



Social Studies Explorations

– A Professional Journey



Spring, 2008 • Volume 2 • Issue 3

Archived copies of Explorations can be found at

<http://www.carcpd.ab.ca/social/newsletters/index.html>

Previous issues include:

- Critical Thinking
- Assessment
- Historical Thinking
- Inquiry-Based Learning
- Multiple Perspectives
- Social Participation

This Issue:

Using Historical Narratives to Teach Thinking

Guiding Question:

How will teachers create a social studies program that meets the needs and reflects the nature of 21st century learners?

Abstract:

Essential to the effective implementation of the new Social Studies Program of Studies is the infusion of technology and its timely challenge to create a program that meets the needs and reflects the nature of 21st century learners. Since digital media plays a significant role in the lives of the digital generation, teachers need to explore how this tool can be harnessed to advance historical thinking and engage students in exploring historical consciousness.

See the full article on pages 2 & 3

Northwest

Regional Learning Consortium

"Wisdom is using your knowledge while doubting what you know."
~ Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006

Supporting Professional Learning:

NRLC continues to support teachers by providing opportunities to address the professional learning needs of K-12 teachers throughout northern Alberta, through the grant funding from Alberta Education. **Please visit our newly updated website for new postings and details:** www.nrlc.net

Some professional opportunities for the remainder of the school year include:

Publisher Resource Fairs – grade 6/9/11. No charge. Register on the NRLC website.

Monday April 29 – Peace River (Springfield School)

Tuesday April 30 – Grande Prairie (Derek Taylor School)

The Essentials: Beginning the Journey – grade 6/9/11 – overview session for teachers new to the program. (Teachers from other grades welcome)

Wednesday, May 21 – Peace River

Thursday – May 22 – Grande Prairie

Digging Deeper into the New Grade 11 High School Social Studies Program – Day 2 – Focus on Planning A day for grade 11 teachers who have had an overview and are ready to go deeper into the related issues of the grade eleven program. **Dates and locations TBD** – check NRLC website.

Supporting Inquiry Learning in our Social Studies Classrooms – for librarians, teachers, children's lit facilitators, admin – a two day program on supporting student learning

through inquiry and research. **May 8 & 9 Peace River** (Catholic Conference Centre) **Saturday PD – Building Better Rubrics** with Sherry Bennett. A full day session on Saturday, **May 24** in High Level.

Sessions via webcast:

Publisher Resource Fairs: Register for these sessions (held from 4:20 to 5:00 pm) through our partner organization **Learning Network** at www.learning-network.org **April 15** - Grade 6 (Pearson); **April 22** - Grade 6 (Nelson); **May 12** - Grade 20-1, 20-2 (McGraw Hill). **May 14** - Social 20-1 (Oxford). No charge.

Exciting summer PD:

Alberta Ed Summer Institute: August 12, 13 and 14, Edmonton. Information and registration will be handled by each district. Focus will be on grades 6, 9, 10, 11 and 12, as well as K&E Social Studies.

NRLC Summer Workshops: August 18, 19, 20 in Grande Prairie. There will be more information to follow. In addition to our in-depth sessions on Tues/Wed, we will be hosting three "one day" sessions on Monday – confirmed sessions include:

August 18 – The Essentials – Beginning the Journey – a one day overview session for teachers who are beginning to work with the program or who want to spend more time with program basics.

August 19/20 – in depth sessions for teachers in grades 6/9/11. Facilitators will include Wally Diefenthaler, Brenda Dyck and Garfield Gini-Newman. Themes will include assessment, technology and planning.

Nominate an outstanding social studies teacher!

Spend some time browsing on the ATA website for social studies teachers. <http://ssc.teachers.ab.ca/> There are many excellent resources available. See the opportunity to **nominate outstanding social studies teachers for their hard work and dedication.** Awards are presented at the annual social studies conference (this year it is October 17-19 in Banff). NRLC encourages you to nominate an outstanding colleague for this award. Nomination forms are available by going to the above website and clicking on "Awards."

Surveys coming in May

Please take the time to answer the NRLC Social Studies implementation survey that you will receive via email in May. Your responses work directly into our program plan for the next two years!

Stay in touch!

Please check the website for session and registration details on all sessions. If you have questions or suggestions please contact:

Leslie Snyder • snyderl@prsd.ab.ca
780-836-3660 • NRLC Zone One Social Studies Project Coordinator



NRLC
Northwest REGIONAL LEARNING Consortium
www.nrlc.net

Hidden Stories

Using Digital Historical Narratives to Teach Thinking

Submitted by Brenda Dyck

“Stories provide a vital opportunity to bring history to life.

Through stories, people share information, values and attitudes about history, culture and heritage. Stories are communicated through legends, myths, creation stories, narratives, oral traditions, songs, music, dance, literature, visual and dramatic arts, traditions, and celebrations. They can include or be supported by biographies, autobiographies, archives, news items, novels or short stories. In social studies, stories provide students with opportunities to understand the dynamics of peoples, cultures, places, issues and events that are integral to Alberta’s history and to contemporary society.”

Alberta Program of Studies (2003)

Professor Henry Yu is a man with a mission. Yu has been piloting a program at the University of British Columbia that is focused on recovering the lost or ignored voices of the many Chinese Canadian immigrants who helped to establish, build and support the economy in the province of British Columbia. Through INSTRCC (Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian studies), Yu and his colleagues have initiated a teaching and research program that is building an awareness of British Columbia’s past and future in Pacific Canada. Yu points out that even though Chinese Canadians “have lived continuously in BC since 1858, they still only enter our historical consciousness as gold miners and railway builders. The question I ask of myself in my research and of my students in my classes is: What were they doing the rest of the time?”

This same question could be asked about many other groups of Canadians such as the First Nations people and non-European immigrants to Canada. And that’s exactly what INSTRCC is doing. These hidden narratives are being uncovered by researching digital archives, registries, and museums and by talking to the ancestors of those whose immigrant voices have never been heard. Using audio, video, historic photographs and text to showcase

their research findings, these *historical archeologists* are reminding Canadians that our understanding of Canadian history is often one-sided and is in need of expansion. These digital historical narratives have brought to life many hidden narratives and, in doing so, have preserved and profiled stories previously reserved for well-known historical figures like Samuel de Champlain, George Étienne Cartier and Louis Riel. Yu claims that this digital documentation is a “new grammar for speaking about and to the world.”

“I realize there is more to history than ... textbooks, there are voices, people, places & things unlike any before or since. Hidden in the shadows of these dusty phantoms are the lives of those who came before us, so that we might be here now.”

Preservice Teacher, University of Alberta

Using Digital Media to Teach 21st Century Learners

Teachers across the world are tapping into the value of using digital media to share the voices of people from the past and present. Like those involved with UBC’s INSTRCC program, Alberta’s teachers have the opportunity to establish inquiry-based classrooms where teachers and students use digital media applications like MovieMaker, PhotoStory or iMovie, to explore, capture and share overlooked stories or perspectives from Canada’s past. These technology tools not only redefine communication and storytelling but help teachers meet Alberta’s Program of Studies mandate to create a social studies program that meets the needs and

reflects the nature of 21st century learners. Just as the 19th and 20th centuries were alive with writers using the power of words to bring their stories to life, today’s highly visual youths have discovered a three-dimensional medium where images and sound merge together to communicate stories and factual information. Our job is to merge this interest with the curriculum we teach.

Creating a Digital Historical Narrative

Step One:

Digital historical narratives begin with a central “burning” historical question that will portray one or more points of view found within under-explored histories. Fueled by historical evidence, emotional content and voice and/or music, the story is based on carefully researched content, and portrayed using images, video clips, diary entries and other primary sources.

Step Two:

“There is always the possibility of tension between a useful history and a truthful history.”

Peter Seixas

For the next step in the digital historical narrative process, students will examine pertinent historical photographs with a keen eye, using one or more of Peter Seixas’ six historical concepts to guide their exploration. These six conceptual considerations will help students further clarify their burning question and will guide them on the search for the voice or perspective they want to portray in their digital story.

- Establish Historical Significance
- Use Primary Source Evidence
- Identify Continuity and Change
- Analyze Cause and Consequence
- Take Historical Perspective
- Understand Moral Dimensions of History

From: Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: A Framework for Assessment in Canada by Peter Seixas
<http://tinyurl.com/284hgx>
Primary Sources Hotlist:
<http://tinyurl.com/3dvwze>

Step Three

Before students chose the images they will use or launch into using the digital media, it is important that they establish a solid storyline. Premature use of technology will result in a weak story that is dominated by the glitz of technology. Education technologist, Bernajean Porter, reminds storytellers that a digital story must be remembered for its soul, not the bells and whistles of the technology tool. Porter's storyboard template is an excellent tool for mapping out the story within the digital historical narrative.

<http://tinyurl.com/35ea3c>

"This project helped me think outside the book- I hope to pass that on to my students."

Preservice Teacher, University of Alberta

Step Four

For this step, students will choose the images and music that they will use.

Students will need to cite their sources at the end of their project and if their digital historical narrative will be published on a web site, they will need to ensure that all images and music are free from copyright restrictions and, if not, ensure that they have obtained permission to use them.

Copyright rules and citing sources:

<http://tinyurl.com/3yjb2b>

Step Five

Equipped with a burning question, a clear sense of the perspective they want to portray and a cache of carefully chosen images and music, the storyteller is ready to create a 2-3 minute digital historical narrative using MovieMaker, PhotoStory or iMovie. Tutorials and tips for using these technology tools can be accessed at <http://tinyurl.com/34n8fq>

Digital historical narratives can be used to:

- Introduce a new unit of study or for review purposes
- Teach skills such as perspective-taking, critical thinking and the interpretation of historical accounts
- As a prompt for a discussion or writing assignment
- Highlight under-explored historical events or to challenge students to consider an alternative point of view
- Provide a digital project format for

Grade 5-12 students to begin their own historical investigation with the teacher's guidance

In *Theorizing Historical Consciousness* (edited by Peter Seixas), Jocelyn Létourneau and Sabrina Moisan suggest that it is imperative that history teachers learn how to move beyond teaching history from a single perspective, or a collection of facts to be memorized for a test. By incorporating the use of digital historical narratives into social studies instruction and learning, teachers are not only expanding students' perspective beyond the dominant perspective, they are meeting the needs of 21st century learners, a unique group of learners who feel a close affinity to digital media and the use of technology to support and express their learning.

"It became apparent we were creating a narrative describing a time and place using the clues left to us by history."

Preservice Teacher, University of Alberta

A Annotated Resources, Web Sites, Books, etc.

Annotated Resources, Web Sites, Books, Etc.

Examples of Digital Historical Narrative: Created by preservice teachers from the University of Alberta <http://tinyurl.com/2j8rup>

Komagota Maru: Created by a preservice teacher from the University of Alberta, this project demonstrates the use of digital media to capture the often overlooked Komagota Maru incident from 1914. <http://tinyurl.com/2r5km3>

Hidden Stories: A Historical Narrative Project: This technology-supported project walks students through the steps of creating a digital historical narrative. <http://www.wired-and-inspired.ca/hidden-stories/>

Digital Historical Narratives: <http://tinyurl.com/3xge95>

The Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies (INSTRCC): From the University of British Columbia <http://www.instrcc.ubc.ca/INSTRCC/Welcome.html>

History's Fracture Mirror: Peter Seixas

<http://www.histori.ca/prodev/article.do?id=11655>

Doing History with Wah Chong's Washing and Ironing,

Peter Seixas <http://tinyurl.com/2eh59x>

Biography

Brenda Dyck is a teacher, university instructor and technology integration coach from Calgary. Author of *"The Rebooting of a Teacher's Mind,"* Brenda writes the "Hotlinks" column in Middle Ground magazine, a publication of the National Middle School Association. She is a regular columnist for Education World and Classroom Connect. An international speaker on teaching and technology, her professional contributions earned her the winning place in the 2004 Global Junior Challenge in Rome, Italy, for her telecollaborative project *"We the Children ..."* Brenda has been a finalist in the Global SchoolNet's Shared Learning Awards in 2003, 2004 and 2005 and was chosen by Surfaquarium as one of the Top Ten Online Educators for 2005.

Social Studies in Action in Zone One

Students Saving Our Society

The following is an actual letter written in 2008 by a group of grade 10 students at Peace Wapiti Academy in Grande Prairie. Letter reprinted with permission.

Dear Senator General Romeo Dallaire:

Students Saving Our Society (S².O.S) is a citizen action group formed at Peace Wapiti Academy. It was inspired by our teacher Louis Chabot. He teaches, no matter who you are, you can make a difference. ... Our goal was to see if a small group of students from Northern Alberta could actually have an impact on a humanitarian situation, whether it is local, regional, national, or even international.

We started meeting in October of this year and after looking at different possible issues, we decided the **“Crisis in Darfur”** was the most urgent. The numbers became staggering for us: 2.5 million displaced, over 400 000 killed, and the countless numbers of rapes in the past five years. This really had an impact on us. So we thoroughly investigated the issue and decided to spread awareness throughout the area. Our first large project was planned by a group of ten students. In a period of three and a half weeks, we organized the **largest rally for Darfur in Canada**. Along with the rally we held the **only “Dream for Darfur” relay run in Canada**. We had a turnout of at least **1800 students** who listened to performers called High Valley, while eating one of the 2000 burgers cooked outside at -26°C. The silence of the students was deafening as **UN investigator Debbie Bodkin & STAND high school coordinator Evan Cinq-Mars spoke of the atrocities in Sudan**.

Since this time S².O.S was requested to make presentations to three rotary clubs, municipal politicians, school boards, and **Member of Parliament Chris Warkentin**. In our meeting with Mr. Warkentin, he congratulated us on our efforts, but suggested it would not be enough to obtain action from the government. He mentioned if we were to show the government that the citizens in the area were more concerned with the crisis in Darfur, it would make a larger statement. Thus we are looking to arrange a large Gala fundraiser where we will have entertainment, speakers, and the opportunity for people to make a difference.

Our goal is two fold. The money raised from this

event is going to go to a refugee camp on the South Eastern end of the Darfur region. The same camp being assisted by London MP

Glen Pearson, who we have been in contact with. Secondly to use this as a springboard to meet with Minister of Defense and Foreign Affairs and have them fully fund the remaining three million dollars to support the camp.

As we have stated, we want to make a difference in this world, and we want to see what people tell us is actually real. People always say: “youth are the future”, and “the sky is the limit”, or “you can do anything you put your mind to”. Perhaps we are too young to know better, but as a group we believe this is possible. We have already proved that big things really do start small, and that one person can make a difference in this world. We admire you so much for your devotion to making the world a better place. You are a role model to many. We realize that you are very busy, but we would be so honored to have you as our keynote speaker. We would schedule the event around your availability.

Yours in making the world a better place,
Students Saving Our Society (Student names omitted)

For more information or to provide assistance you may contact teacher Mr. Louis Chabot by email:
louischabot@pwsd76.ab.ca

Additional information available at these links:

Remembering Darfur: <http://cgi.bowesonline.com/pedro.php?id=1&x=story&xid=360489>

PWA Student to Ottawa:

<http://cgi.bowesonline.com/pedro.php?id=1&x=story&xid=385689>

YouTube video of the Darfur rally:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mV1k7aDoBaU>

Want to highlight what you are doing in social studies?
Submit articles, photos and weblinks to Leslie Snyder,
NRLC Social Studies Implementation Project Coor.



Check out our newly designed website: www.nrlc.net



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