

Historical Thinking in Provincial History and Social Studies Curricula

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February 10-12, 2011

ENGLISH CURRICULA

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Introduction

Purpose

The following analyses of the provincial curricula are intended to give feedback to the various Ministries of Education about the position of historical thinking in their programs and encourage dialogue amongst Ministry representatives and history educators. We hope as well that they might take note of worthwhile features in the other programs, possible small exemplars such as Alberta's use of "questions for inquiry" or larger efforts such as the inter-provincial collaboration of the *Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum*. Publishers too might find areas where they could use common curriculum content for different resources or where they see a need for new resources.

Methodology

We intended to focus on the expectations or objectives for student learning but considered as well the general principles and guidelines and, where they were included, suggested activities and performance indicators. Our criteria for judging the presence of historical thinking were those explained in "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: A Framework for Assessment in Canada" (2006) by Peter Seixas. In several provinces the curriculum guides specifically refer to this conceptualisation of historical thinking.

The analyses were intended for reason of time to be only a sampling of the various history and social studies course guides. For this we chose initially grade 10 curricula as a common point for comparison. However, as we looked more closely, we realized that some provinces do not have history as a compulsory subject as far as grade 10. Because we wanted to consider only compulsory courses, in some cases we chose a lower grade because it was the last history course that all students in the province were required to study. In other cases, the grade 10 curriculum had not been revised for a number of years. Older curricula generally do not reflect the recent research and interest in historical thinking. Therefore, because we wanted to look at the best examples of history curricula, in some cases we chose the most recently revised curriculum guide such as Manitoba's grade 11 history course.

Limitations or Caveats

There are several important factors that can influence students' achievement in historical thinking that are not part of these analyses. We do not evaluate the number of history courses that a student is required to take. Nor do we evaluate the coherence of learning objectives from grade to grade, nor progression of learning, except for a few references to Québec and Alberta's guides. In addition, the analyses do not consider the role of provincial examinations and programs of professional development for teachers. Although we did not include these here, we nonetheless think that they are worthy topics for dialogue. In the United Kingdom, for example, progression in historical understanding is a major subject of curriculum and professional development.

The study was based on what was available on Ministry web sites. As researchers from far away, it is possible that we have made some factual errors. Please let us know if there are any so that we may correct them as soon as possible.

Analysis of Alberta’s Grade 10 *Living in a Globalizing World*

Social Studies is mandatory in Alberta through grade 12. As it is an interdisciplinary subject, the history content varies in each year. Grades 7 and 8 are probably the most historically oriented, with courses that focus, respectively, on Canadian history and on historical worldviews, while grade 9, with a concentration on governance and economics, has the least history content. This analysis will focus on the most recently revised curriculum at the grade 10 level, Social Studies 10-2, *Living in a Globalizing World* (2007). There is also the very similar but somewhat more challenging stream, Social Studies 10-1, *Perspectives on Globalization* (2007).

The program of studies consists of a written document in two parts, Program Rationale and Philosophy (2005) that is common to all of the K-12 social studies courses and a description of outcomes. The outcomes are grouped into three types: Values and Attitudes, Knowledge and Understanding, and Skills and Processes. The section on Skills and Processes for grade 10 includes Dimensions of Thinking with nine outcomes on historical thinking. Both social studies courses are organized course around a Key Issue, “To what extent should we embrace globalization?” that is further divided into four related issues. As students progress through these, they explore the impact of the key issue on individual and collective identity (Related Issue 1), examine its historical background (Related Issue 2) and contemporary considerations related to the key issue (Related Issue 3), and develop personal and civic responses to the key issue (Related Issue 4). The second and most historical related issue for Social Studies 10-2 course is “Should people in Canada respond to the legacies of historical globalization?” and for Social Studies 10-1 it is “To what extent should contemporary society respond to the legacies of historical globalization?”

A key component of the program of study is the on-line implementation guide LearnAlberta.ca at <http://www.learnalberta.ca/>. When one searches using the keywords “historical thinking”, the search yields 75 resources correlated to historical thinking and social studies. Many of these are related to the “Program Rationale and Philosophy” part of the program of studies. For example, to help teachers understand and interpret historical thinking, there are videos of presentations given to teachers regarding historical thinking by prominent history educators such as Amy von Heyking and Carla Peck in English and Stephan Lévesque in French. Grade 10-specific resources on LearnAlberta.ca include elaborate critical challenge lesson plans based on the critical thinking model of The Critical Thinking Consortium that are correlated to the historical thinking skills in the social studies program of studies. This might be considered as the equivalent to suggested teaching strategies that are included in the curriculum guides of other provinces.

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut also follow the curriculum of Alberta for grade 10 social studies. Also see analysis of the NWT *Northern Studies 10*.

Outcomes

There are six historical thinking concepts that provide the framework for our analysis of the Social Studies 10-2 course, *Living in a Globalizing World*. For each of the six concepts the report below on outcomes explains: 1) our criteria in relation to the concept; 2) an evaluation of the curriculum documents in relation to these criteria; 3) a comment which offers a summary judgement on how well the curriculum handles this aspect of historical thinking.

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

The Program Rationale and Philosophy has two paragraphs that outline historical thinking as one of its dimensions of thinking. This includes general reference to “construction of meaning” through the study of “a variety of media, such as oral traditions, print, electronic text, art and music.”

The historical thinking outcomes of Skills and Process for Social Studies 10-2 include “develop reasoned arguments supported by historical and contemporary evidence” and “understand the difference between historical facts and historical interpretation.” This Skills and Processes section also lists outcomes under the title Research for Deliberative Inquiry that reflect an expectation that students corroborate their interpretations, one of the Benchmarks strategies for analyzing sources: students will “consult a wide variety of sources, including oral histories, that reflect varied viewpoints on particular issues” and “revise questions on an issue as new information becomes available.”

LearnAlberta.ca also contains several lesson plans on the use of evidence, notably “Using Primary Documents in Social Studies and History,” “Investigating Pictures,” and “Creating Authentic Diaries.” It is worth noting also that the Social Studies 10-2 outcomes for media literacy, while they do not refer to analyzing primary sources, describe similar strategies, e.g., “assess the authority, reliability and validity of electronically accessed information. (33)”

Comment:

The Social Studies 10-2 program of studies supports learning about the concept of evidence.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

The list of historical thinking outcomes in the Skills and Processes section includes “identifying cause and effect relationships.” In addition, the outcomes related to issues of globalization ask students to “identify”, “explore”, “examine”, and “analyze” various consequences of globalization as well as “factors contributing to” it. For example, students are expected to “examine the consequences of imperialism in Canada for Aboriginal Peoples (*Indian Act*, consequences of residential schools, social impact on Indigenous peoples).”

In the LearnAlberta.ca site, moreover, there is a lesson plan entitled “Case Studies in Imperialism” that targets this and other relevant outcomes. Other support material at the site include “Rating Options” charts to help students “rate the degree to which certain conditions or effects are present” and an extension activity that asks students to answer the counterfactual question : “How might the profiled Aboriginal society look today if imperialism had not occurred?” Teachers using these materials should be able to help students reason about the relative importance of causes. However, there are no direct references to terms such as unintended consequences or agency given above.

Comment:

The skills and processes outcomes in Dimensions of Thinking on “patterns of change” and “benefits or harm” open the door for grade 10 students in Alberta to think historically about continuity and change. Outcomes that refer to the pace of change and tools such as turning point or historical period would further support historical thinking.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

The section Dimensions of Thinking in the skills and processes outcomes includes an expectation that students will “evaluate the impact of significant historical periods and patterns of change on the contemporary world.” Another outcome refers explicitly to progress and decline: students will “demonstrate an understanding of how changes in technology can benefit or harm society...” In the section on the legacies of historical globalization in the knowledge and understanding outcomes, one of the outcomes requires students to “examine multiple perspectives on the political, economic and social impacts of imperialism in Canada,” which implicitly acknowledges progress and decline. The critical challenge “Case Studies in Imperialism” also supports the learning of continuity and change. There are no outcomes that refer directly to the variability of change, nor apply tools such as turning point or historical period.

Comment:

The outcomes in Dimensions of Thinking on “patterns of change” and “benefits or harm” open the door for grade 10 students in Alberta to think historically about continuity and change. Outcomes that refer to the pace of change and tools such as turning point or historical period would further support historical thinking.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

There is no direct mention of historical significance in the outcomes for Social Studies 10-2; however, two of the nine outcomes for skills of historical thinking refer to comparing historical narratives. Other outcomes refer to multiple perspectives on the “impacts of imperialism” and “the political, economic and social impacts of imperialism in Canada.” The Critical Challenges “Globalization and Cultural Identities” and “Sensitive Reading of Historical Documents” also teach how globalization varies in its impact on different groups. (Examining topics and issues from multiple perspectives is integral to Alberta’s K-12 social studies program of studies.) Together, these suggest support for the teaching of one of the criteria for teaching this concept, interpretive variation. There are no references to criteria for deciding on significance nor to change over time.

Comment:

The Alberta grade 10 program of study fully supports one of the Benchmarks criteria for historical significance, interpretative variation.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

The introductory section includes Time, Continuity and Change as one of six key interdisciplinary strands with this commentary on perspective-taking:

Considering multiple perspectives on history, and contemporary issues within their historical context, enables students to understand and appreciate the social, cultural and political dimensions of the past, make meaning of the present and make decisions for the future.

An outcome from the skills of historical thinking has the expectation that students will “understand diverse historical and contemporary perspectives within and across cultures.” The critical challenges “Understanding Historical Worldviews,” “Rewriting History,” and “Sensitive Reading of Historical Documents” support this outcome.

In addition, outcomes for perspective taking are the focus of the grade 8 social studies program of studies, Historical Worldviews Examined, and LearnAlberta.ca includes seven critical challenges for grade 8 on historical worldviews.

Comment:

The Social Studies 10 program of studies fully supports historical perspective-taking. Although progression is not a subject of this analysis, because historical perspective-taking is a focus of both the grade 8 and grade 10 programs of study, it is worth noting that there is an opportunity for the Alberta Ministry to plan for progression in student learning about historical perspective-taking across grade levels.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

One of the four related issues in the Social Studies 10-2 course is both ethical and historical: “Should people in Canada respond to the legacies of historical globalization?” The outcomes identify the values, attitudes, knowledge and understanding necessary to answer that question and one of these asks students to “analyze various attempts to address the consequences of imperialism...” (and in the Social Studies 10-1 course, this outcome is “*evaluate* various attempts to address consequences of imperialist policies and practices...”).

There are no outcomes that directly address anachronisms or other challenges to judging events or people of the past, although this is inherent when considering the Social Studies 10-2 issue “To what extent should contemporary society respond to the legacies of historical globalization?” Moreover, critical challenges such as “Sensitive Reading of Historical Documents and “Rewriting History” give guidance to teachers along these lines.

Comment:

The essential question on responses to the legacies of globalization gives a clear frame to study the ethical dimension of history. The outcomes and LearnAlberta.ca lesson plans support a thoughtful answer to the question. Teachers would be further supported if there were reference to these lesson plans in the curriculum guide.

Analysis of British Columbia and the Yukon's Grade 10 Social Studies

Social Studies is compulsory from grade 8 to 11 in British Columbia. In each year there is a large history component. The focus for this analysis will be the grade 10 guide or Integrated Resource Package (2006). It includes three sections that address the expectations for teaching this grade : the Introduction, the Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and the more detailed Student Achievement : Suggested Achievement Indicators. The PLOs are mandatory. The Suggested Achievement Indicators are not.

The outcomes are divided into five curriculum organizers:

- Skills and Processes
- Identity, Society, and Culture: Canada from 1815 to 1914
- Governance: Canada from 1815 to 1914
- Economy and Technology: Canada from 1815 to 1914
- Environment: Canada from 1815 to 1914

The Yukon follows the B.C. curriculum.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

The Introduction to the grade 10 curriculum and the PLOs refer to generic critical thinking skills, e.g., “students are encouraged to... think critically, evaluate information, and practise effective communication (3).”

The Suggested Achievement Indicators include among its 62 items, two that are specific and relevant to the concept of evidence. Students will

- plan and conduct research using primary and secondary sources, including sources
 - from a range of media types (e.g., print news, broadcast news, online)
 - representing a range of perspectives
- assess the reliability of information sources on selected topics in terms of bias and point of view (24).

There is no explicit discussion of methods or strategies for analysis, the difference or relationships between primary or secondary sources, nor how to construct an argument or narrative; however, this might be considered as implicit in the achievement indicators above.

Comment:

The grade 10 curriculum has a sound potential base on which to teach the concept of evidence. Student learning about the concept of evidence would be enhanced if there were specific, relevant prescribed outcomes and more explicit guidance for teachers and students.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

There are several PLOs that refer to causes and consequences with objectives such as “analyze the impact of interaction between Aboriginal peoples and European(s)...” and “evaluate the influence of immigration.” This is reflected as well in the Student Achievement Indicators. On the other hand, many of the outcomes concerning causation require only description, e.g., “describe the causes of...” or “identify factors that led to...”

There are no references to elements such as underlying conditions versus precipitating events, agency, unintended consequences and the like that could support students in reasoning about causes.

Comment:

The PLOs that require only description may result in students merely memorizing causes and consequences and not thinking historically about them. Outcomes that require students to determine the most important causes or to examine the tension between agency and preceding conditions would be more likely to advance their historical thinking. Nonetheless, there are numerous outcomes that refer to cause and consequence and these give a strong base on which to build a curriculum that explicitly supports historical thinking.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.

- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

Several PLOs and Suggested Achievement Indicators refer to change, e.g., “evaluate changes to Canada’s immigration policy, including Sifton’s open-door policy, Asiatic Exclusion League, and Continuous Passage Rule.” One Achievement Indicator suggests that students “analyse the positive and negative consequences of the elements of the National Policy...,” which could be considered an implicit reference to progress and decline.

However, there is no explicit objective that students consider the pace of change and extent of the change, nor any that require the study of turning points, periods, and progress and decline as analytic tools.

Comment:

There are numerous outcomes that refer to change and these give a strong base on which to build a curriculum that explicitly supports historical thinking. To do this there would need to be objectives and achievement indicators that require understanding of the characteristics of change and refer to the vocabulary given above.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

There are no PLOs or achievement indicators that explicitly require students to reason about historical significance. In the Identity, Society, and Culture stand, one PLO refers to a changing national identity from 1815 to 1914 and others require students to describe the contributions to the development of Canada of individuals, Aboriginals and immigrant groups. These could be said to refer implicitly to the concept of historical significance.

Comment:

The curriculum strand on identity might be a fruitful place to build expectations for students to reason about historical significance, but historical significance is not yet part of the British Columbia grade 10 social studies course.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

The rationale for social studies in the Introduction sets out inclusion, appreciation of multiple perspectives, and the respect of cultural diversity as goals for the *Social Studies 10*. There is one Achievement Indicator that asks students to “relate the status of ethnic minorities in Canada (e.g., Chinese railway workers, Sikh loggers, Eastern European farmers, Irish famine refugees, African-American slavery refugees) to the societal attitudes of the time.” This clearly invites them to understand the perspective of these groups as well as the dominant majority with the possibility of recognizing presentism and anachronisms. However, they are not explicitly required to do so. There are no PLOs that refer to perspective-taking.

Comment:

The broad goals given in the Introduction are fully consistent with the concept of historical perspective taking. These goals and historical thinking would be enhanced if the PLOs and Achievement Indicators directed students to understand the perspectives of others different from themselves in the past, the importance of doing so, and the challenges in understanding them.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

The rationale in the Introduction states that the “*Social Studies 10* curriculum provides students with opportunities to critically reflect upon events and issues in order to examine the past and make connections.” One of the economic geography PLOs makes a connection between the past and contemporary policy questions when it asks students to “evaluate attitudes and practices in resource development in British Columbia from 1815 to 1914 and their impact on contemporary resource management.” However, no history outcomes do so.

One Achievement Indicator in history asks students to “critique the rationale for treaties... and the *Indian Act* (e.g., reserves, residential schools), and evaluate their impact on Aboriginal peoples.” This clearly invites them to make an ethical judgement. However, it does not ask them to consider the challenges of making judgements about events and people in the past nor what might be a suitable response today to these events of the past.

Comment:

The British Columbia grade 10 curriculum opens the door to the ethical dimension of historical thinking in its rationale but it needs further development to help guide students and teachers.

Analysis of Manitoba's Grade 11

History of Canada

Manitoba's secondary school grades are from 9 to 12 and history is a compulsory subject in 9 and 11. This analysis is of a draft version of the grade 11 curriculum, which is in the process of revision.

The draft of the History of Canada (2009) curriculum guide features the Benchmarks concepts prominently. The introduction on the Manitoba Ministry of Education web site (http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/gr11_history.html) states that "(h)istorical thinking concepts, based on the work of Dr. Peter Seixas at the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness at the University of British Columbia, are embedded throughout this curriculum and provide the foundation for historical inquiry." The curriculum lists the six Benchmarks concepts prominently and also identifies historical "skills and competencies." These include objectives for historical inquiry as well as objectives for "historical-mindedness" such as "explain why history is important and relevant."

The over-arching question for the year is "How has Canada's history shaped the Canada of today?" Related to this question are five themes. They are

1. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples
2. French-English Relations
3. Identity, Diversity and Citizenship
4. Governance and Economics
5. Canada and the World

For each there is a list of enduring 4 to 6 enduring understandings. For example, "Immigration has helped shape Canada's history and continues to shape Canadian society and identity." However, these do not include understandings of historical thinking.

The guide also includes "Descriptions of Learning Experiences and Historical Background Statements by Cluster." These "clusters" are organized chronologically beginning with "First Peoples and Nouvelle France (to 1763)" and ending with "Achievements and Challenges (1931 – 1982)." Each cluster has 3 or 4 Learning Experiences that identify an essential question, give a description of the learning experience and historical background and, most relevant to this analysis, list the relevant historical thinking concepts. Seventeen pages in length, these clusters, thirty two in total, give the greatest amount of detailed guidance.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources

- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

The Skills and Competencies section gives five expectations that are fully consistent with the Benchmarks concepts.

The Clusters section includes evidence as a relevant concept for three learning experiences. At the time of this our analysis, the fall of 2009, the description of the experience and the historical background were yet to be developed.

Comment:

In both the Skills and Competencies section and Clusters section there are numerous outcomes that refer to the use of evidence. Together, these could give a strong base on to support historical thinking about this concept, especially if they are linked together with guidance for the teacher and student.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

The learning experiences in the clusters feature several that require students to study causation, for example, “Why and how was the Dominion of Canada established as a confederation of British Colonies in 1867?” Directions to teachers and students about what it means to reason about causes and relevant sub-concepts such as agency, underlying conditions, or unintended consequences are still to be developed.

Comment:

The Manitoba curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by including explicit mention of cause and consequence but these are still in the process of revision.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.

- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

The learning experiences in the clusters feature several that require students to study change. For example, “How did territorial expansion, immigration, and industrialization change life for men and women in Canada?” identifies a number of areas of change. The description and historical background do not, however, refer to continuity, the pace of change, periodization, or progress and decline.

Comment:

The Manitoba curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by including explicit mention of change and continuity but is still in the process of development.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

Historical significance is a part of several learning experiences. For example, Learning Experience 3.4, “How was Canada’s identity as a nation shaped by the First World War, and by its changing relationship to Great Britain (and) the world?” gives a chronology of the growing importance of Canada in the War and steps to autonomy and concludes by stating that this transition to full constitutional independence is an important theme. As with the other concepts, the supporting materials to help teach students to reason about significance are not yet finished.

Comment:

There are many possible learning experiences on which to build expectations for students to reason about historical significance.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

Perspective-taking is the most frequently mentioned concept in the learning experiences and the one with the most explicit requirements. For example, “How did Canada’s relationships with First

Nations, Métis and Inuit people change after Confederation?” states that students “acquire knowledge of... the treaties held by the First Nations and Canadian government.” The supporting material is still under development.

Comment:

The Grade 11 *History of Canada* course strongly supports the concept of historical perspective-taking in its curriculum, an appropriate emphasis for a culturally diverse country.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

There are at least two objectives in the section on Historical-mindedness that reflect this concept: “demonstrate awareness that history can be manipulated to serve political or other purposes” and “explain why history is important and relevant.”

The ethical dimension is also part of five of the learning experiences. It is most explicit in the last experience, “How have Canada’s international relations changed since 1982 and what should its global commitments be in the future?” that asks students to debate the role Canada should play in international development, military engagements, and environmental issues. On the other hand, there is no reference to the relationship of history to the contemporary debate.

Comment:

The learning outcomes for the Manitoba curriculum have a strong ethical dimension but await further development.

Analysis of New Brunswick's Grade 9 *Canadian Identity* and Grade 10 *Ancient and Medieval History*

Social Studies is compulsory in New Brunswick through grade 11. Grades 8 and 9 include a course titled Interdependence and one titled *Canadian Identity*. The grade 9 course on Canadian identity includes geography and civics as well as history. It was developed in co-ordination with all the Atlantic provinces and is the same course in the Maritime provinces, except that in the other provinces it is taught in grade 8.

Grade 10 is *Ancient and Medieval History* and grade 11 is *Modern World History – The West in the Modern World*. The curriculum for the grade 9 *Canadian Identity* course is a more recent document (2006) with much more content relevant to historical thinking than the *Ancient and Medieval History* grade 10 course (1997) or the grade 11 course (1984). This analysis will focus on the two most recently revised courses, grades 9 and 10.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

In the introductory chapters to the grade 9 *Canadian Identity* guide, there is a section on literacy as part of the Social Studies Learning Environment that is consistent with the Benchmarks criteria. The section explains the importance of critical literacy: “Through the implementation of various strategies, teachers will develop students' awareness of stereotyping, cultural bias, author's intent, hidden agendas, silent voices, and omissions. Students are encouraged to be aware that authors construct texts with specific purposes in mind. Further, critical literacy helps students comprehend texts at a deeper level by encouraging them to view content and ideas from a variety of perspectives and to interpret the various levels of meaning, both explicit and implicit, in a given text.”

The appendices for the grade 9 guide also list a number of inquiry skills relevant to the understanding of evidence including the following:

- determine the accuracy and reliability of primary and secondary sources and geographic data
- make inferences from primary and secondary materials
- determine the accuracy and reliability of data

- determine whether or not the information is pertinent to the subject
- recognize the tentative nature of conclusions
- recognize their values may have influenced their conclusion

The grade 9 specific curriculum outcomes do not include references to evidence; however, after several outcomes there are accompanying suggestions for teaching and learning and assessment that give guidelines for analyzing sources.

Although the expectations for the Grade 10 course do not refer to the analysis of primary sources, the curriculum guide does so in a section discussing the relationship to the essential graduation outcomes. There the guide states that problem-solving is “the stuff of history. There is no need to create artificial situations in order to have students practice problem solving. History, as indicated, provides a ready laboratory for identifying and exploring persistent problems. Properly taught, history asks students to formulate questions---Why was Greece able to conquer Persia? Why did the Roman empire decline? Why was there a split within Christianity?---to develop hypothesis in response to these questions and to test their hypothesis against the facts... In examining primary historical materials, students are asked whose voice is being heard in this instance? Whose voice is silent? What perspective is being reflected? Are the claims being made legitimate?”

Comment:

The grade 9 social studies course includes expectations that students will learn to think historically about evidence and suggestions for using primary sources. The specific outcomes could be more integrated with the inquiry skills to ensure that New Brunswick students have some experience in using primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

The grade 10 course is not yet at the level of the grade 9 course in expectations that students think historically about evidence.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

The specific curriculum outcomes for grade 9 include several that expect students to analyze causes and effects. Moreover, the Suggestions for Learning and Teaching and Suggestions for Assessment that accompany the outcomes give ideas that could help students to reason about causes. For example, it is suggested that students make a chart in which they rank the causes of the Great Depression in order of importance and justify their ranking. Another suggestion asks students to research the underlying causes of World War Two and then rewrite a “What if...

paragraph” in which students explain how the cause might have been dealt with to avoid war. Concepts such as agency, preceding conditions, and unintended consequences are not mentioned. In the grade 10 course description there are also outcomes that say that students should identify, assess, or analyze causes but no direction how they might do so.

Comment:

The grade 9 curriculum gives considerable attention to historical thinking about cause and consequence. The inclusion of concepts such as agency and unintended consequences would help students even more to develop sophisticated historical thinking.

The grade 10 course is not yet at the level of the grade 9 course in expectations that students reason about cause and consequence.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

One of the Essential Graduation Learnings is that “at the end of grade 9, students will be expected to identify and use concepts associated with time, continuity, and change.” In addition, there are several specific outcomes which require students to analyse economic, social and political changes as a result of various events and trends. However, an understanding of different characteristics of change such as the varied pace and the extent of change as well as concepts such as turning point, periodization, progress or decline are not included in the outcomes. (Turning point is mentioned in a list of prompts for journal entries in one of the appendices.)

Expectations for understanding continuity and change as proposed by Benchmarks are not features of the *Ancient and Medieval History* course.

Comment:

The New Brunswick curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by including explicit mention of change and continuity but needs further development to help guide students and teachers.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance

- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignment of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

There is some implicit consideration of historical significance in the General Learning Outcome for the theme of Time, Continuity, and Change in grade 9: Students “analyse and evaluate historical and contemporary developments in order to make informed, creative decisions about issues” and “identify and analyse trends that may shape the future.” However, they are not asked to reason about significance. There are no outcomes that suggest that they should apply criteria for historical significance, nor consider how it varies over time and amongst different groups.

There are no outcomes relevant to significance in the grade 10 curriculum.

Comment:

Expectations that students think historically about significance would be consistent with the General Learning Outcomes of the grade 9 curriculum. However, the guide would need development to make these explicit and clear.

The grade 10 curriculum would need considerable revision to include this concept.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

There are several outcomes in the *Canadian Identity* curriculum that ask students to consider the perspective of a historical figure. For example, students are expected to “analyse the impact of changing technology and socio-economic conditions on differing prosperities and lifestyles in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s.” The Suggestions for Learning and Teaching ask students to write a song or poem or draw an illustration to capture the challenges of groups who did not enjoy good times in the boom of the 1920s. Another suggestion asks students to assume the role of different people living in different parts of Canada in the 1930s.

The grade 10 curriculum also includes suggested activities that ask students to consider multiple historical perspectives. For example:

Examine passages from one or more of the following and identify the ideals such as chivalry inherent in each:

- Beowulf
- Song of Roland Poem of El Cid
- Arthur and the Round Table
- Divine Comedy
- The Canterbury Tales

None of the outcomes nor the suggested activities refer to the difficulty and importance of understanding people of the past different from ourselves.

Comment:

The grade 9 and 10 curricula give considerable attention to historical perspective-taking. Student historical thinking about this concept would be enhanced if there were expectations that students recognize the importance and challenge in understanding perspectives of past figures.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

Among the principles underlying social studies given in the introduction to the Canadian Identities curriculum is “Issues-based social studies” that considers the ethical dimensions of issues. Among the grade 9 history outcomes, there are ethical issues raised such as “examine Canada’s reaction and response to the moral and ethical issues raised by events such as the Holocaust and the use of the first atomic bombs.” The guide does not, however, include expectations that students will understand the challenges of making judgments about people and events in the past.

The grade 10 curriculum does not include any outcomes relevant to the Benchmarks criteria. However, in the section on the relationship for the course to the essential graduation outcomes there is the following argument for the connection between history and ethical issues:

It has been suggested that everything is a footnote to Plato. If this is true, then many of the ethical issues, which confront today's students can be examined within the context of our early history. What constitutes the just society? What should be the relationship between the individual and the state? Is there such a thing as a just war? Ancient-Medieval and Early Modern History as the outcomes indicate provide numerous opportunities to begin an examination of these persistent ethical issues.

Comment:

The New Brunswick curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by referring to ethical questions in the list of principles underlying social studies and in certain outcomes. The addition of expectations that students understand the challenges in such judgements and relevant learning and teaching suggestions could help students to develop even more sophisticated historical thinking.

Analysis of Grade 8 Newfoundland and Labrador History and Grade 11 Newfoundland and Labrador Studies

Social Studies is mandatory for Newfoundland and Labrador students in grades 8 and 9. The eights study history and the nines study geography. After grade 9 students are required to take one course in Canadian Studies and one in World Studies. Canadian Studies at grade 10 is composed of two options, either history or geography. At grade 11 the choice is economy, law or *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*. At grade 12 students select history or geography for their World Studies requirement. This means that it is possible for a student to study history only in grade 8.

Although the analysis of history courses in other provinces is restricted to compulsory courses, in order to give a more up-to-date look at history curricula in Newfoundland and Labrador, this analysis will also examine historical thinking in the optional course of *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 2205 in grade 11 in addition to the compulsory grade 8 Newfoundland and Labrador History.

The grade 8 curriculum guide (2005) includes five units:

- Introduction: History as a Lens to the Past
- History as a Story of People
- History as a Story of Significant Events
- History as a Story of Change
- History as a Story of the Past in the Present

The grade 11 *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* (2009) is an unusual combination of art education and social studies. It includes three units:

- Culture, Heritage, and Identity
- People of the Land and Sea
- A Time of Change

The introductory section of this curriculum, “Learning and Teaching in the Social Sciences,” explains the six Benchmarks concepts. At the time of writing this analysis in draft form and has yet to include appendices.

The grade 8 and 11 courses are based upon the premises and principles that are set out in the Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum and thus share many characteristics with the curricula with the other three provinces.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

History as a discipline is the basic framework of the *Newfoundland and Labrador History* grade 8 course and the concept of evidence is featured in the Overview and Rationale and in many of the outcomes. For example, students are expected to “examine how historical sources are windows into the past..., explain that history is open to interpretation, (and) explain that historians are guided by rules of evidence.” Outcomes such as these are supported by numerous sample Teaching/Learning Strategies. They are also expected to undertake a research project using primary sources.

In addition, the Newfoundland and Labrador grade 8 guide shares with the other Atlantic provinces an emphasis on critical literacy. The course overview explains, “Through the implementation of various strategies, teachers will develop students' awareness of stereotyping, cultural bias, author's intent, hidden agendas, silent voices, and omissions. Students are encouraged to be aware that authors construct texts with specific purposes in mind. Further, critical literacy helps students comprehend texts at a deeper level by encouraging them to view content and ideas from a variety of perspectives and to interpret the various levels of meaning, both explicit and implicit, in a given text.”

Many of the appendices of the grade 8 course are the same as those of the other Atlantic provinces. There is a list a number of inquiry skills relevant to the understanding of evidence such as “determine the accuracy and reliability of primary and secondary sources and geographic data” and “make inferences from primary and secondary materials” as well as charts and questions to guide student analysis of varied sources such as a family heirloom, tool, photo, propaganda poster, and sound recording.

Although the concept of evidence is listed in the course overview, the Grade 11 *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* curriculum does not have any outcomes that focus on the concept. Nonetheless, here and there are some sample teaching and assessment strategies that explore this element, for example, “Discuss the problems associated with drawing “conclusions” about the way of life of the earliest people. Consider what data is available to use as evidence and the limitations of this data.”

Comment:

The grade 8 curriculum is consistent with Benchmarks criteria and should help students think historically about evidence. They would be able to progress in their thinking if there were subsequent history courses with appropriate outcomes in regards to evidence. The grade 11 curriculum for *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* has potential to do this given that the Benchmarks concepts are included, but it needs specific relevant outcomes.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

There are many outcomes in the grade 8 curriculum that address cause and consequence. The curriculum features the stories of a number of different groups and how factors such as the geography and laws influenced their settlement. There are also a number of outcomes that ask students to describe the consequences, for example, of natural disasters in history.

There is one counterfactual as a suggested teaching/learning strategy: “pretend how the area... might have developed and affected the history of the province, had it not been for the ‘French Shore Treaty.’” This might encourage some reflection on the complexity and relative importance of different causes. There is also a suggested organizer to examine the role of political leaders that might encourage an appreciation of the dialectic between agents and preceding consequences. Students create a “five-frame narrative” completing the prompts: who..., wanted..., but..., so..., and finally....

However, apart from these suggestions there are no outcomes or suggested activities that follow the Benchmarks criteria for reasoning about cause and consequence as explained in the above criteria.

The grade 11 course includes a description of the Benchmarks concept in the introduction and has several outcomes and sample strategies and performance indicators that ask students to reason about cause and consequence. For example, one outcome is that students “apply concepts from the social sciences to the examination of events, ideas, issues, patterns and trends.” A subsequent sample teaching strategy asks students for a give event “to identify the:

- Immediate causes of the event
- Underlying influences that contributed to that event
- The direct consequence(s) of the event”
- The unanticipated consequences of the event

Comment:

The grade 8 and 11 curricula are generally consistent with Benchmarks criteria on cause and consequence but they need further development to help guide teachers, for example, the inclusion of outcomes on the concept of agency and preceding conditions. Co-ordination of these two curricula might also encourage progressively more sophisticated learning.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)

- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

Continuity and change are especially important in the grade 8 unit History as a Story of Change that covers the province’s history through the second half of the 20th century. The outcomes refer to a wide range of changes from political – Newfoundland’s entry into Confederation - to technological to changes in gender relations and family structure. The concept of turning point is included in the list of General Curriculum Outcomes in the opening section (students are expected to understand that “the history of Newfoundland and Labrador is marked by significant turning points”) but is not mentioned among the specific outcomes or suggested activities. An understanding of different characteristics of change such as the varied pace and the extent of change as well as concepts such as periodization, progress or decline are not mentioned as well.

Change and continuity are most prevalent in grade 11 in the unit A Time of Change that covers the time period from 1934 to the present, though there are references to the concept throughout such as “examine change in lifestyles and culture” with the sample performance indicator “Did the diversification of the Newfoundland and Labrador economy result in improvements in the quality of life...?” that implicitly refers to progress and decline. Elsewhere, there is a suggested performance indicator that asks students to consider cultural loss. However, there are no outcomes that refer to progress and decline, nor to other concepts such as the pace of change or periodization.

Comment:

Continuity and change are important concepts in the grade 8 and 11 curricula. The guides also include some limited recognition of related ideas such as the pace of change, turning points, or progress and decline. However for the history curriculum to realize its promise for the teaching of change and continuity, there would need to be more explicit outcomes regarding the characteristics of change and related concepts and vocabulary.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

There is some implicit consideration of historical significance in grade 8, that is, there are outcomes that require students to understand history as interpretation of evidence and an introductory section states that “many ...spiritual and moral issues... must be examined in light of their historical perspective and the changes which have taken place over time.” However,

students are not asked to reason about significance. There are no outcomes that suggest that they should apply criteria for historical significance, nor consider how it varies over time and amongst different groups.

The grade 11 guide discusses historical significance explicitly. Unit 1 states that “students should consider the concept of significance... (A) focus is on using criteria to determine the extent to which an event is significant.” However, the criteria are not given. Unit 2 requires students to examine significant experiences that influenced Newfoundland but here too the criteria to decide on what is and what is not significant are not explained.

Comment:

The grade 8 curriculum does not ask students to understand or apply criteria for historical significance or consider change and variation in significance. The grade 11 makes a step in this direction but the expectations need greater clarity and elaboration to help teachers and students.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

There are several outcomes in the grade 8 curriculum that ask students to consider the perspective of a historical figure. For example, one outcome in unit 2 expects students to “demonstrate how commercial trapping affected the lifestyles of Labradorians.” The sample teaching/learning strategy next to it suggests that the teacher read a definition of “power”, show a picture of an Aboriginal trading with a trading post manager, and then consider who is in control of the relationship. Elsewhere, students write letters in the role of a 19th century fisher and Head of the Church of England. None of the outcomes nor the suggested activities refer to the difficulty and importance of understanding people of the past different from ourselves.

The grade 11 guide has several suggested activities that ask students to create a display, journal entry, speech or artistic work that reflects historical figures or experiences in the past. However, as with the grade 8 guide, there is no discussion of the difficulty and importance of understanding people of the past different from themselves.

Comment:

The curricula of these two grades consistently ask students to consider perspectives of people of the past. The curricula would go further in supporting historical thinking if they also required students to consider the importance of perspective taking and the challenges in seeing the past through the eyes of someone different from themselves.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism

- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation :

As stated above, one of the overall principles of the grade 8 curriculum is to examine contemporary issues in light of their historical perspective. Unit 5 is entitled “History as a Story of the Past in the Present” and students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the role of history in shaping current “events, issues, and problems.” However, there are no expectations that students will understand the challenges of making judgments about people and events in the past.

Unit 3 of the grade 11 curriculum expects students to understand a number of economic, political and social challenges that have historical roots such as the cod moratorium, land claims and preservation of traditional culture. The sample performance indicators and teaching strategies focus, however, do not ask students to explore the links between past and present and the problems when making judgements about the past.

Comment:

Both curricula open the door to historical thinking with expectations that students consider contemporary issues in the light of history, especially the grade 8 course. The addition of expectations that students understand the challenges in such ethical judgements and relevant learning and teaching suggestions could help students to develop even more sophisticated historical thinking.

Analysis of the Northwest Territories' *Northern Studies 10*

Social Studies from grades 10 to 12 follows Alberta's sequence of courses, including Alberta's diploma exams for graduation. Northwest Territories (NWT) students are required to take one grade 10 and one grade 11 course. Beyond the Alberta courses, they need to complete a course called *Northern Studies 10* (2004), which focuses on the history, peoples and traditions of the North. This course is the subject of this analysis.

Northern Studies 10 is available in CD format with a supplemental on-line NWT History Timeline in both French and English developed by the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. The CD and timeline are quite different from other curriculum guides. They include learning objectives and an explanation of the pedagogical approach similar to other curriculum guides. However, the extensive teacher's guide is aligned with a student text and activities that can be printed from the CD.

The course is divided into three modules. Module 1 covers the study of Northern history and cultures and introduces several concepts in historical thinking. Module 2 covers the study of important Northern Issues. Module 3 explores Land Claims in the NWT context.

The beginning of the teacher's guide and student text establishes that history involves interpretation and that interpretations change. The section entitled "Knowledge of History" says that "it is important to approach the study of history as a human story; a story made and lived by people like you." Moreover, "One sees that while the past is over, it may not be finished, because what the past means for us today can change as we think about it."

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

There is extensive study of primary sources in the course beginning with the first assignment, an autobiography. This is described as "the first step in developing an understanding of (the student's) own history and how that history is part of larger narratives in the NWT."

The main primary sources for *Northern Studies 10* are first person accounts and the treatment of these is consistent with the Benchmarks approach. For example, in an activity that contrasts points of view of the Deh Cho or Mackenzie River the teacher's guide states that "first person accounts reveal a point of view and a writer's identity. When we read a first person account, we may ask: 'What point of view is being taken?', and 'Who is taking this point of view?' Asking these questions enlarges our reading experience beyond the content alone. When we read first person

accounts it may be helpful for students to do so twice. First they can read to summarize the content, then read to reflect on the emotions, reactions, judgments, and beliefs expressed by the author about what he or she has said. Living history can be constructed by identifying a writer's perspective, identity, and emotions and adding this to the content of a description of past events.”

There are several inquiry activities where students have to make sense of several sources to decide on competing narratives such as an encounter in 1756 between Martin Frobisher’s crew and the Inuit of Baffin Island in Module 1 and in Modules 2 and 3 when students investigate Northern Issues such as residential schools.

The teacher’s and student’s texts do not consider, however, methods and strategies to interpret different media such as photographs, nor are students guided to close reading of written text.

Comment:

Northern Studies 10 is consistent with Benchmarks criteria for evidence. The interpretation of primary sources has a prominent place in the course giving students several opportunities to construct a narrative or explanation. Including methods for analyzing different media and close reading of written text could enhance even further student learning of the concept of evidence.

Cause and Consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

Cause and consequence are considered in greatest depth in the section using the internet-based Timeline in Module 1, in Module 2 on Northern Issues, and in Module 3 on land claims.

The Timeline is rich in compelling stories of people and events with supplemental primary sources. The suggested activity is open-ended: students take three events and decide on a connection amongst them. In the Northern Issues and Land Claims modules, students use a variety of historical sources to explain the complex origins and consequences of topics like residential schools.

Students are not, however, asked to reason about causes, that is, to decide on the relative importance and type of causes nor to consider the tension between agents and conditions.

Comment:

Northern Studies 10 gives considerable attention to the causes of cause and consequence and the complexity of various factors. The inclusion of concepts such as agency and unintended consequences would help students even more to think historically about causation.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

Change and continuity are important themes in *Northern Studies 10*. Although the language is different than that used in Benchmarks documents, several sections of the student’s guide describe the varied nature of change. The module on residential schools, for example, goes into considerable depth on change and continuity involving traditional Aboriginal education, mission schools, and residential schools.

Periodization is not featured. Progress and decline, on the other hand, are explored in a very thoughtful manner in the section on the Berger Inquiry:

What is progress? One of the central issues in the Berger Inquiry was two different cultures’ notion of progress. Southern Canada saw the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline as a positive step in the development of the North, something that would bring jobs and infrastructure to the remote North and gas to southern Canada. Aboriginal groups in the North, however, saw the pipeline as an imposition and worried that the proposed pipeline would destroy their traditional way of life. As you can see in the quotes above, many Aboriginal peoples believed that ‘*development*’ and ‘*progress*’ were ideas that meant different things to different people. The coming of jobs, money, and outsiders could be seen as either an economic boom or a dangerous social event.

Comment:

The course is consistent with the Benchmarks criteria for the study of continuity and change. The addition of related concepts and vocabulary such as turning point or tipping point could enhance even further student learning of change and continuity.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

Historiographic change and the interpretive variation of significance are featured in several places in this course. The section Knowledge of History explains that “what the past means for us today can change as we think about it. The fact that a treaty was reached in the past, for example, does not tell us what the significance of the treaty is for various people today. For example, what people think about the significance of treaties in 2004 may be very different from what they thought about treaties in 1867. The same points can be made about the significance of contact between Europeans and Aboriginal peoples.”

One of the first activities asks students to compare creation stories by elders and scientific theories to answer how Aboriginal people came to the North. It goes on to explain that in creation stories “the significance and special nature of human life (are) addressed. Creation stories are found in many cultures and all seek to provide a meaning and direction for human life in the universe. In this sense, they are ‘bigger’ and offer more than just an explanation that describes what happened in the past. These stories attempt to tell us ‘why’ people have come to the North and not just how they arrived.” Students are not asked to choose between the two kinds of stories but to think about why they differ.

The changing nature of historical significance is also central in the units on the explorers, their Aboriginal guides and the role of women. Students “reflect on the historical realities of the times, and reconsider some of the perspectives that written documents from the time may convey.” The teacher’s guide also introduces the concept of “unwritten” history, notably concerning women.

Although the activities above might be said to consider criteria indirectly, students are not asked directly to identify and apply criteria for deciding on historical significance.

Comment:

In regards to the criteria of historiographic change and interpretive variation of significance, the NWT course is fully consistent with Benchmarks. The concept could be developed further by asking students to reason explicitly about the criteria for historical significance.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

As mentioned above in the evaluation of the concept of evidence in *Northern Studies 10*, students at one point use primary sources to consider the disappearance of some of Martin Frobisher’s sailors from the point of view of both the Inuit and the English. In other places they consider the perspectives of John Franklin, John Rae, Charles Dickens towards Inuit and the Dene elders and pipeline company representatives towards the Mackenzie Valley pipeline among other topics.

The related concepts of presentism or anachronism are not mentioned but students are strongly encouraged to gather as much information as possible before making judgments.

Comment:

Historical perspective-taking in *Northern Studies 10* is consistent with the Benchmarks criteria but it could be enhanced by an explicit discussion of the challenge of understanding people from the past and concepts related to this challenge.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

History is given a prominent role in *Northern Studies 10* as students explore important ethical issues for the North such as the impact of residential schools, economic development as studied by the Berger Inquiry, and land claims. Students are guided to appreciate the complexity of the issues, to suspend judgement until they have gathered as much information as possible, and to be open-minded.

In the unit on residential schools, they are asked to consider historical perspective with questions such as “How did the people who began Residential Schools justify them? Why did some people think that Residential Schools were a good idea? What has changed so that we now see that Residential Schools were a bad idea?”

Students are also asked to consider the relationship between the past and present day ethics and policy with questions such as “What are the impacts of Residential Schools? How do impacts show themselves in contemporary society? What are the possible solutions to dealing with the trauma of Residential Schools? Do the people who started and ran the schools have any more, legal, or financial responsibility? How has the current education system attempted to avoid the problems of Residential Schools?”

Comment:

Northern Studies 10 supports historical thinking about ethical issues in a sensitive and thoughtful manner; indeed, such issues are central to the course.

Analysis of Nova Scotia's Grade 8 *Canadian Identity*

Social Studies is compulsory in Nova Scotia up to grade 10 and then after that year students are required to take the following social studies courses in order to graduate:

- 1 Canadian History (*Canadian History 11* or *African Canadian Studies 11*)
- 1 Global Studies (*Global History 12* or *Global Geography 12*)

All of the secondary courses are based upon the premises and principles that are set out in the Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum.

The grade 8 course is the most recently revised (2006) and is the subject of this analysis. The course includes history, geography and civics organized around the theme of national identity with five units. One is on history, another is on citizenship. In the fifth unit students create a culminating activity to demonstrate their personal understanding of "Canadian Identity." There are also appendices relevant to history.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

In the introductory chapters to the grade 8 *Canadian Identity* guide, there is a section on literacy as part of the Social Studies Learning Environment that is consistent with the Benchmarks criteria. The section explains the importance of critical literacy: "Through the implementation of various strategies, teachers will develop students' awareness of stereotyping, cultural bias, author's intent, hidden agendas, silent voices, and omissions. Students are encouraged to be aware that authors construct texts with specific purposes in mind. Further, critical literacy helps students comprehend texts at a deeper level by encouraging them to view content and ideas from a variety of perspectives and to interpret the various levels of meaning, both explicit and implicit, in a given text."

The appendices for the grade 8 guide also list a number of inquiry skills relevant to the understanding of evidence including the following:

- determine the accuracy and reliability of primary and secondary sources and geographic data

- make inferences from primary and secondary materials
- determine the accuracy and reliability of data
- determine whether or not the information is pertinent to the subject
- recognize the tentative nature of conclusions
- recognize their values may have influenced their conclusion

The grade 8 specific curriculum outcomes do not include references to evidence; however, after several outcomes there are accompanying suggestions for teaching and learning and assessment that give guidelines for analyzing sources.

Comment:

The grade 8 social studies course includes expectations that students will learn to think historically about evidence and suggestions for using primary sources. The specific outcomes could be more integrated with the inquiry skills to ensure that Nova Scotia students have some experience in using primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

The specific curriculum outcomes for grade 8 include several that expect students to analyze causes and effects. Moreover, the Suggestions for Learning and Teaching and Suggestions for Assessment that accompany the outcomes give ideas that could help students to reason about causes. For example, it is suggested that students make a chart in which they rank the causes of the Great Depression in order of importance and justify their ranking. Another suggestion asks students to research the underlying causes of World War Two and then rewrite a “What if... paragraph” in which students explain how the cause might have been dealt with to avoid war. Concepts such as agency, preceding conditions, and unintended consequences are not mentioned.

Comment:

Nova Scotia’s grade 8 curriculum gives considerable attention to historical thinking about cause and consequence. The inclusion of concepts such as agency and unintended consequences would help students even more to develop sophisticated historical thinking.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

One of the Essential Graduation Learnings is that “at the end of grade 8, students will be expected to identify and use concepts associated with time, continuity, and change.” In addition, there are several specific outcomes which require students to analyse economic, social and political changes as a result of various events and trends. However, an understanding of different characteristics of change such as the varied pace and the extent of change as well as concepts such as turning point, periodization, progress or decline are not included in the outcomes. (Turning point is mentioned in a list of prompts for journal entries in one of the appendices.)

Comment:

The Nova Scotia curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by including explicit mention of change and continuity but needs further development to help guide students and teachers.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

There is some implicit consideration of historical significance in the General Learning Outcome for the theme of Time, Continuity, and Change in grade 8: Students “analyse and evaluate historical and contemporary developments in order to make informed, creative decisions about issues” and “identify and analyse trends that may shape the future.” However, they are not asked to reason about significance. There are no outcomes that suggest that they should apply criteria for historical significance, nor consider how it varies over time and amongst different groups.

Comment:

Expectations that students think historically about significance would be consistent with the General Learning Outcomes of the grade 8 curriculum. However, the guide would need development to make these explicit and clear.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

There are several outcomes in the *Canadian Identity* curriculum that ask students to consider the perspective of a historical figure. For example, students are expected to “analyse the impact of changing technology and socio-economic conditions on differing prosperities and lifestyles in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s.” The Suggestions for Learning and Teaching ask students to write a song or poem or draw an illustration to capture the challenges of groups who did not enjoy good times in the boom of the 1920s. Another suggestion asks students to assume the role of different people living in different parts of Canada in the 1930s.

Comment:

The grade 8 curriculum gives considerable attention to historical perspective-taking. Student historical thinking about this concept would be enhanced if there were expectations that students recognize the importance and challenge in understanding perspectives of past figures.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

Among the principles underlying social studies given in the introduction to the Canadian Identities curriculum is “Issues-based social studies” that considers the ethical dimensions of issues. Among the grade 8 history outcomes, there are ethical issues raised such as “examine Canada’s reaction and response to the moral and ethical issues raised by events such as the Holocaust and the use of the first atomic bombs.” The guide does not, however, include expectations that students will understand the challenges of making judgments about people and events in the past.

Comment:

The Nova Scotia curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by referring to ethical questions in the list of principles underlying social studies and in certain outcomes. The addition of expectations that students understand the challenges in such judgements and relevant learning and teaching suggestions could help students to develop even more sophisticated historical thinking.

Analysis of the Ontario's Grade 10 *Canadian History since World War I*

Beginning in Grade 7, students study geography and history as distinct subjects. In grade 8, an elementary school year, students study history. In Grade 9, the first year of secondary school, students study geography. In grade 10, the compulsory course is *Canadian History Since World War I*, beginning in 1914. History, however, shares the course content with other social science disciplines. After Grade 10, the Canadian and world studies program offers a number of optional history courses. This analysis focuses on grade 10.

The grade 10 course in Ontario is streamed with an academic and applied curriculum, but the curriculum expectations are very similar.

Canadian History Since World War I, as explained in the larger curriculum guide *Canadian and World Studies* (2005), has five strands that are described in the introduction:

- **Communities: Local, National, and Global:** This theme includes the many interactions amongst communities and how these change over time.
- **Change and Continuity:** The description refers to the varied pace of change. It also includes chronology and how it can help us understand change and continuity.
- **Citizenship and Heritage:** Citizenship, according to the introduction, implies rights, privileges, and obligations. Heritage is what we receive from the past. An essential aspect of heritage is learning stories from the past through which students become connected to their heritage.
- **Social, Economic, and Political Structures:** The description of this strand is framed in terms of sociology, economics and political science rather than history.
- **Methods of Historical Inquiry and Communication:** The description of this strand refers to the development of focussing questions and the use of primary and secondary sources.

Each of these strands is explained more fully with expectations.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

The expectations for the strand Methods of Historical Inquiry and Communication includes formulating different types of questions, distinguishing between primary and secondary sources, evaluating the credibility of sources, and other strategies for analysis. It also lists relevant concepts for analysis: chronology, cause and effect, short- and long-term consequences; adopting the perspectives of different participants in historical events.

Comment:

The Ontario curriculum meets the criteria for historical thinking about evidence, although there could be greater guidance for the teacher.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

Cause and consequence feature prominently in the expectations for the strands of Communities and Change and Continuity. For example, there is an overall expectation for the first strand that students will “explain how local, national, and global influences have helped shape Canadian identity.” Moreover, the specific expectations in the Historical Inquiry strand include reference to employing “chronology, cause and effect, short- and long-term consequences.”

However, the concepts referred to in Historical Inquiry are not included in the student expectations for Communities or Change or Continuity. In addition, other concepts such as agency and preceding or underlying conditions that would help students reason about cause and consequence are missing.

Comment:

The Ontario curriculum has a good beginning on which to build expectations for historical thinking about cause and consequence. However, there could be a better “fit” of objectives in different strands and a further elaboration of the concepts.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.

- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

An entire strand of the grade 10 guide is devoted to the concepts of change and continuity. The introductory description of the strand emphasizes that the pace of change is variable from gradual to sudden and refers to the importance of chronology to understand change and continuity. The list of expectations asks students to analyse changes, shifts, impacts, and the like, but it does not ask them specifically to consider the pace of change. There is no reference to vocabulary such as turning points, progress or decline.

Comment:

Canadian History Since World War I stresses this element of historical thinking, but the expectations could more explicitly reflect the broad goals outlined in the introduction. The use of concepts like turning points or progress might help guide students to more sophisticated thinking.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

The Citizenship and Heritage strand has expectations that students will analyse the contributions of various social and political movements and assess the contributions of various individual Canadians. However, students are not asked to understand or apply the criteria listed above.

Comment:

This strand might be a fruitful place to build expectations for students to reason about historical significance, but historical significance is not yet part of the Ontario grade 10 history course.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

The section on historical inquiry refers to perspectives when it lists the requirement that students “identify different viewpoints and explicit biases when interpreting information....”

However, this use of the term suggests interpretation and is different from the Benchmarks concept that defines perspective taking as the cognitive act of understanding the different contexts that shaped people's lives and actions in the past.

The other strands, however, contain some objectives that reflect the Benchmarks concept such as "identify the major groups of immigrants that have come to Canada since 1914 and describe the circumstances that led to their decision to emigrate" in the Change and Continuity strand and "describe how the conscription crises of World War I and World War II created tensions between English Canada and Quebec" in Communities.

The curriculum guide does not address the difficulty and importance of understanding these perspectives from the past, nor refer to the concepts of presentism or anachronism.

Comment:

The Ontario curriculum has a good basis on which to build expectations for historical perspective taking, but it would need to be clearer and more explicit about this concept.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

There are several outcomes for the grade 10 curriculum that ask students to consider the historical roots of present day questions. For example, "explain the impact in Canada of the experience and memory of the Holocaust (e.g., immigration of Holocaust survivors;

introduction of human rights legislation; policy dealing with hate crimes and Nazi war criminals; nature of response to occurrences of genocide/ethnic cleansing in the world after World War II; participation in International War Crimes tribunal)."

In general, however, students are asked to explain, describe, or analyze. There are no references to the challenges or making judgements about events in the past or about the connections between, for example, past injustices and present day ethical decisions.

Comment:

The Ontario history curriculum is imbued with important, ethical topics. However, the challenges and choices could be given greater prominence in order to engage students and enhance historical thinking.

Analysis of Prince Edward Island's Grade 8 *Canadian Identity* and Grade 10 *Canadian Studies*

Intermediate or le premier cycle du secondaire in Prince Edward Island is from grades 7 to 9. Senior high school or deuxième cycle du secondaire is from grades 10 to 12. Students must take social studies each year up to grade 9 and then two social sciences courses at the senior level to graduate.

The grade 8 course includes history, geography and civics organized around the theme of Canadian identity (2006). Grade 9 social studies in P.E.I. examines the influence of a variety of physical, cultural, economic and historical factors on Atlantic Canada but history has only a minor role. Grade 10 covers a variety of disciplines including history; grade 11 features the law. This analysis will look at the grade 8 and 10 history components. All of the secondary courses are based upon the premises and principles that are set out in the Foundation for the Atlantic Canada Social Studies Curriculum.

The grade 8 course has five units. One is on history, another is on citizenship. In the fifth unit students create a culminating activity to demonstrate their personal understanding of "Canadian Identity." There are also appendices relevant to history.

There are six units to the 10 course, *Canadian Studies* 401A (2007), but only one, *Canadian Voices from the Past*, is focussed on history. The appendices contain four that are relevant to history: Process Skills, including inquiry; Studying Local History; Using Primary Sources; and Examining Issues.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

In the introductory chapters to the grade 8 *Canadian Identity* guide, there is a section on literacy as part of the Social Studies Learning Environment that is consistent with the Benchmarks criteria. The section explains the importance of critical literacy: "Through the implementation of various strategies, teachers will develop students' awareness of stereotyping, cultural bias, author's intent, hidden agendas, silent voices, and omissions. Students are encouraged to be aware that authors construct texts with specific purposes in mind. Further, critical literacy helps students comprehend texts at a deeper level by encouraging them to view content and ideas from

a variety of perspectives and to interpret the various levels of meaning, both explicit and implicit, in a given text.”

The specific curriculum outcomes for grade 8 do not refer to evidence but there are accompanying suggestions for teaching and learning and assessment that give guidelines for analyzing sources.

In the unit *Canadian Voices from the Past*, the grade 10 guide asks students to “carry out historical research of a local nature” but does not refer further to the concept of evidence. The accompanying “Elaborations – Strategies for Learning and Teaching” do invite students to analyse artifacts, photos, and other primary sources.

The appendices for the *Canadian Identity* grade 8 guide list a number of inquiry skills relevant to the understanding of evidence such as “determine the accuracy and reliability of primary and secondary sources and geographic data” and “make inferences from primary and secondary materials.” The grade 10 appendices go further with charts and questions to guide student analysis of varied sources such as a family heirloom, tool, photo, propaganda poster, and sound recording.

Comment:

Both the grade 8 and 10 social studies courses include expectations that students will learn to think historically about evidence and suggestions for implementing an inquiry using primary sources. The specific outcomes for grade 8 could be more integrated with the inquiry skills to ensure that Prince Edward Island students have some experience in using primary sources to construct an argument or narrative prior to grade 10.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

The specific curriculum outcomes for grade 8 include several that expect students to analyze causes and effects. The Suggestions for Learning and Teaching and Suggestions for Assessment that accompany the outcomes give ideas that could help students to reason about these causes and effects. For example, it is suggested that students make a chart in which they rank the causes of the Great Depression in order of importance and justify their ranking. Another suggestion asks students to research the underlying causes of World War Two and then rewrite a “What if... paragraph” in which students explain how the cause might have been dealt with to avoid war. Concepts such as agency, preceding conditions, and unintended consequences are not mentioned.

The grade 10 history unit has three outcomes related to causes and consequence: explain why the colonies merged to become a Dominion, explain the role of P.E.I. in Confederation, and

describe several people who have contributed to the development of Canada. Unlike the grade 8 curriculum, there are no guidelines to help students to reason about causes.

There is an emphasis on “great personalities” in grade 10 with suggestions to create a coffee-table book of “Greats,” conduct a mock interview of a “great Canadian,” and create a “Who’s Who” trivia game about greats, but no reference to the dialectic between agents, great or otherwise, and preceding conditions.

Comment:

The grade 8 curriculum gives considerable attention to historical thinking about cause and consequence. The grade 10 curriculum could further develop historical thinking if it were to build on the grade 8 one. Including more of the Benchmarks concepts such as agency and unintended consequences at both grade levels would help students to develop even more sophisticated historical thinking.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

One of the Essential Graduation Learnings is that “at the end of grade 8, students will be expected to identify and use concepts associated with time, continuity, and change.” In addition, there are several specific outcomes which require students to analyse economic, social and political changes as a result of various events and trends such as changing technology or changing economy. However, an understanding of different characteristics of change such as the varied pace and the extent of change as well as concepts such as turning point, periodization, progress or decline are not included in the outcomes. (Turning point is mentioned in a list of prompts for journal entries in one of the appendices.)

The background to the grade 10 history unit explains how students will have the opportunity to examine the changing nature of Canada’s military stance. However, neither the outcomes nor the suggested strategies refer specifically to change or continuity and the Benchmarks concepts listed above are absent.

Comment:

The Prince Edward Island curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by including explicit mention of change and continuity but needs further development to help guide students and teachers.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

There is some implicit consideration of historical significance in the General Learning Outcome for the theme of Time, Continuity, and Change in grade 8: students “analyse and evaluate historical and contemporary developments in order to make informed, creative decisions about issues” and “identify and analyse trends that may shape the future.” However, they are not asked to reason about significance. There are no outcomes that suggest that they should apply criteria for historical significance, nor consider how it varies over time and amongst different groups.

The history unit for grade 10, Canada’s Voices from the Past, begins with a background discussion of historical significance: “events and dates are important in that these set a context; however, just as significant are the voices and personalities that have traditionally been omitted from text books... The main aim of this unit is to open the realm of ‘who is important’... so that students’ thinking extends beyond the traditional political examples in history.”

Among the learning outcomes and suggestions for instruction and assessment, however, there are no places where students are not asked to join in the debate about who is important, except for one suggestion to “develop criteria for a rubric to assess individual contributions to the ‘coffee-table book’ (of great personalities).” The emphasis on “greats,” moreover, appears to contradict the main aim of the unit that students think beyond the traditional political examples.

Comment:

Expectations that students think historically about significance would be consistent with the General Learning Outcomes of the grade 8 curriculum. However, the guide would need development to make these explicit and clear.

The background to the history section of the grade 10 curriculum shows great potential for the teaching of historical significance. The development of specific outcomes and the inclusion of Benchmarks criteria would build on this strong potential to develop student historical thinking.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

There are several outcomes in the grade 8 curriculum that ask students to consider the perspective of a historical figure. For example, students are expected to “analyse the impact of

changing technology and socio-economic conditions on differing prosperities and lifestyles in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s.” The Suggestions for Learning and Teaching ask students to write a song or poem or draw an illustration to capture the challenges of groups who did not enjoy good times in the boom of the 1920s. Another suggestion asks students to assume the role of different people living in different parts of Canada in the 1930s.

The grade 10 curriculum unit does not clearly refer to perspective-taking but one of the appendices does suggest that through primary sources students can have “direct encounters with past events and people.”

None of the outcomes nor the suggested activities at either grade level refer to the difficulty and importance of understanding people of the past different from ourselves.

Comment:

The grade 8 curriculum gives considerable attention to historical perspective-taking. It is not a feature of the grade 10 curriculum. Student historical thinking about this concept could be enhanced if there were expectations that students recognize the importance and challenge in understanding perspectives of past figures.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

Among the principles underlying social studies given in the introduction to both of these curricula is “Issues-based social studies” that considers the ethical dimensions of issues. Among the grade 8 history outcomes, there are ethical issues raised such as “examine Canada’s reaction and response to the moral and ethical issues raised by events such as the Holocaust and the use of the first atomic bombs.” The grade 10 history unit includes the outcome that students will “assess Canada’s involvement in current world conflicts.”

Neither curricula include expectations that students will understand the challenges of making judgments about people and events in the past.

Comment:

The Prince Edward Island curriculum opens the door to historical thinking by referring to ethical questions in the list of principles underlying social studies and in certain outcomes. The addition of expectations that students understand the challenges in such judgements and relevant learning and teaching suggestions could help students to develop even more sophisticated historical thinking.

Analysis of Québec’s *History and Citizenship Education Program, Secondary Cycle Two, Years 1 and 2 (grades 9 and 10)*

The most recent version of Québec’s history and citizenship curriculum for secondary 3 and 4 (grades 9 and 10) is a result of an extensive reform going back to the 1997 *Report of the Commission for the Estates General*. Most subject areas, not just history, have been reformed and the changes have involved school based projects and grants, wide-ranging consultation, and headline-grabbing controversy.

The *History and Citizenship Program* (n.d.) curriculum guide is 105 pages long and is composed of three sections relevant to our analysis:

- an explanation of the three competencies around which the course is structured
- a description of the program content
- an explanation of “techniques” such as interpreting a written document or picture

The three competencies require a student to

- Examine social phenomena from a historical perspective
- Interpret social phenomena using the historical method
- Strengthen his/her exercise of citizenship through the study of history

The Program Content section includes seven topics or themes such as “The first occupants” and “Population and settlement.” For each there are three or four pages that summarize the topic and outline the objects of inquiry and interpretation. There are also lists of relevant historical knowledge and cultural and chronological reference points for each topic.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

The explanation of the first competency begins with a poetic evocation of the concept of evidence: “some remains (of the past) remain like litter from a picnic, but these material remains never speak for themselves. In fact, they are inert traces until someone asks a question that turns them into evidence...” This section also sets expectations for students to take a historical

perspective and use the historical method that are consistent with the Benchmarks criteria for historical thinking about evidence. Students, for example, are expected for competency one to seek varied and relevant documents in examining a social phenomenon from a historical perspective. There is an emphasis as well on metacognition, reflecting on the learning process. The second competency includes a chart of characteristics of “rigorous historical reasoning” that includes a student “basing his/her interpretation on various sources” and “referring to the frame of reference of authors consulted.” However, despite these expectations and general reference to diversity, relevance, and the context of the authors, the section on competencies does not discuss methods or strategies for analyzing evidence.

The section on techniques is somewhat more specific. For example, it states that “it is essential for students in history and citizenship education to learn to interpret written documents... Written documents used in the subject reflect the society that produced them. Students must view them as a historian would in order to obtain information from them. It is sometimes necessary to go beyond simple decoding, seeking the meaning of a document in its symbolic significance.”

However, the list of steps in interpreting a written document (and the pages on interpreting pictures and maps are similar), does not explain how to view a document as a historian would or how to go beyond decoding. One of the steps is to “decode the title,” but there is neither explanation nor examples. The sample document, a journal entry from Chevalier de Lorimier on the eve of his hanging for participation in the Rebellions of 1837-38, is reproduced without analysis or commentary. The concepts of primary and secondary sources are not mentioned.

Comment:

The intention for students to learn to interpret evidence is clear. Moreover, the expectation that they will use evidence to construct an argument or narrative is integral to the inquiry based competencies. Further guidance about how to fulfil the intention and expectation would strengthen the teaching of the concept of evidence.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation :

The Québec curriculum states explicitly that “social phenomena, which are made up of economic, political, cultural, and social factors, cannot be explained by a single cause.... (S)tudents in Cycle Two must look beyond monocausal explanations.” A diagram for competency 2 requires students to “seek explanatory factors, establish connections among factors, and identify long-term consequences.”

Agency is given an important position in the curriculum document. The Introduction states that the program “promotes the exercise of citizenship by helping students to grasp the impact of human actions on the course of history, and, by extension, the importance of fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens.” The explanation of competency 3 says that “recognizing that human action is the motor of social change and understanding the significance of the (achievement) of rights... should empower students.” This is, however, discussed mostly in relation to the contemporary agency of students and not about agents in the past. Elements such as the constraints on human agency, underlying conditions versus preceding conditions, or unintended consequences are not mentioned.

The concept of consequences, however, is integral to Québec’s twinning of history with citizenship education and explicit in the competencies’ orientation to the present. Many of the descriptions of topics in the Program Content section outline a variety of consequences for diverse phenomena such as the emergence of New France or the formation of the Canadian federation.

Comment:

Cause and consequence are integral to the history and citizenship program of Cycle Two. More robust requirements such as expectations to understand constraints on human agency or unintended consequences could complement this program.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

For competency one, students are required to “reflect on social phenomena using chronological reference points (chronology, periodization, precedence, posteriority), take into account the synchrony and diachrony of social phenomena, (and) look for elements of continuity and change.”

Moreover, the seven themes in the Program Content section are mostly focused on these twin concepts of change and continuity, such as “The change of empire” and “The modernization of Québec society” with the emphasis on change.

On the other hand, some concepts such as the variability of the pace of change and turning points are only suggested. Others such as periodization are listed without explanation. Progress and decline as analytic tools are neither suggested nor listed.

Comment:

Continuity and change are important concepts for the *History and Citizenship Education Program* but the curriculum could be much more explicit and detailed in its requirements for historical thinking about the concepts.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

There is an expectation for attaining the first competency - that students examine social phenomena from a historical perspective - that students understand the duration of social phenomena. This might be seen as requiring students to apply one of the criteria for judging significance. For the third competency, students are expected to consider “the pluralistic nature of society by indicating some of the factors that contribute to people’s identities (and)... showing the diversity of social identities.” This might be interpreted as requiring them to understand interpretive variation. However, none of these expectations explicitly ask students to reason about historical significance.

Comment:

There are opportunities to adapt the existing curriculum to require reasoning about historical significance, especially the third competency’s focus on pluralism. However, historical significance is not yet a feature of the *History and Citizenship Education Program*.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

When students examine a social phenomenon from a historical perspective, the first competency, they must “ask questions about the beliefs, attitudes and values of historical actors and witnesses.” They must “try to grasp how people thought back then.” For competency two, interpreting phenomena using the historical method, students “learn a healthy scepticism when they consider the different points of views of actors and witnesses....” More specifically, one of the qualities given as an example of historical reasoning is to “establish a critical distance by “referring to elements in his/her own frame of reference.”

Although the terms “presentism” or “anachronism” are not used, the Québec program expresses well the difficulty and importance of perspective-taking. This is reinforced by the concept of “otherness” in competency three in a discussion of responsible citizenship.

Comment:

The Québec curriculum meets the criteria for historical thinking about perspective-taking. It could be enhanced by the explicit teaching of the concepts of presentism and anachronism.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

The *History and Citizenship Education Program* focuses on the connections between the past and the present. Contemporary social realities - such as social values, demography or identity - are the beginnings of the inquiries suggested in the Program Content section. In this, the program has a different vision from the ethical dimension outlined in the Benchmarks criteria. It could be said that it goes beyond the Benchmarks frame of reference.

The Québec program does not, however, address the challenge of making judgements about events and people of the past except in its general appeals to consider complexity and adopt a healthy scepticism.

Comment:

The scope and emphases of the Québec curriculum are different from those of Benchmarks as one would expect from a course with equal prominence given to history and citizenship. The connection between history and citizenship is an on-going debate amongst educators. The Québec curriculum is a thoughtful and thorough example of one position. It could, nonetheless, profit from giving more attention to the challenges of linking historical accounts to present-day ethical and policy questions.

Analysis of Saskatchewan's Grade 10 *Social Studies, History and Native Studies*

All Saskatchewan students must take *Social Studies 9*. After this year, they must take three additional courses from a choice of history, social studies, or native studies so the historical content that they learn may vary. However, there is overlapping content amongst the three. This paper will analyze the history component of *Social Studies 10*, *History 10* and *Native Studies 10*. The units for social studies described below come from *Social Studies 10 Social Organizations A Curriculum Guide* (1992), the on-line *A Teacher's Activity Guide* (1998), *History 10: Social Organizations* (1992), and *Native Studies: A Curriculum Guide for Grade 10: Societal Structures of Indian, Métis, and Inuit Peoples* (2002).

Each of the grades from K to 12 has a separate theme and social organizations is the one for both *History* and *Social Studies 10*. There are five units under this theme:

- political decision making,
- economic decision making,
- ideology and decision making,
- international economic relations, and
- international political relations.

Native Studies has four units:

- Identity and Worldviews: Aboriginal Perspectives,
- Community and Kinship: Aboriginal Perspectives,
- Governance: Aboriginal Perspectives, and
- Economies: Aboriginal Perspectives

The social studies and history curricula stress concept learning. Twenty major ones are listed for grades 1 to 12 and these include some that are relevant to historical thinking: causality, change, and time. Forming concepts is one of the four major goals for social studies. The other goals are knowledge, skills/abilities, and values.

There is, in addition, a cross-curricular core curriculum with common essential learnings (C.E.L.s) that are to be taught and evaluated in social studies courses. There are seven C.E.L.s: independent learning, personal and social values and skills, critical and creative thinking, communication, numeracy, and technological literacy. In 2008 the Ministry of Education produced the *Renewed Objectives for the Common Essential Learnings of Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) and Personal and Social Development (PSD)*. For grades 10 to 12 this document includes 57 outcomes for critical and creative thinking that are broadly cross-curricular but with some relevance to learning history.

Outcomes

Primary source evidence

Criteria:

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- methods and strategies for analyzing primary sources
- differences between primary and secondary sources
- relationships between primary and secondary sources
- the use of primary sources to construct an argument or narrative.

Evaluation:

There are no outcomes in either of the three social science courses that refer directly to the use of primary sources except for one in *Native Studies 10*: “Gain knowledge of the Residential School system from primary sources.”

Comment:

There is a basis in the Common Essential Learnings and the Skills/Abilities section to develop outcomes and activities for students to learn how to think historically about evidence. However, the concept is not yet a feature of the Saskatchewan curriculum.

Cause and consequence

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following?

- different kinds of causes (e.g., economic, political, social)
- underlying conditions vs. precipitating events
- the idea of the conscious, intentional historical agent (individual and collective)
- the dialectic between agents and preceding conditions
- the idea of unintended consequences

Evaluation:

There are a number of different outcomes that require students to consider cause and consequence. For example, *History 10* requires students to “practise drawing cause-effect relationships with ... data.” In *Native Studies 10*, students are expected to understand “the effects of technological and social change,” interpret “how the horse dramatically altered Aboriginal economic enterprise,” and “examine the harmful effects of forced change.”

In the section on assessment of skills of analysis, one of those listed is “describe cause-effect or other relationships.” This suggests that students might be expected to reason about cause and effect but a teacher might well interpret this as an expectation that students can comprehend a textbook description and not think historically at all.

Students are not expected to consider different kinds of causes or consequences, nor to analyze the role of underlying conditions vs. triggering events. Agency or unintended consequences are not mentioned.

Comment:

Outcomes that only require students to identify or describe causes and consequences may result in students merely memorizing these and not thinking historically about them. Outcomes that require students to reason about causation, for example, determining the most important causes or examining the tension between agency and preceding conditions, would be more likely to advance their historical thinking. Nonetheless, there are numerous outcomes in the Saskatchewan program of study that refer to cause and consequence and these give a strong base on which to build a curriculum that more fully supports historical thinking about this concept.

Continuity and change

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- continuity as an aspect of history (neglected in a history of “events.”)
- variability of pace of change, including vocabulary of “turning points” and comparable terms.
- periodization as a tool of historians, as much as a quality of the past: periods depend on the concerns and questions of the historian.
- progress and decline as framing devices and analytic tools, also depending on the purposes and perspectives of the historian.

Evaluation:

There are some expectations for students that refer to change and continuity. For example, in the unit on political decision-making in *History 10* “students will examine the problems French society faced in attempting to move from an absolutist political organization to one based on principles of equality and liberty.” In the unit on international economic organizations, students look at the “new industrial culture which was spreading across the world at this time.”

The *Social Studies 10* guide gives considerable guidance for teaching about the variability of the pace of change and perceptions of progress and decline, though these terms are not used. For example, under the content for unit 1 students are expected to understand that “Change does not come easily because there is often little agreement between individuals and groups about what constitutes legitimate change.” The guide then gives examples from the changing position of women, the family farm, Aboriginal self-government, religious and minority rights, and the right of workers to strike.

Specific historical tools and vocabulary such as turning points or periodization are omitted.

Comment:

The Saskatchewan curriculum supports historical thinking about change and continuity. Student learning would be further enhanced if the outcomes were more explicit about the relevant historical concepts and vocabulary.

Historical significance

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- criteria for historical significance
- historiographic change (i.e., changes in assignation of significance).
- interpretive variation (i.e., different groups may value different histories differently)

Evaluation:

One of the objectives for *Common Essential Learnings* expresses the spirit of the Benchmarks criteria for significance:

Understand that knowledge is *socially constructed* and demonstrate the understanding that a body of knowledge or “facts” can change as new knowledge is developed and sounder understanding is achieved.

The *Native Studies 10* course contains a slightly different wording of this essential learning: students will “develop an understanding of how, and by whom, knowledge is created, evaluated, refined and changed in the area of Native Studies.”

There are also many objectives that refer to significance or importance, for example in *Native Studies 10*, the importance of elders, spirituality, storytelling, and the teachings of Trickster stories. Students are also asked to make “personal connections with historical customs” and “understand the significance of provincial recognition of Métis people.”

However, there is no expectation that they will use criteria to decide on historical significance nor consider change and variability.

Comment:

There are opportunities to adapt the existing curriculum to require reasoning about historical significance, especially in *Native Studies*, but historical significance is not yet a feature of grade 10 social science courses.

Historical perspective-taking

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the difficulty and the importance (i.e., the challenge) of understanding people different from ourselves
- recognizing presentism or anachronism

Evaluation:

Activities that require recognition of different historical perspectives are part of *History 10*. For example, students are asked to role play merchants, peasants, clergy, nobility and warriors and asked to use information sheets to decide how they might react to events such as the Black Death or war. Elsewhere, they are asked to consider the concepts of freedom and order from a traditional Iroquois perspective.

Social Studies 10 objectives include “Develop the disposition towards and practice of researching the history of a context from the point of view of more than one culture, gender, or socio-economic group.”

Native Studies 10 includes the objective to “compare Aboriginal peoples’ and European views of the land.” However, the focus of the course is otherwise on understanding Aboriginal and Métis perspectives only.

Comment:

Perspective-taking is a feature of Saskatchewan’s social science curricula. Student historical thinking would be further enhanced if the outcomes also included recognition of the difficulty and importance of understanding the perspectives of people in the past and if all course offerings were consistent in their requirements.

Ethical dimension

Do the documents convey the expectation that students will understand or apply each of the following:

- the challenge of making judgments about events and people in the past without anachronism
- the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions, including, e.g., reparations, commemorations.

Evaluation:

One of the *Common Essential Learnings* is consistent with this aspect of Benchmarks. It requires that students “appreciate the importance of the historical dimension in understanding the present and adopt an historical perspective on present situations of interest or concern.” All three grade 10 social science courses, moreover, include outcomes in the ethical dimension. For example, in a suggested unit on the Thermidorean Reaction in *History 10*, the section on what it calls “value skills” lists the following discussion questions. Students will

- discuss whether order and hierarchy are a better foundation for a society than freedom and equality?
- discuss whether evolutionary change is better than revolutionary change?
- discuss what are the morally justified ways of changing attitudes and achieving change?
- discuss who were the most responsible for the terror - the radicals or the reactionaries?

These ethical questions, however, do not include outcomes that raise the challenges of relationships between historical accounts and present-day ethical and policy questions. History seems almost underplayed in how these questions are framed.

Comment:

All three social science curricula are imbued with ethical questions. However, the historical side of these questions could be given a greater role.