

An Analysis of the Québec History Examination: Validity and Historical Thinking

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of for the
Master's of Arts degree in Education.

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Abstract

This document analysis examines how historical thinking is evaluated by the Ministry of Education history examination in Québec in 2015. High school students in Québec are required to pass this examination in order to receive their diploma. The Ministry examination claims to evaluate students' historical knowledge and skills. Almost twenty years of Ministry of Education documents were analyzed using a historical methodology and two Ministry examinations were analyzed using a rubric derived from historical thinking criteria to answer the following questions: How has historical thinking influenced the history curriculum and the evaluation of history in the province of Québec? How is historical thinking reflected in the Québec Ministry examination?

Analysis of the two examinations show that they are a limited tool for evaluating historical thinking and are instead focused on evaluating historical content knowledge. The current Ministry examination generally has some elements of four domains of historical thinking: evidence, cause and consequence, continuity and change and historical perspective. However, many of the questions only require students to answer at the recall level. Overall, there are few opportunities for students to demonstrate their advanced knowledge of historical thinking on the ministry examination.

Acknowledgements

I would like to recognize and thank my thesis advisor Dr. Stéphane Lévesque. I first met Stéphane at an Ontario History and Social Science Teacher's Association (OHASSTA) conference in Toronto over ten years ago. I was a beginning history teacher from Québec who was looking for professional development that was not available in English in my own province. Stéphane took the time after his workshop to talk with me about teaching, history and his Virtual Historian project. I could tell that he was genuinely interested in me, my learning, and my student's learning. Over the years we would occasionally exchange emails or cross paths at various conference, but when Stéphane moved to the University of Ottawa it gave me an opportunity to have a mentor in the field of history education that I felt that I needed. I reached out to Stéphane and he graciously and enthusiastically took me on as a student. Throughout this project he has helped me refine my research focus, given me engaging and challenging feedback and ultimately made me a better researcher, writer, and teacher.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Timothy Stanley and Dr. Lorna McLean. I appreciate the efforts that they have made in providing me with criticisms, suggestions and feedback on my work that gave me a greater sense of analytical and mythological rigour.

Finally, I could not have pursued this project without the love and support of my wife Melissa and my children Oliver and Penelope. One of the greatest challenges for me has been balancing being a full-time practicing teacher, with responsibilities at the school board and piloting a new history curriculum, being a part time graduate student, and being Dad.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis examines how the history program in the province of Québec evaluates historical thinking through the official ministerial examination in secondary IV (grade 10). Students in Québec are required to pass a ministerial examination in order to receive their high school diploma. Two examinations were analyzed to determine the extent to which they measure historical thinking skills.

The examinations claim to measure students' knowledge and skills in history. However, the analysis of these two examinations has shown that the focus of the examinations is on historical knowledge. Students are mostly examined on their ability to recall historical content through the different questions. While there are some indications of historical thinking on the examinations, they are not a limited tool for evaluating historical thinking.

Overview of History Education

In the last fifteen years, history education researchers (Lévesque, 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2013; Wineburg, 2001) in North America have advocated that a disciplinary form of history teaching based on historical thinking should take precedence over the traditional, collective memory form of history education that has prioritized memorizing facts and grand narratives. Traditionally, Canadian history teaching has been about story-telling, rote learning, and the memorization of facts gleaned from textbooks that sought to reinforce a grand narrative of the nation (Osborne, 2003). Despite important curricular revisions in the recent years, this traditional approach remains the all too present method in many history classrooms today. Canada is not alone. In the United States (U.S.), VanSledright (2011) describes the persistent forces that exist both within the teaching profession and outside it that perpetuate the collective memory function of history education. Inside the field of history teaching, there is the constant educational pressure to cover prescribed material, and evaluate students on facts and their reconstruction of the grand narrative of nation-building. Outside forces, including politicians and interest groups, place pressure on the U.S. curriculum to reinforce the *Americanness* of collective experience in the face of an ever-changing set of newcomers to the U.S. In Canada, over the past two decades, curriculum changes have positioned historical thinking as a prominent part of the curriculum, thanks in large

part to important scholarly writings in the field (Lévesque, 2008, 2011b; Martineau, 2010; Éthier, Cardin & Lefrançois, 2011; Morton and Seixas, 2013). Thus, history education is more than just the accumulation of facts, but rather a way of thinking about and interpreting the past based on the methods and dispositions of the discipline of history (Osborne, 2006; Létourneau, 2011).

In both Canada and the U.S., there has been much hand wringing over the level of historical knowledge that our young people possess. In the U.S., history education researcher Sam Wineburg (2004) concluded that:

A sober look at a century of history testing provides no evidence for the “gradual disintegration of cultural memory” or a *growing* historical ignorance.” The only thing growing seems to be our amnesia of past ignorance. If anything test results across the last century point to a peculiar American neurosis: each generation’s obsession with test its young only to discover – and rediscover – their “shameful” ignorance. This consistency of results across time casts doubt on a presumed golden age of fact retention. Appeals to it are more the stuff of national lore and wistful nostalgia for a time that never was than a claim that can be anchored in the documentary record. (p. 1406)

This preoccupation of young people not knowing the past is not, as Wineburg claims, particularly American. In Canada broadly, and in Québec specifically, there has also been much made about the supposed lack of understanding of the collective past by students.

Canadian historian Jack Granatstein (1998) unleashed his broadside against what he saw as “an unthinking conspiracy to eliminate Canada’s past” (p. 3) in his popular book titled *Who Killed Canadian History?* In this polemic, Granatstein railed against the ills that he thought were “killing” history in Canada: progressive educators, academic historians too focused on the trivia of the past and a multicultural mania that elevated the stories of every group in society to the level of the European master narrative. History, for Granatstein (1998), “is memory, inspiration and commonality –and a nation without memory is every bit adrift as an amnesiac wandering the streets” (p. xii). His indictment of history teaching in schools is centred on the fragmented nature of provincial curricula that promotes a regionalization of history teaching, immigrant children who do not speak English (he makes no mention of French) and whose parents are not citizens, and faceless education bureaucrats who call for mushy curricula and textbooks that speak for all and for no one at the same time. Granatstein also slams what he calls progressive

educators and developmental psychologists who said that education should be “child centered” (p. 25) and that history was too difficult for children to grasp. Unfortunately, Granatstein does not name any particular educator or psychologist or cite any relevant studies to support his thesis.

Granatstein’s solution to the malaise in Canadian history education is to reinforce content over process. To him, content is cultural capital and a requirement for understanding our society. This content, he claims, should be taught chronologically with a focus on “understanding the forces that shaped the settlement of the new world, the conquest of the Aboriginal peoples, and the subsequent creation of new societies (Granatstein, 1998, p. 48). This national story is buttressed by the British institutions that our political system was based on, the involvement of Canada in European wars and the relationship between Canada and the U.S. His view of Canadian history is reflective of his own interests. His views are also, in many ways, a conservative, retrograde narrative of Canadian history; one that has no place for immigrants, French Canadians, Indigenous peoples and women.

The reaction from the historical community was fast and resoundingly negative. Historian John Herd Thompson (2001) writing in the *National Post* stated, “there’s not a shred of evidence previous generations of young Canadians knew any more about the history of Canada than this one.” (para. 2) Others like Ian McKay (2000) and Tim Stanley (2000) proposed new paradigms for studying Canadian history, that of a liberal order framework and an anti-racist history respectively. History educator Ken Osborne (1999) noted that Granatstein’s proposed fixes for history education in Canada were centred around externally imposed standards and curricula for the provinces and said nothing of the current pedagogical practices that were going on in history classrooms. In fact, some of the supposed progressive child centred pedagogical practices that Granatstein criticized lend themselves favourably to history work in the classroom. One imagines Granatstein’s ideal classroom as being teacher centred, didactic instruction where students learn mostly political and military history, as opposed to a version where students are “doing history” (Barton & Levstik, 2001) using inquiry methods through source work.

Granatstein’s condemnation of history in Québec is particularly interesting. His tone changes to be even more negative as he takes on the ideology of the nationalist Parti Québécois. He claims that in the Québec curriculum, which he incorrectly indicates as a grade 12 course

despite the fact that the Québec secondary system only goes up to grade 11, was established to “ensure that they [students] all understand the (inevitable?) evolution of Quebec society” (Granatstein, 1998, p. 34). As well, he notes with some justification, that the Anglophone Quebecers are often portrayed in a stereotypical fashion as “business people or employers (p. 35).” He hypothesizes that English-speaking students fail the ministry examinations in higher numbers than their francophone counterparts because of the “biases of the questions and the difficulty teachers have in spouting the authorized version of the past. If Francophones do well, it might be because their teachers, whose unions are heavy separatist supporters, preach the party line that Quebec (sic) has a collective history and forms a nation (p. 35).” But in making his claim, Granatstein fails to understand the Québec system, especially the Anglophone sector. One important reason why English-speaking students do poorly is precisely because French immersion students in the province write their history examinations in French language and, as such, have their results counted as part of the French language examination results. Arguably the highest performing English-speaking students, who often register in French immersion, are taken out of the English language results and added to the French results. The other aspect that Granatstein ignores is the persistent hand wringing in Québec by, ironically, Québécois nationalists over the state of history education in that province.

The Debate Over History Education in Québec

Similar to Granatstein’s call for a pan-Canadian national history, there has been a call for the return of a grand narrative of Québécois history (Sarra-Bournet, 2008; Bédard, 2014). Québec historian Éric Bédard (2014) believes that it is imperative for the Québec government to support a traditional political narrative. This nationalist call came in response to the development of the history portion of the Québec Education Program (QEP) in the mid 2000s. The QEP is a competency-based curriculum that emphasizes the construction of knowledge and skills by students. It states, “The aim of enabling students to become empowered, informed, individuals reveals the limits of a pedagogy based on the transmission of knowledge... Promoting the development of competencies thus means that school personnel should not focus on instrumental learning, but on teaching students how to think and developing their autonomy” (MELS, 2007). This didactic form of teaching was common in the province. Research by Jean-Pierre Charland

(2003) indicated that pedagogical practice among history teachers in the Montréal region was more focused on grand narratives and storytelling by teachers than in Toronto. Charland was interested in how history teaching helped develop informed citizens. In his research, Charland surveyed students, both Francophone and Anglophone, in the urban centres of Montréal and Toronto. Among the students surveyed (Charland, 2003), those that indicated an acceptance of a national history were more open to the nationalist narrative of Québec. As well, those students who were interested in history – the history of Québec, Canada, North America and the world - were more likely to accept a national history than those who had little interest in the subject.

Quizzes and questionnaires that focus on names, places and dates have their own limitations when it comes to assessing student's historical knowledge. As a result, Jocelyn Létourneau and Sabrina Moisan (2004) opted for a more open ended option. They gave Francophone students in high school and colleges (CEGEP) the task to write their own historical narrative of Québec. Their results are very interesting. They found that far from being ignorant of the past, students' historical consciousness reflected a melancholy narrative of Québec's history. This national narrative (*récit national*) has a long history in Québec and was adopted in the Catholic school system as a central pillar of French Canadian national survival in North America (Lévesque, 2011a). So rather than promoting critical history education in Québec at the turn of the millennium, schools were actually reinforcing the status quo, despite what critics thought.

In the mid-1990s, Québec was beginning the process of curriculum reform. Within the framework of the consultative process of the Estates General on Education, an independent and simultaneous review of history education, both within and outside the province was undertaken. The report of the committee headed by Québec historian Jacques Lacoursière, *Learning from the Past* (1996), was the springboard for the new high school history curriculum that was launched in the late 2000s following new curricula in elementary and middle schools. This new history program titled "History and Citizenship Education" (HCE) provoked heated debate particularly focused on the loss of sense of collective memory (Létourneau, 2011).

Indeed, a draft of the new HCE program was obtained by *Le Devoir* newspaper in 2006. The newspaper highlighted the lack of certain national history events in Québec and promoting more Indigenous history and non-Francophones (Robitaille, April 26, 2006). Lines were formed

and a heated debate arose over what national history to teach and what form history education should take in the province. On one side were professors who promoted the historical thinking approach like Jocelyn Létourneau, Christian Laville and Jean-François Cardin of Université Laval, Marc-André Éthier of Université de Montréal and Stéphane Lévesque of the University of Ottawa. On the other side were the proponents of a nationalist history in Québec who were mostly professional historians, chiefly Eric Bédard, Charles-Phillipe Courtois, and Robert Comeau. Also notable on the national history side was Mathieu Bock-Côté, sociologist and journalist blogger for the *Journal de Montréal*.

For the nationalists, the new history program meant that students would lose their national identity. In the revised program, pluralism and multiculturalism were seen as threats to the collective identity of Francophone Québécois. Courtois (2009) wrote, “La diversité ethnique augmente parmi les élèves, à Montréal surtout. La priorité n’est pas accordée à leur intégration dans la culture nationale... mais plutôt à la promotion du pluralisme (p. 7)”. He further noted that the history program was at odds with the goals of Bill 101 (French language Charter), which was to socialize immigrant students within the national culture through the vehicle of the Francophone school system. More troubling for the nationalists was the use of historical knowledge for making sense of the present and the future. According to Sarra-Bournet (2008), the history program in Québec promotes a dangerous presentism with the goal of reducing collective conflicts and fostering a fabricated sense of “vivre-ensemble.” He believes that the past should remain the past and that students need to have a distance from it in order to understand history. While students should maintain a critical distance, Sarra-Bournet does not acknowledge that students are not passive receptacles of historical knowledge. They come to history classes with certain pre-existing ideas about history, and about their own place in it (Barton & Levstik, 2001; VanSledright, 2002).

For other educators, history is not about replicating grand narratives, but about adopting a historical mindset that enables students to critically analyze the past and further develop their own historical orientation and sense of self (Lévesque, 2008). Writing about the new curriculum, Létourneau (May 1, 2006) stated his view of history: “L’histoire, en effet, n’est pas un stock de connaissances objectives qu’on transmet ou consomme passivement, sans autre ambition que de vouloir informer ou apprendre. C’est une reconstruction cohérente du passé qui

rencontre des finalités identitaires en vue de créer un sens mobilisateur pour le groupe”. (para. 6)

For Éthier, Cardin and Lefrançois (2013) the nationalist narrative was about reinforcing power structures in Québec society, “L’histoire-récit contribue en effet au maintien des relations sociopolitiques propres à un système socioéconomique dont l’élite choisit les connaissances à acquérir, au détriment d’autres apprentissages, ayant pour seul mérite de consolider son pouvoir en légitimant leur connaissances” (p. 101). These ideas about the purposes of school history are also found in English Canada. Seixas (2009) argues against the traditional form of school history as being out of place for the realities of the 21st Century:

Mythic nation-building memory aims to construct and reinforce boundaries: it rests on a notion of an essence forged and hardened in the crucible of struggle over time. Ironically, in a time of dramatic economic, demographic, political, social, and cultural change, some react with campaigns to use the schools to promote such essences at precisely the moment when a more flexible, adaptive, and cosmopolitan historical consciousness, open to new interpretation and historiographic controversy would be more appropriate. (pp. 720-721)

Seixas (2002), further advocates a critical historical discourse where history education “provides a rational way, on the basis of evidence and argument, to discuss the differing accounts that jostle with or contradict each other” (para. 2). Furthermore Seixas (2002) acknowledges that history is complex and messy but that there are three main elements that move thinking away from an authoritarian narrative to a more disciplined approach:

1. Comprehend the interpretive choices and constraints involved in using traces from the past to construct historical accounts.
2. Understand the pastness of the past, the distance between the present and the past, and the difficulty in representing the past in the present.
3. Acknowledge complexity and uncertainty; deal with multiple causes, conflicting belief systems, and historical actors' differing perspectives. (para. 5)

Indeed, the promotion of a more disciplinary form of school history is required to challenge what historian Desmond Morton describes as the “magpie’s nest of diamonds and baubles called ‘heritage’” (Morton, 2006, p. 27). In the context of schools, according to Lévesque (2011), the

disciplinary approach to history has its goal “not to shape a people but to shape student’s minds so they become more conscious historical thinkers” (p. 44). However the forces that seek to promote and reinforce grand narratives are strong and entrenched. Many sites of memory and institutions, like the former exhibits at the Canadian History Museum’s Grand Hall that placed indigenous peoples as outside of history and the Canada Hall (Stanley, 2006), have the backing of state power and carry the air of authority in their interpretations. As Wertsch (2004) notes, “States not only attempt to provide their citizens with official accounts of the past, but they also seek to control the particular ways such accounts are used, as well as access to alternative versions.” (p. 50) These nationalistic cultural artifacts, like monuments, films, historic sites for example, form the basis from which students begin to construct their historical identities and much of the prior knowledge and understanding that they bring to the history classroom (Boix-Mansilla, 2000).

The official school curriculum is another of these cultural artifacts that seeks to promote a collective narrative and the conformity of citizens to that collective identity. The socialization project of schools is a powerful vehicle for the promotion of a grand narrative. If successful, this project leads to the sharing of attitudes, values and images of the nation (Egan, 1999). The example of Québec is insightful. Those who conceptualize history as a form of collective memory, see the past in a particular way; one that helps construct the present as the story of a common people with simplistic dichotomies (“us” versus “them”, “French” versus “English”, “Québec” versus “Canada”) and usually shaped by key military and political events at the expense of socio-economical ones. In the debates over the new history program in Québec, nationalists wanted the inclusion of more material related to New France and the Conquest (Éthier, Cardin and Lefrançois, 2013) Another example is that Bédard (2014) plays lip service to the role of women in the construction of the Québec nation in his narrative, “...légitime de présenter la lutte des « exclus » de l’historiographie traditionnelle, impératif de faire une place à l’histoire des femmes... Cette histoire singulière, qui donne une certaine unité à notre parcours historique, elle s’incarne dans la trame des grands événements politiques (p. 159).” If the great political events are the most important elements of the story of Québec, then the stories of women and marginalized groups are viewed as negligible. However, scholars like Seixas (2002) and Lévesque (2011a) see that there is not a simple uncontested path to nation-building. There is among others, a role for women, for indigenous people, for new Canadians and for linguistic

minorities. Lévesque (2011a) notes that “People may share institutions or a common territory but inhabit different historical realities. The challenge for 21st century democracy is precisely to devise structures that allow for the development and dialogue between multiple narrative accounts of the nation without undermining unity and solidarity (p. 45).” In Québec, the change in history curriculum was a way of promoting the disciplinary approach to history education. When the program was announced, Laville (May 6, 2006) defended the new curriculum: “En histoire, s’il y a, d’une part, les faits recueillis et interprétés, il y a, d’autre part, la façon dont on les recueille et interprète. Le programme a choisi d’insister sur cette seconde part, sur ces compétences et ces concepts qui forment le cœur de la pensée historique.” (para. 11). Likewise, Cardin (April 29, 2006) highlighted the importance of the competency approach in developing historical thinking and understanding among students,

De même, il faudrait bien un jour arrêter d’opposer connaissances et compétences. Tout le monde s’entend pour dire que pour développer des compétences (par exemple, « interpréter le passé à l’aide de la méthode historique », compétence 2 du programme), cela nécessite un long détour par les connaissances (celles émises par le prof, celles qu’on peut trouver dans les manuels ou sur Internet, celles qu’on trouve dans les études d’historiens, etc.). Au lieu d’y voir une mise en retrait des connaissances, il s’agit au contraire d’une mise en valeur de celles-ci! (Para, 14)

A few years after the implementation of the HCE programme, others have also recognized the relationship between acquiring content knowledge, disciplinary thinking and competency development in the Québec history program (Duquette, 2014; Moison, 2015). The tide appears to be turning towards offering a more disciplined approach to history in schools.

Criticism of the Disciplinary Approach in History

The disciplinary approach to history is not without its own internal critics. Samanta Cutrara (2009) claims that historical thinking does not challenge the traditional grand narrative version of history, but rather seeks to replicate it by building a common historical understanding through rational analysis of historical evidence. Thus, according to Cutrara, instead of providing students with the critical skills to analyze and interpret the past, the disciplined approach reinforces a neoliberal ethic of individual, rational understanding that leads to apathy in citizenship. This approach privileges the removal of an emotional response to historical evidence and can further marginalize those students that see themselves as already inhabiting a space outside the

traditional grand narrative. The disciplinary approach has also been criticized for its lack of attention to emotion and imaginative reaction that one has to both current events and to the past (den Hayer, 2011). This criticism is based on three main deficits of the disciplinary approach: it does not put ethics and social action at the centre of the curriculum, young people reason incorrectly about the past and thus require a disciplinary approach to rectify their thinking, and that some interpretations of the past are promoted above other, marginalized interpretations (den Hayer, 2011).

Another criticism of the disciplinary approach to history pertains to the societal mission of schools, which are not necessarily institutions to replicate academic disciplines found in universities (Barton and Levstik, 2003). Rather, as Keith Barton and Linda Levstik (2003) argue, education for democratic citizenship should be the main focus for social studies, not the training in some form of disciplinary thinking. Interestingly, their goal for democratic citizenship education is based on a pedagogy that makes effective use of sources and multiperspectivity similar in method to the disciplinary approach. Indeed, a more well-rounded pedagogical approach advanced by Osborne is possibly the most promising. Osborne (2006) promotes an approach that combines elements of historical narrative, understanding the past to problematize the present (and future), and using a rigorous approach based on evidence to create a sense of historical mindedness. A comprehensive pedagogical approach that promotes a disciplinary approach to history as a way for creating a critical space for students to combine their own narratives and confront the ways that grand narratives are constructed through public memory and heritage is also demonstrated by McLean, Rogers, Grant, Law and Hunter (2014) in a higher education setting, but one that can be adapted to fit the needs of high school or even elementary or middle school. The disciplinary approach has also been criticized as being ill suited to decolonization and reconciliation as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada. Cutrara (2018) believes that historical thinking imposes a settler grammar of rationality that delegitimizes Indigenous ways of knowing.

Disciplinary History and the Québec Curriculum

As a result of this increasing influence of the disciplinary approach, provincial history curricula in Canada's two most populous provinces, Ontario and Québec, now call on students to learn historical thinking skills. Other provinces such as British Columbia (2013) and Manitoba

(2014) also have placed historical thinking at the heart of their new social studies and history curricula. However, despite the interest in the teaching and learning of historical thinking, until recently there has been an absence of research in the area of assessment and evaluation (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015), specifically there is a lack of knowledge about the summative evaluation of historical thinking in the classroom environment.

History standards in Québec are found in a number of different documents. The curriculum, the Québec Education Program (QEP), lays out the rationale of HCE along with the three subject specific competencies – Examines Social Phenomenon from a Historical Perspective, Interprets Social Phenomena using the Historical Method and Strengthens his/her Exercise of Citizenship Through the Study of History (MELS, 2007). The historical content knowledge at the level of secondary IV¹ is divided into four themes: Population and Settlement, Economy and Development, Culture and Currents of Thought, and Official and Countervailing Powers. Students are to learn each theme chronologically over the course of their study.

Further refinements were made to the curriculum with the creation of a Progression of Learning (MELS, 2011b) and a Framework of Evaluation of Learning (MELS, 2011a). The HCE curriculum requires students to develop a historical process that involves “selecting documents, evaluating the different viewpoints of actors or witnesses of a social phenomenon, comparing societies, determining causal links etc.” (MELS, 2007, p. 9). The Framework for the Evaluation of Learning conceptualized these ideas as “intellectual operations” of which there are nine: examine a social phenomenon, establish facts, situate in time and space, characterize a phenomenon, establish connections between facts, makes comparisons, determine explanatory factors and consequences, determines elements of continuity and change, and establish causal connections (MELS, 2011a). These intellectual operations require that students know the historical content knowledge and are able to perform the historical thinking skill. As well, students are evaluated on the rigour of their historical reasoning through an extended response essay (MELS, 2011a). Of the three competencies in the QEP, the intellectual operations and the essay evaluate competency #2. The other two competencies are left for teachers to evaluate in their own classrooms. There is no weighting of the different competencies, as such many

¹ The grade levels in Québec are renumbered beginning in secondary school with secondary I (grade 7) through secondary V (grade 11).

teachers give primacy to the second competency at the expense of the others because they are not evaluated by the Ministry of Education.

The Progression of Learning (MELS, 2011b) lays out the content knowledge: people, events, dates and concepts, primarily focused on the history of Québec. This document is strictly a list of knowledge to be acquired. Most of the entries begin with either the verbs describe or indicate and very few verbs requiring higher levels of thinking (MELS, 2011b). A central problem with the current curriculum is the lack of a clear path for progression in historical learning. Indeed, Duquette (2014) notes that there is currently no progression of historical thinking skills in the Québec curriculum, and that teachers have no guidance as to what level of historical thinking students should achieve by the end of secondary IV. Although, the ministry has also published a document called *Highlights* (MELS, 2014a) that provides an overview of the previous year's examination results and also a table that explains the skills and expected student behaviour for the intellectual operations, there still is no recognized progression of historical thinking skills for students in the province of Québec.

The ministry examination is a mandatory summative evaluation for all secondary IV (grade 10) students in Québec. The examination is weighted at 50% of a student's final mark. In Québec, a passing mark is 60% and HCE is a required course for high school graduation. Thus, the uniform examination is a high stakes test.

On the examination, there are 21 short answer questions and one essay question with a total score of 50 marks. Students are given four separate booklets: a question book, a document file, a graphic organizer and essay outline, and an answer booklet. The weighting of the short answer questions varies from one to three marks each. The change in weighting is supposed to reflect the cognitive difficulty of the question, with most questions worth two marks. The essay is worth 12 marks or 24% of the final examination mark. The questions are arranged by theme, but the order of the themes changes from year to year, so the students will not know if the first section will be a particular theme. The documents are also divided by theme, but are arranged in no particular order. Some questions call on students to use a particular document or set of documents, but other questions require the students to find the relevant document from the set of twelve or so that are provided. The ministry examination uses a variety of documents: both primary and secondary with a mix of textual, visual, graphs, charts, maps and also sometimes

documents created by the ministry. The preponderance of the documents are secondary, with many of them being quotations from textbooks.

Despite the fact that curriculum guidelines stress historical thinking, critics claim that the final examination contains items that assess factual knowledge recall and thus encourage memorization rather than historical thinking (Éthier & Lefrançois, 2011). For instance, Éthier and Lefrançois (2011) note that the “teaching methodology research has not yet confronted these issues directly” (p. 331). That being said, their commentary is not based on an in-depth analysis of the examinations. Ironically, the examination has also been criticized for highlighting procedural knowledge as the expense of historical understanding (Warren, 2013).

Research Questions

The Québec ministry examination claims to evaluate both knowledge and disciplinary thinking skills. Students are evaluated on short answer questions that require them to perform “intellectual operations” known as historical thinking skills. As well, students are evaluated on the rigour of their historical reasoning through an extended essay response. As a history teacher in the province, I am interested in researching how historical thinking has influenced the official curriculum and the evaluation of national history. My two research questions are:

- How has historical thinking influenced the history curriculum and the evaluation of history in the province of Québec?
- How is historical thinking reflected in Québec ministry examinations?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the conception of historical thinking elaborated by Seixas and Morton (2013). I decided to use what they refer to as the guideposts of historical thinking because they represent the most developed design of historical thinking currently available in Canada. These guideposts served of the theoretical foundation of my analysis of the curriculum and evaluation documents in Québec. I used them to inform and guide the construction of a rubric for my analysis. In the rubric, the guideposts formed the descriptors for my criteria. For example, for the criteria “cause and consequence” powerful understanding involves multiple short and long-term causes and consequence (Seixas and

Morton, 2013, p. 115). This definition will become the descriptor for a strong link to historical thinking.

My study is a historical document analysis using a critical policy methodology (Rata, 2014) of ministerial documents concerning the teaching and evaluation of historical thinking in Québec. For the purpose of my study, I rely on the following sources: *Learning from the Past: Report of the task force on the teaching of history* (1996), *The Québec Education Program* (QEP) (2007), *The framework for the evaluation of learning* (2011), *Progression of learning in secondary school: History and citizenship education secondary III and IV* (2011), and two examples of the ministry examinations. For the content analysis, I used Sam Wineburg's seminal framework on historical document analysis (Wineburg, 2010). Analyzing the curricular documents and the official examinations using this approach made it possible for me to answer the two research questions of the study.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Historical Thinking

Teaching and learning about historical thinking in Canada has been heavily influenced by the scholarly works of Peter Seixas, Stéphane Lévesque, Robert Martineau and others in the field (Seixas, 1996; Lévesque, 2008; Lévesque, 2011b; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Peck & Seixas, 2008; Martineau, 2010; Seixas & Morton, 2013). In broad terms, this body of work built upon the initial findings of British researchers who established an important distinction between substantive, or content knowledge – the facts, dates, and historical actors of the narrative – and procedural knowledge, the structure upon which historical content knowledge is built. This procedural knowledge, sometimes referred to as “second-order” concepts, forms the heart of what history as a discipline is about. Some examples of these concepts are causation, change, continuity, significance and evidence (Lee, 1983; Lee and Ashby, 2000). One foundational second-order concept that changed history teaching from memorization of narrative content into an inquiry-based discipline was the use of primary source *evidence*. Working with evidence is the foundational work that historians do. Research into history education and how primary source evidence was used in classrooms in Britain began in the 1970s. However, educators had been slow in using primary sources in the classroom, and when they did it their intention was primarily to stimulate interest in the subject matter, not to engage students in historical inquiry and the methods of historians (Dickinson, Gard & Lee, 1978).

Research in Britain continued with the Schools Council History Project 13-16 (SHP), which asked how history should be taught and what type of history should be taught. The program was built around a number of second-order concepts that are now regarded to be the foundations of historical thinking: evidence, empathy, causation, continuity and change. The goal was ultimately to have students understand history as a form of knowledge. One of the limitations that the SHP study found was that it was difficult to discern a student’s understating or misunderstanding about a second order concept or about the underlying historical knowledge (Shemilt, 1980).

Furthermore, Peter Lee and Roslyn Ashby (2000) established that there can be a progression in historical thinking, but students’ progression in their thinking may not be linear as

initially assumed in Piagetian studies. Lee and Ashby (2000) asked students to work with historical accounts and they found that as students aged the way that they saw historical accounts shifted too. By grade 8 level, almost half of students were attributing criteria to the accounts, whereas none of the grade 2 students did. Building upon this research, Peter Lee and Denis Shemilt (2003) proposed creating some research-based models of progression of students' historical thinking. They note that progression models help teachers because they illustrate how students are thinking and how that thinking is likely to change over time. Progression models are built out of inductive models that are categorized from tasks and examination responses. The models thus come from empirical study and because student's thinking can vary from one concept to another, progression models need to be constructed for each different historical thinking concept (Lee and Shemilt, 2003).

In Canada, Seixas (1996) conceptualized historical thinking as a set of concepts that form the basis of understanding history as a discipline. Initially, he identified the following: significance, epistemology and evidence, continuity and change, progress and decline, empathy and moral judgments, and historical agency. Over the next twenty years, Seixas' ideas about historical thinking were refined. Some concepts were dropped, new ones added, others merged. By 2008, the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking project had taken hold. Under this influential pan-Canadian program, historical thinking was conceived of as: historical significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, historical perspectives and the moral dimension (Peck & Seixas, 2008). The final addition to this conception came with the development of guideposts that are designed to help teachers assess the development of student's historical thinking skills. Seixas and Morton (2013) offer teachers a description of how a naïve or beginning historical thinker conceives of a concept like continuity and change, and what an advanced historical thinker understands of the concept. In doing so, they have also broken down the concepts into their component parts. This is an important development because it aids the teacher in developing activities that develop historical thinking in students and by identifying sub-components, offers potential opportunities for providing feedback to push students' understanding forward. However, what is not provided by the authors is a full progression of historical thinking and understanding, although it is currently the closest tool to a progression available for teachers and researchers.

At the same time, Lévesque (2008) also outlined a conception of historical thinking that includes historical significance, continuity and change, progress and decline, evidence and historical empathy. However, Lévesque (2008) added a model of historical inquiry based on essential questions to allow students to uncover the past that is analogous to the process that historians use to investigate the past. He notes, “ I believe that they [essential questions] are still pertinent (some might say *sine qua non*) for making sense of historical thinking and offering targets for what history educations might accomplish with their students in the twenty-first century” (Lévesque, 2008, p. 38). This insight is an important addition to the teaching and learning of historical thinking because the model is grounded in not only sound pedagogy, but also in the process that historians use when they inquire into the past.

Furthermore, Lévesque (2011b) then built upon his model of historical thinking by adding a progression aspect to it. He advocates for a theory of progression of historical thinking, in both the substantive and procedural knowledge of history. This model of progression would be scaffolded to allow teachers to move their students to further and deeper understanding of the discipline. The weaknesses of historical thinking, according to Lévesque (2011b), are the lack of consistent criteria used to define the various historical thinking concepts and the implicit nature that these concepts, like significance or continuity and change, often find themselves in the various provincial history curricula. Lévesque (2011b) offers teachers criteria in order to define historical thinking concepts and how they can be applied using an inquiry model in the classroom. This model would allow students to improve their thinking of the past and of the present.

An important caveat is that historical thinking is about building the capacity to construct a historical argument or interpretation. Historical thinking skills should not be seen in isolation. But rather, they work together and students should be using these skills as criteria when they are reading history interpretations or building their historical arguments. Teachers may design activities that help students build proficiency in individual historical thinking skills, but they must also allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the skills in complex ways. It is the teacher’s role to provide feedback on students’ approach and understanding of the skills in order so that they can transfer the skills to new, more complicated tasks.

In Québec, Catherine Duquette (2014) investigated the theoretical orientations of the QEP and its impact on the presentation of historical thinking. Through a document analysis of the curriculum she determined that there was a strong influence of Francophone thinkers and as a result a divergence from the conception of historical thinking that is largely found in the Anglophone provinces, which have been strongly influenced by the work of Seixas. In her conclusion, she notes that in Québec, historical thinking is problem-solving and that "...for the MELS, historical thinking is a form of critical thinking, as it prompts students to develop a nuanced and evidence based understanding of the past" (Duquette, 2014, p. 149). That being said, she also found some similarity with the conception developed by Seixas in the QEP. Indeed, the intellectual operations of the QEP include cause and consequence, and continuity and change (MELS, 2011a). As well, the use of evidence is both implicit and explicit in the short answer and essay questions.

Duquette (2015) also investigated the link between historical thinking and assessment. She was concerned about the difficulty that Québec teachers were having finding evidence of student's historical thinking in their work and that, as has been noted before, that there was no pedagogical model of progression in historical thinking to work from. Her conception of historical thinking rely on two main elements: historical perspective and historical method. Historical perspective is a framework that guides the interpretation. For example Seixas' framework of significance, cause and consequence, continuity and change, historical empathy and taking into account the complexity of the past. The historical method is a deductive approach that requires students to question, propose hypothesis, check sources, analyze sources for reliability and to answer the question. This conception by Duquette is similar to that of Lévesque (2008) who places the concepts of historical thinking into the inquiry process. Duquette (2015) used a qualitative approach that draws on a number of sources of data: interviews, analysis student responses and think aloud protocol. Based on the results of her work, Duquette (2015) proposes a four-tier model of progression of historical consciousness:

Primary level – no knowledge of historical thinking

Intermediate level – identify elements of change, interpret the past using documents

Composite level – identifies elements of continuity and change, causes and consequences, interpret the past using documents, establish the relationship between the different documents

Narrative level– includes all the other elements and takes into account the complexity of the past, propose a hypothesis, examines the reliability of available sources.

This method is a useful tool for classroom teachers because they can more easily place students' historical thinking into one of these levels. However, as Lee and Ashby (2000) and Lee and Shemilt (2003) note, historical understanding does not progress in a linear fashion from one concept to another. For example, a student might be at a more advanced level using and understanding how historical evidence works, but still developing their skills at identifying elements of continuity and change in history. Also, this model does not seem to take into account the complexity that Seixas and Morton (2013) and Lévesque (2011b) have identified in their conceptions of historical thinking.

Assessing Historical Thinking

Researchers in the United States and Canada have begun to explore how new assessments of historical thinking can help students to learn historical thinking and to gain knowledge. Seixas (2011) problematizes and proposes a model of cognition to aid in the assessment of historical thinking. In his conception, assessment cannot be divided into summative and formative or assessment for learning, rather these are two ends of a continuum. Furthermore, for each historical thinking concept, there are multiple levels of complexity. Thus, the model of cognition states that knowledge is built on new knowledge, students can progress in their understanding of historical thinking, and progression can be promoted by placing students into their zone of proximal development. The proposal is then enhanced by the analysis of student responses that concludes that the assessment task both can be used formally, to enhance learning and historical thinking, and summatively – to make a judgement about the student's historical thinking and understanding.

Kadriye Ercikan (2006) has been a leading researcher in the development of a model of progression for a number of historical thinking concepts. In a literature review, Ercikan (2006), discusses how Evidence Centred Design can be used in developing instruments to measure historical thinking. This review of the developments in assessment found that the connections between assessment, curriculum and instruction can have a positive impact on learning. However, Ercikan (2006) notes that “Although there is overwhelming evidence to support the

link between assessment and learning, to date there is little evidence to suggest that a consideration of this linkage is widespread” (p. 931). The review also highlighted a model of progression for the historical thinking concept of evidence proposed by Lee and Shemilt (2003), which is important because the use of evidence is of primary importance for the teaching and learning of history. This model was constructed from student responses and once again demonstrates that students can move from a naïve view of evidence where they uncritically assume that historical explanations and interpretations are truthful – “pictures of the past” -- to the critical and interpretative use of evidence in context at a higher level.

As well, Seixas and Ercikan (2011) take this idea of progression and add to it the idea that for learning to occur there needs to be an alignment of assessment, learning goals and the development of a learning progression. For Seixas and Ercikan (2011), learning goals that are clearly articulated are essential because they tell students the kind of learning that they should be focusing on. Using Evidence Centred Design, the authors tackled two challenges of higher order thinking. Evidence Centred Design requires a clear linkage between the assessment construct, the learning task and the interpretation and evaluation of student performance on the task. They integrated both declarative and procedural knowledge and made the procedural knowledge the primary focus of the assessments. Through this study, Seixas and Ercikan (2011) proposed a progression model for the concept of continuity and change that breaks down the concept, into its component parts. As well, a holistic rubric with four levels of achievement was presented.

Ercikan, Seixas, Lyons-Thomas, & Gibson (2012) were concerned about a lack of evidence about the assessment of student’s learning of historical thinking skills and constructed an assessment tool for historical thinking using Evidence Centred Design. The authors focused on three concepts of historical thinking: evidence, historical perspective and the ethical dimension. They described the cognitive demands and expected student behaviours for each of the concepts. For example for the concept of evidence one of the cognitive demands was “to ask questions that turn a primary source into evidence for an argument or account” (Ercikan, Seixas, Lyons-Thomas, & Gibson, 2012, p. 29). The study was a qualitative one that used an analysis of student responses and a think aloud protocol to judge students’ cognitive processes. Notably, for summative assessment, Ercikan, Seixas, Lyons-Thomas and Gibson (2012) found that historical thinking skills are difficult to assess using multiple-choice questions and that

constructed response items were more likely to show evidence of historical thinking. This is important for teachers because the study demonstrates that if a teacher wishes to assess historical thinking, they should be using constructed response questions and criteria of different components of historical thinking concepts as explained by Lévesque (2011b) or Seixas and Morton (2013).

The work of Seixas and Ercikan on assessment of historical thinking has continued with the development of an assessment tool that can be used for historical thinking. Seixas, Gibson and Ercikan (2015) wrestled with the challenges that many teachers face when they try to assess historical thinking. The first is that one cannot separate the content of history or substantial knowledge from historical thinking or procedural knowledge, and the second is that measuring historical thinking is dependent upon skills in reading and writing and thus might prove to be difficult to distinguish those of generic literacy skills from historical thinking. The assessment task focused on three elements of historical thinking: evidence, historical perspective, and the ethical dimension. The design of the assessment task allowed for students to analyze documents individually and then cumulatively, with the opportunity for students to scaffold their thinking. Seixas, Gibson and Ercikan (2015) identified a number of important findings for teachers. For example, they found that sometimes the same student performed at different levels of competence in response to the same level of cognitive demand. Also, because of the nature of the historical method, there is interdependence in historical thinking concepts which made it impossible to make a claim on individual aspects of historical thinking. This means that ongoing assessments to measure progress is important for teachers and that they should not rely on one piece of evidence for reporting. It is also important to note that students, in their study, had not been immersed in a classroom environment that focused on the particular historical thinking skills prior to the task.

Québec is the only jurisdiction in Canada that requires students to write a standardized history examination. In the United States, standardized testing is common. Yet several writers have critiqued what they see as simple, multiple choice examinations, such as in California (Breakstone, Smith & Wineburg, 2013) and New York (Reich, 2009; Reich, 2013; Reich, 2015) as not assessing historical thinking, despite the stated aims of state curriculum standards. As well, researchers in the United States have taken up the challenge to develop new methods of

assessing historical thinking more in line with the discipline. These approaches are grounded in a pedagogy centred around feedback and formative assessment that seeks to push student's skills in historical thinking forward by establishing where student's current level of understanding, identifying potential weakness and planning interventions to push their thinking forward (Sadler, 1989; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Breakstone, Smith and Wineburg (2013) centered their history assessment of thinking (known as HAT) in the space in between the factual recall of traditional multiple-choice tests and the length and complexity of the Document Based Question on the Advanced Placement history examination. The HAT's are concentrated mostly around the analysis of historical documents and placing them in their historical context. As such, they are much more literacy based, focused on student assessment of evidence and historical accounts, rather than on the conception of historical thinking as defined by Seixas (2006). As well, another example of a new form of assessment of historical thinking comes from Bruce VanSledright (2014). Along with Breakstone, Smith and Wineburg (2013), VanSledright's focus is in using diagnostic assessment in order to provide formative evidence of students' understanding of historical thinking so that teachers may give feedback to the students, and adjust their teaching process accordingly.

The United States, like Canada, has a decentralized system of education. As a result, there are no national history examinations, but rather history examinations are administered at the state or district level. Gabriel Reich (2013, 2015) further argues that multiple-choice tests in the state of New York do not even accurately measure student knowledge. The study was designed so that the student answers, were analyzed along with think-aloud protocols and post-test interviews with students. The data was analyzed in two ways: for the correct answer and for the cognitive processes employed to judge whether or not students had conceptual understanding of history as called for in the New York State history standards. Success on the test came down to factors such as historical knowledge – although 17% of responses were correct even though the student did not actually know the answer (Reich, 2015), literacy and test-wiseness. This allowed Reich to develop an argument about the student performance on the multiple-choice questions. In sum, Reich (2015) concludes that the multiple choice test may measure some knowledge; they are an inadequate tool for measuring complicated historical reasoning.

As well, in a four state study of history and social studies exams, Scott De Witt and his colleagues (2013) analyzed examinations and the curriculum standards from New York, Ohio, Texas and Virginia using Blooms revised taxonomy, they found that the examinations were not aligned to the state standards that emphasized higher order skills and most of the examinations focused on lower order, factual recall multiple choice items. The exception was New York State, where the Document Based Questions (DBQ) and extended response questions were judged to be higher order. However, these exams were not measured against a standard of historical thinking. Other researchers have criticized the New York State version of the DBQ. In another study of the World History and Geography course Grant, Gradwell and Cimbricz (2004) conducted a document analysis of the examination and concluded that the DBQ does not provide an authentic assessment of the discipline of history.

The DBQ is however seen in the United States as the gold standard in history assessment. The DBQ is one component of the AP United States history examination that also includes two free response essays and between 80 and 100 multiple-choice questions (Charap, 2015). The DBQ provides students with between six and ten primary sources, and students must argue a particular historical interpretation using source work. It should also be noted that AP are not just American classes but are also offered in Canada with 703 high schools in Canada that currently offer AP courses (College Board, 2015). Wineburg, Smith and Breakstone (2012) criticize the DBQ as being too long and somewhat rhetorically ask what the purpose of the DBQ is : “Is it students’ ability to engage in historical thinking and arrive at a defensible thesis? Their ability to sort through and organize disparate documents? Or their ability to express themselves in writing while wiping beads of sweat from their brows under timed conditions?”(p.54). In their analysis of the DBQ, Young and Leinhardt (1998) found that students who were naïve historical thinkers would uncritically search the sources for information and cobble together a response. Students generally treated these documents as unproblematic sources of information, very reminiscent of the emergent thinkers on Lee and Ashby’s (2000) study of progression of historical understanding and the students in Seixas, Gibson and Ercikan’s (2015) study. Student use of sources was also tied to the knowledge that they had of a topic. When students had knowledge of a topic, they used more documents in their essay, but when they did not have the prior knowledge base, they tended to use fewer documents. However, through a process of guided instruction, students were able to increase the sophistication in their use of sources and their

ability to develop an historical thesis (Young and Leinhardt, 1998). Reisman (2015) asks a good question: is the DBQ exam a measure of disciplinary thinking or one of general reading comprehension?

Other countries have different versions of assessments and examinations that seek to evaluate historical thinking and understanding. In England, the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations ask students to use sources to compare and contrast accounts, establish historical significance and explain historical understandings (AQA, 2016). Sweden has also recently added national history exams that require students to take a historical frame of reference and use historical thinking concepts like cause and consequence and continuity and change in constructed response items. (Eliassen, Alvé, Axelsson Yngvéus & Rosenlund, 2015).

In Sweden, the national history exams that began in 2013 have been analyzed to find evidence of disciplinary thinking in history. The examinations were in response to curricular changes in that emphasized a disciplined based approach to history. Samuelsson and Wendell (2016) were interested in how students in year 6 (middle school age in North America) use sources and based their analysis of history examinations both within the context of the international literature on historical thinking, but also within the traditions of the source criticism in Sweden. The focus of this study was on how students responded to questions were specifically asking them to use the sources. They found that students are able to identify the nature of sources and see them as a means of information if they are authentic and from the right time period. However, students struggled to contextualize and corroborate sources, which are elements of powerful understanding of the concept of evidence (Seixas & Morton, 2013). The lack of deeper understanding of sources led Samuelsson and Wendell (2016) to hypothesize whether or not more complex understanding of sources should be expected for students at this level. They further identified that tests of this kind limit thinking and that assessment of disciplinary thinking in history needs to be supplemented with other assessment evidence.

In analyzing the Québec history examination, my research shares a few similarities with the work of Samuelsson and Wendell (2016) because, like them, I situate my study within the context of the curriculum change, the international developments of research into historical thinking and the specific framework of historical thinking in the jurisdiction. My study of the Québec history examination differs from these other studies because I do not consider student responses. Rather, my study focuses on the construction of the questions on the examination

within the context of Québec curriculum and other supporting ministerial documents. As such, it should be understood as a document based analysis of an official examination. Overall, there appears to be a lack of research on history examinations in Canada. One possible reason is the fact that history evaluation and assessment is generally the preserve of classroom teachers, and these tests and examinations created at the local level may be difficult for researchers to access. This scantiness of prior interest in examinations provides opportunities for researchers to look into how historical thinking is reflected in examinations and how students approach and interpret questions in history.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is informed by the conceptual work of Peter Seixas (1996). Seixas has developed a distinctive Canadian model of historical thinking influenced by the initial research of English scholars who first made the distinction between substantive historical knowledge (content) and second-order procedural knowledge (concepts of historical thinking). In 2013, Seixas presented his model in a book adapted to Canadian educators (Seixas and Morton, 2013). This model presents relies on a framework of six historical thinking concepts aimed to help students think about the past critically and develop their own historical interpretations. These six concepts are:

- Historical significance
- Evidence
- Cause and consequence
- Continuity and change
- Historical perspectives
- The Ethical dimension

Seixas and Morton (2013) note that the six concepts do not operate independently, but rather jointly as a form of knowledge. For the purpose of my study, I have decided to use what they refer to as the “guideposts” of historical thinking because they are the most developed conception of historical thinking currently available in Canada. The guideposts are not a progression, but as stated in *The Big Six* they,

pull from the historians’ methods what students need to know about the concept. We then translate these guideposts into student’s understandings... Many students will arrive with a very limited understanding of the way the discipline of history works. For each guidepost, we describe this possible “starting point” of limited understanding, as well as a demonstration of a powerful understanding of the guidepost. (p.8)

These guideposts will serve as the theoretical foundation of my analysis of the Québec curriculum, and evaluation documents and the examination. I used them to form the descriptors in my rubric. (see Appendix A). For example, for the criteria “Cause and Consequence” there are five guideposts that demonstrate a powerful understanding according to Seixas and Morton

(2013). These guideposts would be that a student identifies multiple short- and long-term causes and consequences and their interrelationships; a student ranks causes according to their influence; a student identifies the interplay between actions of historical actors and the conditions of the time; a student distinguishes between intended and unintended consequence; and that a student can show that an event was not inevitable (p. 115). I used these elements in the rubric so that the analysis was based on established criteria.

Historical Significance

The past is so broad that in order to make any sense of it, we have to select events and people and ascribe some type of importance to them. Likewise, historians when they are sifting through the reams of sources in an archive must determine somehow what value to place on a particular piece of evidence over another. Historians are informed about the potential significance of the events and evidence that they are investigating through the historiographical tradition and methodologies of the discipline. Students, however, have no such formal training. Seixas (1997) found that novices, when not given a structure with which to determine significance, use rough binary subjective/objective framework based upon their own preconceived ideas about history. Within this framework, many students began to interpret events based on their impact, with the most advanced students able to write a unified narrative (Seixas, 1997). Educators have proposed a number of different criteria rooted in the discipline of history for helping students determine significance (Phillips, 2002; Counsell, 2004; Lévesque, 2008). Phillips (2002) notes that his criteria were not universal, suited only to large historical events and focused specifically on the First World War whereas Counsell (2004) notes that conceptions about historical significance are not fixed and many factors might influence judgments about significance. Her criteria are based upon five 'R's: Remarkable, Remembered, Resonant, Resulting in Change and Revealing. These criteria allow for students to not only judge the historical significance of past events, but may also allow students to develop their own criteria, and to recognize how others have made judgments about significance. Lévesque (2008) used the western historiographic tradition to describe the factors of importance, profundity, quantity, durability, and relevance as essential to the disciplinary concept of significance. There are quite a few similarities between the criteria of Counsell and of Lévesque, but also some important differences. For example, both

note that there must be some type of recognition of the people at the time that the event was important or remarkable. Also, both are concerned with the idea that the past tells us something of consequences for us in the present day. They differ however, in that Lévesque (2008) speaks about the duration of events and notes that historians have tended to ascribe significance to events that lasted longer, but he adds a note of caution that events that do not necessarily last a long time, might also have historical significance. Counsell (2004) considers that significant events should have entered the collective memory of the group, but Lévesque (2008) remarks that notions of significance can change over time depending on the questions that the historian asks of the sources.

The conception of historical significance used by Seixas and Morton (2013) is a combination of Counsell and Lévesque. The main elements of their conception are based on four guideposts: resulting in change, revealing, constructed and occupy a meaningful place in a narrative, and that significance varies over time and from group to group. This conception is useful because it allows events that are both large, and small to be judged, as well as over time or from different perspectives (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 24).

Evidence

In order to understand and make judgments about the past, students have to base their arguments on historical evidence. This evidence comes from sources, both primary and secondary.² In the disciplinary history classroom, students are questioning, assessing, analyzing and interpreting sources – much like students in science classrooms conduct experiments and in math classrooms solve equations. However, using evidence is not confined to the classroom. The critical use of evidence is a fundamental part of being an informed citizen (Barton and Levstik, 2004; Lévesque, 2008). In Québec, students are tasked with using sources on their ministry examination. Assessing sources involves the interrogation of documents, asking questions of them in order to find evidence. Lévesque (2008) notes that using sources in the classroom can be problematic as many pedagogical techniques may not appreciate the complexity of making a historical claim. According to VanSledright (2004) the process of assessing sources involves four cognitive acts: identification, attribution, perspective, and reliability assessment. The

² Traditionally there has been a sharp distinction between primary and secondary sources, the ones created by historical actors at the time and those which are produced after the events by historians and others.

complexity in using sources is demonstrated by the model of student's understanding of evidence developed by Lee, Ashby and Dickinson (1993) where students at the lowest level read sources uncritically and see them as "pictures of the past". Their second level treats the past as fixed and the author of the source is an authority that is providing us information about the past.

Testimony is the third level where students assess the source as either providing a report that is done well (right) or poorly (wrong). This level is the start of when students begin to question the sources and think critically about them. The fourth level involves using multiple sources to construct an interpretation, but the evidence is still treated as a report. Finally, the last two levels, treat the sources as evidence whereby students move from using evidence in isolation to using evidence in context.

The five guideposts of Seixas and Morton (2013) are built upon this previous work on the idea of evidence. Students are to know that history is an interpretation built upon inferences based on sources. But that it is only by asking questions of the source that turns it into evidence. Students also need to acknowledge the source by asking questions about who and when it was created and the inferences about the authors purposes and values. Analysis of the source by students must take place within the context of its historical setting. Finally, students cannot just use one source to form an interpretation, but they must corroborate the sources against other sources (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 49).

Continuity and Change

In discussing the concepts of continuity and change, Lévesque (2008) states that these concepts are not only related, but that they are necessary for each other. For historians to understand the process of change, they must also understand what has remained the same over time. In his discussion of continuity and change, Lévesque (2008) illustrates that students must have an understanding of the chronological sequence of events that are tied together through a narrative. However, the sequencing of events is also arranged by colligation – connecting through intrinsic relationships – which allows the events to be seen in their larger historical context. Lévesque also notes that there are many relationships between the concept of continuity and change with concepts like significance, evidence, and causation.

In applying a framework for judging change and the related concepts of progress and decline, Lévesque (2008) proposes the evaluative criteria of continuous application, equal importance and prudential relevance. For example, students must understand the chronology of historical events and use the same standard of analysis towards the whole period. Secondly, students should be provided with examples that reflect both progress and decline and evaluate these contrasting views. Finally, students would apply standards applicable to the past actors themselves.

In another formulation of the concepts Counsell (2011) notes that for students to build their understanding they need to: have opportunities to analyze the subcomponents of this concept like rate of change, extent of change and the nature of the change; use narratives that give the overview and the depth of change and continuity; reflect on the questions to ask about the concept; and use the accounts of historical actors to make inferences about how they made sense of the changes or continuities in their time.

Seixas and Morton (2013) have designed four guideposts to the concept of continuity and change. For students to demonstrate a high degree of understanding they must know that change and continuity are interwoven and exist at the same time. The second guidepost relates to turning points and that students should be able to judge and explain what a turning point is because they can recognize change is process with different paces and patterns that vary. Students also need to analyze society for elements of progress and decline and be able to explain that how progress for one group may result in decline for another. Finally, students should understand that periodization is part of the interpretive process that be able to develop criteria to develop their own historical periods (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 86).

Cause and Consequence

In interviews with students, those at the beginnings of the historical understanding of cause and consequence ascribes that anything that came before an event was a cause and anything that came after an effect (Shemilt, 1983). Woodcock (2011) notes that “a cause is not a thing, but a relationship between things, then students cannot identify causes without considering their consequences” (p. 126.). Lee and Shemilt (2009) proposed a six level model of progression in causal thinking, where students moved from a basic understanding of explanatory factors to

explaining causation using networks of events, to considering the conditions and contexts that historical actors operated in, to finally at the most sophisticated level, that causation concepts are theoretical constructs.

In their conception, Seixas and Morton (2013) identified five guideposts for cause and consequence. They note the link between cause and consequence and the change process. Their first guidepost is that students should recognize that change involves multiple causes and multiple consequence, both long and short term. As well, students need to weigh the facts that that causes may vary in their influence on particular historical events. Further, there are conditions that guide and limit the actions of historical actors and that these actions may lead to unintended consequences. Finally, students should be able to understand that historical events were not inevitable (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 115).

Historical Perspectives

Until relatively recently, this concept was known as “historical empathy” (Shemilt, 1984) in the literature. The change towards the terminology of perspective came because empathy was understood (or misunderstood) by some to be sympathetic, or associated with positive feelings towards those in the past (Davis, 2001). This concept, however, does not involve getting into the minds of historical actors, imagining yourself in the past, or sympathizing with those that lived in the past (Foster, 1999). Rather, taking a historical perspective is about trying to understand the methods and motivations of historical actors given the historical circumstances and contexts that they lived in. It requires that there be a substantial amount of historical knowledge on the part of the student (Davis, 2001). In order to do so, Lévesque (2008) argues that there must be some type of mental imagining in order to understand the perspectives of those who lived in the past. This historical imagination revolves around an understanding of different perspectives of past actions and beliefs while appreciating the realization that there is a shared humanity between people across time and space. VanSledright (2001) states that historical empathy helps us make links between the present and the past:

It makes possible the reconstructions of past events in a way that helps us appreciate the significant differences between the present world and the world being described, while simultaneously bringing that world, theoretically at least, much closer to us. In the ideal, this tempers and textures our understanding of our ancestors and what makes them seem so off at first glance. It makes us less

quick to judge them as short-sighted dimwits with idiotic beliefs and stupid customs. By extension we therefore would be less quick then to judge those in our contemporary world who do not share our sentiments and sensibilities. In this idealized form, one could say that historical empathy is essential to the health of pluralistic democracies. (p. 57)

As a result, historical empathy or perspective-taking is an important process of historical consciousness. By employing a process of critical historical enquiry, historians and students can begin to contextualize the thoughts and actions of predecessors and reduces the gap between the past and present without falling into the trap of presentism. Historical perspective-taking is a transferable skill that can help students understand the thoughts and perspectives of contemporary actors in political and social discourse.

The first guidepost of Seixas and Morton's (2013) conception is that there difference in worldview between today and those that lived in the past. Their second guidepost is that students must avoid presentism, which is applying the social and moral standards of today to those who lived in the past, but can draw cautiously on universal human experience in order to understand the experiences of historical actors. The third guidepost requires students to consider historical perspectives within their historical context. The fourth guidepost is to have students use evidence in order to make inferences about the perspective of historical actors. Finally the fifth guidepost is the recognition that there was a variety of opinions of different historical actors who had different and diverse perspectives on historical events (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 148).

Ethical Dimension

One of the problems with the analysis and interpretation of history is that students encounter people who lived in an unfamiliar time and place. As a result, there is a tension between understanding the pastness of the past and not losing the human connection between now and the past (Wineburg, 2001). Lévesque (2008) situates moral judgment within the broader context of historical empathy. He states that moral judgments often lead to the imposition of present-day standards on people in the past and suggests that students should contextualize the present-day with the variety of values that make up our current society. The ethical dimension would allow students to then contextualize the past and judge actors on their own terms, not on ours.

The ethical dimension deals with interpreting history with a sense of judgment. Seixas and Morton (2013) have identified five guideposts of powerful understanding. The first guidepost that is when historical interpretations are made, implicit and explicit ethical judgements are also made. Secondly, an ethical judgement of the past involves taking into account the historical context in which predecessors lived and acted. The third guidepost involves being careful about imposing contemporary moral standards on the past as predecessors did not necessarily lived under the same moral ideas as today or did not have the opportunity to think otherwise. The fourth guidepost deals with the responsibility to remember and respond to events of the past. Finally, the fifth guidepost allows us to make informed judgments about issues today based on our understanding of history while being conscious of the limitations about making direct lessons (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 184).

In contemplating these historical thinking concepts it is important to remember, as Seixas and Morton argue, that they are not isolated and interact with each other. For instance, in order to make an ethical judgment on past actions a student needs to use evidence to make an inquiry, to consider the significance of the events or the persons and to situate them context by looking at issues of continuity and change and at the causes and consequences of the actions.

Methodological Approach

The methodological model I used is critical policy methodology that Rata (2014) employed to analyze the history curriculum in New Zealand. Critical policy analysis has moved away from an uncritical evaluation of educational curricula to one more influenced by theories of discourse (Taylor, 1997). As a result, curricula can now be seen as texts with which there is no one way to read them but rather a number of different ways. This leads to an analysis that is centred around the effects of policy, rather than the intentions (Codd, 1988).

The critical policy model of Rata (2014) has three stages: the first is to establish causal links between global forces and local developments. In this first instance, I investigated how has the prior research in history education related to historical thinking at the time of curriculum reform in Québec influenced the Task Force on teaching. The link between the development of ideas about historical thinking and curriculum reform provided a base to move into the second part of the method. This second aspect of critical policy methodology involved the analysis of

curriculum within the globalized framework established by the first stage. In breaking down the different aspects of historical thinking by examining how other researchers and writers have conceptualized these ideas and how they were applied to the history program the curriculum can be deconstructed in order to see the potential effects that they may have (Codd, 1988). Finally, the third stage of the critical policy methodology is undertaking an empirical study. The empirical study whether it be ethnographic, a case study or vignette demonstrates the effects of policy on people's lives (Rata, 2014). In her article Rata (2014), using the New Zealand curriculum, first contextualizes the debate over knowledge between socio-constructivists and what she terms knowledge realists. Then, she analyses the New Zealand history curriculum within the context she established in the first stage. Finally, she proposes an ethnographic study of the effects of the new curriculum in New Zealand on teaching and learning.

In using the critical policy methodology (Rata, 2014), I did a historical document analysis of the publicly available ministerial documents concerning the teaching of history and the assessment and evaluation of historical thinking in Québec:

- *Learning from the Past: Report of the task force on the teaching of history* (1996). This document presents a vision for teaching of history in Québec based on the submissions of various organization, public consultations and the study of history education in other jurisdictions. It formed the starting point for the curriculum reform that proceeded in the early 2000s.
- *Uniform examination, History of Québec and Canada* (2004). This ministry exam pre-dates the curriculum reform, but provides evidence about the types of questions and historical thinking prior to curriculum reform.
- *The Québec Education Program* (QEP) (2007). The QEP is the school curriculum in Québec, it is a competency based curriculum and explains how students should learn historical competencies based on the historical method.
- *The framework for the evaluation of learning* (2011). The framework offers more details on how students' knowledge and skills in history are to be evaluated.
- *Progression of learning in secondary school: History and citizenship education secondary III and IV* (2011). The progression of learning is a document that explains what content knowledge students should learn in history.
- *Uniform examination, History and Citizenship Education* (2015). The ministry exam has the types of questions and the documents that are used to evaluate historical knowledge and thinking.

In my investigation, for the first stage, I examined the context for the development of the history curriculum in Québec as part of a global trend towards historical thinking that began in the United Kingdom and spread to Canada and the United States. As well, I situated the development of the curriculum within the debates about the role and place of history that were being debated in Canada and Québec at the time. Ball (1993) notes that policy texts arrive in schools with histories attached to them, both representational histories of the authors who attempt to assert control of the meanings of their texts and interpretational histories of the various actors and stakeholders who seek to impose their views on the policy. I am hypothesizing that the currents of historical thinking present that Seixas (2015) found in England, the United States, Canada, and Germany will be found in the curriculum document.

In the second stage, I analyzed the documents by using the framework established by Wineburg (2010) on how historians approach documents analysis. Wineburg states that historians employ a set of heuristic where they a) source the documents by examining its author, document type and provenance; b) contextualize the document by placing it in its time and place; c) read the text closely to analyze the message and the language used to convey the message of the document; d) corroborate the documents by asking questions of it across other documents looking for points of agreement and disagreement; and e) reading the silences by asking questions of what is left out or missing from the document. In using this method of historical analysis of the documents I linked them together to see how historical thinking was conceptually developed.

The document analyses of the various curriculum documents allowed me to align the curriculum standards and expectations of the government to the guideposts of historical thinking proposed by Seixas and Morton (2013). I did this by creating a rubric with the guideposts as the criteria of my rubric. Using the rubric, and Wineburg's (2010) conception of close reading, I could ascertain the elements of historical thinking that were present in the various curriculum documents. Based on the language used or the way that concepts were described, it was apparent which elements of historical thinking were either present, or not present. Working through the documents by using the historical process of Wineburg (2010) further allowed me to contextualize the documents within the global trends of historical thinking and gave me insight

into how the documents work together. Finally, the analysis provided me with evidence to form a conclusion about how historical thinking is assessed and evaluated in Québec.

For the third stage, I concluded with an argument (Kane, 2013) on the construct validity of the ministerial examination. Construct validity in history assessments has been theorized by Kalinski, Smith and Huff (2015) and they identify that the complex nature of historical thinking might pose an issue for researchers. This argument was built by using the results of the document analysis about the elements of historical thinking in the curriculum and applying them to the examination. An analysis using this methodology has been proposed by Samuel Messick (1995) as a way to investigate construct validity in assessments. Messick describes six aspects of construct validity evidence: the relevance of the content; the substantive theories of the domain that is being assessed; the structural aspect of the assessment; generalizability of scores; external aspects; and the consequential use of scores. The most valuable construct evidence for my study was content relevance, the disciplinary theories (historical thinking), the structure of the exam and the generalizability of the score. My argument about the validity of the constructs is made in relation to the structural validity (Shemilt, 2015) of the examination in its entirety. In essence this is a document analysis of the examination and a validity argument that is based on the constructs and structure of the exam.

Limitations

This study is limited by various research decisions. First of all, it is focused on the official curriculum broadly defined and thus did not consider student responses or their thinking processes as they answer the questions on the exam. There might be difficulty in assessing the historical thinking based just on a document analysis, as a result Think Aloud Protocols (TAP) could have been used to gather evidence of cognitive processes (Kalinski, Smith & Huff, 2015; Seixas, Gibson & Ercikan, 2015), however, TAP would add another level of complexity to this study and was not considered.

Secondly, the study is a snapshot in time. In considering the Québec examinations I have selected to analyze two examinations, one from 2004 (MEQ, 2004) and one from 2015 (MELS, 2015a & 2015b). The 2004 (MEQ, 2004) examination was selected to provide a reference point before the curriculum change in Québec. The 2015 (MELS, 2015a & 2015b) examination is

representative of the examinations that were created after the adoption of the new curriculum. An analysis of more examinations was considered to be too broad for this study.

Another limitation of the study pertains to the fact that it did not take into account teaching styles, beliefs about the nature and type of pedagogy in the classroom or teacher views of the history program in Québec, and how student results are interpreted and used by teachers. This type of evidence would add nuance to the interpretation of my analysis. However, some inferences can be made about the views of teachers based on other studies conducted with Québec teachers (Charland, 2003; Éthier & Lefrançois, 2011; Boutonnet, 2013). Another source of evidence about the views of teachers that can be used are the publications of the professional associations of teachers that would help in describing the context in which the program was interpreted as well as the effects of the program changes.

A third limitation pertains to my own position as a teacher-researcher. I come to this project with my own preconceived ideas about the Québec program and the official ministry examination. In my teaching experience, my school was chosen as a pilot school for the implementation of the QEP. My experiences as in implementing the curriculum led me to attend formation sessions put on by the ministry and, in turn, lead sessions for my own school board and Anglophone network. I have also been a regular participant in professional development outside the school board. I have attended conferences and workshops led by researchers like Peter Seixas and Stéphane Lévesque that have focused on historical thinking. This experience has left me with my own views of how historical thinking should be incorporated in the curriculum. I am aware that my prior knowledge and experiences, coupled with day to day teaching, have informed my practice and my stance as a researcher. I believe that this self-awareness has let me to make a more critical analysis of the documents because I find myself in an educational milieu that favours open-mindedness. Of course, my reading, analysis and interpretation of the documents can never be fully objective and might be different from another person with a different background. However, I believe that I can be open-minded and that my conclusions are based on evidence.

Chapter 4: Analysis

This chapter presents an analysis of Ministry of Education documents from the province of Québec related to the history curriculum and assessment. The analysis was conducted using the critical policy analysis framework (Rata, 2014) that placed the documents within their historical context of the development of ideas related to historical thinking through the 1990s and 2000s. In reading the documents, the methodology of Wineburg (2001) was used: sourcing, close reading of the texts, contextualization, and corroboration. This was followed by an in-depth analysis of the June 2015 Québec history examination. The in-depth analysis was done within the context of the development of a conception of historical thinking proposed by Peck and Seixas (2008). An analytical rubric was developed using the guideposts of different aspects of historical thinking (Seixas and Morton, 2013) in order to systematically analyze the questions in the examination. The results of the analysis were used to develop an argument about the construct validity of the exam that will be addressed in the Chapter 5.

Task Force on the Teaching of History

In Québec during the mid-1990's, as part of the Estates General on Education, a province-wide consultation on curriculum reform, the Minister of Education established the Task Force on the Teaching of History. The mandate of the Task Force was to “return national and world history to its rightful place as a fundamental discipline in the education of young people in Québec” (MEQ 1996, ix) by examining history education in other countries, defining the general objectives of history programs, determining which programs should be mandatory and to indicate the skills that history teachers should have. The Task Force was comprised of teachers, historians and history educators. Most of the report from the Task Force, commonly referred to as the Lacoursière report, consisted of a seventy-eight page examination of the current state of history and social studies programs at the elementary, secondary and junior college levels. This examination focused mainly on the parameters of content knowledge and the organization of the programs. As a result, most of the recommendations of the Task Force were about how substantive knowledge or content in history education should be organized and at what levels.

In regards to historical thinking, The Task Force on the Teaching of History's report, *Learning from the Past* (MEQ, 1996), is a forward thinking document of its own time.

Fundamentally, the task force believed that knowledge of history was central to understanding of our present and to prepare for the future. There is a strong citizenship aspect in the purpose for studying history because as we participate in the present day as citizens, we must understand how society was shaped. The choices that we make as a society today, will define our future. Ultimately the Task Force saw disciplinary history as the “process of asking questions about the past and the ever-changing product of this process” (MEQ, 1996, p.1). The disciplinary framework was the starting point for how the Task Force saw the teaching and learning of history. They define history thinking essentially as the historical method: “The teaching of history is intended to provide us with what is often called “historical thinking”, a specific way of dealing with problems, comprehending their outline and placing them in perspective, and collecting and analyzing appropriate data in order to assess, summarize and interpret them and draw conclusions (MEQ, 1996, p. 4). This strong disciplinary focus on history goes beyond just the memorization of names and dates. Instead, history is constructed and historical thinking should be formed based on the elements of history as a discipline. As a result, there is a deeper understanding about historical thinking in their report. It should be noted however, that the language used in the report may not exactly correspond to the conceptions that researchers and theorists today use when discussing historical thinking. Though the same terminologies may not be used, historical thinking does form the bedrock upon which the Task Force made many of their recommendations

In their discussion about the nature of history and its place in society, the Task Force highlighted some important aspects of historical thinking for a citizen to be a full, participating member of society. For example, the report notes the importance of understanding the concept of cause. They note that a cause is not to be taken in isolation, but rather that there are “complex causal relationships linking events” (MEQ, 1996, p.3). Further, in dealing with the idea of a cause it is central to make distinctions between “the lasting and the transient” and the “accessory from the essential” (MEQ, 1996, p.3). This understanding of causation is very much in line with that of Seixas and Morton (2013) who discuss that the process of change is driven by multiple causes and that some causes have more importance than others. Furthermore, the Task Force recognized that causation happens not just through the actions of individuals but through underlying trends. This is another demonstration of powerful understanding of the concept of cause (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 115).

The Task Force also discussed the idea that it is through history that people understand the “mechanisms” of change and continuity, which implies a deeper understanding of the concept. By studying history students are able to see how current trends in society have developed and make sense of the events that we live in today. Students thus “learn to recognize and weigh the different interests, beliefs, experiences and circumstances that guide human beings inside and outside their own societies, in the past and present” (MEQ, 1996, p.3). Without saying it, the Task Force was referring to the concept of Historical Perspective. The idea that there are different of perspectives both in the past and in the present are examples of a powerful understanding of this concept (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 148). The Task Force also discussed the importance of placing a historical problem in perspective and then collecting evidence in order to interpret and make conclusions. In essence for the Task Force, what they define as ‘historical thinking’ is the historical method. This idea is developed in the report in a number of areas. In particular, the report looks at history teaching in a number of different jurisdictions. In their assessments of the curricula, the Task Force makes an explicit link between critical thinking and methodology of history: “...in all the countries studied, history teaching was given a major role in training citizens, with emphasis on methodological learning, historical thinking, and analytical or critical skills” (MEQ, 1996, p. 34). In the cases of France and Italy, methodological skills and critical thinking were linked. In their assessment of the United States and the United Kingdom, historical thinking was more defined. For example, in the United States historical thinking was defined as chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research, historical issues-analysis, and decision making; along with taking historical perspectives (MEQ, 1996, p. 23). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, historical thinking was seen as: chronology, depth of historical knowledge, interpretations of history and historical enquiry with the added emphasis on increasing difficulty as students move through the grade levels. Creating exit profiles of students’ skill in history was one of the recommendations of the Task Force. By defining what a student should know and be able to do at the end of their studies in secondary history, the Task Force was acknowledging the progressional aspect of historical thinking. They recognized that students build upon prior knowledge and understanding.

The Québec Education Program

The Task Force report formed the starting point from which the new history curriculum was developed in Québec. The history program was part of the QEP that was developed at this time. The QEP is a comprehensive, competency based curriculum that is divided into primary and secondary components. The primary school curriculum was implemented beginning in 2001, with the vision that schools serve an explicit role in the creation of citizens: “Québec schools have a mandate to prepare students to contribute to the development of a more democratic and just society (MEQ, 2001, p. 2)”. The end goal of a democratic and just society would come from the way that students are taught in Québec. The QEP envisions that subject knowledge is integrated into the development of intellectual skills. Students would no longer learn knowledge that is divorced from its context. Rather, knowledge would be integrated into real-world situations and students would be expected to transfer their learning into other new situations. The primary curriculum was followed by the secondary curriculum in 2007 (MELS, 2007a).

The secondary curriculum, was published as a series of different chapters, each aimed at a specific audience of subject specific teachers. The chapters are different for cycles 1 (secondary I and II) and cycle 2 (Secondary III and IV). The first three chapters (MELS, 2007a; 2007b, 2007c) cover the general educational aims of the QEP, the competency based approach and the broad areas of learning. The subsequent chapters were specific to particular subjects or disciplines. The curriculum was not designed to be read in whole, rather teachers are expected to know the parts of the program that are applicable to their own subjects. This study considered the program for cycle 2, the first three general chapters and the seventh chapter – History and Citizenship Education (MELS, 2007d). In total, these chapters encompass almost two hundred pages of the curriculum.

This transfer of knowledge and skill is the essence of the competency based approach. In the QEP’s conception of learning school should provide students with meaningful and open ended situations where the focus is on learning and development (MELS, 2007a). As such, competency development is the core of the curriculum. Schooling in Québec is organized in cycles of two years, with the final cycle of secondary school comprising three years. The reasoning behind cycles is that students require the time to develop their competencies and that student progress happens at different rates. History and Citizenship Education (MELS, 2007d) at

the secondary level is divided into two cycles: Cycle One is comprised of secondary levels I and II, while Cycle Two consists of secondary levels III and IV (Grades 9 and 10). This study is focused on Cycle Two history which is a history Canada and Québec from the origins of Indigenous peoples to the present day.

Competency development in the QEP occurs along two different, but interrelated axes. Students are expected to develop both generic competencies that are used in a variety of subject areas and also subject specific competencies. The generic competencies are referred to as cross-curricular competencies and are organized into four categories: intellectual, methodological, communication-related, and personal-social (MEQ, 2001, p.13). The intellectual competencies are designed so that students can engage with content knowledge at deeper levels. According to the QEP intellectual competencies, "...call on even the youngest students to go beyond superficial memorization of content and mindless conformity, and to aim for a higher level of skill" (MEQ, 2001, p. 14). These four intellectual competencies are: to use information, to solve problems, to exercise critical judgment, and to use creativity. All of these competencies are designed so that students develop their abilities to think critically, deeply, and creatively about the content knowledge that they are learning.

There are two methodological competencies in the QEP, to adopt effective work methods, and to use information and communication technologies (MELS, 2007c). Throughout their course of study students are expected to develop these competencies to aid them in their production of work and to research effectively. Because the QEP is a constructivist curriculum, the ability to develop autonomous work habits is especially important. In using information and communication technologies the QEP recognizes the power of information that is available at our fingertips, "If used appropriately in teaching subject content, ICT accelerate the acquisition and development of many cross-curricular and subject-specific competencies" (MELS, 2007c, p. 15). The caveat here is *if used appropriately*. Appropriate use of technology continues to be an issue in schools. From use of social media, online bullying and harassment, sexting to the ability to judge and weigh the reliability of digital information (Wineburg & McGrew, 2016; McGrew, Ortega, Breakstone & Wineburg, 2017; Breakstone, McGew, Smith, Ortega & Wineburg, 2018) this competency continues to be important for the development of today's citizens.

There are two personal and social competencies: to achieve his/her potential, and to cooperate with others (MELS, 2007c). These two competencies deal with the development of self identity and with the ability to interact in a social and learning environment with others. The communication-related competency is to communicate appropriately, whereby students are expected to develop their abilities to master codes and conventions of the particular method of communication that they select. As well, in this competency, students at the secondary level students are expected to have developed sufficient language skills to aid them in their development of subject specific competencies, in each discipline they are expected to refine the language and codes of the disciplines.

A further element of the QEP that distinguishes it from other curricula are the Broad Areas of Learning. These are designed so that teachers can focus on issues and problematize the content knowledge that students are learning. In effect, the broad areas of learning help contextualize the learning and base the development of competencies on real world situations (MELS, 2007b). When students are presented with issues or problems related to the broad areas of learning they must engage the cross curricular competencies as well as their subject specific competencies. The end goal is the transfer of knowledge and skill to new situations and the ability to respond to challenges as citizens. The QEP has five of these broad areas of learning: Health and Well-Being, Career Planning and Entrepreneurship, Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities, Media Literacy, and Citizenship and Community Life (MELS, 2007b). While some of these broad areas of learning are naturally aligned with certain disciplines: Citizenship and Community life with History and Citizenship for example, it does not preclude a teacher from using Citizenship and Community life in a science class, or a history teacher using Health and Well Being in the history classroom.

In examining the History and Citizenship program, one can see the imprint of the report of the Task Force. While not all of the recommendations of the Task Force made their way into the curriculum, the report certainly provided a blueprint for the new history program. The secondary III curriculum is organized chronologically beginning with the Indigenous people of Québec c. 1500 and ending with Issues in Québec society since 1980. However the secondary IV curriculum takes a thematic approach with five themes: Population, Economy, Culture, Power and Issue in society today (MELS, 2007d). For each of the first four themes, the content is

taught chronologically from the pre-contact time of the Indigenous people until the present day. Thus, the focus in secondary III is on breadth and in secondary IV on depth. As a result, by the end of secondary IV students have been exposed to the chronology of Québec history five times. This was an interesting way to organize the program. While no formal justification was given, it is noteworthy that a student upon finishing their studies would have learnt the chronology of Québec history five times and would presumably be building their knowledge and skill each time they went through the themes in secondary IV. Even though this approach could allow for students to build their historical thinking, seeing the same material five times would also prove to be a tough slog.

The educational aims of the QEP are in line with the recommendations of the Task Force. The program was designed so that students understand the present in light of the past and for them to participate as informed citizens in a pluralistic society. The purpose of the program is therefore designed to have students investigate the past in order to make sense of the present. They are to do so by adopting a historical perspective. This perspective-taking asks students to take into account the duration of events and the complexity of the past. In doing so, students are expected to understand the ways that people in the past and their actions impacted the course of history. The program states, “Adopting this perspective develops students’ reflex to look to the past in order to understand the present (MELS, 2007d, p. 11)”. The program further clearly expresses the citizenship goal of learning history, “... it promotes the exercise of citizenship by helping students grasp the impact of human actions on the course of history, and, by extension the importance of fulfilling their responsibilities as citizens (MELS, 2007d, p. 1.)” By understanding how historical actors grappled with issues in the past, the program envisions that students will be able to understand issues in today’s society and apply critical judgement and reasoning to them.

It is interesting that the conception of historical perspective-taking in the history program encompasses the idea of ‘duration’. This brings to mind that students are expected to see the process of history from a long term perspective, looking for elements of continuity and change. It brings to mind historian Fernand Braudel (1958) who wrote that “rien n’étant plus important d’après nous, au centre de la réalité sociale, que cette opposition vive, intime, répétée indéfiniment, entre l’instant et le temps lent à s’écouler” (p. 726). For the history program, the

longue durée and the development of society are important aspects of student learning and understanding. Although, the program also notes that human action is also important in history. Thus, the program would deal with both the structural aspects of the *longue durée*, but also the human dimension where individuals shape their own present. This interplay between the structure forces of history and human action indicate a high level of historical thinking.

Additionally, the program shows the relationship between different aspects of historical thinking. The process of historical inquiry consists of a number of interrelated disciplinary steps that lead to the development of an interpretation (Lévesque, 2008). This history program posits that students are actively engaging in the enquiry process. It states repeatedly that students are to be put into situations where they are learning to do research, and researching into social phenomenon. In doing this research process, students are to consult various documents, selecting and using these sources critically, and weighing the relevance of the documents (MELS, 2007d). It is through the study of these documents that students begin to construct their interpretations. In doing so, the program asks that they adopt a historical perspective, recognizing that documents might present opposing viewpoints and that they should try to understand the frame of reference of the authors that they are consulting. This integrated use of historical evidence and historical perspective demonstrates that the program views history through the disciplinary lens. And in doing so, the program takes a sophisticated stand in seeing how students use historical thinking skills to construct an interpretation. The program then goes beyond, by asking students to not only seek documents and perspectives, but recognizes that this can only be done by consulting sources that provide historical context. This added step of contextualizing the evidence, and perspectives is really, what in my opinion shows a high degree of historical thinking in this program.

It is fair to say that the history program further sees historical thinking as an intellectual approach. This approach is rooted in the works of Jerome Bruner (1960) and Howard Gardner (1995) on the structure of the disciplines. In history, this habit of mind is based on the realization that history is based on the use of evidence and that students must use the historians “tools of reflection” (MELS, 2007d. p.1).

While the educational aims discussed above demonstrate the goals of the program and how those goals are linked to historical thinking, the heart of the QEP however is the

competency based approach. For the QEP, a competency is “a set of behaviours based on the effective mobilization and use of a range of resources” (MEQ 2001, p. 4). As the organizing principle of the program is based on competency this affects the content of the disciplinary programs in the curriculum. The programs would thus be organized to answer the following questions: What actions does a competent person undertake in these situations? What resources does a person need in order to act competently in these situations? (Jonnaert, et al., 2007). The key to building competency is to have students develop their own competencies through situations which would then allow for transfer into new situations (Roegiers, 2000). The three competencies in the History and Citizenship program are: Examines social phenomena from a historical perspective; Interprets social phenomena using the historical method; and Strengthens his/her exercise of citizenship through the study of history. Thus, the competencies in the program would have a strong disciplinary foundation. It is through the student development of competency in the history classroom by using and practicing their competencies in situations that they are able to learn and develop historical thinking skills that allow them to analyze, and interpret history, and also the social phenomena that they encounter in their everyday lives. This is how students are supposed to “do history”.

The history program sets out the roles that teachers and students should have in the history and citizenship classroom. These roles are based on the ideas of historical thinking. For students: they are to research by asking questions about the society in which they current live and to ask questions about the past. This is the starting point of their research. Research that is based on a variety of documents and that is done with a certain amount of distance so that they can, “step back in order to view the facts, context, beliefs, attitudes and values in perspective” (MELS, 2007d, p. 8). Unfortunately the program does not say more about the role of the student in the classroom. This may be because the program was designed to be open and not prescriptive.

For teachers, their role is that of a mediator. Under the program, the teacher acts as an intermediary between the student and the past, helping in the research and interpretation process. As a result, the teacher is to construct learning and evaluation situations (LES) that include primary sources and promote the development of the thinking tools of historians like continuity, change, duration, periodization, for example. The teacher also helps the students construct their

questions towards the past and questions of the actors and points of view of those in the past. Yet, this process presupposes a strong amount of understanding of historical thinking on the part of the teacher. Researchers have noted that many teachers do not have a strong background in historical thinking. Paul Zanazanian has characterized many Anglophone teachers in Québec as having a “lacking of understanding and pedagogical implementation of both historical content matter and its disciplinary underpinnings” (2016, p. 76.). Meanwhile amongst Francophone teachers, the situation is similarly grim with many history classrooms simply a place for the passive students listening to teachers discussing the narrative and working with textbooks and workbooks (Charland, 2003; Boutonnet, 2013). This poses an obvious problem. While the program presupposes a high level of historical thinking and disciplinary knowledge on the part of teachers, those same teachers according to researchers have a low level of these skills.

The goal of student learning in the history program of the QEP is to acquire historical knowledge and skills in order for transfer to occur. Teachers must thus possess a sophisticated understanding of the discipline of history in order to construct appropriate LES’ that challenge students, at the appropriate level of their competency development, to further and extend their knowledge and skills. This is the model that Lévesque (2008) proposes. In his pedagogical approach, teachers use a planning framework of backwards design where teachers construct a final task that challenges a student to mobilize their knowledge and skills in a challenging task. The skills and knowledge are built during the sequence of activities leading up to the final task. It is through the sophisticated design that targets the growth of historical thinking, the feedback that the teacher gives the student and the use of that feedback by the student that leads to competency development. For teachers that do not have a deep understanding of historical thinking, it would be difficult for them to help students’ develop their competencies, either through LES design or through the use of effective feedback.

The first competency of the history and citizenship program is examines social phenomena from a historical perspective. As the name suggests, this competency is based on historical thinking. The program describes a social phenomenon as “to human action in societies of the past or the present. These phenomena encompass all aspects of the life of a society—the cultural, economic, political and territorial aspects—as well as the social aspect itself” (MELS, 2007d, p. 29). The central way that students are to view historical facts are from this historical

perspective. The competencies in the program all have “key features” that interact with each other and contain elements that students are supposed to employ when studying history. For each of the competencies there is a metacognitive component, while the other key features are directed related to the competency at hand. For the competency examines social phenomena from a historical perspective the three key features are: explores social phenomena in the light of the past, considers social phenomena in terms of duration, and looks at social phenomena in their complexity. Within each of these key features are aspects of historical thinking.

First of all, by exploring social phenomena there is an explicit link to the present. Students are supposed to start with a social phenomenon in the present day and then ask why is it this way? The reasoning is that the historical perspective provides a critical distance from the social phenomena that students are to study. In practice, this would work for example by having students ask a question about the society that they live in like: ‘Why are French and English both spoken in the province of Québec today?’ Students would then go back and search for the answer by using the key features of the competency. For each of the key features, the program provides manifestations of student actions that would allow the competency to be developed. Thus, for the key feature ‘Explores social phenomena in the light of the past’, students are to consider the origin of the social phenomena, seek information about their context, ask questions about beliefs attitudes and values and tries to understand the point of views of historical actors. In this aspect, students are to employ a highly developed form of historical perspective.

Similarly, students are also expected to employ other aspects of historical thinking in developing this competency. One of the other key features is that students are to consider social phenomena in terms of duration. This key feature demonstrates a deep understanding of historical thinking. Students are to use chronology, periodization, and also to examine the synchrony and diachrony of social phenomena and the elements of continuity and change. For example, students could write a hypothesis to the question: “How did the British treat their Canadian subjects following the Conquest of 1760?” Then they could be given a number of primary sources extracts like the Articles of Capitulation, the Royal Proclamation, Instructions to Governor Murray, Letters from the British Merchants and the Quebec Act and asked to identify what changed and what stayed the same with the how the British treated their Canadian subjects. Or, students could place the documents in chronological order on a timeline and further place

documents that represent change above the line or continuity below the line. These types of activities increase the complexity, building historical thinking skills and also strengthen the acquisition of knowledge.

Finally, in this competency, students are expected to look at the social phenomena in its complexity. This involves identifying various aspects of the social phenomena, seeing it in its totality and looking beyond simple monocausal explanations. This part of the competency of looking for more than one cause implies a high level of historical thinking. Because the students are to seek out multiple causes of events, as well as considering the social phenomena in duration, it can be reasonably assumed that students when they are developing their competency in terms of causes they are doing so by looking at causes both in long and short term, as well as contextual causes and flashpoints. Students are expected to do so by using documents presented by the teacher. These documents are to be varied, both primary and secondary as well as being textual and visual. As a result the first competency demonstrates a high degree of historical thinking. It does so across four main areas of historical thinking: evidence, the historical perspective, continuity and change, and cause and consequence.

The second competency is interpreting social phenomena using the historical method. This interpretive aspect of using the historical method revolves around a number of aspects of historical thinking. Because students are employing the historical method, they are expected to use evidence. The program makes specific reference to sources. Sourcing, or the sourcing heuristic (Wineburg, 2001) is the act of reading the attribution and asking questions of documents and their creators in order to make them evidence before actually reading the content of the document. This is a fundamental aspect of historical thinking. As well, the program tasks students to use a diversity of documents. For example, at the beginning of the cycle students can rely on the documents provided by teachers that present the point of view of different historical actors as well as the interpretations of historians. At the end of the cycle, students are expected to find additional documents with alternate points of view (MELS, 2007d, p. 20).

The key features of the competency are also based around the aspects of historical thinking. The first key feature is establishing the factual basis of social phenomena. By doing so, the students are expected to call upon two related aspects of historical thinking: evidence and historical perspective. The program recognizes that aspects of historical thinking are linked and

cannot be learned in isolation from each other. So when students are looking for historical facts, they must consult evidence and look at the diversity in the points of view of the actors and witnesses.

The other key features of the competency involve explaining and interpreting the social phenomena. By explaining, students are to demonstrate a developed idea of causation and consequence. They are to do so, by looking for explanatory factors, which implies that they are to seek out many different causes. Students are to develop their competency by “Taking into consideration various aspects of society, they suggest factors that might explain the social phenomenon, and establish connections among them” (MELS, 2007d, p.17).” Along with looking for a multiplicity of causes they are to look for connections between the causes. This entails looking for causal factors that might be contextualized, or determining that some causes are more influential than others. The clear intent is that students are to recognize that historical events are caused by many factors, and that these factors may operate interdependently with one another. The final manifestation of their explanations is to identify long-term consequences. Though the program only notes long-term consequence, which is linked to the idea of duration in the first competency, there must also be the idea of short-term consequences embedded into the competency. The program also recognizes that historical events lead to many different consequences. Taken together, this is a deep understanding of the concept of cause and consequence (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 115).

Finally, the competency asks students to put their interpretation into perspective by looking at similarities and differences among societies, and most importantly once again using evidence to take into account the frame of reference of the authors consulted. The development of the competency requires students to become critical interpreters of evidence:

The students must increase their ability to analyze and to establish a critical distance with regard to their representations and to those of various historical actors, witnesses and authors. They learn to display a healthy skepticism when they consider the different points of view of actors and witnesses and take into account their specific interests (MELS, 2007d, p. 17).

Using evidence in this way requires the student to develop interpretations that are based on evidence, and on more than one piece of evidence. It also requires students to base their interpretations on the interplay between primary source evidence and the interpretations of historians.

In the techniques section of the program, the authors provide examples of documents that students may use and also provide examples of analysis questions for teachers to help their students think historically about sources and documents. The examples of possible documents that could be used include: maps, charts, diagram, timelines and the interpretation of written document and images. The discussion of the techniques for using written documents is illustrative of the intention of the authors. They suggest analysis questions that involve sourcing the document, contextualizing it within its historical setting, and corroborating it with other documents. The program notes: “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” (MELS, 2007d, p. 92). It should also be noted what is missing. There is no mention of secondary sources as a written document. It is clear that the authors of the program wished that student engage with and used primary source evidence in the construction of their competencies.

The development of competencies that are based on historical thinking requires that the student has an advanced grasp of the content or substantive knowledge of the history program. One of the stated aims of the program is to develop both competency and knowledge, “Students who develop the subject-specific competencies acquire knowledge” (MELS, 2007d, p. 32). Historical knowledge however, is not to be transmitted to students in a didactic way by the teacher, but rather it is thought the LES’ that the teacher implements that new knowledge is constructed by the student. LES’ invoke the use of the historical method and thus form the base of historical thinking. The QEP notes that “[t]he situation must require research (gathering, selecting and analyzing data), involve reasoning processes such as induction, deduction and analogy and draw on students’ capacity to question, use critical judgment and synthesize (MELS, 2007d, p.9). These situations are complex, in that students are mobilizing the content knowledge and the skills of historical thinking simultaneously. This requires a high degree of subject matter

knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (VanSledright, Maggioni, & Reddy, 2012) on the part of the teacher.

Overall, the History and Citizenship Education program shows a highly developed conception of historical thinking that could legitimately enhance historical thinking among students in Québec schools. The program recognizes that historical thinking skills are developed within the context of historical content knowledge (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lévesque, 2008; VanSledright, 2011; Counsell, 2011). In particular, the program emphasizes the historical thinking concepts of historical perspective, evidence, cause and consequence and continuity and change. The emphasis that is placed on these concepts is at the level of deep understanding (Seixas & Morton, 2013). These are the types of skills that have been championed by history educators (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Wineburg, 2001; VanSledright, 2002; Seixas & Peck, 2004, and Lévesque, 2008). The program has a solid foundation of disciplinary knowledge of history and skill acquisition and the way that the competencies were designed and would allow for students to continually develop those competencies over the two years of study of history in high school to become historical thinkers.

Debate Over the History and Citizenship Program

The History and Citizenship program sparked a heated debate once it was released. Opponents and supporters of the program clashed in the press and in academic publications (Létourneau, 2011; Poulin, 2015). Létourneau (2011) framed the debate as a high stakes one based around two ideas: the meaning of the grand narrative of Québec history, and the pedagogical approach taken to teach this history. Opponents of the program attacked it across three axes: the de-nationalization of the program, the teaching and learning of historical skills as opposed to factual knowledge and the emphasis of studying history for the purposes of pluralist citizenship creation. Thus, for critics, taken together these three elements cut the heart of Québécois culture and identify -- the new program undermined national identity by favouring disciplinary knowledge over collective knowledge and promoted a pluralist, multicultural present and future.

Critics like the president of the association of history teachers in Québec at the time denounced the new program as biased towards a federalist point of view, and full of “disinformation” and concluded that it was nothing more than federalist propaganda imposed on

the national history of Québec (Bouvier & Lamontagne, April 28, 2006). For others, the problem was related to competency development over the transmission of the national narrative of Québec. In their reading and understanding of the program, there were no longer established facts of the grand narrative to be transmitted to the student. Instead, the notion that competency development and the construction of knowledge provided problematic. For Bouvier (2007) the main problem of the new program was the systematic removal of the national narrative from the program. He recommended instead a return to the ideals of objective based, political history with the occasional elements of economic or social history as proposed by the 1960s Royal Commission on Education *Parent Report*. The national narrative was key for these critics as it represents the heart of their own identity. The new curriculum posed a threat because it challenged their sense of common identity and the notion that that identity could be transmitted to the next generation of Québec citizens. As Létourneau (2011) noted in his analysis of the debate, “memories of survival and, therefore, a shared cultural heritage are fading away. Students are being taught that history is a mere presentation of the past, and that the past can be built using a method that leaves room for interpretational relativity and that brings established accounts into question” (p.87). Instead of a history curriculum for present day realities with multiple perspectives and questions about the past, critics wanted a return to a traditional pedagogy much like the one they received in school.

Supporters of the program like Laville (May 6, 2006) and Cardin (April 29, 2006) noted that the new program promoted essential skills of historical thinking that would help students not only to decipher the past, but to also situate themselves in the present, as participatory citizens in Québec society. Éthier (2007) reasons that students who learn to do history with the historical method develop skills that are directly relevant to citizenship education. This is the same defence of historical thinking that Barton and Levstik (2004) proposed.

Progression of Learning

In response to criticism about the lack of content knowledge in the different programs of the QEP, the Ministry of Education produced more specific progressions of learning that were designed to provide further curricular information to teachers. The progression of learning documents were designed to complement the curriculum program, and not replace it. Knowledge and competency according to the progression, “raises the challenging question of

how to make this knowledge useful and durable, and thus evokes the notion of competency” (MELS, 2011b, p.3). For History and Citizenship Education the progression contains the content knowledge of the program through Secondary III and Secondary IV. As such, this document is fifty-three pages of tables that present the historical knowledge in terms of statements. These statements are in essence behaviours (actions) that students are to take in order to demonstrate their knowledge.

Despite the fact that the progression of learning is designed to complement and promote competency development, in history there appears to be very little compatibility between the progression and the historical program. The program is based entirely on the idea that students are actively developing competencies over two years and if a student were to cycle with a teacher over the two years the teacher could see and document growth. However, if a student had two different teachers there could be overlap in the content being taught. For example, the QEP does not state exactly what is to be taught in a particular time period, but rather in broad generalizations like in the section on New France in Secondary III: “economic activities” and “internal administration of the colony” (MELS, 2007d, p.41) and in Secondary IV in Population and Settlement “policies encouraging immigration and large families” (MELS, 2007d, p. 68) and in Economy and Development “economy based on fur” and “economic policies” (MELS, 2007d, p. 72). The original goal was to promote the independence of the teacher as a professional, “This knowledge is presented in an overall manner, to respect teachers’ professional autonomy—it is up to them to make their own decisions concerning the number and nature of the facts to present...” (MELS, 2007d, p. 32). Based on my experience as department head and as the social studies lead teacher for the Western Québec School Board teachers that were used to teaching under the prescribed older curriculum were unsure what to teach. They were unsure about how much depth should they go into on a particular topic, what should be emphasized, how much time should be spent on skill and how much on content acquisition. Therefore, the progression was designed to provide clarity as to what knowledge should be taught at what level. This is a legitimate pedagogical concern. However, the progression of learning is not aligned to the program as it was originally written. In Secondary III, the progression of learning does not explicitly mention economic activities, instead historical knowledge is divided into four sections related to colonization of New France and relations with the English colonies in North America (MELS, 2011b, pp. 9-10). In Secondary IV the idea of an economy based on fur and economic

policies are expanded upon (MELS, 2011b, p. 34). The result is a disjuncture in the development of knowledge and by extension competency development. A student is supposed to examine the society of New France in Secondary III and form an interpretation about the impact of colonization efforts (MELS, 2007d, p. 41) but they are to do this without learning about the status of the economy and the economic policies of the mother country that governed New France. The result would be that students would produce a simplistic, unrefined interpretation. It would be difficult for a student to develop their competencies without the full knowledge of the social phenomena. In this case, a student would be in the development stage of their history competencies. As students move from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 one would expect to see the complexity of the historical material increase, along with the use of the key features of the competency of historical thinking. With only some historical content, students would only be partially developing their competency. Since the competencies are based on historical thinking, the development of competency is the act of becoming a historical thinker. As Lévesque (2008) notes:

...sophisticated historical thinkers are not those who have successfully moved away from content acquisition to the mastery of procedural knowledge but those who have made significant progress in understanding both the substance of the past and the ideas (procedures and concepts) necessary to make sense of it. (p.31)

What the Progression of Learning does not do is provide a progression of what students' historical thinking should look like as they pass through Cycle 2 history. Rather, it is an overly prescriptive aggregation (Lee & Shemilt, 2003) of content knowledge that stands in contrast to the History and Citizenship Education program that has a strong level of historical thinking, mostly based on historical perspective, evidence, cause and consequence and continuity and change. As a result the behaviour descriptions that are related to historical thinking are few and far between.

For the most part, while reading the progression of learning, one notices that the descriptors are related to rote learning and knowledge comprehension. Verbs like 'names', 'indicates', and 'describes' appear again and again throughout the document. A count of these verbs in the Progression of Learning shows that 'describes' occurs twenty-four times, 'names' occurs ninety-eight times, and 'indicates' an astounding three hundred and fifteen times (MELS,

2011b)! Some examples of the way that these verbs are used are: “Indicates the context for the first meetings between European fishers and Amerindians: fishers drying cod on the shores of the Gulf of St. Lawrence met Amerindian hunters” (MELS, 2011b, p.34). This statement is factual, there is no discussion about the causes or the consequences of the meetings, or the perspectives of the different actors – the fishermen and the indigenous peoples. Another example is: “Names the period of strong population growth that began after the Second World War and ended in the early 1960s: the baby boom” (MELS, 2011b, p.29).” Yet again there is nothing on what caused the baby boom, the consequences of this growth or even how this phenomena fits into long term demographic trends in society. Simply stated, students are expected to know what this period is called.

There are some examples where these verbs could be used in an historical thinking context. For example, ‘name’ could refer to the point of view of a particular actor. As well, ‘indicate’ or ‘describe’ could also be linked to historical perspective or other aspects of historical thinking depending on how they are phrased. Through a close reading of the document (Wineburg, 2001) it is possible to tease out some indirect elements of historical thinking. For example, the way that ‘indicate’ in relation to the Great Depression is phrased as: “Indicates measures introduced by the federal government in the social arena following the economic crisis of the 1930s: unemployment insurance, family allowances” (MELS, 2011b, p. 19). In this instance the knowledge statement could be read as a simple piece of information that must be remembered, or it could be interpreted as multiple consequences related to the Great Depression. From a curriculum point of view, it is dependent on the choices that the teacher makes.

Other elements of historical thinking present in the document also are dependent upon the choices of the teacher. In the outline of knowledge related to New France, students are expected to know the “Effects of the colonization programs” (MELS, 2011b, p. 10) which are further defined as “Indicates the effect of the colonization programs of the chartered companies and of the state on economic activity: development of the fur trade” and “Indicates the effects of the colonization programs on relations with the Amerindians (e.g. conversion, alliances and rivalries)” (MELS, 2011b, p.10). Another example of how consequences are implied in the Progression of Learning deals with the Long Depression of the 1870’s. Point 5.3.a states, “Names some facts about the economic depression of the 1870s (e.g. precarious financial

situation of some banks, increased unemployment)” (MELS, 2011b, p. 40). Here there is no mention of what were the causes of this depression and, in fact, the main political consequences of this depression are not even found in the same section! The related content knowledge is found in point 6.2.b. “Indicates the solution chosen to develop the domestic market and Canadian industry in the second half of the 19th century: increasing customs duties after adopting the National Policy” (MELS, 2011b, p. 40).

However, despite the presence of elements of historical thinking, there is no sign of higher level thinking in the document such as short or long term consequence, or intended or unintended consequence. Rather, the idea of consequence, as in the examples, is at the level of limited understanding (Seixas and Morton, 2013, p. 115) because students are only required to list consequences.

There is one section of the progression that contains more examples of historical thinking than the others --this is the theme Official and Countervailing Powers. For each of the elements of knowledge, the presentation is the same: The student is to identify historical actors, indicate their demands, indicate the way they tried to influence decisions, and indicate the effects of the power relations. Through the demands made by the historical actors, students are to use historical perspective and the effects of the power relations is related to consequence. An example is from the period of British Rule, 1760-1867:

Power Relations between Church and state

- a. Identifies players who embody power relations between the Church and the state: king, bishops, governors
- b. Indicates demands made by the Church: appointment of a Catholic bishop, collection of tithes
- c. Indicates the means used by the Church to influence the decisions of the state: submitting requests to the king
- d. Indicates effects of the power relations between the Church and the state (e.g. appointment of a Superintendent of the Catholic Church in Canada; suggestion by Monseigneur Lartigue that the population of Lower Canada should submit to British authority during the Rebellions) (MELS, 2011b, p.48)

In this case there are a number of problematic areas. First, while students are looking at historical perspective they are only looking at only one – the Church. Even though the theme is power relations, students are not asked to provide the perspectives of the state. As well, the program makes numerous references to the fact that students must consider social phenomena in terms of duration. Despite this key part of the competency development, the progression makes no mention of continuity or change. This is problematic in this instance because of the way that this period has been conceptualized. This historical period covers almost one hundred years of history, and one must ask how students can understand historical perspective without considering if that perspective continued or changed over time during this period. Once again how these statements in the progression of learning are interpreted to represent advanced levels of historical thinking is contextually dependant on the teacher. If the teacher is using the progression as a complement to the program and creating LES' where students are asking questions and analyzing sources in order to understand multiple perspectives and a multitude of consequences, then it could represent a powerful example of historical thinking. Taken without the context of the wider History and Citizenship program, the Progression of Learning presents the facts, but there is no sense of depth. For students to deploy factual knowledge, they need to learn it in a context, which historical thinking provides. It is that interplay between using factual knowledge, historical thinking and depth of understanding that is important (Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lévesque, 2008; VanSledright, 2010; Counsell, 2011). It is these links that students must make and demonstrate in order to become proficient in their competencies. Rather than providing a tool to aid the teacher to combine the substantive and procedural knowledge, the Progression of Learning promotes a pedagogy of coverage. As it is presented, the progression of learning does not show a high level of historical thinking. As such, it ignores its overall goal. Instead it cuts up substantive knowledge and while making it easier for teachers who do not have a strong background in history pedagogy, it paradoxically makes it more difficult for students to develop their competencies in history. The Progression of Learning also says nothing about how students' historical thinking should grow over time and provides no model of what students should be able to do at the end of their studies in History and Citizenship Education.

Framework for the Evaluation of Learning

Interestingly, the Ministry of Education subsequently released a short framework for evaluating students in history. This brief document, only six pages long, had the goal to give teachers more guidance in how the competencies would be evaluated on ministerial examinations and how grade would be reported on report cards. The frameworks reinforced the role of knowledge in the curriculum by noting that students must be proficient in the knowledge outlined in the progression of learning. As well, the framework for the history program highlighted two criteria to be considered for the examination. These criteria were: appropriate use of knowledge and rigour of reasoning (MELS, 2011a, p. 5). For the criterion appropriate use of knowledge, the document set out a number of intellectual operations that are related to the discipline of history and historical thinking. Some examples of intellectual operations are:

- Situate in time and space
- Determine explanatory factors and consequences
- Determine elements of continuity and changes
- Establish connections between facts
- Establish causal connections (MELS, 2011a, p.6)

These intellectual operations form the disciplinary skills or manifestations of the historical competencies of the program that students are expected to demonstrate in their evaluations. Teachers were to use this document as a reference to develop their own learning tasks. However, no model tasks or sample questions were provided to teachers. In fact, these intellectual operations were not broken down into component parts. There really was no frame upon which teachers could affix learning. Teachers were now left with the situation of working with three separate documents: The QEP, the Progression of Learning and the Frameworks for the Evaluation of Learning. Since the QEP is a competency based program and competency is developed and demonstrated by being applied in situations, it is appropriate to ask: does the examination reflect situation(s) that enable students to demonstrate their competency development?

Analysis of the First Exam

For the sake of this research, the analysis of examination focuses on two particular sets of examinations. The first exam is pre-QEP and is intended to establish a baseline and historical context for the subsequent examinations that followed with the implementation of the QEP, Progression of Learning and Evaluation Framework of Learning. The previous History of Québec and Canada program (MEQ, 1983) was an objective based course in which students studied the history of Québec and Canada in seven consecutive modules. The objectives were framed around understanding and describing events in national history; although there were some mentions of cause and consequence in the program as well (MEQ, 1983, p.22).

The first examination analyzed was from 2004 (MEQ, 2004). This examination had 28 items, of which 22 were multiple choice, five were short answer and one was an essay-type or extended response question. Overall, most of the items were memory recall, but the examination showed some elements of historical thinking, mostly in three categories: use of evidence, continuity and change and cause and consequence. I found no evidence of the three other categories of historical thinking: historical significance, historical perspective, and the ethical dimension. There were no items where a student had to explain the historical significance of an event or to compare the importance of events. There were also no items where students had to identify the point of view of historical actors or to link a point of view to a substantive concept. Finally, there were no questions that asked a student to reflect on controversial aspects of the past or to identify ethical stances in historical writing. In fact, I found that there were no questions where a student was asked to make any type of judgment at all. This examination is about the recall of historical content and not about historical thinking.

Many of the multiple choice questions only require the student to have recall of content knowledge and did not have any elements of historical thinking. For example, question number seven:

In 1763, the Treaty of Paris established the conditions for peace between Britain and France.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS DESCRIBES AN ELEMENT OF THE TREATY OF PARIS IN 1763.

A) The territory of the Province of Quebec extended from Labrador to the Ohio Valley.

- B) France ceded to Britain all its North American territories except the islands of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon.
- C) English civil and criminal law was to be applied in the Province of Quebec.
- D) French political institutions were maintained in the British colony. (MEQ, 2004, p. 7)

There is no historical thinking required for this question. A student would need to have content knowledge of the Treaty of Paris and be able to know which of the choices were related to the Royal Proclamation of 1763. This type of multiple choice question demonstrates recall and the requirement of content knowledge. It was precisely this type of memory and recall skill that the QEP was designed to replace. The new curriculum was to focus more on thinking and less on memory work.

Some of the questions rely on generic literacy skills of the student and the recall of content knowledge. Two examples of this type of question are the second and sixth questions of the exam (MEQ, 2004, pp. 2, 6). The second question tasks the student with reading four excerpts from secondary sources and selecting which one matches the geographic characteristics of the St. Lawrence Lowlands that allowed the French to settle in the 17th Century. In order to be successful on this question, the student should have knowledge of the geographic characteristics of the St. Lawrence Lowlands and the ability to read the text. However, this question also represents an example of how the poor selection of distractors can inadvertently lead to the correct answer. Two of the documents discuss climatic and soil conditions that could not be used for settlement so immediately, the question is reduced to a fifty/fifty proposition. The third incorrect document describes a chain of mountains, which would also not be suitable for farming. Thus, a test-wise student could use logic to arrive at the correct answer without actually knowing about the geographic features of the St. Lawrence Lowlands.

Likewise, the sixth question on the exam tasks the student with reading four secondary sources and selecting the document that describes the role of the Catholic Church in New France during the French Regime. This question relies on the literacy skills of the student, recall of content knowledge of the role of the Catholic Church, as well as the ability to situate the content of the text to the time period of the “French Regime”. As with the previous example, a student who has developed test-taking skills could reduce the number of options. One of the documents

does not actually describe a role of the Catholic Church at all. Rather, it recounts how James Murray allowed Jean-Olivier Briand to return to France to be consecrated bishop (MEQ, 2004, p. 6). Instead of four choices, a student with good literacy and test taking skills could immediately strike off one of the choices.

Another type of question required a student to select the correct document in three different concepts – political, social and economic – for the correct time period (MEQ, 2004, pp. 26-27). The time periods in the question are fixed, the period of the Chartered Companies 1608-1663 and the period of Royal Government 1663-1760. The question reinforces the idea that time periods are fixed which reflects a limited understanding of periodization (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 86). The task itself requires a student to use recall and literacy skills in order to match the document to the period. Since the student is not tasked with creating their own time period, but only selecting a document that represented a fixed period, this question does not represent historical thinking either.

The examination also has three timeline questions, where the student is supposed to select the correct time period on the timeline. For example, question 18 begins with the statement: “The documents below illustrate a period of prosperity in Québec’s history (MEQ, 2004, p. 18).” This is followed by three documents: a graph showing the percentage of rural properties with electricity, a secondary source excerpt describing increased purchasing power, and a map of Québec with circles representing iron ore deposits in the north of the province. The timeline provides the student with four periods to choose from: 1939-1945, 1945-1960, 1960-1980 and 1980-2000 (MEQ, 2004, p. 18). These dates correspond to established periods: the Second World War, The Duplessis Era, The Quiet Revolution and to Contemporary Québec, once again reinforcing the limited understanding of periodization (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 86). In both of these examples, there is no historical thinking that is happening on the part of the student, rather the examination requires the student to recall information and use generic literacy skills. Despite most of the question requiring no historical thinking, there was some evidence of the use of historical thinking in the examination.

Evidence

In the multiple choice section, only five questions showed some elements of historical thinking. Most of these questions relied on the use of evidence, a mix of primary – mostly images - and secondary sources (MEQ, 2004). For example in question 13, the question tasked students to analyze five different documents and choose the two from the list of alternatives that were causes of the Canadian federation. The documents included a primary source photograph, two textual excerpts from secondary sources, a table from a secondary source, and the cover page of Lord Durham’s Report, which is a primary source from 1839. However, students were not asked to analyze any text from Lord Durham’s Report; they were to recall what Lord Durham’s report was and if it was connected to Confederation. A close reading of the question indicates a low level of historical thinking. The question does not require that students use the sources in any particular way. The historical photograph (figure 1, MEQ, 2004, p. 12), the only primary source, shows a number of men lined up, visibly handcuffed to one another with the caption “Métis prisoners, following the Northwest Rebellion.”



Figure 1 Group photograph of Metis and Native prisoners from the North West Rebellion 1885, Library and Archives Canada PA-118760

The student does not have to analyze the document at all. They only need to read the title and think about whether or not the Northwest Rebellion was a cause of the Canadian federation or not. The source information is not provided. As a result, there is no interpretive aspect at all; the student is not required to turn the source into evidence. Multiple choice questions are not suited to measuring higher order thinking in history, but rather are suited to factual recall (Reich, 2009; Breakstone, Smith & Wineburg, 2013). Furthermore in an analysis of the New York State exam Reich (2013) concluded that students did not even master the factual knowledge in the state standards despite arriving at the correct answer. Smith (2017) had students employ a think aloud protocol while answering multiple choice questions from the National Assessment of Education Progress history exam. The results indicated that no item elicited historical thinking, but rather factual recall, reading comprehension and test-taking strategies. As well, like Reich (2013), Smith (2017) found that students who employed factual recall in their answers had a weak understanding of the actual historical content. These findings, along with this document analysis of the 2004 Québec examination (MEQ, 2004) indicate that multiple choice questions are not suited for assessing historical thinking.

Another question tasked students to choose between four historical photographs the one that showed an aspect of the second phase of industrialization. An analysis of the image is not required to answer the question. Once again, the student does not have to interpret the image at all. Like the previous example, the photographs had captions that gave important clues. For instance, the correct photograph (figure 2), had the following caption: “The role of hydroelectricity in Shawinigan’s industrial development.” (MEQ, 2004, p. 15).

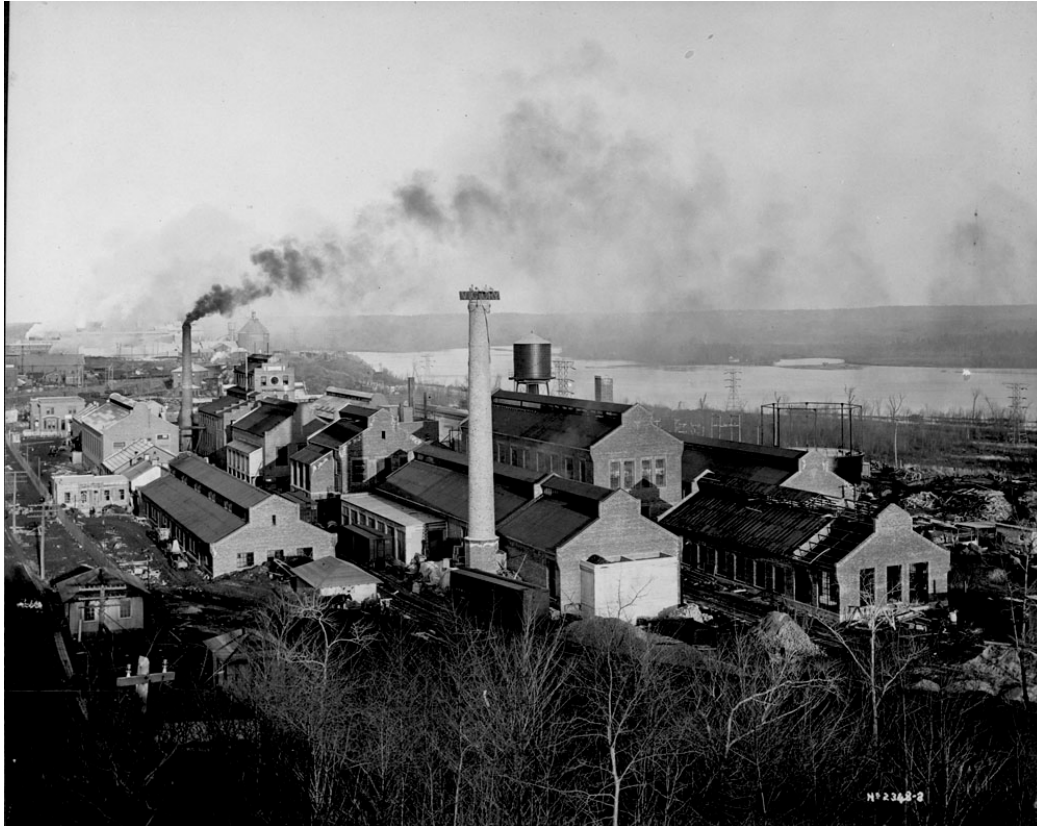


Figure 2 Gen. view of Canadian Electro Products Co. Ltd. and Extension, Shawinigan Falls, P.Q. Library and Archives Canada, PA-024468

The caption provides two clues for the student that the image does not. The caption mentions hydroelectricity, a key feature of the second phase of industrialization, and Shawinigan, a territorial aspect of the second phase. However, a student might not even need to recall these historical facts in order to answer this question. The distractor documents are from the timber trade, probably around 1850, the Great Depression and the Second World War. None, except the correct document show industrialization of any kind. Thus, instead of knowing something about the second phase of industrialization and applying that knowledge by selecting the right document, the student only needed to select the document that showed the factory.

One example where students are required to think historically about a primary source is a multiple choice question that asked student to choose two documents that describe changes during the Quiet Revolution. Of the five documents, four were secondary sources and one, an image, was a primary source (figure 3). Like the other questions, this one also had a caption, but the caption was generic “Québec Liberal Party Poster during an election campaign (MEQ, 2004

p. 21) and did not really give any useful information to the student. Some students might have picked up the clue about the Liberal Party, but it is the analysis of the image that is the most important part of the question. In this case, students could analyze the image and make inferences about the slogan “*Maîtres Chez Nous*” or the lightning bolts in the clenched fist symbolizing the nationalization of hydroelectricity.



Figure 3 “*Maîtres Chez Nous*,” Liberal Party of Québec, 1962 Accessed from: <http://bilan.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/pages/evenements/20947.html>

In another question, students were tasked with identifying which document indicated a particular concept (MEQ, 2004, pp. 30-31). In this case, they were asked to link the document to the cause and the consequence, and to the measures adopted by the government in order to help people during the Great Depression. The documents in this question include three primary sources: a direct relief coupon, a headline from the *Montreal Gazette*, and a historical photograph. Despite the fact that there are three primary sources in the question, the students are not tasked with analyzing them. Instead, the problem is simply a matching question whereby students are linking the document, or the substantive concept that the document represents to the other concept of cause, consequences, and measures taken by the government. The way that the documents are presented, like the previous questions, includes a descriptive title that provides the most relevant information. The result is that the student does not need to analyze the documents, they can rely solely on the titles: Direct relief coupon, The Stock Market Crash, and Public Dormitory, in order to complete the matching task.

In the essay question, students are asked to use the documents provided in order to write about the social changes associated with the first phase of industrialization (MEQ, 2004, pp. 34-39). Students were given seven documents, of which three were primary sources - all were images. Unlike the primary source images in the other questions, students actually have to analyze the images in order to find evidence to answer the question. For example, students are asked to present evidence of working conditions. The associated source is an engraving showing the inside of a factory (figure 4). The students must then analyze this image in order to make their inferences of what working conditions were like at the time. However, students are not provided with much contextual sourcing information such as the year the image was created or the place it depicted.



Figure 4 Interior of Workshop 1850-1885. John Henry Walker. McCord Museum of Canadian History M930.50.8.79

It is possible that students could contextualize the image based on their prior knowledge and corroborate with the other sources that were provided to them. Likewise, another image that was provided to the students was the interior of a working class home (Figure 5, MEQ, 2004, p. 39). This was also an engraving, but from the *Canadian Illustrated News*. Once again the students were not provided with the contextual details for their historical analysis.



Figure 5 *The Montreal Poisoning Horror. Canadian Illustrated News. Vol VIII, 23 1873 p. 356 (Detail)*

The image is actually an element from a larger visual that shows the narrative of a poisoning case that was undoubtedly scandalous at the time. Thus, the original meaning and purposes of the image are lost. Instead, students are to use the image to gain information about the living conditions of the working class. But students could also corroborate their inferences from this document with information provided in the secondary sources, like information on child mortality rates in working class districts of Montreal, which is also included. For the use of evidence, most of the sources can be used without analysis. When analysis is required, contextual information is not provided. In this examination, how students use historical evidence is inconsistent.

Cause and Consequence

The ministerial examination uses different terms to mean the same thing. For the concept of consequence, the terms ‘consequence,’ ‘result,’ and ‘effect’ are used interchangeably in the text. Due to the lack of uniformity in terminology, I have decided to consider them as synonymous to mean consequence and have used them that way in my analysis. For example, the first question on the exam is a complex multiple choice question that asks students to select two statements from five possible statements that describe results of Jacques Cartier’s three voyages to the new world (MEQ, 2004, p. 1). None of the statements are accompanied by documents so there is no analysis by the student, only recall. Question 9 is similar asking the students to indicate which two statements, once again from a possible list of five statements, that describe consequences of

the American independence. As with the question 2, there are no documents, just a recall question. Despite the fact that there is no analysis there is the implication that there are multiple consequences to events since students are required to select two items.

As seen above, question 23 is a question about economic consequences in which students are to analyze three documents: a map, a cartoon and a secondary source text³. The question is worth three marks and the student is required to identify two out of the three consequences of the fur trade on the economy of New France. This question has a higher degree of historical thinking because it requires students to identify multiple consequences. But did the students just memorize the consequences? It is unclear if the answer demonstrates that students understand the concept of consequence. While students are required to use documents they are not justified to explain the consequences or their impact. When judging whether the question reflects historical thinking it is possible to claim that it does because of the requirement that students use historical documents in order to develop their answers.

As with question 23, question 26 requires the use of documents in order to answer a consequence question. With this question, students have to match a document to two negative effects of the Great Depression (MEQ, 2004, pp. 30-31). There is the requirement on the student's part to do some analysis and then to match the document to the concept of 'negative effect'. Once again students are required to identify more than one consequence of a historical event. Taken together, there are four questions on consequence, and all of them compel students to identify multiple consequences, which is a higher level of historical thinking.

For causation there is only one question in the examination. Question 13 asks about causes of the Canadian federation, and students are tasked to identify two documents, which leads to the idea of multiple causes (MEQ, 2004, pp. 12-13). However, the students are not required to determine the influence of the causes, nor to indicate if the causes are short or long term, nor to determine whether or not the cause is related to human action or to the conditions at the time. As with the concept of consequence, there is no more depth to the question than the mere identification that there are multiple consequences. As discussed before with primary

³ Textual excerpts are always relatively short in the exam. Often they are no more than two sentences with the longest being six lines.

source evidence, one of the issues that is pervasive with the examination is that each document, text or image, has a corresponding title or caption. The implication of this is that a student who brings a strong content knowledge understanding to the exam does not necessarily need to read beyond the titles. There is an absence of a demonstration of powerful understanding in how the components of multiple long and short causes and consequences are addressed (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 115). Nowhere are students required to think about cause and consequence, rather they are merely tasked with identifying the cause or the consequence.

Continuity and Change

The exam has a number of questions that deal with the concept of continuity and change. The first is a complex multiple choice question that begins with the statement: “Despite the major changes that were made in New France after 1663, in some respects the colony was marked by continuity throughout the French régime” (MEQ, 2004). This statement tells students that change and continuity coexist, which is a key element of historical thinking. However, students are not tasked with identifying *both* continuity and change. The question only asks them to select two elements of continuity from five choices, without any reference to historical sources. Another multiple choice question asks the student to identify a change brought about by the Statute of Westminster. While the question is about change, it is merely a recall question with no analysis or judgement by the student. Also, the student is not required to consider whether or not there are multiple changes or if the Statute of Westminster is a turning point in Canadian history.

A more advanced question about change is offered later in the exam. Question 20 is a complex multiple choice question that requires students to choose two of the five possibilities (MEQ, 2004, pp. 20-21). Unlike the previous complex multiple choice question, this question includes documents which enhances the historical thinking component by requiring students to identify more than one change. As well, the question implies the notion of turning point with an opening statement describing the Quiet Revolution as being “a period of unprecedented change for Québec” (MEQ, 2004). Since students are required to do two steps with the question -- document analysis and the identification of multiple changes -- there is an enhanced level of historical thinking.

The item on the examination that most demonstrates deep understanding of historical thinking is the essay. The task was “Write an essay of approximately 150 words on the social changes associated with the first phase of industrialization in Québec” (MEQ, 2004, p. 34). This task uses primary sources, but it also requires students to consider the coexistence of continuity and change. The required elements in the essay include two social changes and one element of continuity in living conditions between the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. As well, the statement that introduces the question implies that the first phase of industrialization was a turning point because it led to profound changes.

This question also deals with the concepts of cause and consequence. To answer the question, students must identify some consequences of the first phase of industrialization along with the elements of continuity and change. What mitigates historical thinking in this question is the shortness of the response. It is difficult for students to explain their thinking in 150 words or less. However, coupled with aspects of social changes, the essay asks them to write about two working conditions and one element of living conditions of the working class; three consequences of changes that had been taking place in society. Thus, the essay contains a fair number of historical thinking elements.

Overall, the examination assesses low levels of historical thinking. This is not surprising considering the curriculum (MEQ, 1983) which serves as the basis for this assessment. The examination also reveals the challenges of evaluating both substantive content knowledge and procedural knowledge. Even when trying to evaluate content elements of historical thinking are inevitably present in the examination.

Analysis of the Second Exam

With the changes in the curriculum and the implementation of a new history program, the format and structure of the examination changed as well. The examination analyzed for this study was the version of June 2015. The History and Citizenship Examination (MELS, 2015a; MELS, 2015b) is structured around four booklets: a question booklet that contains all of the examination items, an answer booklet where students write their answers, a diagram and draft sheet for preparatory work on the essay and a document file. The examination is laid out by theme -

Population and Settlement, Economy and Development, Culture and Currents of Thought, Official and Countervailing Powers -- with the order of the themes changing from year to year. Within each theme, the questions are presented chronologically with the exception of a question that asks students to identify a time period. There are 21 short answer questions that cover three of the four themes, with the final theme composing the essay question. The document file presents documents, visual and textual, primary and secondary sources in two page spreads. Typically a section of documents will have between nine and twelve documents, including the essay component.

In the analysis of the examination, historical thinking is found in four of the six categories: evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, and historical perspective. There was no indication of historical significance or the ethical dimension, which is in line with the elements of historical thinking that are in the QEP. In comparison with the previous examination from 2004, the major change is the addition of the historical perspective. The structure of the examination itself led to more references to historical thinking with short answer questions having replaced multiple choice ones. This strategy invited students to construct their answers rather than selecting from written choices.

While the 2015 examination had more historical thinking than the previous examination, there were examples of questions that only required recall from students, or for students to use generic literacy skills. One of these recall questions tasked students to “Name the group of immigrants from the United States who demanded English institutions in the Province of Quebec in the late 18th century” (MELS, 2015b, p. 1). This is only a recall question. Students are expected to indicate the Loyalists as an answer. The document in the document file that is to help the student is a secondary source excerpt from a history textbook (MELS, 2015a, p.2). While the document does not explicitly name the group, there are a number of hints: 6000 building homes in what would be Ontario, the chronological reference point of the 1790s and the demand for British laws and the parliamentary system. It is unclear whether or not this document would be helpful to a student. However, a student with strong literacy skills would be able to realize that the document was linked to the question. In order to arrive to the correct answer however, the student could only answer the question through recall.

An example of a question that on the surface required a student to use literacy skills in order to answer a question was one that asked students to use a document to “compare the means used by the *Front de libération du Québec* with those used by the *Parti québécois* to obtain the independence of Québec: (MELS, 2015b, p. 4). The two documents were a text excerpt from a textbook and an image of the victory of the *Parti québécois* in the 1976 election. Neither document actually mentions or shows the means used. Instead, the student really is required to recall that the FLQ was a terrorist organization and the PQ a political party that contests elections. Like the previous example, it is unclear whether or not the document actually helped the student. Literacy skills could have once again helped the student, as the document makes reference to the October Crisis and the deployment of the army by the federal government. However, this question fundamentally is about recalling content knowledge.

The 2004 examination and the 2015 examination share some similarities in the way that time periods are treated as fixed and how questions about chronology are constructed. The first question on the 2015 examination is a timeline question: “Document 9 refers to a period in the history of Québec. Circle the letter that corresponds to this period on the timeline” (MELS, 2015b, p. 1). This question is almost exactly the same as the timeline questions on the 2004 examination (MEQ, 2004, p. 3). The only difference being, instead of two or three documents to help the student situate the time period in 2004, in 2015 the student only received one, an excerpt from a student textbook that described the demographic situation of Québec in terms of ethnic origin. For a student to be successful on the question they would have to know when these demographic changes happened. This question, like in 2004, represents a recall question and does not represent historical thinking because the periodization is not interpretive (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 86). Another question that was similar to the 2004 examination was the last short answer question which asked the student to indicate whether or not four documents were cultural expressions before or after 1945 (MELS, 2015b, p.6). This skill was very close to the 2004 question that tasked the student with classifying statement into two time periods (MEQ, 2004, p. 29). The questions differ in that in 2015, the student had to classify documents, two secondary and two primary, one an image and the other a text. The use of the primary sources will be discussed below in the section on evidence. In terms of the secondary sources, the student must use literacy skills to try to find the historical content markers like references to *Cité libre* and Pierre Elliot Trudeau in order to place the document in the appropriate time period.

Like the timeline question, these classification questions are more about factual recall and literacy than the historical thinking skill of periodization (Seixas & Morton, 2015). Despite the change in curriculum from 2004 to 2015 and the QEP's greater emphasis on historical thinking through the competencies, the examinations continued to use these types of factual recall questions. There is thus a sustained focus on recall and historical content knowledge in the examinations and not a move to more historical thinking.

The essay question in 2015 also is a question that is more about literacy and recall than about historical thinking. The question begins with a statement: "Between 1960 and 1980, Québec government intervention contributed to economic growth and to the development of Québec society". (MELS, 2015b, p. 7). The statement is presented as authoritative and factual. The task for the student was to:

Explain the Québec government's interventions in the economy between 1960 and 1980. In your essay you must:

- Indicate a government intervention in the area of finance and explain the purpose of this intervention.
- Indicate a government intervention in the area of energy and explain the purpose of this intervention.
- Indicate a government intervention in the area of road transportation and explain the purpose of this intervention (MELS, 2015b, p. 7).

The way that the question is phrased makes this question an explanatory essay and not an argumentative one. What the student is not doing is providing an interpretation of the changes that occurred during the Quiet Revolution, instead they are stating an action of the provincial government and then explaining the purpose of each action. The student does not even have to refer back to the opening statement of the question and explain how each intervention led to the development of society – the idea of progress. The documents that the student is to use in order to construct their essay include three primary source images and seven secondary sources, one of which is only the logos, acronyms and names of two Crown corporations, and a map of the electrical grid (MELS, 2015a, pp.7-8). Two of the primary sources are not used for interpretation. Rather the historical photographs, one with the title "Aerial view of a Montréal suburb" that shows a highway interchange and the other with the title "Daniel-Johnson Dam (Manic 5) on the Côte-Nord" that shows the dam, are used only for the information in the title

(MELS, 2015a, pp.7-8). This is similar to how the historical images were used in the 2004 examination. Students were not required to use historical thinking skills in order to interpret the images. The same is the case here, students are not asking questions of these images, they are not corroborating them nor are they making inferences from them. In fact, the images are not even required, just the titles. The third historical image is the same Québec Liberal Party election poster that was used in the 2004 examination (MEQ, 2004, p.21) and the student is to use it in the same manner, uncritically. Rather than being a historical thinking question, the essay is a literacy and recall question. It is possible for a student to write the essay without even reading the documents at all! All that is required of the student is to state the interventions and to explain their purpose, this could be done from memory. The seven secondary source excerpts call on student's literacy skills in order to read, organize the documents as to which elements of the essay they correspond to and to extract the relevant historical content to either describe the intervention or the purpose of the intervention. A student with good literacy skills would be able to read the excerpts and find the information that would allow them to craft their essay. Paradoxically, a student might have no knowledge of the material, but good literacy skills and write a good essay or they might not use the documents at all and only use recall. Either pathway could work for a student. What they do not have to use are historical thinking skills related to deep understanding of the concepts of evidence (Seixas and Morton, 2013, p.49) and continuity and change (Seixas and Morton, 2013, p. 86).

Evidence

The examination presents a number of primary sources in the document file. The majority of them were visuals, but there were also a number of textual sources as well, including two quotes from historical actors, taken from a secondary source. The presence of primary sources does not guarantee a high level of historical thinking, rather historical thinking comes from the way in which questions are phrased, the interaction between the historical content, the document, and how students use the sources.

The first question that uses primary sources is the fifth question, which is also a causation question (MELS, 2015b, p. 2). In the question, students must use three documents from the document file. The students must search for these particular documents in the document file. The three documents describe how the colonial authorities reacted to the arrival of sick emigrants

at the Port of Québec in the 1830s (MELS, 2015a, pp. 1-2). The first document is related to the “State of health of British immigrants”, and was an image from the Illustrated London News showing the inside of ship that was making the crossing of the Atlantic (Figure 6; MELS, 2015a, p. 1). The document is titled: British immigrants during the crossing of the Atlantic; a pedagogical strategy to draw the attention to the document. The students must then analyze and interpret the source.

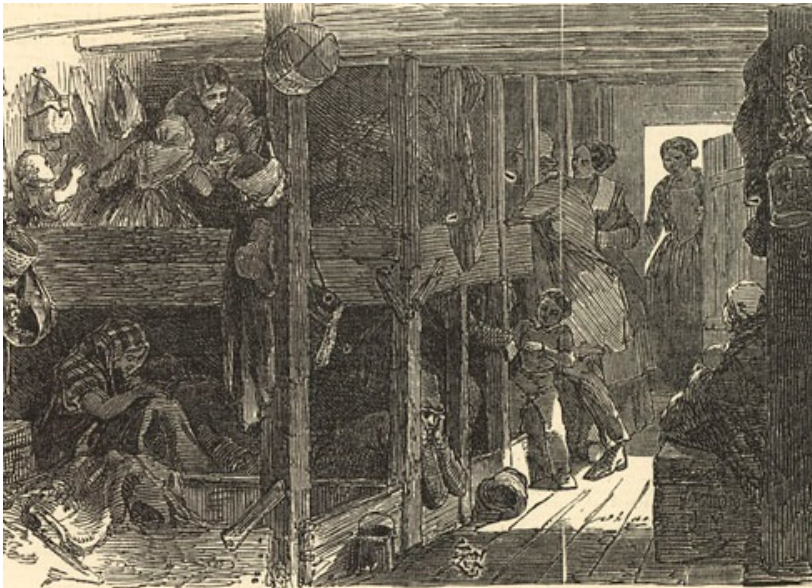


Figure 6 The Illustrated London News, Library and Archives Canada C-006556 (Detail).

One would expect that students use this image to determine the poor living conditions aboard ship during a crossing in the mid 19th century. The second source is an excerpt from the French Canadian newspaper *La Minerve* from June 14, 1832: “Since Monday morning Montreal is in turmoil and the alarm is growing every minute. There is no longer doubt that cholera is present. We recommend that the public observe strictly the Regulations of the Board of Health” (MELS, 2015a, p.1). The students’ analysis of this document should be undertaken within the context of having already analyzed and interpreted the first image. In this case, the students are looking for historical context and corroboration. Finally, in this question students have to use a third source, a painting of Grosse-Île. The title accompanying the image states, “Grosse-Île, port of entry for immigrants” (MELS, 2015a, p.2). The image itself does not give any clues as to what occurred at this port. Students are expected to know that Grosse-Île was the quarantine station for new

arrivals. In the question, students use sources in a number of ways that demonstrate historical thinking. First, they are using the sources in order to form inferences so that they can create an interpretation. Secondly, they are using sources together, contextualizing and corroborating their inferences. Thirdly, they must use sources within the historical context of the time. Finally, they must do all of this by asking such questions: what is this document showing me? What were the conditions on a ship crossing the Atlantic? Why would the board of health issue these regulations? How does this newspaper article link to the image? There is a demonstration of powerful understanding in this type of question on the use of sources as evidence (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 49). An analysis of the question in regards to causation will occur later.

Another question that uses a primary source is one that asks students to determine a consequence of the federal government's immigration policies in Western Canada in the early 20th Century (MELS, 2015b, p. 2). The source is a modified cover of an advertising pamphlet, written in French, to attract immigrants to the Canadian West (MELS, 2015a, p. 1). The Ministry of Education took out information related to specific territories – Manitoba, Assiniboine, Saskatchewan and Alberta – as well as the name of Clifford Sifton, the Minister of the Interior at the time. This question, and accompanying source, demonstrate some level of historical thinking because students are to make an inference from the document. The territorial consequences at the time include increased settlement and the creation of two new western provinces. These would be inferences that students could make by analyzing and interpreting the source. As well, in performing their analysis and interpretation, it can be assumed that students are asking questions in order to turn the source into evidence that can be used to make inferences and to form their own interpretation.

The examination also uses historical photographs as evidence in a number of ways. One is an image of René Lévesque giving a victory speech in 1976 following the election of the Parti Québécois. The image is accompanied by the caption “Victory of the *Parti québécois*, November 15, 1976” (MELS, 2015a, p. 3). The task requires students to compare this image with an excerpt from a textbook to describe the means used by the two groups in order to achieve the independence of Québec. Like the use of the document for the settling of Western Canada, students are to make an inference based on their interpretation of the source. The context for this question is provided by the secondary source on the October Crisis, and students are to

recognize that the Parti Québécois took a different path, the path of democracy, from the most radical elements of the separatist movement.

Historical images are also used in a number of similar questions that require the student to analyze, interpret and contextualize the source by using other documents. Two of these questions are related to the intellectual operation ‘situate in time and space’ and require the students to place documents in chronological order in one question and in the other question to place the documents before or after the date 1945 (MELS, 2015b, p. 6). For the chronological order question, students are given four documents, one primary source and three secondary sources, and required to place them in chronological order. The primary source is a historical photograph with the title “Women’s march against poverty (“Bread and Roses) march” (MELS, 2015a, p. 4). The analysis of this source is contextualized by three other sources that describe elements related to the status of women in Québec society. Similarly, in the other chronological question, students are to analyze another historical photograph in the context of other sources - one other primary source and two secondary sources. The question’s task is to indicate which two documents represent currents of thought (ideas or ideologies), either before or after 1945. The image is of the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and is accompanied by a title that describes the actions taking place (MELS, 2015a, p. 6), which is a pedagogical tool to orient students. Students do not have to analyze the image because the relevant information is found in the title. The other primary source in this question is the Regina Manifesto of the CCF party (MELS, 2015a, p. 6). The analysis of the Regina Manifesto, however, requires students to go deeper because they must identify the worldview of the authors of the manifesto in order to understand the current of thought. When they read the source, they have to ask questions like “Why do they want to replace the capitalist system? Which classes were dominating the other classes? What time period did this happen in?” Thus, the students are required to use historical thinking skills in order to understand the document and place it within its historical context of the Great Depression.

The use of images in another question raises additional questions about students’ use of visuals. The question required students to associate a historical photograph with a current of thought. In this instance, the image is Elvis Presley and the accompanying visual has by the following title: “Elvis Presley became popular in Québec” (MELS, 2015a, p. 5). As with the

examination of 2004, the use of the title meant that students did not have to analyze the source by asking questions and forming inferences. Instead, their work is limited to reading the title and associating Elvis Presley with the idea of Americanism. The same problem is found with the photographs of the Bread and Roses March and the signing of NAFTA. In both instances, we lack information on just how students use these documents in an exercise of historical thinking. Are they taking the necessary information from the titles of the documents alone, or are they following an interpretive process where they are analyzing and interpreting these images as visual evidence?

In a way it is easier to understand how students make use of textual sources because these are meant to be read in full by the student. As discussed above, students have to make inferences about the Regina Manifesto by contextualizing the document and asking questions related to its author, which turn the source into a piece of evidence. This historical thinking procedure is also used with a primary source text from Louis-Antoine Dessaulles (MELS, 2015a, p. 6). Students are required to read the text, ask questions, and infer the values and worldview its author. They are also required to indicate the current of the thought based on the quote. Even though the students' analysis of the source does not extend into a contextualization of the time period of Dessaulles, as they are not given the sourcing information of the text, the question does require a higher level of historical thinking.

One challenge in the analysis of the examination and the way in which the sources are turned to historical evidence by students is the fact that some secondary sources contain primary source information presented to the students. There are four instances like this in the examination. Two of them present historical quotes and two are historical data. I have chosen not to include them in my analysis because these types of sources are generally regarded as secondary sources by historians. For example, one of the documents is an excerpt from a book by historian Jean-François Cardin in which he quotes a primary source related to an election in the province of Lower Canada (MELS, 2015a, p. 5). The student is not provided with any other information about the candidate, his political faction, the year the election took place, or the original newspaper in which the text appeared. Similarly, in another document, the biographer Jean Provencher quotes René Lévesque on the nationalization of electricity, but the student is not provided with any information about René Lévesque, when he expressed his ideas and what was

the context of the time (MELS, 2015a, p. 8). Despite the fact these are secondary sources, students are still required to use historical thinking skills related to evidence. In their analysis, students still ask questions, make inference and interpretations.

Continuity and Change

The examination has three questions related to continuity and change (MELS, 2015b, pp. 3, 5). Two of the questions relate specifically to change and one to continuity. However, the examination does not indicate that continuity and change co-exist. Students are tasked with either determining the elements of change or continuity, using the criterion in the marking grid defined under Determining elements of continuity and changes (MELS, 2015b, pp. 3,5).

Likewise, the examination uses elements of historical thinking related to continuity and change, like turning points and periodization in the construction of the questions. For example, in question 8, the preamble establishes the year 1663 as a turning point in the history of New France, “In 1663, Louis XIV abolished the system of administration by chartered companies and established Royal Government (MELS, 2015b, p. 3).” The question then asks students to identify a change in the political organization of New France. This question is meant to assess factual recall as students do not have to think about why the change occurred, what stayed the same, or whether or not 1663 really was a turning point in colonial history. There is no evidence in this question of higher order historical thinking.

Similarly, question 11 also employs the ideas of continuity and change in the construction of the question but not in the response sought (MELS, 2015b, p. 3) The question asks students to identify the power of the Governor that stayed the same between two periods of Canadian colonial history. Like in question 8, the examination already offers the periodization as 1791-1840 and 1840-1848 which established 1840 as a turning point -- the Act of Union. Students once again are not required to determine any of this information, rather all they have to do is to identify an element of continuity. The student can do so by analyzing a document, which is a graphic that shows the colonial governmental structure during these time periods. To be successful, students need only to analyze the graphic in order to arrive at the correct answer. This question is less about the historical thinking, and more about the literacy of being able to analyze and interpret the graphic.

Question 17 is just like the previous ones (MELS, 2015b, p. 5) The periodization and identification of the turning point are already stated for students. In this case, it is 1791 that is a turning point in reference to the period, before and after the Constitution Act. Students were to identify the change in the political power of the colonial population. This is another recall question constructed much like question 8. All of these examination questions do not require students to engage with the concept of continuity and change. There was no sense that turning points are changes in history established by historians and can be contested, that the pace of change can either slow or accelerate, that different people can construct historical narratives with different periodizations, or even that continuity and change coexist in a process of *longue durée*. As a result, it is difficult from this examination to elicit evidence of students' deep understanding of the historical thinking concept of continuity and change through these questions.

Cause and Consequence

In the examination there were two question types pertaining to the concept of cause and consequence. The first was to determine explanatory factors and consequences and the second to establish causal connections (MELS, 2015b, pp. 2, 4-5). The first type of question required the student to either determine the cause or the consequence of an event. For example, as seen above, question 6 asks students to determine a consequence of immigration policies on the territory of western Canada in the early 20th Century (MELS, 2015b, p. 2). This question does not require students to demonstrate a deep understanding of the concept of consequence (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p. 115). They do not have to identify multiple consequences, or indicate whether or not the consequences were long term or short term. Nor do they have to indicate whether or not the consequences were intended or unintended. Their role is to simply state one possible consequence of the immigration policies during the period. However, students are expected to determine the consequence through their analysis of the source.

Question 7 suffers from the same flaws (MELS, 2015b, p.2). It invites students, to explain the cause for the increase in population between 1945 and 1960. Nothing is said about the reasons why there was such an increase during the time period. The question does not really require the student to use historical thinking skills or demonstrate a deep understanding of the concept of causation (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p.115). The student did not have to explain, but rather only had to indicate one cause - an increase in births.

Question 18 is structured in the same way, where students are to identify the explanatory factor pertaining to the critique of the Catholic Church in the 19th century (MELS, 2015b, p.5). The question is similar to the preceding one because the student only had to identify the explanatory factor. However, the question differs because of the document used. The document is a primary source from an anticlerical liberal. The use of this source could lead to a higher level of historical thinking in terms of evidence, but not for the concept of cause and consequence. It is more in line with the question on the territorial consequence on Western Canada where the historical thinking comes from the analysis of the document that transforms it into evidence and not from the concept of cause or consequence.

The third example of this type of question requires students to use the document file in order to identify two documents that represent effects of the concept of Catholicism on colonial life in New France (MELS, 2015b, p. 5). The two documents that students have to select are secondary sources describing aspects of Catholic life in the colony (MELS, 2015a, pp.5-6). The question does not require students to use historical thinking skills. The ability to read the two secondary sources and link the content knowledge to the concept of Catholicism is what is required. A third document related to the time period of New France in this section, but it does not deal with the subject of Catholicism, and thus becomes irrelevant to the task. In the end, there is no requirement to understand the idea of consequence, as the student only needs to select the two documents linked to Catholicism.

The second type of questions adds an element of complexity to the task because it requires the student to establish causal connections between different elements. In essence, the student must explain why a particular event occurred in time. To do so, the student must identify the first element, which provides a context, then show how that led to the second element and finally how that second element led to the third and final element. The examination has two such questions. The goal of the first one is to explain why the colonial authorities of Lower Canada took action due to the health conditions of immigrants arriving in the colony (MELS, 2015b, p.2). Students have to identify the state of health of the immigrants, how this caused a public health emergency and then how this led to the reaction of the colonial authorities. Unlike the previous four cause and consequence questions, this question requires students to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of causation. Although students need not necessarily identify the

multiple causes of the action of the authorities, rather they establish the interrelatedness of the different causes. As well, there is interplay between conditions and actions taken by historical actors. While students do not judge whether or not the event was caused more by actions or conditions, they were required to identify both actions and condition, thus showing that history is the interplay of both. This demonstrates a high level of historical thinking, both in the construction of the question and in the task.

The second causal connection question is similar. The students must provide an explanation as to what caused Canadian politics to change due to the Pacific Scandal (MELS, 2015b, p. 4). The three elements that the students must link together are: the agreement between the Conservative Party and a private company, the reaction of the Liberal Party and finally the consequence for the Conservative Party. Once again there is the interplay between multiple causes, but unlike the previous example, there is no linkage between actions and conditions. However, this question is more explicit in the link between the causes and the consequences for the Conservatives. As well, in this question there was the notion of unintended consequence. Students are not expected to identify the unexpected nature of the consequence, but it is implied that the loss of the 1876 election to the Liberals was an unintended consequence of the 1872 agreements between the Conservatives and the Canadian Pacific Railway. Once again, this type of question shows a high level of historical thinking. The construction of the question can elicit evidence about a students understanding of the concept of causation.

Despite the fact that six out of the twenty-one short answer questions are related to the concept of cause and consequence, only two of the questions require students to demonstrate an understanding of the concept. This means that even though cause and consequence question are almost one third of the entire short answer part of the exam, most are only at the factual recall level. Since most of these questions are at the recall level, and not at a higher level of historical thinking, it is doubtful that the examination would produce enough evidence to make a judgment about a student's understanding of the concept of cause and consequence.

Historical Perspective

The examination considers three aspects of historical perspective: placing the perspective of actors in their historical context, inferring how people felt and thought in the past, and that

understanding that different actors may have different perspectives. This element of historical thinking is not isolated in the examination, that is students are not specifically tasked with questions about historical perspective but some of the aspects of historical perspective were built into different questions throughout the examination. That being said, direct elements of historical perspective are visible in two questions in particular.

The first instance of historical perspective deals with the cholera outbreak in Lower Canada. As noted before, students must analyze a primary document from *La Minerve*. The newspaper account is not just a reporting of facts, but an editorial piece: “Since Monday morning Montreal is in turmoil and the alarm is growing every minute. There is no longer doubt that cholera is present. We recommend that the public observe strictly the Regulations of the Board of Health” (MELS, 2015a, p. 1). As students read the excerpt they are required to consider the context of the cholera outbreak -- the arrival of immigrants from Great Britain, which is provided by another document, a visual that shows the conditions aboard a ship. Also, the students can infer how the writers of *La Minerve* felt by cluing into the words ‘turmoil,’ ‘alarm,’ and the phrase ‘strictly observe.’ By doing so, students can infer the immediate seriousness of the situation according to the newspaper. This question also demonstrated how multiple elements of historical thinking could be combined into one question.

The second example of historical perspective was when students had to read and analyze a quote from the anti-clerical liberal Louis-Antoine Desaulles. Desaulles states: “...things can only go well in a country when everyone has their place: the clergy at the altar, the State taking care of [government] business... And as soon as the clergy wants to leave the altar and interfere in affairs [of] State... we start worrying” (MELS, 2015a, p.6). In their analysis of the document, students must place it within its historical context -- the second half of the 19th century. Once the document is contextualized, the students must also consider the thoughts and feelings of Desaulles. His point of view is explicit, presenting an opinion against ultramontane influences on Québec society. These aspects of historical perspective are required for a student to attempt to answer the question. There was little else of note concerning this element of historical thinking. Since there were no direct examples of items it is difficult to build an argument that students either understand or do not understand the concept of historical perspective.

Construct Validity

In my analysis of the examination, I tried to understand how the exam aligned itself with the curriculum, progression of learning, and evaluation framework. My goal was to create an argument about the construct validity of the exam in relation to historical thinking. The argument based approach defined by Kane (2013) allows for the development of a framework to evaluate the claims put forward by the test scores. In the case of the Québec history examination, the claim based on the test score is that a student who achieves a mark of 60% has demonstrated proficiency in the intellectual operations of the two subject competencies of the history program. As outlined earlier, these intellectual operations are the government's formulation of historical thinking and generally align with conception of historical thinking of Seixas and Morton (2013).

In their discussion of construct validity evidence, Kaliski, Smith and Huff (2016) focus on the dimensionality and the cognitive processes that can provide evidence in order to develop an argument on the validity of a test. However, my document analysis has brought more evidence of the content validity, a different type of construct evidence (Sireci, 1998). Content validity is important because when we make judgements on student's progress and certification, it is important to know that the test actually measures what it claims to measure. Sireci (1998) notes that:

Because content validity refers to the ability of a test to represent the domain of tasks it is designed to measure, it is an important indicator of the soundness of the domain definition underlying a test, and of the degree to which inferences derived from test scores are well-founded. Thus, "content validity" is an accurate descriptor of desirable test qualities (p. 104).

In this case the content domains are the intellectual operations of the evaluation framework (MELS, 2011a) of the Québec Education Program (MELS, 2007d).

The results of the document analysis has allowed me to formulate an argument that while the Québec history examination does superficially evaluate intellectual operations, it does not do so at the depth of historical thinking as identified by Seixas and Morton (2013). Thus, the assessment evidence that the examination provides is in line with the ministry documents. It does not provide assessment evidence of deep historical thinking. It further shows a disjuncture between the original curricular goals of the QEP and the supplemental ministry documents like the Progression of Learning.

Evidence

The QEP begins its discussion about the first history competency, Examines social phenomena from a historical perspective with a quote from the American historian Joyce Appleby, “material remains never speak for themselves. In fact they are inert traces until someone asks a question that turns them into evidence” (MELS, 2007d p. 11; Appleby, 1998). Yet the program says nothing else about evidence or how sources are the evidence upon which claims and interpretations about the past are built. The program does refer to documentary sources and resources, which are seemingly used interchangeably. Teachers are expected to provide students “...with a variety of resources, including primary resources...” and that “The strategies and learning contexts teachers use must allow students to acquire the historian’s main tools, such as the method and certain concepts (continuity, change, duration, periodization, etc.)” (MELS, 2007d, p. 9). These resources are defined as: “maps, plans, media, firsthand accounts, pictures, artifacts and historical documents, audio-visual documents, and so on. (MELS, 2007d. p. 9). As well, in the techniques section of the program, there are suggestions for the types of questions that might be asked of primary sources so that students could source them, contextualize them and corroborate them. Teachers are expected to provide opportunities for students to actively engaged with primary sources.

My analysis of the two examinations found that there has been a shift towards more primary sources between 2004 and 2015, but that the vast majority of sources remain visuals. One problematic element found is the use of quotations from historical actors taken from a secondary source. Normally these would not be considered primary sources, but in this case, students were clearly supposed to use them as primary source evidence. As well, the level of historical thinking was dependent upon the way that students used the document in order to answer the question. At times students are expected to display high levels of historical thinking. For example, when students had to use three primary sources in order to create a set of causal connections. When performing this question, students had to ask questions of the sources, particularly the visuals: What is this document showing me? What are people doing? What are the living conditions on the ship? How does this image connect to the newspaper article? By asking these questions, students were turning sources into evidence, and then using them to form interpretations. As well, students were using the evidence in order to establish the context and to

corroborate their inferences. This was by far the most powerful understanding of the use of evidence on the examination.

There were other instances where students had to question the sources, and then contextualize them within. However, these situations were too few. The examination in 2015 had the vast majority of its sources as secondary ones, from a mix of scholarly sources and student textbooks. This creates a problem when we are considering how students use evidence. Can a secondary source be used to elicit evidence of students' historical thinking? VanSledright (2002) indicates that students can think historically by weighing conflicting secondary interpretations of a historical event by contextualizing and corroborating the sources. However, he also notes that in the teaching process, students must be exposed to both primary and secondary sources, which is also what the QEP recommends. However, the examination did not treat secondary sources in this manner, rather they were employed as 'sources of information' used uncritically for factual details.

When the examination required students to use primary source material, students were engaged in a historical thinking task. According to Seixas and Morton, students were using three of the five guideposts for evidence: asking questions of the source to turn it into evidence, contextualizing the source and corroborating the source. However, students were not required to consider the source and exploring sourcing the document, nor were they required to consider that history is an interpretation based on inferences.

Unfortunately, the examination did not require students to do this type of historical thinking frequently. I strongly believe that there is an over reliance on secondary sources at the expense of primary sources. For the questions dealing with primary sources, there is evidence of construct validity. We can use these questions in order to assess whether or not the student has though historically using evidence. But the fact that most sources are secondary makes it difficult to judge whether the student is consistently using historical thinking skills. The ministry examination therefore reflects historical thinking in an emerging way when we consider the use of evidence. The use of more primary sources would allow students to demonstrate more facets of historical thinking and would make the examination a more valid tool to assess historical thinking. This shift would also re-focus the examination, making it more aligned with the intent of the program, which clearly has students use primary sources in the formation of their historical competencies.

Continuity and Change

The idea of continuity and change forms a central aspect of the history program in Québec. Continuity and change is part of the first historical competency. In this competency students are supposed to look at a social phenomenon in terms of duration so they can seek elements of continuity and change (MELS, 2007d). The program implies that continuity and change co-exist at the same time. It also implies that students could be looking for other elements of continuity and change that Seixas and Morton (2013) identified in their guideposts, such as: the process of change has varying patterns, the identification of turning points, the evaluation of progress and decline. These elements are never explicitly stated in the QEP. The program notes that when students enter their final years of high school they should, “take a greater interest...in diachrony (the temporal aspect of social phenomena) and changes in duration; showing a greater concern for what came before and what came after the phenomenon studied (MELS, 2007d, p. 11).

In the examination in 2015, continuity and change as a construct appears three times. The way in which continuity and change are treated on the examination does not require the student to demonstrate a high level of historical thinking. The questions are mostly recall. It is ironic however that in the construction of the questions there are elements that demonstrate that the writers of the exam understand the complexities involved in continuity and change, but this complexity is not sought of in students’ responses. Fundamentally, the examination has moved away from what the program wishes students would learn from continuity and change -- that they consider changes in duration. If the examination were to better reflect the original intent of the program perhaps there would be a greater opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the concept of continuity and change. Therefore based on this aspect of historical thinking, we can say that the examination is not a valid tool for the historical thinking construct of continuity and change. The three questions do not require students to engage with the sources at a complex level. There is no opportunity for students to demonstrate that continuity and change are interwoven, that change has various paces and patterns, that turning points exist, or to evaluate progress and decline over time.

Cause and Consequence

The history program is explicit, students must learn about cause and consequence at a high level of sophistication. The expectations for students building their first competency is that, “Social phenomena... cannot be explained by a single cause. To take into account their complexity, students in Cycle Two must look beyond monocausal explanations (MELS, 2007d, p.11)”. As well, when students form their interpretation, they must consider “...factors that might explain the social phenomenon, and establish connections among them. They formulate hypotheses. They also try to ascertain long-term consequences of the social phenomenon” (MELS, 2007d, p.17). This high level of understanding of consequence is reflected in Seixas and Morton’s (2013) guideposts for the concept. Both the program and Seixas and Morton are clear that historical events have multiple causes and consequences and that there are both short and long term consequences. This idea of long-term consequences also links with the program’s focus on duration. The program further asks students to seek connections between the multiple explanatory factors. This can be interpreted to mean that students are to determine which causes are more important than others, or that there is interplay between actors and conditions that cause historical events. What is not treated in the program is that idea that historical actors can create unintended consequences and that there is no inevitability in history.

The examination assesses the twin concepts of cause and consequence through two different intellectual operations: determine explanatory factors and consequences and establish causal connections. For the intellectual operation determines explanatory factors, the three questions that are used on the exam do not assess the components of historical thinking related to the historical thinking concept of cause. Rather, they are factual recall type questions that only involve the student either stating one explanatory factor or one consequence. This contradicts what is clearly stated in the program, which is unequivocal that students are to go beyond monocausal explanations and consequence. Yet the three questions do not provide any evidence that students could do so.

The other intellectual operation involved is related to causal connections. Unlike the other questions, these questions do assess a higher level of historical thinking. The task requires students to connect multiple causes together, thus establishing the connections between different causes. This is a high level of thinking. The material selected for the first question requires students to go beyond the program and look at the interplay between the actions of the historical

actors and conditions present at the time. The second example does not feature this aspect but does contain the notion of unintended consequences. What these two questions demonstrate is that the level of historical thinking that is involved is variable due to the substantive content chosen, and the documents that are used. These tasks are already complex and are made even more complex by perhaps the inadvertent addition of other historical thinking elements like evidence and historical perspective.

Overall, for the historical thinking construct of cause and consequence, the examination contains both valid and non-valid evidence. The questions that only require students to provide a simple cause or consequence do not demonstrate a high level of historical thinking, and could not be used to provide any information about a student's historical thinking capabilities. However, the other type of question demonstrates historical thinking, and could be considered valid evidence of historical thinking because it requires students to go beyond single causes. However, both assessment designers and teachers should be aware of the probability that these types of questions also inadvertently require students to use other elements of historical thinking that is not overtly sought in the item.

Historical Perspective

Like evidence, historical perspective is not one of the intellectual operations, but a prominent aspect of the QEP. The whole first competency of the program consists of the historical perspective. The program aligns well with the conception of Seixas and Morton (2013) on historical perspective. Elements of all five guideposts are found in the program. First of all, the program reminds us that students are to keep a critical distance, which raises the elements of the difference between current worldview and those of the past, as well as the idea of presentism.

Further, the program tasks students to,

...try to see through the eyes of historical actors and witnesses in order to understand their point of view. They must look at the social phenomenon from the inside, and try to grasp how people thought back then. To do this, they examine the motives, intentions, hopes, fears and interests of the actors and witnesses of a period. (MELS, 2007d, p. 11.)

This calls to mind the other three guideposts: perspective must be understood within its historical context, inferring about how people felt and thought in the past, and that people had different perspectives (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Taken together, the program presents a powerful

understanding of historical perspective, as well as a developed expectation of what students should be able to do as they develop their competency.

But, the examination does not assess historical perspective in this way. Students are assessed on an element of historical perspective through different intellectual operations. In one of the causal connection questions student must identify a historical perspective within its historical context -- that is the perspective of a newspaper due to an outbreak of cholera. As well, in another question, students must analyze a quotation from a historical actor. In order to arrive at the correct response, students must contextualize the document and then try to understand the historical actor's thoughts and feelings. However, these are only two of the five elements that Seixas and Morton (2013) identified in their guideposts. The requirements of the students do not go far enough towards what the program states are required of students in order to demonstrate their competency development. As a result, since the examination only has elements of historical perspective on two questions and does not fully develop more of the guideposts of this element of historical thinking, the examination cannot be used as a valid tool to assess student's understanding of historical perspective.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implications

Conclusion

This study aimed to answer two research questions: How has historical thinking influenced the history curriculum and the evaluation of history in the province of Québec? How is historical thinking reflected in the Québec ministry examination? By tracing the development of ideas around historical thinking through a document analysis of the relevant ministry documents from the 1990s to the 2010s, it became clear that historical thinking played a central role in history education in Québec following the introduction of the QEP. The groundwork for this curricular shift was laid by the work of the Task Force on the Teaching of History, which released its report in 1996. The Task Force stated that history should be taught as a discipline and that students should approach learning about the past within the disciplinary framework that includes historical thinking elements like cause, continuity and change (MEQ, 1996). The result was swift and impressive. Historical thinking was infused throughout the Québec history curriculum (MELS, 2007). Since the QEP is a competency based curriculum, a disciplinary approach to history was understandable and aligned to the general principles of competency development in the curriculum. Students would be learning both historical content, and would be building competencies that were related to the discipline of history and historical thinking in the broader educational context of democratic citizenship education at the same time. The theory was that students would be placed in situations where they could demonstrate their learning of the content of history and their abilities to perform tasks associated with the competencies. As a result, the intellectual operations were developed to provide a skills basis for assessment and evaluation on the ministerial examinations. It seemed as if Québec could provide a model for the teaching, learning and assessment of historical thinking.

However, a backlash grew against the curriculum on the ground that the new program was too focused on skills and citizenship, and lacked specific content knowledge of Québec history (Bouvier & Lamontagne, April 28, 2006; Létourneau, 2011; Poulin, 2015). The ministry reacted with a supplemental document, the *Progression of Learning in Secondary School* (MELS, 2011b) (for all subjects, not just history), which became a list of prescribed content to teach. As the new document became the backbone for the provincial examination, teachers soon began to use the supplemental resource as a stand-in for the actual program of study, and *The*

Progression of Learning for Secondary School. Interestingly, this document had little to do with historical thinking as it was a list of factual content knowledge. The program of study became of curriculum of coverage, rather than a disciplinary based program of inquiry and historical thinking.

My content analysis and comparison of two ministry examinations in history, from before and after the implementation of the QEP, demonstrate that the provincial examination is a limited tool for the assessment of historical thinking. The examination has elements of historical thinking built into some questions. But, when historical thinking concepts like evidence, cause and consequence, continuity and change and historical perspective are considered, the examination does not use them in powerful ways. The vast majority of the sources used in the examination were secondary sources with the expectation that the student would use a generic reading approach to find the main ideas or factual information. When students were infrequently required to use primary sources as evidence, students are engaged in historical thinking by sourcing, contextualizing and corroborating. Likewise, the examination treated questions about continuity and change as questions about factual recall instead of questions about the deeper understanding of how continuity and change co-exist, what constitutes a turning point, or what are elements of progress and decline. This lack of depth was also demonstrated in the concept of historical perspective where students are required to analyze the thoughts of historical actors on only two questions. The same difficulties were found with the historical thinking concepts of cause and consequence. The examination used these concepts in two different types of questions. One was basic and remains at the recall level where students are required only state a cause or a consequence. The other type of question, which shows a more powerful understanding of the concept (Seixas & Morton, 2013, p.115), requires students to write how a chain of causal events occurred. Even with this question, students were not required to analyze causation for long or short-term factors, make any judgement about the importance of different causes, or judge the interplay between individuals and conditions in history. For these reasons, the Québec examination cannot be considered a valid tool for evaluating historical thinking.

Implications for Exam Creators

For the ministry, this study should raise a host of challenges pertaining to the level and depth of questions pertaining to historical thinking. Questions that remain at the factual recall level do

not promote deep student understanding of history. While content knowledge is necessary to learning acquisition, there must be a balance between the acquisition of factual knowledge and the use of historical thinking skills. Indeed, these two aspects complement each other and should be used interdependently.

The province of Québec is about to implement a new history program (MEES, 2017) that contains the same historical thinking components -- Intellectual Operations -- of the QEP. The current situation provides a golden opportunity for the ministry to adjust its approach towards historical thinking concepts as presented in this study. In fact, the disciplinary domain of historical thinking needs to be better articulated and explained to teachers and students and not treated as a general set of skills detached from disciplinary thinking. For instance, Breakstone (2014) details how he sought out many conceptions of historical thinking from history education scholars and historians before deciding on the aspects of historical thinking to be included in the formative historical thinking assessments. Radinsky, Goldman and Pellegrino (2015) note: “The tasks need to allow students to “show what they know” in a way that is as unambiguous as possible” (p.134). Questions need to be carefully designed in ways that will allow students to demonstrate their depth of understanding on *both* historical knowledge and historical thinking concepts.

The use of evidence is one immediate change to favour disciplinary thinking. The examination should increase the number of primary sources, specifically textual sources. The examination, as it stands, relies too heavily on various secondary sources that are not treated as historical evidence but rather as bearers of factual information. Increased digitization at libraries and archives are making primary sources readily available to the public and students. The examination should take advantage of digital history and the accessibility of these materials to move beyond sources for fact-finding answers. Furthermore, recent research into designing assessments of historical thinking have demonstrated that using primary source documents as evidence can also lead to increase in historical understanding, a key criticism of those who opposed the competence based curriculum (Breakstone, 2014; VanSledright, 2014; Seixas, Gibson & Ercikan, 2015).

Another issue with use of primary source evidence is how to ensure that the task elicits evidence of historical thinking, and not basic literacy. Seixas and Ercikan (2015) note that to reduce the likelihood of reading and writing as a determining factor, primary sources should be

shortened or adapted to history students. However, some of the current quotations from primary sources on the Québec examination are already very short -- one or two sentences mostly. The challenge is thus to find the right balance so that students can use the source for as evidence in order to demonstrate understanding, but not too long or difficult so that reading comprehension becomes the main issue.

Cause and consequence provides another opportunity to increase the level of historical thinking on the examination. The guideposts of Seixas and Morton (2013) offer ideas for the possibility to increase the level of historical thinking on the examination. For example, using sources, students could be asked to provide multiple causes or consequences of an event. They could also be asked to determine if the causes and consequences were in the short term or long term. Students could also be asked to determine if the causes and consequences are the result of the conditions in society or the actions of specific individuals. Likewise, students could be asked to judge whether or not some causes have more influence than others, in other words, to favour the development of sound historical judgment.

Similarly, for continuity and change, questions should promote deeper level of thinking. Students could be asked to describe the quality of change, whether or not the pace of change increased in a period of time, or slowed down, not just to identify an element of change. Similarly, they could be asked to describe the types of change or to explain how change impacted different groups in society. Students could also be asked to explain why a particular event is described as a turning point, or explain how society stayed the same during a period of profound change. In determining change, a test item could ask student to justify whether or not economic or political factors led to more change for a particular period.

Implications for Teachers

This study has serious implications for teachers as well. If the provincial examination is evaluating students primarily at the recall level, then we can postulate that teaching is seriously biased toward content knowledge mastery. As a matter of fact, researchers have recently described history teaching in Québec as teacher-centred and not disciplinary rigorous (Boutonnet, 2013; Zanzanian, 2016). Clearly, more needs to be done by teachers to become more familiar with elements of the discipline of history and its epistemologies, and the pedagogical practices required to grow student learning and understanding of historical thinking.

Teaching habits, Barton and Levstik (2004) remind us, are notoriously difficult to change. As VanSledright (2011) argues, teachers in the United States are still socialized during years of schooling where they have observed teacher-centred pedagogy. Teacher education in the United States seems to do little to alter this well-entrenched traditional practice. VanSledright offers a number of solutions to this pedagogical problem: building learning communities for teachers, adapting curricula around clear historical questions and historical thinking concepts, having innovative teachers act as mentors to beginning teachers, investing in subject-specific professional development programs, and having historians more open and attuned to the methods of the disciplinary thinking in their own courses (VanSledright, 2011). Barton and Levstik (2004) have surmised that even with strong pedagogical content knowledge many teachers revert to a default position of didactic teaching due to the expected school culture that encourages them to cover the curriculum and maintain control of the classroom. Too often an orderly classroom is seen as an efficient practice as well as a sign of professional expertise. For Barton and Levstik (2004), for teacher practice to change, the purpose of history teaching must change as well. They argue that teachers must believe that students can learn history in an inquiry based way using primary sources and historical thinking because this approach will help them to contribute more effectively to participatory based democracy. In an analysis of the effectiveness of a professional development program that sought to provide teacher's with the pedagogical tools to shift away from the teaching of nation-state narrative, VanSledright, Maggioni and Reddy (2011) found little change in American teachers' epistemic stances towards history education and their classroom practice. This result was despite an on-going program over a number of school years that actively tried to train them in methods of teaching historical thinking. They found that the interventions were undone by the demands of the coverage-based curriculum in the school system. Another study by the same authors came to the same conclusion: the adoption of new pedagogical practices takes time, skills, and a lot of energy on the part of the teacher, most of which is countered by the culture of schooling and prescribed curricula that value coverage over uncoverage and control over student-centred learning (Vansledright, Maggioni & Reddy, 2012).

As historical thinking concepts are now imbedded in provincial curricula, there are growing professional development opportunities for teachers across the country. The Association for Canadian Studies offers annual conferences that rotate between French and English as the primary language of formation that provide workshops and presentations for

teachers on historical thinking and pedagogy. The Ontario history teachers association, OHASSTA, also holds annual conferences, with several workshops in both French and English that teachers could use to develop professional knowledge about historical thinking. Likewise, the Historical Thinking Summer Institute, an initiative developed by Seixas when he was professor at UBC, has recently been providing week-long professional development for teachers in both official languages, with its most recent session in Ottawa. These professional development opportunities may appeal only to teachers whose epistemic beliefs are in line with the goals of teaching for historical thinking. In fact, they reach out to professional teachers who are already familiar with or vested in the discipline of history. The great majority still lacks sound exposure to historical thinking in the context of their practice teaching. And ministries of education do little to encourage or even compel them to further disciplinary expertise.

Greater disciplinary knowledge by teachers is not enough however. Teachers need sophisticated course planning skills for their lessons and units so that they are not merely covering content but uncovering the past (Lévesque, 2008). Planning is central to the learning process, and using a best practice such as “backwards design” (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) that is centred around essential questions can provide the structure for students to gradually perform historical inquiry and learn history at a much deeper level. Planning lessons in this way would be helped if school systems were more willing to allow teachers to have greater flexibility and support to interpret the curriculum (VanSledright, Maggioni & Reddy, 2011) and make a reasoned professional judgement about the historical material that they teach to their students.

Attention to the design of formative assessments that target historical thinking is also of the utmost importance. Formative assessment is a powerful method to drive student learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998) as it provides evidence of student thinking and progress and informs the teacher as to the next steps that must be taken. Feedback is thus a two-way street, or a loop (Heritage, 2007) because effective feedback from teachers can use to enhance their learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It is important for teachers to know the structure of the discipline to not only be able to design learning activities and assessments that target the development of historical thinking, but also to be able to provide timely and useful feedback to students that will enable them to grow their knowledge and understanding over the course of their program. This is demonstrated in the Ontario *Canadian and World Studies* curriculum (2013) that contains an extensive section on the principles and purposes of formative assessment. This section includes

the integration of assessments for learning in the planning process, the communication of learning intentions and success criteria to students, the feedback provided to students and an achievement chart that outlines the levels of student achievement to the provincial standards.

Implications for Research

For researchers, this study also opens new avenues of investigation. While this study was limited to the official curriculum and provincial examination in Québec, more work can be done, especially with student responses – or what might be called the ‘learned curriculum.’ As recent research (Ercikan, Seixas, Lyons-Thomas & Gibson 2015; Reich, 2015; Smith & Breakstone, 2015; Smith, 2017) has shown, an examination of student responses and the thinking behind those responses can provide a wealth of rich information. A study of student responses to items from the examination in Québec, coupled with a Think Aloud Protocol (TAP) strategy, would be a natural extension of this project. Researchers (Reich, 2015; Smith, 2017) using TAP have found that students are rarely thinking deeply about the subject matter when answering exam or test questions. As well, students also demonstrate a shaky understanding of historical knowledge. Are students in Québec acting in similar manner? How are they approaching the questions and using the documents provided? We have no answer at this point. Clearly, there is a need for further study into assessment tools that are currently in use. Research of this nature would provide further evidence for the validity of the examination in Québec as an instrument to measure historical thinking and historical knowledge.

Implication for Stakeholders

Finally, a further implication for all stakeholders (teachers, students, ministry officials) pertains to what does it mean to have achieved competency in history in the province of Québec? There is no clear picture of what a student in history should be able to know and do at the end of their schooling. This is coupled to the fact that there is no sense of learning progression in the development of student’s historical thinking. In 1996, the Task Force called for just such an exit profile of student’s abilities. With recent research into historical thinking, what student understanding of historical thinking looks like, and more importantly what some misconceptions of historical thinking they hold, it is possible to begin to construct a more accurate progression of learning. A progression model (Lee & Shemilt, 2003; Lévesque, 2011b) would help teachers in

the planning process, giving them the opportunity to better recognize how students are progressing in their historical thinking, and to help them anticipate areas where students might be experiencing difficulties. Learning progressions are critically important for teaching and learning. They provide the roadmap for formative assessments that allow teachers to gain feedback on student learning and provide opportunities for teachers to refine their own teaching approaches (Popham, 2008). A learning progression of historical thinking would also provide a clearer learning target for teachers. By knowing the end goal, teachers can effectively plan their sequence of lessons for growth in historical thinking, as oppose to content mastery. Seixas and Morton (2013) offer the perfect starting point. They have provided examples of both proficiency in historical thinking and what beginning historical thinker looks like as well. Their work has been taken up by Ford (2014), a British history educator, who has built a model of progression for the English education system. Popham (2008) provides a guide to building a learning progression in four steps:

1. Acquire a thorough understanding of the target curricular aim;
2. Identify all requisite precursory sub skills and bodies of enabling knowledge;
3. Determine whether it is possible to measure students' status with respect to each preliminary identified building block; and
4. Arrange all building blocks in an instructionally defensible sequence. (pp. 35-42)

Lee and Shemilt (2003) note that a progression model must be based on research, not on bureaucratic imperatives, and that students may not grow their historical thinking in a linear manner as initially outlined by Piagetian theory. This work could be adapted to the Québec context, and would be extremely beneficial for teachers in their planning, teaching, feedback and assessments of students. Finally, a true progression of learning in historical thinking would allow teachers to make a sound judgement on each student's achievement of competency. As it stands right now, there is no final picture of what competency looks like in the Québec history program and what individual student acquires in the course of their high school education. The current Québec examination is a poor substitute to competency achievement.

Reflection and Final Thoughts

This study has allowed me to reflect on the nature of the teaching profession. Discovering that the provincial ministry examination is far from a valid measuring tool for historical thinking has generated deep thinking on my part. Findings from my study can help teachers like myself to develop best practices in teaching historical thinking, most particularly among the Anglophone community in Québec. This goal can be achieved through better knowledge mobilization strategies including student teacher supervision, new teacher mentoring programs, conference and workshop presentations, and professional publications. Too often, these initiatives are not well regarded or recognized among the teaching profession. Nevertheless, they surely have significant impact on how we, as professional agents, improve our teaching and build a community of professional practice. This community of professional practice often referred to as a professional learning community (PLC) can operate in different forms or scales. They can exist at the school level in a departmental setting. They can also be created at the school board level to bring in teachers in a network. Also they can be cross-boundary by bringing together teachers, history education academics and historians to strengthen the work of all our respective fields (Sears, 2014).

As a matter of fact, this study has caused me to reflect on my own practice as a history teacher. I feel that through this research I not only understand the discipline of history education at a deeper level, but also the need for sound assessment of history and historical thinking. While I always felt that course planning and evaluation feedback to students were central to my own teaching, this study has helped me develop strategies to be even more structured and precise in promoting learning in my own classroom. When I compare my lessons from four years ago to now, they are very different. Primary sources are infused in my teaching lessons, students look at and debate historical perspectives, they are given chances to see how society has changed over time, but also how it has remained the same. They rank order causes and consequences, define turning points, question authoritative accounts and, above all, think about history in critical ways. Of course, it is difficult to find appropriate sources, explain complex inquiry tasks, and provide timely feedback, but overall I feel that the overall classroom experience has greatly improved over time.

Finally, by studying the origins and design of curriculum documents, through the lens of historical thinking, I have come to appreciate how much historical thinking and the development of competency in history were aligned in Québec. I feel that this study has given me the intellectual tools to develop a progression of learning in historical thinking for my own students. This will give me -- and them -- clearer attainable targets beyond the accumulation of content knowledge. As the new curriculum is being implemented and evaluation enters a trial phase for a few years, this period is a perfect opportunity to experiment with new, more authentic forms of assessment in history. As educators, I believe that we should promote historical thinking and have students think critically about their own society and their own place in the world. Historical thinking is a transferrable skill and important in the development of citizens (Barton & Levstik, 2004; VanSeldright, 2004; Lévesque, 2011b). Students need to be able to assess claims made today on social media and the internet. There currently is a lack understanding by students on how to assess the reliability and accuracy of online sources (Wineburg & McGrew, 2016; McGrew, Ortega, Breakstone & Wineburg, 2017; Breakstone, McGew, Smith, Ortega & Wineburg, 2018). Historical thinking can help students become better assessing the reliability of online sources by checking the sourcing, corroborating and contextualizing the information. This study is a small part in understanding assessment of historical thinking and new ways of assessing knowledge in history -- not just content knowledge but also disciplinary thinking knowledge.

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Appendix A: Rubric

Historical Thinking Rubric adapted from Seixas and Morton (2013)		Document title:			
Category	Guidepost 1	Guidepost 2	Guidepost 3	Guidepost 4	Guidepost 5
Evidence	History is an interpretation based on inferences from primary sources	Asking questions of sources turns it into evidence	Sourcing involves inferring the author's purposes, values, and worldview	A source should be analyzed in relation to the context of its historical setting: the conditions and worldviews at the time	Inferences from a source can never stand alone, they must be corroborated/
Historical Significance	Events, people or developments have historical significance if they result in change: deep consequences for many people over a long period of time.	Events, people or developments have historical significance if they are revealing: they shed light on enduring or emerging issues in history or today	Historical significance is constructed: events, people developments occupy a meaningful place in a narrative.	Historical significance varies over time and from group to group.	
Continuity and Change	Continuity and change are interwoven: both can exist together. Chronologies can be a good starting point.	Change is a process with varying paces and patterns. Turning points are moments when the process of change shifts in direction or pace.	Progress and decline are broad evaluations of change over time. Progress for one people may be decline for another.	Periodization helps organize thinking about continuity and change. It is a process of interpretation.	
Cause and Consequence	Change is driven by multiple causes, and results in multiple consequences. These create a complex web of interrelated short and long term causes and consequences.	the causes that lead to a particular even vary in their influence with some being more important than others.	Events result in the interplay between actors who take actions to cause historical events and conditions within which the actors operate.	Historical actors cannot always predict the effects of conditions, actions and reactions - these generate unintended consequences.	The events of history were not inevitable.
Historical Perspective	An ocean of difference can exist between current worldviews and those of earlier periods	it is important to avoid presentism - the imposition of present ideas on actors of the pasts.	The perspective of actors are best understood considering their historical context.	Taking a historical perspective means inferring how people felt and thought in the past. It does not mean identifying with them.	Different actors have diverse perspectives
The Ethical Dimension	Authors make implicit or explicit ethical judgments in writing historical narratives.	reasoned ethical judgments of past actions are made by taking into account the historical context of the actors.	When making ethical judgments, it is important to be cautious about imposing contemporary standards of right and wrong on the past.	A fair assessment of ethical implications of history can inform us about our responsibilities to remember and respond to contributions, sacrifices and injustices of the past.	Our understanding of history can help us make informed judgments about contemporary issues, but only when we recognize limitations of any direct 'lessons' from the past.