

RUTH SANDWELL & AMY VON HEYKING (Eds.). *Becoming a History Teacher: Sustaining Practices in Historical Thinking and Knowing*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto: ON. (2014). 345 pp. \$35.95 (paperback). (ISBN 978-1-4426-2651-5)

Over the past two decades, several western contexts, including North America, have witnessed a growing inclination towards transforming history education. In this reconceptualized space, students cultivate what is being called historical thinking. Historical thinking entails developing the skills needed to work with historical events to analyze significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence, while considering historical perspectives and ethical dimensions (e.g., Seixas, Morton, Colyer, & Fornazzari, 2013). Applied in the classroom, historical thinking stands in contrast to traditional methods that expect students to passively memorize the content transmitted to them. However, there are several barriers to be overcome before this approach can be widely accepted and applied in schools. Among those are the time constraints that teachers face to cover curricular content and prepare students to meet standardized assessment demands. Another is the reluctance of some teachers to apply historical thinking in their classrooms, either due to their lack of conviction or lack of knowledge and confidence in this approach. How do teachers transform classrooms into environments conducive to historical thinking? *Becoming a History Teacher: Sustaining Practices in Historical Thinking and Knowing*, edited by Ruth Sandwell and Amy von Heyking, offers a range of research-based strategies and practices grounded in historical thinking. These strategies promise to equip teachers with the necessary outlook, skills, and support needed to apply historical thinking approaches in their classrooms.

The collection is divided into 19 chapters. The editors start by explaining that the book is based on the contributions of some of Canada's most prominent history teaching scholars, teacher educators, and history teachers. They had all participated in a symposium together. Their contributions might be read as responses to Canadian educator Alan Sears's proposal, which he outlines in Chapter 2. Sears advocates a "lifespan" view to history teacher preparation and development, beginning with the selection of pre-service teachers into education programs, and continuing through ongoing professional development

opportunities. Fundamental to this approach is acknowledging the influence of predefined “cognitive frames” on shaping pre-service teacher learning. Heeding Sears’s call, the contributors emphasize “cross-boundary” collaborations with historians to help redefine those frames. Such collaborations would allow history teachers and teacher educators to move from the periphery closer to the core of the discipline of history.

In Chapter 3, Clark provides a historical overview of the evolution of history teacher education in Canada, especially in Ontario and British Columbia, starting with the British North America Act of 1867. This act granted provincial autonomy over teacher education. Pre-service teachers are increasingly expected to arrive in teacher education programs with the requisite disciplinary preparation – this, Clark maintains, has been among the key changes in history teacher education in Canada. In Chapter 4, Pollock presents a literature review of studies conducted on social studies teacher education, pointing as well to the need for more large-scale studies. Studies should explore how history teacher education programs approach research-based historical thinking concepts, and how teachers apply them in their classrooms. In Chapter 5, Sandwell calls on undergraduate history professors to support pre-service teachers in developing an understanding of the workings of history as a discipline. Such preparation would essentially equip pre-service teachers to apply historical thinking concepts as well as critically engage with constructs such as the nation state. In Chapter 6, von Heyking stresses the importance of cross-boundary collaboration to help pre-service teachers redefine their cognitive frames and identities. She bases her argument on having co-taught an undergraduate course with a history professor, this in an attempt to bridge the content-pedagogy divide.

In Chapter 7, Lévesque presents findings from his small-scale study on the ideas about history among francophone pre-service teachers in Ontario and Quebec, reiterating the importance of exploring pre-service teachers’ cognitive frames. He stresses the need to account for pressures that pre-service teachers encounter in the school system, which might impede them from applying historical thinking concepts. In Chapter 8, Duquette examines the theoretical underpinnings of Quebec’s Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (formerly known as MELS), finding its approach to historical thinking to be inspired by francophone literature and elements of the Historical Thinking Project (led by Peter Seixas). Chapter 9 is a dialogue between the two co-authors: a teacher educator (Peter Seixas) and a pre-service teacher (Graeme Webber). They propose a two-pronged approach to history teacher education reforms: a restructuring of admission processes to ensure that incoming students possess the necessary preparation and a closer collaboration with school administrations for pre-service teachers to receive needed support with their teaching.

In Chapter 10, Den Heyer contests the limited definition of the historical thinking concept of “historical perspective,” which stipulates contextualizing events within the specific circumstances shaping any historical era under study.

He argues that discussions of historical perspective should also emphasize how present interests compete to shape historical narratives. Resonating with Duquette's call to encourage practical applications of historical thinking, in Chapter 11, Case and MacLeod urge teacher educators to "model" how they want pre-service teachers to teach. They also warn that, oftentimes in practice, teacher educators value content recall and curriculum coverage. Based on a course where this helped her teach more effectively, Gibson dedicates Chapter 12 to advocate for pre-service teachers to have more opportunities to work directly with primary sources. These opportunities need to be coupled with pedagogical support to develop the appropriate teaching activities. Related to practical engagement with historical research, in Chapter 13, Christou illustrates how researching the history of education in New Brunswick exposed his pre-service teachers to key aspects of historical research. Embedding a peer-review component in the course also initiated a scholarly community that could provide sustained support.

In Chapter 14, Myers illustrates how we can unsettle the "theory-versus-practice" divide by encouraging pre-service teachers to connect theoretical and research-based literature with their practicum experiences. Such reflections would optimally instigate conversations around desired history education reforms. In Chapter 15, Peck points to the paucity of research on teacher professional development, especially in the Canadian context. Based on her research, and in line with Sears's and other contributors' proposals, she argues that teachers require professional development support throughout their careers if they are to fully grasp and apply historical thinking concepts.

In Chapter 16, Trofanenko turns the gaze to museums, which remain as understudied sources of historical knowledge. She calls for more "cross-boundary" collaboration: a synergy between museum curators and teacher educators to promote a more critical approach to history. Haskings-Winner's Chapter 17 outlines teacher professional strategies of demonstration classrooms, and the summer literacy camps that she has set up, stressing that such opportunities provide in-service teachers with needed support and a sense of community. Based on their experiences in Ontario and British Columbia respectively, Fine-Meyer (Chapter 18) and Taylor and Farr-Darling (Chapter 19) make strong cases for "place-based" history teaching. They argue that this approach helps students connect with their local communities' histories, allowing them to critique the grand narrative, gaining valuable hands-on experience with historical thinking.

The collection could be critiqued for the little attention its contributors give to variations within teachers' experiences based on their diverse identities, as well as its lack of discussion of the potential role of history education in serving a social justice agenda. The collection glosses over differences based on gender, class, ethnic, and religious backgrounds or other intersectionalities that shape teachers' interactions with history education and the dominant historical narratives. It is also silent on how those differences shape teachers'

experiences with their students and other stakeholders in the educational system. Sears does refer to teacher identity, but mainly in the context of the need for history teachers to assert themselves confidently in engaging with the discipline of history and in “doing history.” Pollock points to the need to focus on studying “how the identities of pre-service teachers influence their historical thinking” (p. 67). Similarly, Den Heyer proposes adopting a “curriculum-as-encounter” approach to ensure a more inclusive experience; in that context, he critiques “curriculum-as-thing” for its indifference to “racial, sexual, class, and gendered inequalities,” and emphasizes their significant ramifications on “techniques, students and teachers” (p. 180). Beyond such brief mentions, the collection offers little insight into how history teachers’ diverse identities might shape their experiences differently, especially in interacting with and applying historical thinking concepts.

Other than Den Heyer’s attempt to problematize how grand narratives omit minority narratives and perspectives, there is also little discussion of history education as a potential space for confronting historical injustices. Among the exceptions are Fine-Meyer’s, and Taylor and Farr-Darling’s contributions. Within their discussion of place-based history, Taylor and Farr-Darling present their work with rural students to interrogate Japanese-Canadian community narratives about World War II internment camps in British Columbia. This approach allowed their students to engage with multiple historical perspectives and to learn about social justice issues. Apart from that discussion, the collection is largely silent on history education’s potential to address social justice issues. Acknowledging the diversity of teacher identities and experiences, and including discussions of omitted narratives, are fundamental to critical educators who envision history education as a space to foster inclusion and confront historical injustices. How these issues would be addressed within a historical thinking framework is left largely unexplored in the book.

In summary, the collection elucidates several understudied aspects of history teacher education, proposing research-based strategies that help teachers productively integrate historical thinking concepts. These should prove practicable for history teacher education programs committed to fostering historical thinking and encouraging a more engaged approach to history. However, studies that explore how teachers with diverse identities interact with historical thinking, and how to address questions of historical injustices within a historical thinking framework, are largely missing. Such discussion would give critical educators direction on ways to apply the framework in their classrooms, while also stimulating a much-needed dialogue.

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REFERENCES

Seixas, P., Morton, T., Colyer, J., & Fornazzari, S. (2013). *The big six: Historical thinking concepts*. Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.