

# Pedagogies: Into the Corridors and Classrooms

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Over fifteen years ago a group of feminist historians in Canada gathered at Trent University to discuss pedagogy. In 1996 they published *A Manual for Teaching Canadian Women's History*. Since the 1990s, historians have been increasingly turning their attention to the means and methods we use to teach students our craft. From the 2005 creation of the History Education Network to job advertisements seeking candidates whose teaching and research intersect to the *Canadian Historical Review's* recent "A Life in History" series, historians across the country are talking about teaching. This past June, with three Brown Bag Teaching Workshops held over the noon hour, pedagogy returned to the CHA with renewed vigour.

This trinity of Brown Bag Teaching Workshops began on Monday, 3 June 2013, with a session sponsored by the Faculty of Arts at Mount Royal University entitled: "Teaching, the Historian's Other Craft." Elise Chenier (SFU) tantalized the capacity crowd with images of sex and sexuality from her first year History of Sexuality course. Chenier's "shock and awe" technique certainly got people's attention; but so too did her assertion that we must not forget that learning, for students, is also an emotional experience. Magda Fahrni (UQAM), reflecting upon her experiences teaching women's and gender history, observed that one of reasons she finds teaching this type of history so rewarding is being able to witness students' excitement as they begin to conceive of history differently. To this end, the film *Qui va chercher Giselle à 3h45?* has allowed Fahrni and her students to grapple with the broader scholarly and social transition from studies of the feminist movement to feminist studies. Like Chenier and Fahrni, Matthew Hayday (Guelph) offered practical suggestions from his senior undergraduate course on federalism in Canada. To comprehend the complex nature of Canadian federalism Hayday has students pick an election – any election – and assess how it was reported in newspapers from across the country. Jeff Keshen's (MRU) remarks revolved around the changing nature of military history in Canada, in particular the increased emphasis on commemoration and the intersection between conflicts and societies; knowing the history of wartime Canada, Keshen explained, is essential to comprehending the history of Canada in peacetime. Lunch arrived as Kirk Niergarth (MRU) was offering up keen insights about the teaching of labour history. To counter students' assumption that they'll be uninterested in the history of labour in Canada when they enter the classroom, Niergarth proposed that labour history works best when it engages local history, architecture, art, and archival materials. Niergarth's advice: Remind students that they too are workers. Adele Perry (U of M) closed the session by asking attendees why is it that we teach survey courses, bound by a nation-state, when so much of our reading and scholarship transcends these boundaries?

Tuesday's teaching workshop was equally well attended. Sponsored by the Aboriginal History Study Group, and chaired by Liam Haggarty (MRU), this session was designed to home in on the teaching of Indigenous histories in Canada. Susan Naylor (WLU)

began by asserting that teaching indigenous history in Canada requires us to do more than "add aboriginal people and stir". Survey courses, Naylor argued, ought to narrate Canada's history as one of colonialism and "resettlement," and simultaneously emphasize connections of kin, land, and stories. Boyd Cothran (York) reflected upon his first year teaching US Indigenous history in Canada. Cothran argued that in addition to educating students about indigenous history, more must be done to educate non-Canadian academics about Canada's indigenous history. Christine O'Bonsawin (UVic) noted that for many Indigenous people, education continues to be a tool of colonialism and universities to be unsafe spaces. O'Bonsawin challenged us as teachers to not only work to Indigenize universities, but also our classrooms. Keith Carlson (U of S) encouraged teachers of Indigenous history to "unsettle the settler within." To do this, Carlson suggested that we combine social science models with humanist approaches and create, what he termed, "community-engaged research." Jennifer Pettit (MRU) concluded the session by discussing various tools and technologies available to teach Indigenous histories. Pettit argued that often ignored sources, such as the blueprints of residential schools (that show no classrooms) and school grocery lists can help students analyze the day-to-day experiences of indigenous children at these institutions.

Interest in these Brown Bag Teaching Workshops had not waned by Wednesday. The last session, sponsored by the Active History Committee of the CHA, also attracted a large audience and tackled the question of how to make history matter. Dana Wessell Lightfoot (UNBC) discussed the alternative final assignments that students have completed in her classes, assignments that range from art to essays. Jo-Anne McCutcheon (U of O) spoke about how to integrate active histories into our classrooms and the importance of providing students with interactive dialogue and persistent feedback. McCutcheon drew, in particular, upon her experience working through HUBOttawa. Sean Graham (U of O) explained that whether one is teaching pop culture, or history, it remains the instructor's responsibility to contextualize sources and their historical content. To this end, Graham found that assignments where students review pop culture from the perspective of time to be especially fruitful. Nathan Smith (UNBC) argued that it is essential for historians to be using digital history in our classrooms. Of his many examples, Smith's web review assignment of the Government of Canada's War of 1812 website was the most timely, illustrating not only that the past remains relevant in the present, but also that web review assignments can simultaneously increase student engagement and foster skills acquisition.

The Program Committee ought to be thrilled with how these workshops were received. Presenters and attendees alike repeatedly commented that there needs to be more sessions like these at the CHA – and held in larger rooms! Some even mused that a conference dedicated solely to the teaching of history is required. Only time will tell. For now, with these three sessions, pedagogy has made its mark in the corridors and classrooms of #chashc2013.