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Podcasts as Teacher Talk in Historical Thinking

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ABSTRACT

One of the challenges associated with preparing teacher-candidates to teach historical thinking involves moving away from narrative practices that inhibit explicit use of historical thinking concepts. One belief is that if teachers are able to demonstrate out loud how historians work with primary sources—and thus model historical reasoning through the use of historical thinking strategies—they can better assist their students to arrive at more complex understandings about the constructed nature of history. Indeed, as van Boxtel and van Drie (2018) have argued, how teacher-candidates make sense of the past is key to how their future students will learn to make sense of the past. In this practice-oriented journal article, I explore the benefits and challenges of using podcasts as a pedagogy for preparing pre-service teachers to model historical thinking—and thus engage in dynamic conversations as teacher talk. Through a semester-long project that culminated in the development of "Unwritten Histories" podcasts, teacher-candidates were encouraged to work in groups to adopt a National History Day framework for historical inquiry. This involved the use of annotated bibliographies, inquiry questions, and storylines. Participants were also required to adopt a vocabulary for historical thinking, thus practising the strategy of modelling historical thinking out loud—as teacher talk. This pedagogy was found to be beneficial in supporting a criterialist stance in historical reasoning. What makes this inquiry unique is that while a great deal of research has been undertaken with regards to explicitly teaching historical reasoning through document-based writing (De La Paz et al., 2010; Monte-Sano, 2011; Nokes et al., 2007; Sendur et al., 2021), very little research has been undertaken with regards to creating dialogic podcasts for this purpose.

KEYWORDS

Podcasts, Teacher talk, Historical thinking

CITATION

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Introduction

As Nitsche, Mathis, and O'Neill (2022) have pointed out, practice-oriented research has stressed that epistemological development is directly related to historical thinking and arriving at evidence-based conclusions about the past (p. 2). In preparing teacher-candidates to teach historical thinking, one of our major goals is to move their teaching practise away from a content-driven lecture format, so as to embrace teaching strategies that will enable their future students to think historically. In Canada, it is widely believed that Peter Seixas' six concepts of Historical Thinking are well suited to achieve this pedagogical goal (Gibson and Peck, 2020; Seixas and Morton, 2013; Miles et al., 2017), since as Seixas (2006, 2017a, 2017b) has argued, they provide students with a tangible set of cognitive tools to engage in historical reasoning. Likewise, demonstrating explicitly, how historians work with primary sources and adopt historical thinking strategies, has been found to be highly beneficial in assisting students to arrive at analytical statements about the past (Martin and Wineburg, 2008; van Drie and van Boxtel, 2003).

In this journal article I consider how explicit use of Historical Thinking concepts, combined with an inquiry-based podcast project, might engage pre-service teachers in complex levels of epistemological reasoning. In so doing, I explore the benefits and challenges of using podcasts as a pedagogy for preparing teacher-candidates to teach Historical Thinking. Working with three groups of teacher education candidates at the University of Ottawa, I analyse their historical reasoning, as well as challenges experienced in adopting Seixas' six concepts of Historical Thinking, as they engaged in dynamic conversations that model Historical Thinking. Their assignment was to develop a podcast in which they entered into a conversation with a colleague, and explicitly employed at least three concepts of Historical Thinking. In so doing, the teacher-candidates were challenged to "thinking out loud" like historians. As part of this assignment, they were also asked to adopt a National History Day framework1 for historical inquiry (National History Day, 2023), which involved the use of annotated bibliographies, inquiry questions, and storylines. In their final reflection process paper, participants were then invited to reflect upon their epistemological challenges; via an exit survey, they were also invited to reflect upon the potential of using such pedagogy in their future classrooms. What makes this research unique is that while a great deal of research has been undertaken with regards to explicitly teaching historical thinking and reasoning in the context of document-based writing (De La Paz et al., 2010; Monte-Sano, 2011; Nokes et al., 2007; Sendur et al., 2021) very little research has been undertaken with regards to creating dialogic podcasts for this purpose.

Literature Review

Teacher talk

Although it is widely accepted that contextual knowledge is equally important as procedural knowledge when teaching and learning about the past (Chapman, 2021; Darling-Hammond, Orcutt, and Austin, 2015; Ellsworth, 2017; Powell, 2020; Schulman,1986; Thorpe and Persson, 2020; van Boxtel and van Drie, 2004; van Drie and van Boxtel, 2008; VanSledright, 2011; VanSledright and Limón, 2006), dialogic learning—in the form of "teacher talk"—has also been identified as an effective teaching strategy for modelling historical thinking (Allender, 2019; Gestsdottir, van Boxtel and van Drie, 2018; Holt, 1990; Reisman and Wineburg, 2008; Sandwell, 2014; Stoel, van Drie, and van Boxtel, 2015; van Boxtel and van Drie, 2017, 2018). This was the objective of this inquiry: to engage teacher-candidates in practising their "teacher talk" as historical thinking.

One of the earliest proponents of this pedagogical belief was American historian Thomas C. Holt (1990), who rocked the foundation of history education in North America by proposing that—rather than presenting students with a "predictable litany of other people's facts served up by teacher-technicians on a kind of educational conveyor belt" (Kelly, Meuwissen, and Vansledright, p. 116) that teachers examine their own assumptions about the past and—among

other fundamental teaching practices—become models of mindfulness. In this sense, as Dennie Palmer Wolf and Robert Orrill have explained: "teachers must find ways to make their thinking public, visible, [and] audible—without prescribing its course or conclusion" (Holt, 1990, xii).

Reisman and Wineburg (2008) have since built upon Holt's argument by recommending that teachers explicitly model contextualised thinking about the past—as well as provide background knowledge, and ask guiding questions—as a way of assisting students to develop their historical thinking skills:

> Historical thinking is by its very nature invisible. If teachers want students to learn how to think contextually, they must show them what this thinking sounds like. Thus, the third tool used to develop students' contextualized thinking is the expert think-aloud. (p. 204; see also Stoel, van Drie, and van Boxtel, 2015)

Here in Canada, Ruth Sandwell (2011) has emphasised the role of dialogue as a way of conveying the "epistemological framework and analytical tools that [students] need [in order] to understand and navigate a complex social world" (p.81). In her pre-service history teacher classroom, Sandwell (2014) adopted an approach to modelling historical thinking that utilised primary documents as a way of enabling her students to learn how to *do* history with their future students. Sandwell found this teaching practise to be very effective. Her pragmatic observations are certainly supported by the research of Janet van Drie and Carla van Boxtel (2008; see also van Boxtel and van Drie, 2017), who have also emphasized the role of dialogue in the classroom: "An important task of the teacher… becomes to create ample opportunities in the classroom for students to practice historical reasoning, for themselves, in dialogue with other students, and in dialogue with the teacher" (p. 105).

More recently, Tim Allender's (2019) study of history teaching practice in Australia, has identified the "teaching voice" of experienced teachers "as central to the craft of history teaching, particularly in the way it orchestrated the disciplinary intersections between epistemology and pedagogy, teacher procedure and student cognition" (p.162). As Allender notes: "This voice was… built using a repertoire of intuitive adaptations to classroom realities in terms of student interest and knowledge deficits, although these adaptions remained largely unscripted—even to the teachers themselves." (p.162).

For this inquiry I combined this theoretical base of "teacher talk" and "teacher voice" with Susanna Gestsdottir, Carla van Boxtel, and Janet van Drie's (2018) framework for evaluating teacher practise; since, as Gestsdottir et al (2018) have noted, demonstrating historical thinking and reasoning through teacher practise is one of the key indicators for successfully teaching historical thinking (p. 967). In addition—and perhaps more importantly for this inquiry—they have also noted that being able to demonstrate historical reasoning is distinct from being able to provide instruction on how to apply tools for historical thinking (p. 970). Moreover, van Boxtel and van Drie (2018) have also emphasized the importance of explicitly modelling historical thinking in the classroom—as a form of what Collins, Brown, and Newman (1989) have termed *cognitive apprenticeship*—in order to move their students' reasoning towards a *"*more mature *criterialist"* (van Boxtel and van Drie p.158) understanding of the constructed nature of history (as cited from Maggioni, VanSledright, and Alexander, 2009).

All of these findings point to the critical role of teacher talk as a way of modelling historical thinking. As this body of research suggests, teachers demonstrating out loud how historians work with primary sources of evidence—thus modelling historical reasoning through the use of historical thinking strategies—can assist classroom students to arrive at a better understanding of the complex nature of history. In this context, how teacher-candidates make sense of the past becomes key to how their future students will learn to make sense of the past. This is the premise on which this podcast teaching strategy was developed: enabling teacher-candidates to practise their teacher talk around Historical Thinking concepts.

Teaching to think

While historical thinking has been widely embraced as a pedagogy for history education in North America, one of the epistemological challenges associated with preparing teacher-candidates to teach historical thinking involves moving away from a narrative format that inhibits explicit use of Historical Thinking concepts (Case and McLeod, 2014; Maggioni 2010; Powell, 2020; Seixas 1998; Yeagar and Davis, 1996). Critical historical thinking in the pre-service teacher classroom, as Roland Case and Genie MacLeod (2014) have observed, requires knowing the difference between "teaching 'to think' and teaching 'what to think'" (p 210). Hence, the responsibility rests at the university level for instructors to "walk the talk" (Case and MacLeod, 2014, p. 211) in order to enable teacher-candidates to "talk the walk" in their future history classrooms. As the authors conclude:

> 1. Commonly used pedagogy in history and social studies methodology courses is often inconsistent with the theory and practice it purports to teach;
> 2. It is possible to teach methodology courses in a manner that more closely models the pedagogy espoused in these courses; and
> 3. "Walking the talk" is not only necessary—it is more likely to successfully prepare students to teach in desired ways in their own classrooms (p. 211).

In Canada, Lindsay Gibson and Carla Peck (2020) have piloted a teaching strategy that shows promise in this regard. Throughout their 13-week course, students were asked to complete five "in-class" assignments and five major assignments designed around six concepts of Historical Thinking (Seixas and Morton, 2013): "What is historical thinking? (4 classes); Evidence and Interpretations (6 classes); Historical Significance (2 classes); Continuity and Change (3 classes); Historical Perspectives (2 classes); Ethical Judgments and the Ethical Dimension (3 classes); Assessing Historical Thinking (3 classes); [and] Historical Thinking in Indigenous Contexts (2 classes)" (Gibson and Peck, 2020, p. 228). In-class activities were intended to provide students and instructors with evidence regarding abilities to model effective historical thinking assessment strategies and practices, within the limitations of Alberta's K-12 Social Studies curriculum. The final course assignment involved designing a lesson plan around Seixas' six Historical Thinking concepts that included:

> - An effective historical inquiry question, identify[ing] the historical thinking concept(s) they are focusing their inquiry activity on;
> - Relevant learning outcomes from the Alberta K-6 Program of Studies to focus their lesson on;
> - Accessible primary and/or secondary sources relevant to the topic being investigated;
> - A sequence of learning activities that scaffold the key substantive and procedural knowledge the lesson focuses on;
> - Blackline masters, data charts, or other tools and strategies that will help students organize their findings and respond to the historical thinking question;
> - Valid assessment criteria for assessing students' understanding of the historical thinking concept(s) and the substantive knowledge being focused on (Gibson and Peck, 2020, p. 231).

Although the authors clearly indicate the limitations of their research—specifically, whether pre-service teachers would actually transfer their newly acquired knowledge about historical thinking

into their future classrooms; and whether this acquired knowledge might impact their future students' historical reasoning (Gibson and Peck, 2020, p. 225)—their findings are particularly significant because of what was not achieved. As Gibson and Peck discovered, while pre-service teachers in their inquiry became well versed in teaching and assessing for historical thinking, their own epistemological beliefs about the meaning of history and teaching history remained unchanged (p.244). This finding, as well as research discussed thus far, points to the question that guides this journal article: How might epistemological reasoning and teacher practise that supports historical thinking be aided through podcast-project teacher training?

Data Collection

Podcasts as teacher talk

Findings presented here are focused upon three classes of fourth-year education students enrolled in an elective course entitled "Teaching History at Senior Level" at the University of Ottawa. This course was held during the winter terms of 2021, 2022, and 2023 (35 participants in total). Participants in 2021 and 2022 (23 in total) were in the last semester of a two-year Bachelor of Education, and had already completed their second-year practicum requirements. Due to the covid pandemic, their entire course was conducted on-line synchronously, with additional short-quiz assignments and readings made available asynchronously.

Participants in 2023 (12 in total) were completing their first semester of the same two-year Bachelor of Education, but had not yet commenced their second-year practicum requirement. Instruction for the 2023 weekly course was conducted in person, with the same short-quiz assignments and readings as in previous years made available asynchronously. For this latter group, additional information was also collected with regards to their previous experience in learning and teaching history. Of these twelve, all but two had completed coursework in history during their undergraduate studies, and five had majored in history. Only two possessed teaching experience in history, and that was at post-secondary level. All of the teacher-candidates had already completed a companion course during the previous term about teaching history at junior level (ages 12 to 14), so all were very familiar with Seixas and Morton's (2013) six concepts of Historical Thinking.

As with Gibson and Peck's inquiry, the 11-week course was designed around Seixas and Morton's (2013) six concepts of Historical Thinking[2]: Evidence and Sources (6 classes); Historical Significance (2 classes); Cause and Consequence (2 classes); Continuity and Change (2 classes); Historical Perspectives (2 classes); and Ethical Dimensions (2 classes). In addition, throughline classroom instruction and activities were provided around evidence-based inquiry methods (5 classes); designing critical questions (3 classes); historical agency (2 classes); and assessing for Historical Thinking (2 classes). During each class, participants were provided with explicit instruction around implementing and teaching each historical thinking concept, three of which they were then requested to use explicitly in their culminating final assignment of creating an "Unwritten Histories" podcast as a think-aloud in historical thinking (hence demonstrating criterialist historical reasoning through their own teacher practise). In this sense, participants were explicitly asked to think out loud epistemologically, by adopting at least three of the six concepts of Historical Thinking.

How this final assignment differed from that of Gibson and Peck's (2020) is that—rather than designing lesson plans for their students to follow—these teacher-candidates were tasked with "walking the talk" (Case and MacLeod, 2014, p. 211) of *doing* history (and hence experiencing a project-based pedagogy as their future students might experience it) in the form of teacher talk. In addition, what set this assignment apart from Sandwell's (2011) methodology, is that these teacher-candidates were required to adopt a National History Framework, which culminated in a final reflection process paper (appendix A). As a result, through their 8-week journey of developing their podcast-project, they were prompted to not just follow the steps of *doing* history,

but also think—with each formative assignment along the way—about *what they were doing, how they were doing it,* and *why*.

In addition to this final assignment, each week we read and discussed a chapter in Margaret MacMillan's publication *Dangerous Games: The Uses and Abuses of History* (2009), as a way of understanding how historical narratives can change, depending upon the political times in which we live and who controls the narrative. Then, as an extension of this thesis, participants were asked to develop lesson plans suitable for their future senior level classrooms, using Historical Thinking concepts and also adopting a specific theoretical lens (relevant to Ontario's senior level history curriculum): Indigenous Perspectives in History; Feminist Theory in History; Settler Colonial Theory in History; Anti-racism in History; Transnational Theory in World History; and Social Justice Theory in History.

The culminating final assignment was to work in groups of two to create an "Unwritten Histories" podcast on any historical topic relevant to Ontario's History curriculum. In so doing, participants were required to explicitly model at least three concepts of Historical Thinking, and engage in an investigative conversation with their partner (hence employing techniques of dialogic learning). They were also prompted to "thinking out loud" like an historian—by clearly employing a vocabulary for Historical Thinking (adopting such terms as Cause and Consequence, Continuity and Change, Historical Significance, etc.). The length of the podcast was limited to 15 minutes, which meant that their conversation would have to be succinct and to the point. This podcast assignment extended over 8 weeks, becoming a key activity for learning and implementing the "Big Six" concepts of Historical Thinking (Seixas and Morton, 2013). To first demonstrate this approach to historical inquiry, participants were initially asked to review a podcast from the popular CBC Broadcasting series "Secret Life of Canada" (CBC Radio, 2023). Their task was to recognise when the podcasters were implicitly adopting Historical Thinking concepts, and to explain how the podcasters eventually arrived at a statement of Historical Significance.

National History Day framework for historical inquiry

Overall, what made the culminating final assignment somewhat different from a typical podcast project is that participants were asked to adopt (and with each portion of the assignment were guided through) the National History Day curriculum framework for historical inquiry (National History Day, 2023; Kuhn and O'Hara, 2014). This involved the development of annotated bibliographies, inquiry questions, storylines, scripts, statements of historical significance, and a final reflection process paper (appendix A). The objective (which was made very clear to participants at the very beginning) was to model in explicit ways their use of historical thinking strategies. In so doing, they were requested to adopt a vocabulary for Historical Thinking, thus employing at least three of the concept terms during their podcast, as a way of entering into a dialogue with their partner and modelling historical thinking. More specifically, the project was staged over eight weeks in the following manner:

Week 1 (which was actually 3 weeks into the course): 'How-to' review of "Secret Life of Canada" due. Participants were asked to review a podcast from this popular Canadian series—meaning—identify how the authors use and demonstrate one or more of the "Big Six" concepts of Historical Thinking (Seixas and Morton, 2013):

1. **Evidence and Sources:** Selecting, comparing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources of evidence;
2. **Historical Perspective:** Understanding the past as different from today, with a diverse range of social, cultural, intellectual, or emotional contexts that shaped people's lives and actions;
3. **Cause and Consequence:** Identifying how both direct and indirect conditions or actions led to others;

4. **Continuity and Change:** Identifying turning points in history as well as what has changed and what has remained the same over time;
5. **Historical Significance:** Why we care today about certain events, trends or issues in history; or
6. **Ethical Dimensions:** How we, in the present, judge actors in different circumstances in the past, and/or how different interpretations of the past reflect different moral stances on what happened (Seixas, 2006, pp 1-2).

Week 2: Participants' own "Unwritten Histories" podcast topic selection due (any topic of their choosing that supports Ontario curriculum outcomes).

Week 3: Preliminary annotated bibliography for their "Unwritten Histories" podcast due.

Week 4: Draft outline for their "Unwritten Histories" podcast due.

Week 7: "Unwritten Histories" podcast presentations and peer reviews take place in class.

Week 8: Submission of final "Process Paper" (instructions outlined in appendix A) along with a final revised annotated bibliography, podcast, and final script. This final process paper served to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the assignment, identify bottlenecks in their research, and explain how they worked around these problems (if any).

Along with each weekly submission, participants were provided with formative feedback, enabling them to refine their focus, clarify their use of the Historical Thinking concepts, and consider alternative primary and secondary sources of evidence.

Data Analysis

As Gestsdottir, van Boxtel, and van Drie (2018) have pointed out, simply engaging classroom students in doing history is not nearly enough. Gestsdottir et al (2018) have identified 7 key categories for evaluating teacher practise:

1. The teacher communicates learning objectives that focus on historical thinking and reasoning goal;
2. The teacher demonstrates historical thinking or reasoning;
3. The teacher uses historical sources to support historical thinking and reasoning;
4. The teacher makes clear that there are multiple perspectives and interpretations;
5. The teacher provides explicit instructions on historical thinking and reasoning strategies;
6. The teacher engages students in historical thinking and reasoning by individual or group assignments;
7. The teacher engages students in historical thinking and reasoning by a whole-class discussion (p. 970).

In addition, Maggioni, Alexander, and VanSledright (2004) have identified three types of epistemological stances:

1. A *copier* stance regards claims about the past as either right or wrong, citing one authority as correct;

2. A *subjectivist* stance acknowledges that authorities can disagree, but as merely a matter of opinion;

3. A *criterialist* stance understands the constructed nature of history and the use of specific Historical Thinking concepts to evaluate the validity of author interpretations, resulting in the idea that some interpretations can be more plausible than others (van Boxtel and van Drie, 2018, p, 158).

This is the criteria that was adopted for analysing the final podcasts and scripts. As illustrated in Table 1, participants' podcasts were compared against Gestsdottir et al's (2018) categories 2 through 5 for the following evidence of teaching practice: 2) demonstrating historical thinking and reasoning; 3) using historical sources to support their reasoning; 4) adopting multiple perspectives or interpretations; and 5) explicitly adopting a vocabulary for historical thinking. In turn, the podcasts and scripts were also hermeneutically analysed against Maggioni et al's (2004) categories for epistemological stance: copier, subjectivist, and criterialist.

Table 1

Participants Epistemological Stances

Participants	2 - Reasoning	3 - Sourcing	4 – Multiple Perspectives	5 – Use of terms	Historical Reasoning
1 and 2	✓	✓	✓	No	2 - Criterialist
3, 4 and 5	✓	X	✓	No	3 - Copier
6 and 7	✓	✓	✓	Yes	2 - Criterialist
8	✓	✓	✓	Yes	Criterialist
9	✓	✓	✓	Yes	Criterialist
10 and 11	✓	✓	✓	Yes	2 - Criterialist
12	✓	✓	✓	No	Copier? Criterialist?
13	✓	X	✓	No	Copier
14 and 15	✓	X	✓	No	2 - Copier
16	✓	✓	✓	Yes	Criterialist
17 and 18	✓	✓	✓	No	2 - Criterialist
19	✓	✓	✓	Yes	Criterialist
20	✓	X	X	No	Copier
21 and 22	✓	✓	✓	Yes	2 - Copier
23	✓	✓	✓	Yes	Criterialist
24	✓	X	✓	No	Subjectivist
24	X	X	X	Yes	Subjectivist
26 and 27	X	X	N	No	2 - Copier
28	✓	✓	✓	Yes	Criterialist
29	✓	X	✓	No	Subjectivist
30 and 31	✓	✓	✓	No	2 - Copier
32	✓	✓	✓	Yes	Criterialist
33	✓	X	✓	No	Subjectivist
34 and 35	✓	✓	✓	Yes	2 - Criterialist

Notes: Evidence of Gestsdottir, van Boxtel, and van Drie's (2018) categories for evaluating teacher practice in participant podcasts and scripts: 2) demonstrating historical thinking and reasoning; 3) using historical sources to support their reasoning; 4) adopting multiple perspectives or interpretations; and 5) explicitly adopting a vocabulary for historical thinking.

In addition, participants' final process papers (outlined in appendix A) were analyzed for evidence of benefits and challenges associated with their overall podcast-project experience. Lastly, participants were also requested to complete two final exit survey questions: 1) Please explain what challenges you experienced in adopting Historical Thinking as a learning pedagogy for this project; and 2) How might this pedagogy apply to your future teaching practice in history education?

Findings[3]

Podcasts and scripts

What I was looking for in the final podcasts and scripts was evidence of whether there existed a correlation between implementing the terms (vocabulary) of Historical Thinking and adopting a criterialist stance in historical reasoning—i.e., moving away from "telling what happened" (a copier or subjectivist stance), to thinking historically *about how we know* what happened (a criterialist stance). This is a teaching practice that also corresponds with Gestsdottir, van Boxtel, and van Drie's (2018) criteria for teaching historical thinking in the classroom: demonstrating historical thinking or reasoning in their own thought process.

What I found is that for those participants who demonstrated a criterialist stance in their podcast presentations (17 out of 35), most (13 out of 17) also demonstrated elements of Gestsdottir et al's (2018) categories for teacher practise and were successful in adopting a vocabulary for historical thinking (see table 1).

For example, in the podcast developed by HO and AC (appendix B) the two teacher-candidates set about adopting the Historical Thinking concepts of Evidence and Sources:

> … the Parthenon acts as a **primary source** that we can analyze as **evidence** and what that evidence is saying is that Athenians wanted everyone to know the struggle it took to be victorious, but they again took that notion a step further when they started comparing their successes to the stories of the gods.

Historical Perspective:

> This is a great example of **historical perspective**! This primary source account is representative of the thoughts and beliefs of the Athenians at the time. And the fact that this story is documented by a writer living almost 500 years later shows just how powerful collective memory can be. By spreading stories of divine support for their Acropolis, Athens created a legacy of Athenian superiority.

And Historical Significance:

> So in conclusion, when we look at the Acropolis with historical perspective, it becomes clear that to ensure a lasting legacy of Athenian victory and supremacy, the Athenians memorialized the suffering and loss that they endured on their path to achieving Greek victory in the Persian Wars.

In so doing, they also laid their historical thinking out to the listener, thus demonstrating criterialist reasoning:

> Exactly! We envision them as these affluent, civilized, philosophers who mastered art, architecture, and literature. But is this picture just a snapshot of Athens at height? Does this mean that the Acropolis is a successful tool of propaganda if we still believe in this narrative of Athenian superiority thousands years later?

In addition, for HO and AC, like many of the others, their epistemological journey to create their podcast was guided by specific criteria:

> 1) …it needed to be relevant to today, inspire critical thinking, and be a lighter topic so that our podcast could be upbeat and funny (AC, p. 2);
>
> 2) …we had to be sure to be true to the facts, stay historically accurate, bring in the interesting tidbits, and ensure our audience could have a laugh or two, often at our own exaggerated expense (HO, pp 2-3).

In this context, historical thinking was indeed—as Sam Wineburg (2001) has described—an "unnatural act":

> The difficulty lies in picking the right information, not presenting too much information, fitting it into fifteen minutes, and being clear and concise while following the curriculum and the historical thinking concepts. The easy part was getting it to flow and make sense as a team. Once we got started, and got over all our initial trepidations of feeling inadequate to write a script it became fun and easy, and interesting (to us) (HO, p. 3).

Hence, through the process of developing their podcast around a topic of special interest to themselves, HO and AC consciously and deliberately engaged in refining their teaching practise to support Historical Thinking.

Annotated bibliographies

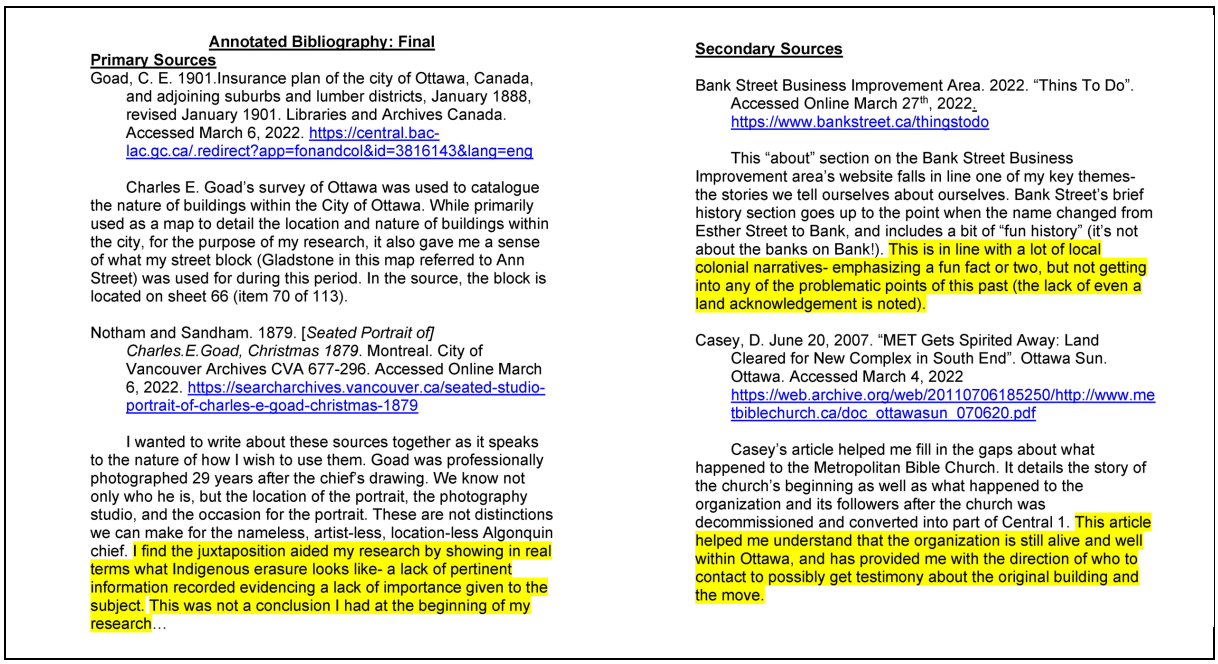
In keeping with the National History Day framework, preliminary annotated bibliographies were submitted early in the development of the podcast projects. Overall, this assignment became key to moving participants away from simply "telling" their audience what they already knew to be true—what Kuhn, Weinstock and Cheney (2000) have referred to as a "copier (e.g., history as a copy of the past)" or "borrower (e.g., people choose their preferred facts)" mode of epistemic development (Nitsche, Mathis, and O'Neill, 2022, p. 3). The desired outcome for the overall project was to move the teacher-candidates towards a "criterialist stance (e.g., history as a process of inquiry)" (Nitsche, Mathis, and O'Neill, 2022, p. 3).

The thought of developing a detailed bibliography at the BEGINNING of their project was not the most popular activity for participants. Upon explanation of the assignment, I sensed a unanimous groan—since the task required thoughtful upfront planning as to what primary sources would be considered, what alternative sources would be compared, and how these sources may or may not relate to the secondary information participants already possessed in hand. Without this key activity, I sensed that the end podcast result would be simply a polemic on a narrative that the participants had already copied, or borrowed, and was already well fixed in their belief system as true.

As illustrated in figure 1 below, this example of KT's final (revised) bibliography demonstrates a critical stance in making choices of what sources to include in his inquiry. What is important (I think) is that from the very beginning of his podcast project KT was thinking through HOW and WHY he would incorporate a specific piece of evidence into his analysis—and how this might compare to other sources of information. In other words, actively demonstrating corroboration of sources and reflecting upon their meaning:

Figure 1

Excerpt from KT's annotated bibliography



Annotated Bibliography: Final

Primary Sources

Goad, C. E. 1901.Insurance plan of the city of Ottawa, Canada, and adjoining suburbs and lumber districts, January 1888, revised January 1901. Libraries and Archives Canada. Accessed March 6, 2022. https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.redirect?app=fonandcol&id=3816143&lang=eng

Charles E. Goad's survey of Ottawa was used to catalogue the nature of buildings within the City of Ottawa. While primarily used as a map to detail the location and nature of buildings within the city, for the purpose of my research, it also gave me a sense of what my street block (Gladstone in this map referred to Ann Street) was used for during this period. In the source, the block is located on sheet 66 (item 70 of 113).

Notham and Sandham. 1879. [*Seated Portrait of] Charles.E.Goad, Christmas 1879*. Montreal. City of Vancouver Archives CVA 677-296. Accessed Online March 6, 2022. https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/seated-studio-portrait-of-charles-e-goad-christmas-1879

I wanted to write about these sources together as it speaks to the nature of how I wish to use them. Goad was professionally photographed 29 years after the chief's drawing. We know not only who he is, but the location of the portrait, the photography studio, and the occasion for the portrait. These are not distinctions we can make for the nameless, artist-less, location-less Algonquin chief. I find the juxtaposition aided my research by showing in real terms what Indigenous erasure looks like- a lack of pertinent information recorded evidencing a lack of importance given to the subject. This was not a conclusion I had at the beginning of my research…

Secondary Sources

Bank Street Business Improvement Area. 2022. "Thins To Do". Accessed Online March 27th, 2022. https://www.bankstreet.ca/thingstodo

This "about" section on the Bank Street Business Improvement area's website falls in line one of my key themes- the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves. Bank Street's brief history section goes up to the point when the name changed from Esther Street to Bank, and includes a bit of "fun history" (it's not about the banks on Bank!). This is in line with a lot of local colonial narratives- emphasizing a fun fact or two, but not getting into any of the problematic points of this past (the lack of even a land acknowledgement is noted).

Casey, D. June 20, 2007. "MET Gets Spirited Away: Land Cleared for New Complex in South End". Ottawa Sun. Ottawa. Accessed March 4, 2022 https://web.archive.org/web/20110706185250/http://www.metbiblechurch.ca/doc_ottawasun_070620.pdf

Casey's article helped me fill in the gaps about what happened to the Metropolitan Bible Church. It details the story of the church's beginning as well as what happened to the organization and its followers after the church was decommissioned and converted into part of Central 1. This article helped me understand that the organization is still alive and well within Ottawa, and has provided me with the direction of who to contact to possibly get testimony about the original building and the move.

KT was also conscious of how his ideas were changing over time, as he sifted through—what seemed at times—an overwhelming quantity of sources and potential avenues for investigation:

> In my original annotated bibliography, I had made mention that I would dive into how the National Capital Commission discusses its acquisition of land, and how the Algonquin territory includes the fracturing of the Algonquin of Quebec, as represented through documentary. I omitted both of these avenues of research as, the more I examined my topic, the more I focused on the specific example—what could *this condo* say about colonial erasure, leaving the other stories for another day... As far as next steps go, would I have had more time to research as well as more time allocated in this podcast, I would have loved to bring in a couple of guests—someone from the Metropolitan Bible Church, Robert S. (who seems to really enjoy getting into local history, albeit colonial history) and an Algonquin elder to speak to their relationship and recommendations for what development could look like (KT, April, 2022).

KT, like other teacher-candidates who participated in this inquiry, found it difficult and "messy" to work with sources and evidence. Yet, while many (21 out of 35) recognised this as a challenge that they had to overcome, the actual cognitive experience of working through that challenge is what Thorpe and Persson (2020) have noted is missing from the Canadian model for Historical Thinking:

> We think that the intersubjective, unsettled and existential dimension of historical thinking suggested here is given too little attention in history educational research, where instead the primary focus seems to be the question of how we can transfer and operationalize academic standards of history in history education (p. 898).

This element of personal reflection, as described by KT, also illustrates what Thorpe and Persson (2020) have argued is often overlooked in methods-style teaching—when too much attention is focussed on procedure over reasoning:

> …historical thinking should be seen as an attitude or stance that we can have towards history (and ourselves) rather than the mastering of a certain methodological technique. In addition, we have stressed the need to provide students with excessive opportunities to both use and challenge their own experiences as human beings (Thorpe and Persson, p. 899).

Benefits

An overwhelming number of participants (24 out of 35 participants[4]) indicated, upon completion of their podcast projects, that they enjoyed the experience of applying their Historical Thinking skills in this way, on a topic of their own choice. They also indicated that they would like to undertake similar activities in their future classrooms. As KR explained:

> I absolutely see the benefit of podcasts, and also can understand an even greater benefit of podcasts in high school history classes with students. If I was teaching the history class, I would not change anything that I learned in this process, including the self or peer reflection, the sharing of knowledge, the multiple steps to create the podcast, etc. A podcast would allow them to enhance research abilities, understand the importance of primary research, and find an interest in historical development (KR, 2023).

KR also elaborated upon the unnatural act of not just *doing* history—but actually *thinking* about adopting the concepts in meaningful ways:

> It was a challenging experience to adopt historical thinking as learning pedagogy because it was a new topic for me this semester. In the semester prior to this, we touched on historical thinking concepts broadly, but did not apply them particularly to a project. Therefore, using the historical thinking concepts with a podcast and building a script was challenging.
>
> The process was time-consuming, and using the historical thinking concepts made research more difficult, though less general. It was also challenging to fit the historical thinking into the podcast in a meaningful and academic way without ruining the flow of the project.
>
> Despite the challenges, however, the podcast and the historical thinking pedagogy was extremely helpful to my understanding of history as a teachable subject because it allowed me to complete a deeper analysis of my topic.

So, how might epistemological reasoning and teacher practise that supports historical thinking be aided through podcast-project teacher training? Although evidence presented in table 1 does not definitively suggest a direct correlation between using a podcast assignment as a way of training teachers to "talk the talk"—hence demonstrating criterialist historical reasoning—such findings do suggest potential benefits for both teacher-candidates and their future students. As HD pointed out in her final reflection:

> It took a lot of time and planning to adopt Historical Thinking as thinking out loud. Some challenges I experienced were developing the argument through having both HS and I talking. I did some research online on how to make a podcast and a lot of professionals use a script, so we went with this method. This was helpful because we were able to work through our ideas and plan on paper. I also enjoyed writing the script because it reminded me of writing a screenplay which I loved doing when I was a kid. In terms of pedagogy, it can we really useful to work through your ideas using reading, writing and speaking and this assignment includes all 3 modalities which could be really useful for helping students to learn and understand history (HD, 2022).

The overall benefits of such a model also seem to be closely aligned with Gestsdottir, van Boxtel, and van Drie's (2018) criteria for teacher training:

1) Teacher-candidates were prompted to focus their historical reasoning upon specific historical thinking goals;
2) they were also prompted to explicitly demonstrate historical thinking;
3) by using both primary and secondary sources to support their historical thinking; and
4) to seek out multiple perspectives and interpretations.
5) By explicitly adopting a vocabulary, they were prompted to model Historical Thinking for their future students;
6) they also engaged in a meaningful group assignment that could be replicated with their future students; and
7) through peer-review and presentation of their final podcast project engaged in whole-class discussions on their topic of interest.

Challenges

Such an approach was also not without its challenges. One of the most obvious deficits was finding reliable primary sources—and in particular, sources that reflected alternative perspectives, such as that of Indigenous Peoples. This highlights an important point with regards to sourcing of information, since one of the central premises of historical thinking is to engage in close reading of evidence and sources (Seixas, 2017; Martin and Wineburg, 2008; Wineburg, 1991). All of the participants in this inquiry turned to the Internet for access to both primary and secondary sources; yet, as Weinburg and others (Wineburg, 2018; see also Cutrara, 2019; Steinhauer, 2022; Wineburg and McGrew, 2019) have pointed out, the very nature of Internet archival resources presents their own unique challenges, making it difficult to realise alternative perspectives and multiple interpretations. The creator of the data resource also requires critical examination. As HP explained:

> Finding primary sources from Indigenous peoples… was unfortunately very difficult, which reflects the Eurocentrism of academia. While things are starting to change, for centuries, academia has prioritized the voices and opinions of Europeans and those of European decent, particularly white men. As a result, most of our sources are written by white men, and it is nearly impossible to find an "academic" source written by an Indigenous person on the topic (HP, 2023).

This points to a serious limitation in adopting inquiry projects as a method for teacher training in historical thinking. More time needs to be devoted to critical analysis of the producers of Internet materials (not just in analyzing the primary sources that are found therein).

A second major challenge was in sifting through the multitude of sources available via the Internet to narrow down a topic. This points to the "messiness" of history—in that more often than not, there are no easy or clear answers. Being able to recognise the constructed nature of history—and sift through a variety of interpretations or assemblages of sources—is key to being able to adopt a criterialist stance in historical reasoning.

So while these two points were recognised as challenges by the teacher-candidates, they also point to opportunities for supporting historical thinking in teacher training, since participants came to realise the problematic nature of historical inquiry, and began to think of ways to scaffold their future students in similar activities.

Conclusion

In this journal article I have considered how explicit use of Historical Thinking concepts, combined with an inquiry-based podcast project, might engage pre-service teachers in meaningful historical inquiry. Enabling participants to practise their teacher talk was found to be very beneficial in making their historical thinking public, visible, and audible (Holt, 1990). It also served as a valuable prompt for reflecting upon their own historicity, and laying out their own historical reasoning. These results are very much reminiscent of what other researchers (Collins, Brown, and Newman, 1989; van Boxtel and van Die, 2018; Maggioni, VanSledright, and Alexander, 2009) have described as *cognitive apprenticeship*. Through their production of podcasts, teacher-candidates were learning to not just lead their future students through what Thorpe and Persson (2020) have termed an "operationalised" set of skills—but rather ask questions (of themselves as well as their colleagues), gather background knowledge, and explore the "messiness" of historical inquiry.

For those who demonstrated a criterialist stance in historical reasoning (17 out of 35 participants), the process of developing their podcasts around a topic of special interest led them to consciously and deliberately engage in refining their teaching practise. Certainly, with exception of three participants (out of 16), it was evident that successfully adopting all four of Gestsdottir et al's (2018) criteria for teacher training correlated with demonstrating a criterialist stance in historical reasoning. This points to potential benefits of such a teaching strategy in aiding teacher-candidates to gain a more complex understanding of the constructed nature of history.

In addition, the formative experience of developing and refining—over time—an annotated bibliography was found to be supportive in guiding teacher-candidates towards a criterialist stance. As was evident in the examples presented, the reflective act of sifting through a multitude of evidence and sources—thus narrowing down and comparing—actually led participants to think about the HOW and WHY behind their choice of specific pieces of evidence and sources. In other words, actively examining, corroborating, and reflecting upon their meaning became an act in itself for establishing criteria around understanding the constructed nature of history.

Modelling historical thinking out loud, in the form of a conversational podcast, was found to be very appealing for those who participated in this inquiry. An overwhelming number of these teacher-candidates indicated that they would like to undertake a similar project with their future students, since they found the communication technique more dynamic than writing an essay or completing an exercise. Indeed, as Case and McLeod (2014) have pointed out: "'Walking the talk' is not only necessary—it is more likely to successfully prepare students to teach in desired ways in their own classrooms" (p. 211) Nevertheless, although participants appreciated the creative process, as well as being able to select their own topic of inquiry, their challenge rested with sifting through multitudes of sources available on the Internet—and recognizing the limitations of such Internet resources.

The adoption of a formative development process was found to be necessary in order to move participants away from borrowed truths—to instead adopt more analytical (criteria-based) considerations of their inquiry topic. This was achieved through the National History Day framework, which involved providing participants with individualised formative feedback, as well as opportunities for discussion on a weekly basis. In so doing, participants were prompted to continually reflect upon *what they were doing*, and why; hence not just follow prescribed steps for historical thinking, but actually think more wholistically about the problem of history meaning-making. As Thorpe and Persson (2020) have pointed out, this element of historicity can become easily overlooked when teachers focus too much of their attention on teaching the methods of historical thinking, without also reflecting upon their own—and their students'—human experience (p. 897).

How might epistemological reasoning and teacher practise that supports historical thinking be aided through podcast-project teacher training? What these findings confirm is that such a

learning process does support a "criterialist" stance in historical reasoning, as well as a more complex understanding of the constructed nature of history. It also presents history as a reflective process of inquiry, rather than simply tasks to be completed (Nitsche, Mathis, and O'Neill, 2022; Thorpe and Persson, 2020). Working through historical thinking concepts in an explicit and practical way—hence not just following the steps of *doing* history, but thinking more wholistically about *what you are doing, how you are doing it, and why*—holds great potential as a method for engaging and promoting more complex historical reasoning in teacher training.

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Endnotes

[1] Established in 1974 in the United States, the National History Day (NHD) curriculum framework is designed to engage senior level students (ages 14 to 16) in original project-based research, on historical topics of their own interest. Students present their research projects to the public at local and regional fairs, where they are judged by historians, and top projects are advanced to a national competition held each year at the University of Maryland. In Canada, a similar program, directed mainly to junior level students (ages 11 to 14), has operated since 1993, and is sponsored by Canada's History Society. As part of the NHD framework, students are required to follow procedural steps replicated in this inquiry, which involve the development of primary and secondary source annotated bibliographies, inquiry questions, storylines, scripts, statements of Historical Significance (e.g. thesis statements), and a final reflection process paper.

[2] **Evidence and Sources:** Selecting, comparing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources of evidence; **Historical Significance:** Why we care today about certain events, trends or issues in history; **Cause and Consequence:** Identifying how both direct and indirect conditions or actions led to others; **Continuity and Change:** Identifying turning points in history as

well as what has changed and what has remained the same over time; **Historical Perspective:** Understanding the past as different from today, with a diverse range of social, cultural, intellectual, or emotional contexts that shaped people's lives and actions; **Ethical Dimensions:** How we, in the present, judge actors in different circumstances in the past, and/or how different interpretations of the past reflect different moral stances on what happened (Seixas, 2006, pp 1-2).

[3] Limitation of findings: It is important to state that the researcher's role in this inquiry was also that of course instructor.

[4] The other remaining 11 did not complete the exit survey.