

## Teachers Helping Their Students Think Historically...At Last?

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WE BEGIN WITH an author's admission, as a former teacher: writing about teaching historical thinking is easier than actually teaching it. Indeed, it is difficult to teach students to think historically since they do not develop this ability naturally in the course of their development.<sup>1</sup> And yet, there is no shortage of theoretical models, instructional strategies, curricular prescriptions and practical advice on this topic. The *National Standards for History* of the United States made reference to historical thinking,<sup>2</sup> as did the curriculum of many Canadian provinces with the impetus of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness<sup>3</sup> and French-speaking didactic specialists.<sup>4</sup> These models and prescriptions establish a causal relationship between certain characteristics of learning situations implemented by teachers, on one hand, and students' learning of historical thinking, on the other. For example, it has been demonstrated that classroom discussion promoting the expression of different views significantly contributes to learning critical thinking, which is a necessity to exercise citizenship.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, teaching that is essentially lecture-based appears to be poorly suited to the learning of historical thinking.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, analysis of historical documents (primary sources) is considered essential to this learning.<sup>7</sup>

which tends to be compromised by the use of history textbooks.<sup>8</sup> Research on teaching practices in history have nevertheless indicated the variable presence of these characteristics. These practices seem to stress the acquisition of factual knowledge, often taught through lecturing.<sup>9</sup> Teaching to the test, in keeping with the coverage and control approach, seems to result in practices based on teaching the content prescribed by the curriculum.<sup>10</sup>

Conversely, studies have also noted that history teachers recognize the significance and value of the documentary analysis at the core of historical investigation, with some even expressing the intention to apply it in the classroom.<sup>11</sup> Hence, history teachers may incorporate documentary analysis into their learning situations, but with a mechanistic approach that often boils down to collecting poorly contextualized and generally simplified information.<sup>12</sup> This approach is not exclusive to history teachers in the United States and English-speaking Canada. It has also been identified in France,<sup>13</sup> in French-speaking Belgium,<sup>14</sup> and in French-speaking Canada.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, this is not a marginal or isolated phenomenon. Moreover, to paraphrase John Goodlad regarding curriculum reform, it has been remarked that with prescribed curricula, “something strange seems to have happened to them on the way to the classroom.”<sup>16</sup> According to Linda Levstik, many teachers attempt to incorporate activities that will contribute to learning historical thinking, beneath the surface of practices geared toward preparing students for their exams.<sup>17</sup> The problem is that we do not know how this learning is incorporated, in a context where teaching practices appear to be characterized by an eclectic array of theoretical and practical references.<sup>18</sup> According to Joe Kincheloe, teaching first and foremost manifests as a *bricolage* or patchwork expressed through the development of learning situations. Theories and curriculum prescriptions also play a role in this process, but seem to be modulated according to individuals’ beliefs and experiences. These phenomena raise questions about the nature of this *bricolage* in the development of history-learning situations, and how we might identify and describe the theoretical elements mobilized in this process.

To address these questions, we led a workshop during a professional conference gathering French-speaking teachers of Quebec in the fall of 2018 with the aim of describing the learning approaches adopted in social studies teaching within the secondary school context. The

workshop provided an opportunity to evaluate teachers' adherence to the conceptualization approach prescribed by the social studies program in Quebec.<sup>19</sup> The ensuing discussions also helped pinpoint common characteristics in their learning approaches, based on the main learning models of historical thinking as proposed in the scholarly literature. These characteristics suggest the existence of tension between two competing models: one involving equilibrium-based conceptualization analogous to that initially defined by Edwin Peel,<sup>20</sup> and another consisting of historical documentary analysis using "The Big Six" historical thinking concepts defined by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton.<sup>21</sup>

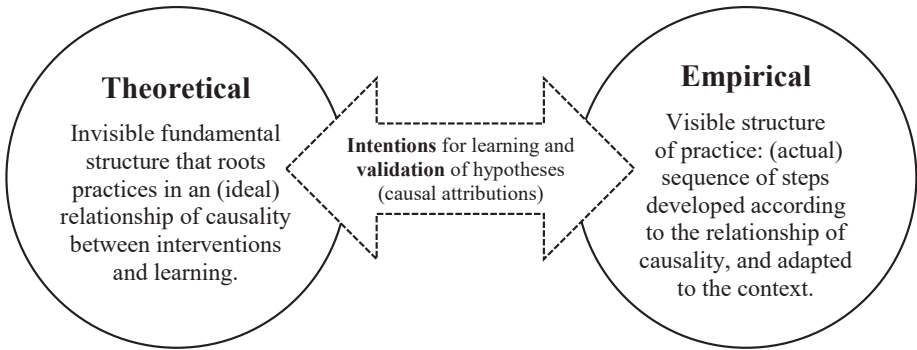
After presenting these instructional models associated with learning historical thinking, we present data collected from the participants at the workshop, with their kind permission. This data describes sequences relatively similar to those of both models (i.e., conceptualization and documentary analysis). Next, we discuss the results, which, even if they show variable modulations, suggest social studies teaching practices relatively favorable to the learning of historical thinking.

### **Analyzing Learning Situations in History**

Analysis of learning situations is based on the principle that real-life teaching practices are structured according to teachers' shared representations of the learning process, which should be studied as they are—and not as we would like them to be.<sup>22</sup> Only on this condition might we understand the foundations involved, and ultimately propose valid and relevant research findings for the stakeholders concerned.<sup>23</sup> Since the 1980s, research in English-speaking countries<sup>24</sup> and in French-speaking Europe<sup>25</sup> has shed light on these teacher representations in the context of actual practices. These studies partake in a broader movement of developing a theory of teaching practice by questioning the very nature of the phenomena and theories associated with teaching practice.<sup>26</sup> With respect to the construct of historical thinking, this perspective therefore requires a distinction to be made between the practices of historians and the practices of teachers, which are respectively subject to different principles of application. Although both types of activity involve a relationship to historical knowledge, they are

assigned different aims, and the conditions under which they are put into practice have distinct logics of action and thinking. The logic of the historian's activity is connected with a nomological issue: it is primarily concerned with the epistemological value and scope of the knowledge it produces within a scientific field in the university context, which variably confers privileges and symbolic recognition on the actors concerned.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, teaching practice is subject to an institutional framework and to highly variable contextual considerations, such that a prescription, even if validated by the scholarly literature, must meet the criterion of specific relevance to actors not located within the scholarly field(s) of reference.<sup>28</sup> A construct such as historical thinking thus migrates from a scientific field according to a more or less hierarchical and bureaucratic delivery chain that brings into play political, social, university, and professional actors.<sup>29</sup> At each step of the migration, the construct is susceptible to changes in meaning that require a consideration of the formal curriculum, its evaluation, as well as its context of application.

This context also calls for caution when it comes to the transfer of results in the field of history teaching research. Most studies on the teaching of historical thinking define "best" practices based on epistemological characteristics of the historian's activity, often validated with relatively small samples of students and teachers. This validation often takes place in learning situations that are then presented as models to generalize or as exemplary practices. The problem is that the proof rests on the very nature of these epistemological characteristics, such as documentary analysis of students' learning of the historical method, and not the actual process of developing learning situations. This shortcoming has been pointed out in a 2016 literature review by Keith Barton and Patricia Avery,<sup>30</sup> who note that, whereas the literature has focused on the role of teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and intentionality in their curricular and instructional decisions, it should now turn to appropriate "instructional scaffolds" in order to promote student learning of historical thinking.<sup>31</sup> Examining such scaffolds has therefore become necessary in order to help ensure meaningful transfer to actors by identifying the organizing principles of invariant practices,<sup>32</sup> especially for history teaching.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the development of instructional scaffolds, and the potential transfer of research knowledge, must take into account the practical epistemology on which the scaffolds are based.



**Figure 1:** Perceptual arc of tension between the theoretical pole (instructional knowledge) and empirical pole (learning sequences that are taught).

The epistemology of teaching practice has been the subject of a number of works since it was originally conceptualized by Lee Shulman, who urged researchers to uncover teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge in order to grasp the foundations of their practices, beyond contextual variability.<sup>34</sup> Different studies have been carried out on this construct, including Lauren McArthur Harris and Robert Bain’s “Pedagogical Content Knowledge for World History Teachers” (2010).<sup>35</sup> In the same vein, studies on higher-order thinking skills in connection with epistemic beliefs and academic development have yielded descriptions of teaching.<sup>36</sup> However, many authors have underscored the low explanatory potential of teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge and beliefs in analyzing teaching practices, which are distinguished from the learning process.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, these constructs appear to be generally examined in themselves as opposed to partaking in a broader explanation of practices. Fritz Oser and Franz Baeriswyl put forward a descriptive and explanatory approach to shed light on the epistemology of instructional practices, a *knowing how* to teach domain-specific knowledge based on instructional models, or “choreographies.”<sup>38</sup> These choreographies are thought to be adapted according to the situation, but express a form of professional knowledge composed of the successive steps considered fundamental in order for students to learn. Hence, instructional scaffolding is believed to reflect teachers’ pedagogical reasoning in accordance with a perceptual arc of tension between two poles—theoretical and empirical—that embrace the interrelationship between teaching and learning (**Figure 1**).

The theoretical pole consists of a set of organizing principles and invariants of practice, describing a form of professional knowledge and identity. These fundamental principles define a chain of necessary, irreducible, and irreplaceable operations in order to achieve desired learning outcomes. Further, they inextricably link together psychological considerations (how students learn) and epistemological ones (the knowledge objects to be learned).<sup>39</sup> They define necessary steps of basic learning sequences that are invisible structures in the sense that they do not exist outside teachers' minds *per se*, but help with grasping and adapting to various situations according to causal relationships between one's actions—by either teachers or students—and learning. The empirical pole refers to the actual realization of the learning sequences' concatenation. In this respect, it is individually developed through professional socialization and teaching experiences, as well as adapted to the various contexts of teaching practice. In everyday practice, the sequences are variably modulated according to different situations (contextual constraints and improvisations) and teacher intentions. As such, learning sequences express less of a theoretical necessity than a practical one: even if psychological principles are present in teachers' thinking during their actions, the learning goals play a greater role upstream in the activities that result—keeping with the principle of control.<sup>40</sup> Adaptation by different teachers or even by the same teacher on different occasions are possible within the set boundaries of basic structures, at the risk of being irrelevant regarding the learning objectives. This process of adaptation is consistent with the empirical pole, allowing for the upstream identification of components of the theoretical pole that describe a limited number of organizing principles of teaching practice for a given teaching discipline. Illustrated by the double-headed arrow in **Figure 1**, the tension between these two poles is the site of development and transformation of knowledge on teaching practice and professional identity. In terms of teachers' thinking, these principles provide a basis for teachers' causal attributions about the learning process and enable them to regulate their conduct accordingly, out of a concern for effectiveness.<sup>41</sup>

An analysis of instructional practices nevertheless requires a definition of these fundamental models in order to shed light on their psychological and epistemological nature with respect to

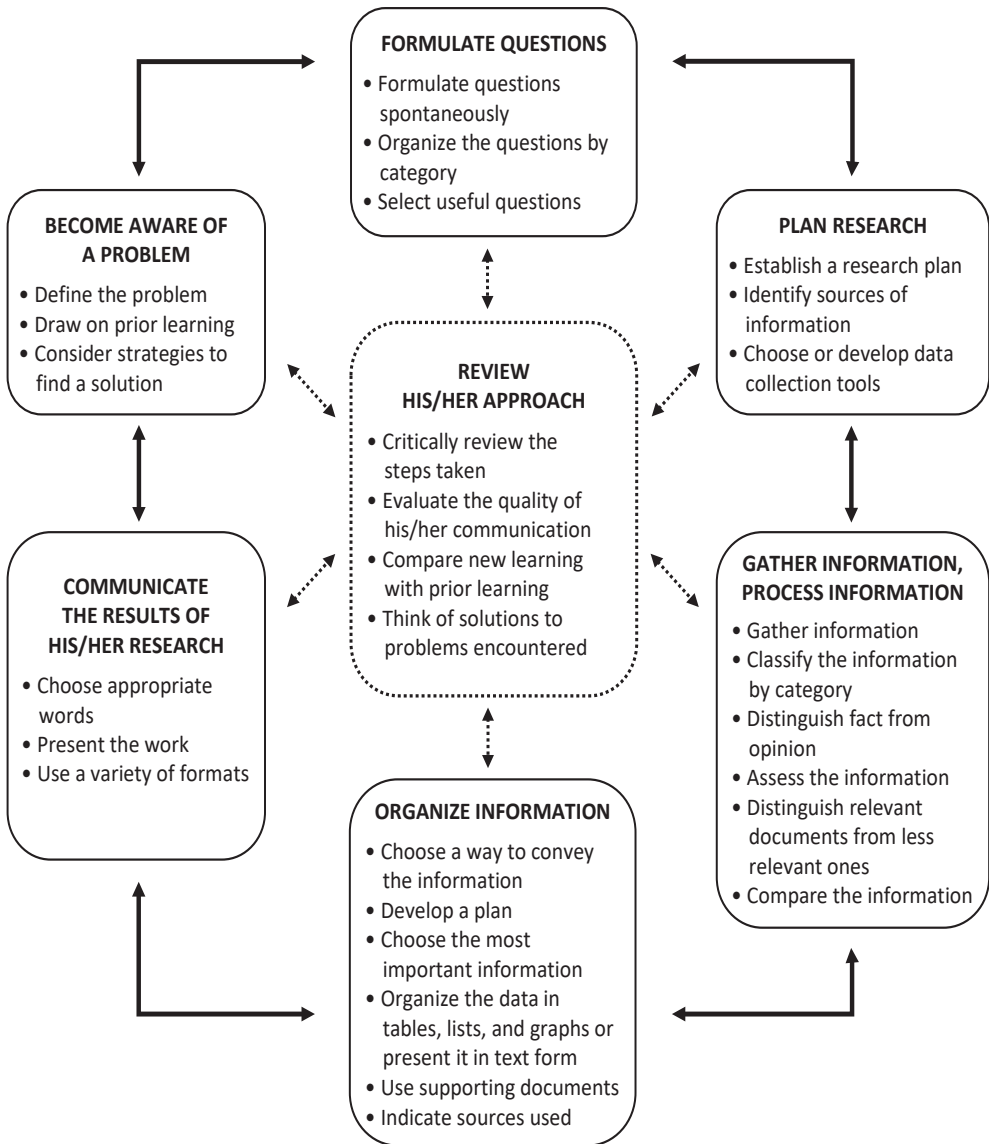
the object of learning and, most importantly, the sequences they prescribe for learning situations. These models, presented in the following section, served as a springboard for discussions during our workshop and helped identify the steps of teaching choreographies.

### **Learning Sequences for Historical Thinking**

Fritz Oser and Franz Baeriswyl put forward twelve models applying to the study of teaching practices pertaining to all school disciplines.<sup>42</sup> These include (1) discovery learning, (2) development as an aim of education, (3) problem solving, (4) concept building (referred to in this article as “conceptualization”), (5) contemplative learning, (6) development of routines and skills, (7) learning strategies, (8) learning through motility, (9) social learning, (10) construction of values and value identity, (11) hypertext learning, and (12) learning to negotiate. These models help describe and explain teaching practices according to exclusive properties that can be linked in different ways to produce diverse combinations. Didactic specialists of other school disciplines, like French language arts<sup>43</sup> and the sciences,<sup>44</sup> have used this theoretical approach to teaching practices. Oser and Baeriswyl’s research data based on these models indicates that teaching practices across all disciplines essentially revolve around concept building (71%), discovery learning (6%), development of routines and skills (6%), and construction of values and value identity (4%).<sup>45</sup> Problem solving, for example, only appears to be an organizing principle in less than 1% of cases. These findings are in fair agreement with the models identified by Daniel Moreau for teaching historical thinking in secondary school: a little over half of the instructional models were organized around conceptualization (or concept building), followed by the discovery model (corresponding to documentary analysis), which accounted for approximately one-third of occurrences.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, these results are akin to those presented by Cornelia Geller, Knut Neumann, and Hans Fischer, referring to these models about science teaching, mainly based on conceptualization.<sup>47</sup>

This approach of analyzing practices via instructional model is based on the “path” metaphor, which itself echoes the “gatekeeping” metaphor initially proposed by Stephen Thornton and later taken up by Keith Barton and Patricia Avery.<sup>48</sup> The gatekeeping metaphor

### “The Research Process” for Historical Thinking



**Figure 2:** “The Research Process,” a prescribed problem solving model for historical thinking, includes six general steps along with a continual review of one’s own approach.



highlights the structuring of the teaching process, based on decisions teachers make when planning, piloting, and evaluating their instructional practice. The path metaphor narrows down the gatekeeping metaphor by describing this decision-making process according to the specific sequence of operations (or nodes) carried out by the teacher. Although these operations define many learning moments (operational units), their meaning is inextricable from the sequence (or chain) to which they belong. Hence, it is not so much the sole presence or absence of a given type of operation that matters, but its structuring over time, in keeping with the “method orchestration” concept defined by Nathaniel Gage and David Berliner.<sup>49</sup>

Three teaching models were addressed during our workshop and will be presented in the following pages: (1) problem solving, (2) conceptualization, and (3) documentary analysis. The models were selected in light of official and scholarly literature that attests to their importance in the educational context of social studies in Quebec.

### *1. Problem Solving Model for Historical Thinking (Prescribed)*

In Quebec, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport prescribes a model for teaching problem solving in social studies that is supposed to lead to learning historical thinking.<sup>50</sup> This model outlines “The Research Process” as a more or less iterative approach between six steps (illustrated in **Figure 2**):

- Becoming aware of a problem in light of students' prior experiences and knowledge.
- Formulating questions and hypotheses for potential further analysis. Along with categorization, this step aims focus on a particular topic pertaining to the problem.
- Planning out a research process to define the further steps leading to information collection, including the determination of sources of information and tools to gather data.
- Gathering and processing of information according to specified categories pertaining to the problem analyzed. This step requires assessment of information in order to sort out opinions from facts, through corroboration with documents and comparison between available sources.

- Organizing information in the context of a communicable production. This step is necessary since information gathering and criticism is insufficient to answer the research question or confirm hypothesis. The students must synthesize information supporting their interpretation of the problem and formulate congruent arguments.
- Communicating the results of the process to their peers, which allows every student to share her or his interpretations of the problem using appropriate words.

This prescribed process is connected to concepts that are expected to be learned by students for each social studies program. The model appears to be scarcely implemented by French-speaking history teachers in Quebec,<sup>51</sup> with some component operations—such as problematization and being critical of sources—generally being neglected or absent.<sup>52</sup> This observation was validated with the participants in our workshop, all of whom confirmed they did not apply this learning approach, nor intended to do so.

## 2. *Conceptualization Model for Historical Thinking*

The conceptualization model, which is the one most frequently identified in the workshop by Moreau, was described in 1989 by Ian Dawson in reference to Britain's Schools History Project.<sup>53</sup> The project is regarded as one of the first attempts to implement the learning of historical thinking within a curriculum.<sup>54</sup> This learning is understood as an equilibrium activity, as initially described by Edwin Peel in 1967.<sup>55</sup> In the conceptualization model, concepts help problematize historical realities and provide a basis for making causal attributions, in keeping with a "compensatory" dynamic. In turn, this dynamic consists of controlling the relation between historical facts and explanatory structures in order to resolve a contradiction perceived by a learner. In Peel's words, "The most obvious and general action of this kind in adolescence is the need for and the process of explanation. When a person explains a phenomena [sic] he effects an equilibrium."<sup>56</sup> This operating principle of explanation has also been noted by historian Reinhart Koselleck, who makes it out as a characteristic of modern history, which can only be "comprehended...through the reciprocal explanation of events through structures, and vice versa."<sup>57</sup>

The conceptualization approach proposed in the Schools History Project was hypothetico-deductive in nature. It involved the study of four topics—namely, the history of medicine or the concept of energy, industrial or local history, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the history of England or the American West in 1840-1895.<sup>58</sup> These topics guided a set of information and documents that teachers could use for evaluation purposes, without the learning sequences being strictly predefined. Teachers were essentially expected to go beyond their comfort zone of note-taking and memorizing information, or “safety-first approaches,” to adopt this conceptualization approach.<sup>59</sup>

In discussing the teaching practices actually put into practice following this project, Dawson noticed a five-step sequence when observing yearly planning.<sup>60</sup> This sequence is homologous to the equilibrium activity outlined by Peel about the process of history teaching and learning. The surface-level phase, designated by the letter “S,” involves giving a general presentation of goals, concepts, and key events (whole map). The deeper analytical phases for the concept studied are represented by the letter “D.” These phases enable students to familiarize themselves with concepts by alternately focusing on concrete and specific aspects. Such a sequence involves an iterative learning process between a conceptual structure and concrete manifestations of historical facts, and plays out in five successive steps:

1. Attracting students’ attention to the different meanings assigned to a concept in everyday life (S).
2. Analyzing examples of the concept (D).
3. Formally defining the properties, principles, and other concepts (if applicable) assigned to the concept (S).
4. Applying the concept in analyzing other examples (D).
5. Establishing the analyzed concept within a conceptual network with other concepts (linking) (S).

In practice, the duration of this planning could vary according to the topics or concepts under study, as well as the teacher’s intention. The key element to note here is the movement of equilibrium that the sequence articulates, and the transformative process of hypotheses and deductions that leads to a continual adjustment of the sequence. The scholarly literature on the learning of historical thinking contains

examples of this approach. The case study by María Fránquiz and Cinthia Salinas describes each of these steps within the context of three learning situations on the concept of racial segregation in the United States.<sup>61</sup> First, the concept is presented to students by drawing on the African American historical memory (which is familiar to students) and on historical documents. These documents discuss historical events associated with the targeted concept, such as the American Civil War (1861-1865), Jim Crow laws (1865), and the Civil Rights Movement (1955-1968). Second, the students develop their knowledge of these events using historical documents (scenes of racial segregation and police brutality) and a handout to complete. Third, the students clarify the meaning of the concept of racial segregation using a concept-matching exercise on discrimination, racism, and liberty during an analysis of iconic representations. Fourth, this conceptual network is reinvested to analyze the 1957 Little Rock Crisis and the Mexican American and Chicano civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s (*El Movimiento*). Fifth and last, the students apply the concept of racial segregation along with the concept of immigration in order to analyze the social realities of Latin Americans. Students complete the sequence by writing a letter to the president of the United States at the time, Barack Obama, presenting their position on Mexican immigration, supported by an analysis of myths behind the discrimination facing immigrants.

### *3. Documentary Analysis Model for Historical Thinking*

The second-most identified model was developed in reference to the discovery model defined by Fritz Oser and Franz Baeriswyl.<sup>62</sup> In history, this involves learning via analysis of historical documents so as to develop the disciplinary concepts associated with historical thinking, such as historical empathy, historical perspective, proof, historical relevance, the use of primary sources, continuity and change, links of cause and consequence, the ethical dimension, etc.<sup>63</sup> This documentary analysis model has given rise to various initiatives, including a British project entitled “Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches: 7 to 14 (CHATA)” and a commitment in Canada to “The Big Six” (concepts of historical thinking) suggested by Peter Seixas and Tom Morton, building on the works of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness.<sup>64</sup> In Quebec, this

model nevertheless appears to be less frequent than the previous conceptualization model, and to be understood more variably by teachers.<sup>65</sup> It, too, consists in five successive steps:

1. Planning learning sequences in accordance with student abilities and interests, especially in terms of their mastery of disciplinary concepts.
2. Engaging students in historical documentary analysis in the classroom.
3. Having an open discussion on questions and interpretations formulated by the students.
4. Identifying elements or principles associated with the disciplinary concepts that could be generalized.
5. Applying these elements or principles in an analysis of other documents.

The steps of this model appear to be modulated unevenly, with greater focus being put on the second step of engaging students in a documentary analysis task, which may be followed by a discussion of the documents in question.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, disciplinary concepts are rarely referenced. There may be two reasons for this modulation of the model. First, the adjustments may be instrumental to information gathering in the context of a specific problem solving assignment or short- or long-answer questions. This type of usage, characterized by a low degree of document problematization and critical analysis, was previously noted by Vincent Boutonnet and Stéphanie Demers.<sup>67</sup> (It should be mentioned, in passing, that student engagement in a documentary analysis task can fall under the fourth step of the problem solving model prescribed by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport presented earlier.)<sup>68</sup> Another reason that might explain such a modulation of the sequence has to do with the established practice in ministry exams of evaluating intellectual operations in the context of documentary analysis.<sup>69</sup>

Information was collected on the models connected to the conceptualization approach and documentary analysis approach during the workshop, but data was not gathered on the problem solving model, even if it was discussed in order to confirm the participants' lack of interest in it. The data collection procedures and data analysis are presented in the next section.

### Conceptualization approach

■ Targeted concept:

■ Learning sequence :

Signification	Exemplification	Signification	Exemplification	Signification

■ Equilibrium movement? Yes? No?

■ Explain your answer.

**Figure 3:** Conceptualization approach handout for conference participants.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Data was collected from secondary-level social studies teachers participating in the conference of the Association québécoise pour l’enseignement de l’univers social (AQEUS), held from October 11-12, 2018 in Gatineau, Quebec. The mission of this association is to promote the teaching of social studies disciplines, primarily composed of history and geography, from a civic education perspective. Its annual conference is mainly addressed to French-speaking secondary school teachers in Quebec, and is intended as a venue for professional development activities. This is the spirit in which we led a workshop entitled “*Conceptualiser les réalités sociales: vers l’identification d’un modèle pédagogique*” (“Conceptualizing social realities: towards the identification of an educational model”).

Twenty-seven teachers from various regions of Quebec took part in the workshop, which we started off by presenting the above-defined models. Given that the number of participants was higher than expected, pairs of participants were formed in order to enable them to fill out the thirty handouts (fifteen for each of the two models—conceptualization and documentary analysis). We asked them to participate with a view to validating these models, but also in a spirit of collective reflection from an empowerment

## Documentary analysis

■ Targeted disciplinary concept(s):

empathy, proof, historical relevance, use of primary sources, continuity/change, cause/consequence, historical perspective, ethical dimension, etc.

■ Learning sequence:

I plan learning sequences according to student abilities and interests, as well as their mastery of disciplinary concepts.	
I engage students in documentary analysis.	
I hold open discussions on student questions and interpretations.	
I help my students identify generalizable elements or principles.	
I apply these elements in analyzing other documents.	

■ Explain your answers. I do things this way because...

**Figure 4:** Documentary analysis handout for conference participants.

perspective.<sup>70</sup> Each handout, respectively shown in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**, included a description of the learning sequence for each model and an explanation justifying the participants’ choices. **Figure 3** lists the learning sequence for the conceptualization approach, structured around the five-step concatenation by Ian Dawson outlined previously.<sup>71</sup> Participants had also to confirm if—or if not—they perceive the underlying equilibrium movement. **Figure 4** lists documentary analysis disciplinary concepts related to historical thinking learning, such as historical empathy, proof, relevance, use of primary sources, continuity and change, cause and consequence, etc. Participants could choose one or some of them to describe and explain a learning sequence they teach.

For the conceptualization approach, the participants were asked to describe a learning sequence they had previously taught or planned to teach for a concept prescribed by one of the secondary school programs in social studies, indicating whether or not they identified it as being based on the equilibrium approach. Next, they were to follow a relatively similar procedure for the documentary analysis approach, writing or circling the disciplinary concept(s) targeted. In both cases, the participants had to support their descriptions and explanations with an example in order to uncover the intentionality associated with their teaching practice. The participants were given no further instructions, and were free to complete the distributed

handouts in part or in whole. The participation rate proved relatively high, with two-thirds of the handouts (twenty handouts) being returned at the end of the activity. This was followed by an open discussion to allow everyone to respond and to make comments. Submitting the handouts was not mandatory, but participants were suggested to return those they felt appropriately represented their instructional practice. Moreover, those who did hand them in were informed that the collected data could be disseminated.

The data collected through these handouts was analyzed to determine the frequency of each item. The explanations written by the participants were preserved verbatim and sorted according to our conceptual framework on the basis of the causal attribution upon which they lie. These frequencies and attributions will be presented in the next section.

## Results

The number of handouts completed by the participants shows a slight preference for the conceptualization approach, with eleven handouts submitted for this model compared to nine for documentary analysis. Although these figures do not confirm the predominance of either model, analysis of the respective content of the handouts appears to indicate an orientation in favour of the conceptualization model. The handouts were aimed at collecting two types of data: the steps of the sequence concerned and the explanations used to justify their choices in teaching a concept (which they selected).

### *Participants' Use of the Conceptualization Model*

Learning sequences associated with the conceptualization approach were described by ten participants; the eleventh did not complete this portion of the handout. These sequences show a relative balance between each step of this model (refer to the *Conceptualization Model for Historical Thinking* section on page 741 above for the five steps). The first, second, and fourth steps were described by eight of the participants, with the third step being slightly predominant ( $n=9$ ) and the last step, a little less ( $n=7$ ). Interindividual modulations were identified, but were mild in nature. Half of the participants stated that they fully completed all five steps. These results partially



echo those of Daniel Moreau's research indicating the third step of formally defining a concept as the most frequent.<sup>72</sup> The results can be better contextualized by the explanations given in the handouts regarding the teaching of the concept of their choice. Participants mentioned the concepts of settlement, humanism, constitution, nationalism, ultramontanist, left and right on the political spectrum, and natural risk. The concept of settlement ( $n=5$ ) was mentioned the most frequently. The equilibrium movement was observed by nine participants, two-thirds of whom recognized it as being *constant* in their teaching practice. These participants explained their answer by the constant tension between a concept and its concrete manifestations, which are susceptible to vary significantly depending on the social realities under study. In this vein, one respondent mentioned the role of analogies that are immediately intelligible to students as a way to create tension between targeted concepts—in their case, left and right on the political spectrum. More specifically, the respondent described the use of a box of tissues in the classroom to represent limited access to resources within a social group, especially during the winter when the flu can run rampant. This analogy helps to problematize the concept from the perspective of wealth-sharing and its underlying power relationships, and to explain the creation of political formations with hierarchical or egalitarian ideological leanings.

However, another third of the participants expressed a nuance: they felt equilibrium can be achieved in three stages rather than five, in more or less variable order; the first two, which are more closely associated with a problematization phase, can be considered optional. The explanations given by these participants attest to a particular modulation that consists of formally presenting the properties of the targeted concept in order to identify facts and examples, and, ultimately, to bring students to better understand and apply it concretely in their daily lives. One participant also mentioned incorporating steps from the documentary analysis model into the conceptualization model by engaging students in a documentary analysis task (second step of the documentary analysis model) and by holding a more or less open discussion on the documents that were analyzed (third step of the documentary analysis model). However, the elements raised during this discussion did not have to do with disciplinary concepts (or concepts of historical thinking), but instead with the properties of the targeted concept (settlement in the proposed example).

*Participants' Use of the Documentary Analysis Model*

Nine handouts describing the documentary analysis approach were completed. In six of them, the participants specified the disciplinary concepts they use in their teaching practices. The most frequently suggested were those that consist of identifying causes and consequences ( $n=5$ ) and elements of continuity and change ( $n=4$ ). The disciplinary concepts of empathy, proof, being critical of sources, and historical perspective were each mentioned twice. The ethical dimension was mentioned only once, and historical relevance, not at all. The list of disciplinary concepts proposed on the handout was non-exhaustive, and the participants could add their own. Five of them provided additional concepts, but addressed concepts targeted by social studies programs (settlement, colonization, federation, reasonable accommodation, Christianization, and urban development). This result suggests that the concepts of the historical discipline, which are especially salient in the English-language scholarly works on historical thinking, remain relatively unfamiliar to Francophone teachers in social studies. Learning sequences were described by six participants, who revealed the predominance of the second step of engaging students in documentary analysis ( $n=6$ ). Four participants mentioned that this step was followed by one of the subsequent steps—discussing student questions and interpretations, identifying generalizable principles (related to the targeted concept), and reinvesting them in analysis of new documents. The participants gave two types of explanations to justify their choices. First, the repeated use of documents helped emphasize the diversity of views on a concept (e.g., colonization) within a given historical context (e.g., North America during the French and British colonial period). One teacher explained that he used analysis of selected excerpts from a children's film (*Pocahontas*) and a historical essay to fulfill this intention. In addition, three participants indicated that this model was integrated into the conceptualization model, in order to demonstrate the concreteness of the concept being taught. These results bring into play the hypothesis of model hybridization discussed by Oser and Baeriswyl, in which certain dominant models can incorporate specific steps from other models, as “transplants,” to meet expectations for students' targeted learning.<sup>73</sup>

## Discussion

These results help bring perspective to the coverage and control approach, which is based on teaching content prescribed by the curriculum and on learning activities essentially consisting of teaching to the test.<sup>74</sup> In our view, the results seem to emphasize a fundamental tension in social studies teaching practices, between learning approaches respectively founded on studying concepts and analyzing documents. Both approaches are interpretive in nature, but they do not follow the same trajectory, do not involve the same steps, and, ultimately, do not lead to the same learning. The imperative of coverage and control is not expressed in the same way in these two cases, and does not exhibit the same constraints for learning historical thinking.

The conceptualization approach leads to a tendency, pointed out by Moreau (and by Cornelia Geller, Knut Neumann, and Hans Fischer about science teaching),<sup>75</sup> to favor steps that help to more quickly define the targeted concepts—to the detriment of their application to examples and their linking with other concepts. This tendency impacts the meaning assigned to concepts, which tend to remain abstract and disconnected, and weakens their interpretive potential for the social realities that are studied. Nevertheless, the participants mentioned two elements related to the learning of historical thinking. First, most acknowledged the operational nature of concepts, i.e., the fact that relationships between the concepts can be controlled, consistent with the principle of cognitive equilibrium identified by Peel.<sup>76</sup> Finally, one teacher remarked on the role of analogies, defined by Peel as a “model which is familiar to the learner, whose properties are related causally.”<sup>77</sup> Indeed, analogies can make a historical event immediately intelligible, as they provide both a description and explanation: “The analogy would seem to be a link between the two.”<sup>78</sup> This *analogical* principle has been identified by numerous authors to explain the transformation of representations in history.<sup>79</sup>

In the case of documentary analysis, the imperative of coverage and control translates into a focus on the documentary analysis step, without necessarily following up with discussions on the questions and interpretations raised by the document. The issue of disciplinary concepts, though not entirely absent, does not seem to be fundamental. The teachers in our study refer to disciplinary concepts of cause

and consequence, as well as continuity and change, but do not state that they use them in planning documentary analysis situations, or intentionally reinvest them in other learning situations. On the one hand, this result echoes those reported by Mathieu Bouhon as well as Patrick Garcia and Jean Leduc,<sup>80</sup> who observe history teachers' recognition of the value of group analysis of documents, which is associated with a social representation of the historical discipline, even though they don't actually make an instrumental use of it. On the other hand, this model's modulation is consistent with the one described by Oser and Baeriswyl, who note the lack of consideration accorded to the last two steps.<sup>81</sup> Hence, we are faced with a seemingly contradictory phenomenon: in spite of a recognition of its importance, documentary analysis appears to be limited to its most simple expression. Indeed, it seems that this analysis is subordinated to a data collection process, in the context of the conceptualization model. This phenomenon raises questions and calls for further research on history teaching practices connected with documentary analysis.

## Conclusion

Our intent in the course of our workshop was to examine how elements associated with learning historical thinking were incorporated into actual teaching practices. To do so, we conducted a method analysis based on the approach put forward by Oser and Baeriswyl,<sup>82</sup> in which the idea is to identify the organizing principles of fundamental practices via a descriptive analysis of teaching sequences. A handout describing teachers' instructional practice, distributed during a professional development workshop, revealed reservations about the models prescribed by social studies programs as well as the presence of the two models of conceptualization and documentary analysis. The results indicate the predominance of the conceptualization model, which seems to be described in greater conformity with the fundamental theoretical model, as detailed by Dawson.<sup>83</sup> The conceptualization model appears to be sufficiently flexible to assume different modulations, or even to incorporate steps from the documentary analysis model in different ways. Some teachers acknowledge the relevance of engaging students in documentary analysis tasks, but it is generally in reference to the concepts prescribed by one of the social studies programs. The disciplinary concepts of cause and consequence, as well as

continuity and change, are not entirely absent from the teachers' reasoning, but the focus appears to be on analyzing these concepts. This may be explained by these concepts' stronger connection with the intellectual operations prescribed to assess learning.<sup>84</sup> These disciplinary concepts could also characterize the history-related epistemological beliefs of social studies teachers. Dawson observed the same phenomenon in the context of the Schools History Project, with the disciplinary concepts of historical empathy, causality, proof, and change and continuity.<sup>85</sup> Additional analysis would be required, however, to validate such an interpretation.

In terms of learning approach, our results show near-generalized recognition by history teachers of equilibrium reasoning analogous to that described by Peel.<sup>86</sup> The hypothetico-deductive approach is thus viewed as part of a spiral curriculum, characterized by tension between a theoretical pole (or an explanatory function) and an empirical pole (or descriptive function). However, it was observed that the number and duration of steps can vary depending on the teacher. Moreover, the issue of the problematization of learning—which is necessary to make it meaningful to students—remains obscure and should be subject to further analysis of practices. On a related note, Dawson points out that learning situations that help apply the equilibrium learning approach can be diverse and even unexpected.<sup>87</sup> Additional descriptive analyses of instructional practices would help identify steps considered to be fundamental, and ultimately could update our reference frameworks associated with learning historical thinking. On this subject, the results presented here, although cursory, invite reflection on the nature of these frameworks used to bring teaching practices to light in social studies. Indeed, it is these frameworks that contribute to our understanding of the learning and teaching of historical thinking. As Keith Barton and Patricia Avery have mentioned, research practices in social studies teaching all too often exhibit shortcomings in their theoretical justification.<sup>88</sup> Models, especially those founded on attributes of civic participation or disciplinary expertise (such as disciplinary concepts) lead to developing causal attributions helping to explain learning, but offer little description of teaching practices. In this context, continued reflection appears very important in order to be able to propose models that can both describe actual practices and open up realistic and pragmatic possibilities for innovation.

## Notes

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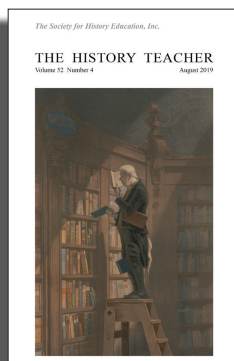
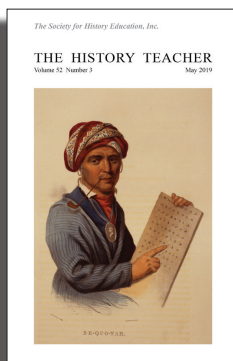
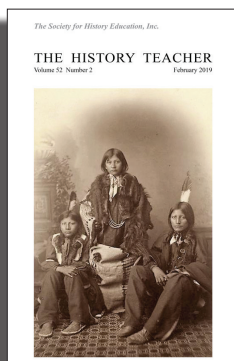
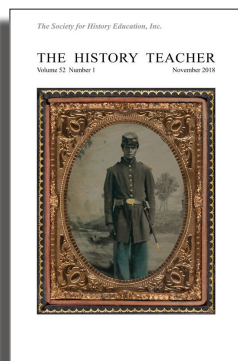
clinical environment (professional in this case) favorable to experiences of wellness and fulfilment. The participants were invited to share comments and engage in discussion in a warm context that was free of judgment on the nature of their input and that acknowledged their contribution to developing a shared understanding. See Douglas D. Perkins and Marc A. Zimmerman, "Empowerment Theory, Research, and Application," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 23, no. 5 (October 1995): 569-579.

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