

THE TEACHING OF HISTORY AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL:
EDUCATING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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By

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ABSTRACT

History remains one discipline that continues to concern itself with better understanding the motives and behaviour of human beings. In recent years elementary schools have faced widely publicized criticism for producing graduates who lack even the most basic knowledge of Canadian historical events, personalities, and places. Such press coverage has understandably deepened the concerns of many teachers, parents, and members of the general public about the adequacy of Ontario's elementary history curriculum. Guidelines introduced by the Ontario Ministry of Education since the early nineteen-seventies have largely failed to address this issue, by allowing local school boards to produce and implement their own curricula in the area of history.

At present, the deliberate study of history as a subject at the elementary level (ages 5-10, grades 1-5) is virtually non-existent. The most direct piece of evidence of this relatively recent trend has been the absence from many teachers' timetables and lesson plans of a reference to history in its own right. As misguided as such a generalized statement may seem, there is, in fact, strong evidence to

support the accuracy of such a claim.

This topic was selected in order to examine the validity of the perceptions, observations, and criticisms of the way in which history is currently being taught in Ontario's elementary schools, and to discuss the implications. In addition, a survey (N=100) was conducted in order to explore the views of the members of the public on issues relating to the teaching of history to young children.

Children do have a real psychological need to touch even the most recent past, and teachers must be made more responsible for making it possible. The central value of history lies in its ability to allow children to see themselves and their own interests in the perspective of time. Clearly, that is one outcome of the study of history that is both meaningful and compelling.

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INTRODUCTION

History, like Mathematics and English, was until relatively recently one of the subjects that customarily appeared on most elementary school timetables. The majority of students were expected to study it quite systematically throughout their elementary school careers. However, it has been patently clear for at least the past two decades that the thought of teaching history at the primary and junior level in Ontario schools has produced a sense of anxiety and inadequacy in many teachers' minds. On the other hand, there are those teachers who have asked, why history? What inalienable claim does this subject have on an already overburdened timetable? How can they justify it and the time needed to teach it effectively? Is history relevant to 5-10 year olds? Can they learn from it? Can an awareness of the past really help them to better face their futures? Too often the answer of many teachers to one or more of these questions has been "no".

With a provincial Ministry of Education that allowed school boards and teachers the freedom to create their own social studies curricula, it is little wonder those principals and teachers with little interest in the subject began to marginalize it. After all when the general public, business, and those in provincial and local educational leadership roles rarely speak out to defend the value of the study of history in the schools, it is little wonder some teachers have begun to ask, "Why history?" When all they have heard as a rebuttal to this question from many circles is, "Well, why not?",

those teachers who have already become convinced that some sort of organized teaching of history to young children is too difficult for them have simply had their views reinforced. Therefore, the trend in recent years of elementary teachers omitting any reference to history in its own right in their timetables and lesson plans is not one that teachers have worried a great deal about having to justify.

This state of affairs, I will argue in this project, is not good enough. There are excellent reasons for studying history at the elementary level, and those teachers who feel that it is very important to the comprehensive education of every child should feel supported. This project presents a compelling and, I believe, sound case for the teaching of history in Ontario's elementary schools.

The project divides naturally into two sections. The first four chapters focus on pedagogical and educational issues. The remaining chapters deal with the content and implementation of the curriculum. Throughout the project, I draw on the findings of the survey (N=100) that I conducted in order to assess the views of the members of the public on these issues. More specifically, in the second half of the project, I examine the record of historical study in elementary education in Ontario, and look at the reforms that are needed in elementary historical scholarship in order to meet current societal concerns about the necessity for quality programming and accountability in education. The final chapter and conclusions focus on various suggestions and recommendations that I

regard as helpful for teachers who are required to teach history in elementary schools. It also provides a detailed set of recommendations on how to teach the subject to young children more successfully.

In the first chapter I relate my own philosophy of education. In addition, I present personal observations and experiences explaining what I regard as the steady decline of the study of history in elementary classrooms. Next, with the assistance of some of the findings from the leading experts on the subject and from my own data, I consider some of the reasons why history in its own right is largely no longer taught at the elementary level.

The second chapter of this project deals first with the specific aspects of my own "Progressive but Responsible and Accountable" philosophy of education, and shows how it relates to my conviction that the study of the past should be part of every elementary classroom. The aspects of "Progressive but Responsible and Accountable" that I investigate most completely are; the reasons why so many educational experts have begun to subscribe to views similar to my own; the purposes and goals of such a philosophy that sees children both as distinct individuals and also as part of a societal whole that would benefit from them being taught a certain degree of similar information and socially accepted norms and values; the role of the teacher in creating and carrying out a history program based on the provincially required academic outcomes set out in the new "Common Curriculum" (1995) ; and, lastly, the role of teachers in their own classrooms in such areas as the acquisition

and management of the resources, materials, time, and space needed to execute their plans. Secondly, the chapter deals with the need of children to understand even the most recent past. Knowing about the past, about their families, and about themselves helps children to understand who they are and why they are that way.

The third chapter provides a rationale for the necessity of studying Canadian history at the Primary-Junior level. A fundamental awareness of some of the important people, places, and events in local, provincial, and national Canadian history enables children to see how they fit into the continuum that is the past. It also allows them to better understand where we have been, where we are now, and where we may be going as a country over the next few years. The focus of the fourth chapter is on how teachers can make the teaching of history relevant both to their students and to themselves, by helping children to become more socially responsible. If one believes, as I do, that human beings are naturally somewhat selfish and self-centred, then the process of directing children away from a selfish preoccupation with themselves to a more unselfish state in words, attitudes, and actions is one in which the study of history can assist. It would appear fairly obvious that children who understand themselves, their families, and their pasts will become more self-confident, considerate, and caring adults. They will grow up with positive values and with the knowledge that they have a useful role to play in society.

The second section of this project deals with the content of the curriculum. Not only does it focus on the Canadian historical content

that I suggest be used in Ontario's elementary schools, but it also considers the other types of history that elementary students should be exposed to. The first half of chapter five is an outline and assessment of the specific learning outcomes set out in the new Ontario "Common Curriculum" that relate to the study of history. Largely developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education in response to a perceived demand by the public, this plan has yet to be universally implemented. However, it seems very promising because a large part of it appears to have been designed to increase accountability and to more effectively codify academic standards in education. In the final part of this chapter, I present an elementary curriculum framework for history that takes into consideration the "Common Curriculum", the opinions of acknowledged experts in the field, and my own ideas on the subject.

Chapter six provides a more detailed examination of some of the research and development that has been done by a number of educational experts on the study of history by young children. It is an attempt to highlight some of their ideas and to evaluate those which have something of value to add to our understanding of the issues dealt with in this project. Chapter seven ponders how any new and/or reformed elementary history curriculum could judiciously assess and evaluate student performance and progress and its own success.

Finally, this project concludes with a set of suggestions and recommendations intended to assist teachers in understanding how and

what they should be teaching, and parents in knowing what sort of things their children should be learning when they study history. As Francis Bacon once pointed out, "Natural abilities are like natural plants; they need pruning by study."¹ It has been my experience that when young children know about and discuss the people, places, and events of the past, it helps them to be more self-assured when communicating with the people in their own lives.

CHAPTER 1

THE DECLINE OF HISTORY IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

History: a record of past events, usually with an interpretation of their cause and an assessment of their importance; the study and writing of such records¹

It seems particularly fitting to begin any serious investigation of whether history should be taught in present-day Ontario elementary schools with some reflection on the main philosophical reasons why I feel history should be taught to young children at all. It is not my goal to undertake a history of history teaching or a history of history. Instead, I will endeavour to elucidate some reasons why the development of a fundamental knowledge and understanding of the past is essential to the education of all children. I would also submit that many if not the majority of these reasons have been largely ignored in recent years.

To my mind the central value of history is that it assists in developing a better understanding of the present. Children will be better prepared as they practise looking back for the looking forward that they will soon enough be asked to do. Other benefits include the positive moral effects on students of the material that they are studying, and the development of their abilities to compare, to contrast, to make inferences, and to cultivate their own imaginations. Evaluations are undertaken as students assess what is right and wrong, what is true and false, and what is

really important. Therefore, history, as I see it, has three main values. In a practical sense, it can help children acquire a better sense of perspective in our often frantic modern society. In a moral sense, it can assist children in seeing the value of being a positively contributing citizen in a modern democratic nation. And in a more global way, it can strengthen a child's sense of empathy with and sympathy for those less fortunate than themselves. In others words, the study of history can help them to become the kinds of people who will take action to help others.

Without denying that teaching good citizenship should form one goal for those who teach history, there are other even more immediate benefits. History is full of sequences that are often evolutionary in nature, both of which, if examined, can help children see our society in perspective. With such an attitude as part of their instructional repertoire, good elementary teachers should be able to move students beyond the confines of their own particular trains of thought. Some degree of detachment is required in order to understand both the present and the past. And well taught pupils should be able to successfully explain the significance of many of the people, places, and events in their own world and show how they relate to the larger world beyond their own locality.

It would be accurate to say that nearly every teacher has been asked at least once during his/her career, "What is your philosophy of education?" To answer such a question intelligently in five minutes or less is very difficult. It requires that one consider nearly every aspect of

teaching, from content and available materials to an assessment of one's own personal methodology and style of interaction with students. Although I would submit that my philosophy of teaching and education is a progressive one, that takes into consideration the need for responsibility and accountability in the classroom, to dispense a long list of specific elements would be both misleading and useless. A philosophy is something that continues to evolve and that is based on one's years of experience as a teacher. It also depends on the level of professional development that the individual has been exposed to and on what he/she sees as important in his/her own mind.

Before delving into why the teaching of history in elementary schools appears to have been in a steady decline in recent years, it would be valuable to see what a number of respected teacher-historians have had to say in the past about the purpose of studying history in the classroom. First printed in 1915, and then revised in 1940, Henry Johnson's textbook Teaching History was one of the first in a series of volumes during the Twentieth-Century to outline a number of specific methods, principles, and applications that teachers might consider using in their classrooms in order to improve their teaching of history.² The value of historical study for children, as Johnson saw it, lay in the methods of acquiring facts and in an appreciation of historical evolution.³ Understanding the nature of society was a goal he supported. However, he clearly opposed any attempts by teachers to make history subservient to

any individual's personal view on what was educationally relevant and should be taught.⁴ Johnson's distrust of what he saw as a trend of "watering down" existing subjects, amalgamating them under the umbrella of "Social Studies", and allowing teachers alone to determine what types of historical information were relevant is a conviction I definitely share.⁵ Teachers should be given a great deal of freedom with regard to the methods they use in ensuring that information, ideas, and values are effectively taught in their classrooms. However, to give teachers, especially those who know very little about history or about its inherent usefulness, free rein to teach whatever they deem appropriate seems questionable.

In his book The Idea of History (1946), the distinguished British historian R.G. Collingwood takes many of Henry Johnson's ideas one step further. He devotes a great deal of attention to such questions as, "What is the object of history?" ; "How does history proceed?"; and "What is history for?"⁶ Therefore, it should not be surprising that Collingwood's response to the first question shows some parallels with some of Johnson's notions. For him, the object of history is, "*res gestae* : actions of human beings that have been done in the past", that it should be "pursued by interpretation of evidence" ... "and for the sake of human self-knowledge."⁷ Again, like Johnson, the influential Collingwood is quite specific about his philosophy of history and shares Johnson's view that history is what the people who are teaching and/or studying it determine to be relevant.

W.H. Burston's useful book, Principles of History Teaching (1963), clearly serves as a bridge between the views of such earlier writers

as Johnson and Collingwood and the more liberal views of those who have written on this topic during the past couple of decades. Like them, he regards the teacher's role as one of a mentor whose expertise lies in his/her ability to break "down a skill into its component parts in order to facilitate the gradual mastery of the total skill."⁸ On the other hand, unlike them, he is of the opinion that, "Teaching is not simply a relationship between a teacher and pupil - rather it is to be seen as a three-fold relationship between teacher, subject or skill on the one hand, and the pupil on the other."⁹ This distinction is what separates Burston from his two predecessors, in so far as he does not see the teaching of history as largely teacher-centred. Instead, he sees it as a process that should be more of an interplay between the teacher, the learner, and the acquisition of skills. Although he does not mention such currently fashionable elementary teacher terms as "process oriented", "integrated", "child-centred", "cooperative group work", "learning styles", or "self-directed learning", his strong focus on the role of the learner in the educational process certainly represented a movement towards the types of instructional strategies that many teachers utilize today.

One of the most obvious differences between the afore-mentioned philosophies and those of Robert V. Daniels is that they represent a leap into a realm of thought now taken for granted by many who teach history. In his book, Studying History:How and Why (1966), Daniels does not just speak of how the study of history helps one to learn many interesting facts and skills, or to become aware of the lessons that history can teach, but of

the additional intrinsic value of studying a subject such as history.¹⁰ When one reads what Daniels has to say, it is like listening to the views of a son or daughter who has considered the opinions of his/her parents, and, without rejecting all of them, has modified them to suit his/her own needs and era. For him, "History is an indispensable part of the liberal education that aspires to train the general powers of the mind and open it to an awareness of the greatest things men have done, thought, or discovered."¹¹

Like Daniels, Arthur Marwick, the noted British historian and former professor in the Open University, does not dismiss out of hand how history has been taught in the past. However, he does strongly suggest that a better job could easily be done. His book The Nature of History (1970), is not really a consideration of how history should be taught in schools. Rather, it serves as a platform for presenting his views on which type of history should be taught. At the heart of his argument is his conviction that the "aims, methods and history of the discipline" are not being sufficiently taught.¹² In his opinion, the result has been that students have been seduced by the many possibilities that science and technology appear to provide, or have been drawn to subjects such as sociology or political science because of their more practical nature.¹³ Unlike earlier authors such as H. Johnson or R.G. Collingwood, Marwick puts forward the view that one of the central reasons why formal historical study in schools has become increasingly less popular among elementary and secondary level students is the fact that the only history with which most people have

been familiar is the history they were taught in elementary school: "Dates and boring facts of course. And also, in the recollection of many, a terrible tub-thumping jingoism, glorifying the United States, Britain, France or whatever the country ... which strains the credulity of the more intelligent child." ¹⁴ Marwick's assessment can easily be taken one step further as one reaches out to understand why some elementary teachers are reluctant and/or uncomfortable about teaching history in their classrooms.

While it is regrettable, such a reaction is understandable. After all, what sorts of teachers would want to put their students through a method of instruction that was the source of so much tedium and frustration in their own lives? Given the way that it has been presented in the past, Marwick points out that it should surprise few people that history has been "attacked , from the intellectual heights, as being vague, cliché-ridden and devoid of basic standards, and, from the popular lowlands, as being pedantic and over-concerned with the detailed pursuit of the insignificant".¹⁵ Had this been the case in my own life, I wonder how enthusiastic I myself would have been about studying history?

What is Marwick's proposed solution? First, that the nature, aims, and methodology of history and its relationship to other disciplines must be clearly defined for students throughout their academic careers.¹⁶ Second, that the writing of even simple expository essays be a skill that should be practiced early, so that children do not become fearful of the process and so that they learn the skills that they will need in order to be effective writers in their everyday lives.¹⁷ Third, that children should study a limited but

authentic selection of documentary material such as poems, simple statistics, charters, and official papers in order to better enable them to learn the basic techniques and methodology of the subject in an interesting way.¹⁸ Finally, once they have a solid grasp of some of the basic aspects of the study of history, he argues that they should be allowed to undertake small research projects on topics of their own choice.¹⁹ Only then, in Marwick's view, will children develop true originality of thought and the ability to ask the sorts of penetrating questions that will make the study of history truly meaningful and exciting to them.²⁰

Marwick's assessment of the reasons why the study of history in elementary schools had begun a decline during the 1970s was, in the opinion of this writer, very accurate. As a student who lived through the experimentalism in education in Ontario in the 1970s that resulted from such changes as the adoption of the recommendations of the Hall-Dennis report of the late 1960s, I can certainly relate to much of what he expressed. Take the case of open concept classrooms. Teachers, having been told by the Ministry of Education and by local administrators how beneficial they were for children, had little understanding of their long-term value or of the effects on their students. Classrooms that focused very successfully on experiential models of education, where children would learn by doing, were often not balanced with the types of teacher-directed instruction, and with explanations of purpose, aims, and methods that might well have made for better comprehension, better skills, and greater awareness of the value and excitement of learning. Marwick's book, in

other words, was something of a watershed. In fact, it is one of the first books on the study and the teaching of history that attempts to balance the more conservative nature of education characteristic of the 1940s and 50s with the radicalism of the 1960s and 70s. In this way, its value is considerable as it provided an introduction to many of the evolutionary rather than revolutionary attitudes that have dominated the responsibility and accountability driven educational scene of the late 1980s and 1990s.

An excellent example of the more laissez-faire attitude toward the study of history at the elementary level during the 1970s can be found in an article entitled, "What Sort of History should we Teach?" by G.R. Elton, the eminent Tudor historian from Cambridge, in the book edited by Martin Ballard, New Movements in the Study and Teaching of History (1970). Much of what Elton says has a great deal of merit. He astutely points out that in many cases in previous decades the whole concept of historical study in the schools had been "distorted by being assimilated to a concept proper to quite another compartment of historical studies, namely that rightly prevalent at the universities."²¹ His recommendation that the extent of the elementary students' study of history should concentrate on "stories of war, exploration, great men [women] and especially progress in science" and exciting them with "stories and descriptions distinguished from other similar tales by being about real people" would be very useful to consider when creating a history syllabus for young children.²² However, I cannot agree with Elton in his claim that there is little use for method at the elementary level. Elton argues that most children are "immature" by nature

during these years and that they should be taught history with the emphasis being primarily on “concern and amusement.”²³ As a teacher who has taught 5-10 year olds for eight years, I would submit that my observations and experiences have revealed the opposite to be true.

Many children as young as five years old do have a fundamental sense of the past, and they have the ability to grasp that what is happening today is different from what happened yesterday, last year, or one hundred years ago. When Elton states that “the teacher of the under-fifteens should not be worried if he cannot instill any notable sense of the past or any grasp of differences”, he really underestimates the capabilities of elementary students.²⁴ Not only is the history that I have seen taught or taught myself at the grade two, three, and four levels not driven by “progress mongering” or solely the “linear development of man's habits and circumstances”, it has usually been interesting and meaningful.²⁵ In fact, these lessons have motivated many students to want to study it further.

Teachers of young children do not have to patronize them or set their standards well below what is necessary to effectively teach and learn about the past. Many educators of the 1960s and 70s believed that the reason many children did not excel and were bored in school was because they found the material they were offered too difficult and/or tedious. It is now clear that Elton and others with like views drew inaccurate conclusions. It was not that children were incapable of learning real historical material and of understanding it in the context of the present and

other events in the past. Rather, the problem was that history had often been presented to children in this age group in a manner that failed to excite them about doing so.

The teacher-directed Socratic method of instruction may be effective for older high school and university students. These students are already highly motivated and convinced of the value and enjoyment to be had from the study of the past. In contrast, elementary teachers are faced with ensuring acceptable comprehension of content, knowledge, and skills as well as teaching in a manner that will hold the attention of a 5-10 year-old. Today, with such creative ideas as the utilization of museum collections and student-provided artifacts, field trips that help bring the past to life, small-group discussions and cooperative activities, research projects, as well as the employment of the Socratic method, many teachers do teach successfully and inspire their students. In fact, having benefited from these varied teaching methods, there is no need to expect that the majority of students would be unable to understand many of the historical concepts taught to them.

During the early 1980s the types of books and articles written on the teaching of history at the elementary level began to change. No longer was the discussion of history at the elementary level simply relegated to a paragraph or two in a more general treatise on the nature or teaching of history, but work began to appear that dealt specifically with the topic. A notable example is Geoffrey Partington's book The Idea of a Historical Education (1980). Not only does Partington present an argument as to

why history should be taught in schools, but he also presents ideas about what type of history should be taught, the types of skills that an effective history teacher should have, and how a syllabus might be organized. Without dismissing the traditional reasons why history has been taught in the past, (history as heritage, history for moral instruction, and history for understanding the present) he puts forward his conviction that approaches like those of G.R. Elton are misguided if not completely erroneous.

Partington was very much aware that by the 1970s the traditional reasons for teaching elementary students about history had begun to lose support, and that some teachers had even become hostile toward the idea of the study of history with young children.²⁶ He noted that there were five common criticisms from teachers about the discipline of history in relation to young children (see below). While not denying that there was some validity in each one of them, he set forth a number of simple recommendations that could help overcome them and allow elementary children the opportunity to experience the wonders of the past in interesting and meaningful ways. To the charge that there is “too little active engagement of children in their own learning”, he suggests much more active methods such as drama, simulations, discussions and debates, projects, field trips, and interviews.²⁷ To those who say that history involves “too much mere memorization and repetition” and a neglect of higher order skills, he proposes a wider use of taxonomies and clearly defined learning outcomes.²⁸ In countering the opinions of those who believe that history often neglects “children’s felt needs, interests and experiences”, he asserts

that teachers should simply make a more complete use of their interests and experiences and become more cognizant of their needs.²⁹

A commonly held belief among teachers is that history is too difficult for children because it falls outside their daily reality. Partington reasons that an effective solution would be to more consciously “choose events and problems intelligible in terms of children’s experiences.”³⁰ Finally, he deals with the allegation that “too much emphasis on specific events at the expense of promoting the understanding of widely applicable concepts and the structure of the past” has prevented many students from developing a fascination with history.³¹

While not debating the accuracy of the latter statement, he points out that an easily workable solution to such a problem would be to “choose key concepts which will illuminate and link individual occurrences and develop a more meaningful structure.”³² One of the most valuable features of Partington’s analysis is his acknowledgement that the way history has been taught in the past was not always effective, interesting, or meaningful to students. He freely admits that those children who later became teachers and who resisted teaching history in their classrooms were right to reject the moralistic, and selective use of the past to support so-called absolute truths, and to question the “Whig interpretation” of the past as a linear and progressive heritage in which life unfolded in a specific and largely unproblematic way.³³ The prime significance of Partington’s work then is not in the way in which it acknowledges the validity of past criticisms or justifies the disillusionment that many teachers have felt concerning the

value of studying history at the elementary level. Instead, it is because he was one of the first scholars of the 1980s never to lose sight of the inherent value of history in schools and to make positive and practical suggestions for strengthening its place in the curriculum.

Not long afterwards other publications began to appear that supported the views and recommendations put forward by Partington. There were books like his that began to specifically analyze how history should be learned and taught in the information age and there were more general works on the nature of the elementary curriculum and the benefit of teaching the humanities in the schools. For example, A.K. Dickinson, P.J. Lee, and P.J. Rogers edited a book titled Learning History (1984), in which a number of authors examine how and why history should be taught in the contemporary classroom. They also consider how it might be assessed and evaluated. Similarly, Hilary Cooper's book The Teaching of History : Implementing the National Curriculum (1992), grapples with how to successfully teach history in British elementary schools in light of the new "National Curriculum" of 1991, which required that history be taught to all children from five to eleven years of age.

Once again, there was not a great deal of support among educators for such a plan. Understandably conscious of their own experiences, they feared a return to a study of the "facts" and "dates" as opposed to the "whys" and "ifs" of history.³⁴ Whether rational or not, their fears were real. Hence, Cooper attempted to allay some of these fears by advocating a plan of action that more or less mirrors, fleshes out, and

builds upon Partington's earlier recommendations.

Two other books that indicate the evolution of scholarship on the teaching of history in elementary schools are the following: Jim Campbell and Vivienne Little's (eds.) Humanities in the Primary School (1989) and C.J. Willig's Children's Concepts and the Primary Curriculum(1990). Both books provide useful discussions of where the study of Primary-Junior education has come and where it may be going. Rather than simply providing a general commentary on the education of children from the primary grades through to the secondary level, they look specifically at conceptual development, and at needs, and they explore some of the possible ways in which the curriculum can address some of the more common concerns surrounding the education of young children. Instead of spending time agonizing over whether the humanities, including history, should be part of the curriculum at all, they have moved beyond the old fears and prejudices concerning their appropriateness for young children. They, and others like them, had begun to forcefully expound the benefits for young children of coming into contact with the past. In addition, they provided many practical suggestions for making it happen in a manner that is meaningful and engaging for children and manageable for teachers.

David Sylvester, in his article "Children as Historians" in the book Humanities in the Primary School (1989) edited by Jim Campbell and Vivienne Little, makes a very strong argument for his philosophy that even young children can be historians, albeit at the most rudimentary of levels. They are acutely aware of the now well publicized reasons why some

schools and teachers resist teaching history: "Children cannot understand time" ; "History is about adults and beyond the minds of children" ; "History is about the past and children live in the present" ; "Children learn holistically and separate studies in history and geography are inappropriate" ; and "Why should children do history when anthropology, archaeology, economics, psychology and sociology have equal claims for consideration?" David Sylvester presents the case that these arguments are only half-truths.³⁵ Though he agrees that young "children cannot understand time in the abstract", he also argues quite capably that "they can learn to handle chronology." ³⁶ In addition, he points out that while history is most frequently about adults, it is not entirely about adults. There were children in the past, and as I can confirm from my own observations children are interested in adults because they know they too will eventually grow up to be one of them. ³⁷ Although many children may learn holistically, Sylvester argues that this does not happen all of the time, and that children often need structure and specific things to focus on before they can relate things to a wider context.³⁸ Furthermore, he explains that, since history is really "the only subject in the school curriculum which deals with the long term effects of people's decisions, actions and accidents", it does have an important place in the lives of younger children that other subjects do not. ³⁹

The significance of the ideas presented in Sylvester's article and those of other contemporary authors with similar views is that these writers finally began to make a convincing case for the teaching of history as a

subject at the elementary level, in which many educators have lost faith. Sylvester's judgment is that, although there may well be reason for further discussion on the degree of priority the study of history should be given at the elementary level, that "there is no longer excuse for not knowing the great potential which there is educationally if children are encouraged to be historians." 40

C.J. Willig takes a similar tack when he documents the fact that history at the elementary level has often been relegated to being part of a general topic, where elements of a number of subjects are included in the study of a particular theme.⁴¹ Although this approach has had many supporters among well meaning elementary teachers over the past few decades, Willig notes that such an approach is frequently "quite loose in structure and adds to the difficulties in planning history teaching in primary schools."⁴² Willig backs up his statements by drawing on the findings of the British Department of Education and Science (1987). Inspectors found much of the work in the discipline at the elementary level to be "superficial and fragmented" in nature.⁴³ Willig also presents the results of a survey carried out in the north-west of England by R.Swift and M. Jackson in 1987. These researchers also found that the teaching of history was often "superficial, characterised by a lack of uniformity of subject matter and a lack of sequence and progression in the selection and development of historical themes." 44

One author whose scholarship on the place of history in the education of young elementary children deserves special consideration is

Joan E. Blyth. Her two volumes on the subject, Place and Time with Children Five to Nine (1984) and History 5 to 9 (1988), challenge two of the most widely held arguments against teaching history at the elementary level. First, there is the more strident view that such narrow disciplines have no place in the curriculum of young children. Secondly, there is the view that incidental learning that provides some information relating to the past is entirely adequate. Not only does Blyth assert that children have a need for the past, but she also argues that history, in fact, fulfills some of the “psychological inward-looking needs”, the “outward looking needs”, and the “practical needs” of children.⁴⁵

What Blyth has really done is to provide two detailed resource manuals that summarize her own thoughts, research, and field work. She comprehensively reviews recent research and, most importantly, provides a guide for the selection and sequencing of content, details, approaches, and resources. Her work is extremely valuable in that it links theory with practice.⁴⁶

Why history? Blyth gives one of the most convincing and sensible explanations for why the study of the past is essential to the well rounded education of elementary children:

The essential reasons are the help it gives to children in finding their own identity, the knowledge it gives them of the society in which they will become adults and the interest it can provide for a lifetime of searching, observing and reading about one area of the past. At the same time, such learning enables children to see themselves and their own particular interests in the perspective of time.⁴⁷

While the views of these authors may range from staunchly conservative to leading-edge progressive, the key element that ties nearly all of them together, even over a fifty-year period of time, is their conviction that the study of history in its own right at the elementary level has undergone a continuous decline.

Over the past few decades Canada's fortunes have become increasingly intertwined with those of other nations. Yet history has all but disappeared from many elementary classrooms. History has been folded into the social studies or abandoned altogether. The proof? My own observation is that few, if any, of the teachers below grade six in my own home school ever broach the subject of history. Why is this the case? My own informal inquiries and observations reveal that many teachers simply feel they are inadequately trained or knowledgeable to do a "good job". If this is true, it is very unfortunate as Canadians are not bound together by a common ethnicity or religion. Instead, our defining heritage is a democratic one of equality, liberty, justice, and responsible government. If Canadians are going to maintain that definition and to ensure its daily practice, it would seem essential that all citizens understand how our past has been shaped. Children need and have a right to know what events, people, and forces assisted in the development of their country. Knowing how Canada has evolved and the background to the current social, political, and economic circumstances, if only in a cursory manner, is something all children should have the opportunity to explore.

My informal observations, are based on my eight years as a

classroom teacher with children in the five-to-ten age range. However, when combined with the research results of others, and also with the results of my own research questionnaire there does appear to be a substantial amount of quantitative evidence to support such a perception. As is described later, the great majority (N=88%) of my questionnaire sample group (N=100) of Burlington, Toronto, and Cambridge residents believed that Primary-Junior teachers should be required to teach history in their classrooms.

Although nearly every author I have examined mentions their alarm at the decline of the study of history at the elementary level, there are a few who stand out from the rest. Either the strength of their convictions or the quality of their research make them worth reviewing. First, is an article by John West, in the journal Trends , entitled, "Young Children's Awareness of the Past" (1978). West, the Chief Inspector of Schools in Dudley, England, was in a unique position to be able to observe staff and programs in many schools. He noted that for at least the last two decades that the prospect of teaching history in English primary or middle schools had created a sense of doubt and some confusion in many teachers' minds. ⁴⁸ The result he observed was that, "In first schools the subject is now virtually non-existent." ⁴⁹

Joan E. Blyth is in complete agreement. Her book History 5 to 9 (1988), points to a lack of consensus among administrators as to the value of teaching history to young children, given the pressure to teach the basics, to increase class sizes, to develop integrated interdisciplinary

studies, and a want of interest among many elementary teachers.⁵⁰ Two articles by Canadians Jim Giles, a resource teacher with the Peel Board of Education, and Peter Seixas, a researcher at the University of British Columbia, are of interest. In his article "The Arts in Education - Our Neglected National Resource" published in the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation publication News (1994), Giles points out that "in contemporary society many people still consider the Arts to be a luxury, or more often, a source of amusement and leisure time activity."⁵¹ While not specifically an article on the study of history, his more general comment on the state of the Arts in Ontario schools as a whole still has something worthwhile to contribute to what is fundamentally a connected issue. He is correct when he puts forward the notion that the basic argument of those who oppose the expansion (or even the very existence) of the Arts in schools is that they only serve to "divert attention and resources from other subject areas that prepare students for the competitive workplace and the prospect of high-paying jobs."⁵² I agree wholeheartedly with Giles' analysis and submit that the Arts in general, and history specifically, can contribute to the creation of an environment in schools in which imagination and creativity can prosper. Children can be taken beyond the duties, routines, and habits of the everyday.

Peter Seixas, from British Columbia, takes Giles' criticisms about the lack of Arts in the curriculum one step further. Seixas remarks that while history is certainly a large part of the content of the British Columbia social studies curriculum, "there is no systematic attempt to deal with a

progression of historical thinking.”⁵³ Also of interest is his comment that when social studies teachers talk about “skills” or “process” or “higher-order thinking” and list “problem solving” and “decision making” as two of the most important skills children need to learn, they rarely mention the practices of the discipline of history.⁵⁴ “Analysis of historical documents, assessment of historical interpretations, construction of historical explanations, consideration of human agency in history, and assessment of historical significance” are all crucial skills that the study of history can teach in an interesting and meaningful way, even to young children.⁵⁵

At first glance there appears to be very little logic in separating content from process in an elementary history curriculum, since in the case of history the nature of the material that is being examined is not of primary importance. However, upon careful consideration I would have to agree with Seixas’ conclusion that the inclusion of history in its own right in the curriculum does not necessarily preclude an interdisciplinary approach to the study of history. Nor does it indicate a return to the largely teacher-directed, fact-driven, clinical, and narrow methods of the past.⁵⁶ On the contrary, those who regard the study of history by young people as essential want to ensure that the children of today have the opportunity to understand its uses and the ways in which it can be manipulated by unscrupulous governments and individuals. As Arthur Schlesinger, the famous American biographer, very convincingly notes, history can be used “as a weapon”.⁵⁷ In fact, this may be the principal reason why elementary students need to be taught to understand it, to work with it, and to employ it.

Chapter 2

A CHILD'S NEED FOR THE PAST: THE PAST AS A FRAME OF REFERENCE

There can be no history of the past as it actually did happen; there can only be historical interpretations, and none of them is final, and every generation has to frame its own.¹

Research has demonstrated that children between the ages of five and ten have an understanding of place and of many elements of time. Every student lives in a home of some kind in a town, village, or city and attends a particular school. Children also listen to the radio, play computer games, watch television, and go on vacations. Therefore, they do have a real daily need to understand the concept of place, and it is important that they understand the connection between various places over time. Through the study of maps and diagrams, and by plotting routes, measuring distances, sketching buildings and other places, such as , airports, railways and roads, teachers can develop this understanding.² Where young children are concerned their “natural curiosity, the need for racial tolerance and the widening of horizons from the purely local environment are satisfied by the study of places near and far.”³

Children do have pasts of their own that many of them can recall

from as early as the age of five or even earlier. I am convinced that children have a need to be in touch with even the most recent past, and that their teachers have the responsibility to make it happen in an engaging, organized, and meaningful way. Children growing up in Canada today are faced with a continual onslaught of information from all quarters. They are informed in no uncertain terms that the world has not always been the same as the one they have begun to encounter and are striving to understand. However, this message about the past has frequently been delivered in a fractured and confusing manner. Few of them ever really comprehend a significant part of it. Very often they reach adulthood with little awareness of the past, of its relationship to the present, and to our possible future.

Once an elementary teacher has decided that a more deliberate and conscious examination of the past would be beneficial to his/her students, the next step is to decide why children really need to look at the past and to find ways of making the experience positive and valuable. There appear to be three central needs that all children have that the study of history can address very successfully. First, history can fulfill certain personal needs to look inward. This can assist children into growing into stable, well-adjusted adults.⁴ All humans are self-centred to a lesser or greater degree, and “the education of children at home and at school is part of the process of leading children from this inward-looking preoccupation to thinking of others and being unselfish in attitudes, word and actions.”⁵ Having some knowledge about themselves, about the

people and the world around them, and also about the past, can help students to become more aware of who they really are and how they fit into the larger society.

Secondly, children who are comfortable with themselves and believe in their abilities, are in a much better position to look beyond their own sphere and try to come to terms with the world around them. They can then begin to develop a genuine interest in the welfare of others and the ability to tolerate ideas and opinions other than their own. History deals with the interplay between people, ideas, and events over time. I believe that this reality is what has excited many children to cultivate a life-long enthusiasm for the subject. Canada's native peoples, the early settlers, the War of 1812, and the two world wars, to name but a few topics, are ones that, when presented in a dynamic manner, have resulted in even younger pupils pursuing an interest in them in more detail and on their own time. For an elementary teacher to discover that one of his/her students has begun to frequent the library in order to learn more about a topic introduced in class is an accolade like no other.

The difficulty has been to convince the majority of educators of this. For example, in his article "Young Children's Awareness of the Past", John West analyzes a survey, conducted in 1976, of sixty-eight head primary, junior, and middle-school teachers in one British West Midlands district. Seventy-six per cent of those surveyed "felt obliged to acknowledge a conscientious belief that from 7 to 11 years of age the integration of historical material with other subject matter was both necessary and

desirable, rather than isolating history for specialized attention”⁶ Based on my own observations and those of a substantial number of writers in the field of education, it is clear that a significant number of teachers in Canada and elsewhere continue to hold and disseminate this view and remain unaware of the benefits of historical instruction for children ten years of age and under. On the other hand, from the data gathered from my own survey and those of others it is clear that a substantial proportion of the general public does not share this philosophy. It is interesting that while there is a fairly acute awareness between teachers and the general public about what the mathematics, science, physical education, and French curricula should look like at the elementary level, there is considerable controversy over a subject like history.

Having distributed well over two hundred questionnaires in the Toronto, Burlington, and Cambridge regions of Ontario between June and September 1995, I was fortunate enough to have one hundred returned. A description of the procedures and response rates is given in Appendix A. The respondents represented a cross-section of socio-economic groups. Of the total number of responses, 56 were from women, 43 were from men, and one was returned without the gender indicated. The results are referred to throughout this project. There was a high level of public support for history at the Primary-Junior elementary level. In fact, 85% of the respondents agreed that is important that children at the Primary-Junior level gain a knowledge of history as a subject in its own right (see Appendix C).

The argument for the inclusion of history under a larger thematic umbrella such as "Social Studies", is frequently advanced, in conjunction with the widely held presumption that "young children have no concept of time" and that "historical ideas are too abstract and formal for comprehension by any child before adolescence."⁷ Yet research from as far back as the nineteen-twenties would suggest otherwise. N.C. Bradley, in his study "The Growth of the Knowledge of Time in Children of School Age" (1947), in which he conducted a series of four interview questions about the concept of time with children 5-13 years of age at an urban elementary school in Britain, discovered some intriguing patterns. The aims of his investigation were to "trace the growth of ability to understand the ordinary time-words used in everyday life and the development of the conception of a universal continuous time-scheme extending into the past and future."⁸ After collating his results, Bradley felt he could draw several definite conclusions about children and the development of their concept of time.

First, that at the age of five the average child's comprehension of the "conventional time-scheme" was very limited.⁹ However, he also notes that by this age most children had at least a general sense of what was being asked because there were very few questions in which no right or wrong answers were provided.¹⁰ Interestingly, Bradley found that in the following two years progress was so substantial that there were even some respondents in the seven-year-old sample who answered none of the questions incorrectly. His results indicated that after the age of five

there was a clear order of development in which definite stages were successfully achieved.¹¹ At this general age, the differentiation between past, present, and future had begun to be successfully made. For example, such time words as yesterday, today, tomorrow, morning, afternoon, last year, and one-hundred years ago were both used and understood. Bradley also found that more frequently occurring cycles, rather than those of longer periodicity, were understood much more quickly; such as the concept of a day over progressively longer periods of time such as a week or month.¹²

Other studies, such as Roy N. Smith's and Peter Tomlinson's "The Development of Children's Construction of Historical Duration" (1977) and Peter Knight's "A Study of Children's Understanding of People in the Past" (1989), have produced similar results. Additional studies have utilized the data collected by others in order to formulate analogous conclusions. Examples include Gustav Johoda's article "Children's Concepts of Time and History" (1963), John Lello's "The Concept of Time, the Teaching of History, And School Organization" (1980) and Gwenifer Shawyer's and Richard Brown's "The Development of Children's Historical Thinking" (1988).

What each of these authors has to say is worth at least some consideration. This research provides support for the view that even young children can be guided to understand the past and that they can benefit from its study. Smith and Tomlinson, while not dismissing the results of earlier studies, question whether better methods might have produced

more reliable findings. A total of 144 children participated in their study, "60 (30 boys and 30 girls) from the top three years of a primary school and 84 (45 boys and 39 girls) from the first three years of a secondary school."¹³ Out of their original sample of 144 children, 28 (8 boys and 20 girls) were not able to give two historical sequences of at least three items each.¹⁴ The remainder of the 116 children "provided intervals ranging from 3 to 43 items, with a mean of 6.72 and a standard deviation of 3.6."¹⁵

Their main finding was that there were statistically significant differences in the quality of responses of children within each age level. Smith and Tomlinson conclude by supporting an approach to the study of the past with young children that involves more interaction and that takes into account learning differences and styles within particular age groups. Peter Knight's conclusions, based on his study "A Study of Children's Understanding of People in the Past" (1989), are very similar to those of Smith and Tomlinson though rather more detailed in nature. Knight considered data from two samples: from two urban British schools with over 300 children (ages 5-11) each, and two British village schools with approximately 90 pupils (ages 5-11) each.¹⁶ None of the schools had any sort of formal history curriculum that encouraged children to think about people in the past, nor had any teachers been observed to teach about these matters on their own.¹⁷

Knight was not able to interview and test all of the children at the four schools because of time constraints, and because of the sheer difficulty of transcribing the tape-recorded responses of so many children.

Even though he decided to focus on those children in the average academic range of ability, his results are still important. Though he does not indicate the exact number of children he interviewed, Knight does say that “the scores were evenly distributed across the four primary schools and twelve primary classes.”¹⁸ Unlike some earlier studies which claimed a relationship between empathy in children and an understanding of people in the past, he appears to have found very little evidence of this. However, like Smith and Tomlinson, what Knight did find is that “children’s performances improved over time, but not at an even pace”, and that so-called average students “showed, a wide range of understandings.”¹⁹ Again, like them, he was still convinced by his results that children of this age generally have enough of an “untutored understanding” of people in the past to warrant a more mature consideration of the past that does not focus solely on facts and dates.²⁰

Increased attention to individual learning styles, the inevitable variations of abilities in classrooms, and the need to move toward more outcome-based learning are avenues that people with ideas similar to those of Knight could use in order to find a more valuable and permanent role for history in elementary schools.²¹ Like the educators and administrators who helped create Ontario’s new “Common Curriculum”, he criticizes the activity-based approaches of the past, where teachers created interesting activities for their students and hoped that they had fairly accurately determined their needs and that academic progress would be the natural outcome.²² Both in Britain, with its relatively new “National

Curriculum" (1987), and in Ontario, this method has been replaced by a method in which outcomes are determined, in which instruction is organized to move students towards achieving these outcomes, and in which the outcomes are assessed at various stages. Thus, although it took quite a bit of explanation to adequately summarize it, the third central need that the study of history fulfills for young children is a practical one.²³

Through the use of skills and concepts that are unique to the study of history, children can get a genuine sense of time and of how numerous things in the world follow a sequence. John Slater, in his article "Why History?" (1978) in Trends, refers to this as "a sense of history" that can be fostered in children when a teacher focuses on a "concern for evidence", "an awareness of continuity and change", and "an interest in cause."²⁴

I would add that a sense of history also involves questioning earlier perceptions, interacting with the evidence, be it at a museum, at a pioneer village, or through the handling of artifacts. In this way, teachers and children are able to compare the past with the experiences of teachers and children today.

History can then in a very practical way give children the opportunity to learn new skills and concepts that no other subject area can do completely. The studies of those authors mentioned, my own informal observations in the classroom, and those of a number of other teachers in the schools where I have worked also support the contention that children do begin to develop a sense of the past when they are as young as five years of age. As Joan Blyth states,

In spite of much previous research to the contrary, the last ten years have shown that young children can begin to develop a sense of time. A study of the past, with constant use of simple and gradually more advanced sequence-lines, first gives children of 5 to 7 an idea of sequence (what comes before what) with no dates. This can be developed, even at the age of 6, into a beginners' time-line, using two, then more dates and talking 'centuries'. By the age of 9, children should be able to cope with the concept of about 1,000 years in time. Only a study of the past, in all areas of the curriculum can do this. ²⁵

Admittedly, most of the data concerning children and the past is of British origin. One might say that this is because the majority of Canadians have had very little interest in the way the past is taught to their children. This contrasts with the situation in Europe where children are surrounded by the past in many concrete ways and where their history stretches back much farther than our own. There is probably some truth to these assumptions. However, even more significant is the fact that the British are somewhat farther along in their quest for a responsible and accountable national curriculum, based on research-defined, generated, and proven age-appropriate learning outcomes than is the case in Canada.

The introduction of the "Common Curriculum" (1995) in Ontario has significantly narrowed the gap, and it is likely that there are many other educators such as myself interested in seeing the study become a more integral part of every child's learning experience. With this in mind, there is little shame in utilizing the information gathered from other countries on the same subject to support the view that children have a need to look at the past. After all, the Ontario Ministry of Education and many of the Boards of

Education in the province regularly use evidence garnered from all over the world to justify their various directives.

There is no question that it would be better to have an increased number of uniquely Canadian studies and expert views on the question of young children and past that take into consideration the subtle nuances of the Canadian educational experience. However, this is not the case. Those interested in investigating the issue have little choice but to rely to some degree on research from elsewhere. While unfortunate, the similarity of the experiences, issues, problems, and observations described by these authors and noted by my colleagues and myself lead me to believe in their value and usefulness.

The results of my own survey and my observations of other teachers confirm the validity of my own experiences in the classroom over the past eight years. Because of curriculum constraints and the general unavailability of material appropriate for children in grades two through four, any teaching of history in its own right in my class has been unavoidably infrequent. In fact, history was sometimes only dealt with in a general way in our social studies curriculum. A good example would be the fact that the current social studies curriculum has children of this age focus solely on the "peace" aspect of Remembrance Day.

Certainly the whole issue of peace is an important one for teachers of young children who, in their everyday lives, are faced with the spectre of increasing societal violence. Yet, every year the children in my class have

expressed a desire to know more about the reasons why they are being asked to remember the importance of peace in the world and to honour the men and women of the Canadian armed forces who helped secure it for them. Many children as young as five or six years old have at least a basic awareness that Canada has been involved in two world wars during this century. Often they have had grandfathers or great uncles who served in the armed services of one of the nations involved who have given them some anecdotal accounts of what they went through. Children of this age invariably enjoy sharing items of their own that they have brought from home. Because of this, our work in class around Remembrance Day usually results in a number of artifacts from the wartime period arriving at school.

“Tell us more, Mr. Van Wyngaarden,” they say. With the era not being part of the social science core at this age, I am usually left in a bit of a dilemma when this request comes up, as it does every year. Do I go ahead and tell them anything? And if I do, how much detail should I go into? If I tell them too much, will I risk complaints from parents and administrators alike? These people are frequently still sensitive about the subject, and often believe it to be inappropriate for children of that age. Moreover, since it is not in the official curriculum at the primary-junior level, I do have to consider what sort of sanctions I might face at the Board level if an administrator was made aware that we had discussed the topic in class. This person might not share my students enthusiasm for the subject. Given these concerns, when my students ask me to move beyond the official

curriculum I will usually tell them enough about a particular topic to satisfy their immediate curiosity. As someone who enjoys his career path and who is still relatively new to the teaching profession, taking steps in the area of curriculum development that are not currently supported by Board policy or by the administrators who have to uphold it, would be unproductive.

All is not entirely bleak however. Ontario's new "Common Curriculum", which sets out mandated learning outcomes that are to be achieved by the time a student reaches grade 3, 6 and 9, is general enough at this point that it does allow teachers some license to attempt more in-depth study in many subject areas. According to the "Common Curriculum", by the end of grades three and six, in the area of history, students should be able to:

Grade 3:

1. - describe the contributions of diverse peoples to the community (e.g., describe what they learned from visiting local historical sites, historical houses, or museums, or from listening to local storytellers)
2. - describe the contributions of various individuals to the history of Canada (e.g., Laura Secord, Susanna Moodie, Alexander Graham Bell, David Thompson, Pauline Johnson, Rosemary Brown, William Peyton Hubbard, George Erasmus)

Grade 6:

1. - describe outstanding accomplishments of individual Canadians from a variety of backgrounds in the past and the present in such fields as science, medicine, the arts, sports, and politics (e.g., Tom Longboat, Roberta Bondar, Harriet Tubman, Marc Garneau, Reginald Fessenden)

2. - compare the physical environments of different regions of Canada and demonstrate a basic knowledge of Canada's political and economic organization (e.g., describe land forms, climate, resources, imports and exports, transportation; identify provinces, capitals, political leaders)
3. - identify and describe the contributions to the development of Ontario and Canada of diverse groups at various times in history (e.g., describe exploration by Europeans, describe patterns of settlement and land use of Aboriginal, Metis, and European groups)
4. - describe significant events in the past and ways in which they have contributed to the development of Canada (e.g., the establishment of the Red River Settlement; the building of trading posts; the formation of the "underground railroad"; the battle of the Plains of Abraham; early settlement by Europeans) ²⁶

Assuming the outcomes remain the same when a more specific version of "The Common Curriculum: Provincial Standards, Personal and Social Studies: Self and Society, Grades 1-9" is published, as has happened with Mathematics and Language Arts, then it is possible that, for the first time in many years, elementary teachers will be required to teach more history in their classes with official provincial support. On the other hand, if the provincial government chooses not to make the study of history a requirement at the Primary-Junior elementary level, if it allows local Boards of Education to develop their own curricula, and if it depends solely on teacher interest, then it is likely that the subject will continue to be largely ignored.

I am optimistic that the Ministry of Education and a substantial number of educators in Ontario have begun to adjust their thinking with

regard to the nature of the curriculum and the nature of its dissemination. Those in a position to make effective evolutionary and significant revolutionary changes have finally begun to listen to the research-based views of many of the people involved in educational inquiry, and have begun to work together to enact some of the suggestions that they have been making for years. The fact is that research has proven that children do have a need to understand the past. And it is now up to the educational system to provide the opportunity to satisfy that need. Ultimately, a solid awareness and understanding of the past provides children with a frame of reference within which to build their present and their future lives. And if we adults want these young lives to be positive and productive ones, then it is up to us to facilitate this process.

This chapter began by articulating that one subject in the elementary curriculum -history- that is basically concerned with the lives of real people, is a subject that has not been taught in an organized manner, in its own right, in Ontario for a number of decades. We then considered research on the benefits for young children of systematically studying the past. The evidence is that history has the power to enable children to identify their own niche in the world, to develop an understanding of the world they will inherit, and the motivation to become a lifelong learners, interested in investigating, examining, and reading about the past. In addition, the bonus for society as a whole is that the study of history permits children to consider their own lives, needs, and desires in the context of the continuum of time.

Chapter 3

THE RATIONALE FOR CANADIAN STUDIES

AT THE PRIMARY-JUNIOR LEVEL

Historical syntheses depend to a very large degree not only upon the personality of their authors, but upon all the social, religious, or national environments which surround them.... ¹

In an apparent parallel with the situation in other parts of the world over the past twenty years, in Canada Canadian cultural content, if not specifically historical content, has become much more of an integral part of elementary social studies programs. Substantial Canadian content can be found in one form or another, throughout the elementary grades in Ontario. Moreover, with the expectations of the new Ontario "Common Curriculum", that Primary-Junior students attain specific benchmarks in their knowledge and understanding of particular aspects of Canadian history outlined in the document and to be elaborated on in the very near future within the new "Personal and Social Studies: Self and Society" curriculum, teachers will be expected to teach it. Still, there is no denying the deficient nature of Ontario's elementary level Canadian history curriculum as it stands at the moment. In a state of conspicuous transition, it is representative of all the confusion in motives, objectives, and outcomes that significant and governmentally imposed change can bring. Therefore, the central issues to be considered in this chapter are these. What exactly should be the

nature of the focus on Canada and Canadian history in a provincial curriculum? And is there support among the general public for continuing and expanding educational initiatives in this area?

Before looking more closely at what the priorities of the Canadian history studies have been, and should be, in terms of curriculum and materials, it would be useful to provide a well considered rationale and explain why the subject merits study by elementary school students in the 1990s. The whole question over a supposed lack of Canadian content and focus in elementary and secondary programs dates back to the 1960s and 1970s and there were a number of influential publications on the topic. One of the first was a document put out by the Ontario provincial government in 1964. Entitled simply "Teaching History", this document was a summary of the replies to a questionnaire on the subject from school principals, inspectors, and school boards.

This booklet was designed as a response to criticisms like those leveled by a Toronto newspaper. A journalist had charged that, "scarcely a Canadian child or a Canadian adult is aware that the homely, hard-drinking, witty character who designed the nation, made it a reality, tied it together with the first Transcontinental railroad and led it for nearly twenty years, was born on this date in 1815."² Concerned by these charges, and feeling that the school system was being blamed for what many inside and outside the media considered to be an appalling ignorance of Canadian history among Ontario youth, William G. Davis, the Minister of Education at that time, determined that the most suitable people to explore the situation

were the province's educational leaders. The report that followed was essentially a summary of some of the arguments from some of the more thought provoking letters he received.

It serves no immediate purpose here to go into great detail. Suffice it to say, the answers were not completely homogeneous in nature. Hence, Davis considered it difficult to arrive at any firm conclusions without "immediately revealing personal prejudices."³ This may well have been true, but as an elected official he was expected to provide some sort of overall direction and to develop solutions. It is interesting that his conclusion should be somewhat pessimistic in character. He felt that Canadians were at a distinct disadvantage when it came to their chances of truly being able to understand the country's heritage. In fact, Davis considered it "a fact of Canadian life that must be accepted, that Canadian efforts in this regard will always appear second rate."⁴ While I do not agree with the negative flavour of this comment, it does encapsulate much of what even the most enthusiastic Canadian teachers have had to face during the last few decades.

Canada shares its borders with the world's most powerful nation and its sophisticated media machine. The American past has involved the sorts of conflicts that lends themselves to exciting and passionate re-telling. This means that disseminating information about Canada's past in stimulating and meaningful manner is a definite challenge. Yet, distilled as it was down into the two final sentences of the report, the conclusion that Davis came to over thirty years ago still has something useful to say

about how and why an effective investigation of Canada's past in Ontario schools can and should be a part of the school curriculum, even for very young children. There are no sensational catch all solutions here, only simple advice that remains relevant to this day: "The mass media can help, the textbooks can help, the curricula can be improved to meet current inadequacies."⁵ "But, it is refreshing to conclude, in an age of machines, that the crucial factor is still a human being - the teacher."⁶

Although Davis' report may have signalled the beginning of the debate over the need and perceived lack of a systematic Canadian studies program at all levels in the Ontario school system, it was not the major work that compelled the provincial government to take action. A.B. Hodgetts' study of civic education in Canada, entitled What Culture? What Heritage? (1968), the Report of the National History Project, a privately sponsored study initiated by the members of the Governing Body of Trinity College School, Port Hope, served as the catalyst for the many other books and articles on the subject that followed and also the actions taken by provincial governments all over the country.

Hodgetts' book was the result of his two-year investigation of history and social studies in Canadian schools. It was based on student questionnaires, interviews, open-ended essays, school profiles, classroom observations and relevant literature. Hodgetts' basic conclusion was that Canadian history and civics classes as they were still being taught continued "to concentrate on an old-fashioned, purely descriptive account of the three levels of government, with very little analysis or realism."⁷ What

concerned Hodgetts deeply was that :

The psychological or sociological motives for voting, the influence of the mass media, the roles of political parties, the effects of lobbying and pressure groups, the decision making processes, the importance of bureaucracies, power elites and other factors that bring politics to life seldom get into the Canadian studies classroom.⁸

Hodgetts' central recommendation was that a Canadian Studies Consortium be established to implement a new national Canadian studies curriculum developed by the Council of Ministers of Education. In his estimation, immediate action and radical changes were required in the "scope, content, and teaching methods" in the Canadian history and studies programs in all of Canada's elementary and secondary schools.⁹ While his portrayal of the situation may have been overly gloomy, many succeeding authors agreed that something had to be done.

Although his report did not result in the immediate funding, curriculum planning, and changes in the classroom that he had hoped for on a national level, it did have a substantial influence on the federal and various provincial governments of Canada. More specifically, the issues that Davis, Hodgetts, and others had raised led directly to the federal government undertaking the research that was presented in the Symon's Report, or as it was officially known, To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies (1975), through the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Chaired by Professor Thomas H.B.Symons, founding president of Trent University, the commission was established in response to the widely held view in academic circles and

among members of the general public that students were graduating from their various schools and colleges without a solid understanding of the history, government, culture, geography, and social milieu that is Canada.

Ignoring those who argued that the study of these factors could not and should not be confined by particular national borders, they produced a report sufficient in size and scope to finally provide an officially accepted rationale for Canadian studies in the nation's classrooms. The fruit of two years of sober consideration and research by a host of respected Canadian educators at every academic level, their rationale for the importance of developing a more adequate curriculum for Canadian studies at every level in the nation's education system was two-fold. Ideally all Canadian children should be aware of the value and importance of self-knowledge, " the need for Canadians to know and to understand themselves."¹⁰

More pragmatically, the Symon's Report revealed a pattern of neglect among some educators at the university level of the country's needs. The report concluded that all too often scholars and researchers were too slow in acknowledging that Canada, as a nation, had many problems that had to be faced and worked out. Hence, a second important rationale for increased emphasis on Canadian studies was provided by the report: Only when universities recognized that they had a major responsibility to concentrate more effectively on Canadian issues and concerns would we, as a country, be able to deal effectively with the difficult

decisions that would certainly have to be made in the not so distant future.¹¹

Many of those in a position to effect change must have agreed, because universities, colleges, secondary schools and elementary schools all over the country increased their efforts to provide well planned and meaningful Canadian studies programs that were age appropriate. One such program, that was created in Ontario in the late 1970s by the Halton Board of Education and used in a revised form right up to the present day, is one that I am familiar with. It is an excellent example of an attempt to address the recommendations made in the Symon's Report. Beginning in grade 3 (ages 7-9), children focus on the study of their local communities. Unit titles range from "All About Me and My Street", "We Live in a Community", "Special Events We Celebrate in Our Community", "Mapping Our Community", "Solving Problems in Our Community", and "The Natural Environment of Our Community" to "How Do We Run Our Community?" When they reach grades four and five, the focus on Canada as a country becomes more overt with the various units reflecting this. By grades six through eight, the concentration on the actual political, social, and economic history of Canada from the fur trade to the present is more apparent.

Speaking first as a teacher who works with young children every day, I am not entirely satisfied with this state of affairs. It does not recognize the ability of children in the early primary grades (K-2), to benefit from being introduced to some of the more famous people, places, and events in the

country's history. Nor does it give them a fundamental awareness of its geography. Similarly, the grade 3-5 provincial curriculum in place prior to the "Common Curriculum" also had serious shortcomings in the area of content. While it specified a belief that teachers at the elementary level should introduce the study of Canadian history and society to elementary students, it gave very little in the way of actual direction as to what would be appropriate to teach at each grade level. Instead, the Ministry of Education left it up to the individual boards of education in the province to develop and implement curricula based on their general recommendations. This state of affairs was fine as long as the children living in a particular county had dedicated and skillful curriculum designers, who were aware of the need for a systematic continuum across the elementary grades. This is needed if one is to teach such a broad topic as history effectively. Unfortunately, one of the most significant and potentially negative results of this arrangement, and one that the new provincial curriculum has attempted to address, was the lack of even a modest level of standardization.

This is not to say that the new "Common Curriculum" does not allow for a great deal of creativity and latitude in the ways in which certain learning outcomes are achieved by grades 3, 6, and 9. It simply better ensures that children whose individual teachers (or local school board curriculum designers) have, for whatever reason, made little effort to focus on Canadian history or society in past, will now be compelled to do so. Obviously, there is still no guarantee that what is mandated will actually be

done in a dynamic and effective manner. Yet, this new curriculum initiative will ensure that most of the children in the province will at least be introduced to a subject that they may well find enjoyable and meaningful. There is little doubt that such a situation would please many members of the general public. Many people are very concerned about the issues of responsibility and accountability in education and about the quality of instruction, given the high cost.

The analysis of a survey conducted by the staff at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Public Attitudes Towards Education in Ontario 1992, confirms that many of the attitudes perceived by the media as currently being held by the public are, in fact, accurate. In brief, of the random sample of 1000 adults over the age of eighteen and older, 46% felt that the quality of education received by students over the past ten years had deteriorated at the elementary level. In a similar survey conducted in 1990, the proportion stood at only 30%.¹² Also revealing was the fact that, of those who responded in 1992, 73% favoured province-wide tests to assess individual student performance at the elementary level, as opposed to 59% in 1990.¹³ Significant as well for the purposes of this study were the responses to the following question :

Most people agree that students should learn reading, writing and math skills in elementary school. Listed on this card are other possible areas of learning. Which, if any, do you think should receive more emphasis than they do now in the elementary school program?¹⁴

Canadian history and geography was the first choices of 11% of the

respondents, and the combined first and second choice of 21%.¹⁵ Only the use of computers (29%), science (19%), and an awareness of educational requirements for different careers (14%) garnered more support as a first choice.¹⁶ Although Canadian history and geography were more frequently selected by older respondents as their first choice, it should also be noted that across the entire sample they were selected above French (10%), Environmental Studies (7%), Physical Fitness and Health (6%) and The Arts (visual arts, drama, music, and dance) (3%) as first choice for being in need of more emphasis at the elementary level.¹⁷

Interestingly, the results of my own survey were quite similar, with 59% of the respondents agreeing and 18% strongly agreeing that a basic knowledge and awareness of the past is essential to the educational development of young children aged 7 to 10. In the same vein, when confronted with the statement, "Primary-junior level teachers (Grades 2-5) should not be required to teach history in their classrooms", 59% of my respondents disagreed, and 12% strongly disagreed. When faced with the query, "If the elementary timetable was increased by 6 more hours a week, I would allot extra instructional time to: - " the results were once again very much like those of a similar question posed in the O.S.I.E. survey of 1992. Given the opportunity to select three subjects in order of priority from a choice of a) Computers, b) History, c) Values Education, d) Geography, e) Religions, f) French, g) Social Skills, h) Art, and i) Physical Education, 69 people selected computers as their first choice, 53 selected both values education and social skills as their second choice, and 29 selected history

as their third choice. With results such as these and the those from the earlier O.S.I.E. surveys, it is fairly clear that there is strong public support for the teaching of history at the Primary-Junior level.

Even with such support among men and women in all age groups, 23% of these same individuals disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that the younger elementary children of Ontario are receiving an adequate historical education. Of the remainder, 57% were uncertain, 3% provided no response, and only 13% agreed that the current situation was adequate. Also of interest is the fact that not a single respondent was able to strongly agree that the province's Primary-Junior elementary students are currently receiving an adequate historical education. In apparent further support of the study of history at the elementary level, 53% of the respondents disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed with the statement that, "Young children do not need to know about the personalities of major figures in Canadian history. " Another revealing result was the belief among 50% and 17% of the respondents who agreed and strongly agreed respectively, that love of Canada is fostered in young children by the teaching of Canadian history. In spite of what some in the media have reported during the past few years, and despite the somewhat apathetic, ambivalent, and even downright negative attitudes towards history that I have regularly observed among many Primary-Junior elementary teachers of the baby boom generation, interest in history among the general public remains high. In fact, 54% of the respondents in my own survey agreed and 9% strongly agreed that they had a personal interest in history.

Given these responses, one would expect that there would also be a considerable degree of support among members of the general public for changes in curriculum priorities that would promote a more organized, systematic, and concerted provincial effort to introduce young children to the history of Canada. Given the nature of the "Common Curriculum" there is reason to be optimistic. However, it will remain to be seen whether the province will also introduce province-wide testing in order to ensure that the new curriculum will actually be applied in a timely manner at the board and classroom level. This is not to say that the great majority of teachers would not voluntarily introduce the new curriculum if instructed to do so and given some training on effective methods and use of materials. However, making it mandatory will guarantee that those who do not introduce the new curriculum will find it difficult to continue to refuse to change.

Although this may seem overly harsh, accepting change and the new ideas and processes that often accompany it is something that some individuals have to be coerced to undertake. The trial provincial language arts testing that took place in Ontario at the grade three level in the spring of 1995 in the form of a theme-based animal unit, with reading, writing, viewing, and listening components, was a first attempt at this. True, it represented a tentative and initial step. But its very existence, if it achieved nothing else, reminded teachers of the focus on language arts that professional educators and the general public have agreed to be essential. The fact that provincial Ministry of Education representatives met with many of the teachers who carried out the test in the hope of improving it in future

years, indicates that the government still respects the opinions of teachers enough to at least ask for their reactions and advice. Whether they will incorporate this advice into further yearly tests in language arts or history is something that only time will tell. However, since educators and members of the general public are now emphasizing accountability, there is little doubt that some sort of province-wide testing to support the new curriculum direction is likely at a number of grade levels in the near future.

In concluding this chapter, it is appropriate that I provide my own reasons for arguing that increased attention should be given at the elementary level to the study of Canada's past, present, and future. On the one hand, I agree with the sentiments of many authors that the substance of this increased attention to the study of Canada has no place for the type of jingoistic nationalism that divides nations against one another, sometimes causing them to develop feelings of superiority over others. However, at the same time, neither do I see the value of giving the "academic nod" to an entirely global view of the world in the area of history and social studies. At the elementary level, such a course of action could very well leave children without the sort of awareness of national identity that is necessary to enable them to discern the characteristics of other people in countries other than their own.

Any contribution that Canadian teachers can make to the design and dynamic implementation of a reinvigorated Canadian history and social studies curriculum will certainly help us to achieve one of the more desired learning outcomes of elementary education. Our goal is that each

and every child should have a greater knowledge of Canada, its past, and its present, and, in turn, be enabled to better know himself/herself. When Canadian children have the opportunity to cultivate their knowledge of their own country and its unique characteristics, then there is a greater likelihood that they will develop a similar hunger to learn more about the histories and cultures of other nations around the world. In this way an awareness of one's national identity can be used as a positive force, rather than a potentially negative one. Through the consistent use of a balanced curriculum, that combines the investigation of local, provincial, and national history and culture with more abstract and remote international histories and cultures, many elementary school children will begin to become aware of their existence in the context of the realities of the wider world.

This type of Primary-Junior elementary Canadian studies program is much more difficult and challenging to design than the Canadian elementary history courses of the past. Today, the "big question" has moved well beyond the question whether the children in a particular class, school, or board should study Canadian history exclusively, or should include the histories of other nations. Living as we do in our electronically interconnected global village, the challenge for teachers today is to provide their students with a syllabus that accepts Canadian studies and the study of other nations as integral parts of the same broad curriculum. Thus, in the end it appears that if history, either in its own right or as part of a broader Canadian studies curriculum, is ever going to find a permanent place in elementary classrooms, then the development of much more

comprehensive educational goals will be necessary.

Once again, the respondents in my own survey have provided sage counsel. Half of them disagreed and 24% strongly disagreed with the following statement: "The study of history cannot teach values and morals that are very relevant to our modern world." In a rapidly changing post-industrial technologically driven world, continually concerned with losing its way both morally and ethically, it seems very logical that half the population would understand that history could provide children with many lessons and examples to assist them in becoming well adjusted, socially responsible adults. The ability to face change without feeling undue apprehension or demoralization is something that the children of today will have to develop. And the teaching of history at the elementary level can help to make this possible.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORY AND EDUCATING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

I have read somewhere or other,--in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, I think,--that history is philosophy teaching by examples.¹

Viscount Bolingbroke

With the advent of the personal computer and the flood of information to which children are exposed every day from a diverse assortment of sources, it is little wonder some people have begun to question the fundamental objectives of elementary education. As legitimate and understandable as the acknowledgment of this reality may be, it does not necessarily undermine certain aspects of the traditional elementary curriculum that I, for one, regard as being of prime importance in ensuring the well rounded education of young children. One of the central tasks of teaching that every teacher should find the time for, is the preparation of “the student to be an informed and conscientious citizen, to play his part as a responsible member of a democratic society and very likely to assume the role of intelligent leadership.”²

History, like few other subjects, provides unparalleled opportunities to educate children about social responsibility in an interesting and effective manner, and in a manner that does not have to be doctrinaire or narrow minded. The study of history allows students the opportunity to

more fully understand the world. In fact, over the years nearly every country has used the study of history to inculcate students with ideas about the value of responsibility and loyalty to their nations.³ It is no secret that many historians see this use of the discipline as being completely contrary to the effect that it can have in nurturing a sense of “critical judgment and detachment” among students.⁴

There is no denying that, in the past, much of the history taught below the university level has included as a part of its formal mandate the blatant indoctrination of the glory of the nation, and the need for complete loyalty in exchange for the benefits of citizenship. Given this, it should be no surprise that in many countries the study of national history is mandatory in elementary schools. Often, when this has happened, the type of national history teachers have been required to teach has been very partisan in nature, shamelessly promoting their nations’ accomplishments and paying little if any attention to their weaknesses and problems. At its most extreme, such a situation can lead to the jingoistic and nationalistic promotion of one country’s leaders, politics, and origins. And it can also lead to the vilification of other nations .

There is no need to mention specific countries, but examples of this sort of “loyalty gone too far” are to be found throughout history. Perhaps the desire to proclaim the virtues of one’s own nation and to discredit the values and beliefs of other nations that we see as inferior to our own is part of human nature. Assuming for a moment that this has frequently been the case, then it is not difficult to see why the teaching of history has often been

a very difficult task for a teacher who is committed to sharing the genuine values of historical study in as objective, meaningful, and reflective a manner as possible.

This consideration of the effect that nationalism can have on the study of history does not even begin to consider the problems that teachers in communist and fascist countries have had to endure this century. It is one thing to disagree so fervently with a mandated curriculum that one ignores it completely or modifies it to suit one's own sensibilities. However, teachers in such countries often have to use history to teach half-truths or outright lies in order to help strengthen or validate a particular political or social doctrine. It is little wonder that in some nations the discipline of history is regarded with a high level of suspicion and mistrust. Unfortunately, a history lesson under these conditions can easily become almost entirely "an instrument of political propaganda." ⁵

With abuses such as these continuing to be perpetrated around the world, it is easy to see why some historians question the usefulness of employing history as a vehicle for educating children about social responsibility, morals, and values. A perfect example of such a questioning attitude can be found in Geoffrey Partington's book The Idea of an Historical Education (1980). At various points in his book, which is essentially a reflection on the value of teaching history in schools at all levels, Partington voices his opposition to the use of history in schools for the teaching of a "naive moral absolutism." ⁶ Not only does he believe this to be inappropriate use of the discipline, but he is also of the view that it

encourages children to become the passive receptacles of a group of predetermined truths.⁷

After considering the opinions of quite a number of other authors on the subject, Partington distills his philosophy down to one that I not only agree with but also regard as providing a sensible model for educating young children about the virtues of social responsibility. Without denying teachers the chance to reflect on issues and formulate their own conclusions, his suggestions would still allow teachers the ability to impart a number of morals, values, beliefs, and ideas that are almost universally accepted as positive. On this issue, Partington concludes by saying that:

The essential consideration for us is that we do not confuse the good with what has been, what is or what we think will be, which is quite different from suggesting that moral judgment has nothing to do with possibilities, practicalities and constraints.⁸

In other words, Partington's proposed answer to the dilemma is to remember not to fall into the trap of projecting our own personal values, morals, and beliefs onto the past, present, and future and twisting events to suit our wishful thinking. His solution, which would appear to be both workable and productive, is for teachers and children to study the past and as they do reflect upon it and discuss it in a manner that reveals the many possibilities, practicalities, and constraints that nations have had to face in order to remain growing and evolving entities. With such a method as part of their repertoire, teachers can still deal with the values, beliefs, and moral issues that surround any teaching about social responsibility without

neglecting the numerous other sound reasons for teaching young children about the past. The data from my survey confirm that instruction in values and morality in schools is an issue that has a high level of public support. A full 49% of my sample group agreed and 39% strongly agreed that elementary schools cannot ignore morals and values education, and that teaching in this area is one of their most important responsibilities.

Just how this might be accomplished is not as much of a mystery as it may first appear. Developmental psychologists involved in education have argued that a “cognitive-developmental” approach to moral development could provide the basis for a fresh approach to morals education that does not involve the indoctrination of children.⁹

Stimulation of development (of reasoning) as an aim avoids the critical objection to value education that teachers have no right to indoctrinate children with their particular values, which may be different than those of the child and his family. The existence of moral stages indicates that there is progression to greater moral awareness which teachers and researchers can define independent of their particular culture and religious affiliation.¹⁰

At the heart of the cognitive-developmental approach is the conviction that there are two fundamental factors that are necessary for the effective growth of a capacity for moral reasoning in children. First, students must experience some degree of inner conflict about what is the right or moral decision in a particular situation.¹¹ Secondly, exposure to moral reasoning more advanced than their own may well make possible their evolution to the next stage or level of moral reasoning.¹²

At the secondary level, study of the acquisition of morals, values, and beliefs has often taken place through the medium of small group and whole class debates over pre-selected moral issues. In the judgment of Robert L. Selman and Marcus Lieberman, authors of the study "Moral Education in the Primary Grades: An Evaluation of a Developmental Curriculum" (1975), this approach had never been tested before at the primary level. Although they had discovered no conclusive evidence to indicate that age or level of academic development should present any unsurmountable problems, they were well aware that children of different age groups do present different challenges. Taking this into consideration, their experiment "evaluated the effects of a semistructured group discussion approach to moral education on the level of usage of the concept of moral intentionality."¹³

The significance of this study, for those contemplating the introduction of an effective and socially acceptable method of introducing the concepts of social responsibility to young children in a manner that does not involve indoctrination, cannot be underestimated. Selman and Lieberman's subjects were 68 second-grade students, half of whom were from middle-class areas and the other half of whom were from lower-class school districts in the state of Massachusetts.¹⁴ Using sound filmstrips to introduce a variety of moral dilemmas, they had the teachers of the children who were to be tested initiate discussion and debate among the their students. Their results "indicated that children in the experimental condition show higher level usage of the concept of moral intentionality on

post- and follow -up testing than does a control group.”¹⁵ While they openly admitted that the limited number of classrooms and children included in the study meant that the results could not be specifically assigned to the quality of their program rather than the teachers teaching it, their work remains influential nonetheless.

Armed with a healthy awareness that any conclusions must be interpreted within the context of the tentative nature of their research, there are a number of connections that can be made between their findings and any proposed elementary history / social-studies curriculum that includes a social responsibility component. However, Selman and Leiberman warn those planning to use the cognitive-developmental approach to moral development that they need to consider several issues before going forward with any sort of concrete curriculum building. They needed to recognize the following points: 1. That some modification of the moral dilemmas used to generate debate at the middle school and secondary levels will have to be made in order to make them relevant to younger children.¹⁶ ; 2. That the oral presentation of hypothetical dilemmas is not suitable for younger students, who often have difficulty understanding the background details and social facts that must be comprehended if one is to grasp the dilemma presented.¹⁷ Instead, the use of a more visual introduction of the dilemmas to be presented (i.e.; orally presented stories, films, filmstrips and computer simulations) would probably be more successful in holding their attention and in getting the desired points across in a manner that does not involve indoctrination.

The obvious next question is what sort of ingredients should a history / social-studies curriculum designed for young elementary students include, given that teaching about social responsibility is also a central focus? After looking at the articles and books written by many experts, analyzing the responses to my survey, and drawing on my own conversations and observations, it became clear to me that schools are generally regarded as having a fundamental responsibility to assist students in overcoming any feeling that they are powerless to make a difference in the world. As teachers we need to help students to develop a sense of community and a feeling that they can make positive and meaningful contributions to the world outside their classrooms. Given the reality that a significant percentage of adults and children consistently put their own needs far above the collective needs of society as a whole, the responsibility for redressing the situation appears to have fallen to the nation's educators.

It does not take years of thought to realize that to develop a society with a stronger moral foundation will require an improvement in the overall social ethics of children as they interact in large groups, and not simply an improvement in their individual moral conduct. The potential obstacles standing in the way of any attempt to make this possible are immense. The results of one study (1990) in the United States carried out on a continuous basis by Jerry Bachmann since 1975, make it abundantly clear that many of the students he surveyed felt powerless to initiate any types of political or social changes. Among the 17,000 secondary school seniors that he had

surveyed since 1975, Bachmann found the following pattern:

Since 1978 an average of approximately 45 percent of the students polled chose “mostly agree” or “agree” in response to the statement, “I feel I can do very little to change the way the world is today.” And approximately 30 percent chose “mostly agree” or “agree” in response to this statement: “When I think about all the terrible things that have been happening, it is hard for me to hold out much hope for the world.”¹⁸

Anyone who pays close attention during election campaigns knows that young voters are the hardest voters to convince to cast their ballot and that voting patterns have declined among those aged 18 to 24.¹⁹ Surely part of this phenomenon stems from the busy nature of their lives, consumed as they often are with furthering their education or finding employment. Yet, given that similar situations exist in the United States and in some European countries, one wonders whether there is more to this than a simple lack of time or opportunity. These statistics seem, in part, to indicate some basic lack of commitment and an inability to relate in a significant way to the wider community.

A sense of social responsibility - “that is, a personal investment in the well-being of others and the planet” - is not something that we are born with.²⁰ To develop it in children requires time, commitment, and a good dose of faith in their capacity to usually choose right over wrong. Various movements in education over the past few decades have, either directly or indirectly, grappled with society’s desire to instill a strong sense of social responsibility in children. Such initiatives as “cooperative learning, conflict resolution, multicultural education, moral development, global education

and environmental education, community service, and involvement in political and social issues” have all had some positive impact on how children connect with the world around them.²¹

History, to one degree or another, has been applied in most human civilizations to reinforce and intensify social cohesion and patriotism, prized values and moral practices, and certain beliefs and expectations of citizenship that are deemed to be socially acceptable by the majority and by their political representatives. It is true that if the discipline is looked at in a cynical light, that it can probably be proven over and over that history, when taught solely with aims such as these, has frequently been used to indoctrinate. One need only think of the number of countries which have, in the twentieth-century alone, used historical study to further disseminate their particular political and social philosophies and their particular views of specific historical events, people, and ideas. In my own optimistic way, I would like to think that such events have enabled a great many educators and those who design curriculum to isolate various positive principles that can be gleaned from including some study of social responsibility (i.e.; values, morality, empathy, and citizenship) in the elementary history curriculum.

Say what you will about the quality of education today, one need that contemporary elementary teachers are quite adept at addressing is the need for young children to look in a more global way at the decisions they make. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the whole concept of making choices that ensure a life-long commitment to the well-being of

others and the planet is something that has been gaining momentum in Ontario schools over the past ten years. The new Ontario “Common Curriculum” essentially codifies this in the “Personal and Social Studies: Self and Society” component of the document, within which the history-based learning outcomes are divided into four broad topics. These are: 1. Meaningful Participation: The Individual in Society; 2. Understanding Diversity and Evaluating Equity; 3. Understanding Natural and Human Made Systems and; 4. Functioning in the Age of Information.²²

The question that remains is the following - how does this relate to the study of history with young children? While not forgetting the previously mentioned aims and desired outcomes of the study of history, it appears that issues surrounding citizenship, empathy, morality, and values instruction are not simply going to disappear. Therefore, it seems that it is going to be the job of elementary teachers, not only to teach their students about people, places, and events in the past, but to do it in a manner that respects other opinions, views, and beliefs. Although the province has yet to develop a specific curriculum to help achieve the variety of learning outcomes defined under each of the four topic headings under the umbrella of the “Personal and Social Studies: Self and Society” component of the “Common Curriculum”, it appears likely that the issue of social responsibility will not be ignored.

With this in mind, I would propose that instruction in social responsibility is a natural adjunct to the study of history that could very easily be incorporated into the elementary curriculum. Moreover, including

an examination of social responsibility could very well provide an effective answer to those individuals who question the relevance of having young children study the past, and show them its continuing relevance. Though having to justify the existence of history in this way may seem like heresy to some, giving those people who are concerned with tangible results something that is socially desirable as an outcome could be the key to securing a future for history at the elementary level. An analysis of the answers to one of the questions in a recent survey (1992) conducted by staff at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, showed that 46 % of adults questioned believed that the quality of elementary education had deteriorated over the past ten years, as compared to 30% in a similar survey conducted in 1990. The message is clear. Teachers had better be able to justify what they are teaching or their opportunity to do so may very well disappear.²³

It makes very little sense to hold the history or social studies curricula, at any level, completely responsible for teaching students how to be good citizens. Family, friends, and the community at large all share in the responsibility of showing children what it takes to to be a happy well-balanced citizen, able to contribute in a meaningful way to the betterment of all. Nevertheless, the social studies curriculum of which history is a central part plays an essential role in achieving such a goal. It is here that the central tenets of citizenship are discussed and analyzed. Social studies (history) is really the only place in the elementary curriculum where such topics as the discussion of democratic ideals and practices are to be

found.²⁴ It is also here that the processes, sometimes triumphant and sometimes tragic, of Canada's development can be examined. Students can learn about Canadians who had civic vision, like Sir John A. Macdonald. They can be introduced to the idea of participatory democracy and to the often difficult issues and decisions that have to be dealt with in such a system.

The reality is that there are many ways in which children can be encouraged to become aware of their roles and responsibilities as citizens of a democratic nation. Such an approach could provide a framework for the citizenship component of an effective elementary history curriculum. In order to circumvent claims that teaching citizenship is next to impossible, because the goals are often too vague and too open to abuse by those interested in forwarding their own personal philosophical views, what is needed is a specifically designed set of learning outcomes. Such a set of learning outcomes could be developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education or by individual local boards of education. These guidelines would delineate what children would be expected to achieve in their elementary school and secondary school careers.

Curriculum design for a course on citizenship should have as its primary goal the determination of what a senior secondary level student should know about what it means to be a good citizen. Secondly, there should be a continuum of learning experiences from K-12 that would eventually culminate in demonstrations of citizenship among secondary students.²⁵ While by no means an entire curriculum document, the

following six points do summarize what could be the basis for an effective citizenship component when the new elementary history and/or social studies curriculum is designed in order to accomplish the learning outcomes in the "Common Curriculum."

Graduates of our school system, in demonstration of their readiness to hold the office of citizen, are able to:

1. select one pressing public controversy drawn from this month's newspapers, given three of the same, and write an analysis of the issues involved, take a position, argue both for and against the position, and draw at least one historical parallel;
2. respond correctly to at least 95 percent of the items on the citizenship test given to immigrants seeking citizenship;
3. describe the changing diversity and relations of ethnic groups in North America from the 12th century to today, and forecast a number of years (to be announced) hence;
4. given three pressing international conflicts related to economic development, select one and summarize it in writing, addressing the role of climate, resources, and location, and sketch from memory a map of that region of the world;
5. compare and contrast a diverse set of examples of societies, attempting to organize under the democratic ideal;
6. analyze a transcribed excerpt of a discussion of a public issue, distinguishing among factual, definitional, and ethical issues, and judging the quality of each participant's contribution to the discussion.²⁶

To achieve this with senior secondary students would be an exciting challenge for any history teacher. Teachers would have to be able to assume that throughout the educational careers of their students they had been exposed to a sequence of learning experiences in a wide range of areas that included history, geography, and citizenship. There would also have to be an expectation that their students' past teachers had given them

regular opportunities to discuss, analyze, and debate current events. It may seem like a major task to ensure results such as these. But if taken step by step, beginning in Kindergarten, then both students and teachers need have no fears. If young people were given the opportunity to participate in such a program, in twenty years our country might well have a generation of young adults that was better prepared and more committed to being contributing citizens in a democracy than was the one immediately preceeding it.

The quandary over the teaching of ethics (values and morality) at the elementary level has been, and continues to be, one that defies consensus. Those concerned that the type of ethics taught may differ substantially from those taught by parents, or by particular religious denominations, who worry that their children may begin to exhibit undesirable behaviours. There is little doubt that this is significant and legitimate concern for many people. And if publicly funded elementary schools were to support particular lifestyles, religious beliefs, or specific ways of thinking about particular issues I myself would be concerned. I am fully cognizant that there have been occasional instances of individual teachers abusing their trust and instructing their students to think in particular ways about certain individuals, nations, or races. However, even so, such isolated instances and/or other well intentioned concerns about possibly upsetting a particular religious or cultural group, must not be allowed to prevent the formal study of values and ethics and, in turn, relegate them to only incidental “teachable moments”.

It is clear that the effective teacher of history cannot really avoid the subject of ethics. Issues of morality and values abound in history, because history is almost entirely about people. It examines what they have done and why. It questions their intentions, and looks at the consequences of human action and the degree to which these consequences are considered good or evil.²⁷ History is essentially about our humanity and about the inhumanity that we have shown others across the ages. It cannot escape debate of ethical issues. Even though history should not dictate what is ethical, it should provide another avenue for enabling children to formulate their own personal codes of ethics. I do not propose that certain specific values or morals be presented to young children in school. Nor do I propose that they must become committed to these. However, as teachers, we should assist them in understanding that values and morals do help to determine human actions and decisions. History and the study of the past provides an excellent opportunity to show children that life is full of choices, and that accepting and acting on certain values and morals is likely to have specific consequences.²⁸

Defining the exact direction any history or social studies based ethics program should take at the elementary level is difficult to determine. However, the most reasonable course of action, in terms of increasing the odds of success, would be to provide a curriculum that begins by determining some of the outcomes that educators would like to see exhibited in their students by the end of grade twelve. It should grant students the opportunity (in a sequential manner) to discuss, debate,

experience, and write about issues relating to morals and values. Finally, with guidance that is constructive rather than intrusive, it should assist students in making their own decisions about what is right or wrong.

The ethics-based outcomes expected of a senior secondary school student might look something like the following:

1. distinguishes between fact and value judgment
2. identifies values on which human actions are based;
3. identifies sets of values that are an integral part of beliefs, philosophies, cultures, etc.;
4. recognizes the holding of a particular value can determine action and lead to particular results;
5. identifies the extent of choice available to an individual in a given situation;
6. recognizes the range of factors (i.e.; past experience, present situation) which help determine and reinforce an individuals' choice of values.
7. recognizes the complexity of contemporary situations;
8. identifies bias in reported materials (e.g. newspapers, T.V. programmes);
9. identifies gaps which exist in reported evidence;
10. uses reasoning rather than emotive language in discussion;
11. makes measured judgments of contemporary situations;
12. takes action, in everyday situations, in relation to and not against available evidence.²⁹

Human relationships continually involve issues relating to values, morality, and conflict. But the degree to which this is the case varies from individual to individual, and is affected by a myriad of factors. In fact, it is generally accepted that a person's values and the level of his/her personal morality consistently affect the way in which he/she reacts to critical issues and conflicts in his/her own life.

It is patently clear that teachers have to become more aware of the

power of the values and morals held by children. They also need to have a more complete sense of their own systems of morality and values, so that they will be able to discuss these issues wisely and successfully with their students. A teacher's job is not to inculcate a specific set of values or view of morality, but, instead, to provide opportunities and activities that allow students to explore their own. Ultimately, the usefulness of examining questions of morality and values associated with particular historical events, issues, and people is that these occasions provide children with opportunities to evaluate them based on their own experiences. Over time, children are then better able to appreciate the fact that different circumstances often require different decisions and solutions.³⁰ It is at this point that the study of history can have a substantial impact on students, as it encourages them to think critically, like a true historian.

Empathy is commonly referred to as "the ability to put oneself in someone else's shoes", or, in a more formal sense, to "reciprocate positions (i.e. (a) to view the world from the situation of another person; and (b) to conceive how he would see things were he in your shoes.)".³¹ The development of a higher level of empathy in students in the form of good citizenship, morality, and values is a learning outcome that many educators hold dear. The acquisition of historical empathy enables one to appreciate the situations or viewpoints of others in the past.³² Empathy is not always an easy thing to impart to young children. But it is, nevertheless, worth the attempt. To nurture empathy teachers must provide dynamic presentations of the evidence and opportunities for students to role play, since

empathizing with others differs a great deal from sympathizing with and identifying with others.

The study of history makes it possible for children to interact with evidence, to assume the roles of individuals who lived in the past, and to experience a measure of what they did, while all the while remaining detached enough to analyze the outcomes of the actions that their historical counterparts took. For instance, my own experience studying “Canada’s Native Peoples” with Grade 4 students tells me that endeavouring to learn native crafts and to grow healthy bean and squash plants was far more challenging for them than they had at first assumed. They learned from this activity that Canada’s native people were far from slow-witted. In addition, through this small task they also gained a new respect for aboriginal people.

If the development of historical empathy is going to make any sort of difference in contributing to the evolution of social responsibility in children, it needs to be part of the history / social studies curriculum from Kindergarten through to Grade 12. The form that it takes must take into account the ages and abilities of the children involved. Given specifically defined age and ability-appropriate activities to pursue, empathy training can have very positive effects on young children for the following reasons:

1. it is a socially useful skill to have in a world often dominated by a “me first” attitude;
2. it allows one to understand the possible thoughts, feelings, uncertainties, and emotional pain of others if particular actions are taken;

3. it helps make it possible for children to make inferences about how they might act if faced with similar situations in their own lives;
4. it can enable children to see that there is usually the possibility of choice in most circumstances, that they do have control over many of the choices that they make, and that an awareness of potential choices can lead them to more readily respect (if not agree with) the opinions of others.³³

The development of such attitudes can frequently be inspired by such concrete activities as role playing, discussion, and dramatic simulations. Such a course of action is made easier by the fact that many elementary teachers are well versed in these techniques and already use them on a daily basis in their classrooms.

One of the primary responsibilities of every educator is to inspire students to look positively towards the future; we hope for a future in which, individually and collectively, we do more, are more respectful of others, live in a more positive way, and are fair to others. Children need the guidance of parents, other family members, friends, and teachers if they are to develop into the happy, confident, capable, and contributing members to the sort world we want to help them create. There remain those individuals in both the secular and religious worlds who are equally against the teaching of values and morality in publicly funded schools. They are either not aware of or refuse to accept the value of having children contemplate their social responsibility to the world around them. Notwithstanding claims like those of the eminent twentieth-century British playwright George Bernard Shaw, who wrote that "The vilest abortionist is

he who would attempt to mould a child's character", it is clear that there are children who have never been adequately taught right from wrong.³⁴ As a teacher, I have a responsibility to expose children to such ideas as truth, justice, beauty, goodness, respect, self-control, dependability, and consideration. Given this, is it possible for us, as professional educators, to do it in a way that does not promote one set of values or form of morality above another?

Not only do I believe that it is possible, but my own observations tell me that a great many elementary teachers are already doing this successfully in their classrooms. One of the most important contributions of early historical / social studies education is self-knowledge. As R.G. Collingwood, the influential British historian, stated in 1946,

Knowing yourself means knowing, first, what it is to be a man; secondly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; thirdly, knowing what it is to be the man you are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; since nobody knows what he can do until he tried, the only clue to what man can do is what man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.³⁵

This is not to say that the use of history to deal with concepts such as citizenship, ethics, and empathy has not been abused in the past to promote ideas only beneficial to the individuals or nation promoting them. All one has to do is look at examples such as Nazism, Soviet-style Communism, and extreme Nationalism in order to see how even simple ideas can be used to marginalize and hurt others.

Even so, I have faith, as should the provincial government, in the

ability of Ontario's elementary teachers to use the medium of historical study to effectively define values and moral attitudes, and to place them in historical context. All they need now is a commitment from the province to develop an elementary history curriculum that is both interesting and meaningful. This curriculum should allow teachers and students to interact, and it should emphasize the cultivation of social responsibility.

CHAPTER 5
OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:
A POSSIBLE FRAMEWORK FOR AN ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM

...history deals not only with the lives of great individuals;...it may be said to consist of the sediment of the lives of millions of smaller men and women who have left no name, but who have made their contribution.¹

The centralization of the Ontario provincial elementary school curriculum has begun with the “Common Curriculum” (1995). This marked the end of a thirty-year period during which teachers in Ontario’s Elementary schools have had a significant degree of autonomy in the selection and implementation of their curricula. Of course there have always been general Ontario provincial curriculum guidelines developed for various grade levels, but it has often been left up to the boards of education during the past few decades to develop the specific subject-based curricula that bring these rather general guidelines to life. One area for which specific objectives and outcomes, to give life to the more general outcomes mentioned in the “Common Curriculum” document, have not yet been defined is the field of social studies, which includes both history and geography.

I will, therefore, endeavour to fill in the gap and to suggest an

elementary curriculum framework for the study of history among children ages 5-10 (grades K-5) that is both practical and relevant, and that addresses the objectives and learning outcomes mandated by the "Common Curriculum". Making suggestions for strengthening an elementary school history curriculum that is presently almost non-existent across the Primary-Junior grades demands that one take a number of routes of investigation. To begin with, it means addressing the fact that many elementary teachers have had only limited amounts of historical training. Hence, they may have very little knowledge of how to teach effectively what can be a fairly demanding academic subject. Secondly, it means breaching a decades old barrier - the aforementioned philosophies and opinions opposing the teaching of history in its own right to young children. Some teachers have internalized these ideas over the years. With their own negative memories of the boredom that was associated with the memorization of events, names, and dates during their own schooling, teachers were obviously not going to subject their students to the same. Even those teachers who recognize the genuine value and excitement children can experience when looking at the past often do not attempt to teach it in detail in their own classrooms, because of a perception that they are not qualified enough to do so. Thirdly, it means examining current provincial curriculum guidelines and recommending appropriate syllabi, objectives, and learning outcomes to successfully complement them. Finally, it means evaluating and suggesting some effective methods, techniques, and resources.

The recent Ontario “Common Curriculum” specifies key learning outcomes that have to be achieved in all academic areas by the end of grades three, six, and nine. The obvious reason for the present trend away from a focus on goals and objectives to learning outcomes is that learning outcomes can be more easily evaluated using standardized tests should the province ever choose to do so (i.e.; such as the test of language arts skills piloted in grade-three classrooms in 1994-1995). It is the hope of the Ontario Ministry of Education that, by increasing the focus on creating a mandatory set of learning outcomes for each grade level and subject area (rather than simple objectives), that it will give the public the impression of increased levels of teacher responsibility for student success. Whether this will in fact be one of the results remains to be seen. However, if administrators and teachers take the time to really look at the “Common Curriculum”, another thing that it makes possible, and upon which it actually insists, is that by the end of grades three and six students have a fundamental grasp of a number of basic historical concepts

As was discussed in chapter two, these concepts include such broad ideas as ethnic diversity, equity, citizens’ rights and responsibilities, and the experiences, traditions and contributions of various ethnic groups and individuals to our schools, our communities, and our national history.² One particularly positive aspect of the new Ontario “Common Curriculum” is that it still allows for a high degree of flexibility among teachers with regard to how they are going to achieve these outcomes by grades three and six, and with regard to what sort of scheduling and classroom

curricula they should create to ensure satisfactory results.

The following is a sequential and a very conceivable curriculum pattern that could provide an effective framework for accomplishing the learning outcomes in history laid down in the "Common Curriculum" from K-12:

- K- Self, School, Community, Home
- 1- Families
- 2- Neighbourhoods
- 3- Communities
- 4- Provincial History, Geographic Regions
- 5- Canadian History
- 6- World Cultures, Western Hemisphere
- 7- World History and/or Geography
- 8- Canadian History
- 9- Civics and/or World Cultures
- 10- World History
- 11- Canadian History
- 12- Canadian Government ³

It is easy enough to come up with this sort of basic skeletal syllabus that focuses on ensuring that children understand the concepts that are deemed essential by the provincial government. However, it is another matter altogether to provide teachers with adequate means for making it work.

This particular man was a whirlwind of a teacher. Feared by the unprepared but respected by all, John Giandomenico expected as much

from his students as he did himself. Yet the great majority of his students relished the challenges that he provided and the things that they learned. He was rarely flustered. If anything ever came close to shaking Mr. Giandomenico it was the sheer breadth of the content he had to cover. There was a great deal of history to be covered when John Giandomenico taught me in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and a great deal more has taken place in the world since then. The reality is there will always be more history that could be covered than any teacher could ever possibly teach. Still, this is no reason for teachers to let themselves become so overwhelmed by the task at hand that they fail to expose to their students at least to a rudimentary historical education. The reality, however, is that even today there are students who are proceeding through the province's elementary school system at the Primary-Junior level who have never been introduced to the study of history. One female secondary school respondent to my survey confirmed this when she pointed out her belief that, "...they should start teaching about history in elementary school more, because once in high school you only have to take the class if you want to."⁴ Another respondent noted: "If you don't have much experience with the subject then you won't want to take it."⁵

Another objective of this chapter is to provide an outline that the province or local school boards could utilize as a basic history curriculum for Primary-Junior elementary children. Any similarity to past or existing curriculum at the provincial or local level is not accidental. There is much included in them that , with modification and refinement, can be

successfully used again. Even so, two other issues need to be dealt with first. To begin with any proposal that considers academic content needs to recognize the variations in the approximate intellectual and developmental readiness levels of children between the ages of five and ten.⁶ Their ability to comprehend complex relationships and concepts must be considered before any work is attempted with them. What better a way to “turn off” even younger children than to expect them to be able to make sense of issues that even secondary school students would find challenging.

Secondly, any new elementary school history curriculum needs to make it abundantly clear to teachers that no one is going to expect them to cover all of the material that they will see listed on the syllabus. Not only would this put unnecessary pressure on both teachers and students, but in a practical sense this goal would be almost impossible to achieve. One of the central objectives of history teachers at the elementary level is to develop interested, enthusiastic individuals who, provided with meaningful and well thought-out-activities, will become life long-learners who are excited about history. No teacher is considered a failure if he/she does not complete every unit or tackle every issue. What school administrators (and much of the general public) are looking for is the development of students with the ability to make intelligent and informed decisions, rather than having them plough through reams of material without being given the opportunity to ponder its implications.

With the aforementioned points in mind, what follows is a slightly modified set of historical learning outcomes that the Department of

Education and Science expects children in Great Britain to be familiar with by the ages of 8 and 10. These would translate most satisfactorily to the Ontario situation without the province having to spend millions of dollars in order to come up with something similar. If one remembers the framework of topics suggested previously (see p.84) to best address the ability, needs, and interests of children K-12, the outcomes listed below could tie in most satisfactorily with those topics listed for children up to the end of grade five: K-Self, School, Community, Home; 1-Families; 2-Neighbourhoods; 3-Communities; 4-Provincial History, Geographic Regions; 5-Canadian History.

BY THE AGE OF 8:**REFERENCE AND
INFORMATION FINDING SKILLS:**

- Can scan pictures and simple books
- Can read simple accounts
- Can use page references

LANGUAGE AND HISTORICAL**IDEAS:**

- Can use terms commonly used in stories of past (hero, heroine, king, queen, pioneer, settler).
- Begins to use words such as "the past", "myth", "true"

**SKILLS IN
CHRONOLOGY:**

- Can use basic vocabulary (ie; "now", "long ago", "then", "after")
- Begins to understand the chronology of the year (ie; seasons); and begins to record on a wall chart sequence of stories heard.
- Can put some historical pictures & objects in sequence

USE AND ANALYSIS**OF EVIDENCE:**

- Can describe the main features of concrete evidence of the past (ie; pictures, artifacts, buildings) and hypothesize as to their use.
- Is familiar with the question "How do we know?"

EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING:

- Can say, write or draw what they think it felt like in response to some historical story that has been heard.

ASKING HISTORICAL QUESTIONS:

- Begins to become aware of basic historical questions, eg.;
- What happened and when?
- Why did it happen?
- How do we know?

SYNTHESIS AND COMMUNICATION USING BASIC IDEAS:

- Using memory and recall, can describe orally and in writing some past events or story in narrative or dramatic form.
- Can make a pictorial representation

BY THE AGE OF 10: REFERENCE AND INFORMATION-FINDING SKILLS:

- Knows which books supply information (ie; topic, encyclopedias).
- Can use contents, index, and glossaries of books;and can read passages to select information relevant to a topic.
- Can use visual sources (ie; pictures, filmstrips,slides,artifacts);and oral sources(talk,tape,radio).
- Can list main points from one or more sources using teachers' questions.

SKILLS IN CHRONOLOGY:

- Knows terms BC and AD.
- Understands "generation" in a family context.
- Knows sequence of prehistoric,ancient times,middle ages, and modern.
- Can put a wide range of historical pictures in sequence.
- Can make a simple individual sequence chart.

LANGUAGE AND HISTORICAL IDEAS:

- Can use an increasing number of terms that arise from topics studied (ie; family,community,neighbourhood, and province).
- Knows words such as "history", "archaeology".

USE AND ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE:

- Can define in simple terms "source" and "evidence".
- Can understand and make deductions from documentary as well as concrete evidence (ie; pictures,artifacts).

- Can describe the main features of simple maps, diagrams, or graphs.
- Increasingly asks the question “How do we know?”

EMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING:

- Can make a simple imaginative reconstruction of a situation in the past and describe how it appeared to the people in it, using the evidence available to draw, model, dramatize, write, or tell the story.

ASKING HISTORICAL QUESTIONS:

- Becomes used to asking of any historical period studied questions about the main features of everyday life, ie;
- When and how did people live and how did they clothe /feed themselves?
- What was the available technology?
- What were the life-styles of different social and gender groups?
- What were the differences between now and then?

SYNTHESIS AND COMMUNICATION USING BASIC IDEAS:

- Can describe orally and in writing some past events or situations, recognising the similarities and differences with today.
- Can present information in a graph, diagram, or map.
- Can support an account or conclusion with some evidence.⁶

It is exciting to imagine a primary classroom in which all of these proposed objectives and learning outcomes have been implemented.

However, in order to truly fulfill any expectations for curriculum reform at least one of the following, the Ontario Ministry of Education, the province's school boards, or the schools themselves, must first:

- clearly delineate the primary objectives and learning outcomes for the teaching of history; (something that, with the "Common Curriculum", they have already begun to do)
- set aside more instructional time for the study of history;
- begin the study of history in pedagogically sound ways at the elementary level and then extend this progress in the intermediate and senior grades (i.e.; grades 6-12)
- acquire better history resources and texts;
- ensure timely professional development for staff and provide training to assist teachers in learning or strengthening their understanding of the types of instructional methods and approaches needed in order to carry out the new history program.⁷

Whether they follow an environmental studies approach, a social studies approach, or a solely historical approach, teachers at the elementary level need to ensure that the methods and approaches that they utilize are sound and include an effective sequence of learning outcomes. This can be accomplished through such methods and approaches as projects, imaginative writing, use of source material, dramatization, discussions of issues, field trips, as well as some teacher-directed Socratic learning.⁸ Given the fact that the historical topics that children will study in their primary-junior years will generally be local and/or provincial in nature, teachers will be able to identify a variety of places

of historical interest at a short distance from their schools.

While a curriculum should provide teachers with clear instructions on what is to be learned and suggest a number of potential ways of teaching, it should not be so rigid as to exclude experimentation, supplementary study, and the possibility of capitalizing on “happy accidents” that occur so frequently in Primary-Junior classrooms.⁹ Every curriculum has its weaknesses, but if it is just a framework, then all that it should really do is provide clear expectations as to what should be taught and in broad terms how this might be done. As the authors of the British Department of Education and Science document History in the Primary and Secondary Years (1985) put it, “in practice, when curriculum decisions have had to be taken in the classroom, it has often functioned as the arbiter of good sense, an impetus in a worthwhile direction.”¹⁰

With this in mind, the following provides a sample scheme of work for a portion of the topics listed earlier for children in kindergarten through to grade five:

<u>FOCUS:</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>	<u>SUGGESTIONS, RESOURCES, ETC.:</u>
(GRADE)		
<u>K-Self, School, Community, Home</u>	School tour; visits by community representatives (ie; police, ambulance, firefighters); an age-appropriate examination of the shared components of a school, community, etc.	Artifacts and other materials available from any number of community service organizations. Use the Ireland House or Spruce Lane farm at Bronte Creek Provincial Park ,(both in Burlington, Ont.), to illustrate home life in the past. The Ontario Agricultural Museum in Milton, Ont.

and how individuals fit into them

or Westfield Heritage Village in Flamborough, Ont. provide excellent examples of community life in Ontario's pioneer past.

1-Families

Determine the elements of a family. Compare modern families with families in Ontario's pioneer past. What are similarities and differences? Do some personal family research and construct a family tree.

Keep contact with the child's known world, ie; use the child's family as a starting point. Deal with specifics, and avoid giving only a general overview of the aspects of a family. What is it like to be in a family? Why do we all need our families? The presentation of the topic should be highly visual, and small cooperative group activities could be very helpful in fostering understanding. A willing member of the family, such as grandparent, could be chosen to identify the necessary information to construct a family tree.

2-Neighbourhoods

Include a study of a local neighbourhood landmark such as church, shopping mall, or community centre. Focus on what defines a neighbourhood, and some of the individuals and places unique to one. Carry out some research into what the neighbourhood looked like in the past (ie; 20, 50, 100 years ago).

Motivate students to write a narrative story about the lives of 3 or more fictional characters who lived in their neighbourhood 100 years ago. Numerous books can be found in most libraries on neighbourhoods. A time line showing the development of the neighbourhood would be useful. Try finding old newspaper articles that could shed some light on the character of the neighbourhood in the past. Invite local neighbourhood representatives (ie; councillor, mayor, minister, pharmacist, doctor,) to come talk about the roles they play in the life of the neighbourhood.

3-Communities

Any look at a community is an exciting voyage of discovery. Begin by defining what a community is; its parts, places, other items we might expect to find there. Again, some research into the nature of the community 20,50, and as far back as

Stress the human factor at this age. Community centres, hospitals, hall, factories, newspapers, etc., can all be investigated and / or daily operations of a community. Maps and photographs, both old and new, can be studied and will provide valuable context when looking at the past with young children

100 years ago would not only interest students but provide them with the context necessary to better understand where there community has been, where it is now and what it may look like in the future.

There are excellent opportunities for public speaking on some aspect of the community . This, of course, would provide the impetus for a teacher to demonstrate how one should go about preparing and carrying out a successful speech.

4-Provincial history, Geographic regions

There are many different directions a study of historical Ontario could take, (ie; famous events and people) ; and excellent resources for each of these topics are readily available. One effective way to go would be to pick a time period and a topic such as the “Pioneers” and look at each of the directions within the general historical timeframe provided by the topic.

An excellent chance to begin with fiction: ie; Little House on the Prairie, Laura Ingalls Wilder; Maria Plain and Tall, Patricia MacLachlan. The Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto, Ont., and the Joseph Brant and Ireland Houses in Burlington, Ont., among others are all valuable sources of information on the subject and well worth a visit. At this age concentrate on empathetic response and relate what they are learning to what they already know. Ensure that they understand the basic time framework and context of the era they are studying. Tie in the mapping work with the routes taken by the pioneers to get their various homes and highlight the names of each of the provinces, territories and the capital cities that the pioneers played a part in building.

5-Canadian History

A potentially overwhelming subject. Once again, emphasize the human factor at this age. There is no need to get into the evolution and eventual Confederation process too heavily. Instead, focus on some of the more well-known individuals involved in the context of the of the era. It is physically impossible for both students and teacher to cover Canada’s nearly 130 years of history let alone the period before Confederation.

Opportunities for honing such academic skills as seriation, sequencing, making inferences, and debating are excellent. A plethora of visual and written resources are available on Canada even at this grade level. They are too numerous to mention. Films on Ottawa, the Parliament Buildings, John A. Macdonald, the various wars, etc., can help bring the topic alive. The link with Geography is, once again, strong and can be used in a number of ways. For example, one can create a national map that delineates

The goal should be to introduce their students to some of the more famous, (and infamous) people, events, places, and issues that have shaped Canada in a manner that is meaningful and exciting and that leaves them eager to learn more.

when each of the provinces joined Confederation. Key focus here should be to present information in a dynamic manner (ie; drama, cooperative group research, projects, public speaking, creative writing), so the topic is meaningful for students.¹¹

Clearly, such learning outcomes for history cannot be achieved in the very limited amount of time allotted to history / social studies in many schools today. Above and beyond the need for more time, these outcomes require a thoroughly considered curriculum, developed either by the province or by school boards. Bringing history back as a subject in its own right at the elementary level would, no doubt, be controversial in some circles. Would children not get bored with all of those dates, events, and names? Are they really ready to grasp the concepts needed in order to understand the past? As was pointed out earlier, the answer for many teachers and administrators, looking back on the unsatisfying nature of their own elementary history careers, has been an unequivocal “no”. However, that was yesterday, and given the research evidence that I have already discussed, and will discuss further in chapter six, it is evident that young children can comprehend much more than they have been given credit for in the past.

Parents, teachers, and librarians have long known the power of good literature (i.e., biographies, myths, legends, folk tales, and historical

narratives) to unleash the imaginations of young children.¹² In my own classes over the years, I have found that , if I have been examining a theme and have chosen to read a specific book on the topic at hand, then many of my students will invariably want to borrow similar books (or even the same one) on their next visits to the library. The message here is three-fold. First, children can be influenced in a positive manner by teachers who provide them with high quality learning experiences. Second, actively involving children in the experiences of people who lived in the past can broaden their view of the world, and take them beyond their own reality. Finally, history provides children with occasions to view the world through eyes other than their own, and can provide them with the foundations for undertaking historical analyses.¹³

In creating a history curriculum for primary and junior students, those who design it need to consider how Canadian and world history should be introduced. They need to ensure that, not only do students know about Canada's past, but also that they know about our past in terms of our interdependence with many other nations. Teachers are frequently faced with a seemingly endless choice of resources, rapidly changing government directives and directions, and little consensus from any quarter about necessary goals, objectives, and learning outcomes. Hence, those elementary teachers who choose to teach their students about the past still need to arrive at their own conclusions about how best to present the material, and the best sorts of teaching methods and techniques for doing so. Perhaps this is desirable, especially in the case of teachers who are

well versed in the the subject. But would not some carefully developed curriculum better serve more children in the long run? Admittedly, many teachers would resist any sort of program that was forced upon them. But if they were given the chance to learn about it, to learn how to present it effectively, and to learn about the benefits for young children from learning about the past, then I am convinced most would be enthusiastic. Change of any kind is never easy and myths hard to overcome. But most teachers, if they are truly committed to serving children, are usually flexible and open to considering new ideas.

CHAPTER 6
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT: SOME IDEAS FROM THE EXPERTS

**Ignorance plays the chief part among men,
and the multitude of words; but opportunity
will prevail.¹**

Diogenes Laertius

There is little question that history, as a subject in its own right, has been on the defensive in elementary schools over the past two decades. It has been regarded by many as involving the more traditional and outdated teaching techniques. Whether there is any truth in this perception matters little. Perception is as good as truth to many people. One of the results has been that fewer and fewer young children have studied history. However, there have been some educators who have upheld the value of an historical education even for young children. These voices were few and far between in the 1970s, dominated as it was by the the ideas of the first wave of the post-war generation. Having equated the study of history with the endless copying and regurgitation of notes and the memorization of seemingly endless numbers of names, dates, people, and events, many of them, when they became teachers, simply did not want to subject their students to a similar experience.

Whether accurate or not, the opinions of the so-called post-war “baby boomer” generation were influential during this period. One of the

results was a rapid and almost complete disappearance of the study of history from Ontario's elementary schools. Having been an elementary student during the 1970s, I can vouch for the accuracy in this argument. Even so, there were some dynamic and enthusiastic elementary teachers who believed in the value of history and, as a result, opposed the trend because they were aware of the positive effects exposure to the past could have on their students.

This state of affairs appears to have been reflected in the world of academic research and discussion. Only rarely does one find any articles or books championing the cause of history at the elementary school level. This said, there were a few people who conducted research and presented arguments that have ultimately resulted in many educators and parents arguing for renewed attention to history and to the past in our schools. Perhaps this stems from a genuine belief in the positive aspects of studying history or from listening to media reports on the so-called "historical illiteracy" among Ontario children. On the other hand, they may realize that history, although it may have been poorly taught in the past, is a subject that is important if children are to have regard for anything more than the distractions of the present.

Drawing on the results of my own survey, it is clear that if the general public shared the view held by some teachers that children between the ages of five and ten are too young to learn about the past, they do not share it now. When asked to respond to the statement, "Teaching about history should only begin at the Secondary level, because events

are so complex that young children cannot understand them”, 89% of the sample group disagreed, with 16% disagreeing strongly (see “Appendix C”, #31). Likewise, when invited to respond to the comment, “Current world events and recent history are too disturbing to be taught to young children aged 7 to 10”, 76% disagreed, with 12% disagreeing strongly (see “Appendix C”, #29). While the views of this sample of just one hundred individuals can by no means be considered a definitive survey of current public opinion on the subject, they do provide useful insights. What these people appear to be saying is that children between the ages of seven and ten should not be underestimated, and that, if taught in an age-appropriate manner, they are more than capable of learning about and understanding many of the people, events, issues, and ideas of the past. In fact, the great majority of the respondents (82%) disagreed, and 16% strongly disagreed, with the statement that, “Teaching children about history only confuses them because there is so much to memorize” (see “Appendix C”, #30). These results would appear to support the argument that children are not as easily confused by history as some adults suppose, and that they can often understand a variety of perspectives on events.

One of the earliest and most influential of the new wave of supporters of history in elementary schools were Jeanette B. Coltham and John Fines. They were both British, lecturers of history at the University of Manchester and at Bishop Otter College, Chichester, respectively. Coltham’s own pamphlet, The Development of Thinking and the Learning of History (1971), and a pamphlet that she wrote in collaboration with John

Fines that was published the same year entitled, Educational Objectives for the Study of History: A Suggested Framework , represent partial attempts to erase the misguided conviction held by many teachers that the place of history was only at the senior secondary and university level. Coltham asserts that, if teachers can ensure that their students understand that evidence is usually incomplete and biased, if they de-emphasize any generational gaps that may be created when dealing with issues and events beyond students' realms of experience, and if they help students to learn some of the common terms used by historians, then they may well reach and motivate their students.² Coltham also reminds teachers that, if they are contemplating the study of history with young children, then they need to select their material carefully. Coltham repeats the age-old teaching maxim that when the "teacher is enthusiastic, children are likely to be interested provided that the adult's enthusiasm does not blind him to all the features of the learner's situation."³ Her observation, borne out time and time again in my own classroom, is that "if, by use of their interests and through work aimed to develop their understanding, children gain satisfaction from their study, then the urge to continue is kept alive and motivation is strengthened - and what more can teachers of history ask!"⁴

She points out that there is really no great mystery surrounding how to teach history effectively to young children. Determine their interests, prepare them for the sort of language and thought processes that are unique to the study of history, and endeavour to present the content in as dynamic a manner as possible, while allowing for maximum participation.

Show them that history is relevant in their own lives by allowing them to research it, write about it, and explore it.

In her pamphlet written with Fines, Coltham attempts to formulate a set of general objectives, skills, and learning outcomes. Not intended to accompany any particular curriculum they are essentially broad philosophical statements about what the authors would like to see emphasized when history is taught.⁵ To list and comment on them all would be impractical here, since their significance really lies in the authors' belief that there needs to be a set of widely agreed upon, credible, and flexible standards in place. When viewed in the context of the open nature of education in the 1970s, with its tendency to focus on the ridding of the system of the supposedly rigid and constraining subject divisions of the past, their two pamphlets must have appeared to some to be a vain attempt to restore an already "terminally ill" subject within a system that was itself in dire need of radical change. With the benefit of hindsight, however, the importance of their ideas is now obvious. Committed to the importance of the studying the past even by young children, they were one of the first of a group of researchers to lay out some concrete proposals for what history should be attempting to achieve in order to remain a vital and relevant school subject.

Although Coltham and Fines were not the only ones pondering the future of history during the early 1970s, it is their work, so often mentioned and quoted in later volumes on the issue, that appears to have set many historians and researchers thinking about the reasons for the decline in the

subject. The slow but steady string of books that have followed usually endeavour to provide teachers with some specific methods for making the study of the past more than the dissemination of a collection of facts. Representative of the first wave of these self-help books, that seem to have been designed to appeal to elementary and secondary history teachers in the early 1970s, are Alan Jamieson's Practical History Teaching (1971) and W.H. Burston's (ed.) Handbook for History Teachers (1972). We do not know, however, whether the warning given by Coltham and Fines of the the need for historians to concern themselves more directly with the continued health of the subject at the elementary and secondary levels influenced Jamieson and Burston directly, or if they too had begun to notice the move in many schools boards away from the teaching of history.

Jamieson's work is a useful analysis of his feeling that history as a subject was being put on the defensive. What is interesting about his book is that he admits that history as a subject had some fundamental problems. It was, "becoming more and more difficult to justify the continuation of history where formal traditional methods of teaching prevail."⁶ Essentially, he questions the value of having newly graduated teachers require their students to copy, memorize, and regurgitate material. He blames many experienced teachers for giving history the reputation for being staid, and overly structured. He points to Plato's advice as being of particular value for reaching young children: "Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion obtains no hold on the mind. So do not use compulsion but let early education be a sort of amusement."⁷ Thus, his book, based on his

own viewpoints but drawing on data from a variety of other sources, provides a practical blueprint for teachers. No long soliloquies on his philosophy of history here. Instead, he examines the strengths and weaknesses of traditional classroom methods and champions the use of research projects, local history, artifacts, and primary sources in order to motivate young children to want to know more about the past. He provides chapters on how to find local sources of information, how to make use of one's local museum in program planning, how to carry out productive field studies, and how to provide specific activities to make history more of an active endeavour for young children. The significance of Jamieson's work is that he was one of the first to take the concerns of people like Coltham and Fines and to equip teachers with the means of addressing them in practical ways in their own classrooms.

Burston's handbook, though similar in intent, is even broader in scope, featuring a diverse assortment of authors and articles covering the relationship between the study of history and the needs of children from the earliest primary years right through to the university level. Kathleen Davies' article, "The Syllabus in the Primary School", is a useful companion piece. While emphasizing the numerous filmstrips, transparencies, cassettes, video tapes, document packages, and packaged kits that have come onto the market to augment the history curriculum, she, nevertheless, laments the fact that the job of a teacher committed to teaching history in their classroom had become much more complex and less easy to define.⁸ She also advances the idea, as do Coltham, Fines, and Jamieson that the

whole question of suitable objectives, methods, and learning outcomes was in disarray. Many teachers were having to arrive at their own conclusions about how to present the subject and how to teach it.⁹ Criticized by some for holding on to outdated and boring methods, the reality is that these same teachers were not being provided with much in the way of alternatives.

Davies works from the premise that “it is at the primary stage that the past begins to acquire meaning, that interest may be established and some of the skills involved in studying history can be learned.”¹⁰ Davies also makes abundantly clear her conviction that children denied the opportunity to study the past would be deprived “of an important constituent in their education, demonstrating as it does the principles of growth, development and change, and offering much to stimulate the imagination.”¹¹ Although these two statements represent her own personal opinions, they are obviously based on her reading and on her own observations in her job as Principal of the Wall Hall College of Education, in Aldenham, England. As someone who has also had experience teaching Primary-Junior age children, I find it difficult to question the honesty, insight, and the general accuracy they demonstrate. Perhaps the most useful part of Davies’ article is the practical suggestions it provides.

Introducing stories that help foster a sense of the past within a truly historical framework, out of school visits, discussion, drawing, the examination of artifacts, and the collection and classification of information all provide opportunities for young children to have experiences that have

historical significance.¹² As she points out, if teachers are committed to pursuing a high quality, chronologically structured syllabus, they need to provide a wide variety of age-appropriate topics and activities. These must be characterized by a high level of “energy, activity, a strong sense of inquiry, and a passion for collecting and, to some extent, classifying information”, and then the chances of history finding a more permanent place in the elementary curriculum will increase greatly.¹³ I cannot agree more. I have also found that, if the past is presented in an enthusiastic and memorable way, with some degree of contact with artifacts and simple primary sources, then young children quickly become fascinated with it and drawn to it.

With works such as Coltham's, Fines', Jamieson's, and Burston's as models, the late 1970s and 1980s saw more teachers developing an awareness that history was in jeopardy at nearly every level, but especially where younger children were concerned. The result was that, not only were individual teachers with the ambition and the time to write beginning to document the decline and to suggest ways of reinvigorating the study of history at the primary-junior level, but various government and government-sponsored agencies in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain were beginning to reflect on the issue and to make recommendations as to how the apparent decline might be stemmed and reversed. A fine example of this type of report is the Report of the History Commission of the Council for Basic Education, Making History Come Alive: The Place of History in the Schools (1982), written by James Howard and Thomas Mendenhall.

The report written by Howard and Mendenhall is grounded on the premise that history is in trouble in the schools because what it should be, what it should not be, and what sorts of valuable lessons it can teach children about the world and about themselves have not been adequately defined. The report itself puts forth the notion that even a rudimentary knowledge of the past can provide children with richer and more meaningful lives. The result, the report goes on to say, is that history should be part of the curriculum at all grade levels, that teachers should be capable of teaching it in dynamic and interesting ways, and that there should be a basic minimum of history that every child should know by the time he/she graduates from secondary school.

Most of the following recommendations set out in the report have appeared in one form or another before. However, they serve here as a “wake-up call” to those teachers, administrators, and other interested parties who may not have been aware of the steady decline in the teaching of history in schools:

1. It is the job of school board members and administrators to restore to history the resources and distinctiveness needed for it to be effective.
2. Those teachers who teach or may at some point teach history even at the elementary level should have a sound foundation in the liberal arts, and a central awareness between the flaccid, routine historical study of the past with lively and invigorating type of historical study needed to successfully communicate with the children of today.
3. Teachers need the strong and continued support of their administrators and like-minded colleagues to help them confidently pursue the subject and improve their own methods and techniques. Without their support and the development of realistic but challenging expectations of students the chances of teacher success diminish greatly.

4. Parents should assist their children in developing historically sensitive minds through leisure-time reading, trips to historical sites, friendly debates, as well as supporting teachers as their children complete any homework or research projects. Moreover, parents who act as models when their children see them reading history with interest, reinforce the importance of studying history at Parent-Teacher Association meetings and become involved at the classroom through to the board level, both help their children and serve as responsible citizens.¹⁴

Rare is the classroom teacher who would have even one parent contributing in all these ways. However, the primary objective of reports such as these is to portray the world of education as it ought to be. Their main goal, in fact, is to make teachers, administrators, and parents think about what would be lost in a school in which history was never studied.

P.J. Lee is another author who skillfully lays out an excellent rationale as to why history should be a part of every school curriculum. In his article, entitled "Why Learn History?" (1984), Lee provides an argument for the existence of history in elementary and secondary schools that cannot be ignored. At no point does he claim that a historical education will necessarily make anyone a better citizen, politician, teacher, or all around human being. Instead, Lee sees history's intrinsic value as an adequate reason for studying it.¹⁵ He does not dispute that history "is plainly not *souseful* as science or mathematics", but questions a society that measures worth by the link between a particular area of study and its potential to generate employment and wealth.¹⁶ The challenge that his article conveys to teachers, administrators, and the general public is that they need to begin to expand their conception of what is of value, has a

practical use, and is meaningful in the lives of students. Is a subject that expands one's conception of the world not priceless and worth pursuing even if its positive influence cannot be quantified immediately? I would hope that most people would find some wisdom in Lee's advice that education is much more than something that must have an immediate practical application.

Blyth's book, History 5 to 9 (1988), provides a wealth of practical suggestions, recommendations, and advice for anyone with even the slightest interest in learning how to teach young children about the past. She begins by presenting a rationale for why children have a need for the past, while at the same time acknowledging the research of others on the subject. Blyth then goes into great detail about her own research concerning how children learn about the past, what part of the past should be taught to children in this age group, and effective teaching techniques, followed by a discussion of the almost endless variety of resources available to both teachers and students. She is convinced of the accuracy of J.S. Brunner's philosophy, "that all disciplines can be taught effectively to all ages of children if the appropriate teaching strategies are used."¹⁷ In her judgment, teachers need, at the very least, to have a basic knowledge of that part of the past that they intend to teach. They need to plan well in advance the structure and resources of any unit of historical work.¹⁸ It is difficult to dispute the details of her research that indicate the obvious need for a balance between teacher-directed instruction and child activity, a pace based on students abilities, and the provision of sufficient time for

discussion without the whole process becoming too monotonous.¹⁹

Also central to Blyth's prescription for success is her belief that teachers need to teach sequence and time in a manner that is interesting and that works. For instance, she points to the work of John West who developed the technique of using sequence cards on familiar topics that children can identify and then put in historical sequence.²⁰ Using a timeline as the medium, a shelf can also be placed underneath the cards to house artifacts, replicas, and models that tie in with the pictures and help to further reinforce the concept of sequence.²¹ Taking this one step further in her own research, Blyth used 2,3,4, or 5 postcards, because of their availability and because of the variety of historical pictures that can be found on them. She used them to determine whether children between the ages of 6 and 9 could arrange them in correct time order. She also explored the reasons they had for putting them in this particular order and considered whether they had any awareness of a sense of period.²²

Her results indicate that children in this age group do, in fact, have a generally good beginning grasp of the concept of sequence that could, if nurtured, be well developed by the end of their primary-junior years.²³ She admits that such factors as intelligence, command of the language, motivation, concentration, imagination, observation of details, confidence, and the ability to see the past as a whole were gifts that some children seemed to have, while others struggled because of their deficiencies in one or more of these areas. However, intriguing though her results may be, their significance is not immediately obvious.

What Blyth has done is to help entrench the notion that young children enjoy learning about the past, that there are many methods and techniques that teachers can use to teach history, and that there are more than enough resources to support almost any historical topic that a teacher might wish to explore. Nevertheless, the central importance of her work lies in her research-based claim that most young school-age children are more than ready to commence learning about the past in a formal but age-appropriate way. I wholeheartedly agree and am not embarrassed to admit that I was very pleased, after my first reading of some of her work, to discover that I myself was not attempting to teach in a way that was not supported by current research. Blyth's work represents both hope for the future of the discipline in elementary schools, and one of the most detailed and well thought out discussions why the study of history is essential and how it can be presented by any competent teacher. All that is necessary now is for books such as hers to be required reading for administrators, trustees, board members, and curriculum designers at the Ministry of Education. Then perhaps history would find its rightful place in the elementary curricula. Clearly, this is not likely to happen, but if enough of those people who do read books like Blyth's become convinced of the inherent value of history and of the necessity of introducing children to it at a young age, it is unlikely they, or their ideas could be ignored for long. Few people enjoy or believe that they should have to "sell" others on the worth of their ideas if this worth appears to be self-evident. But perhaps this is exactly what the supporters of history in the schools are going to have to do.

It is interesting to note that many of those who have written about the study of history at the elementary level have adopted the view of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, one of the most influential theorists in the history of developmental psychology and the study of human development during the twentieth-century, that children in the ages 5-8 range are in a “pre-operational” stage of thinking that does not yet allow them to be sufficiently “persistent and logical thinkers” to be able to grasp such concepts as the passage of time.²⁴ Instead, many seem, (knowingly or not), to share an outlook like that of J.S. Brunner, who believes we should “learn structure (which) , in short, is to learn how things are related”, and that one of the best ways to do this is through the use of a spiral curriculum. Closely related ideas and concepts can be taught over and over again at different levels of sophistication all the way through elementary school by using teaching techniques that address the needs of children at various age and grade levels.²⁵

D.G. Watts defined the spiral curriculum effectively when he portrayed it as being based on the “notion that the relatively small number of key concepts in a subject can be introduced in a simplified form at a low level of understanding and then reintroduced at deeper levels of understanding.”²⁶ As teachers, we want our students to have the best chance they can to understand both the present that they live in and the past. Such a statement does not necessarily mean that a strong understanding of current events will guarantee a solid understanding of the present. Nor does it mean that a good understanding of the past will allow

us to make brilliant predictions about the nature of our futures. What it does mean is that awareness can often lead to better understanding, and that better understanding can help students as they grow into young adults.

What then are some of the things a sympathetic teacher should be aware of that will help his/her students learn history, but that are also of value in and of themselves? The following statements summarize my position quite well:

- a) Brunner and Piaget have provided teachers at the elementary level with the notion of the importance of concept development.
- b) Bloom has given academic credibility to the idea of the potential of focusing on and nurturing specifically delineated skills.
- c) At the elementary level the argument that there are key concepts of that relate to history as a subject and that need to be taught should not be the primary instructional goal. Teachers should offer young students the opportunity to explore a wide variety of political, economic, and social concepts that could also be used in the study of subjects other than history.
- d) Teachers should not worry about dwelling too deeply on ensuring that their students develop particular skills unique to historians. Rather they should introduce and reinforce a wide range of academic skills that can be applied to the investigation of history. There is little doubt that, along the way, many of the skills that historians use regularly will begin to be absorbed into their students' repertoire of skills without always having to be the subject of specific instruction.²⁷

Whatever the direction taken by a particular teacher, it is important that he/she develop within his/her students an understanding of concepts, rather than just the skills needed to complete a task. By concepts, I do not simply mean general divisions like participation, attitudes, or cooperative group interaction. And I am not just discussing concepts that are specific to

history, for example, the skill of interpreting primary historical documents in an objective manner. Rather, there are a variety of more specific concepts that are central to the comprehension of certain teacher-selected topics and terms. In my own case, I would focus on such topics as Native Canadians, Communities, and Pioneers and on such terms as native, neighbourhood, community, village, town, decade, century, government, settler, treaty, and immigration.

Using the available research , I have discussed some of the more influential and practical ideas derived from the research and development carried out by those with an interest in the area of teaching history to young children. Ultimately, history is about people, and if the ideas of these experts could be distilled down to one phrase it would have to be the following: the major role of history in elementary schools is to describe and explain what happened to people in the past, and why it happened. While doing this, teachers should begin to encourage their students to use the evidence they are able to obtain to distinguish cause and effect relationships in history, and to identify any obvious (and not so obvious) similarities and differences between the past and present. As the experts have made very clear, the psychological development of children has a large role to play in accomplishing these outcomes. Although the exact age at which this development takes place seems to be entirely dependent on who is carrying out the research, there is considerable evidence to suggest that children as young as five or six years of age (and certainly by nine or ten years of age) are capable of understanding that history deals with

important events and people in the past. To my mind, the early cultivation of such an awareness, as fragmented and imprecise as it may be, is necessary.

Without taking away from the findings of others without whose work any examination of the teaching of history in the elementary grades would be nearly impossible, it should be noted that such data is still often scarce and dated. We would do well to remind ourselves periodically that any conclusions we may draw are only as solid as our present knowledge. But, in no way must such a philosophy be allowed to become an excuse for inaction or for claiming that the study of history is inappropriate for young children. Clearly, if the experts have voiced any consistent theme, it is the idea that historical knowledge is entirely necessary and pedagogically sound. It enables children to better comprehend the feelings and thoughts of some those people who have come before them.

While it is true that I did discover a few articles written by psychologists and others who attempt to decode the workings of a young child's mind when he/she is thinking about the past, this still seems to be an under-researched area of study. Admittedly, the formulation of the historical syllabus at any academic level is not the responsibility of psychologists. But what the discipline of psychology can do is to help determine whether children are, in fact, comprehending those topics and themes selected by teachers. Given that, as yet, little is known about this topic, it is likely that further, even more useful, information will eventually be provided for teachers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

We are firm believers in the maxim that, for all the right judgement of any man or thing, it is useful, nay essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad.¹

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Teachers of history at all levels would do well to remember this dictum of Goethe, especially when they are considering how they might best assess and evaluate the progress of their students. Was my program of instruction in history successful? Were my teaching methods and techniques effective? Have the learning outcomes been achieved? Have my students strengthened and developed their skills, attitudes, and work habits in the areas of problem solving, intuitive thinking, and cooperative group relations? How can they best ascertain the answers to such questions? Which methods of assessment and evaluation are most useful given the many, often diverse, aspects of the program? How will my instructional methods and techniques influence the evaluation and assessment techniques I utilize? These are some of the questions that all history teachers ask themselves with regard to the quality of their instruction. Chapter seven explores some of the more productive and successful methods of assessment and evaluation that have been used in classrooms in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain.

Evaluation can be defined as, “ a comprehensive process of inquiry, which, through the utilization of many data-collecting techniques, analyzes the extent to which the learner has achieved the stated objectives [outcomes] as determined by change in his behaviour.”² Clearly, the central purposes of evaluation and assessment are to help determine whether progress has been achieved, and to enable one to modify a program in order to improve it. Naturally, the emphasis of the evaluation and assessment will differ somewhat from classroom to classroom, from board to board, from province to province, and from country to country. Teachers in their classrooms are interested in their students' academic progress and social skills development, while officials at the local board, provincial, and national levels are concerned with ensuring acceptable levels of academic progress and social interaction among all of the children under their jurisdiction. This chapter will explore some of the essential principles of assessment and evaluation at the Primary-Junior elementary level, and provide a number of models for assessing and evaluating student progress in history.

At the elementary level, the discipline of history has often had to deal with a range of obstacles when trying to evaluate and assess what has and what should have been learned. To begin with, the schools and the society at large have sometimes been at odds over what the learning outcomes for a good history program at the elementary level should be. Furthermore, in the past much of what had been taught in the area of

history was disseminated almost solely in a form that emphasized rote memory and “ assign - recite - test”, a form that could virtually take a lifetime to properly assess.³ With its central premise that such methods, when overly used, are unsuitable and ineffective, most elementary history and social science programs that have been introduced over the past twenty years or so have been arranged around the acquisition of more broadly based historical concepts and generalizations, rather than the rote memorization of numerous facts.

Assessment and evaluation undoubtedly encourages responsible and accountable thinking about the curriculum among teachers. They compell teachers to determine both what it is that is essential in any elementary history curriculum, and what is interesting but not required to successfully achieve the predetermined learning outcomes. As Jim Campbell and Vivienne Little point out in their book entitled Humanities in the Primary School (1989), “Legal obligation concentrates the mind wonderfully, especially when it becomes evident that protest is pointless; but it leaves the justification of human action at a very pedestrian level.”⁴ To determine more pedagogically palatable reasons for assessment and evaluation that acknowledge both legal duty and public expectations, it is essential that educators become more aware that the need for them is central to the process of education itself.⁵ For it is the responsibility of teachers to remember that assessment should be an integral part of their instructional repertoire and of every child’s learning process.⁶

Every time I question my class about a specific historical event ,

issue, or individual, and every time they respond I am evaluating their understanding of what has been taught. I can see whether they have been making adequate progress and I can diagnose what I can do to assist them. Beyond such regular informal types of assessment and evaluation, there are times when I find it more valuable and appropriate to test my students in more formal manner. It is probable that teachers will always need to know whether their pupils have “grasped a given body of work or mastered a particular range of skills.”⁷ It is true that elementary schools are very busy and demanding places to work, and there appears to be little time to assess and to evaluate student progress in a comprehensive manner. Even so, teachers must spend a regular and substantial proportion of their time on assessment and evaluation. This is one of the principal duties of every elementary school teacher. In fact, I believe that any teachers who purport to be interested in improving their own skills and in ensuring the adequate academic progress of their students must integrate a variety of forms of assessment into their program. At the Primary-Junior level, this is achieved by measuring the degree to which a particular set of predetermined learning outcomes have been accomplished. The method(s) of assessment and evaluation that will most effectively determine whether these outcomes have been adequately achieved will depend on a number of often fluctuating factors. To begin with, teachers must take into consideration the particular characters of their own classrooms, as well as other local and provincial concerns and demands.⁸ Secondly, the individual interests of children and the

differences among them cannot be ignored.⁹

Many teachers invariably find keeping detailed systematic records very helpful as they attempt to assess and evaluate the progress of each of their students.¹⁰ However, there are those individuals who feel confident enough in their own knowledge of the progress of their students that they regard their unrecorded observations and intuition as more than adequate.¹¹ For those teachers who value a high degree of organization, such an approach may seem to lack in its “systematic concern for cognitive and social expansion” and may not be very useful for them, even if they have a firm awareness of the the strengths and needs of their students that result from the significant amount of time they spend with them every day.¹²

Whatever the procedure(s) for assessment and evaluation that administrators choose, they must allow for the distinctive characteristics and past experiences of their teachers to be employed. Yet, at the same time, there should also be some sort of basic common curriculum so that teachers have some guidance as to acceptable assessment and evaluation methods in the area of history.

The assessment and evaluation of the progress of an individual student cannot take place in isolation. In fact, genuinely useful prescriptive assessment and evaluation can only be provided if it is part of a planned scheme of record-keeping that allows for the development of a wider picture of a child's progress throughout his/her elementary school career. No matter how good a teacher's memory is or how strong his/her devotion to the well-being of his/her students, a teacher's recollection of events does

dim over time. If part of the goal of assessment and evaluation is to be able to give succeeding teachers a solid summary of strengths, gains, and areas that require improvement, then some type of regular record keeping is essential. In an ideal world, this might well take the form of a detailed annual set of notes on each and every child in a school. However, most teachers are already heavily burdened with commitments on their professional time and are wary of being asked to do even more. Thus, if they are going to accept such a system then it must be simple and straightforward.

One way in which this might well be achieved is through the use of benchmarks, baselines, or sets of standardized learning outcomes that children of beginning, average, and above average academic abilities should be able to achieve at specific points in their academic careers (i.e., Grade 3 , Grade 6 , Grade 9 , and Grade 12). Various political jurisdictions may call them by different names but the 'benchmark' model of evaluation appears to be the preferred approach among educational leaders, politicians, and parents alike. To begin with, they address the concerns of teachers with regard to just what children should be learning and what they should be teaching at various academic levels. Parents seem to like them because they allow them to see what their children should be learning at various stages in their school careers, and they provide more in the way of "hard" data making it easier for them to hold their local school accountable. It should not be surprising that many politicians also like them. On the one hand, they address to a large extent the calls on the part of the public for

more standardization of expectations in education. On the other hand, it gives them the means to enforce these standards in a more specific manner if they are not being met.

The 'benchmark' model of assessment and evaluation, when applied to the teaching and learning of history, appears to have a great deal of potential. Once teachers are given some concrete direction as to what children between the ages of five and ten should know, and how they can best get these ideas across, perhaps they will not be so hesitant to include the study of history in their regular daily programs. However, there is little question that the possibility of this happening will depend largely on the nature of the 'benchmarks' selected, and on the ways in which they are used.¹³ Those who regard them as useful only in terms of determining how a particular child should perform at various ages do appear to run the risk of becoming obsessed with them. This is not to say that a high quality end product or excellent in-class performance is not admirable or desirable, so long as they do not degenerate into "superficial product-oriented" measures that please the public, but do little to promote real learning and development.¹⁴

In the not so distant past, teachers, parents, and administrators had frequently trusted that learning had taken place and relied solely on a teacher's personal judgement without using any predetermined learning outcomes to help guide these judgements. If the process seemed positive and the required end product at least satisfactory, then the whole experience was usually deemed to be of value and worth repeating the

following year. For instance, a model pioneer settlement that a class has produced together and depicts the everyday lives of people in a nineteenth century Ontario pioneer community may be a wonderfully skillful scale recreation. However, the question is this. How should the teacher evaluate it and assess the process used to arrive at this finished product?

Evaluation and assessment in the classroom should be ongoing processes and should include as many learning experiences as is practical. When planning a unit of study, teachers need to ask themselves a number of guiding questions. How will the study of this particular theme, and the activities designed to support it, benefit their students? Which of the required school-board-wide and/or provincial learning outcomes will this unit fulfill? Unfortunately, all too frequently even those teachers interested in adding a regular history component to their schedule have little or no idea of what should be assessed and evaluated or the sorts of standards that should be used.¹⁵ Even teachers of primary and junior level elementary students should have long-range plans for their history curricula. They should endeavour to provide meaningful and interesting units of study, and should ensure that the learning outcomes contained within them are achieved.

As was noted previously, assessment and evaluation need to take place at every stage of the learning process, from the diagnostic to the formative, to the summative. It is particularly important that teachers remain aware of the necessity of diversifying their assessment and evaluation intervals to better secure accuracy. Prime opportunities would be

the following: "(1) evaluation of a single learning experience; (2) evaluation of a group of experiences organized around a unit of study, a problem-solving situation, or the presentation of concepts from the social sciences; and (3) longitudinal evaluation of the progress achieved over a period of time whether a month, semester, or year."¹⁶ At each of these points the teacher can assess and evaluate the extent to which particular learning outcomes have been achieved.

Like their teachers, children need to know the criteria by which they are going to be assessed before a specific learning experience takes place. To do so is valuable in terms of students needs to plan where to most effectively direct their energies, and even the youngest of students appreciates knowing what their teacher's academic focus is going to be. For example, if a teacher is teaching for knowledge of content, then children need to know this. On the other hand, if a teacher is more interested in the application of general historical facts and the development of wider generalizations about patterns of historical change, then they also need to know that.¹⁷ There is no doubt that the elementary history teachers of today are still interested in the assessment and evaluation of a child's acquisition and knowledge of information. But they are equally interested in the development of positive values and attitudes, in the evolution and development of the use of the inquiry process, and in the strengthening a child's ability to conceptualize and to make inferences that can be applied in other learning situations.¹⁸

It is generally agreed that, where assessment and evaluation are

concerned, teachers tend to use the observation method most frequently. As they teach a lesson or lead a discussion, they are continually observing the responses of their students. Do they appear to be engrossed in the subject matter? Who are those students who always seem to be prepared to attempt to answer any questions directed at them? What are the names of those children who rarely appear willing to contribute to any large group discussion? Do the students look as though they comprehend the information, the issues, and the concepts that are being dealt with? And, finally, would a different instructional strategy be more successful? As far as the last question is concerned the answer is probably, "yes". There are now a variety of methods and strategies of instruction, assessment, and evaluation that teachers today can utilize that go beyond simple observation.

There is no denying the fact that there have been many changes in the way social studies (and, in turn, history) have been taught during the last two decades. In those schools that teach history, the focus is no longer solely on listening to the teacher, on reading the textbook, and on taking tests that simply require one to regurgitate what has been heard and read. Instead, there are teachers who are making genuine efforts to get students more actively involved. How is this being done? Teachers are now augmenting their lessons and texts with such things as research projects, cooperative group investigations, and the reading of historically relevant fiction. As the focus of teachers has moved away from the memorization of facts to an emphasis on a more comprehensive understanding of historical

events, ideas, and people, teachers will need to reappraise their own methods of assessment and evaluation. Are assessments and evaluations that only ask children to prove that they can listen, copy, memorize, and give back material to their teachers on multiple-choice or standardized tests really good measures of progress? The danger in such tests is that they can sometimes become little more than vehicles that test a child's response to sets of isolated and disjointed questions. To attain a more thorough and complete representation of student progress, more comprehensive and balanced methods and strategies are required.

More reliable forms of assessment and evaluation, methods that are more in step with various new teaching methods and instructional strategies, have begun to be used. These include skills and concepts checklists, portfolios, logs and journals, performance assessments, cooperative investigations, research projects, student self-evaluation, and parent evaluations. There is little doubt that these types of assessments and evaluations require more work on the part of teachers. However, they do provide a more accurate picture of student progress.

It is crucial that teachers of history be aware of their students' levels of comprehension of the skills and concepts taught. It may be valuable for teachers to keep records of the skills required at each grade level and of the units in which they are to be covered. Teachers of history at the Primary-Junior level also need to assess their students' skills in concept development at least once a term, so that their improvements can be tracked and students can receive positive reinforcement. The checklist

method is simple and effective, without being overly time-consuming or intimidating.¹⁹ Designing and completing a simple checklist for a specific historical unit of study does not need to be too complicated or time-consuming. The first step is to determine the skills that one is required to teach at their particular grade level. Once a teacher has charted the skills that he/she is going to teach, the dates these are going to be taught, and how these are going to be assessed, he/she can then begin to observe his/her students. Students can and should be observed in a variety of situations, including working in small groups, with partners, and individually. They should be observed during unstructured time, as well as during formal teacher-directed lessons. A checklist for a history unit would naturally include a history section, but it could also include sections on geography, economics, culture, belief systems, social and political systems, national identity, constitutional heritage, citizenship, study skills, visual learning, map and globe skills, critical thinking, and social participation.²⁰ The following checklist provides a useful example, and shows how a list does not need to be long and complicated to be useful in determining whether a group of students is beginning to understand the concepts and develop the skills associated with the study of a particular historical issue or era.

History Skills Checklist: Grade 3

Unit: Canada's Native People

Student's Name _____

School Year _____

Skill	Date	Unit	Form of Assessment
History			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discusses native traditions and their origins • reads native legends and other material relevant to the theme • is familiar with real native people from the past • understands migration and settlement • reads and is able to use a time line • recognizes conservation issues • is aware of the interrelatedness of geography • appreciates the diverse nature of Canada's native people • is knowledgeable about the elements of a typical "Woodlands" Native village 21 			

Another approach to assessment and evaluation is the use of a portfolio. Portfolios exemplify a philosophy of teaching that regards assessment and evaluation be an integral part of instruction. While this method is not for everyone, portfolios are considered by many educators to be an especially valuable means of assessment, because they can indicate whether learning has taken place in many different situations. Portfolios involve both the process and products of learning. Both teachers and students decide what should be included. The first decision that any teacher needs to make when deciding to use portfolios is their purpose. Clearly, the purpose will depend on the individual assessment and evaluation requirements of the teacher involved. Asking a few basic questions clarifies the situation. First, will the portfolio serve as a means of gathering examples of all types of student work or will it contain only their best efforts? Will the portfolios be passed on to next year's teacher? Who is going to decide what will be contained in the portfolio? Will the portfolio incorporate unfinished as well as finished work? Who will have access to the contents of the portfolio? Finally, to what degree will the students be invited to participate in the development of the portfolio? Even when one has answered these questions, one still needs to determine how to assess and evaluate the contents of the portfolios.

Designing criteria for the assessment and evaluation of student work tends to be a very personal process. Certainly, there are those skills and concepts that teachers are expected to analyze, but most teachers have areas of special interest to them that they themselves choose to

assess and to evaluate. In the case of portfolios, anecdotal notes and observations can be invaluable and provide documented records of specific events , behaviours, and newly learned skills. They provide records that can be used by teachers when completing report cards and when conferring with parents, and frequently provide valuable overviews of student progress and growth. The following form is an example of an anecdotal record that can be used to record data relating to a single activity, but which can be easily modified to encompass an entire unit and/or term:

Portfolios**Anecdotal Data Form: History****Student's Name:** _____**Activity:** _____ **Date:** _____**Instructional Task:****Instructional Circumstance:****Observed Behaviour:****This behaviour was
significant owing to: 2 2**

One excellent way for older primary and junior students to better understand historical events and people and to enhance their motivation is to assign a historical novel for each unit of study. Since there is no shortage of appropriate fiction on many different historical themes, the majority of students are able to select books of their own choosing. However, a potentially significant obstacle to successfully carrying out such a plan lies in the assessment and evaluation of student growth. Student journals and logs can be an excellent way of tracking student work habits, attitudes, and progress when reading novels, but they also have many other applications.²³ Logs are useful in determining how much time students have spent doing such things as reading, working at an activity centre, or doing their homework.

In contrast, a journal goes beyond a log in that students are required to respond to what they have read, heard, or observed. When a teacher of elementary students reads his/her students' journals, not only does he/she learn about their progress in reading and their written skills, but he/she can also evaluate their basic comprehension of the historical concepts that are being dealt with. Although finding the time to read journals can be a challenge, students can be further motivated to make journal entries if they know that their teacher is going to respond regularly to what they have written.²⁴ In fact, when a student and teacher correspond using a mechanism such as a journal, this provides another way in which a meaningful connection can be made between them. For teachers who lament that class sizes appear to be on the increase, journals can

provide useful instruments for student-teacher communication. From my own experience I have found that students value the efforts of teachers in this area. It provides them with evidence that we really do care about their success. A template for such as log might take the following form:

Term 1 Reading Log:

Student's Name: _____

*** Use this chart to record all the historical reading you complete in Term 1.**

Title of Book	Author	Historical Topic	Pages	Comments

Cooperative investigations in history often request that students work in heterogeneous groups in order to achieve a shared goal. The merits of cooperative group investigations are usually judged to be their focus on teamwork and collaboration, as opposed to competition. The basic philosophy of this method is that, by undertaking such activities, children can learn from and with one another. In a cooperative group investigation, each student in the group has a specific role to play that is crucial to the successful completion of the task. Hence, each of the group members need to make a positive contribution if the team hopes to do well. Such a situation compels students to begin to develop the skills that they need in order to work productively with others. Roles in such a group may include such jobs as 'Recorder', 'Reporter', 'Timekeeper', 'Materials Collector' as well as 'Encourager'.

Teacher and student assessment and evaluation of the success of the group and of the effectiveness of each member would involve such things as group cooperation, attitude, individual participation, problem-solving strategies used, and whether or not the desired learning outcomes were, in fact, achieved. Checklists, logs, or journals can be used as the actual medium for recording both teachers' and students' observations. The assessment and evaluation of cooperative investigations will probably never be as clinical or objective as performance oriented tests, but their essential value lies in the fact that they provide teachers with an alternative way of appraising student progress. In addition, for those students who tend not to excel in formal testing situations, cooperative investigations

allow them to demonstrate their abilities in different, but no less valid ways.

Research projects enable students to examine one topic for an extended period of time. It is thought, and I would have to agree, that, by focusing on a single topic, young children can gain a much greater understanding of it.²⁵ When carrying out the required research for their projects, students also have the opportunity to strengthen their library and study skills by taking notes, using reference materials, establishing basic ideas, and formulating conclusions.²⁶ Other less involved but beneficial activities that are related to projects would include current events presentations and speeches. While not as long-term in nature, students can still carry out useful bits of research that help them to become more familiar with how newspapers and other reference materials are organized, and allow them to practice their oral presentation skills.

As an assessment and evaluation tool, research projects are valuable because they demand that students learn and/or broaden a range of skills. They must synthesize and then apply them in order to successfully complete their task. Time management, information gathering, writing, and oral presentation skills can all be considered as criteria to be used when assessing and evaluating an elementary level research project. While one must always recognize the value of the formal test even with younger children, it is clear that the research project can enable one to assess and evaluate proficiency in areas that tests simply cannot. The following is an example of the type of form that a teacher could use in order to evaluate an individual student's performance on a research project:

Individual Research Project:

Student Evaluation

Name: _____

Topic: _____

(1=Excellent 2=Good 3=Satisfactory 4=Needs Improvement)

Skill

Achievement

	1	2	3	4
Project fulfills requirements (Ideas / Information, Organization / Neatness, Grammar / Punctuation / Spelling) Comments:				
Information was collected from a variety of sources Comments:				
Oral presentation given on topic Comments:				
Extra credit work included Comments:27				

This template allows a teacher to assess and evaluate a student in four central areas, assigning a score of 1 through 4. There is also room for brief comments and examples. Teachers may wish to give a sample of this form to students and discuss the criteria by which students will be evaluated before they begin their work so they will be aware how their project will be evaluated. Templates such of these can be very helpful to students. They can enable students better organize their time, suggest what they need to know, and how they can most easily obtain the information they will need.

One of the more traditional forms of evaluation and one that remains popular among teachers to this day is performance assessment. Performance assessment is usually a very effective way in which to evaluate students in a variety of contexts. It enables them to display their comprehension of concepts and apply the knowledge and skills that they have developed.²⁸ An effective performance assessment should be designed to assess and evaluate specific objective knowledge and skills in addition to a student's own critical thinking skills. The indicators or tasks used to assess and to evaluate this knowledge are most effectively scored using a set of predetermined criteria. Frequently referred to as a rubric, it shows students, before they start a particular task, exactly what the teacher expects them to achieve in their work, using a number of indicators along a predetermined scale. A rubric can be used in two ways, both as a teaching tool and as an assessment tool. When a rubric is used as a teaching tool, it serves as a pattern that students can follow. It can increase learning by

providing students with clear-cut performance standards. In turn, when it is utilized as an assessment and evaluation tool, a rubric can be used as a criterion by which a student's work can be gauged.

The development of a valuable performance task can be quite challenging. The first step is to decide what sorts of knowledge of content and what sorts of critical thinking skills one wants to assess and evaluate. It is also important that the teacher determine whether students will be asked about certain events, people, places, and the general historical concepts associated with them, and if they will also be asked to apply this knowledge in the form of basic problem-solving strategies. In their application of a particular strategy, they will have to demonstrate they are able to apply their knowledge of the basic skills that were introduced in the unit. Such an assessment is also beneficial, because it provides the opportunity for teachers to assess and evaluate the type of critical thinking skills a student will have to have used in order to successfully complete the given performance task.

The next step is to decide on the nature of the performance task that will be used to assess the skills, knowledge, and attitudes. It could take the form of a formal written or oral test, a problem-solving activity, an invention, or a decision-making task. Students should understand clearly the way(s) in which they will be expected to present their answers or data. As an alternative to paper and pencil efforts, some presentation ideas within a performance assessment could include the use of video tapes, audio recordings, interviews, debates, or oral reports.

Once a group of students has completed the given performance task, an evaluation rubric and/or template must be developed in order to grade their results. Whether this is done before or after the task has been completed is up to the teacher involved. However, it is widely recommended that this be done beforehand, so that students are well aware of how they will be evaluated and can prepare accordingly.³⁰ In fact, student opinions may well be a significant factor in determining the nature of the rubric. Those teachers who allow this have often told me of their belief in giving students the chance to participate in the creation of their own evaluation rubrics. They believe that this brings the task expectations into better focus, and may well enable them to improve their performance.

What follows is a model for a decision-making task. Also provided is the student activity sheet that accompanies it, and the rubric for its evaluation:

Decision Making Task: Name: _____**Background Information:**

Discrimination is the unfair treatment of certain people for reasons such as their religion, skin colour, physical disabilities, or country of origin. In the early 1940's Canadian citizens of Japanese origin were victims of discrimination in Canada. Legislation was passed that forced them give up their personal property to the federal government and to move into isolated detention camps. An example of one family's experience is given below.

The Yamashita Family:

A fisherman living in Vancouver, British Columbia Mr. Douglas Yamashita spent most of his time providing for his family. The rest of it he spent with them. Not involved in politics in any way beyond doing his electoral duty every few years, he considered himself no less a Canadian than his neighbours of European extraction. Then in early 1942, with Canada having declared war on Japan following the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Philippines in late 1941, life changed significantly for the Yamashita family. With legislation passed by the federal government designed to guard against what they regarded as the potential for acts of sabotage and intelligence gathering on the part of sympathetic Japanese-Canadian citizens, the Yamashita family had all their belongings confiscated and were sent off to an isolated detention camp in Alberta.

Your Task:

You are asked to consider the reasons why the Canadian Parliament felt it necessary to pass legislation restricting the daily lives of Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry. You are also asked to think about how this legislation discriminated against Japanese Canadians. Lastly, you are asked to contemplate how this legislation may have affected later potential Japanese immigration to Canada. Your answers should be recorded on the activity sheet provided.

Decision Making Task Activity Sheet:**Name:** _____**Date:** _____

1. List the reasons that you think may have caused Canadian legislators to pass the laws detaining Japanese Canadians during World War II.

2. In what ways did this legislation discriminate against Japanese Canadians?

3. What effects could the legislation detaining Japanese Canadians and allowing the confiscation of their belongings have had on further Japanese immigration to Canada?

Decision Making Task Rubric:

Name: _____

Score 3:

- ___ The student clearly articulates the factors that caused lawmakers to pass legislation detaining Japanese Canadians.
- ___ The student clearly articulates the ways the legislation discriminated against the Japanese.
- ___ The student clearly articulates the effects the legislation had on Japanese immigration to Canada.

Score 2:

- ___ The student has a basic understanding of the factors causing lawmakers to pass legislation detaining Japanese Canadians.
- ___ The student has a basic understanding of how the legislation discriminated against Japanese Canadians.
- ___ The student has a basic understanding of the effects of the legislation on Japanese immigration to Canada.

Score 1:

- ___ The student did not understand the factors causing the legislation to be passed.
- ___ The student did not understand how the legislation discriminated against Japanese Canadians.
- ___ The student did not understand the effects the legislation had on Japanese immigration to Canada.

Score 0:

- ___ The student did not respond to the given task.

Student self-evaluation is very useful because it is so adaptable and can be utilized with nearly any topic on which a teacher may wish to focus. Before doing any of the required reading and activities or receiving any formal lessons from their teacher, students are asked to state what they already know about the topic they will be studying. They can then be asked to report on what they have learned following their reading, their formal lessons, and the reinforcing activities they have carried out. Those who use this method of evaluation regularly in their classrooms believe that, by using it, their students will be better able to assess what they feel they will need to know prior to any final test or task. While not every teacher will feel comfortable with this method of evaluation and assessment, few could argue that it is not worth trying at least once in order to see whether it could be of value to them in their classrooms.

The research project self-evaluation form given below works very nicely for the teacher who is interested in getting some insight from his/her students into what they have learned, how they felt about the nature of the given task, and their views on how they can improve their efforts in the future. Students are asked to rate their performance in five different areas that are related to their research projects. Even those teachers who are reluctant to attach a value to their students' self-evaluations in the form of grades, may well find these evaluations to be of use, if for no other reason than the fact that it enables them to compare their students' responses to their own.

Research Project Self-Evaluation

Name: _____

Date: _____

Topic of Study: _____

(1=poor 2=average 3=good 4=excellent)

Score

Skill	1	2	3	4
<p>Chose topic Comments:</p> <p>Consulted reference books Examples:</p>				
<p>Wrote report to meet requirements Examples:</p>				
<p>Gave oral presentation Examples:</p>				

Another useful form of student self-evaluation asks them to evaluate a specific assignment, to describe how they feel about the assignment, to assess what they did best, and to pinpoint where they can improve. They are also frequently asked to give themselves grades for the assignment or the unit of work. One particular benefit to students and to teachers is that the notes that students make, with regard to what needs improvement, can be used as a guide for future evaluations and reflections.

Historical Concepts-

Self-Evaluation:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Topic of study _____

What did you already know about this topic?
(Complete this section prior to beginning a unit)

What did you learn about the topic?
(Complete this section at the end of a unit)

What else do you need to know about the topic?
(Complete this section before taking a test on the unit)

Although this can be a challenge, teachers do have a basic responsibility to keep parents informed about classroom programming, and about students' academic and social progress. Parents can also be invited to play a role in the assessment and evaluation of a child's growth and progress. With this type of initiative, the assessment and evaluation process is then complete, because it has allowed all of the parties in a student's education - student, parent, and teacher- to be involved in the evaluation circle. Inviting parents to take a more direct role in their child's assessment and evaluation will often result in them becoming more involved in their child's homework. A second benefit of parental assessment and evaluation is evident during parent-teacher interviews. Parents tend to be much better informed and better able to discuss their child's progress. When this stage has been reached, the parent-teacher interview really does involve a two-way dialogue between the parents and the teacher, rather than a one-way monologue given by the teacher and aimed at the parents.

Parents, like teachers and students, need to be trained how to assess and evaluate before they can be expected to undertake any of the same. While it would likely mean sacrificing one evening of their time and the planning involved to get such a session ready, there is little doubt that it would pay valuable dividends for a teacher in the long run in the form of the information contained on the parent evaluation and response forms. In fact, few people would dispute the importance of parents becoming more aware of their children's academic strengths and weaknesses, and the sorts of goals they would like them to achieve in school. In fact, such forms can

help parents to plan realistically their short-and-long term goals for their children's education. The form given below is an example of the type of evaluation that could be sent home by teachers at the Primary-Junior level.

Parent Evaluation Questionnaire:

Student's Name _____

Age _____ Grade _____ Date _____

Name of parent completing
questionnaire: _____

Please answer the questions as they pertain to the study
of **History /Social Studies**.

1. What is going well for your child this year? _____

2. What progress has your child made since beginning the
school year? _____

3. Do you have any concerns about your child? _____

4. Do you have any suggestions for working with your child?

5. What are your goals for your child this year? _____

Additional Comments: _____

*****THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME !**

Assessing and evaluating historical instruction at the primary-junior level will, no doubt, require the development of additional new methods and techniques. However, upon considering some of the techniques that my colleagues and I are using in our classrooms and those in the relevant literature, it is clear that some useful beginnings have been made. Learning outcomes, both individual and group-centred, need to be discussed in behavioural terms so that teachers have a better chance of establishing authentic records of student progress as it takes place.³¹ In other words, they need to recognize the needs and abilities of the children they are designed to assist, rather than being designed for the adults who will be doing most of the evaluating. It is generally agreed that the fundamental proof that a child has achieved a specific learning outcome is when he/she is able to apply a new skill or understanding and/or when he/she possesses the knowledge to move ahead with a new activity that has been identified as essential by a further learning outcome.³²

Teacher-created assessment and evaluation organizers, such as the examples I have provided, allow teachers to make appraisals that are more objective. Teacher-generated and government-mandated standardized tests, whether formative or summative in nature, also remain excellent sources of information about student growth if used judiciously. While future interest and commitment to community, province, country, democracy, and general citizenship cannot be predicted by such evaluation tools, they do provide ways for teachers to begin to examine current student attitudes, values, and citizenship behaviours. They can

show how these can be strengthened.³³ With the recent movement towards higher levels of responsibility and accountability among educators, one of the old mainstays in assessment and evaluation, simple observation, has sometimes been criticized as being too unreliable. However, it should not be rejected out of hand as unproductive, just because it relies on the character of an individual observer. Most elementary teachers spend at least six hours per day with their students, and quickly get to know many of their strengths and also those areas in need of development. It is true that there will be a proportion of teachers, as in any other profession, who rely too heavily on observation as an evaluation technique. Yet, when used prudently and in conjunction with other evaluation methods, it is still a very useful technique for determining if specific learning outcomes have been achieved.³⁴

Teachers must also be careful about focusing too much on responsibility and accountability. These concerns, though important, should not be the only major influence on the nature of their programming and evaluation methods. For example, a program whose primary feature is “payment by results” does not adequately address the needs of children who are academically challenged and at risk.³⁵ It is probable that if a particular teacher and program are both excellent, then the assessment and evaluation that follows will be effective and efficient. In such an atmosphere, teachers, students, as well as parents, will welcome opportunities to highlight student growth, and will regard evaluation as providing an opportunity for further growth. As almost any teacher who has

spent time in an elementary classroom can attest, assessment and evaluation are “inseparable from the teaching process” and “should improve children’s learning and help teachers to improve the curriculum and their teaching techniques.”³⁶ Although it is patently clear that no document on student evaluation can ever be considered completely definitive, what I have discussed here could provide the basis for the design and the development of a better system of evaluation for a school’s history program or that of an individual teacher. As with anything new, it is suggested that changes should be implemented in stages, over a reasonable length of time.

Teachers, parents, politicians, and members of the general public are all responsible for providing children with the best education possible. In the end, it is the quality and relevance of the curriculum provided and the creativity of the teachers who present it that will determine whether the result is real growth for students. The assessment and evaluation methods used will be central to achieving such gains and need to be continuously monitored and improved in light of the research currently available. However, as important as it is to develop effective assessment and evaluation models, if history is ever going to have a permanent place in any broad primary-junior curriculum, then this will come about largely through the commitment, enthusiasm, and effort of classroom teachers.³⁷ They are the ones that, through the excellence of their programs and evaluation techniques, will have to prove to a frequently skeptical public that history has an essential role to play in the education of young children.

CHAPTER EIGHT
SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

“It is time for reconsideration of the foundations, and of the fundamental postulates of historical thought.”¹

In this project I have argued for renewed consideration of the teaching of history at the Primary-Junior elementary level. It is difficult to dispute the claim that our history plays a central role in shaping our collective national character and our society.² More specifically, history has maintained the ability to infuse principles of organization and insight into a child’s learning process that can be applied to all subject areas. Yet, with its disappearance in its own right in many schools over the past few decades it is often no longer able to contribute in this way. The central problem is that during the last few decades history has often been considered as part of “social studies”, and has had its goals, perspectives, and learning outcomes confused and subordinated to the study of “society”.

In the suggestions and recommendations that follow, I am really addressing a number of audiences. Each one of them, whether they be parents, teachers, administrators, school board members, provincial government bureaucrats, or students, all have the power to help strengthen the place of history in the nation’s schools. To begin with, school

administrators and school board members are both in key positions to provide the study of history with the support in resources and recognition that would be necessary for its successful restoration. Secondly, those individuals who train teachers at the university, college, and local board level must be able to model how history can be taught in exciting, vital, and meaningful ways that enrich students. This is quite different from the sometimes tedious, fact-driven history programmes of the past. Third, and most significant, are the actions taken by classroom teachers and school-level administrators whose support is critical. Still, even without such overt support, those teachers with an interest in introducing their students to history in a manner that is dynamic will frequently seek out like-minded colleagues with whom to share experiences and ideas. The problem, however, is not in convincing the teacher with an inherent belief in the value of teaching history to young children, but reaching those teachers who have chosen to remove it from their regular program. The fact is that many of those same teachers who, twenty years ago, began to question the validity of a historical education at the Primary-Junior level based on their own negative experiences in school are now principals and superintendents themselves. Unless they can be convinced that the study of history by young children is both valuable and pedagogically sound, then I fear there is little chance that the subject will make a widespread return to the lower elementary grades.

Unfortunately, the melting away of provincial, board, and school levels of support and encouragement has slowly led to the evolution of an

attitude of unnecessarily low expectations as to what young children can do with and gain from historical study. Expectations are important, and teachers, administrators, and teacher educators have a better chance of successfully challenging students to extend themselves if they work together, rather than if one group is not genuinely supportive.

Parents also have an important part to play in the promotion of history. Parents must be informed that the acquisition of historical knowledge is more than just something that happens in a school setting. They can take their children on trips to well known historical sites, partake in family debates that utilize reference materials, read books with historical themes to and/or with their children, they can actively discuss history homework, and can assist their children when appropriate. Similarly, nearly every teacher has observed that if parents are readers of history or any other subject, then there is a much better chance that their children will be as well. One final way in which parents can articulate their belief that the study of history deserves a greater role in the education of young children is through their local P.T.A., school board trustees, and their children's own classroom teachers. The reality is that, as responsible citizens, taxpayers, and voters interested in the welfare of their children, parents can often achieve more in terms of assuring the development and continuance of new programs than even the most well-meaning teacher.

The aforementioned suggestions and recommendations are only the most obvious ways in which any interested parties can help ensure that the study of history can be strengthened, but there are certainly many other

avenues that could be explored. What follows are my recommendations and /or suggestions as to what can realistically and fairly rapidly be done in order to strengthen the place of history at the Primary-Junior level:

- 1. Those individuals interested in a future career as elementary school teachers should have a broad but exacting post-secondary educational background.**
- 2. The training / instruction of the teachers of history should be done by accredited historians and supported by similar preparation in such areas visual arts, literature, writing, and the social sciences (i.e., political science, anthropology, psychology, and sociology).**
- 3. The training / instruction of teachers of history should include historiography and should include material on how to carry out historical research and writing, so they will be better able to select appropriate resources and assist their students in identifying differing historical interpretations in any courses that they may teach.**
- 4. The training / instruction of teachers of history should include the latest pedagogical research on how to best present the subject to Primary-Junior elementary children.**
- 5. At the heart of any teacher training / instruction should be a philosophy of continuous career-long learning.**
- 6. History should begin in the elementary grades by familiarizing K-6 students with the past through relevant, interesting, and steadily more complex narratives.**
- 7. History taught at the elementary level must satisfy or exceed provincially mandated learning outcomes and / or standards.**
- 8. History curricula at the the K-6 level should include an ongoing survey of Canadian history and various specific topical studies that are fully developed and appropriate for each grade level.**

9. **History curricula at the K-6 level should include some topical studies of United States., European and other non-Western countries deemed important for their education as socially responsible, contributing and informed citizens in a democratic society.**
10. **History should be taught to young students in a manner that is active, dynamic, that incorporates technology & appropriate primary sources, that allows them to problem solve, work cooperatively, and that is interesting and meaningful to them.**
11. **The federal government should more vigorously mandate and support Canadian studies through its various departments and agencies, while at the same time urging the provinces to take a degree of responsibility for some of these initiatives.³**
12. **Student interest and motivation does not depend solely on how a teacher teaches, but also on what is being taught. Thus, it makes sense to implement a history curriculum at the Primary-Junior level that relates history to social themes, current events, and community studies. Beginning at Kindergarten, the requisite content could steadily spiral outwards from family and local history to the national and international communities.⁴**
13. **Finally, there is a clear need for the creation of more age-appropriate and interesting written material, audio-visual aids, and computer software to assist teachers in the teaching of history to young children.**

Obviously, these suggestions and recommendations do not represent the final word on how to facilitate the permanent inclusion of history in every elementary school in Canada. Instead, they provide a useful framework that can assist in achieving that goal.

CONCLUSIONS

Our experiences do not merely link us to the outside world; they are us and they are the world for us; they make us part of the world.¹

I have attempted to demonstrate how the study of history at the Primary and Junior elementary levels can assist in the shaping of educated and socially responsible students, either as a specific subject of study or as part of a well designed social studies curriculum. History is an essential part of any early educational experience, for it is one of the subjects that endeavours to develop the broad potential of a child's mind and to guide him/her to a consciousness of some of the most significant things people have thought, discovered, and achieved. History provides us with a wealth of experience that cannot be duplicated in the way it contributes to our understanding of the past. It provides insights into present circumstances, situations, and predicaments. History is also a source of wisdom as we consider future actions. Most importantly, for young children, history is a basic source of the morals, values, promise, and vitality that tells us about what makes life worthwhile and what makes us civilized.

History arguably has its principal usefulness in instructing students in ways of thinking that can be applied in the study of many different academic subjects and in daily activities. The sum of history is much more than simply a listing of events. Certainly, it does chronicle what humanity has achieved

in the past, but it also explores what has been attempted and the convictions and ambitions that have inspired humanity to continually struggle for a better life. History is the keeper of our collective values and goals, the result of our labour, knowledge, experience, and inspiration for many of the successes that have steadily developed humankind. With this in mind, it is important that children come to know history so that they can develop a better understanding of the human condition.

As educators, it is our duty to encourage and to guide our students to aspire to a future that is positive, and to help shape the world into one that is at least a little bit more benevolent, equitable, and environmentally healthy than the one we live in today. Such objectives have, and will almost certainly continue to result in an ongoing questioning and assessment of what young children are presently being taught, what the nature of this instruction is, and how schools can be better organized to achieve their academic and social goals

The vast majority of researchers who care about the future of their discipline at the Primary-Junior level admit that history will have to adapt to the rapid changes brought on by the information age. Otherwise, it may find itself eclipsed by other areas of study that are considered more relevant to the education of young children. It is clear that, whether its supporters like it or not, if history is going to secure an ongoing role in the schools it will have to continually prove its relevance and value in a world where merit and the ability to apply a subject immediately to everyday life is often deemed inseparable. The following model provides a comprehensive

and viable framework for the inclusion of social responsibility in an elementary history or social studies curriculum, without sacrificing historical content and methodology:

History and the Development of Social Consciousness

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF OUR INTERDEPENDENCE:

- global education
- multicultural education
- environmental education
- systems analysis

EXPLORING REAL WORLD ISSUES:

- inquiry
- data collection
- critical thinking
- dialogue
- negotiation

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE A RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF A COMMUNITY:

- shared goals
- participatory decision making
- collective efforts
- acknowledgement of community accomplishments

HISTORY: ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD

DEVELOPING BASIC PARTICIPATORY UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS:

- organizing skills
- consensus-building skills
- group problem-solving skills
- long-term thinking skills

BASIC SOCIAL SKILLS:

- cooperation
- conflict management
- empathy
- impulse control
- presenting ourselves to others

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

- community service
- students helping students
- in-school service
- examples of individuals and organizations making a difference 2

Through the application of such a model of curriculum organization it would be possible for children at even a very young age to begin to develop an understanding of the forces of historical change. They will realize that they may some day have the ability to act upon and possibly even reshape them. It should be noted that, even though I would not regard this as a desirable first option, to completely rule out an interdisciplinary methodological approach to the teaching of history to young children would be self-defeating. If such an approach was the only way in which a particular provincial government or school board would allow history to be included in the syllabus for children ages 5-10, then for someone who considers it to be an essential part of a child's formative educational experience such a state of affairs would be more satisfying than complete abolition. While conceding this, history in its own right does have a unique way of collecting and forming knowledge about the human condition in a way children need to comprehend. As history itself has consistently proven over the last millennium, those who have not come to understand the ways in which it can be employed and misused are susceptible to subterfuge and deception.

In the study of history there is an inescapable struggle between the objectivity the subject demands and the often simultaneous allure and revulsion that one's values cause one to project onto a particular event, person, or philosophy. Much of history's appeal stems from the fact that its countless thrilling events and compelling personalities have been a source of inspiration throughout the ages. One major benefit that results from

having history in the schools would be lost if students were not allowed to experience some of the emotions and conflicts of the past. What child would not be excited and provoked by the actions of the various protagonists in the innumerable wars and rebellions of the twentieth-century? What child would not be filled with revulsion when told of the indignities of the slave trade between Europe, North America, and Africa between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries?

Historians, especially those charged with teaching elementary-level students, should not allow the detached nature of their training to subvert their ability to extoll and honour those morals, values, and beliefs that they consider to be deserving of support. While in no way renouncing the former, there is another central lesson that history teaches that should not be overlooked: the importance of vigilant opposition of any blind adherence to any particular set of morals, values, and beliefs. History itself teaches that no single monolithic set of morals, values, and beliefs has the monopoly on truth but that they are continuously evolving entities that can be extremely varied from culture to culture, and from one era to the next. One of the strengths of history is that it compells students to confront the relativity of some morals and values, and that they have to be considered in relation to the conditions of place and time. Was what happened to the Japanese internees in Canada during the Second World War an atrocity? It is almost universally acknowledged that it was not as bad as what happened to the Jewish people of Europe during the same period. Are all governments with totalitarian dictatorships completely reprehensible?

Perhaps, but they can sometimes be regarded as a necessary step in the development of a modern economically strong and politically independent country that is not yet ready to be a democracy. Issues such as these demonstrate the reality that morals and values seldomly remain static in relation to changes going on in the society around them, but that they are capable of adapting and changing when the circumstances require it. Thus, it is the job of the classroom teacher to make this evident in a manner that is age-appropriate.

To say that the teaching of history and historical writing aimed at younger children has been in a state of transition in Canada over the course of the past two or three decades is very apparent. Under these conditions, and with so many changing ideas as to what historical instruction for younger students should be, it has been very difficult to develop and to apply a broadly accepted set of instructional standards. This situation has frequently been exacerbated by the activities of provincial governments, which have appeared not to know the abilities of their students and teachers, or what they should expect from the various levels of the educational system. There is little doubt that such a state of affairs would have to be clarified before any sort of broadly accepted set of curriculum standards could be accepted.

With the distribution of the first draft of "The Common Curriculum" in Ontario in 1993, some steps were taken to deal with what has been perceived by many people as a loss of direction and a drop in standards in education over the past few decades. Whether this perception was

grounded in truth is debatable, but the research that went into creating “The Common Curriculum” was long overdue, and it was welcomed by most interested groups. Unlike the United Kingdom and to a lesser extent the United States, Canada has simply not had the same tradition of research in historical education at the Primary-Junior elementary level. All one has to do is a quick visual survey of the resources used to support this project to confirm this statement. Even though Ontario’s “Common Curriculum” (1995) does not feature a newly constructed curriculum for history at the elementary level it does mandate within its “Self & Society” learning outcomes a significant emphasis on the skills, knowledge, and Canadian historical content that has been missing in many classrooms during the past few decades.

The situation in Ontario is definitely an improvement. However, whether this change is going to result in teachers being provided with a better understanding of how children learn about the past and of how to improve their own levels of understanding remains to be seen. My own belief is that documents such as Ontario’s “Common Curriculum” have at least opened the door for a more valuable and rigorous type of historical education than anything that has been described in curriculum documents for quite a long time. Beyond the debate over arguments such as these, there is also the challenge of successfully convincing all of those who are concerned that historical instruction in elementary schools is really, “ the place where the politics of our society are made plain, where we learn most carefully who we are, and what we are to inherit” in a world where the only

thing that seems guaranteed is change.³

Ultimately, there is no single way of ensuring that more and better historical instruction reaches Canadian elementary school students. I am hopeful that my reflections on the purposes, the issues, and the recommended directions for the historical education of young children has provided those with an interest some of the knowledge and skills necessary for making it happen. Historical education for social responsibility is admittedly an ambitious objective. It depends on the systematic and regular teaching of history, in conjunction with sufficient opportunity for students to clarify and debate current public issues that have their roots in the controversies and decisions of the past. To my mind, there is no compelling reason why this is not an achievable goal. In the end, I remain optimistic and confident that elementary teachers can help their students contribute to an ongoing investigation and assessment of history that is both comprehensive but manageable. This subject area will explore a diversity of morals, values, and opinions, and it will be united by a shared commitment to the further development of social responsibility in the schools. Although an entire school must make this one of its central goals if it hopes to achieve success, it is clear that the study of history can play a leading role in the endeavour.

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APPENDIX A:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL STUDIES SURVEY: METHOD

Portions of the results from my analysis of my survey using the “Elementary Schools and Social Studies Questionnaire” and discussions of the relevance of my findings are contained in chapters two, three, four, and six. In addition, and as was noted in chapter three, many of the results from my own survey parallel those of the survey conducted by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1992 entitled Public Attitudes Towards Education in Ontario, 1992. In fact, several of the questions in my questionnaire were modeled on questions used in the O.I.S.E. survey. Below is a brief description of my own questionnaire, a discussion of the characteristics of the respondents, and a summary of the results. The basic themes explored in my “Elementary Schools and Social Studies Questionnaire” were based on the following assumptions:

- Historical knowledge, skills, ideas, attitudes, and relationships can be taught to Primary and Junior elementary students.
- Teaching and learning involves an active exchange of ideas, information, morals, and values between teacher and learner.
- How well an individual student learns depends on the quality and relevance of the content they are invited to deal with, as well as the methods their teachers use to disseminate it.
- Teaching strategies that emphasize involvement and that are grounded in concept & principles development, brainstorming, formulating inquiry questions, analysis, problem solving, evaluation & assessment, making inferences & hypothesizing, and synthesis & application are the most useful.

Sixteen central themes were explored in the questions included in the “Elementary Schools and Social Studies Questionnaire”. As you consider them, you may want to refer to the “History and the Development of Social Consciousness” concepts that

are dealt with in the chapter seven, the conclusion. These concepts are:

- Social responsibility
- Citizenship
- Values
- Learning outcomes
- Goals
- Philosophy
- Tradition
- Cultural change
- Interdependence
- Cooperation
- Causality
- Curriculum change
- Conflict
- Modification
- Differences
- Power

This research was done with the goal of supporting the development of a more meaningful and defensible direction for the teaching of history at the Primary-Junior level. Teachers in particular and the public in general need to know whether history is going to be able to continue on as a school subject and an entity in its own right in the province's elementary classrooms. Or has its time as something essential to the basic education of young children passed? It was with this important question in mind that I embarked over a six- month period on the distribution, collection, analysis, and final tabulation of the responses of one hundred individuals, whose opinions, views, and comments were very enlightening.

The questionnaire was distributed in three regions of Ontario, with 25 going to Toronto, 100 to Burlington, and 100 to Cambridge. Response rates for the three groups are given on page 209. Because I resided in Burlington at the time of distribution I was frequently able to provide respondents with detailed verbal instructions personally, over and above the covering letter. Therefore, it is not very surprising that the majority of the returns came from there. However, as I was working full-time throughout the research process, I had to rely almost entirely on family and friends to distribute and explain the questionnaire to the Toronto and Cambridge respondents. I was very fortunate to have friends and family that often went out of their way to distribute questionnaires, explain my project to respondents, and to collect many of the responses by hand. It is because of this much appreciated support, that I received such a large number of responses.

The covering letter, (see "Appendix B") included with the questionnaire, noted my

identity, my rationale for the research, and my goal of using the results in my M.A. (T) project. It also indicated that I had provided a stamped self-addressed envelope in which the completed questionnaire could be returned. Also of importance, is the fact that it made very clear to any potential respondents that they would not have to reveal any detailed personal information if they chose to complete the questionnaire. Similarly, I also indicated that their responses would be kept in the strictest confidence, available only to me and to my academic supervisors. Finally, they were encouraged to contact either these supervisors or myself at the telephone numbers provided if they have any questions or concerns.

The choice of the three sample regions was based largely on opportunity and a knowledge that the responses from these residents would probably reflect a range of socio-economic, cultural, and age-related diversity. The selection of Burlington was a natural one. Having grown up there, I was able to petition many of my family, friends, and neighbours for assistance. The fact that I could knock on many doors personally and that I knew a number of neighbourhoods I could visit in order to ensure diversity among respondents was also helpful. The Toronto group consisted of co-workers and acquaintances of my fiancé who works there. These individuals were generally under the age of thirty. This is because her job as a research technician puts her in daily contact with many students and young professionals. However, from the total number of twenty-five questionnaires distributed in Toronto only three responses were received. Cambridge, the third region selected, was chosen because my paternal aunt resides there and she has access to a variety of individuals through her church, her work in the garment industry, and her neighbourhood contacts. Admittedly, I could have selected other towns and cities. But these three seemed to provide the sort of diversity I was seeking. Also, time constraints and my inability to find other willing and dependable assistants made it impossible to distribute the questionnaire in other regions. In fact, I learned this the hard way when one individual in the Toronto area "accidentally threw away" fifty questionnaires and the accompanying envelopes, complete with postage stamps, when he determined they were not of interest to him, and that he did not really want to help anyway. Yet, in the end I was extremely pleased with the help that I

did receive from many individuals and with the large number of responses that I did receive.

In the majority of cases only one person per household completed and returned a questionnaire to me by mail, or personally to my fiancé, my aunt, or myself. However, I did not specifically encourage or discourage a definite number of questionnaires to be completed per household, and those households that requested two or more were given these. The questionnaires themselves were colour coded, with a “red” dot in the top right corner of the first page indicating a response from Toronto, and a “blue” dot from Cambridge. A questionnaire without a colour code came from Burlington. By and large, respondents were positive towards the idea of teaching more history to young elementary level students. What follows then in “Appendix B” is a copy of the original questionnaire and the covering letter. In “Appendix C”, the final tabulated results are presented. Given in percentages, the calculations are based on the final total of one hundred respondents. As has been noted, the findings of my survey are examined in greater detail in chapters two, three, four, and six.

Appendix B: Elementary Schools And Social Studies Questionnaire
And Covering Letter

Please return to:

**Mr. Brian Van Wyngaarden
1083 Maplehurst Avenue
Burlington, Ont.
L7T 3G3**

June, 1995

Dear Sir / Madam:

Over the past few years I have been working part-time on my Master of Arts (Teaching) degree at McMaster University. Currently, I am examining people's views on the place of history and the social sciences in the elementary school curriculum. The following questionnaire is designed to help me gain a better awareness of the opinions of the general public on the teaching of social sciences at the Primary-Junior level.

If you would be willing to take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire, I would be most appreciative. Included is a stamped self-addressed return envelope for your convenience. Your opinions, ideas and thoughts will provide me with many valuable insights. As you can see, the questionnaire does not ask for your name or for any detailed personal information. All responses will be regarded as completely confidential, with access limited to myself and my academic supervisors.

Should you have any questions concerning this project, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number given below or my supervisors at McMaster University: Dr. J. Synge, Dept. of Sociology, and Dr. R. Rempel, Dept. of History.

Sincerest thanks,

**Brian Van Wyngaarden
*_ ***_ ***_ ******

APPENDIX B: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL STUDIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions:

Below are a number of statements and questions that deal with the way Social Studies is currently being taught at the Primary-Junior level (Grades 2-5, ages 7-10) in Ontario. For each statement, decide whether you "Strongly Agree", "Agree", are "Uncertain", "Disagree", or "Strongly Disagree".

Please Note that the completion of any or all of this questionnaire is entirely voluntary, and that all responses will be treated in a completely confidential manner. Feel free to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable responding to.

• **Age** 20-29___ 30-39___ 40-49___ 50-59___ 59 and over___

• **Female**___ **Male** ___

• **Occupation** _____

• **Highest level of school completed:** Elementary ___ Secondary ___ Community College___ University ___

Other (please specify) _____

• **Are you a parent?** Yes ___ No___

• **Are you a parent with children currently in elementary school?** Yes___ No___

• **Are you a parent who has had children in elementary school sometime since 1980?** Yes___ No___

• **Ages of your youngest and oldest children:** Oldest _____ Youngest _____

• **Have you ever had experience of a year or more teaching at the elementary level?** Yes___ No___

Grades Taught: _____ Time Period: 1940's___ 1950's___ 1960's___ 1970's___ 1980's___ 1990's___

- 1 -

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. A major goal of any good elementary Social Studies Curriculum is to create good citizens.	—	—	—	—	—
2. Social Responsibility, that is the personal investment in the well being of others and the planet, develops naturally and does not need to be taught at the elementary level.	—	—	—	—	—
3. Teachers who create environments that provide examples of positive social skills will succeed in teaching them	—	—	—	—	—
4. Students can no longer be expected to memorize all of the facts and information they need.	—	—	—	—	—
5. As we move into the 21st Century, the ability to find and work with information on computers will become even more important to students than the input of their teachers.	—	—	—	—	—
6. Canadian elementary students do not necessarily need to be proficient in computers to be competitive in any future job market.	—	—	—	—	—

- 2 -

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. Compared to other people you know at work and in the neighbourhood, how much would you say you are interested in education?					
• more interested	___				
• about the average	___				
• less interested		---			
• much less interested			---		
8. I am reasonably well aware of the the general contents of Ontario's social studies curriculum at the elementary level. (Grades 2-5)	___	___	___	___	___
9. Basic historical knowledge and an awareness of the past is essential to the educational development of young children aged 7 to 10.	___	___	___	___	___

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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10. If the elementary school timetable was increased by 6 more hours a week, I would allot the extra instructional time to:

(Choose 3 subjects, from (a) to (i) given below, in order of priority)

First: _____

Second: _____

Third: _____

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| a) Computers | b) History |
| c) Values education | d) Geography |
| e) Religions | f) French |
| g) Social Skills | h) Art |
| i) Physical Education | |

11. The goal of elementary schools is primarily to:

(Arrange 1 through 4 in order of importance)

i) Prepare them for the job market..... _____

ii) Prepare them for college or university... _____

iii) Improve their self-esteem..... _____

iv) To appreciate and respect democratic ideas..... _____

- 4 -

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12. Young children are not really ready to learn about the evolution of parliaments and democratic ideals.	—	—	—	—	—
13. Is it important that children gain a knowledge of the following subjects at the elementary level?					
a) Geography	—	—	—	—	—
b) Economics	—	—	—	—	—
c) Current Events	—	—	—	—	—
d) Political Science	—	—	—	—	—
e) History	—	—	—	—	—
f) Religions	—	—	—	—	—
g) Values Education	—	—	—	—	—
14. Young children in Ontario's elementary schools are currently receiving an adequate historical education.	—	—	—	—	—
15. Young children do not need to know about the personalities of major figures in Canadian history.	—	—	—	—	—
16. The study of history cannot teach values and morals that are very relevant to our modern world.	—	—	—	—	—

- 5 -

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
17. With so many important subjects in the elementary school curriculum, there is very little reason to learn about history.	---	---	---	---	---
18. Students need to learn that every problem of the present or future can only be truly understood when the past is taken into account.	---	---	---	---	---
19. Love of Canada is fostered in young children by the teaching of Canadian history.	---	---	---	---	---
20. The most important influence on the quality of history instruction is not the classroom teacher, but the types of textbooks and materials used.	---	---	---	---	---
21. Elementary schools cannot ignore morals and values education. Teaching in this area is one of their most important responsibilities.	---	---	---	---	---
22. Elementary schools should teach students about the different philosophical bases of morality and values, including the major world religions.	---	---	---	---	---

- 6 -

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23. Knowing what constitutes a moral life and actually living one are different matters. Students not only need moral leadership, but also teacher-directed guidance in sorting out their own values.	---	---	---	---	---
24. Geography seems to have all but disappeared from Ontario's elementary schools.	---	---	---	---	---
25. The study of geography cannot really help students gain an understanding of the cultural, political, economic and environmental challenges they'll be asked to meet as adults.	---	---	---	---	---
26. Children as young as 7 to 10 years of age should have a basic knowledge of the location of Canada's provinces, territories, and their capital cities.	---	---	---	---	---
27. Elementary schools should not be compelled to support the teaching of a specific geography curriculum.	---	---	---	---	---

- 7 -

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28. I have a personal interest in history.	—	—	—	—	—
29. Current world events and recent history are too disturbing to be taught to young children aged 7 to 10.	—	—	—	—	—
30. Teaching children about history only confuses them because there is so much to memorize.	—	—	—	—	—
31. Teaching about history should only begin at the Secondary level, because the events are so complex that young children cannot understand them.	—	—	—	—	—
32. Children as young as 7 to 10 years of age should be given a basic knowledge of how governments are elected and operate.	—	—	—	—	—
33. Teaching young children about history is often problematic because there are so many possible perspectives on events.	—	—	—	—	—
34. Primary-Junior level teachers (Grades 2-5) should not be required to teach history in their classrooms.	—	—	—	—	—

APPENDIX C: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND SOCIAL STUDIES QUESTIONNAIRE: RESULTS**Directions:**

Below are a number of statements and questions that deal with the way Social Studies is currently being taught at the Primary-Junior level (Grades 2-5, ages 7-10) in Ontario. For each statement, decide whether you "Strongly Agree", "Agree", are "Uncertain", "Disagree", or "Strongly Disagree".

Please Note that the completion of any or all of this questionnaire is entirely voluntary, and that all responses will be treated in a completely confidential manner. Feel free to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable responding to.

- **Age** 20-29 12% 30-39 21% 40-49 23% 50-59 19% 59 and over 19% No Response 2%
- **Female** 56% **Male** 43% **No Response** 1%
- **Occupation** _____
- **Highest level of school completed:** Elementary 3% Secondary 39% Community College 25% University 25%
Other (please specify) _____ 4% No Response _____ 4%
- **Are you a parent?** Yes 78% No 22%
- **Are you a parent with children currently in elementary school?** Yes 26% No 70% No Response 4%
- **Are you a parent who has had children in elementary school sometime since 1980?** Yes 42% No 51%
No Response 7%
- **Ages of your youngest and oldest children:** Oldest _____ Youngest _____
- **Have you ever had experience of a year or more teaching at the elementary level?** Yes 16% No 80%
No Response 4%
- **Grades Taught:** _____ **Time Period:** 1940's _____ 1950's _____ 1960's _____ 1970's _____ 1980's _____ 1990's _____

- 1 -

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
1. A major goal of any good elementary Social Studies Curriculum is to create good citizens.	<u>23%</u>	<u>64%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1%</u>
2. Social Responsibility, that is the personal investment in the well being of others and the planet, develops naturally and does not need to be taught at the elementary level.	<u>0%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>69%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>1%</u>
3. Teachers who create environments that provide examples of positive social skills will succeed in teaching them	<u>19%</u>	<u>71%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>4%</u>
4. Students can no longer be expected to memorize all of the facts and information they need.	<u>3%</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>35%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>1%</u>
5. As we move into the 21st Century, the ability to find and work with information on computers will become even more important to students than the input of their teachers.	<u>10%</u>	<u>27%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>1%</u>
6. Canadian elementary students do not necessarily need to be proficient in computers to be competitive in any future job market.	<u>2%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>57%</u>	<u>23%</u>	<u>1%</u>

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
7. Compared to other people you know at work and in the neighbourhood, how much would you say you are interested in education?						
• more interested	<u>38%</u>					
• about the average	<u>54%</u>					
• less interested	<u>7%</u>					
• much less interested	<u>0%</u>					
• no response	<u>1%</u>					
8. I am reasonably well aware of the the general contents of Ontario's social studies curriculum at the elementary level. (Grades 2-5)	<u>3%</u>	<u>23%</u>	<u>45%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>1%</u>
9. Basic historical knowledge and an awareness of the past is essential to the educational development of young children aged 7 to 10.	<u>18%</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>0%</u>

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
10. If the elementary school timetable was increased by <u>6</u> more hours a week, I would allot the extra instructional time to:						
(Choose <u>3</u> subjects, from (a) to (i) given below, in order of priority)						
First: _____ a) 69 _____						
Second: _____ c) 53 g) 53 _____						
Third: _____ b) 29 _____						
a) Computers b) History						
c) Values education d) Geography						
e) Religions f) French						
g) Social Skills h) Art						
i) Physical Education						
11. The goal of elementary schools is primarily to:						
(Arrange 1 through 4 in order of importance)						
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th		
i) Prepare them for the job market.....	15%	15%	29%	30%		
ii) Prepare them for college or university...	24%	21%	31%	16%		
iii) Improve their self-esteem.....	40%	20%	17%	9%		
iv) To appreciate and respect democratic ideas.....	12%	33%	10%	30%		
v) No response.....	9%	11%	13%	15%		

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
12. Young children are not really ready to learn about the evolution of parliaments and democratic ideals.	<u>6%</u>	<u>32%</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>34%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>3%</u>
13. Is it important that children gain a knowledge of the following subjects at the elementary level?						
a) Geography	<u>19%</u>	<u>70%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>7%</u>
b) Economics	<u>16%</u>	<u>46%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>4%</u>
c) Current Events	<u>24%</u>	<u>63%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>4%</u>
d) Political Science	<u>13%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>7%</u>
e) History	<u>26%</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>7%</u>
f) Religions	<u>22%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>5%</u>
g) Values Education	<u>34%</u>	<u>52%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>2%</u>
14. Young children in Ontario's elementary schools are currently receiving an adequate historical education.	<u>0%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>57%</u>	<u>23%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>3%</u>
15. Young children do not need to know about the personalities of major figures in Canadian history.	<u>0%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>53%</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>0%</u>
16. The study of history cannot teach values and morals that are very relevant to our modern world.	<u>2%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>49%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>0%</u>

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
17. With so many important subjects in the elementary school curriculum, there is very little reason to learn about history.	<u>0%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>64%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>1%</u>
18. Students need to learn that every problem of the present or future can only be truly understood when the past is taken into account.	<u>17%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>14%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>
19. Love of Canada is fostered in young children by the teaching of Canadian history.	<u>19%</u>	<u>62%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>
20. The most important influence on the quality of history instruction is not the classroom teacher, but the types of textbooks and materials used.	<u>2%</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>51%</u>	<u>14%</u>	<u>1%</u>
21. Elementary schools cannot ignore morals and values education. Teaching in this area is one of their most important responsibilities.	<u>39%</u>	<u>49%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>1%</u>
22. Elementary schools should teach students about the different philosophical bases of morality and values, including the major world religions.	<u>14%</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>2%</u>

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
23. Knowing what constitutes a moral life and actually living one are different matters. Students not only need moral leadership, but also teacher-directed guidance in sorting out their own values.	<u>22%</u>	<u>64%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1%</u>
24. Geography seems to have all but disappeared from Ontario's elementary schools.	<u>1%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>54%</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>4%</u>
25. The study of geography cannot really help students gain an understanding of the cultural, political, economic and environmental challenges they'll be asked to meet as adults.	<u>2%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>9%</u>	<u>2%</u>
26. Children as young as 7 to 10 years of age should have a basic knowledge of the location of Canada's provinces, territories, and their capital cities.	<u>52%</u>	<u>43%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>1%</u>
27. Elementary schools should not be compelled to support the teaching of a specific geography curriculum.	<u>0%</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>31%</u>	<u>47%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>4%</u>

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	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
28. I have a personal interest in history.	<u>9%</u>	<u>54%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>23%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>
29. Current world events and recent history are too disturbing to be taught to young children aged 7 to 10.	<u>0%</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>54%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>0%</u>
30. Teaching children about history only confuses them because there is so much to memorize.	<u>0%</u>	<u>7%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>66%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>1%</u>
31. Teaching about history should only begin at the Secondary level, because the events are so complex that young children cannot understand them.	<u>0%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>73%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>0%</u>
32. Children as young as 7 to 10 years of age should be given a basic knowledge of how governments are elected and operate.	<u>8%</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>
33. Teaching young children about history is often problematic because there are so many possible perspectives on events.	<u>1%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>45%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>0%</u>
34. Primary-Junior level teachers (Grades 2-5) should not be required to teach history in their classrooms.	<u>0%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>59%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>0%</u>

Addendum to Questionnaire:

1. **Addendum** to the question from the survey's cover page, "Have you ever had experience of a year or more teaching at the elementary level?"

Yes 16% No 80% No response 4%

<u>Teachers:</u>	<u>Grades Taught:</u>	<u>Years:</u>
1.	Kindergarten	1990 to the present
2.	2, 3, 4, 6, 7	1980 to the present
3.	Junior Kindergarten	1990 to the present
4.	4, 5	1980 to the present
5.	Rural and 2, 3, 4	1940-1950
6.	1-8	1940-1950
7.	1	1980 to the present
8.	Kindergarten	1940-1980
9.	5, 6	1960-1970
10.	2, 6	1980 to present
11.	5-8	1980 to present
12.	4-8	1980 to present
13.	Pre-school	1960-1970
14.	K-8	1990 to present
15.	1- O.A.C.	1980-1990
16.	4	1950-1960

2. **Regional breakdown of questionnaire returns:**

- a) **Blue** - Cambridge, Ont. - 100 distributed, 30% of returns
- b) **Red** - Toronto, Ont. - 25 distributed, 3% of returns
- c) **No Colour** - Burlington, Ont. - 100 distributed, 67% of returns