

Letter from the Editor

Hard to believe, but already we are in October. And just as the leaves turning colours indicate change, Dimensions and the BCSSTA will be undergoing some new changes as well. The electronic version of the newsletter will continue to be sent out, but it will also have a website (dimensionsnewsletter.weebly.com) with videos and additional resources that I think you will find useful as educators.

As for me, I have been a teacher since 2009, teaching Socials 8, 10, 11, Civics 11, Geography 12, Comparative 12, Psychology 11, English 11, Planning 10, and currently teaching ESL writing and language courses at Panorama Secondary School in Surrey – my home away from home.

I encourage you to try something new this year – like using a game to teach government, using critical thinking to teach about social injustices, or using pop culture as a regular feature to teach in your classroom. Any questions or comments – email me at amber.rainkie@gmail.com.

Amber Rainkie



Upcoming Events

- October 21 – BCSSTA Annual Conference
- October 26 – Deadline for BC Youth Parliament Applications
- November 24-26 – Annual Provincial Conference on Aboriginal Education

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Spotlight: Civic Mirror

Developed by Regan Ross, Civic Mirror is a game that students play in class, and in an online environment. It actively engages students in learning about government, law, economics and citizenship.

Instead of students learning about government, law, and citizenship from a textbook, they are provided with the means to create a voice in the classroom and experience the learning process in a new way - as citizens of their own country with a family to provide for, a government that makes decisions that affects the students, a court system to provide justice, a live economy, and an environment that if not taken care of could prove disastrous for the classroom country.

Civic Mirror fits very well into several classes including Socials 10, Socials 11, Civics 11, and Economics. Regan has developed a scope and sequence for these courses so that the guess work is taken out of implementing it into the classroom...and he makes it easy to do. You can view the course scope and sequences [here](#). There is also a [five week lesson plan](#) that you can implement if you feel you are short on time.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in trying you can [request a free trial](#).

Once you have signed up for a free trial you have access to the Student Manuals and Instructor Manuals that set up the game and all the 'events' that you and the students will go through.

To view the Civic Mirror site in its entirety you can go to www.civicmirror.com



Students taking part in Town Hall

Population of 7 Billion

Dale Gregory dgregory7@shaw.ca
BCSSTA Executive Member

This year, the world is set to reach, and surpass a total population of 7 billion people on October 31, 2011. By 1965, the world population was 3.5 billion, which means that our world will have doubled in size in only 46 years.

Putting this number into perspective for students can be a challenge. When you were 11.6 days old, you were a million seconds old. You do not reach a billion seconds until you are 31.7 years old.



Resources for teaching about population:

[World of Seven Billion](#)

This website offers middle school and high school lesson plans to engage students for a fun, easy way to take advantage of the teachable moment when world population will reach 7 billion.

[CNN Article](#)

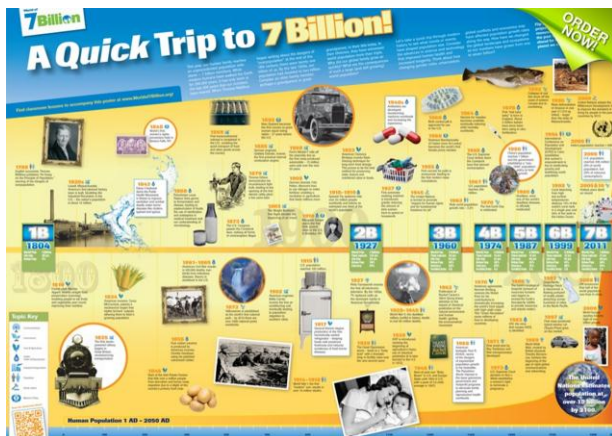
This article discusses the rapid growth of our population and the strain this puts on developing countries.

[National Geographic: Seven Billion](#)

National Geographic has been spread their coverage on this topic over a year looking at specific issues such as demographics, food security, climate change, fertility trends, and managing biodiversity.

To get more ideas and resources for teaching this topic, download the Population Education newsletter that covered this topic [here](#).

Click on the poster to find a link to order wall posters.



Social Justice Fair = Students That Change the World

Elise Mennie and Angela McCanny



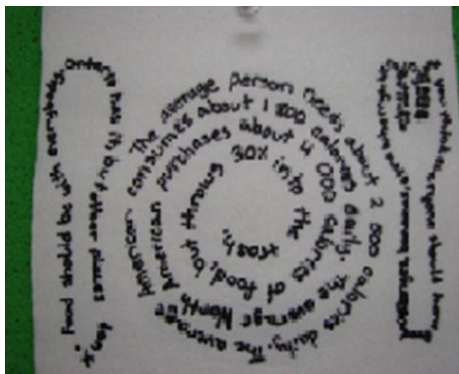
Students sharing their results from the Tap Water Challenges.

“ All of my students are working towards becoming global citizens, and the projects ...made them sensitive to the reality of some pressing issues in the world. Students were not merely looking for the answers, but collecting and analyzing data concerning domestic and international issues that allowed them to talk about instances of racism and inequality.

I started crying when two students that were presenting said, “As global citizens, how can we continue to take long hot showers when we know that there are kids our age who don’t even have clean drinking water?” Her teammate added, “So you can’t blame them [children with no access to clean water] for not having an education, because they are busy fetching water all day in villages.”

From developing and revising their survey/research questions, to collecting data and displaying it in graphs using Microsoft Excel, students had ownership of their learning as they co-constructed it with peers, teachers, parents, and volunteers. They achieved a noticeable feeling of empowerment by having succeeded in addressing a major issue that they care about and often having come up with proposals to improve the situation related to their topic. ”

~ Hina Kausar-Ahmad, Grade 4/5 teacher



Students reflect on what they have learned in their Social Justice projects by constructing shape poems.

To read the full article click [here](#).

Hina Kausar-Ahmad wants her students to “be the change they want to see in the world.” This Grade 4 and 5 teacher from Kleinburg Public School in Ontario challenged her students to research issues that were important to them and to present their findings at a Social Justice Fair on February 28, 2011.

Threading social justice issues throughout the curriculum, Hina aimed to help her students grasp abstract social and mathematical concepts by applying them to real-world issues. Inspired by what she read on Statistics Canada’s [Learning resources](#) website, Hina designed the project to help her students apply critical thinking skills and become wise users of statistical data.

Designing the project

For young students to manage such a large, complex task, Hina had to guide them through [a structured process](#) (click link to view plan and worksheets). First, the class read *If the World Were a Village* (Smith 2006) and then brainstormed topics such as world hunger, garbage, world population, literacy rates and energy consumption. Students then chose a topic that interested them, and worked in pairs through the steps of information and data collection, and analysis and presentation, while receiving daily feedback on their progress from their teacher. Over a period of one month, the students worked through the [six phases](#) of the project:

Statistics Canada support for data projects and fairs at your school

Statistics Canada has published a general resource on its **Learning Resources** website for teachers called **[Data analysis projects and fairs](#)** http://www.statcan.gc.ca/edu/edu06i_0000-eng.htm. At this site teachers are given information and resources to help organize a data fair. Students and teachers can also use this site to find tips on collecting primary data or finding and using secondary data.

An additional module **[Investigating social justice issues](#)** http://www.statcan.gc.ca/edu/edu05_0022-eng.htm provides datasets and critical thinking questions to engage students in exploring justice issues.

Many of British Columbia’s social studies learning outcomes for grades 4 to 12 are given a meaningful context in this project, including:

- applying critical thinking skills - including comparing, imagining, inferring and summarizing – to a range of issues, situations, and topics
- using maps and timelines to locate, interpret, and represent information
- selecting and summarizing information from primary and secondary print and non-print sources, including electronic sources
- creating a presentation on a selected topic
- formulating strategies for a plan of action to address a selected school, community or national or international problem or issue

This excellent project has cross-curricular links with geography, civics, social justice, language arts, mathematics and religion.

Heritage Fairs and the Big Question

Tom Morton

The pedagogical literature of these years is full of articles written by classroom teachers describing imaginative ways to teach history. Across the country energetic teachers maintain school museums, organize projects in local history, set up classroom reference files of clippings and pictures, take their classes on visits and field trips, hold mock elections, stage historical plays, use primary sources, and generally look for ways to move beyond the textbook. (Ken Osborne¹)

What time period for history teaching is Ken Osborne describing? The nineties? The noughties? Surprisingly, it is long before the internet, personalized learning initiative, TC² or the Historical Thinking Project. These years of imaginative and energetic teaching were the nineteen twenties.

In the years following, however, many factors worked against these innovations and led to a decline in their use. External to the classroom was the power of the behaviourist tradition amongst educational leaders and the nationalist, conservative ideology amongst professional historians. Inside the classroom, according to Osborne, these approaches to teaching history demanded too much from teachers in the working conditions that faced them, such as minimal training, large class sizes, little preparation time, rigid timetables, and lack of resources.

Osborne's description of working conditions suggests that there is continuity from the twenties to today. However, there is one other element of continuity that may explain why project-based learning in history is again on the rise: the joy of seeing students engaged in creative, discipline-based work. Well-organized projects can engage reluctant learners and excite both students and their parents. A project based that explores an inquiry question using evidence may also be the *sin qua non* of thinking historically.

There have also been some changes in the kind and level of support for history teachers such as easier access to primary sources on the internet and the development of networks such as the PSA. One other network with which I have begun to work in recent months is the Heritage Fairs Program.

It has managed to last for more than 15 years from its start as a pilot project in Winnipeg, remarkable longevity for our fad-stricken school system. Across Canada more than a quarter million students from grades 4 to 10 participate each year.

A Fair begins in the classroom as students decide on some aspect of Canadian history that interests them. Their choice can be linked to a curricular theme such as First Nations or local history, but I have seen projects that ranged from pro wrestling to the history of milk cows. They also choose the medium to present their findings to their classmates such as a performance, display, or cartoons. The [resources section](#) on the society web site at has a manual to download that gives guidelines for setting up classroom fairs, a description of how the fairs fit the B.C. curriculum, and a list of topic ideas.

...

No teaching approach is a panacea, however. Every teacher has a story of a research project gone awry – cut and paste copying, inaudible oral presentations, or beautiful displays unrelated to the assignment. In this sense, Heritage Fairs projects can have continuity with the 1920s. The path to powerful understanding of history and engaging learning is not always straight.

The most successful projects are focused on an inquiry question: a big question worth exploring but not too big as to be unwieldy. Students find and interpret sources to find evidence that helps them to answer this question. The student needs to create his or her own question in order to be motivated to persevere through the twists, turns, and dead-ends of research. Although it is not obligatory, the question can usually fit the curriculum and the web site gives many examples of the fit.

Students will need, of course, guidance and practice in writing their own inquiry questions...A quick and dirty criterion for inquiry questions is to tell students, **“Write me questions that you can't Google the answer to.”**

For the full document, including reproducible worksheets, and references, you can download the file [here](#).

the history education network
THEN|HiER
 histoire et éducation en réseau

The first five BC teachers to [sign up as members on our website](#) from the time this issue of *Dimensions* appears will receive a copy of THEN/HiER's first publication, [New Possibilities for the Past: Shaping History Education in Canada](#), edited by Penney Clark.

THEN/HiER's website has a whole new look! It has been redesigned to make it more interactive and easy to navigate. We have reorganized our existing content, and made some exciting changes to the homepage. Some of these include:

* A new menu with **About, Directory, Resources, Projects, Opportunities**, and **Contribute** as the main categories.

* **Featured Project** and **Featured Member** boxes which rotate periodically.

* Feeds for relevant **News** and **Events** related to history and history education.

* Upcoming **Deadlines** for calls for papers for journals and conferences, funding programs, and other items related to history teaching and learning.

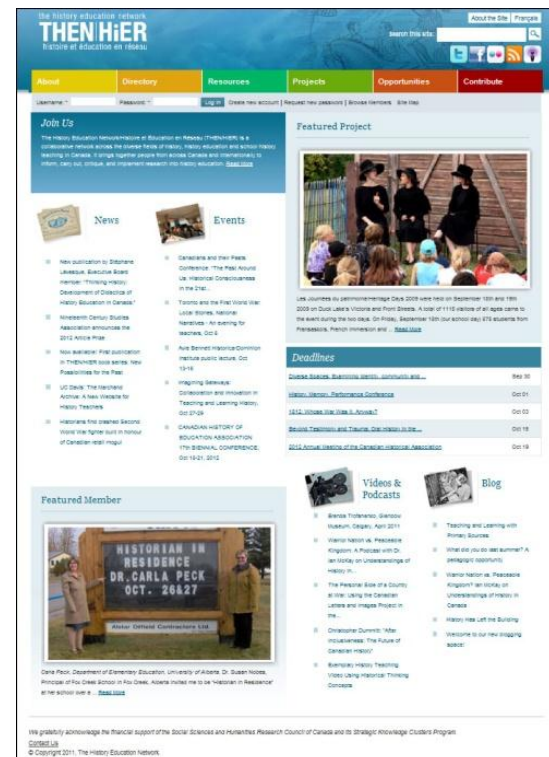
* A feed for the most recent **Videos and Podcasts** uploaded to the website.

* Feeds for our English and French language **Blogs**.

* Links to our **Twitter, Facebook**, and **Flickr** sites, as well as the ability to set up **RSS** and **Podcast & Video** feeds.

In addition, members who sign up on the website are now able to upload their own videos, podcasts, news items, and event announcements. Try it for yourself!

[Become a member](#) Then: [Upload materials, news, and announcements](#)



Short Takes

Ed Harrison

Some ideas for the coming weeks:

Consider the Palestinian request for nation status at the United Nations.

- a. Map the region.
 - b. Make a list of the situations since and conflicts since 1914 that lead to the present situation.
 - c. Have students list the leaders in Israel and the leaders of the Palestinian people. Make a short biography of each.
 - d. Search for the position of Israeli and Palestinian leaders in news sites such as [Telegraph](#), [CBC](#), [The Economic Times](#), [Haaretz](#) and [Arab Times](#). Have students divide the research and report back to the class.
 - e. Make a list of the positions taken by various countries in the world.
 - f. Briefly examine the United Nations and the role of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Why was the bid for recognition not expected to pass the UN Security Council?
2. Will the continuing turmoil on global stock markets have students select one or two Canadian stocks to follow for a week. (Research in Motion and other similar stocks are interesting to follow.) Have students graph the value. Simulate how a stocks value is determined by how much bidders are willing to pay for it.

Announcements

The Geological Survey Store at Robson and Seymour is closing down. They presently have many of their materials and books on sale as they will no longer be offering many of these for sale. They are no longer open on Saturdays as well. If anyone is concerned about this, they should be contacting their MP and letting them know about the service and resources that have been available from the GSC for teachers in the classroom.

New Population Connection Trainer needed! As a Trainer you will be responsible for presenting educational workshops related to population 1-2 times/year. If you would like more information, please see the full job description [here](#).