

An Interview with Dr. Lindsay Gibson and Dr. Catherine Duquette: “Exploring Historical Thinking and the Legacy of Dr. Peter Seixas”. A Special Issue of *Revista Perspectivas*

**Entrevista al Dr. Lindsay Gibson y la Dra. Catherine Duquette
para el número especial de la *Revista Perspectivas* “El
pensamiento histórico y el legado del Dr. Peter Seixas”**

**Entrevista com a Dr. Lindsay Gibson e a Dra. Catherine Duquette
para a edição especial da *Revista Perspectivas* “O pensamento
histórico e o legado do Dr. Peter Seixas”**

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Abstract:

The interview has been edited by Lindsay Gibson and Catherine Duquette for clarity, brevity, and accuracy. Footnotes have been added to provide links to organizations, websites, articles, books, and resources

mentioned in the interview. The interview examines Dr. Peter Seixas’ model of historical thinking, its scope, and its achievements in the subject of Social Studies.

Keywords: Peter Seixas; Historical Thinking; Social Studies; History.

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**Resumen:**

La entrevista ha sido editada por Lindsay Gibson y Catherine Duquette para mayor claridad, brevedad y precisión. Los enlaces a organizaciones, sitios web, artículos, libros y recursos mencionados en la entrevista se han añadido como notas a pie de página. La entrevista reflexiona sobre el modelo de pensamiento histórico del Dr. Peter Seixas, así como sobre su alcance y logros en la asignatura de Estudios Sociales.

Palabras claves: Peter Seixas; pensamiento histórico; Estudios Sociales; Historia.

**Resumo:**

A entrevista foi editada por Lindsay Gibson e Catherine Duquette para maior clareza, brevidade e precisão. Links para organizações, sites, artigos, livros e recursos mencionados na entrevista foram adicionados como notas de rodapé. A entrevista reflete sobre o modelo de pensamento histórico do Dr. Peter Seixas, bem como seu escopo e conquistas na disciplina de Estudos Sociais.

Palavras-chave: Peter Seixas; Pensamento Histórico; Estudos Sociais; História.

Question: Could you tell us a little bit about who Peter Seixas was?

Lindsay Gibson (LG): The best way to describe Peter Seixas is to use the words from his obituary, which he wrote before he passed away this past year. Peter Seixas died on October 9 at his home in Vancouver from complications from medullary thyroid cancer, which was first discovered in 2013. He is survived by his loving wife of forty-two years, Susan Cohen Inman; two daughters, Naomi of New York City, and Mikaela of Vancouver; his sister Abby (Mark Horowitz) of Seattle, and brother Noah (Dana Standish) of Port Townsend, Washington; and many nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by both of his parents: Frank A. Seixas and Judith Sartorius Seixas.

Peter grew up in the New York suburb of Hastings-on-Hudson. He graduated from Swarthmore College and left the U.S. east coast for British Columbia in 1970. After three years in the bush outside of the mill town of Powell River, he started his education career as a social studies teacher in Vancouver. He earned an M.A. in the history of education from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 1981 and a PhD in U.S. social history from UCLA (1988). In 1990, he became an assistant

professor at the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Education, with responsibilities for history and social studies education.

A decade later, he was awarded with the Faculty's first Canada Research Chair, enabling him to establish the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, and the pan-Canadian Historical Thinking Project. He spearheaded the articulation of six concepts of historical thinking, which became the basis for history and social studies curriculum reform across Canada and internationally. His research was published widely in Canadian, American, and international journals. His contributions were recognized with his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and with numerous research and teaching awards.

From the secondary social studies classroom, through the UBC teacher education program, to his signature graduate course, "Problems in Historical Understanding" Peter was an inspiration to the many students he mentored. He lived a life consistent with his strong moral values, touching his many friends and acquaintances with his humanity, intellect, humor, and generosity of spirit.

Over the course of his life, Peter was an avid tennis player and committed water colorist. From childhood through retirement, he spent at least part of each summer at his family's house on the beach in East Hampton, New York, where he painted, swatted tennis balls, swam, bicycled, and jogged in under the August sun.

Question: How did you come to know Peter Seixas?

Catherine Duquette (CD): I first met Peter through his writing. I was starting my PhD at Université Laval in Quebec City. At the beginning, my dissertation topic dealt with the use of films in the classroom. In my quest for literature on the subject, I read Peter's 1993 paper titled "Popular Film and Young People's Understanding of the History of Native American-White Relations." It is through this article that I first came across the concept of historical thinking and historical consciousness. It was as if somebody had switched on a light. The following day, I met with my supervisors to let them know I was changing my PhD thesis, leaving films aside to study the relationship between historical thinking and historical consciousness. Let's just say that they were quite

surprised by the abrupt change, but supportive nonetheless. I then quickly read everything that was published about historical thinking and historical consciousness. Among all the available models of historical thinking, Peter's appeared as the most complete.

It was a few years later before I met Peter in the flesh for the first time. It was at the AERA conference held in Montreal in 2005. Peter was presenting the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking with his graduate student Carla Peck (now professor at the University of Alberta). After the talk, I gathered all the courage I had to go and speak with him. He was very enthusiastic about the work I was doing for my PhD. We then kept in touch through emails, and he was always very helpful. In 2009, I received a scholarship from THEN/HiER, which allowed me to spend about a month at UBC working with him. Peter also agreed to be the external examiner for my PhD, even though my dissertation was in French.

At the end of my PhD studies, Peter became a colleague and a mentor. He was always there to counsel when needed. I also worked with him on the Executive Committee of THEN/HiER. So, this is basically how Peter and I met. He was a very important figure throughout my studies and during my career as a professor. What about you?

LG: I was introduced to the six historical thinking concepts before I met Peter. I did a master's focused on critical thinking in the teaching of history, and I began thinking about the unique ways of thinking in the discipline of history that a generic model of critical thinking couldn't quite capture. My master's supervisor worked with The Critical Thinking Consortium³ who had just published the book *Teaching Historical Thinking*,⁴ and I was given a copy of that. It was written by Roland Case and Mike Denos and edited by Peter and Penney Clark, but it was based on Peter's newly articulated framework of historical thinking. I always describe reading that book as turning the lights on for me. As you and I have talked about before, Cate, the historical thinking concepts provided me with a language to articulate some of the thoughts I was having about teaching history. After I finished my master's, Roland Case from the

3 www.tc2.ca

4 Denos, M., & Case, R. (2006). *Teaching about Historical Thinking*. The Critical Thinking Consortium.

Critical Thinking Consortium, who was a friend of Peter, introduced me to him. We started emailing and started discussing me doing a PhD with him, which I began in 2009. My relationship with Peter changed over time. First, he was an academic hero, then he became my PhD supervisor, a mentor, and then over time he became a friend.

CD: Yes, definitely. He was very welcoming, and it is true that, as we grew as academics, our relationship with Peter changed. It was less about receiving ideas than bringing new ones to discuss and debate. Peter was always a good place to start when you had new ideas. Also, for me at least, he was also a good example of what an academic should be. He was very rigorous and very research-oriented; he wouldn't let you get away with half-baked work, but at the same time, he was very kind and helpful. This is something I aspire to be as well, and I hope I can pass on a little bit of what he taught me to my students. So, I guess, our relationship with Peter changed through time and moved from a supervisor to a mentor and then to a friend.

LG: Well said, Cate. I would echo that too. The ways he related to new ideas and criticism modeled the behaviors I want to embody as an academic. He loved when people challenged and criticized his ideas, and not in a way that he was relishing an intellectual joust, but that the criticism would further his thinking and understanding of the things he was theorizing. As you said, he was also a very kind and generous mentor who always made me feel like my dissertation research was one of his top priorities, which made me feel supported. But, as you said, he was rigorous in making sure that my work met his standards. He was a great writer, and he expected you to put the work in to make sure that your writing was up to snuff.

Question: What is his greatest legacy?

LG: Along with history educators like Sam Wineburg, Peter Lee, and Denis Shemilt, he's one of the foundational thinkers in the field of history education that developed in the 1980s and 1990s. He had close to a decade of teaching experience in either alternative programs or

secondary schools. He also had an impressive academic background, including a PhD in social history from UCLA. He had feet in both the worlds of education and history, which, I think, earned him a lot of credibility. In a lot of ways, his work is a translation between those two communities.

CD: Indeed, the field of history education is very young. Peter's unique career path, first as a teacher and then as an historian, enabled him to have an understanding of teachers' reality as well as deep epistemic and ontological comprehension of the discipline.

LG: He has a massive legacy. He taught social studies and history methods to undergraduate students who are still teaching history and social studies in the K-12 system today. He taught and supervised numerous graduate students, and developed a course called "Problems in Historical Understanding," which a lot of students from different disciplines have taken over the years. He received the Canada Research Chair and created the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness. He articulated the six concepts included in the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking framework, which later became the Historical Thinking Project. He was also an active member of the history education research community, doing research, writing papers, delivering presentations, and helping build a truly international community of history educators.

CD: We saw real proof of his legacy at his retirement symposium and party, where there were scholars from all over the world, such as Sam Wineburg, David Lowenthal, Mario Carretero, and others who came to celebrate his work. This was a testimony to the community he had built by that point.

LG: When Peter passed away last year, I don't think his family quite understood the influence that he had around the world both academically and on teaching and learning history in K-12 schools. The influence of academics is usually measured by how well-known they are outside of the academy. Have they gone from the academic realm into the popular realm as well? But he hadn't necessarily done that.

When you talk about Peter's influence, you need to consider scholars and educators in history education, but also his influence on curricula, textbooks, and resources. And when he died, it was incredible to see the number of emails, letters, and comments on social media posts from people around the world. I'm regularly contacted by people from countries around the world who want to know more about historical thinking and the Historical Thinking Project.

CD: Definitely. His influence goes beyond English-speaking countries as well. Scholars from Colombia, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Morocco, Sweden, and so on are all interested in the Historical Thinking Project. I feel that the project still brings people from different countries together. I think the reason behind this is the model of the six second-order concepts he constructed. It is a simple model, but its roots are deeply embedded in the discipline of history. This complexity doesn't emerge at first. In a way, the six concepts are a little bit deceptive. But the more you dig, the more complex they get. For me, this complexity is also one of Peter's greatest legacies. He left us with a sandbox where you think you have a little bit of sand, but when you start digging, you see that, in fact, the sand is never ending. There are always more questions that need to be answered. As you said, it's not a perfect model. There is still so much we can do with it. Basically, Peter left us with a lot to think about.

CD: Moreover, his legacy is not limited to the sphere of academia. As you said, the six second-order concepts of historical thinking have been introduced into most history and social studies curricula across Canada. The concepts are seen as being an important tool to help students learn history and make sense of the past. Of course, different provinces have different ways of including the concepts in their curricula. Still, the Historical Thinking Project and the historical thinking concepts are not only an idea; they have concrete and real influence in the classroom.

LG: I agree. The historical thinking framework he conceptualized is foundational, and that doesn't mean it's beyond critique, or written in

stone. If you're doing any work in history education, you need to understand Seixas' framework, know its strengths and limitations, and how it relates to other frameworks and models. It's a generative framework. The historical thinking concepts highlight fundamental problems encountered when doing history; that ultimately might be irresolvable problems but are crucial for thinking about the past. Regardless of the topic, one has to think about evidence, the causes and consequences of events, how things changed and stayed the same over time, or who or what is significant to teach, learn, or research about. All of the six concepts open up problems and questions for approaching the prescribed curriculum.

CD: One thing we haven't really talked about is the graduate students that Peter has either directly supervised or was on their committees, and the number of teachers he taught throughout his career. All these people did not simply repeat the gospel, but they took these ideas forward and have continued to think with them, challenge them, critique them, and build on them over time. It would be hard to actually count everyone who has benefited from Peter's teaching and the Historical Thinking Project.

LG: I regularly hear from his former undergraduate and graduate students at UBC who are now teaching throughout British Columbia. They tell me that Peter taught them their social studies methods course at UBC and how his teaching still influences their practice. It's really hard to measure someone's influence, and I don't think Peter was even aware of the influence he had and continues to have on his former students.

Question: What is the Historical Thinking Project?

LG: Rather than provide a comprehensive history of the Historical Thinking Project (HTP), I'll provide a link to two articles that describe the origins and early work of the project. The most comprehensive article is "Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: First Steps," which was written by Dr. Carla Peck and Peter Seixas. Carla was a PhD student

with Peter and was involved in the genesis of the HTP.⁵ The most straightforward description of the HTP is from the website.⁶

The HTP was created to foster a new approach to history education — with the potential to shift how teachers teach and how students learn, in line with recent international research on history learning. It revolves around the proposition that historical thinking — like scientific thinking in science instruction and mathematical thinking in math instruction — is central to history instruction and that students should become more competent as historical thinkers as they progress through their schooling. The project developed a framework of six historical thinking concepts to provide a way of communicating complex ideas to a broad and varied audience of potential users. Active from 2006 to 2014, the Historical Thinking Project provided social studies departments, local boards, provincial ministries of education, publishers and public history agencies with models of more meaningful history teaching, assessment, and learning for their students and audiences. Since April 2014, the HTP has operated in “pilot light” mode.

LG: The HTP was a bilingual (French and English) project that was devoted to making historical thinking the core of history education in Canada. It had four major foci: 1) to make sure that historical thinking concepts were included in curricula all across Canada; 2) to support textbook manufacturers and organizations that are producing textbooks, learning resources, and lesson plans that explicitly address historical thinking; 3) to offer professional development workshops and an annual Historical Thinking Summer Institute in a different Canadian city that was attended by teachers, curriculum developers, graduate students, historians, museum educators, and others; 4) to develop assessments that could be used to determine how well students were learning how to think historically. There was also an annual meeting every year that would include representatives from every provincial and territorial Ministry of Education, history education scholars, teachers, textbook companies,

5 Peck, C., & Seixas, P. (2008). Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: First Steps. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 31(4), 1015-1038. Seixas, P. (2009). A modest proposal for change in Canadian history education. *Teaching History*, 137, 26-30.

6 www.historicalthinking.ca

and others. It was like a history jamboree that reviewed what happened over this previous year and introduced new resources and ideas.

Question: What have been the achievements of the Historical Thinking Project?

CD: Bringing everybody together on an annual basis was definitely an achievement because those meetings brought together people who rarely had the chance to meet. Canada is a massive country, it takes me the same amount of time to go see you in Vancouver as it does to fly to London, England. So, having people from every province, representatives from provincial and territorial education ministries, academics, teachers, teachers' associations, and museum specialists all at the same table was incredible. And I think that was the best part of those meetings — the opportunity to talk to people who all loved history and history education and build a better understanding of their reality through those conversations. So, one of the biggest achievements of the project was, for me, its capacity to bring everybody, at least from Canada, together to talk about history and history education. It helped me better understand the importance of the work that was being done.

LG: It's difficult to say exactly what the achievements were because there are certain aspects that we can say for sure, and others that are more anecdotal and unknown. In terms of curriculum, it was a success. Most provincial and territorial curricula across Canada (ten provinces and three territories) have embedded historical thinking in one way, shape, or form in their social studies and history curriculum, including my home province of British Columbia. Each jurisdiction has made adaptations to the historical thinking framework and has changed some aspects of it. You could also debate how well it has been applied in some curricula. There's been an enormous number of French and English resources created by different organizations, including teacher created lesson plans on the website.⁷ These include books about historical

7 <https://historicalthinking.ca/lessons>

thinking and how to teach and assess it.⁸ That's been a big achievement. The third achievement is the Historical Thinking Institute. Starting in 2007, every summer, the HTP partnered with a museum, archive, or institution in a different city across Canada, which was attended by a diverse group of 50 educators including K-12 teachers, graduate students, history education scholars, historians, museum educators, and curriculum developers interested in deepening their understanding of historical thinking and how to apply it in their varied contexts. Because of COVID, we have moved our Historical Thinking Institutes online, so they are more accessible to educators, and we've doubled or tripled the number of participants we have every year. This has continued to be a success of the HTP.

CD: Yes. And it's the ongoing interest people show for the Historical Thinking Institute that is wonderful. Every single year, people come to the institute. Sometimes, they come because they know somebody who has done it the year before, and they have heard good things about it. Other times, they want to better understand their curriculum or change the way they teach the discipline. And that's often what teachers tell us. They tell us that "You've put into words what I knew intuitively, but I couldn't properly explain or put into words." Although we have changed the institute a little bit to make it our own, I think the essential message, and the core ideas are still the same. They're still as Peter sketched them.

Question: How have social studies teachers been involved in the Historical Thinking Project?

CD: Well, I think they have been involved since the very beginning, but even more so now, because the concepts are omnipresent in provincial curricula. Teachers are either learning the model at university or getting to know it through professional development opportunities.

8 Seixas, P., & Morton, T. (2013). *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*. Nelson Education; Stipp, S., Gibson, L., Denos, M., Case, R., & Miles, J. (2017). *Teaching Historical Thinking: Revised and Expanded Edition*. The Critical Thinking Consortium. Lévesques, S. (2013) *Enseigner la pensée historique*, The Critical Thinking Consortium.

The institute is another means for them to get involved in the project. So, they often come to the institute with the desire to do things differently, to move away from lecturing, reading the textbooks, and memorizing facts. They want students to engage in the doing of history. They wish for students to analyze evidence and think about causality and change and perspective. There are also more and more projects that still emerge from the initial historical thinking project, such as the Thinking Historically for Canada's Future. So, there are even more teachers getting involved in these new projects. It's an ongoing thing.

LG: The Historical Thinking Project was based on a “train the trainer” model of professional learning. Every year, educators attended the Summer Institute to deepen their understanding of historical thinking and how to apply it in their context. The idea was that they would get excited about historical thinking and start using it in their practice and context. They would then share their learning with their colleagues and build communities of inquiry in their contexts. In one of Peter's early articles, he talked about building communities of inquiry for learning history.⁹ In the early days of the HTP, teachers also created lessons that went on to the HTP website. As a graduate student, Carla Peck was hired to edit and review the lessons and work with teachers to get them ready for publication.

Led by lead teachers, local assessment development teams made up of teachers were also created in two urban areas (Toronto and Vancouver) and two rural areas (Selkirk, Manitoba, and New Brunswick), where they developed tasks and rubrics, and collected student work, exemplary of different levels of competence. We also created a teacher group in my hometown of Kelowna, BC, which included about eight or nine teachers. We brought in teachers from different schools, and we collaboratively built a unit of study in which each lesson focused on a different historical thinking concept. It was a profound learning experience for me because it wasn't just focused on the product we created. It was really about the process we went through and the learning we did

9 Seixas, P. (1993). The Community of Inquiry as a Basis for Knowledge and Learning: The Case of History. *American Educational Research Journal*, 30(2), 305-324.

from each other during the process of building the unit. Working with the historical thinking concepts really pushed our thinking and built a common vocabulary for talking about history.

Question: What challenges did the Historical Thinking Project experience?

LG: The major challenge the HTP experienced was the development of valid and relevant tools that help teachers assess the development of their students' historical thinking. Some assessment tools, Blackline Masters, and rubrics were created, but much more work in this area was needed. There are also some challenges with the historical thinking framework that Seixas conceptualized. It's a framework and a set of tools that can be used effectively or ineffectively. The historical thinking framework is like the tools a carpenter carries on their tool belt. A hammer can be used destructively or constructively, and it is effective for some tasks but not others. The framework Peter developed is not a fully articulated pedagogical model that is going to show educators exactly how to teach historical thinking. He provided the concepts, and it's up to teachers to apply it in their context. And he didn't fully articulate how this looks in a course or unit plan, or in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. But I don't think this is a weakness of the model because that's not what it was intended to do.

CD: I think Peter always considered teachers as professionals. Depending on whom they have in their classroom, they are the ones who have to decide how they will apply the framework with respect to their teaching context. And I think, that is also why assessment was never a main consideration of his, not until later, because it is so closely linked to the teaching context. Yet, I feel that assessment has become a challenge for many teachers. Assessing students' historical thinking demands that teachers move away from traditional assessment methods. And because of this, teachers sometimes feel uneasy about their assessment practices. They still want to quantify the good and bad answers. Assessing students' use of the second-order concepts demands a more qualitative approach to assessment. In a way, assessing historical thinking requires

a deep understanding of the epistemology and ontology of history. It also asks teachers to change the way they approach the discipline. Teaching historical thinking is like giving the car keys to the students and asking them to drive you to a destination. You're not driving the car, and you don't decide which roads to take, but you chose the destination. You assess how well students get you there. And for some teachers, that's a lot to ask.

LG: As you said, it requires some teachers to rethink their understandings of the nature of history. And at the same time, teachers are also being asked to design learning activities that are going to help students develop sophisticated understandings of history. That's a challenging task, right? One of the powerful things about the concepts is that they are intuitive and communicable. Even people who have not studied history extensively can look at them and have a basic understanding of what they are about. And yet, the more you work with the concepts, the more you realize how sophisticated and complicated they are. And then you start seeing the interconnections between the concepts and the blurry boundaries between many of them. This is challenging.

CD: A final challenge for me is when historical thinking becomes very much a mechanical process. Because the framework has become so popular, and because it has been integrated into the curriculum, practitioners who don't understand the fundamental nature of the concepts simply use them as tools to gather even more factual knowledge. Historical thinking as developed by Peter is a simple model, but it's not simplistic.

Question: What other projects are being developed at UBC?

LG: UBC is one of the main centers of history education in Canada, mainly because of the work of Dr. Peter Seixas and Dr. Penney Clark. The HTP and the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness¹⁰ were created by Peter. From 2008 to 2016 Dr. Penney Clark

¹⁰ <https://www.cshc.ubc.ca/>

created THEN/HiER,¹¹ the first pan-Canadian organization devoted to promoting and improving history teaching and learning by bringing together varied constituencies involved in history education: academic historians; public historians in museums, archives, and historic sites; practicing teachers; researchers based in faculties of education; and curriculum policy-makers. The goal of this grant was to create more research-informed practices (from kindergarten to graduate school) and more practice-informed research through dialogue among these various communities. The HTP still exists, but it also doesn't exist. It's hard to describe. Since Peter retired, I'm the director of the HTP, and along with our partners at Canada's History, we offer annual professional learning institutes, including the Virtual Historical Thinking Institute (VHTI) and the Historical Thinking Community of Practice (HTCP).¹² However, we have no major funding or sources of revenue, and we aren't really seeking them, either. So, we say that the HTP pilot light is on, and it could fire up again, but at this point, it exists only to offer limited professional development opportunities. The other major project that UBC is involved in is the Thinking Historically for Canada's Future project that is being led by Project Director Dr. Carla Peck.¹³ Dr. Penney Clark and I are researchers on this Canada-wide research project, focused on analyzing how history is taught and learned in Canada. The project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and involves partners from fifty different organizations, as well as researchers and graduate students from all across Canada. Cate, can you share a little more about this project?

CD: The Thinking Historically for Canada's Future (THFCF) project follows in the footsteps of the HTP. As Project Director Dr. Carla Peck could tell you, the project aims to better understand how after all that research, all the influence of the Historical Thinking Project, what's going on in our classrooms? How is history being taught? THFCF follows in Peter's footsteps, as it brings together researchers from every part of Canada. Historical thinking is a definite focus of the project, but

11 <http://thenhier.ca/en.1.html>

12 <https://www.canadashistory.ca/education/professional-learning>

13 <https://thinking-historically.ca/>

also the themes of Indigenous ways of knowing and civic engagement. All three themes are deeply connected and will be observed through the lenses of curricula and resources, teaching and learning, and teacher education. In some ways, the THFCF project is an attempt to assess the impact of the HTP in Canada.

Question: What advice would you give to Latin American teachers to develop historical thinking in history and social studies lessons in primary and secondary school?

CD: I think we need to be very humble about offering advice because Latin America is a large territory with many countries, and the political, economic, linguistic, cultural, and social contexts are different from Canada, and so sharing our experiences in Canada might not be that instructive. Contexts are complicated, and history as a school subject is a political tool. Historical thinking asks you to look at historical narratives in a different way, and so we don't know how much challenging official narratives is something that is acceptable in other contexts.

LG: There's no one pathway or route that teachers need to follow to develop historical thinking lessons in their practice. The HTP and Peter's legacy can be a really powerful study about how to bring about educational change. You need powerful ideas that teachers are going to connect to, but you also need to support teachers along that way. The best starting point might be to start reading about what historical thinking is, and not just Peter's model, but also other models too. Then I would suggest that teachers start small. Some historical thinking activities can be taught in 10-15 minutes. One of the most powerful discussions that we often have with students is about what history is, and what's the past, and what are the similarities and differences between the two. So, start small, and try out some different historical thinking activities. Then I would suggest for teachers to start working with like-minded colleagues in your school, from a different school, or a professional development conference. Build friendships with people, experiment with different strategies and techniques, and then come together to talk about it. I'm

never surprised how much teachers can learn from each other by sharing their classroom practices and experiences.

CD: Exactly, teaming up and creating community is what, I think, Peter wanted. So, I think that's something teachers should be conscious of. It is not only you in your classroom, it's you plus other people who, as you said, are working with these concepts. Teachers must also be patient with themselves. It can be a lot to start with. New concepts, new approaches to teaching, new materials. One can always start small, like a 15-minute activity. You don't need a 60-minute period to do historical thinking. So, starting small, but still starting. But you can do it slowly. And at some point, what I've seen with teachers is that they start small and things grow slowly, but surely. When they look back at their school years, they are very pleased with themselves, but to do this, you need a starting point. And you need to be patient and give yourself time to grow with the model.

LG: I want to pick up on something that you said that I think is important. Teaching historical thinking is not about reinventing the wheel and redoing every lesson, unit, and course from scratch. You cannot teach historical thinking without focusing on historical content, and every history curriculum includes content, no matter what educational system you're in. What historical thinking requires teachers to do is make a shift. Rather than seeing history as information to be taught and learned, teachers are asked to use historical thinking concepts to problematize history and create inquiry questions that students have to solve and respond to. For example, teachers can take a typical topic they always teach, and they can simply ask students, "Is this topic historically significant?" Rather than imply that the topic is significant because it is being taught about and included in the textbook and curriculum, teachers can ask students to rate its significance. Students are expected to decide how significant the event is, why it is significant, and what its most significant aspects are. In many ways, this approach is really about a shift in perspective.

CD: Moving towards being active learners is so important here. And if teachers want to have active learners, the historical thinking concepts give you the tools to make history active, rather than just information driven. But that doesn't mean that students won't learn facts. On the contrary, they will learn them more because you've let them play with them.

LG: Exactly! They'll understand the content because they worked with it, molded it, and developed a deeper conceptual understanding of it. Far better thinkers than I am have explained that you can't really understand something unless you understand its nature. What we're really saying is that you need to understand the nature of history to really understand its content. In my experience, historical thinking has totally changed the way I understand the past, the present, and the future.

CD: Another thing for me, I would say that Peter was very rigorous, but he wasn't averse to fun. And I think that's also something we need to bring into our classroom. And I think that's something also teachers must embrace is that history can definitely be fun. And the concepts help you make it fun, because you're actively doing something, you're asking good questions, you can have some interesting topics, and you can be doing all sorts of activities. It will make your class engaging and interesting, and not boring.

LG: Thanks for the great conversation Cate.

CD: Thank you, and also thanks to Jéssica Ramirez Achoy for creating the interview questions.