



# THE **Historical Thinking** PROJECT

*Promoting critical historical literacy for the 21st century*

## **History Educators Webinar** Ontario's New History and Social Studies Curriculum

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## Session Plan

- What are the Key Changes to the Curriculum?
- What is Discipline-Based thinking?
- How can you Integrate Historical Thinking Into Your Classroom, Museum, or Source Materials?



## What are the Key Changes in the New Curriculum?

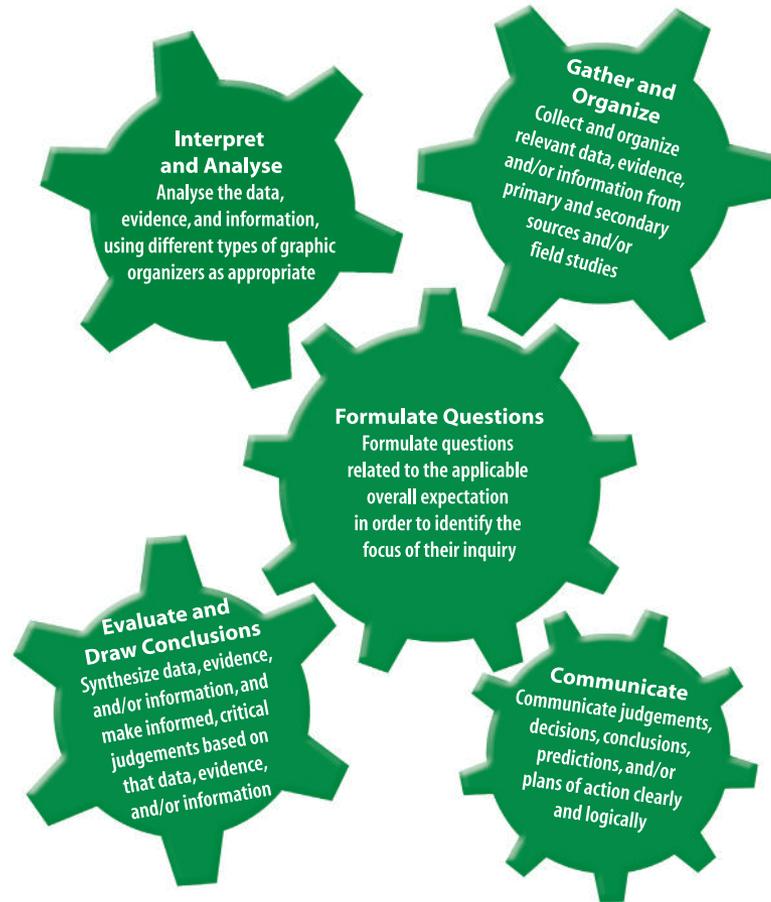
There is little change to the “content” of courses.  
(See OESSTA website, <http://oessta.blogspot.ca/>)

Big changes are:

1. The adoption of an Inquiry Model of instructional practice.
2. The integration of Discipline-Based Thinking concepts across courses.



## The Inquiry Process





<b>Concepts of Disciplinary Thinking across Subjects</b>					
<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Geography</b>	<b>Politics</b>	<b>Economics</b>	<b>Law</b>
Significance	Historical Significance	Spatial Significance	Political Significance	Economic Significance	Legal Significance
Cause and Consequence	Cause and Consequence		Objectives and Results	Cause and Effect	
Continuity and Change	Continuity and Change		Stability and Change		Continuity and Change
Patterns and Trends		Patterns and Trends		Stability and Variability	
Interrelationships		Interrelationships			Interrelationships
Perspective	Historical Perspective	Geographic Perspective	Political Perspective	Economic Perspective	Legal Perspective

The Ontario Curriculum, Social Studies, Grades 1-6; History and Geography, Grades 7-8, 2013 (revised 2013), p. 13



## What does Historical Thinking mean in Ontario?

- Students will learn how to analyze past events and actors through the lens of *historical significance, continuity and change, cause and consequence, and historical perspective taking.*
- Students will learn **how historians make sense of traces of past information** in order to write historical accounts.



## Basic Principles of Historical Thinking

- history **≠** the past
- we do not need to turn students into historians, but rather, to help them ***understand how history is constructed***
- our ***interpretation*** of evidence, and what we leave out, ***changes*** the history we tell



## The Historical Thinking Concepts

OEs

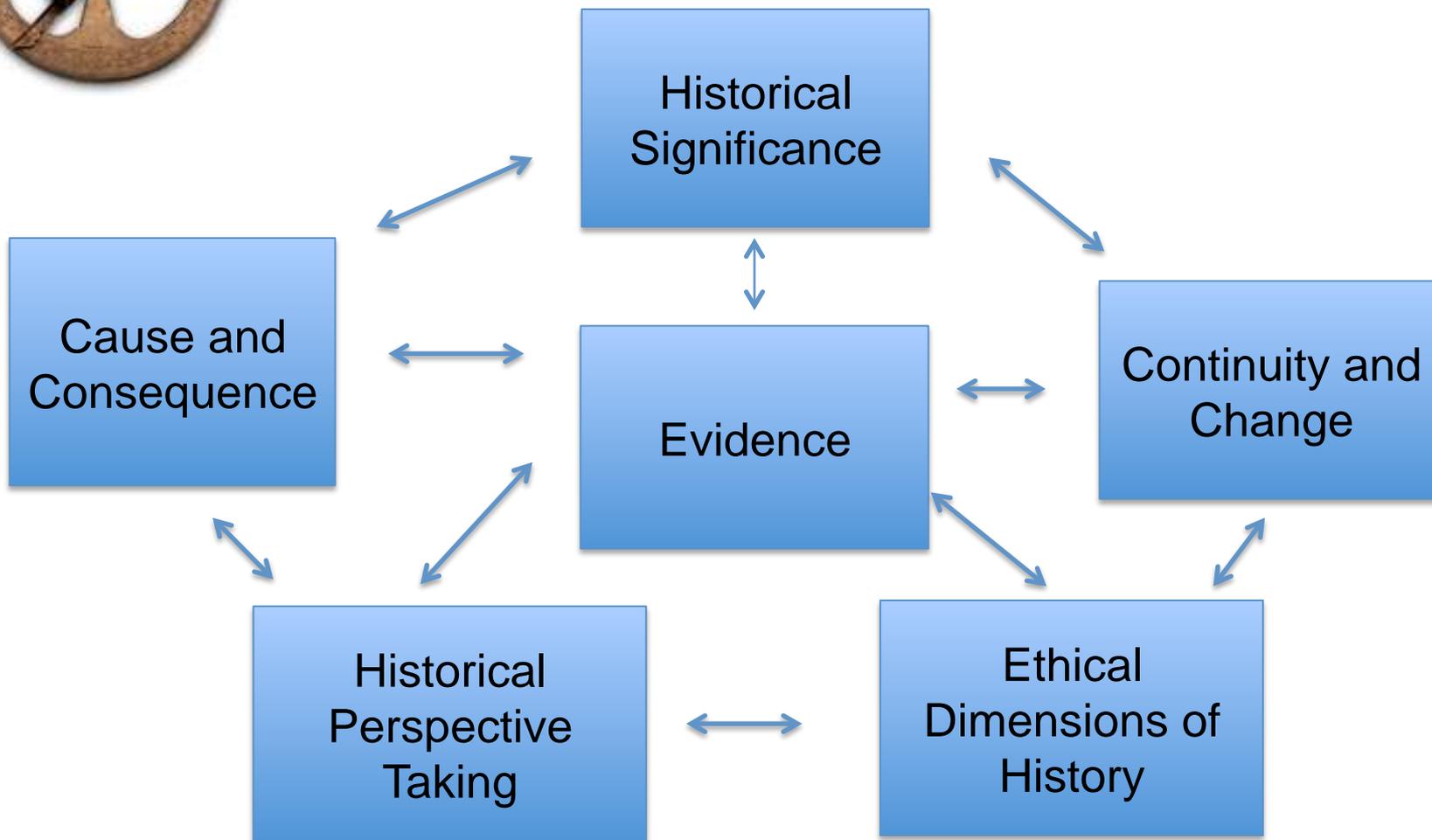
- Historical Significance
- Cause and Consequence
- Continuity and Change
- Historical Perspective-Taking

Inquiry &  
Evaluation

- Use of Primary Source Evidence
- Ethical Dimensions of History



# Concept Integration





# Historical Significance

addresses the question:  
“What is worth studying?”



*Establish*  
**Historical Significance**

How do we decide  
**what**  
and  
**whose**  
stories to tell?



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## Getting Started with This Concept

- Select the three most significant events in Canadian history (Grade 7, 1713-1850)
- Send your three to Alison when finished

### Establish Historical Significance

How do we decide  
**what**  
and  
**whose**  
stories  
to tell?



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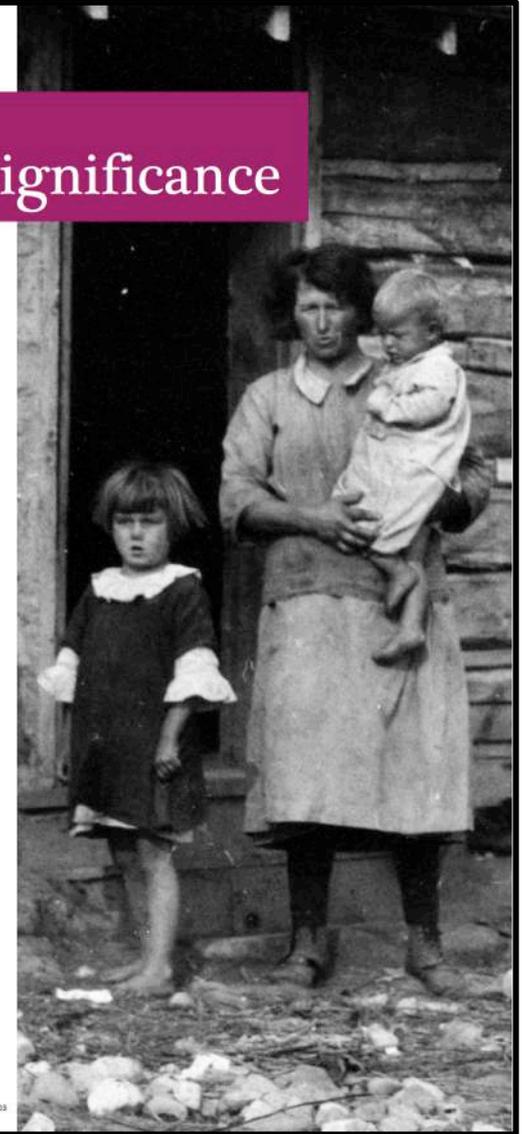


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- After working in pairs or small groups, students would be asked to share their events and try to agree on three as a class
- The purpose of the exercise is not that there are three correct points, but for them to wrestle with the idea of significance

## Establish Historical Significance

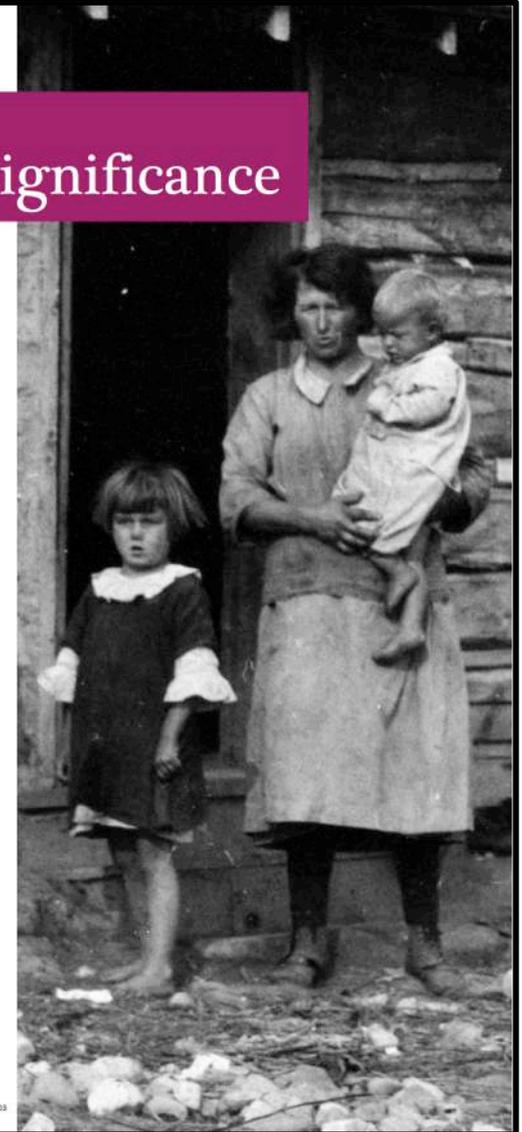
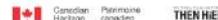
How do  
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## Historical Significance Criteria

1. Resulted in change (deep consequences over a long period of time)
2. Revealing (sheds light on emerging issues today)

*Establish*  
**Historical Significance**

How do we decide **what** and **whose** stories to tell?

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## Working With This Concept

- Begin with **personal significance** activity, or events/persons of **local significance**
- can use this concept for summative assessment, for projects, or as a focus for instruction

*Establish*  
**Historical Significance**

How do we decide **what** and **whose** stories to tell?

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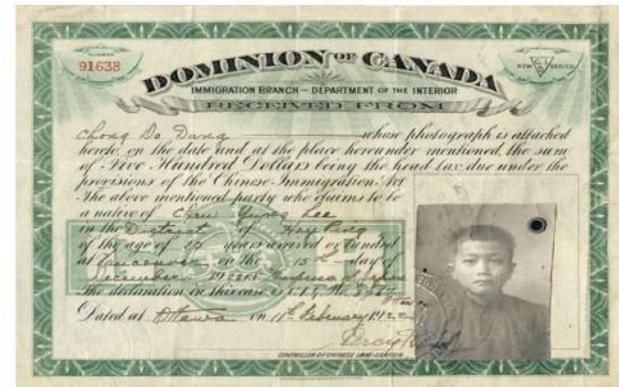
## Use of Evidence

asks us to consider:

- quality of evidence
- conflicting evidence
- various interpretations

### Use Primary Source Evidence

How do we **know**  
what we **know**?



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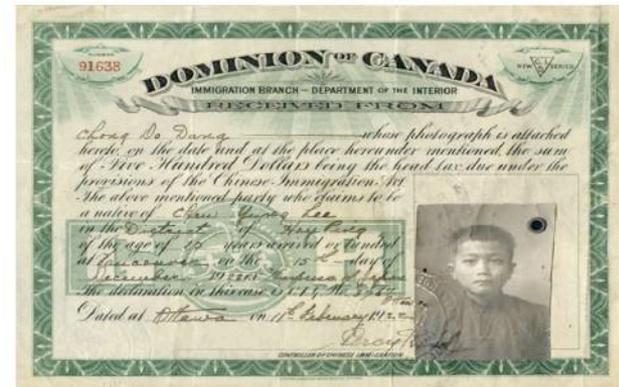


## A Key Big Idea

When you think you know something, ask yourself what evidence you have, what you might have overlooked, or what you could have misinterpreted

### Use Primary Source Evidence

How do we **know**  
what we **know**?



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## An Example

Why did we choose the astrolabe (above) as the logo for The Historical Thinking Project?

**Evidence is powerful**

<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/arts-entertainment/visual-arts/visual-arts-general/champlains-astrolabe-returns-to-canada.html>

## Use Primary Source Evidence

How do we **know**  
what we **know**?



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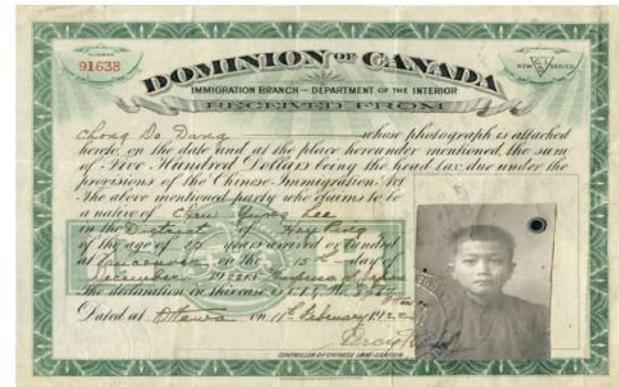


But, stories can be “false” and evidence can be misinterpreted

No conclusive evidence that the astrolabe is Champlain’s. Dates to the time but no record of it in his logs.

## Use Primary Source Evidence

How do we **know**  
what we **know**?



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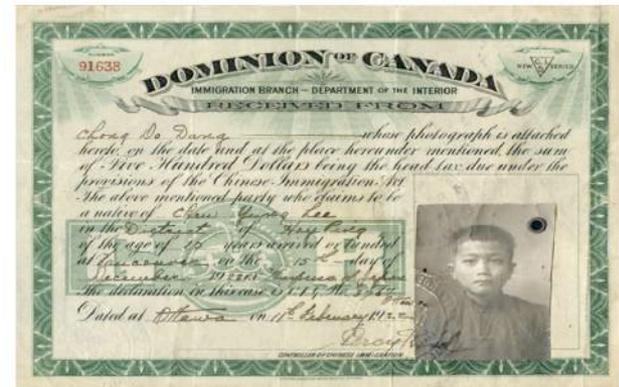


## Evidence Classroom Activity

1. Record everything you've done since you woke up this morning.
2. Place a checkmark beside those items for which there will be a physical trace.
3. Then circle those traces that you believe will remain for some time (will have a permanent record.)

### Use Primary Source Evidence

How do we **know**  
what we **know**?



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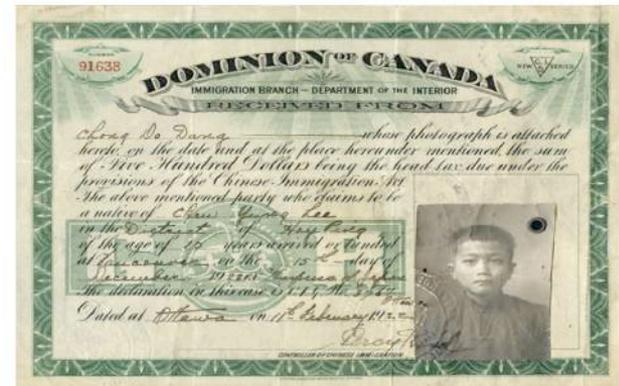
## Debrief

1. If a historian studied the traces what conclusions might he/she make about you?
2. What has been left out? What does this do to the historical record?
3. How might the historian's conclusions change if he/she studied your traces over a longer period of time? Or studied other people's traces as well?

Seixas and Morton. (2013) *The Big Six*. Toronto: Nelson Education.

## Use Primary Source Evidence

How do we **know**  
what we **know**?



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# Historical Perspective-Taking

Asks us not to judge the past by today's standards

## Take Historical Perspectives

How can  
we **ever**  
understand  
the  
past?



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## A Key Big Idea

To understand a person, event or development we need to explore the social, political, and economic conditions of the time.

### Take Historical Perspectives

How can  
we **ever**  
understand  
the  
past?



THE LATEST FASHIONS

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## Working From the Poster

Begin with the 5Ws.

Use this information to explore bigger ideas around images of beauty in history – including the removal of ribs.

Use poster as anchor chart to remind them to withhold judgment.

Take  
**Historical Perspectives**

How can  
we **ever**  
**understand**  
the  
past?

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## Continuity and Change

Asks us to consider *similarities* and *differences* in the lives and conditions of societies that came before us

### Identify Continuity & Change

Does **change** always mean **progress**?



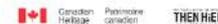
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# Cause and Consequence

Shifts our focus to the multiple causes and consequences of events

Analyze

## Cause & Consequence

What are the **causes** that are hidden from view?



Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library



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*Understand*  
**Ethical Dimensions of History**

What do historical injustices and sacrifices mean for us **today?**



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## Ethical Dimensions of History

Meaningful history does not “neutralize” past events



## Integrating Historical Thinking: How Do I Actually Do This?

### Specific activities

- *The Big Six* (Nelson, 2013), *Teaching About Historical Thinking* (TC2, 2006)

### Selected lessons that integrate HT

- The Historical Thinking Project website, [www.historicalthinking.ca/lessons](http://www.historicalthinking.ca/lessons)
- Teaching History.org  
<http://teachinghistory.org/best-practices>
- Stanford History Education Group  
[http://sheg.stanford.edu/home\\_page](http://sheg.stanford.edu/home_page)



## Integrating Historical Thinking: How Do I Actually Do This?

### **What other teachers have done:**

- two or three concepts integrated in one term/semester, the others in the next
- one concept per topic/unit, one question on a concept per test/assignment
- all concepts evaluated in summative task



## Integrating Historical Thinking: How Do I Actually Do This?

### Major project that focuses on historical thinking

- teach and assess concepts across course, linked to the project OR
- teach and assess concepts during a block of time devoted to the project

<http://www.canadashistory.ca/Awards/Teaching/Articles/2012/Bharucha-and-San-Martin.aspx>



## Next Steps – Historical Thinking in Your Classroom/Department/Board

### **Integrate concepts across entire course**

- restructure course so that kids are “doing” history and working with the 6 concepts throughout the course

<http://www.canadashistory.ca/Awards/Teaching/Articles/2012/Janet-Thompson.aspx>



## Next Steps – Historical Thinking in Your Classroom/Department/Board

### **Work Backwards from Summative Assessment**

Ian Duncan, Halton DSB

<http://historicalthinking.ca/resources/assessment>

Rachel Collishaw, Ottawa-Carleton DSB

<http://collishaw.pbworks.com/w/file/53987227/CHC2D%20Summative%20%232%20Interview.doc>



## Next Steps – Historical Thinking in Your Classroom/Department/Board

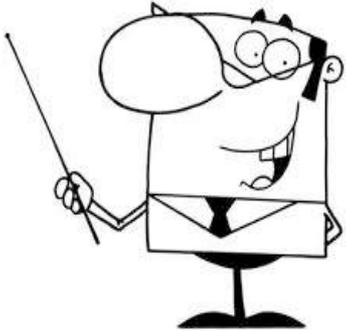
### **The truth about integrating historical thinking:**

- have to do more with less
  - thinking concepts are not skills that can be added on if there is time
- restructure course around big ideas rather than narrative historical content
  - consider the content blocks you can cut



## Should you be worried about the new curriculum in Ontario?

### **Absolutely not!**



- You are already doing great things in your courses and museums.
- Keep what you love and you know is successful.
- Use this opportunity to weed out the stuff that isn't great, stop covering content quickly, dig more deeply into the content you do cover, and create great thinkers.



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