

Article review: Tupper, J. (2005). We interrupt this moment: Education and the teaching of history. *Canadian Social Studies*, 39(2)

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The author of this article encourages educators to apply critical analysis to the educational mandate of national museum exhibits. In Trofanenko's opinion national museums are "public representations of the past" that form the "collective consciousness" of the past and are places "where the public affirms the museums authority to define and educate" (p. 271). She actively questions the authority of this institution to construction narratives of national identity.

Jennifer Tupper, the author of the article, delves into the issues surrounding the bias and narrow History that is included (or excluded) in today's curriculum in Social Studies classrooms around Canada. She argues that students are receiving an altered historical understanding due to the heavy emphasis on men in history. The result of this emphasis has been a significant lack of the female voice in history classrooms. She states that this narrow view of history is a detriment to students' understanding of history and their development as Canadian Citizens. Tupper argues that there is a need for a new approach to teaching history that includes women through two methods including 're-historation' and interpretation.

Re-historation in this article is used in the context of restoring something that exists but has been abandoned or forgotten.

This term is used in the context of women within Canadian history. Women's history is the subject that exists but has been forgotten and is in need for restoration. Interpretation is defined as a vehicle through which thinking and learning might be transformed. Interpretation allows a process of critical re-reading as a way to re-present what has been left out of the curriculum. According to the article women's role in history should be the focus of interpretation and re-historation for social studies teachers to ensure that students receive a well-rounded historical education.

Tupper outlines the important role of a social studies teacher throughout the article. Stating that teachers in the field have the power to perpetuate historical narratives and therefore reproducing a male centralized society. She argues that the only way to avoid this self-prophecy is to encourage teachers to re-think history and teach it in new ways allowing females to become part of the picture. Tupper's over arching argument is, in my mind, correct. There is a need to rethink the way in which history is taught in the classroom - that social studies teachers need to consistently interpret what they know, what the students know, and what the resources you're using in the classroom convey. I believe; however, that her argument could be made stronger by ensuring that not only women and

gender were the subjects of this focus but also other neglected subjects such as; minority groups in Canada, the environment, and arguably social history in general. If one chooses to interpret only gender history then we will end up with the same fundamental problem of a narrow history being taught. Holistic pictures are still not being illustrated for students.

I am also wary of the use of interpretation in the history classroom. When an individual teacher re-interprets history they will always be bring in their own basis to the historical topic. It is likely in Tupper's class her interpretation would involve a significant aspect of gender history, but one must also ensure that personal basis don't allow the leaving out of other important aspects of (our)story.

Another element that I believe would have made the argument stronger is to emphasize the use of multiple resources, voices and points of view within the classroom. The examples used in the article indicate the use of one curriculum, one text, and one museum. To avoid the construction of a narrow history for the students I believe it is imperative to bring in multiple resources such as texts, trade book, field trips and guest speakers to minimize narrow perspectives as much as possible. Tupper outlines the need for 'pre-conditioning' the students before presenting certain materials to them. Her example of a field trip to the RCMP Museum asking students various framing questions such as: "whose story is being told and whose is not?". I believe this is an important tool for teachers to have in their toolbox to open the student's minds to step out of their pre-conceived notions of history. This should however be used

with multiple resources rather than just one narrow resource such as a subject specific museum. This allows students to make connections to the bigger picture of Canadian history and what is missing from multiple records.

I will use Tupper's recommendation to use both re-historation and interpretation in my future classroom. I will also use the method of pre-conditioning my students to ensure that they are interacting with the materials in my class with an open mind, aware of biases and whose stories are not being told. An example of this would be to bring in a variety of newspapers from the period of time the class is studying. The papers would be left wing, right wing, and center to ensure that many voices are heard. I'd have student's analyses what parts of the population the newspapers were directed toward and what kinds of stories appeared in each. I would hope that this activity would foster students' ability to think critically and would show students a historical period from multiple different perspectives.

The article provides a valid argument for the need of re-historation and interpretation in social studies classrooms around Canada. Although I believe the argument could have been made stronger by focusing on (our)story rather than history or (her)story, I would bring these concepts into my classroom. The need to pre-condition students and foster a critical mind when interacting with history is another point that I would bring into my future classroom.