



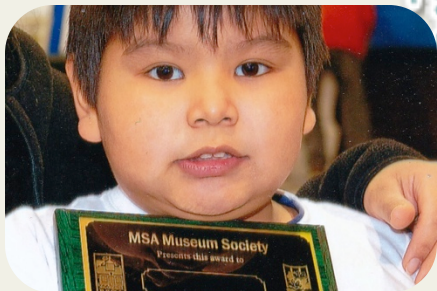
[Name of Coordinator]

[Name of Regional Fair]

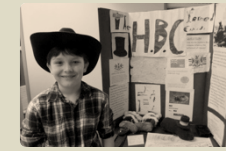


Making History Meaningful

BC Heritage Fairs Society



“Purpose and relevance are something that the iGeneration students demand. They want to create real products and share them with a wider audience.” (Sheldrake and Watkins)



The Challenge

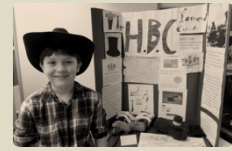
- Many students are unable to see the use of school history.

A 2005 survey of UK students found few who could explain the purpose of learning history. Some typical answers:

“I think it is in the curriculum because people need to learn about it.”

“Don’t know. Don’t care.”

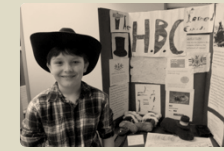
- Student understanding is often “piecemeal and confused”, unconnected to the big ideas in history.



The Challenge

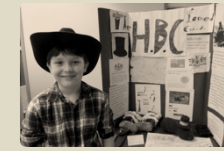
- The provincial curriculum fails to connect personal and family history to larger narratives and to contemporary Canada

Canadians and Their Pasts, a telephone survey of 3,419 adult residents of Canada found that family history was seen by Canadians as by far the most important aspect of the past and "*'autobiographical memory,' a personal version of history is a first step in the development of a 'usable past.'*"



What would make meaningful history?

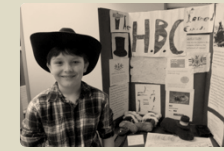
- Students understand the **purpose** of a topic, project, or learning goal.
- Students recognize the **connections** of local history to larger narratives and see the connections amongst events over time — the “big picture”.
- Students develop **curiosity** about the past and learn the process of **inquiry**.



Meaningful History in Heritage Fairs



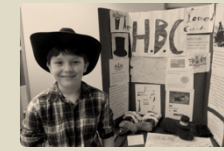
- Students choose their topics, which are often **connected** to family or local history, although the teacher needs to guide students to connect the local to larger narratives.
- The showcase of research gives a **purpose** and can build confidence and self-esteem.



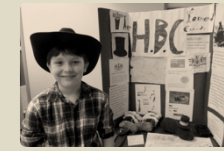
Meaningful History in Heritage Fairs



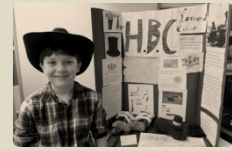
- The Historic Places and other regional awards encourage **connections** to history around us.
- **Inquiry** is the core of the Heritage Fair unit.
- The Fairs also have cross-curricular **connections** with current "best practice" pedagogy, such as project-based, inquiry, critical thinking and authentic learning.



Heritage Fairs fulfil a hunger for students to see how their story is part of Canada's heritage and to have an opportunity to celebrate it. The connections and purpose are expressed in the following letter from an Abbotsford teaching assistant:

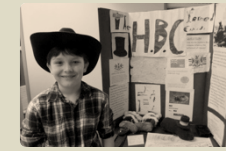


“Before Heritage Fair, Andrew was a very shy, child who missed a lot of school. He chose to do his Heritage Fair Project with his grandfather on the ‘Salmon People.’ It was a huge struggle (but) his project made it to the district level. His parents got involved more than they had in all his five years at the school. Accepting the Aboriginal Excellence award in front of his peers left him proud. He learned a full year of reading in two months, greeted students and teachers in the hall, walked with confidence, and spoke more clearly. His grandfather said he was so impressed that Andrew spoke about the Salmon People. ‘I never knew he was listening.’”

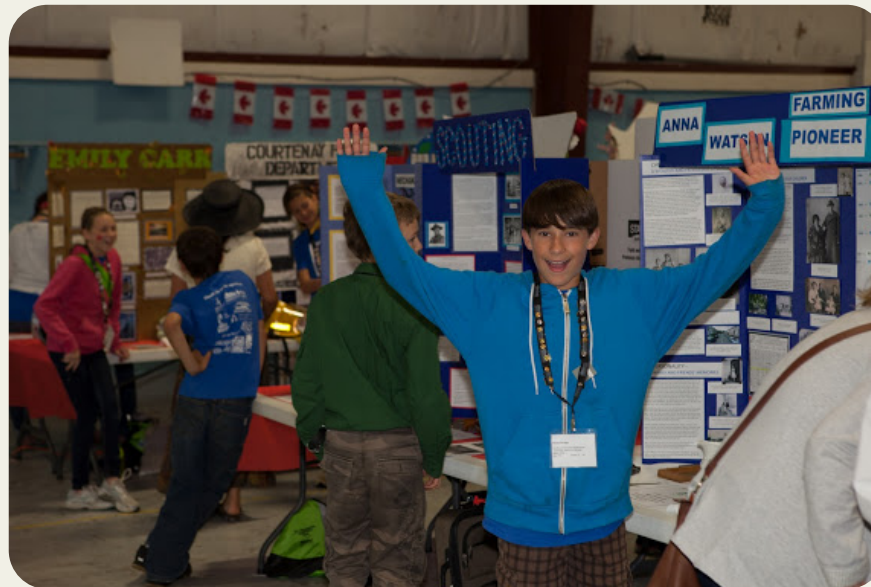


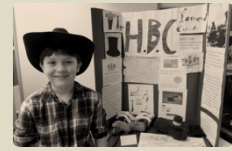
Heritage Fairs and the B.C. Curriculum

Heritage Fairs already fit the curriculum for Social Studies. Recent proposed changes to the curriculum from the Ministry should make it easier for teachers to do Fairs by giving "more time and flexibility to allow students to explore their interests and passions." The Ministry also proposes developing learning outcomes "through the conceptual framework developed by the Historical Thinking Project." And...

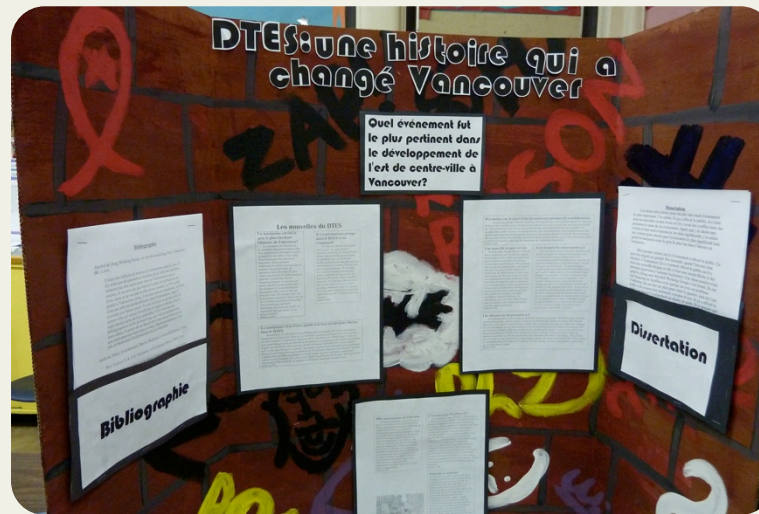


Heritage Fairs and Historical Thinking Concepts Give Still More Meaning

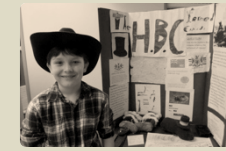




Historical Significance highlights purpose and connection to a larger narrative.



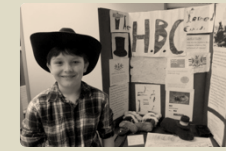
What was the most significant event in the history of the Downtown Eastside?



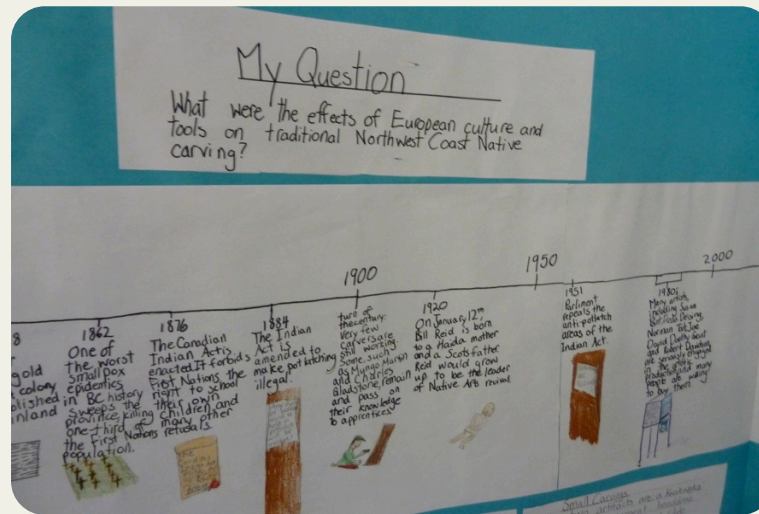
Evidence shows practical application and teaches inquiry.



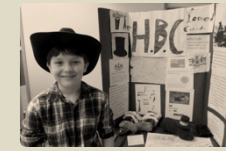
Kristen Schulz's "Heritage of My Home"



Change and Continuity connects events to a coherent theme.



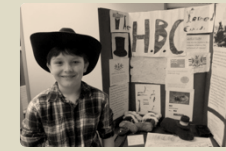
What were the effects of culture and tools on traditional Northwest Coast Native carving?



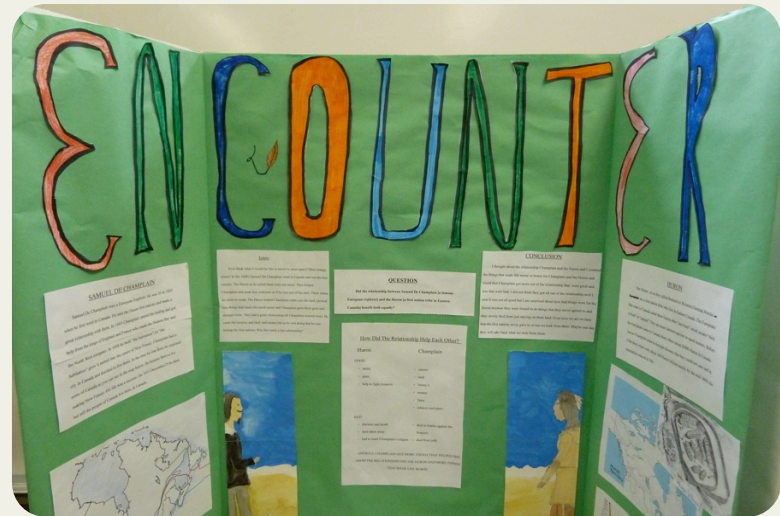
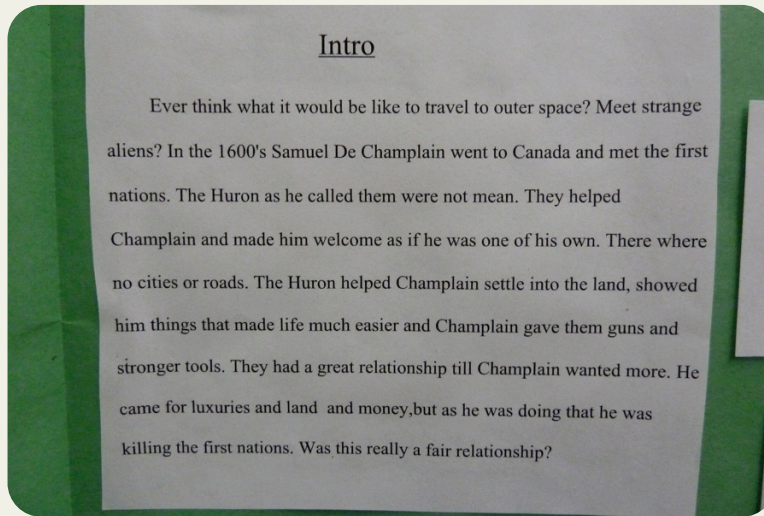
Cause and Consequence begins with curiosity about a historical question or mystery and may have personal connections.



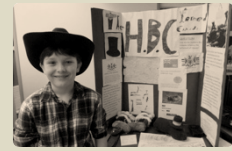
How did the Hudson's Bay Company influence settlement?
(grandparents were trappers who sold furs to the HBC)



Perspective Taking engages students' curiosity and helps students see people of the past as real figures, although they also need to recognize the often great distance in world view and context between ourselves and the people of the past.



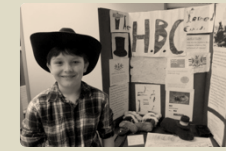
Grade 4 student's project on First Nations and Champlain compares their encounter to travel in outer space.



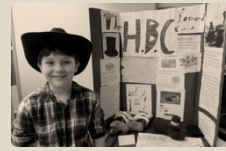
The Ethical Dimension has practical application when students consider how to respond to historical legacies.



Should the Canadian government apologize for the treatment of immigrant children?

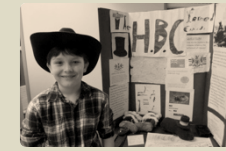


These students interviewed their grandparents who had attended residential schools.



Some Challenges Remaining for Teachers

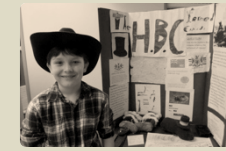
- helping students develop meaningful inquiry questions
- managing multiple student projects
- teaching students to read primary sources for evidence
- finding primary sources for diverse topics
- supporting students to be open-minded and fair-minded towards controversial aspects of history



Conclusion

Our students should be able to articulate why they are studying history and see themselves in the larger fabric of human experience.

The Heritage Fairs program strives for history teaching that encourages children and young people to become curious about the past, to develop their own inquiry questions and use evidence to answer them, and to build a deeper understanding of the present by **engaging with** and **questioning** the past.



References

- Rosie Sheldrake and Neal Watkin. "Teaching the iGeneration", *Teaching History*, 150, March, 2013, p. 30-35.
- Richard Harris and Terry Haydn. "Children's ideas about school history and why they matter," *Teaching History*, 132, September, 2008. p. 40-48.
- Gerald Friesen, Del Muise et David Northrup. "Variations on the Theme of Remembering: A National Survey of How Canadians Use the Past," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, vol. 20, n° 1, 2009, p. 221-248.