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## *History Education in the Anthropocene*

*Heather E. McGregor*

*Sara Karn*

*Jackson Pind*

*Queen's University*

### **Abstract:**

As much as history education is supposed to be about the past, it is oriented towards the future. History teachers are guided by a variety of purposes, such as cultural inheritance, critical and disciplinary thinking, identity formation and personal development, or activism and social change. Each of these purposes is imbued with particular notions of memory, citizenship and other values relevant to preparing young people for the future. While it may not always be explicit, a prevailing assumption in history education, as with Canadian curriculum, generally speaking, is that the future is a place and time to which we should look forward, as it will improve upon the past. But as we are coming to know, that may not be a responsible or accurate frame to pass on to the next generation. What theoretical and practical supports can help history educators renew their teaching in light of the Anthropocene, and particularly the climate crisis? In seeking to attune history education to a relational, ecological and ethical future orientation, we turned to the fields of Indigenous studies, environmental history and climate change education. We suggest some new, and even radical, directions we might look as a community of history educators. In doing so, we hope to nurture solidarity in navigating uncertainty together. With a set of common questions, assumptions and goals to guide us, we

may find ways of teaching and learning that respond more meaningfully to the precarity of our times.

**Keywords:** history education; Anthropocene; climate change

### **Biographical Notes**

Heather E. McGregor is an assistant professor of curriculum theory in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. Her research and publishing portfolio spans the fields of Arctic and Indigenous education, historical thinking/consciousness, decolonizing research and, most recently, teaching history in the Anthropocene.

Sara Karn is a PhD student in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. Her research explores historical empathy in Canadian history and social studies education. She has taught at both the elementary and secondary levels and was a program educator for the Vimy Foundation's experiential learning programs.

Jackson Pind is a third year PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at Queen's University. As a history educator he strives to incorporate traditional Indigenous teachings and decolonial pedagogies into his practice. His doctoral research examines the history of Indian Day Schools in Ontario.