**Helen Snelson – CHT Professional Evaluation**

The ongoing, evidence-based debate about out shared past informs our present. The respectful pursuit of a better understanding of the many decisions and dilemmas of people in the past builds community. The study of history is also life-enriching. It therefore follows that the teaching of history as an academic discipline is fundamentally important. I remain restless to improve my own practice and I am committed to furthering the quality of history teaching in my local area, nationally and further afield. This summarises why I would like to become a Chartered History Teacher.

At the heart of my practice, in both school classrooms and now with teacher trainees, is modelling a thirst for knowledge, the connecting of ideas and endless curiosity about the past and how to interpret it. The HA QM assessor who watched me teach in 2013 described the lesson as inspiring. My value-added for the new A Level in 2017 was +0.3. I start building that sort of success from Year 7 with enquiry-based lesson sequences that seek to develop students’ subject-knowledge, conceptual understanding and support them to develop their own thinking. I use the teaching strategies that I think will best support the learning I want to achieve, and I have never paid much attention to top-down mantras about the ‘best way’, while keeping connected with ideas about ‘best practice’. A recent example would be a two-lesson sequence for the new GCSE thematic study. (E1) I deliberately chose the question: ‘Why had women in Britain NOT achieved the vote by 1914?’ for lesson one, following long experience about how much support students of this age need to grasp the complexity of the contribution of the 1914-18 War to the achievement of women’s suffrage.

I have been a subject leader for 12 years. In this role I have taken history well beyond my classroom. We have a course called ‘Investigating York’, where we take advantage of York’s rich past to study local history, local politics, leisure and tourism with Year 7. For example, the changing role of local government, including visiting the medieval council chamber and the new West Offices. Displays in the school corridors often have an historic theme (E2). In addition, our school Creative Arts Festivals are under-pinned by an understanding of the historic context. In 2015 ‘Medieval Merriment’ was shared with students and parents in the months up to the event (E3) and the history student team researched, produced and performed a Time Travellers’ Guide to 15th century York (E4). I am now working with the Classics Department on this year’s project to look at women’s voices across time. My department was the first in the country to be awarded the HA Quality Mark at Gold Level.

Learning Outside the Classroom is a long-standing passion of mine. I have written the relevant chapter in both editions of ‘Debates in History Teaching’ (Davies, I, ed. Routledge, 2017). I organised for the York schools to co-ordinate their Centenary Battlefields places onto one tour, then worked with York Minster to develop a service of commemoration on our return and co-ordinated the York-wide legacy project for the York Castle Museum Community Room, where students from across the city produced a researched display called: ‘1916: it’s more than the Somme!’ (E5). In 2016, I organised student research and a memorial walk to commemorate the 1916 zeppelin raid on York with another local school and our local history group. We made a HistoryPin of it all: <https://www.historypin.org/en/zeppelin-raid-on-york-2-may-2016/> and students wrote ‘real time’ tweets of the event that went out via: @zeppelinWW1live. Our long-standing partnership with a German school near Berlin has included projects on topics such as national identities, questions about Europe and voices of the Great War(E6). I am now extending this work to my teacher trainees. We have an upcoming medieval project, linking with the Centre for Christianity and Culture so that trainees can work with a historian in the York Minster archive to design lesson sequences, for example: ‘Thomas Becket - a medieval life’. Watch this space for publication to the wider teaching community!

I have always sought to contribute to this wider history teaching community. I am a co-ordinator of the YorkClio network and I maintain and contribute to our web-page: [www.yorkclio.wordpress.com](http://www.yorkclio.wordpress.com). I am also working with Alex Ford at Leeds Trinity University to promote subject-specific ITT and CPD in the Yorkshire region: <https://yhepsite.wordpress.com/>. I am a member of the HA Secondary Committee and will be the new chair from September 2018. I have contributed several articles to Teaching History over the years, for example on the topic of why historical stories disappear in TH135. I am leading the Secondary Committee effort to try to engage more teachers with the riches the HA has to offer via an online blog initiative: [www.onebighistorydepartment.wordpress.com](http://www.onebighistorydepartment.wordpress.com). I regularly present workshops at the HA and SHP conferences and to regional events, such as the HA Medieval Tower of London event and the Northern (now Yorkshire) History Forum. An example of research-based resources developed can be found here: <https://yorkclio.wordpress.com/2017/05/15/teaching-the-domesday-survey/>. Ruth Lingard and I are currently working on research-based resources to help teachers improve their teaching of disability history. These have, in part, led to the idea of ‘slot-ins’. (E7). I acted as a teacher adviser to Ian Dawson for the recent Teaching Medieval History publication, following the award of an HA Teaching Fellowship with distinction. I am currently part of the SHP-Hodder writing team for a new KS3 textbook series to be published in 2019.

I am an active member of EUROCLIO – the European network of history educators. I have taken the lead in designing and disseminating learning activities to accompany key content, especially on the Frist World War and Changing Europe post-45: <https://www.beta.historiana.eu>. I have been part of the advisory team for a new e-learning activity builder and the demo is here: <https://demo.historiana.eu/#/builder>. I am now part of a project called ‘Learning to Disagree’ which aims to promote better teaching of sensitive and controversial issues in post-conflict societies. I was recently in Serbia delivering training on techniques for classroom debate and discussion.

I hope that this has given you a flavour of my approach to history teaching and that you will consider awarding me the status Chartered History Teacher.