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Editorial

IJHLTR is now entering its fifth year. The journal has kept its eyes firmly on the basic premise that led to its foundation: i.e. to serve as a forum for reporting research and scholarship in the field of History Education at the interface of theory, scholarship, research, policy and practice. As such, we have covered a wide and varied number of topics and issues, and presented findings in different ways. Since the journal's inception it has reported on initiatives that prominent figures in the field of History Education have led. Each annual edition contains two volumes.

The last two editions of IJHLTR for 2003 and 2004 indicate its scope and remit. In Volume 3/1, January 2003, we published papers delivered at a symposium that the late and much missed and lamented Robert Phillips had organised. The British government's Economic and Social Sciences Research Council, the main funding body for educational research in the UK, funded the symposium held on the theme 'British Island Stories: History, Schools and Nationhood'. This symposium was an important element in Robert's related ESRC project. At the heart of Robert's seminar was the key question: what is history for in schools? Instead of treating history narrowly within the context of the curriculum, the symposium took a much wider view: the part that history plays in the construction of our individual and collective identities in the modern world. Volume 3/1's papers not only examined the role of history in the wider curriculum for life in the 21st century but also drew upon the testimony of Ralph Samuel whose contribution 'A case for National History' is as fresh as when it was written during the debate on the English National Curriculum for History in the late 1980s.

The July 2003 edition, Volume 3/2, followed a similar pattern in taking the best papers from an international conference on a particular facet of History Education: the nature and role of textbooks in the teaching of history. Keith Crawford arranged and ran the conference and wrote the editorial. Volume 3/2 highlights the importance of the textbook as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural messages that reflect the values, beliefs and aspirations of particular groups and interests in society. Indeed, in totalitarian societies this has long been recognised as a normal and necessary element in the political education, or rather indoctrination, of their citizens. Jason Nicholls sets the scene for reviewing the importance of textbooks: the other contributions highlight the essentially political education and citizenship role that history has through reporting on research into textbooks in Serbia, Russia and the teaching of the holocaust in Britain and Germany.

In January 2004 IJHLTR in Volume 4/1 branched out in a new direction with the reporting of two major pieces of research. Peter Lee had had a long lasting interest in the work of Jörn Rüsen – Peter's paper on 'Walking backwards into tomorrow' Historical consciousness and understanding history' relates the ideas of Jörn to fundamental assumptions about the nature of History Education. Peter examines some elements of Jörn's theory of history and historical consciousness. His paper makes a preliminary and tentative attempt to tease out the ways in which Rüsen's theory may be helpful or problematic for thinking about History Education's role in orienting young people in time, and in particular the extent to which his typology of the ontogeny of historical consciousness may be useful for researchers. As such, Peter makes a major theoretical contribution to the debate on the nature and purpose of History Education.

Robert Guyver and Jon Nichol's paper on the professional development of trainees being educated to teach history as a subject in the primary school curriculum is of

considerable relevance to all those engaged in the professional development of entrants to the teaching profession who will teach history to 5-11 year olds. The paper is based upon Robert's research from 1993-2002 for his doctorate. The paper takes Shulman's knowledge bases for teaching paradigm and subsequent research into it. The findings illuminate both the nature of the knowledge bases that trainee teachers of history develop in order to become effective teachers and the unique role that HEIs play in this process. The two main conclusions from the research were the valuable, seminal role that HEIs have in developing the personal and professional persona of young teachers that affects their orientation towards teaching and the importance of grounding expert teaching in an academic discipline's syntax. Teaching that reflects syntactic academic understanding in turn empowers pupils to assimilate the discipline's meta-cognitive processes, skills, concepts and protocols that they need to 'do history', i.e. the first and second order conceptual understanding, the problem solving, creative thinking and active learning that enable pupils to 'do history' and thus construct their own historical understanding.

In the July 2004 edition, Volume 4/2, we report the outcomes of a new venture, the work of the History Educators International Research Network [HEIRNET]. We had felt that there was an ecological niche for an organisation that would enable colleagues in the field of History Education to meet and share research ideas and findings. Nationally we had already taken steps to establish research networks: the History Education and Heritage Centre at St. Martin's and the History Education Centre at Exeter. HEIRNET would mirror in a more tangible form the international aims and aspirations of IJHLTR. HEIRNET would complement the excellent work in the UK of bodies like the History Teacher Educators Network [HTEN] and the Primary Educators NAC. Indeed, we are pleased to report that HTEN has given and continues to give IJHLTR its full support and backing. The idea of HEIRNET was greeted positively, even enthusiastically, on all sides. Accordingly in July 2004 we held our first international conference at St. Martin's College, Ambleside.

The HEIRNET conference had two dimensions: a History Educators workshop on using the environment and the research seminar. The workshop was mainly aimed at colleagues from the new states of Eastern Europe – it was well attended and positively received. The research seminar covered many facets of History Education research that are currently of concern – details can be found at www.heirnet.org. There were over forty participants from ten countries and four continents: Africa, America, Europe and Asia. HEIRNET is continuing to be proactive. In July 2005 it is holding a seminar on *Identity and Museum Education* at the English government's Qualifications and Communications Agency and in September 2005 a round table seminar at the European Conference on Educational Research in Dublin. Next year HEIRNET will be meeting in South Africa: we also hope that History Education will become one of the themes of the ECER from 2006, enabling us to de facto run a HEIRNET symposium within the carapace of the ECER.

Apart from the HEIRNET conferences our aim was that HEIRNET would fill a more general gap in the area of History Education research and related support. In the United Kingdom the governments of all three mainland countries recognise the importance of networks of scholars and researchers. With the change in funding in England towards supporting groups that produce world class research we are pursuing the idea of government bodies and the funding agencies recognising the existence of groups like HEIRNET. Hopefully they will support them in relation to the development of evidence-based policy and practice that takes fully into account scholarship and research. One aspect of networks and networking with their related conferences, symposia, publications and dissemination is the involvement of

administrators, policy makers and politicians. This is a major aspect of HEIRNET and IJHLTR.

The conference papers from HEIRNET 2004 will be the focus of this and the next two volumes of IJHLTR. Volume 4/2's papers address the crucial area of cognition and history in relation to children, pupils and adults. The eleven papers are wide ranging: cumulatively they touch upon concerns that are central and relevant to the History Education community. It would be invidious to pick out any paper as being of more importance and relevance than any other: as History teacher educators we have both already drawn heavily upon them in our teaching and research.

Hilary Cooper and Jon Nichol

Enhancing Collaborative Historical Reasoning by Providing Representational Guidance

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Abstract *The main aim of this study is to promote historical reasoning in a computer-supported collaborative learning environment by providing representational tools. The CSCL environment we used enables pairs of students to collaborate on an historical inquiry task and in writing an essay. Sixty-five student-pairs from pre-university education participated in this research. Representational guidance was offered by a tool for the collaborative construction of an external representation, in order to select and organize information from the sources. Three different representational formats were compared with a control group: an argumentative diagram, an argument list and a matrix. As it is assumed that external representations can support both cognitive and interaction processes, we expected that using this tool would result in more historical reasoning, in the chat as well as in the text. The analyses included analyses of interaction processes in the chat, the quality of the constructed representation, the quality of the essay and the scores on the individual post test. The results indicate that each representational format has its own affordances and constraints. For example, Matrix users talked more about historical changes, whereas Diagram users were more focused on the balance in their argumentation. However, this did not result in differences in the quality of historical reasoning in the essay, nor in outcomes on the post-test.*

Keywords: Computer-supported collaborative learning, Historical reasoning, External representations, Collaborative writing

Introduction

Current trends in the field of learning and instruction stress the importance of active knowledge construction and collaborative learning. Computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) aims at enhancing and supporting peer interaction and the joint construction of products by the use of technology. However, research has shown that using a CSCL-environment is no guarantee for productive student interaction or positive effects on learning. Therefore, important research questions are: what kind of interaction processes promote collaborative knowledge construction and how can such interaction be provoked and supported by the design of the learning environment and tools? In this study we focus on promoting historical reasoning through a collaborative writing task in a computer-supported environment. Historical reasoning can be considered an important aim in history education. Historical reasoning consists of several components, such as (1) situating historical phenomena in time, (2) describing changes or continuity, (3) explaining the past, (4) discussing trustworthiness of sources, (5) taking a point of view and supporting this with arguments and (6) the use of historical concepts. Historical reasoning can be reflected both in talking and writing. Collaboration on a writing task can be a powerful method to engage students in historical reasoning. Research in the field of writing to learn has shown that a writing task can deepen students' knowledge and understanding (Klein, 1999), and may result in deeper historical understanding (Voss & Wiley, 1997; Boscolo & Mason, 2001). Moreover, *collaborative writing*, by which we mean co-authoring a text, can trigger critical reflection, externalisation of thinking and immediate feedback (Gere & Stevens, 1985). Especially, the writing of an argumentative text may result in a productive discussion, for learners may have different views or use different arguments. Lastly, a small group inquiry task in which students jointly write an essay are more often used in current Dutch history education.

In this study we aim to support historical reasoning in a CSCL-environment by adding tools for the joint construction of an external representation, in order to select and organise information for text writing. Collaboratively constructing an external representation can be meaningful because of the communicative and cognitive affordances (Suthers & Hundhausen, 2003). It can contribute to a shared understanding and a joint problem space between co-learners, and enables to focus on salient knowledge. Moreover, it stimulates the process of elaboration, for it can refine and structure the content of students' knowledge and makes participants aware of gaps in their knowledge. The construction of particular types of external representations may support particular components of historical reasoning. For example, the construction of a causal diagram may provide guidance when learners are asked to explain a historical phenomenon, whereas for example a matrix can be a useful format to organize aspects of change and continuity.

In this study we investigated the influence of the construction of three different kinds of external representations: a diagram, a list and a matrix. The main question of this study is whether and how the construction of different representations influences historical reasoning, both during collaborative processes in the chat discussions, and in the essay and the learning outcomes.

Method

Design

In an experimental design, we compared the influence of three types of representations on historical reasoning in chat-discussions and learning outcomes. The experimental groups were compared with a control group who performed the same task, without a tool to construct a representation. The study took place at school, during the history lessons, and lasted for six lessons (50 minutes each) in two weeks time. Subjects were 130 students (65 pairs) from six history classes in secondary (pre-university) education, aged 16-17.

The students performed an historical inquiry task, which involved studying historical sources (such as texts from textbooks, different interpretations of historians, photos, tables and interviews) and writing an essay of approximately 1,000 words. The task was to examine whether the changes in the behaviour of the Dutch youth in the sixties of the twentieth century were revolutionary or not. The students did not receive instruction on the subject in advance. The task was made in a computer-supported learning environment called Virtual Collaborative Research Institute (see <http://edugate.fss.uu.nl/vcri>; Jaspers & Erkens, 2002). VCRI is a groupware program that enables students to work collaboratively on an inquiry task and essay writing. Each student works at one computer, physically separated from the partner. Communication takes place by means of chat. Fig. 1 shows the main screen of VCRI in the diagram condition. Information about the task and relevant historical sources can be found in the database menu. The upper left window contains a chat facility and the chat history. The lower left window contains a shared text processor that can be used by taking turns. The upper right window contains a private notepad. In the lower right window, the representational tool is shown (in this case the diagram). The different representational tools are all shared tools. In the control group, no such tool was available.

We compared three representational tools. In the *argumentative diagram* a point of view and arguments pro and contra can be graphically represented. Viewpoint, arguments pro, arguments contra and examples can be represented in text-boxes (each with their own colour) and all boxes can be linked to each other by arrows.

Furthermore, in each box students can refer to the source from which the argument or the example derives. As well as the diagram, the *list* also focuses argumentation. However, whereas an argumentative diagram organizes and links arguments in a 2-dimensional graphical way, the list organizes arguments in a linear way. Students can put their arguments pro and contra below each other. The argumentative diagram and list do not pay explicit attention to more domain-specific aspects of the argumentation process that is required by the task. This task is about historical change. The *matrix* used consists of a table format that can be filled out by the students. In the second column the number of the source can be put down, in the third column students can describe the historical changes (or aspects of continuity) and in the fourth whether they think the change can be defined as revolutionary or not. The last column contains a sort function. Students can categorize the changes in the way they choose, for instance on the type of change (economical, political, cultural). When they push on the sort button, all the changes are sorted.

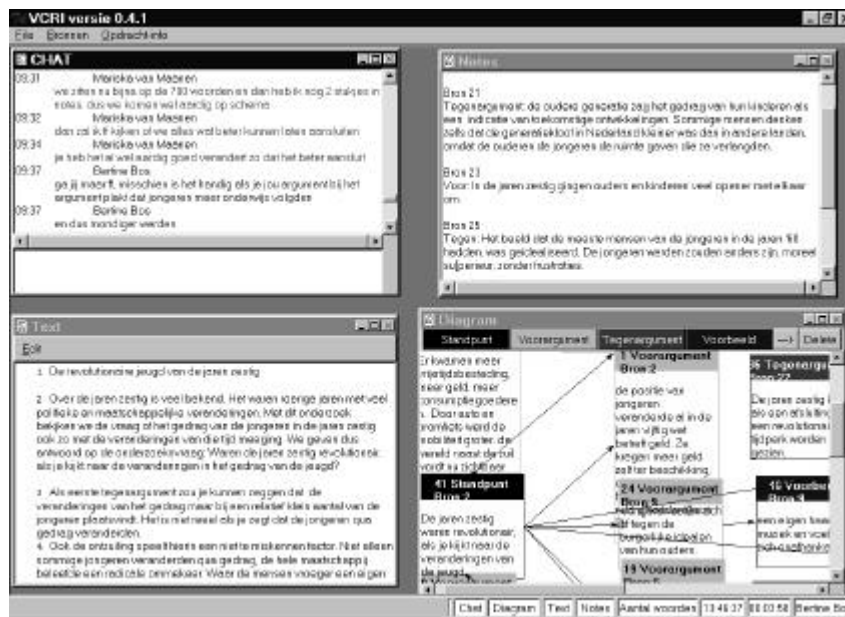


Fig. 1. The main screen of VCRI for the diagram condition

Instruments and analyses

Our analyses focused on the process of collaboration, on the products as outcomes of the collaboration and on individual learning outcomes. All actions made in the CSCL-environment were logged. First, we analysed the interaction processes in the chat protocols by using MEPA, a computer program for Multiple Episode Protocol Analysis (Erkens, 2002, see <http://edugate.fss.uu.nl/mepa>). We coded interaction episodes as historical reasoning episodes when students discuss the past and give an interpretation of the past or of the merit of sources. We distinguished six types of historical reasoning episodes: (1) situating historical phenomena in time, (2) describing the past, (3) describing changes or continuity, (4) explaining the past, (5) discussing trustworthiness of sources, and (6) taking a point of view and supporting this with arguments. Based upon results of research on collaborative learning, we considered interaction episodes productive that were elaborated and constructed by both learners. These episodes were coded as co-elaborated historical reasoning. In TABLE 1 an example of co-elaborated historical reasoning from a pilot study, is provided. In this example Paula and Wendy discuss their point of view on the question whether the sixties were revolutionary or not. Paula and Wendy co-construct their meaning on this subject. First, they talk about which point of view they are taking, and whether they both agree on this. They ask questions which elicit

1	Paula	<i>But what is our opinion?</i>
2	Wendy	<i>To start with, what is your opinion?</i>
3	Paula	<i>The sixties were revolutionary.</i>
4	Wendy	<i>Why?</i>
5	Paula	<i>Because the consequences are still noticeable now.</i>
6	Wendy	<i>Okay, that is true.</i>
7	Paula	<i>But it already started in '50.</i>
8	Wendy	<i>That's true too, but that's got little to do with the revolutionariness, so the sixties were indeed revolutionary!?</i>
9	Paula	<i>If you think so too.</i>
10	Wendy	<i>Yes, sure I do too.</i>
11	Paula	<i>Okay.</i>
12	Wendy	<i>Which arguments pro are we going to use?</i>
13	Paula	<i>That young people became a group, and that they had their own opinion.</i>
14	Wendy	<i>The depillarization* went on strongly.</i>
15	Paula	<i>Yes, and the consumptive society arose.</i>
16	Wendy	<i>People started to think more flexible about sex, which meant greater freedom for young people.</i>
17	Paula	<i>Yes, young people had more freedom anyway, because of their being financially independent they were able to leave their parents more early and they were independent of their parents.</i>
18	Wendy	<i>Exactly.</i>
19	Paula	<i>Okay.</i>

TABLE 1. Example of co-elaborated historical reasoning (fragment of chat protocol, translated from Dutch).

*Depillarization refers to the breakdown of the strict division in socio-religious groups or pillars (Protestants, Catholics, Socialists, and Liberalists) that existed in Dutch society since the beginning of the twentieth century.

elaboration, such as 'What is our opinion?'; 'Why?' and 'Which arguments pro are we going to use?'. They both, in turn, add arguments to support their meaning, and they elaborate upon the reasoning of the partner, as is shown in lines 16 and 17. Second, we analysed the external representations that the students produced. They were scored on the number of arguments pro and contra that were represented. We also scored the number of sources referred to in the representation; the total number of arguments used (arguments pro plus arguments contra) and the balance of arguments pro and contra. Thirdly, the essays were also scored on the six components of historical reasoning. Furthermore, a score was given for the structure for the complete essay. The scoring took into account both amount and quality; for example, the number of explanations given, and the quality of the explanations given. The maximum score on the essay was 60 points. The essays were independently judged by two researchers and differences were discussed until agreement was reached. Fourthly, we measured the individual learning outcomes by a pre-test and post-test: both tests focused on subject knowledge about the sixties, for the aim of the task was to improve subject-matter knowledge. The test contained seven open-answer questions and one multiple-choice question. The items were constructed in line with the components of historical reasoning. Furthermore, the students were asked to give associations on the fifties and with the sixties. The pre-test and the post-test consisted of the same questions, except that for some items different historical sources (for example a different picture or text) were used. The maximum score on both tests was 79. After excluding item 1a, in which the students had to give associations on the fifties, the item homogeneity (Cronbach's alpha) turned out to be acceptable (pre-test 72; post-test 64). Lastly, after finishing the assignment the

students were asked to fill out a questionnaire that contained evaluative questions about the task and the computer environment. We calculated the inter-rater reliability for all variables (including chat, representation and tests); Cohen's kappa turned out to be acceptable (between .69 and 1.00).

Results

Historical reasoning in the chat discussions

We expected that the experimental groups would show more co-elaborated historical reasoning in the chat compared to the control group. Furthermore, we expected that the Matrix would show more reasoning about historical changes, whereas the Diagram would show more discussion about the viewpoint. The results are presented in TABLE 2. Note that TABLE 2 mentions the number of utterances that were part of historical reasoning episodes, thus not the number of episodes. The mean length of the protocols was 361.4 utterances (Sd 171.5), of which 7.4% was coded as historical reasoning. In general, most historical reasoning was about the two most central aspects of the task: the historical changes in the sixties (Change) and the point of view the students would take (Standpoint). A MANOVA conducted on the components of historical reasoning revealed an overall effect ($F(18, 164) = 1.840$; $p = .05$). Significant differences between the conditions were found for the categories Time ($F(3) = 4.745$; $p = .01$) and Change ($F(3) = 4.004$; $p = .05$). The post-hoc test (Dunnett's C) revealed that students in the Matrix condition talked significantly more about historical changes compared to the students in the List condition. This is in line with our expectations. Furthermore, the students in the Control condition made more time references compared to the students in the Diagram condition. With respect to the amount of co-elaboration, the Control and Matrix conditions show the largest amount of co-elaboration. However, although the ANOVA resulted in a marginally significant difference ($F(3,61) = .727$; $p = .052$), the post-hoc tests did not yield any significant difference between the conditions.

Historical reasoning	Diagram (N=16)	List (N=14)	Matrix (N=18)	Control (N=17)
Total historical reasoning utterances	16.7 (14.8)	17.6 (11.0)	34.3 (23.4)	35.2 (35.3)
Time	0.4 (1.1)	1.3 (2.8)	1.2 (3.0)	5.1 (6.5)
Description	3.4 (4.9)	2.3 (3.2)	5.2 (5.9)	6.8 (11.1)
Change	3.4 (5.0)	2.9 (4.2)	14.1 (15.4)	6.1 (11.8)
Explanation	0.4 (1.3)	0.9 (2.7)	1.2 (3.5)	0.8 (2.9)
Source	0.7 (1.8)	0.1 (0.5)	1.4 (5.2)	0.9 (3.0)
Standpoint	8.4 (6.6)	10.1 (7.1)	11.2 (11.5)	15.5 (17.1)
Co-elaborated historical reasoning	6.7 (10.0)	9.6 (10.3)	13.4 (13.7)	23.9 (30.4)

TABLE 2. Mean frequencies and standard deviations of historical reasoning in the chat protocols for the four conditions (N=65)

The constructed representations

Did the jointly constructed representations differ in the three conditions? The results (see TABLE 3) showed an overall effect of the conditions on the total number of

arguments (arguments pro plus arguments contra). Dunnett's C post-hoc tests revealed that both in the List and in the Matrix condition more arguments were used compared to the Diagram condition. In the Matrix most arguments pro were used, next to the List and the Diagram. The post-hoc tests did not show any significant differences on the number of arguments contra. This outcome seems to be in line with the number of sources used in the representation. In the Matrix condition almost all sources were used (a mean of 25, out of 26), in the List condition the mean number of used sources was 21 and in the Diagram condition students used the least number of sources (a mean of 14). A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the conditions and the post-hoc tests showed that this difference was between all three conditions. Additionally, we analysed the balance between the arguments pro and contra. The balance was computed as the difference between the number of arguments pro and the number of arguments contra. So, a larger score means less balance. A one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference between the conditions ($F(2) = 4.916$; $p < .05$). This difference was found between the Diagram and Matrix condition. In line with our expectations, the diagrams showed more balance than the matrices. In the questionnaire, we asked the students to give their opinion about working with the representational tool. About 80% of the students who worked with one of the representational tools ($N=96$) thought it a useful way of working. They thought that the tool helped them to select important information for the essay and to structure this information. Others, who were not so positive about the representational tool, considered the construction of the representation as extra work, or preferred their own way of working instead of the structure that was offered by the representation they used.

	Diagram(N=16)	List (N=14)	Matrix (N=18)	F	p
Total arguments	13.5 (3.7)	17.6 (3.1)	18.6 (2.0)	13.191	.000*
Arguments pro	8.9 (2.4)	10.9 (1.6)	12.5 (1.2)	17.279	.000*
Arguments contra	4.6 (1.9)	6.7 (2.5)	6.1 (1.7)	4.281	.020*
Balance pro and contra	4.3 (2.3)	4.2 (2.8)	6.4 (2.1)	4.916	.012*
Sources	14.3 (4.8)	20.9 (4.5)	25.1 (0.7)	36.155	.000*

$p < .05$

TABLE 3. Mean scores and standard deviations of representation scores for the diagram, list and matrix and the results of analysis of variance ($N=48$)

Learning outcomes: essays and tests

In TABLE 4 we have presented the scores for the categories that we used to describe the quality of the essays. We expected that using a representational tool would result in higher scores on the essay. Furthermore, we expected that students in the Matrix condition would score higher on Change, and students in the Diagram and List condition would score higher on Standpoint. A MANOVA revealed that there were no differences in the overall quality of the essays between the four conditions, nor on the categories Change and Standpoint.

In TABLE 5 the results of the pre and post-test are presented, as well as the maximum scores. A paired samples T-test showed that the students improved on all items of the test ($p = .05$); the only exception was that the students in the List

	Diagram (N=16)	List (N=14)	Matrix (N= 18)	Control (N=17)	Maximu m Score
Time	4.8 (0.8)	5.4 (0.7)	5.0 (0.8)	5.4 (0.9)	6
Concept	6.9 (1.2)	6.4 (1.1)	6.9 (1.3)	7.3 (1.6)	12
Change	6.1 (1.1)	6.5 (0.9)	6.8 (1.2)	6.6 (1.1)	9
Explanation	4.4 (0.8)	4.1 (1.6)	4.6 (1.3)	4.4 (0.9)	9
Standpoint	8.5 (2.5)	10.2 (2.0)	8.8 (2.2)	9.2 (2.2)	15
Source	3.9 (1.1)	4.1 (1.0)	3.9 (1.1)	4.4 (1.2)	6
Structure	1.9 (0.8)	1.9 (0.7)	1.9 (0.7)	1.9 (0.6)	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>36.7 (5.1)</i>	<i>38.6 (4.9)</i>	<i>38.1 (5.3)</i>	<i>39.2 (4.6)</i>	<i>60</i>

TABLE 4. Mean scores and standard deviations and maximum scores for the essays in four conditions (N=65)

condition did not improve on their scores on the Source item. The total score on the pretest turned out to be different for the conditions ($F(3) = 16.172$; $p = .000$). The post-hoc test revealed that the scores in the Diagram and List was higher than the score in the Matrix and Control condition. We therefore used the score on the pretest as a covariate. A MANCOVA, with the total pretest score as a covariate, showed a significant effect of the conditions on the post-test scores ($F(21, 353) = 1.758$; $p = .05$). This effect was found for Concept, Standpoint and Source. Both List and Control scored significantly higher on Concept than Matrix. And the Control group scored higher on both Standpoint and Source compared to the Diagram and List. We expected the Matrix to have higher scores on Change, but this expectation was not met.

	Diagram (N=32)		List (N=28)		Matrix (N= 36)		Control (N=34)		Max. score
	pre test	post test	pre test	post test	pre test	post test	pre test	post test	
Associations	3.1 (1.4)	5.9 (1.0)	3.1 (1.6)	5.3 (1.4)	2.6 (1.9)	5.4 (1.1)	2.0 (1.3)	5.5 (1.2)	7
Time	6.4 (1.6)	7.1 (1.5)	5.9 (1.8)	7.5 (1.3)	5.5 (2.0)	7.3 (1.5)	4.9 (2.5)	7.5 (1.8)	10
Concept	8.1 (2.7)	11.2 (2.4)	8.1 (2.7)	12.1 (2.0)	5.9 (2.5)	9.6 (2.6)	5.4 (2.9)	11.2 (4.4)	16
Change	2.5 (1.3)	4.3 (1.4)	2.6 (1.5)	4.6 (1.5)	1.9 (1.4)	4.2 (1.3)	1.9 (1.3)	4.5 (1.3)	8
Explanation	2.6 (1.9)	5.1 (2.7)	2.5 (1.8)	5.1 (2.3)	1.4 (1.7)	5.0 (2.5)	0.8 (1.1)	5.9(2.4)	12
Standpoint	1.7 (1.2)	3.3 (1.9)	2.1 (1.2)	3.4 (1.4)	1.7 (1.4)	3.5 (1.4)	1.1 (1.2)	3.7 (1.4)	12
Source	3.4 (1.7)	4.2 (1.7)	3.6 (1.7)	4.1 (1.6)	3.0 (1.8)	4.4 (1.7)	2.7 (1.8)	4.6 (1.9)	7
<i>Total</i>	<i>27.8 (437)</i>	<i>41.1 (725)</i>	<i>27.9 (5.5)</i>	<i>42.1 (5.9)</i>	<i>21.8 (6.5)</i>	<i>39.4 (7.6)</i>	<i>18.7 (8.4)</i>	<i>43.0 (7.6)</i>	<i>72</i>

TABLE 5. Mean score and standard deviation of the pre-test and the post-test per condition, and maximum scores (N=130)

Conclusions

In this paper we have reported the results of our study on the effects of the construction of external representations on the collaborative construction of historical knowledge in a CSCL-environment. In the analyses we focused on the collaborative process, the co-constructed products and on individual learning outcomes. In general, the results indicate that a collaborative writing task in a CSCL-environment is a useful task to promote reasoning and learning of history. All students had learned from the task, as the results of the pre-test and the post-test indicate. Moreover, the chat discussions, as well the constructed representations and essays reflected historical reasoning. The amount of historical reasoning in the chat was somewhat less than that we had hoped for. Detailed analyses of the chat protocols showed that the chat was most often used for the coordination of the task. Because typewritten utterances involve a lot of effort, students might confine themselves to what is minimally necessary for the coordination of the task. Furthermore, the chat-protocols showed that the students have a tendency to accept each other's contributions very easily and without criticism. This tendency might be explained by the educational context in which not much attention is given to critical reflection on one's own or other students' contributions and students' tendency to be more focused on the product than on the deep learning.

We assumed that adding a representational tool would result in more historical reasoning. Contrary to what we expected, the addition of a representational tool did not result in more co-elaborated historical reasoning, better essays and higher scores on the post-test. In relation to historical reasoning in the chat, it seemed that this did not only take place in the chat discussion, but also *through* the use of the representational tools. If a student, for example, adds an argument in the diagram or puts some sentences in the shared text editor, he or she does not mention it in the chat. By adding it in the representational tool or text, the argument is in a way communicated to the other student and becomes part of the shared context. This brings us to the conclusion that the representational tool does not only function as a cognitive tool that can elicit elaborative activities, but also as a tool *through which* students communicate and elaborate. A possible explanation for the fact that the experimental groups did not score higher on the essays compared to the control group, might be that students had not enough experience with constructing external representations, left alone how to use this representation for writing an essay. Additional analyses on the number of overlap items in the representation and in the essay suggest that for our participants the List was easier and the Diagram less easy to use for text writing. The comparison between the three different representational formats indicates that each representational format has its own affordances and constraints and that the representational notation has an effect on the type of interactions in the chat. Both the Matrix and the List are suited for representing a lot of information. Especially, the structure of the Matrix invites students to fill out all the rows for all the sources. A diagram might be less suited for representing a lot of information for it might become too complex when a lot of information has to be organized. On the other hand, this possibility of organizing and linking arguments can be considered the main advantage of the argumentative diagram. It prompted students to represent arguments pro as well as contra, which resulted in a more balanced argumentation. We expected the Matrix to have more potential to support domain-specific reasoning. Our hypothesis was confirmed. The students in the Matrix condition talked most about historical changes, a component of historical reasoning that was most important for the task that we used. The Matrix seems to have prompted students to fill in all available changes and continuities and discuss these changes in the chat.

In sum, this study shows that a collaborative writing task in a CSCL-environment is a useful task to engage students in historical reasoning, both in chat discussions and in the construction of joint products. The representational tools we used seem to influence the type of historical reasoning in the chat discussion and the amount and type of information that is represented, but did not result in subsequent differences in learning outcomes. Continued work in this area is needed to give us more insight into the support that representational tools can give, especially with respect to the domain-specific reasoning that is asked for in the task.

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Pupils' Conceptions of History and History Teaching

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Abstract: *We present the results from qualitative analysis of eight interviews with 15 years old pupils about their conceptions of history and history teaching. These interviews were conducted as an extension of a survey conducted by a social sciences didactics team from the University of Geneva under Professor Audigier's direction. We first analyse what pupils think about the utility of history and the statements they make about what is important in history (social science and teaching). We then examine how they think that we learn history. These questions introduce those of the function of history and its relation to identity, of relation to evidence and truth, and finally of how history teaching is perceived by these pupils. The main purpose of this paper is to draw patterns of pupils based on the nature of their feelings towards history and history teaching.*

Keywords: Conceptions, History, Relation, Patterns, Pupils

A qualitative survey

This paper describes part of the research carried out in Geneva under the project 'Les élèves du cycle d'orientation et l'histoire'. Following the quantitative results of the survey, a more exploratory phase consisted in conducting interviews with some of the pupils who filled out the questionnaire of the survey. 8 interviews took place with pupils from the last grade of lower secondary school (14-15 years old). 4 pupils of level A (strong) and 4 of level B (weak) were asked about their feeling about history and its teaching. The aim was to gather qualitative material in order to complete quantitative textual analyses about pupils' conception of history (social science and teaching), how they feel about history and what aspects of history seem useful and important to them, particularly for their personal life.

We interviewed 2 girls from level A (Al. and Z.), 3 girls from level B (Ar., F. and Sh.), 2 boys from level A (L. and Sé.) and 1 boy from level B (E.). Interviews were semi-directive: questions were linked to pupils' assertions, while conducting a conversation about the thematics of our survey. These pupils belong to two different classes, with two different teachers. Both of them put in practice teaching objectives defined by a new history curriculum that was progressively introduced between 1999 and 2001. Pupils' answers do therefore much refer to these new objectives, particularly pupils from level A, who were looking at their history file while being interviewed. These objectives are meant to develop pupil's historical thinking and avoid a linear approach to the teaching of history:

- 1. You will be capable of understanding an historical document (source) and its utility for historians. You will know how to situate it in time and place. You will be able to analyse it, but you will also know their limits.*
- 2. You will be capable of better understanding our time and the world in which we live by asking yourself questions about the past (link between past and present)*
- 3. You will have the curiosity to meet other peoples from different cultures or time. By your interest in how they think and live, you will perceive the originality of the past.*
- 4. You will be sensitive to the fact that the past of humanity happens with variable durations (rough changes, but also more stable realities with long term evolution). You will notice that there are several ways of understanding time and chronology.*

5. *You will see that memory is not the same as history and that only certain historical events are called back to our memory. You will try to understand the reason for this.*
6. *You will realize that history is present in culture (books, films, pictures) and media. You will learn to appreciate these works, and also historical documentaries, by asking you how they contribute to our historical knowledge.*
7. *Bit by bit, you will construct landmarks in the history of humanity, which will enable you to weave links between events, times or civilizations.*

An exploratory treatment of this material was performed with Alceste, textual data analysis software that identifies the most characteristic words. The grouped analysis of 8 interviews has been crossed with three variables: individual, sex and level (A or B). Treatment by Alceste of these interviews has been completed – in a more traditional way – by a manual qualitative analysis. We will present results from these analyses.

Results from Alceste

Alceste arbitrarily cuts the text to analyze, thus creating “elementary context unities” (e.c.u.). Within the material we submitted to the software, Alceste classified 81% of these e.c.u. and distributed them among three different patterns of discourses. The first pattern gathers 15% of the classified e.c.u.; the second, 30% and the most important, the third, 55%. Alceste distinguishes two categories of words: ‘full-words’ and ‘tool-words’. ‘Tool-words’ are those necessary for syntax (when, then, because, etc.). ‘Full-words’ are those that in themselves convey meaning (names, verbs, adjectives, certain adverbs). Analysis of contextual worlds is mainly based on ‘full-words’, but examining ‘tool-words’ may sometimes occur. The following tables (overleaf) summarize these results. The Khi^2 indicates the degree of association of the words to the pattern of discourses: the higher the Khi^2 , the stronger the degree of association. The number of e.c.u. indicates how many e.c.u. contain the words. The frequency indicates how many times a word appears (as it can appear several times within the same e.c.u.).

The pattern of discourse 3 concerns more than half of the discourse of pupils of level A and B. It is relevant that ‘history’, ‘past’ and ‘know’ are strongly associated with this pattern. The association between ‘history’ and ‘past – content’ on one hand, and ‘knowledge’ on the other hand is one of the relevant results from the quantitative survey. Words like ‘important’ and ‘useful’ also show that history matters for pupils and their attitude towards history is rather positive (‘interest’, ‘like’). Moreover there is an association between pupils’ positive attitude and asserted contribution of history to personal or collective life. They value knowledge and are aware that it is of some use. Still, they have difficulties in defining what it is useful for. Utility is rather defined in a circular, tautological way.

The pattern of discourse 2 is rather associated with pupils of level B. Speaking about history, they mainly refer to activities linked to classroom: ‘listen’, ‘ask’, ‘answer’, ‘do’, ‘prepare’, ‘questions’, ‘tests’, ‘exercises’. A situation of mutual expectations – questioning and answering – prevails and shows a clear consciousness of their ‘*metier d’élève*’ (Perrenoud, 1984). Still, words like ‘understand’ and ‘search’ refer to more complex activities and therefore indicate presence of a cognitive dimension of history.

Finally, the pattern of discourse 1 is strongly associated with pupils of level A and can therefore be characterised as a dominant discourse among the four pupils of this level. They not only refer to activities like those of pattern 2, but also to sources

Khi2	Nb. of e.c.u.	Full-words	Frequency
33	14	Make use of	16
29	14	Photography (-ies)	21
27	27	Document(s)	37
23	25	Watch	32
20	10	Tape(s)	12
19	11	Picture(s)	15
17	9	Chronology (-ical)	9
14	6	Analysis	8

TABLE 1. Pattern of discourses Number 1
Concerns pupils of level A, and more particularly two pupils

Khi2	Nb. of e.c.u.	Full-words	Frequency
67	18	Question(s)	19
47	30	Do	39
43	10	Need	13
42	12	Answer	16
37	15	Understand	19
29	6	Prepare	7
29	6	Listen	9
28	17	Text(s)	26
26	12	Test(s)	14
24	6	Search	6
24	4	Exercise(s)	9
20	11	Ask	12

TABLE 2. Pattern of discourses Number 2
Concerns pupils of level B, and more particularly two pupils

Khi2	Nb. of e.c.u.	Full-words	Frequency
31	118	History	170
25	61	Past	82
22	42	Know ("savoir")	49
20	40	Important	56
18	22	Interest	23
17	23	Event	21
15	36	Like ("aimer")	55
14	25	Be useful	30
13	25	Know ("connaître")	16
13	16	Switzerland	19
12	14	Like ("plaire")	17
11	19	People	22
10	21	School	22
10	32	Find	36

TABLE 3. Pattern of discourses Number 3
Concerns pupils of levels A and B, and more particularly three pupils

and methods belonging to the teaching of history: 'document', 'photography', 'tape', 'picture'. The link between 'history' and 'past – content', dominant in pattern 3, has to be considered carefully in the case of pupils of level A: when questioned about their relation to history and taught history, they mainly refer to verbs like 'look at' and 'analyse'.

Results from qualitative analysis

To organize a more qualitative analysis, we picked out pupils' assertions about three themes linked to our interview questions:

- What is the utility of history? What is important in history?
- How do we get to know history?
- What do you feel about the history that is taught?

What is the utility of history? What is important in history?

This category of questions leads to that of the function of teaching history. Three themes are relevant: the utility of history, the importance of dates and the relation between history and identity.

All pupils perceive history as being important for general knowledge or general education, even though some of them hesitated before attributing such a function to this discipline. For most of them, it was difficult to think of a concrete utility of history: 'it can be interesting to know about the past', 'if you want to become a history teacher', 'to tell your children', 'to know why and how', 'to explain'. Only one of them refers to critical attitude.

Speaking about the utility of history leads to questions about time: which periods are the concern of history? Some pupils think that history is not only about past events, but also deals with present times or even with the future. L. suggests this: "*Je pense qu'on pourrait étudier l'histoire sur les événements futurs. Il y a des spécialistes qui ont fait des prévisions, justement on pourrait en parler en histoire*". His point of view, which seems to indicate a rather critical conception of history, is shared by two other pupils of level A. They consider history as enabling an understanding of present times through knowledge of the past ("*Savoir ce qui s'est passé avant qu'on soit là et pourquoi c'est comme ça maintenant*" (Sé..). Historical knowledge which can evolve and even be modified in function of results from new investigations: "*On peut très bien croire un truc et puis dans quelques années se rendre compte que finalement c'était pas ça*" (Al.).

Functions and practices of taught history are related to common culture, shared but not always explicitly expressed. And yet pupils hardly ever refer to questions of identity. When they do, it is mainly about parts of history linked with their personal history or origins and which aren't taken up in class. Z. Says: "*Mon identité et l'histoire, ce n'est pas vraiment ça. Ça touche pas forcément mon origine personnelle*". Al. appreciates the worldwide dimension of taught history, even though she thinks that Swiss history isn't taught enough. She is the only one who defines identity as enabling her to place herself in relation to the past and to appreciate 'our' evolution. The other pupils aren't concerned by Swiss history.

All pupils acknowledge the importance of dates, but are unable to discuss them: 'it's to understand', 'not to get all mixed up'; nor do they understand the interest or complexity of chronological information: '*Parce que si on connaît un événement mais*

qu'on sait pas quand il s'est passé, ça sert pas à grand-chose. Faut situer (Al.). Dates don't appear to have a central function in their history classes, so that the necessity of knowing dates is asserted but without making much sense: *'Ça s'apprend par cœur. C'est un peu obligé quoi. [c'est important] parce qu'on nous demandera un jour de les savoir, tout simplement. A l'école ou ailleurs'* (S.) Still, two pupils note that dates are important so that we don't mix up different periods, as an event can't be understood out of its context. Which induces a more complex thinking and understanding of time and periodisation.

How do we learn history?

This category of questions refers to how pupils imagine historical process, how they think we collect knowledge about the past and their concepts of evidence and truth. Pupils are very hesitant when answering this kind of question, probably because they are afraid of being 'wrong'. They recall words like 'research' (most standard usage), 'investigations', 'excavations', generally equating historians' work to that of archaeologists. Historians look for evidence, read and decipher texts, determine the age of objects and analyse. They also question people and read books. Two pupils emphasize the necessity to collate different sources in order to establish reliability and one refers to the function of witnesses.

Z. thinks it is easier to investigate about the recent past, as we can get information from witnesses, even though she emphasizes the difference between individual and collective history: *'Il y a des choses qui sont plus importantes pour [les témoins] que ce qui est vraiment vrai'*. A testimony implies a point of view. That's probably the reason why L., taking the example of war, insists on the necessity of having a point of view from 'each side'. But he can't answer the question whether there could be several points of view within the same 'side'.

Does the consideration of different points of view lead pupils to wonder whether they can be sure what has happened in history? Sh. thinks that teachers only teach what they think is true. Still, they might not always know the truth about the past: *'Peut-être des trucs que même eux, ils ne savent pas, qu'ils disent que c'est vrai, mais que c'est faux'*. Ar. is more suspicious: historians don't always tell the truth; they even want to hide information, for example about religion. Al., who showed an ability to think in relative terms about historical knowledge, emphasizes the possibility of finding new documents that might change the nature of current discourses.

Finally, do pupils learn about the past in every day life, outside of the classroom? Pupils mainly refer to television: either traces of history in drama, or historical documentaries which they hardly ever watch. Ar. refers to the film *Titanic*: after hesitating, she finally expresses doubt that the film is historically accurate. History is also to be found in libraries - books, texts, that pupils don't read - and while travelling (monuments, statues of famous people).

Feelings about taught history

This category of questions is about how pupils feel about history lessons, the "métier d'élève": their expression of expectations both from teachers and the school system on one hand, and their perception of ordinary school practice on the other hand. Answers are of course much influenced by the context of class and teacher and by the fact that pupils of level A could look at their history file during the interviews. Moreover, pupils give their reactions to a new way of teaching history, which they aren't used to as it was recently introduced in Geneva.

Generally speaking, results in history lessons don't seem to be a problem for pupils interviewed. L. even thinks he has a gift for history, as he doesn't need to work much:

'Un clic comme quoi j'arrive à enchaîner plusieurs événements peut-être chronologiques ou des choses comme ça et puis je croche tout de suite.' All eight interviews show that each pupil builds up a personal relationship with history, which to a large extent depends on his own experience of life. Lets try to summarise their feelings.

Z. describes taught history using many documents. She refers to different types of activities: watching films, filling in questionnaires, conducting interviews. She's more interested in recent periods and has some difficulties with certain activities, for example when asked to empathise with historical personages. She likes new methods of teaching history that invite pupils to think. Still, she sometimes finds it tiresome and tends to miss a more traditional and didactic teacher.

L. thinks that the need to 'instruct' them leads to too many purposes. They often work with different types of documents, which they read, situate and comment on. He very much appreciates being asked to develop arguments instead of learning by heart.

Al. enjoys good results, but has difficulties with dates. She disliked the course about Industrial Revolution that was centred on reading documents. Other subjects gave rise to more original activities: imagine an ideal city, interview witnesses, etc. When studying a document, she reads it at least twice and underlines what seems to be important. She never revises before tests, except for learning a few dates. When she doesn't understand something, she asks someone in her family circle or a friend, never the teacher.

Sé. prefers to watch a movie rather than read a book. He has always liked history. He studies in class, but hardly ever at home. With new methods of teaching history, dates no longer need to be learned by heart: pupils learn to develop thinking and the exchange of information. He likes to be asked about what he thinks. Describing history lessons, he refers to texts, documents, group-activities, pictures, films, interviews, etc.

Sh. thinks that history should be discussing rather than learning a subject and she is only interested in recent periods (20th Century). Teaching is based on documents: they do a lot of reading, investigating and watching tapes. Being a good pupil means reading, listening, understanding, answering questions and finally learning. The teacher's explanations are therefore important. She revises before tests and sometimes asks questions of a friend, never the teacher. How does she revise? Learning by heart answers to questions or summaries of texts.

Ar. has a specific point of view: she speaks with nostalgia about her experience in a French school, which she describes as being completely different from the Swiss system. She prefers to learn history with traditional methods, using a textbook, as she experienced it in France. When revising, she reads her notes and asks questions about documents, trying to identify what is important to learn and to understand. She sometimes asks her brothers or her mother for help. She regrets not having an exercise book as she was used to in France.

E. compares history to physical education: it's entertaining and interesting. They have a lot of discussions, exchange ideas and try to find the true reasons for what happened in the past. They are asked to point out and underline what is relevant about a document. He learns while listening and discussing in class, but never studies at home, which satisfies him very much.

F. is also more interested in recent periods of history. It's important to her that a teacher knows how to speak to pupils, meaning not using complicated language. She listens to the teacher, answers his questions when she understands them, remembers more or less what has been said in class and gets good results. She watches films but dislikes texts. To be able to understand, one has to listen to the teacher.

Generally speaking, interviewed pupils have a traditional view of their "métier d'élève", centred on reproduction of elementary knowledge. One has to acknowledge documents, point out what seems to be most relevant, learn and reproduce it. One also has to communicate with the teacher in order to be clear about his understanding of a document and what is relevant about it. Regarding pedagogical practices, pupils seem to appreciate the diversification of activities proposed, except for reading activities, which cause difficulties for level B pupils. Regarding recent changes in the teaching of history, pupils have different points of view. Being more involved and active in class and having to voice their opinion doesn't seem to satisfy all of them.

Provisional conclusions

Because of the number and duration of interviews, the great variety of questions and nature of the discussions we must be careful in drawing conclusions. We therefore propose a set of hypotheses inspired by this short analysis. These should, of course, be tested by conducting a systematic inquiry with a larger sample of pupils. It is also probably too early to evaluate the contribution of the introduction of new teaching objectives and how far they foster the development of pupil's historical thinking. But still, qualitative analysis helps us to understand further the results of the quantitative survey.

Generally speaking, pupils seem to be attached to their 'métier d'élève' and know precisely what is expected from them in order to get good results (listen, ask and answer questions, read and summarise documents, etc.). The importance of historical knowledge doesn't go far beyond the classroom, which means that they have a somewhat remote relationship with history (history as a school subject, separated from personal life), rather than an intimate relationship, which would refer not only to a better understanding of the world, but would go further with an awareness of the possibility of changing it. This observation could question the results from the quantitative analysis, which show a small majority of pupils with an intimate relationship with history. Still, at least three of the interviewed pupils' interest in history seems to depend on links they can make with their personal origins. This thinking about genealogy and their ability to see their own lives as set within the course of history shows an intimate relationship with history.

Pupils also clearly associate taught history with general knowledge, which corresponds to the dominant pattern in the quantitative survey. History is an element of culture, useful in connecting with the real world, an element of curiosity or of researching individual or collective origins. Pupils are less concerned with critical functions of history; civic consciousness and historical thinking – comparison, periodisation, social use of history, etc. Even though some pupils don't believe everything asserted by documents or by historians, their conception of history is rather realist (history tells the truth about the past) than constructivist (attention paid to points of view and the conditions of the construction of historical knowledge).

Regarding the utility of history, even if some pupils think history enables a better understanding of the actual world and how society functions, they hardly ever display

or refer to any critical attitude. But finally, history seems to be of some personal benefit to them, at least helping them to situate themselves in relation to the past and their origins.

Related readings

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Maturation and the Assimilation of the Concepts of Historical Time: A Symbiotic Relationship or Uneasy Bedfellows? An Examination of the Birth-date Effect on Educational Performance in Primary History

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Abstract: *This paper critically examines research which contends that age-related performance differentials are apparent within the English educational system. Whilst accepting that a birth-date effect exists within the core subjects of English, mathematics and science the paper highlights the lack of equivalent findings within the foundation subjects. The paper addresses this limitation by conducting exploratory research into the teaching and learning of primary history with children aged eight to eleven years of age. The paper contends methodological limitations within previous history researches must lead to a questioning of extant findings that maturation and cognitive assimilation are inextricably linked. Based upon statistical analysis of the study's results it is concluded that age does not act as a performance determinant within the teaching and learning of primary history. The findings of the research support the contention that curricula and teaching methods, not age, are the main catalysts for cognitive assimilation.*

Introduction

A number of papers have ably summarised and extended the research base with respect to the correlation between the birth-date effect and educational performance (see Bell & Daniels, 1990; Schagen, 1994; Daniels, 1995; Daniels et al., 2000; Gledhill et al., 2002;). These papers and others within this research vista have, in the main, persuasively argued that summer-born children are educationally disadvantaged at primary school and this inequality of educational performance continues to make itself apparent within the context of secondary and tertiary education. The paper notes this research base, and indeed critically analyses it. However, it is suggested here that the findings within this vista are necessarily limited because this research has not countenanced the effects of maturation outside of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It is apparent that little, if any, research has been recently carried out which has examined age-related performance differentials within the context of the foundation subjects. Moreover, this lack of research is especially common within the teaching and learning of primary¹ history. The paper, therefore, addresses this limitation by critically reviewing the somewhat dated research which has hypothesised a correlation between the assimilation of chronological knowledge and understanding and the maturational development of the child. In addition, the paper outlines the findings from a current study which examined these previous hypotheses within the applied educational setting. The analysis and discussion of these results firstly seeks to establish whether previous contentions remain persuasive and whether current age-related research findings are transferable to the teaching and learning of primary history. Second, the analysis of the current study's results seeks to determine if an adapted curriculum and teaching method are able to overcome the birth-date effect.

Background

It has been substantially contended that children whose birth-dates fall in the summer term suffer an inequality of educational performance when compared to their older autumn-born peers. Within the context of the British educational system children begin compulsory education at the start of the term following their fifth birthday (Daniels et al., 2000). As the autumn term commences in September this means that

summer-born children may be one year, in age, behind the oldest children. Research has consistently demonstrated that summer-born children attain less in primary, secondary and tertiary education (Daniels et al., 1995; Gledhill et al., 2002). Indeed, results at G.C.S.E² denote that this group of children perform at a level some two to three percent lower than their autumn-born peers. Furthermore, it is apparent that five per cent fewer summer-born children go onto study at A-level³ in comparison to their older peers (Sharp, 1995; Alton & Massey, 1998). Although it has been shown that this inequality of educational performance has dissipated by degree level (Russell & Startup, 1986) and that no significant performance differentials are noted, by birth-date, for adults (Crooks, 1963; Dawes, 1964; Marcie-Taylor, 1980), it would seem that the birth-date effect has wide ranging implications for the attainment of young children. The determination of this inequality would appear to have its foundations in one of three distinct areas, these being the seasonality effect, the length of schooling effect and what has been termed the age-position effect. The initial section of the paper critically reviews previous research into the birth-date effect and considers which, if any, of this triad of thought would appear to provide the most reasonable explanation for age-related performance differentials.

An examination of the birth-date effect

One explanation for birth-date performance differentials is the so-called seasonality effect. It has been suggested that summer-born children have an inherent educational deficit because heightened pre-natal exposure to winter infections has the potentiality to lead to an increased risk of birth defects (Orme, 1962). Research (Orme, 1962; Martindale & Black, 1970) also contends that intelligence is related to climatic temperature change during pregnancy. Whilst interesting, these postulates are subject to limitation for it is clear that Martindale and Black's study relates only to neurologically-damaged populations. The efficacy of the seasonality effect is further diminished if one has regard to the findings of Jackson's (1964) study, which demonstrated that a change in the start to the academic year positively affects the educational performance of summer-born children (see Bell & Daniels, 1990). A review of this vista of research would strongly suggest that the seasonality effect is one that has little, or no, relevance for the current study.

A second area of birth-date research, and one that had relevance within the 1960s, is the length of schooling effect (Bell & Daniels, 1990). Within the first year of primary education some of the oldest autumn-born children may have lived 25 per cent longer than their youngest class peers (Bell & Daniels, 1990). In terms of schooling this can equate to a difference of two terms of education. Barker Lunn (1972) contends that this inequality of provision, within the infant school, leads to performance differentials on age-adjusted assessments. Research of this nature had a definite impact on educational thinking and led to the Plowden Committee's (CACE, 1967) advice that school admission should enable all children to experience three complete years of infant education.

Whilst the length of schooling effect may have had ascendancy during the early 1960's it seems that the arguments forwarded, within this vista of research, have been undermined with the passage of time. Indeed, while Barker Lunn (1972) demonstrated an educational inequality, in respects to summer-born children, it was noted that this was probably due to factors that lay outside of the length of schooling effect. Moreover, evidence (Bergund, 1967; Pidgeon, 1965) from outside of the British educational setting supports Barker Lunn's contention by challenging the notion that the birth-date effect is caused by length of schooling that a child receives. This research demonstrates a birth-date effect in countries that have a uniform entry to school and also in countries where formal education commences some two years

after English schools. Recent evidence, from within the English educational system, also indicates that the length of schooling effect makes little difference to educational achievements in the National Curriculum assessments of English, mathematics and science at age seven (Sharp et al., 1994; Daniels et al., 2000). Additionally, the Audit Commission (1996) reported the length of schooling that pupils received within Key Stage 1 was not responsible for performance differentials.

A third area of thought in relation to the birth-date effect is that autumn-born children have an inherent developmental advantage over summer-born children in the same year group (Plug, 2001). It is contended that because summer-born children are always the youngest and least mature members of the group they will always be subject to an educational inequality. This inequality appears to lie in the fact that the relative immaturity of these summer-born children leads to stress and it is this disabling factor that results in a '...failure in the school environment...' (Gledhill et al., 2002, p.41). Although it is demonstrable that autumn-born pupils' relative age may lead to performance differentials of up to seven months, in comparison to youngest pupils (Bell & Daniels, 1990), it is apparent that evidence to support the contention that this inequality is solely due to stress is not as ably supported. Bell and Daniels (1990, p.70) account that there is strong evidence to suggest the birth-date effect is merely an '...artefact of the organisation of pupils' and that this is manifested by differential expectations of, and within, the internal assessments administered by teachers (Barker Lunn, 1972; Jackson, 1966; Thompson, 1971). Furthermore, it is postulated that curricula and teaching activities that are insufficiently differentiated to take account of age-related development (Gledhill et al., 2002) are the root cause of the age-position effect. Whatever may be said of the causation of the birth-date effect, it is most apparent that its affects are wide ranging and it is clear that it should be seen as an important causation of performance differentials, for primary-aged pupils, within the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

The teaching and learning of historical time

Whilst age-related research within the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are detailed for children of seven and eleven years of age, the same cannot be said for the research base in history. Therefore, the question that arises is; are birth-date research findings transferable to history, a subject where concepts do not function as they do in the natural sciences? (Dickinson & Lee, 1978).

History, within the English state educational system is termed a foundation subject and as with other primary curriculum areas such as geography, physical education, art and design technology it is not the subject of statutory assessment or examination. Furthermore, in recent years the governmental focus on literacy and numeracy has led to a reduction in the time for the teaching and learning of history within the primary classroom. It is argued, that this reduction in curriculum space has led to many opportunities being '...lost or overlooked' (Hoodless 2002, p.174).

A review of the literature suggests that in terms of age-related research many opportunities have been also 'overlooked or lost'. The research that does exist is somewhat dated. However, a review of the literature would suggest that the weight of evidence denotes that maturation and educational performance are strongly linked. The second component of the paper critically examines the literature base within history that has investigated the development of children's understanding of chronology. This examination seeks to ascertain whether it is justifiable to link maturation and educational performance into a symbiotic relationship. Before, such an examination may take place it would seem necessary to establish why children's development of chronological understanding is a legitimate area for research.

The development of chronological understanding has been deemed to be an important feature of the teaching of history within 'curriculum 2000' (Hoodless, 2002). This need to focus upon the teaching of chronology may be traced back to the fears expressed by Her Majesty's Inspectors (DES, 1978) that children were '...acquiring a very confused, superficial understanding of the past' (Hoodless, 2002, p.173). It would appear that the importance of an understanding of chronology to the development of historical thinking cannot be over stated. As Stow and Haydn (2002, p.85) account, chronology '...is the distinctive marker of history, setting it apart from other disciplines...'. Whilst the teaching of chronology has become enshrined within governmental curricula it seems that development of teaching method and assessment of chronological understanding has not been grounded in empirical research findings (Hodkinson 2003a,b, 2004a).

Within the research base it has been persuasively argued that increases in chronological age are positively correlated with the assimilation of the concepts of historical time (see for example Oakden & Sturt, 1922; Ames, 1946; Bradley, 1947; Hallam, 1966; West, 1981). These researchers, in the main, hold that around the age of eleven children develop cognitive structures which enable an understanding of historical time to be countenanced. Ames (1946, p.110) succinctly summarises these thoughts asserting '...readiness to acquire and express time concepts depends chiefly upon maturational factors'. From this standpoint, it would appear that maturation and the development of chronology are indeed inextricably linked into a symbiotic relationship. However, a critical review of this vista of research findings suggests that this developmental relationship is subject to four distinct challenges.

Firstly, there is a contention within the literature base that previous studies assessment protocols are problematic. For instance, Harris (1976, p.15) argues that Oakden and Sturt (1922) and their replicators posed '...trick questions' that did not allow for the assessment of temporal concepts. Hallam's work, it is argued was based upon comprehension of written passages which were '...flat, general, uninteresting and the questions were often trivial or unanswerable' (Booth, 1978, p.311). In addition, it is suggested that a number of West's (1981) assessments were over complicated and allowed the spectre of language ability to overshadow research findings (Hodkinson, 2003b).

Second, a further challenge emerges if one examines how these previous maturational studies measured their participants' age. Many studies (for example Oakden & Sturt, 1922; Bradley, 1947) measured the age of their participants as homogeneous year groups; that is to say each research cohort was attributed with a mean age. It can be argued that an age measurement, such as this, is an inappropriate determinant because it ignores a body of empirical evidence which intimates that scholastic attainment varies by the birth month of a child (Bell and Davies, 1990; Gledhill et al., 2002). Within the context of the teaching and learning of chronology it would appear that the birth-date effect has not been countenanced by previous studies. The contention is, therefore, that if one solely uses the mean age of a group to determine levels of temporal cognition there is a possibility of confound. The causation of this confound is due to the fact that this method of measurement does not separate the effects of age from those of duration of schooling, nor does it countenance the wealth of evidence, outlined earlier, which persuasively argues that performance differentials are as a result of the age-position effect.

The third and perhaps most fundamental challenge to the existence of a maturational developmental relationship is the fact that none of these previous research studies

attempted to systematically teach or develop temporal concepts. Therefore, the question arises did these previous studies merely define a child's '...real level of development', rather than assessing the child's '...potential levels of development' (Vygotsky, 1987, p.85). Furthermore, researchers within the field of the birth-date effect would argue that age-related performance differentials may be as a result of inappropriate curricula or classroom processes (Bell et al., 1995; Gledhill et al., 2002). Interestingly, research, within history and other subject areas such as science, indicates that children's conceptual thinking can be accelerated using a specialised curriculum, training methods or direct instruction (see Vikainen, 1961; West 1981; Shawyer et al., 1988; Thornton & Vukelich, 1988; Adey & Shayer, 1994). From this perspective previous maturational findings, within the teaching and learning of chronology, must be viewed as speculative because of the lack of the manipulation of curriculum and the controlling of the variable of teacher expectancies and classroom practices.

In recent years, a further challenge to the ascendancy of the maturational hypothesis has been promoted by researchers and educationalists (for example Low-Beer & Blyth, 1983; Blyth, 1994; Haydn, 1995; Hodgkinson, 1995; Hoodless, 2002). This 'research' base suggests that young children are capable of assimilating the concepts of chronology. Whilst these researcher's findings are based upon small sample sizes and some are founded upon subjective comment it would seem reasonable to suggest that previous researches might not have detailed the full capabilities of young children.

If one accepts these challenges, and caution would seemingly dictate this, then rather than seeing maturation and temporal cognitive development existing as a symbiotic relationship they should be viewed as uneasy bedfellows. It seems apparent, from the review of the literature detailed above that further research is needed to establish the relationship between maturation, the birth-date effect and performance differentials in primary history.

Research Questions

A review of the literature identifies a number of questions which merit further investigation. For instance:

- is chronological age a significant factor in the development of historical time concepts;
- is a birth-date effect apparent for the assimilation of the concepts of historical time and the ordering of historical knowledge;
- do summer-born children have a poorer attitude towards and a lower enjoyment of history;
- have previous studies utilised appropriate age determinants in their analysis;
- can curricular and teaching method overcome the birth-date effect by accelerating children's conceptual understanding; and,
- can chronological understanding be adequately measured by the National Curriculum Level Descriptors?

Method

In September 2000 I began to collect data in relation to children's academic performance in history. The data were obtained, over the course of one academic year, from a school situated in the suburb of a north western city of England. At the time of the study 435 girls and boys attended the school and were arranged in 13 classes. For the purposes of the research a sample of four parallel classes, for

children aged eight to nine years of age (Year Four), were chosen. Additionally, one class of nine to ten year olds (Year Five) was also selected to act as an age control. In total 150 children were chosen who were distributed into five age related classes.

The population and samples

Population: Year Four and Five children from the same school
Sample: Four parallel Year Four classes matched for intelligence, reading and mathematical ability. One Year Five class acted as an age control.
Subjects: 150
Groups: 5 X (30)

The research was of a quasi-experimental multi-method design based upon a pre, post and repeated measure with control. I taught two classes of eight to nine year old children (Treatment and Active Control) with a Special Teaching Method (*STM*). One group of similarly aged children (Control), also taught by myself, followed what might be called a traditional teaching approach to primary history. After one term of employing the *STM* the Active Control reverted to a traditional teaching method. The three classes were assessed for temporal cognition at the start of the academic year and then again at the end of each term. Two other classes, who were taught by their own class teachers using the traditional curriculum, were also assessed for levels of temporal cognition and historical knowledge at post-test. This design allowed a consideration of whether age-related performance differentials are evident for the whole sample or indeed whether two separate teaching methods had any effect on the assimilation of time concepts or the retention of historical knowledge.

Teaching Method

In the years preceding the study the participants of the research experienced a method of history teaching that was substantially based upon the QCA schemes of work (QCA 1998a). During the research itself, this teaching method was continued and this traditional curriculum was taught over three terms to the research participants. Firstly, in the autumn term the children experienced Study Unit 18 (QCA, 1998a); this enabled children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the locality in which they lived and how this area had changed over time. During the second term, the teaching of historical content was generally centred upon Study Unit 11 (QCA, 1998a), a unit which relates to the Victorian era. Finally, during the summer term the children completed work based upon Unit 6c (QCA, 1998a), a unit that explores the reasoning behind peoples invasions and settlement of Britain.

The research's special curriculum and special teaching methods (*STM*) employed exactly the same historical content as outlined in the QCA study units. However, the *STM* was designed to involve children as active agents in their own learning. Pupils were encouraged to work cooperatively within learning activities that enabled open-ended discussion of temporal vocabulary. Careful planning and organisation of flexible, multi-sensory teaching tasks sought to promote the teaching of challenging temporal concepts at increasingly complex levels. The overriding feature of the *STM* was that historical material, within the curriculum, was always presented chronologically from time present to time past and time lines were used consistently in every lesson (see Hodkinson, 2001).

During each lesson, every opportunity was taken to discuss and heighten children's temporal vocabulary. In addition, specific skills based activities that centred upon developing children's chronological understanding were developed through the introductory and plenary phases of the lesson. One negative feature of this curriculum and teaching method was that the time for the development of historical

knowledge was reduced because a significant effort was devoted to developing children's temporal skills.

Data collection

A number of data collection techniques were employed throughout the research study. Firstly, pupils' attitudes towards school were measured using a three point scale and were classified as being positive, neutral or negative (Tymms, 1999). In addition, a child's enjoyment of history, in relation to other curriculum areas, was also examined and graded as 'enjoy', 'ok' and 'don't enjoy'. The research study also developed the work of Stones (1965), West (1981) and Tymms (1999) by devising a questionnaire that measured a pupils' levels of interest in history outside the context of the school (Historical context - Hodkinson 2004b).

Pupils' language and mathematical abilities were examined by the employment of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's (QCA, 1998ab) spelling, written English, mental mathematics and written mathematics tests. Specific temporal data were collected using previous research assessment techniques (see Oakden & Sturt, 1922; Bradley, 1947; West, 1981; Hodkinson, 1995; Hodkinson, 2003b), albeit with minor modification of test protocols. These assessments explored children's ability to use AD and BC dates, the development of temporal concepts such as century and decades, subjective temporal phrases and the retention and ordering of historical knowledge.

This research documents its findings in two forms; firstly, the results as homogeneous year groups are outlined and secondly, the findings are documented by partitioning each year groups into three subsets which relate to a child's birth-date, these being:

A - September to December Year Five	(Autumn Births	Yr 5)
B - January to April Year Five	(Spring Births	Yr 5)
C - May to August Year Five	(Summer Births	Yr 5)
D - September to December Year Four	(Autumn Births	Yr 4)
E - January to April Year Four	(Spring Births	Yr 4)
F - May to August Year Four	(Summer Births	Yr 4)

Data Analysis

The analysis of the findings determines whether chronological age, the birth-date effect or curricular and teaching methods are a significant factor in children's assimilation of time concepts and the retention of historical knowledge. The temporal assessment items are analysed using parametric statistics; this method is utilised because it allows the best possible examination of the interaction effects of chronological age, birth-effect and teaching method. To facilitate this mode of analysis the original datasets are transformed following the conventions of Tabachnick and Fidell (1996). The analysis worked on the premise that if birth-date effect is a significant factor, then autumn-born Year Five children will outperform the other age groups at pre- and post-test. Likewise, on the secondary measure of homogeneous age groups it is expected that the Year Five class will significantly outperform the Year Four cohorts.

<i>Name of Assessment</i>	<i>Homogeneous Age</i>		<i>Age-position</i>	
	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Temporal Naming	Year Five	Treatment	Summer Yr5	Autumn Yr5
Duration	Year Five	Treatment	Summer Yr5	Autumn Yr5*
Personal Duration	Year Five	Active	Spring Yr5	Spring Yr4
Clock Time	Control	Active	Summer Yr5	Spring Yr5
Personal Time	Year Five	Treatment	Autumn Yr5	Spring Yr4*
National Curriculum	Year Five	Treatment*	Summer Yr5	Spring Yr4
Temporal A	Control	Active	Autumn Yr4	Autumn Yr4
Temporal B	Year Five	Active	Summer Yr5	Spring Yr5
Temporal C	Year Five	Year Five	Autumn Yr5	Spring Yr5
Temporal D	Year Five	Treatment	Autumn Yr5	Summer Yr5
AD Dates	Year Five	Year Five	SummerYr5	Spring Yr5
BC Dates	Year Five*	Treatment	Spring Yr5	Autumn Yr4
BC Dates 2	N/A	Treatment	N/A	Autumn Yr4
Chronology	Year Five	Treatment*	Spring Yr5	Summer Yr5
Time Machine	Control	Treatment*	Autumn Yr5	Autumn Yr4
Temporal Language	N/A	Treatment	N/A	Autumn Yr4
Decades	N/A	Treatment*	N/A	Spring Yr4
Centuries	N/A	Treatment*	N/A	Summer Yr4
Temporal Mathematics	N/A	Treatment	N/A	Autumn Yr4
Historical Knowledge	N/A	Treatment*	N/A	Spring Yr4

*Statistically significant result over all groups ($p < 0.05$)

TABLE 1. Summary of Results

Results

Analysis and discussion

The first area to consider is whether younger summer-born children display a poorer attitude or lower enjoyment levels in relation to the teaching and learning of primary history. An overview of the research data (see TABLE 1) indicates that there are no significant age-position differentials in relation to children's enjoyment or attitude to their history lessons. Whilst it is accepted that the attitude scales utilised in this research are limited the findings from the study do not confirm the contention that stress or deficits in attitude are the causation of the birth-date effect.

Maturation and learning

The primary purpose of this component of the paper is to ascertain whether the birth-date effect or maturation has any influence upon the assimilation of the concepts of historical time and the retention of historical knowledge. The first question to be considered is whether the usage of differing age measures may have caused a methodological confound and thus limit the transferability and validity of the maturational hypotheses. The results of the study offer evidence to support the postulate that differing age measures may have caused a confound within previous researches. An examination of the results denote that the homogeneous age measures, employed at pre-test, offer many more indications that age had been an important variable than do those of chronological age. At pre-test, the results detail that in eleven of the fourteen temporal assessments the Year Five children produced the superior scores as opposed to only five occasions when autumn-born Year Five children did so. The results also only demonstrate an agreement between the age measures on three tests; these being Personal Time, Temporal Absurdity B and D. It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that these two measures of age do indeed produce contradictory results. This assertion is also supported by the results at post test where there is little, if any, correlation between the two age measures.

A further area which deserves analysis, in relation to temporal cognition, is whether it is the case that scholastic attainment varies by birth month so that older children outperform their younger peers (Bell & Daniels, 1990; Gledhill et al., 2002). The results at pre-test indicate that there is a variation of performance by birth month. However, it is also apparent that there is no consistency of age and performance across the assessment items. The assertions of birth-date researchers (for example Bell & Daniels, 1990) that older, autumn-born, children will produce superior scores is not confirmed by the results at pre-test. These findings document that out of the fourteen assessment items it is summer-born Year Five who produce the superlative scores on six tests as opposed to four managed by the older participants. Furthermore, at post-test it is evident that birth month is not a factor as the results show a congruency of performance between autumn and summer-born Year Five participants. It is also interesting to note that at the completion of the study it is autumn-born Year Four children who have the greatest incidence of superior performances. These findings offer limited evidence to suggest that on some assessment items, older children in the intervention group may have benefited most from the temporal teaching methods and curriculum. This line of analysis is, though, somewhat tentative and it would seem beneficial to conduct further research to investigate whether the efficacy of the teaching method is correlated with age.

Another question which merits consideration is whether any of the age measures are significant in the development of temporal cognition. As indicated in the literature review, this vista of research is a 'well worn path,' with many research studies linking biological maturation of the normal physiological processes to cognitive development (Hallam, 1967). However, in order to accept previous research findings the results of the study should have demonstrated a superior performance of Year Five, and possibly autumn-born Year Five participants, at both pre- and post-test. Initial investigation of the homogeneous age measure at pre-test seems positive in that, out of the fourteen assessments, Year Five participants evidence ten results which are in advance of Year Four. Care though should be exercised with the usage of these findings as it is only on one assessment (*BC Dates 1*) that this advanced scoring is statistically significant. Moreover, if we analyse the results of the chronological age measure at pre-test it is apparent that the oldest children in Year Five do not, in the main, produce the superior scores.

Accelerated learning

Since the 1950's research has examined the hypothesis that children's conceptual understanding can be accelerated by cognitive intervention. Most recently, the work of Adey and Shayer (1994) within science has strongly suggested that children's levels of assimilation might be enhanced by specialised teaching (GTC, 2004). Problematically, though, these findings have not been transferred to the teaching and learning of chronology where it is asserted that conceptual development is reliant upon mental maturation (Hodkinson, 2003b). Scrutiny of the study's results at post-test, therefore, proves to be most interesting as it is indicated that teaching method is a greater determinant of performance than are homogeneous or chronological age. Of the twenty assessments it is only on two (*Temporal C & AD Dates*) that the homogeneous Year Five group evidence the highest scores and it should be noted that both of these results are not statistically significant. Within the chronological age results it is apparent that the oldest participants only evidence two superior performances, those of Temporal Naming and Duration, of which only the latter is statistically significant. These results evidence, within the age and teaching data sets, that there is no correlation between assimilation of chronology and the age or mental maturation of a child. The findings of this study authenticate those of West (1981) and Vikainen (1961) who assert that teaching methods and curricula that focus attention on chronology enable acceleration of the assimilation of these concepts to take place. The study's findings strongly suggest, therefore, that developmental theories which include the acceptance of accelerated models of learning would appear to hold more relevance for researchers attempting to describe and explain how temporal cognitive assimilation is activated.

The evidence detailed above suggests that age is generally not a significant factor in the development of time concepts. If we accept this suggestion it is reasonable to assert that previous age-related research is fundamentally flawed because of its reliance on homogeneous age as a determinant of concept assimilation.

Furthermore, as was alluded to earlier, many previous maturational researches were subject to limitations in both the mode of presentation of the assessment tasks and in the type of questions utilised. If we also accept that some studies (see Bradley, 1947; Oakden & Sturt, 1922; Rees, 1976) used homogeneous measures and other researches such as West (1981) posited a maturational link but did not countenance any specific teaching of temporal concepts, then, it would seem logical to conclude, as Rees (1971, p.70) did in relation to the seminal study of Oakden and Sturt that '...(development) has little to do with the effects of biological maturation but rather the effects of teaching'. It would appear, therefore, that continued support for the development of temporal cognition, as set out by previous research studies, would seem wholly inappropriate. Moreover, for teachers or curricula to restrict levels of teaching to the age spans defined by these studies would seem to be quite illogical. Perhaps a more refined and considered view might be the one outlined by Downey and Levstik (1988, p.333):

There is certain evidence then, that historical time concepts are not beyond the understanding of young children though the level of understanding may be constrained by the form of instruction, by the child's prior experiences and by their stages of development. These constraints however do not appear to justify delaying the introduction of history until mature time concepts develop.

The assessment of chronological understanding

Based upon the findings of the study a further notion that appears problematic to the teaching and assessment of chronological development is the premise that the National Curriculum's Level Descriptors can effectively measure it. The Level Descriptors would seem to have been formulated upon the notion that children's

thinking is developmentally hierarchical (Hodkinson, 2003c). The research findings suggest, however, that temporal cognition is not actuated in a hierarchical nature, nor would it seem to be linear. The results from the study intimate that teaching actuates cognition, not maturation or the relative abstraction of the concept itself. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the Level Descriptors are of little use in the assessment of children's temporal cognitive assimilation. From this viewpoint Knight's (1996, p.35) comment '...that while it was neat to say that school learning could be described on a 10 point scale, it was the neatness of logic, not psychology' appears most appropriate.

Summary

Whilst the current analysis has de-valued the significance of age, the question remains whether age, in either of its measures, has any impact upon the development of temporal cognition. Primarily, it would seem reasonable, especially in the light of the findings of the effectiveness of the teaching method, to discount the hypothesis that age is the sole determining dynamic in temporal conceptual development.

The second question to consider is whether it is possible to arrange a learning situation which enables children's thought processes to be so challenged that they have to adapt to new material, thus overcoming the restrictions of chronological age (Hallam, 1975). The findings of the research would seemingly produce an answer that is an unqualified 'yes'. However, if we accept this contention it still seems apparent that we have not adequately described the effect, or scope, of age upon the development of chronological understanding. From the current findings it seems logical to posit that a certain age is needed to begin temporal cognitive development. The current study is, however, unable to provide any evidence as to what would be the earliest age at which children could positively benefit from the *STM*. This lack of evidence leaves only one conclusion open to this analysis, which is, as Wallace (1967) accounts, that certain levels of maturation are needed to provide the biological neurological structures which lead to the acquisition of complex conceptual processes. If we accept this contention it is possible to hypothesise that whilst age is a necessary condition for development, it does nothing to determine that development. From this standpoint, age becomes an ancillary variable (Wallace, 1967) which has some usefulness as a quantitative descriptor but has little explanatory power (Hallam, 1967).

Conclusion

A critical review of the literature details that a substantial evidence base exists that suggests a birth-date effect in children's performance within the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Moreover, it seems that the weight of research evidence strongly suggests that performance differentials are most likely to be as a result of the age-position effect. Whilst it is accepted that the age-position effect is operationalised within the areas of English, mathematics and science the present study, apart that is from durational concepts, has not been able to demonstrate that these results are transferable to the teaching and learning of primary history. In addition, the findings of the research do not provide cogent evidence to support the postulate that children's attitude towards their schooling has any significant effect on their capacity to assimilate historical concepts and to retain historical knowledge, nor does it suggest that summer-born children have any significant deficits in attitude compared to their autumn-born peers. Finally, a substantive conclusion of the present study is that teaching and curriculum are the main catalysts in the development of temporal cognition. Comparisons of this study's findings with those of previous researches serves to question earlier researchers' obsessions with the

notion that learning is age related. Unlike many previous researches, the notion that age is the sole determining dynamic of understanding has not been proved by the preponderance of evidence. Analysis of the present research findings strongly indicates that children's chronological understanding can be accelerated by instructional interventions. The findings of this study suggest, therefore, that the assimilation of temporal cognition and levels of maturation are not linked symbiotically but moreover should be viewed as uneasy bedfellows.

Notes

1. English primary education covers children from four to eleven year of age.
2. G.C.S.E – General Certificate of Secondary Education, these are examinations normally taken at the end of English compulsory education by children of aged sixteen.
3. A-Level, Advanced Level normally taken by pupils aged eighteen.

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Ideas on History and Orientation in Time: A Study with Beginning Teachers

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Abstract: *The recent research on historical consciousness, a meta-historical concept discussed by the German philosopher Rüsen, has drawn attention to the need to investigate how historical understanding might influence young people's decisions in the present. A similar concern is the focus of the Portuguese Historical Consciousness – Theory and Practices Project (funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology-FCT) which aims to investigate in a multifaceted study (including several PhD and MA theses) students and teachers' ideas of significance, narrative, explanation and evidence in history, social identity and citizenship as related to history, and how those ideas fit the claim that 'history is useful to understand the present and predict the future'. Two of the specific contributing research questions which are being explored within the Project's scope are 'how far and in what ways do beginner history teachers relate their ideas on change and significance of the past to their orientation in time'. This paper analyses the essays and group interviews of 18 beginner teachers, involved in the teacher training programme of three universities. Each interview was conducted with three teacher-trainees and the guidelines were based upon personal narratives about contemporary Portuguese history given by beginner teachers in a former exploratory study. Some results emerging from the preliminary analysis of data will be presented under a theoretical framework discussed by Lee and seeks to understand in what ways meta-conceptions of history might provide a usable framework of the past.*

Keywords: Historical consciousness, History education, Teacher education, Orientation in time

Introduction

The statement 'history is useful for a better understanding of the present' is often used – at least in Portugal - to legitimate the place of history in the curriculum. Nonetheless, the idea of a 'useful history' has been interpreted from different, sometimes conflicting views: the concept of a 'practical past' analysed by Oakeshott (1933) reminds us of a certain usefulness driven by specific religious, political, economic interests and producing some cosmetic versions of the past. As Lee (2002a) pointed out, 'the past can be a potent source of myth' when a partial selection of facts as well as a partial interpretation of evidence is made to support a given case. The history education in Portugal from the 1930s up to the mid-1970s provided explicit examples of such an approach. It was against these practical constraints that many historians and educators reacted in the mid-1970s and strongly argued for a 'history for its own sake', a history learned and practised according to its own disciplinary rules, the basis of an independent mind in the western world. The views within this position have varied, some recognising the interpretation of the past as an intellectual enterprise undertaken from several points of view, some others examining the past under a specific theory about the course of the human actions, and yet some others envisaging history as a 'cold', perspectiveless study of the past, detached from the present. If the former position appears to have provided a framework for a sophisticated history education in the UK, the second had a small influence in western education and the latter might have reinforced in Portugal an image of an inert history as far as history education is concerned. The idea of a relationship between historical reasoning and scenarios for the future has become unacceptable within a structuralist trend, looking at permanences throughout time

more than at changes, perhaps as a reaction – at least in Portugal – against the marxist dialectic framework defended by a few historians in the mid-1970s. Even the idea of an existing relationship between history and the understanding of present life has become a stereotyped statement for the case of history in the curriculum more than a grounded argument to theoretically give a consistent answer to the perplexity provoked by the question: What's the use of studying history?

The idea of 'historical consciousness' discussed by Rösen (1993) brought a new breath to the debate about possible and legitimate relationships between understanding the past, taking decisions in the present and predicting the future. In the field of history education, it has influenced recent studies drawing attention to how historical knowledge might function as a tool for temporal orientation of young people (Angvik & Borries, 1997; Lee, 2002a; Seixas & Clark, 2004). Lee (ibid.) discussed the theoretical concept comparing the Rösen's disciplinary matrix about the relationship between the discipline of history and the practical life with the Oakshott's 'practical' and 'historical' pasts, stressing the various meanings and roles that the practical past might assume. Carrying out a fruitful cross analysis with the British research approach to second order students' ideas, Lee argued for the need to young people acquiring a powerful meta-historical apparatus in order to develop sophisticated patterns of historical consciousness such as those proposed by Rösen. Lee hypothesised, however, that a wider range of types of historical consciousness than those theoretically identified by Rösen might be observed. Although from different theoretical frameworks, related research questions were also explored in studies on students' ideas about significance and change (Cercadillo, 2001; Barton, 2001). A similar concern is the focus of the HiCon Project (Portuguese *Historical Consciousness – Theory and Practices Project*) which aims to investigate in a multifaceted study students' and teachers' ideas of significance, narrative, explanation and evidence in history as well as social identity and citizenship as related to history, and how those ideas *fit* the claim that 'history is useful to understand the present and predict the future. The present study is part of the HiCon Project.

The Study

Research questions

This study aims to investigate how far and in what ways beginning history teachers relate their ideas on change and significance of the past to understanding the present and their decisions in everyday life.

The method

Eighteen history undergraduate students, from 22 up to 25 years of age, and about to complete their in-service teacher training at three universities (2 groups of three at each university), were asked to perform two tasks. Firstly, they were asked to write an individual, brief account of the last one hundred years of the history of Portugal in half an hour and, secondly, they were interviewed in separate groups of three for half an hour. The guidelines for the semi-structured interview included six items, the first of them asking the beginning teachers to select and justify which narrative among a set of three they would choose as more significant and how far their chosen version(s) would be useful to their personal lives. The three short narratives related to the 1974 Revolution (an occurrence known as 'The 25th of April') and were written by beginning teachers who had participated in a previous study, one year before. These narratives were supposed to suggest different approaches about temporal orientation related to history, according to the former analysis of data. The participants were also asked to discuss how they would perceive a line of time, such as it was charted in the *Youth and History* project questionnaire (Angvik & Borries,

1997) and where in the timeline they would situate the present actuality. The data analysis was carried out on a qualitative basis to identify some patterns of ideas related to the historical consciousness discussed by Rusen but in a flexible approach, such as Lee (2002a) suggested, in order to let the empirical data provide a ground for (future?) theory.

Main Results

The beginning teachers questioned in this study appeared to understand the present mainly as an outcome of political ruptures and a long-term economic structure, the social and cultural perspectives being omitted for the most part. A set of significant events and situations like the end of Monarchy and the rising of the 1st Republic, the establishing of the Salazar dictatorship, the 1974 Revolution (the 25th of April) or the entrance into the European Union are referred to as the milestones for each subsequent segment of time by all the participants. The Portuguese taking part in World War I and their neutrality in World War II, the colonial war in Africa, or even the age of Discoveries (as a golden past to be remembered) are some other events sometimes referred to by the beginning teachers. According to these young people, the main political milestones explain and are explained by a set of political, economic, social facts. They all acknowledge the political changes in Portugal occurred 30 years ago towards a free, democratic system and simultaneously regret the persistent economic problems of the country, these being seen either as unchanged or within a cyclic movement. They rarely make explicit how history has contributed to their personal lives; they also as well as they rarely envisage themselves as agents shaping the present actuality. Besides this overall picture, the beginning teachers' ideas about how (recent) history has affected their personal lives might indicate several patterns:

One pattern, here designated 'A clue for action?', suggests that an occasional link between the historical past and personal decisions is made explicit among a few youngsters. Recent history was interpreted as a succession of relevant milestones with specific political, economic, social and cultural causes and consequences. As the past was understood as a complex web of relationships, the line of time was considered as difficult to disentangle. There is neither a progressive or regressive evolution, and situations do not repeat themselves. Nonetheless, these young people appraised the 25th of April as a significant event bringing freedom and a democratic openness to the world and perceived a cycle up and down at the economic level. 'There was an economic crisis by the end of Monarchy and the Republic did not solve those problems; with Salazar there was an economic improvement, the 1960s were prosperous, and this is valued by older people', Luís said. They tended to consider a relative forward-backward pendulum at the political and social level as well as a progressive move regarding mentality: "even at education, for example, there is an increase but that also causes a regression regarding employment", as Alda stated, in relation to their own prospects of future unemployment. When they were asked to compare the present economic crisis to the economic prosperity in the 1960s, as they previously had stated, they first reacted with a perplex silence and smiles. Then Gilda observed: 'in the 1960s there was a lack of industry and the unemployment rate stabilised due to emigration; now there is more industry but the factories close, unemployment increases... Some explicit links between their attitudes in the present and how they understand the past were spontaneously formulated: 'I was born in freedom and I know that I've always felt free to choose our rulers', Luís noted. 'I have freedom of voting, that is priceless, I vote every time', Alda claimed. A political participation within the idea of representative democracy or free cultural interactions were the examples given of how their personal lives were affected by recent history. Gilda recognised that:

Now we can interact with other cultures, we are allowed to be open to the world, we have more opportunities and we can value our identity and that of others. That was not possible before the 25th of April.

In another pattern, 'Impulse for action', the link between a given past and what should be done in the present was stated in terms of pointing to a superficial analogy between past and present situations. The past was understood as a succession of political milestones (as in the previous pattern) with political and economic causes and consequences mainly. The 25th of April was also appraised as bringing freedom and democracy to the country, while an endemic lethargy was perceived at the economic level: 'In spite of remaining a poor country, without large resources, Portugal has moved in the direction of Europe and to her model of development', as Lisa said. The line of time was envisaged as a mixed cycle and pendulum. There appeared a more or less detailed 'scientific' version of the past but some historical events were explicitly treated as a potential source of inspiration for action in the present. This kind of relationship emerged when a few beginning teachers generalised from a given context of past events and expressed the wish for a similar outcome in the present without concerns of different temporal features of the situations under comparison: Rosa, for example, claimed:

Now we are going backwards, another revolution is required!

In another pattern, 'Spectators of history', the youngsters also understood the past as a succession of political milestones with political and economic causes and consequences. They also appraised the 25th of April as a touchstone of recent freedom and democracy, and regretted the persistent, mechanistic economic crisis in spite of efforts for developing the country. The line of time tended to be also envisaged as a mixed cycle and pendulum. The accounts written by these beginning teachers appear consensual, portraying one single, substantive version of the past, sometimes seeming to contradict the cyclic vision affirmed in the interview. Generalisations in terms of a set of principles underlying political or economic factors and outcomes may point to an implicit relation to the present. Those principles were stated at everyday level, such as with José, who mentioned several revolutions and generalised about their consequence: 'almost always the problem is the same, people want power and the power corrupts'. However, the relationship between a set of principles and their own present decisions was not made explicit. The historical consequences were just considered in an objective perspective, as Ana's words suggest:

The democracy was installed; from this moment Portugal began a long road to set up the republican regime again and for the population to learn about their rights and obligations as citizens.

Within a 'Heirs of the past' pattern, the idea of a social memory grounded on a mythologised past was defended. In this idea of a golden past, relevant milestones - such as the Age of Discoveries or the 1974 Revolution - must be remembered and proudly celebrated as indicators of greatness of the country and the Portuguese. 'In the twentieth-century we witness deplorable conditions of life and financial difficulties; the glorious epoch of Discoveries scarcely influenced these times', Ilda stated. The celebration of fixed events was mixed with feelings of nostalgia due to the perception of a crisis in the present and in some periods of the past (such as during the Salazar dictatorship). Another student, Alice, celebrated the good old days of 'monarchy' (a concept here conceived as opposed to democracy) as providing the most 'solid

values'. A balanced view of past and present was not evident, and the fixed memory may involve a stereotyped view of people. The same teacher claimed:

How has Portugal lived for the last 100 years? With hope, conscious that its history and men have contributed to shape the world as we know it.

It is the practical past remembered for purposes of maintaining a traditional social identity glorifying a given group (Oakeshott, *ibid.*). These students defended a mixed cyclic and pendular line of time: perhaps waiting for the return of an age of glory?

Conclusions

Sudden political changes and a stable economic structure appeared to be the main significant features of the recent history of Portugal, according to the history beginning teachers from three universities participating in this study. Thus the present seems to be determined by specific political events while at the economic level the tardiness persists. Social and cultural perspectives, or even industrialisation issues were rarely mentioned. Contrary to the existing evidence about British, American or Irish students' ideas of progress and technology (Lee, 2002a, 2002b; Barton, 2001), these beginning teachers ignored technological dimensions and tended to conceive time in a cyclic-pendular movement. As data do not allow for generalisations of findings, how far the selection of historical dimensions by beginner teachers omits such issues as technology is a question to be explored further within the scope of the ongoing Project. Answering such a question may be relevant for understanding in what ways technology is to be taken seriously by young people as an important dimension in present and future life. The related data available refers to children's and adolescent students' ideas in industrialised countries. Slight references about the selection of conditions to explaining the past by Portuguese adolescents appeared in Barca (1996), technology being one of the most cited dimensions after the military and moral ones, in a context where the participants discussed historical versions which took into account that dimension. There need to be further studies with younger students in Portugal and beginning teachers elsewhere.

The political milestones as well as the economic picture given by the young people converge in a single version of the recent past and alternative views were rarely provided. This overall picture of the past might correspond to the key facts and situations predominantly conveyed by the historians, thus functioning as a feature of social identity among the young generations of history graduates.

Explicit relationships between history and present life - when they were made - might appear at the level of a practical past ('the heirs of the past') or else as an emerging tool for orientation ('a clue for action?'). The 'subjective' element (Lee, 2002a), that is, the relationship between meanings of the past and personal orientation was rarely evident, since most of times the interviewees avoided arguing about how history specifically would contribute to their personal decisions. The ideas this study tried to highlight - still in a very early phase - give a range of four, not exclusive, patterns. Furthermore, although the Rusen theory was considered for the theoretical framework, the four patterns described here do not equate to the four types of historical consciousness - traditional, exemplary, critical and genetic - he proposed. The 'heirs of the past' ideas, oriented toward/from a legendary past, may fall into the traditional category, but both the 'spectators of history' and the 'impulse for action' seem to be based on ideas of exemplary type, operating with generalisations on how human actuality 'works', the former in an academic, 'objective' style, the latter suggesting (perhaps?) a mechanistic application of those principles to the issues of

present. The 'a clue for action?' pattern might indicate an approach to the genetic category, very circumscribed to the use of freedom as a citizen in a representative and open democracy, suffering the constraints of an economic crisis reflected in their own perspectives of unemployment. The critical category seems to be absent in this sample, indicating that the deconstructive turn has not affected these student teachers' ideas.

According to Lee (2002a, p.7), 'there are different kinds of pasts, based on different ways of reading the present'. The ways they looked at the line of time seemed to be related to the ways they look at the present more than to their narratives about the past. Taking into account the examples given by the participants, the economic recession and the alternative political powers in present actuality seemed to inspire the idea of a cyclic and/or a pendular movement of time (a research issue to be further explored in the future).

Data discussed here led to posing two questions about history education at universities in Portugal: What kind of experience is gained with the learning of history? How far is the meaning of the past constructed on the basis of evidence? Such questions, converging with questions arising from the results of other studies on teachers' ideas (Barca, 2001; Magalhães, 2004) provide a strong motivation to clarify and improve the understanding of ideas about historical consciousness among undergraduate students, as a contribution to history teacher education. The data collected is still very limited and its analysis and results are very provisional. But for the research team, this preliminary interpretation of several kinds of ideas around history and temporal orientation is seen as the first step of an important path toward a sophisticated understanding of the idea of a usable history.

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Developing a Concept of Historical Evidence: Students' Ideas about Testing Singular Factual Claims

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Abstract *This paper discusses research evidence from Project Chata (Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches) bearing on students' understandings of the nature and status of different kinds of historical claims. It provides a detailed analysis of pupil responses to two specific questions, designed to explore one aspect of children's concept of historical evidence. The paper provides example responses to these questions as a means of highlighting the key ideas that children appear to be working with in the context of this task. A total of 320 children from Year 3, Year 6, Year 7, and Year 9, across three primary and six secondary schools, make up the research sample. The paper relates the range of ideas apparent in the sample to the different age groups and these findings suggest that the majority of students from all age groups treat historical claims as if they were matters to be directly tested by an appeal to authority, or by identifying a link between the subject matter of the claim and material the past has left behind. However, these findings also demonstrate that some children were able to make important distinctions between the claims made by different singular factual statements, and to raise questions about the status of those claims. For these children there was a clear recognition that a test suitable for one kind of claim would not necessarily be suitable for another kind of claim.*

Keywords: Historical claims, Historical sources, Stories, Clues, Evidence, Testimony, Information, Know That, Know How, Valid, Test, Disconfirmation

Introduction

Over two decades ago Peter Rogers, in his pamphlet *The New History: Theory into Practice* (Rogers, 1978), offered an argument about the nature of history from a 'brief discussion of the general conditions which validate a claim to knowledge'. He suggested that in history when 'we are forced to consider the grounds upon which our claims to knowledge rest' it is inadequate to claim that 'we have it on good authority'. Pointing out the futility of infinite regression in this approach Rogers makes the argument 'that some claims to knowledge other than mere authority must be found' (p4). He goes on to tell us:

Only 'know how' can give 'the right to be sure' because it is the only valid basis for claims to 'know that'. On the other hand, 'know how' is no general technique of enquiry, but is marked by a large element specific to the sort of area of enquiry and hence type of proposition which it has been shaped to serve. There are different kinds of evidence, which have to be deployed and manipulated by different enquiry strategies (p.7).

He expands on this by arguing:

There are different kinds of evidence which have to be deployed and manipulated by different enquiry strategies precisely because there are different kinds of question concerned to produce different kinds of statement (p.7).

Although Rogers is making distinctions here between enquiry strategies in different subjects, it is also clearly the case that different kinds of questions in history also demand different enquiry procedures. History asks different kinds of questions about the past, and it is the individual and specific nature of these questions that determines what can count as evidence in validating any claim to knowledge in

response to them. It also follows that if different questions (about what happened, about why it happened, about who is responsible for it happening, about what changed, or about what was or is significant about what happened or about what changed) relate to the evidence in different ways, then this evidential relationship also determines the different status of the claims being made.

If historical enquiry is to be at the heart of the history curriculum and to be recognized as a serious enterprise in history classrooms, then central to that curriculum and that enterprise has to be the development of students' concept of historical evidence. Rogers encouraged a critical use of sources, in particular, the questioning of testimony and the author's position to know, but after three decades of critical 'source work' research suggests that many students' retain a powerful propensity to treat information as given, and to make appeals to authority as a means of finding out about the past. Where students do recognize the fact that our knowledge of the past comes from the material the past has left behind, they all too often learn interrogation routines for dealing with sources that have little to do with understanding these sources as historical evidence.

While appeals to authority may be an efficient way to gain access to historical particulars, and the routine interrogation of historical sources may support students' critical awareness of testimony, without an understanding of what Rogers calls the 'symbiotic' relationship between 'know that' and 'know how' (Rogers, 1978, p.7) historical accounts will remain inert knowledge that is of little use to students' future lives. They will not be able to become rationally involved in the historical debates of the future, or have any hope of understanding why explanations about past events, or the significance of those events may change during their own lifetime.

The propensity of students to either appeal to authority for validation of historical claims, or to treat sources as face value information, or to reject sources as useful on the basis of a reliability test, was apparent in the context of the Chata (Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches) research designed to explore students' understanding of Historical Enquiry. One aspect of this research examined students' approaches to testing historical claims and their understanding of the relationship between historical claims and the evidence on which they rest. Students were asked to make a choice between different historical claims (presented to them as very brief stories) on the basis of a set of sources (presented to them as clues) provided in the context of the relevant background information, and to explain that choice. Recognition of the valid claim required students to use the sources as a set and to understand them as evidence. Students were then asked to suggest whether any of the sources were particularly helpful (and whether any were not particularly helpful) in making their decision and to explain why. These acted as a check on, and clarification of, the reasoning behind the students' choice of story. Analysis of the data from these initial questions has been reported elsewhere and confirms the propensity of students to treat sources as information, and to regard details (like names, dates and numbers) as facts that carry with them their own validity. (Lee, Ashby & Dickinson, 1996; Ashby & Lee, 1996; Ashby & Lee, 1998; Lee & Ashby 1998; Ashby, 2003, 2004) Analysis of the data also revealed the power of a detailed, expansive, exciting or lengthy story over one that was more modest and generalized in its claims and took no risks with what could be claimed on the basis of the evidence.

There was evidence from this research that even where students were able to operate with a sophisticated concept of a test (making complex disconfirmatory moves), their treatment of the sources as information led them to invalid conclusions. Further, the propensity of many students to isolate particulars within the claims, treat

these as given, and look only for information that supported these particulars, meant students were able to ignore the conflicts in the material, conflicts that could only be resolved if the students had used the sources as a set, and as evidence. Where students did challenge the information provided in the sources by appeal to provenance (treating sources as testimony) they still faced difficulties in recognizing a valid claim, because testimony that was labelled unreliable was consequently rejected, rather than used to validate other aspects of the valid claim. However, what the research also revealed was that some students were able to bring a sophisticated understanding of evidence to the task, and others a sophisticated notion of the ways in which particular kinds of claims are more likely to survive an evidence test than other more risky claims. In this context, the research highlighted the importance of the conceptual leap students need to make, and some were able to make, from understanding sources as testimony to working with a concept of evidence, where sources are given recognition of their value as evidence for specific kinds of claims. It was apparent that teaching needs to pay attention to the nature of historical claims alongside the work students undertake with sources. If students are to develop a concept of evidence they will need to understand the evidential relationship between historical sources (understood in the context of the society that produced them) and the claims about the past they are able to support.

The study also revealed the complexities of concept development in the context of specific skill demands, reminding us that understanding of the more generic psychological issues about cognitive development raised by Brunerian and Piagetian work (for example 'going beyond the information given' and centration) remain important aspects of teachers' professional knowledge (Bruner, 1974). Aware of some of these difficulties, and in an attempt to overcome them when collecting the data, a series of further questions followed the initial task. These were designed to probe, in more detail, the students' understanding of the source material.

Students' understanding of singular factual claims

The data collected in response to two of these questions is the subject of this paper, and is explored in the context of the argument offered here: that if historical enquiry is to remain an important aspect of school history, then developing students' concept of historical evidence (through an exploration of the nature of historical questions and the way in which they set parameters for the kind of evidence on which answers to these questions can rest, and the ability of the evidence to bear the weight of any claim being made) has to be the goal for 'source work' in the classroom.

The research sample for the data discussed here is set out in TABLE 1.

The claim addressed in the first of the two questions was relatively straightforward. Pointing out that 'Clue 1 tells us there was a big battle at Badon Hill', the question asked, 'How could you check whether there was a battle fought at Badon Hill?'

Clue 1. Written in 540 by a British Monk called Gildas

Some Britons were murdered by the Saxons, some were made slaves. Some fought back under a leader called Ambrosius. Sometimes the Britons won the battles and sometimes the Saxons won. There was a big battle at Badon Hill. I know about this because I was born in the year it happened.

The claim addressed in the second question was identified in a similar way: 'Clue 2 tells us that Arthur killed 960 Saxons', and students were asked 'How could you

decide whether this is true?’

School	Phase and type	Intake	Y3	Y6	Y7	Y9
School A	Primary	urban	17	29		
School B	Primary	small town	16	18		
School C	Primary	rural	22	28		
School D	secondary comprehensive	urban			24	24
School E	secondary comprehensive	suburban			24	25
School F	secondary comprehensive	urban			23	
School G	secondary comprehensive	small town				10
School H	secondary selective (girls)	urban +			14	16
School I	secondary selective (boys)	suburban +			15	15
Total	in each year group		55	75	100	90

N = 320

Mean age of year groups

Y3: 8 years 1month; Y6: 11 years 2 months; Y7: 12 years 1 month; 9: 14 years1month

TABLE 1. Phase I schools

Clue 2. Written in 800 by a Welsh Monk called Nennius

The war leader was called Arthur. His twelfth battle was on Mount Badon. At the battle Arthur killed 960 Saxons all on his own. He won all the battles he fought.

It was expected initially that the older students would raise questions about the author of the source, or the period of time in which the sources were produced, or, in the case of Source 2, why this type of claim might have been made at this point in time. The students had been provided with historical background material setting out clearly the time context of the departure of the Roman Army, and the series of Saxon invasions and gradual Saxon settlement. However, only a handful of students referred back to the source from which the claim was taken, or the background material. The students appeared to work with the assumption that the battle site was known, and only a very few challenged the existence of Arthur in the context of the second question.

The nature of the claim being made by these authors was of considerable importance here. The questions, when taken as a pair, provided data that could explore students’ ideas about testing in the context of different kinds of claims. How did the students tackle these two questions? What counted as checking a particular claim, and to what extent did the students distinguish between the nature of the claim being made in question one and that being made in question two? To what extent would their validation rest on an appeal to authority, an enquiry into the authors’ positions to know, or corroboration from other sources? Responses were analysed by means of an inductive category set, the most robust form of which is discussed below.

Deciding whether there was a battle at Badon Hill

Responses to the first of these two questions suggested four main categories. Fig. 1 shows the distribution of responses under these categories by age for the first question. Large numbers of students responding to this question wanted to check this claim through the authority of Books and/or Experts, other students suggested Records or Relics (mainly bodies, bones, weapons and armour). Others qualified their use of sources to test this claim suggesting that sources had to have Credibility to have any value in supporting this claim, but without reference to the actual author

of this source. Some students, noticeably those in the older age groups Questioned the Claim itself in the context of the author's ability to know. Fig. 1 shows the percentage of responses in these categories by age group.

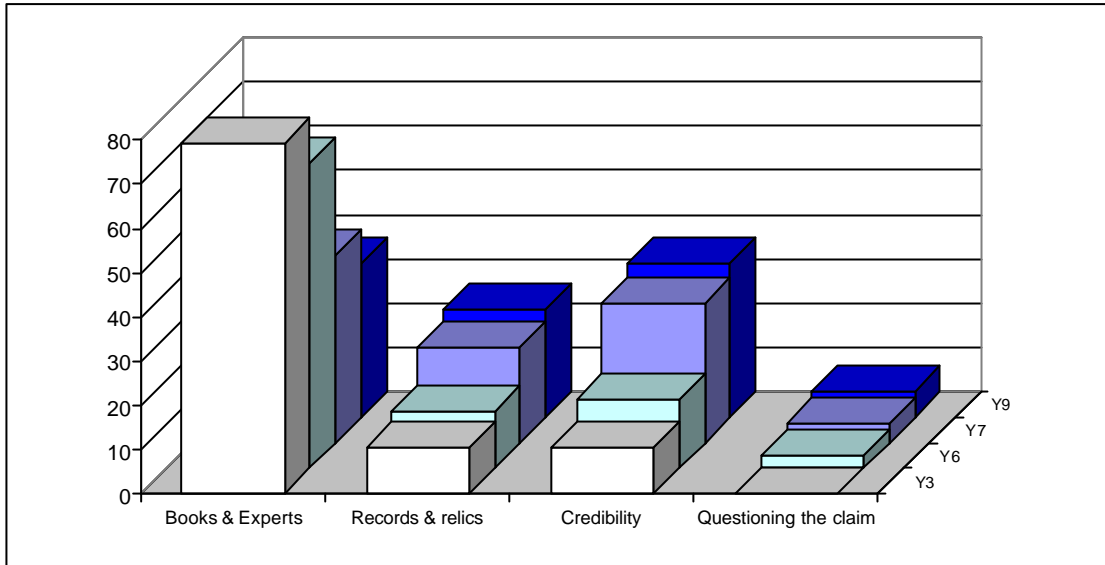


Fig. 1. Testing the claim that there was a battle at Mount Badon
Percentages of year-group (excluding non-responders)
 Deciding whether it is true that Arthur killed 960 Saxons

An additional category was suggested by a study of responses to the second of these two questions. (See Fig. 2.) Students who challenged the Plausibility of the claim have been identified separately from those who questioned the claim on the basis of the difficulty of creating this kind of record in the context of a battle.

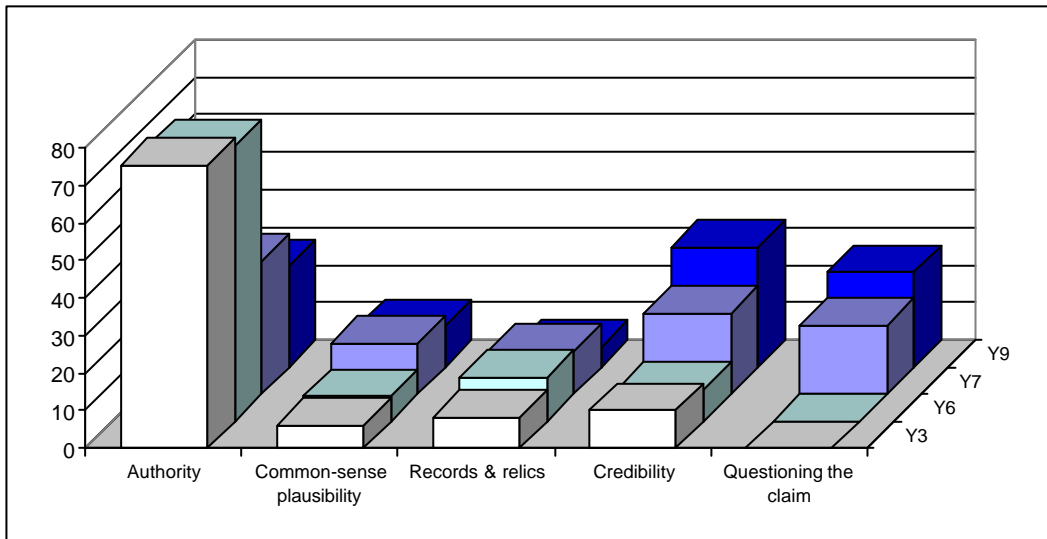


Fig. 2. Testing the claim that Arthur killed 960 men
Percentages of year-group (excluding non-responders)

This made it possible to identify students who reconstructed the situation in which it was possible to produce testimony and what that might mean about the accuracy of that testimony. These students may be able to make moves in other historical

contexts that students responding to the more obvious exaggeration of this claim may not necessarily be able to make.

A quick glance at Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 reveals the propensity of students in all age groups, but particularly the year 3 and year 6 students, to call on the authority of books and experts. (This is not to claim that this is not a sensible and efficient way of finding out, but this does not satisfy the 'right to be sure' suggested by Rogers, and the assumption, being made by these students, is that this information is available.) Within this category there was a distinction between younger students who turned to books and teachers, and older students who worked with a sense of expertise identifying history books, history teachers, or archaeologists or museums as sources for validating these claims. For those students who wanted to work from the historical sources, looking for the remains of a battle on a battlefield was a legitimate method of checking the claim identified in question 1. As one year 7 student suggested 'we could go there and dig to see if there are any weapons or dead bodies', and as suggested this is a valid move, provided the site was known, though more difficult than can easily be imagined by students who may well see the site as being very precisely located.

However, where some of these students repeat this as a method for checking the claim identified in question 2, it is clear they are not making distinctions between the different kinds of claims being made. Responses to these two tasks (and other Chata research tasks) suggest that some students have recognized that the material the past has left behind can provide us with information about the past but are not able to make distinctions between what can actually count as evidence for particular kinds of claims that history makes about that past, and what cannot. This kind of move is apparent in the wider Chata data on Historical Enquiry, where archaeological finds are understood as being able to tell us about the past, but access is direct rather than inferred or deduced.

Consider the two clusters of responses to question 2 (about how to check the claim that 'Arthur killed 960 Saxons') set out in the boxes below:

Gary (year 9):
By looking in other history books and ask a history teacher or an archaeologist.
Alison (year 6):
Look it up in different information books and see what it says in them. If most of them said that he killed 960 Saxons it would probably be true.
Laura (year 7):
By checking things that had been dug up at Badon Hill.
Samantha (year 7):
By looking it up in places or finding stuff underground that tells you.

Martin (year 9):
It is quite hard to tell that this is true because how do we know that Arthur killed exactly 960 Saxons? Was he counting them as he put his sword through each one? So I do not think that this is completely true, I believe he may have killed many Saxons but I have no idea how someone could get an exact figure of how many he killed.
Richard (year 9):
It is too accurate to be true, unless someone went round with him counting. It probably means that he executed about a thousand Saxons himself after he had won.
Lisa (year 9):
I would check and see if other non-biased sources said this and decided whether it was just someone who tried to make Arthur seem wonderful.

The students represented by the first group of responses here regarded the claim that Arthur killed 960 Saxons, as if it were asserting simply that 'a lot of Saxons got killed'. The task was one of finding the answer, and the problem was confined to where you look, and what you look at. So Alison and Gary directed us to authorities, and Laura and Samantha to the presumed site. Gary wanted to ask an expert or to look at history books, Laura and Samantha to look at what has been found. The particular demands of the claim were simply not addressed.

The difficulties that remain untouched by such moves are made clear by another student, David, year 7, who wrote: 'You could go to Badon Hill and look for bones. If you found a lot of bones then you would know. But you would not know if he killed exactly 960 Saxons.' It is possible, of course, that he sees the problem as simply the practical one of sorting out the bones precisely enough to do the counting job accurately, but this response may be recognizing that a claim like this raises further difficulties than mere numbers.

The students in the second group of responses begin to see that there are complex issues involved in checking a claim of this kind. Martin, year 9, in facing the problems raised by the exact number, recognized how difficult it would be to attach this to the actions of a particular person in these specific circumstances. Richard, year 9, also saw the difficulty of counting and raised the possibility of how a more formal situation might have made it possible, while still wanting to shy away from the exactness of the number, preferring to round it up to a thousand.

Lisa, year 9, however, went beyond the problem of numbers, and by giving some consideration to why someone might want to make such a claim, raised the issue of the kind of claim that was being made. The claim itself suggests bias on the part of the author, and attributes a particular purpose to him in wanting 'to make Arthur seem wonderful'. Lisa's strategy of checking with other non-biased sources might not serve her so well, since the bias she was recognizing is in the claim itself, and she did not deal with it in its time context.

A discussion of the students' responses under the four main categories sheds some light on the kind of thinking that teachers need to challenge or encourage to support their students' progress towards dealing with the complexities of historical evidence in relation to historical claims.

Books and Experts

Students in this category were concerned with looking to some authority to seek reassurance about the truth of the statements they were given. Some wanted to look them up in a book or ask someone, as though they were seeking a pre-existent known answer to a question. Others recognized that information was complex and that difficulties arose in actually finding authorities. There was recognition that knowledge was specialized and therefore sources of knowledge were often organized to accommodate their search. An index, or encyclopedia, a history shelf in the library, or a museum would also support a search for some written authority on the matter. People also specialized: history teachers, historians, archaeologists could provide the information needed to check this claim. Some were appalled by the second claim, and Emma, year 6, wrote 'Well I would look it up, and hope it's not true'.

Within this category there were other distinctions that could be made, and there was a sense that even with authorities of this kind there needed to be some caution. Some students wanted to get 'lots of books', or 'ask different historians'. Looking for agreement, or looking at what most books said was an important way of checking information found in any particular book, or information given by any particular person. As Peter, year 7, suggested, you 'get loads of information and see which

bit's more popular'. Counting sources of information, as a corroborative approach to validating claims (made by both the stories and the clues) was a frequent approach taken by students.

Relics and Records

This category recorded responses from those students who recognized that historical claims bore some relationship with what the past had left behind, but saw this as a direct connection. If you wanted to find out whether there was a battle at Badon Hill you just went to the site and found the weapons and bodies. The question of whether the site was known did not arise and little inference was necessary. This could work quite well for question 1, if the existence of the site was taken for granted, but would not of course be appropriate for question 2. Students whose responses fell into this category in question 1 did not all fall into the same category in question 2, as a study of Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 will make apparent. However, some who wanted to look for weapons and bodies for the first question, looked for their answers to the second question in just the same way. Laura and Samantha (in the first group of examples discussed above) were typical of students who made no distinction about the type of claim they were checking, but recognized that checks on claims about the past had to attend to what the past had left behind. However many of the responses in this category tended to take a 'topic' approach to the information it was necessary to find, and distinctions between students was possible in the context of the two questions.

Credibility

This category recorded responses which looked to what the past had left behind for validation of the claims, but additionally required these sources to have some particular credibility. Students' responses can be placed in three broad groups. First, primary sources were credible if they agreed with other sources. This worked in much the same way as seeking agreement under the category 'Books and Experts', but here the students wanted to check with sources that were in some way attached to the past. Richard, year 7, suggested 'a survey of several clues could be done and an average of above 80% would be sufficient for saying the opinions are true'. Consensus was obviously an important check on any single source of information, and this numerical approach to validating historical claims is a feature of quite a few students' responses across a range of research tasks.

Other responses were more explicit about the kinds of sources needed, and 'sources from the time' were often seen as most credible. However, these sources that are referred to as 'from the time' appear often to stand in for an eyewitness whether or not the source from the time is even claiming to be a witness to the event they are describing. There is a great deal of evidence from the data, to suggest that students who use 'from the time', do so with limited precision about what a source 'from the time' is able to support.

A smaller third group, in this category, looked at the credibility of the author of a source. Caroline, year 9, in response to question 2 claimed 'Monks' writings would be particularly useful as they were supposed to be intelligent and should have written the facts instead of elaborating, or lying about the event.'

For responses to question 2 in this category the nature of the claim did not arise: there were no special difficulties involved in validating such a claim. Although a distinction was made between needing weapons and bodies for checking the claim in question one and needing eyewitness accounts for question two, it was still considered that an eyewitness, or for some several eyewitnesses, were all you

needed, and the 'fact' that monks don't lie was sufficient to give credibility to the author of Clue 2.

Questioning the claim

Responses in this category went beyond getting the information, looking for agreement, or access to relics or eyewitness accounts. They showed an awareness that inferences could be made from sources, that you might be able to 'work things out' from sources, and that in some sense sources could provide evidence. Others recognized the problem that having particular types of sources did not necessarily enable you to make certain claims, particularly in the light of the nature of those claims. Martin, and Richard, both year 9, (see the second box above), exemplify this kind of response, in their response to question 2. Like Martin and Richard, some students recognized that the type of claim being made in question 2 raised questions about why someone would make such a claim and how it might have come about. They all went beyond the search for the information as a given or knowable fact that can be accessed if you go to the right source. They recognized the limitations of eyewitness accounts or simple agreement. They offered a mechanism that enabled an examination of the claim to be made in the context of how you might be able to know, and the problems that can get in the way of knowing, or questioned (in some sense) how the claim itself came about. Looking through testimony to the circumstances that produced it is an important aspect of students' understanding about the nature of historical sources and therefore the claims you can make on the basis of it.

Plausibility

Figure 2 shows an additional category to those used in Fig. 1, that of 'Common-sense plausibility'. Some students found the particular claim in question two unbelievable. For some of them it was dealt with by an appeal to human experience: it was not physically possible for a human being to do this, although one year 6 student at the trial stage of this research suggested that if it was true that Arthur had a magic sword then it would be possible that he killed this many Saxons on his own. This common sense plausibility approach to the question was clearly expressed by Robert, year 9, who wrote, 'I cannot believe that one man could ever kill 960 Saxons in one outing, it is almost physically impossible'. Michael, year 7, didn't believe it either: 'I wouldn't. I can't believe everything I hear and to kill 960 Saxons is quite horrid. Someone else probably did it for him'. Presumably he means Arthur had help here. This category represents an important type of response to other kinds of claims that may be encountered in history. The way in which students re-create everyday situations through which to examine the possibility of particular past action or practice is likely to be recognized by many teachers and has some important bearings on understanding their ideas about evidence and empathy. This may indicate first steps in the creation of what Wineburg calls a 'situation model' (Wineberg, 1994).

Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 in highlighting the percentage of responses from each age group within the different categories described and exemplified above suggest that:

- In the context of both these questions younger students are more likely to rely on the authority of books and experts than are older students, although there is still a significant number of older students who do so;
- There is a marked difference between the responses of the two primary school age groups and the responses of two secondary school age groups in appealing to the authority of books and experts, with little difference between the two

primary school age groups, and little difference between the two secondary school age groups;

- Older students are more likely than younger students to question the credibility of sources than younger students, and again responses show a marked difference between the primary school age groups and the secondary school age groups.

An examination of the key differences between Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 also suggests that:

- The secondary school age group are more likely to make distinctions in the nature of the claims they are testing than the primary school age group, in recognizing that while it is possible to test the likelihood of a battle being fought at a particular site by digging up relics of a battle from that site, this approach is not likely to yield evidence about who killed whom, or how many people were killed by a particular person;
- The nature of the claim being tested in question 2 encouraged students in year 7 and 9 to question the claim being made, but had no such impact on year 3 and year 6 students.

Conclusion/Implications

There is of course much discussion among teachers and teacher educators of what is termed 'bad' and 'good' practice, but this should not be a division between the past and the present state of history teaching. 'Bad' and 'good' practice is all too often identified independently of the goals a teacher has in mind, and these goals seem to have shifted away from the teaching and assessment of the conceptual understanding of evidence to 'source work' that in many schemes of work and assessment systems does not appear to go beyond the routines of gathering or eliciting information, or demonstrating that if you use one set of sources you come up with one interpretation and if you use another set you produce a competing interpretation. It is teachers' goals that determine the nature of classroom work with historical sources, and shed light on different practices both in the past and the present. It may be that discussions about the purpose of 'source work' in school, and its relationship to historical claims or interpretations, would be more fruitful than discussions about source sets and their length.

If one of these goals is to develop students' understanding of evidence, a major obstacle to this is persistence in treating 'source work' as a 'skills' based activity. Further, all too often the words 'source' and 'evidence' are used interchangeably and teachers as well as students need to make clearer distinctions here. It is particularly worrying when, in an attempt to be helpful to their students, teachers put commercially produced material on their classroom walls that reinforce many students' existing misconceptions. (I have in mind here a commercially produced poster showing 'Kinds of Evidence' when what is actually meant is 'Kinds of Sources'.) If progress is to be made students need to understand that sources are not the same thing as evidence, and to develop a conceptual understanding of the evidential relationship between sources and claims. The 'symbiotic relationship' that Rogers identifies must be encouraged in the classroom, but must also take students beyond the matching of sources to claims at the level of information, or the counting of sources to determine validity of particular claims.

In thinking historically about this two decades ago, Denis Shemilt in his Evaluation Study of the SHP (Shemilt, 1980) pointed out:

Children can begin to handle gaps, contradictions and bias in sources but until they can reason hypothetically, they insist on expecting the evidence, by some mysterious means, to quite literally tell them what happened. Only when the child can hypothesise can he clearly predict what some piece of evidence should or, more properly, should not reveal; only then can he say what additional evidence may be needed and speculate on where it might be found. (p.47)

What was particularly rewarding and exciting for teachers at this time was the fact that Denis Shemilt's study found that:

Despite the intellectual difficulty of this process, quite a large number of Project candidates were able to solve historical problems by forming and testing hypotheses. (p.47)

Research reveals the sophistication of many students' thinking in history and the Chata research testifies to the complex understandings that some students have about the nature of history. To encourage more students to think in these sophisticated ways it is perhaps important to remember Shemilt's words from 1980, and how these words should take us beyond the current NC ATs:

The capacity to reason in propositional terms is necessary before anyone can understand that History does not and cannot aspire to convey a true picture of the past (if only because there is no original against which the accuracy of such a picture can be checked). History attempts to do no more than to make statements about the past valid in terms of the available evidence. But a child unable to reason propositionally cannot grasp the difference between a true and a valid statement, an accurate and a justified representation of the past. (p.47)

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Children's Thinking in History: Analysis of a History Lesson Taught to 11 Year Olds at Ihsan Sungu School, Istanbul

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Abstract *This case study analyses a video recording of a history lesson taught to a class of eleven year olds in Istanbul. It is part of a larger project in which video recordings of history lessons in Bucharest, Cumbria, (England), Lyons and Geneva have been analysed in order to identify ways in which children are involved in historical enquiry rather than didactic teaching as a basis for comparison, discussion and development. In this lesson pupils work in groups to interpret information in texts, maps and pictures in order to reconstruct it in poetry, art, drama and music. The analysis of the transcript explores ways in which pupils extract information, transfer it to new contexts and express it from different viewpoints. It shows how, in discussing sources, pupils gradually become independent of adult support, how they spontaneously use special vocabulary introduced by the teacher in new contexts and how they use causal vocabulary. It is concluded that pupils are engaged in the process of historical enquiry to the extent that, in an embryonic way, they interrogate sources to construct interpretations which include presenting the information from different perspectives and developing arguments, using specialised vocabulary. The significance of classroom organisation and ethos in developing historical enquiry is considered.*

Keywords: History education, Turkey, Sources, Discussion, Classroom ethos

Context of this case study

The analysis of this lesson is part of an ongoing project, *Teaching History to Ten Year Olds in a Range of European Countries**. The aim of the project is to identify the extent to which ten-eleven year olds in a range of European countries learn history through the process of historical enquiry, irrespective of content, as a basis for comparing similarities and differences and for further development. The researchers agreed that historical enquiry involves asking questions about different kinds of sources, in order to make deductions and inferences about the past (Collingwood, 1939), and so learning that, because evidence is often incomplete and of varying status and is selected and combined to construct accounts of the past, interpretations may vary but be equally valid. The discourse of history is total interpretation of historians in which they reflect their thoughts and biases (Karabag, 2002) as well as historical facts. There is no single, correct view of the past. Learning to question, to form opinions, develop arguments and listen to those of others is central to an open society although history as a discipline has no specific aim for developing democratic attitudes (Dilek, 2002a; Ozturk & Dilek 2003; also see Safran for aims of history teaching). At a meeting of researchers into history education convened by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (1995) it was agreed that young pupils can engage with historical enquiry in this way, that it is important that they should, before stereotypical ideas develop, and that small scale case studies may be the best way forward.

In this project history lessons considered by the researcher in each country to be typical good practice were video recorded and analysed: three lessons in Bucharest, three in Cumbria, England, one in Geneva, two in Lyon and one in Istanbul. The video recordings were transcribed and translated into English, the common language of the researchers. In the initial analysis the process of historical enquiry underpinning each lesson was identified by listing the questions asked, the sources used to answer them and the specialised vocabulary involved. In analysing the English, French, Romanian and Swiss lessons this analysis showed that each of the lessons was based on asking questions about sources,

using different kinds of historical vocabulary. To this extent the teachers were modelling the process of historical enquiry.

However there were no questions involving opinion or arguing a point of view, there was no extended discussion, (the teachers always spoke far more than the pupils) and different interpretations were neither constructed nor compared.

Secondly the researchers in each country analysed the videos from their own perspective identifying areas of interest, problems arising and areas for development. The Romanian researcher was interested in how a definition of creativity could be interpreted in terms of investigations involving questions about Ancient Egypt (Capita et al., 2000) and in lesson structure (Capita et al., 2001). The Swiss researchers considered how to avoid over simplification when young pupils are involved in historical enquiry (Audigier et al., 2003), responded to by Cooper and Capita (2003).

The first analysis of the Turkish lesson revealed that, as in the other lessons recorded, questions were asked of sources (text, maps and pictures), and that vocabulary specially associated with history was employed. To this extent the Turkish lesson reflected the process of historical enquiry, in the same way as the English, Romanian, French and Swiss lessons did. A second analysis, described in this paper, considers how pupils extracted information from sources and used it to express opinions from different perspectives; the ways in which they discussed and interpreted sources, the vocabulary they used, the way in which they developed an argument using causal language, gender differences, the extent to which they created different interpretations, and evidence of enjoyment of what was, for them, a novel approach to learning history. A cross curricular approach called thematic teaching was used in a longitudinal experimental research in relation to history teaching revealed similar findings (see Dilek, 2002b).

It is interesting that a similar approach was first researched in England by Hallam (1975) and that this was one of the precursors of further research into young pupils ability to learn history through 'active' approaches (Blakeway, 1983; Knight, 1989; Cooper, 1991; Lee, 1996) This research has arisen from and been applied to practice (e.g. Wood and Holden 1995; McAleavy, 1997; Fines & Nichol 1997).

The Turkish lesson

Background

Dursun Dilek, associate professor of history education at the University of Marmara, Istanbul, recorded a lesson taught by one of his student teachers to a class of eleven year olds. Dilek's doctoral research at the University of Warwick, had investigated approaches to the teaching history other than the didactic methods which had been traditionally used in Turkey, although it was not experimental research (Dilek 1999). One difference between the Turkish lesson and the other lessons is that extracts of group dialogue were captured which indicate how the teacher's introductory information linked to the ways in which pupils discussed the sources in groups, and the resulting presentations. The Turkish lesson was also cross curricular.

Although every country has an education culture in which different interpretations of educational theories may be practised there were striking visual similarities between the Turkish classroom and the other lessons recorded. The classroom could have been confused with the rooms in the French or Romanian videos, except for the crescent on the wall. The pupils too appeared ubiquitous: school uniforms, school bags, stylish jackets; shy, boisterous, extrovert and diligent pupils; the female teacher with long hair, wearing fashionable trousers and sweater. Turkey is a secular state but it was surprising for a British researcher not to see the hijab which is so frequently found in English classrooms. This also

shows that how our perceptions may be formed by the need for generalisation in a way trying to understand the phenomena from the cultural point of view that we are related.

Structure

The teacher explained, with the help of two pictures and a map, that the lesson was about the Battle of Ankara, between the Ottoman, Bayezit and the Mongol Timurlane (Timur) in 1403. Bayezit's aim was to recapture Iran and Syria. Timur wanted to destroy the Ottoman State and be Emperor of all Turks and also to capture China.

Pupils were told that there would be five group activities in which they would reconstruct the battle from different perspectives, using sources and that they would share their work at the end of the lesson. The art group would use pictures of weapons and some texts to construct visual interpretations of aspects of the battle. The drama group would use texts to construct a dramatic interpretation, discussion at the meetings of Timur's and the Bayezit's advisors; what was said and how decisions were made. The poetry group could interpret the texts as a poem. The document group, based on information in a text that letters were exchanged between Bayezit and Timur, would write letters which might have been exchanged. The music group would compose a song about the war. Pupils could join the group of their choice. Research has suggested that such small group activities enhance learning since cognition is intrinsically social (Hamlyn, 1982; Bennett & Dunne, 1992; Galton & Williamson, 1992). Ashby and Lee (1987) found that children reached higher levels of understanding when discussing an historical event or problem amongst themselves than they could achieve in their own. So problem-solving process can be accelerated through discussion which also develops critical thinking skills of children (see Akinoglu 2003).

Pace

The video recorded the changes in pace during the lesson. The teacher's direct input was followed by lots of excitement, movement and noise as the groups began their activities. The room then became quieter dominated by reflection and sharing of ideas. Next there was frantic motivation under pressure of time to complete the presentations, followed by the excitement of dressing up – a scarf as a turban for a bespectacled Timur; a girl's cork moustache... Finally, the presentations were watched in admiring silence, with applause at the end. It seems important to allow pupils to initiate changes of pace and mood if they are to be given 'ownership' of their work and to develop and share their ideas; this is the reality of a social constructivist approach to learning.

Classroom layout

The classroom was set out to encourage discussion. Square tables, (with civilized tablecloths!) were surrounded by benches on four sides. In state schools in Turkey pupils usually sit in rows, but teachers can change these rows to square tables. In this case the teacher set out the classroom in the way most appropriate for this teaching approach

Use of sources

Pupils extract information and transfer it to new contexts

In each group pupils drew on sources to inform their activity. They were able to extract information from a written text, map or pictures and to reconstruct it in another form. Bruner (1963) sees this an essential component of the learning process. The art group found from their text that elephants were an important feature of Timur's army. 'I'm drawing an elephant. I shall create a masterpiece!' one boy exclaimed. A girl pupil found out that the Kara (Black) Tatars changed sides during the battle, deserting Bayezit's side and joining Timur's army. She made this the subject of her picture. A boy drew the subsequent event. 'Timur's enslaving Bayezit!'

The music group sang the song they had composed to the tune of a flute. Their song incorporated much information extracted from the text: where the battle took place, that the initial attack on Timur's forces was repulsed by elephants, that the battle lasted for three hours and ended with the fall of the Sultan Bayezit's horse.

The document group extracted factual information and used it to construct an Imperial Edict from the point of view of Timur. The text stated that, 'Ahmet Celayir, the Emperor of Iraq and East Anatolia and Kara Yusuf, the ruler of Karakoyuns took refuge with Bayezit.'
'My dear enemy Bayezit, (there was discussion about this form of address!), I want you to drive away Ahmet Celayir and Kara Yusuf, whom you are sheltering...'
This pupil, rather than simply repeating information given, has internalised the text, made sense of it, seen its significance from the point of view of Timur and so the implications for causing the war.

Pupils express opinions from the perspective of a given person

The proclamation, read from a paper scroll, demonstrated pupils' ability to present arguments to Bayezit from the perspective of Timur in a coherent way, using appropriate language and images, but also in their own words. In doing this they are analysing causes of the war.

Banging on the desk,

'Ladies and gentlemen I am going to read you Timur's edict,...'Before I go to China on a military campaign you will give me one of your sons whom you love more than yourself. If you attempt something treacherous while I am away I will cut off your son's head. If you do not accept my request, which I know you will not, war is inevitable. (Here he is seeing the situation from both points of view). I have soldiers and elephants that are able to beat you. If you do not accept these requests you lose your Emperorship and your lands. There will be bloodshed and your lands will be mine. Make your last prayer!'

Members of the drama group discuss from contradictory viewpoints. There are different opinions amongst Bayezit's advisors:

First advisor:' If you ask my opinion Sultan I do not suggest fighting a major battle. I prefer a hit and run. We will send small forces which will damage their army without putting our army at risk.

Another advisor:'Do not be upset Ali Pasha but I say to you my Sultan, I do not like Ali Pasha's idea...The Mongols entered Anatolia and plundered... Therefore I think we should have a major battle and destroy the enemy soldiers.'

There are also different viewpoints amongst his Timur's government:

... 'Be gathered princes and lords. We are going to conquer Anatolia immediately. Prepare war tactics.'

'But sir you must give me a chance to speak..... They have more soldiers than we have.'

'My soldiers always win.'

'But sir I don't understand the reason for war...'

'The reason is that I want to annex the Ottoman lands of my ancestor, Genghis Kahn'.

Pupil discussion and interpretation of sources

The video and transcription captured extracts of dialogue which show how pupils scaffolded their peers' thinking (Bruner, 1966). They clarified and developed each other's ideas and understanding through small group discussion. Although the group discussions could not be captured in their entirety the video recorded the volubility, earnestness and vigour of these discussions. It showed constant examples of pupils sharing ideas, gesticulating, apparently

challenging, pressing a point of view and checking back to sources. The transcript did not record the energy of the discussion or that it was going on all the time in each of the groups.

Role of the Adult

- *Accepting questions from pupils.*
During the whole class introduction, on several occasions pupils asked if they may ask a question. This had not happened in any of the other lessons recorded and suggests that the student teacher had created an unusually relaxed atmosphere of openness and mutual respect, which is a prerequisite of a discursive classroom.
'May I ask something?'
'Yes'
'Bayezit wants to destroy China and the Ottoman State. Well, how can he manage to destroy both? On the one hand he will attack China and on the other hand he will attack the Ottomans. Isn't he destroyed in this case?'
- *Cueing to initiate discussion*
Initially during the group work the teacher asked cueing questions to initiate discussion.
Pupil: 'You'll give one of your sons to me as a loan.'
Teacher: 'That's a good suggestion. So what should we do?'
- *Intervening to check understanding*
Teacher: 'Now let's talk for a short time about the drama. The Ottoman war government has met. There were two opposite ideas. What were they?... OK What was the other?'

Pupil/pupil dialogue

Gradually, as the lesson continues, the pupils talk more than the adults. In the following extract they offer multiple suggestions; they reject the teacher's idea and they question each other.

Pupil: 'But teacher, it's not what I want to say. For example the date, the signature. I don't want these. I'll give you the date.'

Teacher: 'Understood.'

Pupil: 'We'll say - until sunset.'

Pupil: 'When this letter arrives 4 sunsets will have passed!'

Pupil: 'But how will the letter be conveyed from here to there?'

Pupil: 'How many days does it take to get there by horse?'

Pupil: 'We'll give it a week.'

In the following extract pupils correct each other:

Document group:

'Timur has requests from Bayezit. First he wants Bayezit's sons...'

'Do we send the letter from Timur to Bayezit or from Bayezit to Timur?'

'From Timur to Bayezit.'

'How do we start?'

'Dear...? (Laugh)

'No. Write... write... Thunderbolt Bayezit.'

'No! Thunderbolt Bayezit, my dear enemy!'

'You can't say 'dear' to him! Just Thunderbolt Bayezit...'

This extract captures collaboration in the poetry group:

'The Ottoman state is going to war',

'Strongly, bravely it is going to war.'

'Read it all again so far.'

'The year was 1402 – 28th July'.
A new war was being made in the heartland of history',
'then - Going on to war, strongly , bravely going to war.'

Specialised vocabulary

Since the past cannot be directly experienced it can only be investigated and reconstructed through language. Sources do not tell us about the past until inferences and deductions are made from them. Much of the language used to discuss sources and describe the past and changes over time is not language pupils would use in everyday exchanges. There is no single definition of historical concepts. Some are organising ideas which run through human society: power, conflict; others are not exclusively historical: law, trade (Blyth, 1990). Vygotsky (1962) showed that concepts are learned by trial and error: by hearing new concepts, then having the opportunity to try them out. He said that concept development could be promoted by careful use of significant new concepts by the teacher and that this promotes intellectual growth and discussion. The teacher followed Vygotsky's suggested teaching approach. First she gave information, then she intervened to help children, to scaffold their learning. This is an important process. What children cannot learn by themselves they master with the teacher's assistance. Then, independent of the teacher, they present or perform their work. So with this approach the teacher scaffolds learning using what Vygotsky called, the 'zone of proximal development'.

Words introduced by teacher used spontaneously in group discussion

The teacher's introduction contained 24 words which, although not peculiar to history are concepts frequently used in history. Vocabulary concerned with:

- war, (war, military campaign, commander, empire, capture, expand, destroy),
- culture (culture, customs, language, heritage)
- law (law, punishment, crimes)
- land tenure (empire, border, head of state, emperor, ruler, lands, neighbour, secure, edict).

In the recorded extracts of pupil discussions when no adult was present pupils spontaneously used some of the concepts used by the teacher in the introduction: war, emperor, military campaign, empire, destroy, empire, lands, edict. Pupils were beginning to experiment with some of the specialist language used by the teacher.

Specialist concepts used by pupils but not in teacher's introduction

It is also interesting that they employed vocabulary frequently used in history in their group discussions which may have been derived from the text or from previous knowledge: enemy, treacherous, battle tactics, troops, reason, ancestor, preparations, strategy, strong attack, savage struggle, protect pride, yield to anarchy.

Developing concepts of cause and effect through causal statements

Piaget (1926) identifies a pattern in the development of children's ability to relate a statement to its premise. Young children, he says, leap from a premise to an unreasonable conclusion. Maybe because of their lack of vocabulary adults make no sense at first glance of their conclusions (see Dilek & Sogucakli Yapici, 2003). Next they communicate facts and descriptions. Later the statement is followed by explanations, which become increasingly explicit. Gradually they learn to use words such as 'because'.

There was a number of examples of causal connectives used in group activities. The drama group suggested sending 'a few troops SO THAT our army remains strong'. Someone did not like Ali Pasha's idea 'BECAUSE Mongols had entered Anatolia; THEREFORE we should...' Someone else did not understand the 'REASON

WHY...Genghis Khan's treasure was in Anatolia'. 'THEREFORE the Ottoman state should be destroyed...' 'BECAUSE...' 'SO they had to attack'.

In the music group the foot of the Sultan's horse slipped SO it fell and THEREFORE the battle was lost. Maybe, because the teacher selected and used historical language and because the children were trying to make sense of the language in the texts, they attempted, with the teacher's assistance and through trial and error, to use and write the special vocabulary and causal connections themselves.

Gender

It appeared from the selected extracts of group discussion in the transcript that the girls contributed less dialogue than the boys but the video showed that this was misleading. There did appear to be differences between the nature of the discussion in those groups which were all boys or all girls. Amongst the girls there seemed to be more turn-taking, sharing and quiet reflection while boys appeared to press their view points more forcibly with more expansive body language. Maybe the topic was more interesting for boys than girls, but boys and girls seemed equally involved in the discussion.

Conclusion

Pupils could extract information from a source, make inferences and construct different viewpoints

It was stated at the beginning that historical enquiry involves asking questions about sources and so learning that evidence is often incomplete and therefore that there may be more than one equally correct interpretation of the past. The skills demonstrated in this lesson are a good foundation for such development. Pupils interrogated texts and applied what they learned in new contexts. They demonstrated that they could see a situation from different viewpoints, and could develop contradictory arguments in role. They showed that they could develop a dialogue in a group, expressing different ideas and questioning each other, when no adult is leading the discussion. They reproduced concepts introduced by the teacher spontaneously in new contexts. Consequently, as Ata (2002) points out, the use and reproduction of documents are related to both historical approach and educational theory based on the thought that pedagogic (school) history should introduce methods of scientific history in which pupils may develop historical skills.

Closed and open questions

Pupils were not asked, and did not themselves pose open questions during the first part of the lesson. In the introduction to the lesson they are asked only closed questions. 'Who is the person in the picture?' 'Who is Timur?' 'Which Empire did he rule?' 'What is the law of Genghis Khan?' The aim was to introduce the topic and historical characters before the group work. During the group work teachers and also pupils asked open questions, but we could not capture all data unfortunately. Some of the questions touched on in the groups gave rise to open discussion of alternative actions. For example, in the drama group:

'We are going to conquer Anatolia.'

'But sir you have to let me have a chance to speak. The Turks make war with Christians. We don't need to make war with Anatolia....'

This raises the question, given that an important aim of history education set out at the beginning of this paper is to help children to develop and defend an opinion or a point of view, how can we best support them in doing so?

Classroom ethos

There was much evidence in the transcript, (reinforced by watching the video), that the pupils enjoyed learning about the past through active involvement:

‘The drama group collects some items for making costumes from the class. A shawl is turned into a turban with the teacher’s help. ‘O...O Timur’, his friend exclaims with mock obeisance.’

‘The class applaud the poem and when a member of the music group sings their song there is more applause and requests for an encore’.

The teacher concludes the lesson with:

‘Well today children we have enjoyed very much one of the most important wars in history.’

The transcript analysis was looking for cognitive content: evidence of the process of historical enquiry. But the video demonstrates the importance of classroom organisation and classroom ethos in creating the enthusiasm and motivation to engage with sources, in valuing pupils’ ideas and trusting pupils, in using adult support to encourage their thinking rather than to control and inform.

The analysis also reveals the need to capture and analyse more small group discussions (Cooper 1996), if we are to discover how interaction develops thinking. Following this analysis we may use microphones for each group to record all dialogues and allow them to work outside the classroom to minimise extraneous noise.

*The Project referred to in this paper, *Teaching History to Ten Year Olds in a Range of European Countries, (on-going project)*

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Spotting the Adult Agendas: Investigating Children's Historical Awareness Using Stories Written for Children in the Past

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Abstract *This paper summarises an investigation of primary children's understanding of the changing attitudes and values revealed in historical stories written at different times in the twentieth century. The investigation was a small scale case study, which used ethnographic methods, and produced qualitative data from small group discussions with children aged ten and eleven in two English primary schools. The choice of texts, drawn from a specifically English context, was intended to enable primary age children to understand familiar periods from the History National Curriculum. Findings suggest that children of this age were capable of identifying changing styles of presentation and different attitudes within historical accounts and stories written in different periods. Some children were aware how adult authors writing for children transmitted their attitudes and values through historical stories. The paper argues that such historical texts are excellent sources from which children can learn about the less tangible aspects of the past. It also argues that there are wider implications for the study of children's conceptual awareness: children revealed very subtle understanding of chronology and change, as well as a surprisingly sophisticated understanding of how texts written for children are not only a product of the age in which they were written, but also a medium for the transmission of adult values and beliefs. It is suggested that further study of the use of such sources would enable a deeper understanding of how children acquire an awareness of these very important but less tangible aspects of the past.*

Keywords: Childhood, Chronology, Values, Attitudes

Introduction: the research focus

This paper investigates how reading and talking about historical stories dating from different periods can reveal children's understanding of the past. Young primary school¹ children often work with artefacts, historic architecture and sites to enable them visualise what the past was like in practical, concrete terms. They learn from visual and tactile sources and by first hand experiences such as reconstructions and re-enactments. However, these sources do not necessarily reveal the thoughts, attitudes and values of past ages. It is in this aspect of learning about the past that texts perhaps have their most important role. Recent research has raised questions about the suitability of dated reading material for young children and whether they would be able or motivated to read it (Hicks & Martin, 1997). Hannabuss (1999) and Evans (2000) have identified the potential of historical fiction as a means of entering into the social and cultural values and practices of the time of its writing. Evans argues that the literature published for children is 'an untapped and rich vein of data' (Evans, 2000, p.26) that provides insights into the real experiences of childhood in the past. They also provide a source of information about how childhood itself was perceived by adults within contemporary agendas in relation to children and their learning. Both the teaching of history in English primary schools and the style of writing about history for children have changed considerably over the course of the last century. I therefore set out to use texts about British history written at different times in the twentieth century as a tool for studying children's awareness about the times in which the texts were written, a form of 'unwitting testimony'. The texts provided a window through which the children might be able to 'spot the agendas' of authors of historical stories and how these agendas have changed over time. There

were two aspects to the inquiry. Firstly, how would the children deal with texts from earlier times as historical sources? Secondly, how would they respond to them as a source of evidence about the less tangible aspects of the age in which they were written, such as contemporary attitudes and values, especially in relation to children's historical education?

It is widely acknowledged that academic histories are a product of the age in which they are written (Marwick, 2001). Adult purposes in writing history for children have also changed significantly over time, reflecting changing views about what was deemed appropriate for children. For example, compare these two short extracts in terms of their approach to teaching about history. The first is an extract from a story about Boadicea, queen of a tribe of Ancient Britons at the time of the Roman invasion. This appeared in a book written for young children in 1930, 'Stories from Greek, Roman and Old English History',

Nearly a hundred years after Julius Caesar came to Britain, there lived a young British Queen called Boadicea. Boadicea's husband Prasutagus was king of his tribe, and he and his people all lived together in and around a little town which they had built for themselves upon a tiny hill. ...Not far away there were other tribes of Britons, each with its own king or chief; and the different tribes were constantly quarrelling and fighting with one another; so Boadicea's life was not a peaceful one. But she did not mind this at all, for she loved nothing better than fighting.
(Sarson & Paine 1930, p.61)

The second extract is about the same queen, now called Boudicca, from a children's book written in 1994, 'The Rotten Romans',

But the boldest of British women – maybe the bravest ever – was Queen Boudicca. That was what the Britons called her. Later generations changed her name to Boadicea. Some people say this change was made because Boadicea sounded nicer. Another story is that a mediaeval monk made a spelling mistake when he was copying an old history and his mistake was copied by later historians! Let's call her Boudicca...
Boudicca, *This is Your Life*' (Deary 1994, pp.40-41)

The purposes of the two stories are clear. The first is told in great detail, in a didactic, slightly patronising style deemed suitable for children at that time. The main purpose of the first story is the simple transmission of factual information, while the second is a humorous discussion of Boudicca's activities, which raises the issue of different accounts of the events that took place, and the mistakes and further mistakes made over the years in writing about these. The version written in 1994 deals with history in a way that would have been quite alien to the writers of historical stories for young children during the first half of the twentieth century. At this time, the Victorian style of storytelling, moralising and hero-worship appears to have persisted in children's historical tales. By the end of the century, it is clearly being replaced by a very different style, which invites the child reader to engage in independent, critical thought. I was interested to see whether primary school children (aged 10 – 11) were able to point out the social influences of different ages in stories written for children and whether they noticed the accompanying contemporary adult agendas, an issue eloquently discussed by Elwyn Jenkins in his work on the publication of indigenous folktales (Jenkins, 2002).

Background to the research

Two areas of interest prompted the enquiry. Firstly, there has been a resurgence of interest in the use of literature as a means of teaching history through the growing popularity of historical texts (Hicks & Martin, 1997) as part of the Literacy Hour at Key Stages 1 and 2 in England², and the extension of the Literacy Strategy into Key Stage 3 in England. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, interest has grown in the discussion about the real value of using literature and story to engage children's interest in the past. Following the rise of the 'new history' in Britain, in which learning was based mainly on the analysis of historical sources of evidence, teachers and academics have questioned the demise of story. Hake and Haydn (1995) argued that history consists of both sources and stories. The case for the use of narrative in establishing a meaningful context for children learning about the past was re-established over a period of time (Self 1991, Levstik & Barton 1997; Bage, 1999, Nelson & Nelson, 1999). These authors and historians argue that children need a narrative in learning history, and that deep understandings can be achieved if children are carefully guided by a teacher, who can help contextualise their understanding of events. I set out, therefore, to explore what these qualitatively superior, deeper understandings might entail.

The focus of the study arose from the comments of a ten-year-old child who had been reading a story by Rosemary Sutcliff, from the 'Capricorn Bracelet' (Sutcliff, 1973). The story was about a British soldier working in the Roman army, who is sent to fight in Rome itself, prior to the fall of the Empire. News is eventually brought back about the soldier's death, and is received in an almost detached manner by his family. A friend returns from Rome and gives back the family bracelet to the narrator of the story, explaining that his father is dead. The child narrator comments:

I waited a little, outside in the dark; then I went in, and showed the bracelet to my mother. And we both knew that it was time to stop pretending.
(p.147)

The child who had read the story commented,

It's too boring, and too predictable. You wouldn't just go 'OK then' if you heard that your father had been killed. You'd scream and cry – all the family. Children nowadays', he went on to argue, 'want blood and gore, not writing that won't upset anybody!

What this child had recognised, from his comment, 'Children nowadays', was that the writing of historical stories is rooted not in the time that the story is about, but in the time when it is written. Layers of contemporary values and attitudes about literature and about what is appropriate for children shroud historical stories and texts, and here was a 10 year-old who was beginning to articulate an understanding of this. This ten-year-old had indicated the ability to go unaided and spontaneously 'Beyond the Information Given' (Bruner, 1973). He could see beyond the Roman time in which the story was set, and identify the writer's attitude towards her readership, an attitude influenced by the values of the mid-twentieth century. This somewhat hardheaded response is from a late twentieth-century child, who has grown up in a media age exposed to all the harsh realities of life. His critical comments resonate with those of an American child who had just listened to a traditional telling of a fairy story. Her response, described in the findings from research by Ann Trousdale and Sally McMillan (2003) into children's views of patriarchal fairy tales in the USA, was:

Cinderella was a Wuss... She could have run away, you know
(p.14)

The realisation that children of this age were capable of such insights prompted me to look more closely at how children make sense of the past as it is represented in story, and how much they understand about attitudes at the time in which they were written.

Methodology

The research was ethnographic and produced qualitative data; it was based on participant observation in group discussions and made use of methods encompassed by grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The quality of children's involvement, the tone of their responses and the level of their engagement with the texts formed part of the data. Once the children had been introduced to the topic, and had examined and talked about the books and their relative ages, they each chose one story to read. I then prompted the children with open-ended questions to find out what they thought about the stories, their style, differences between them and what they had learned from them. The group discussions were tape-recorded and transcribed in order to analyse the children's comments and, by inference, their understandings and perceptions. Illustrative examples of the different perceptions held by the children are quoted below. I used stories about Queen Boudicca, drawn from national schemes of work in England (DfEE & QCA, 1998), and familiar to children from their history lessons by Year 6.³ The research, however, focused on the way the story was written and what this told them, rather than on its content. My own analysis of the texts was left until after the children had talked about them since I did not want my questioning to be influenced by my own perceptions, and wanted the children themselves to make their own comments.

The stories

There is a huge variety of types within the genre of historical fiction, as well as a very wide range of content areas that historical fiction might cover and a second consideration in the selection of the texts was their appropriateness for the task and for the children reading them. Aiken (1985), and Hicks and Martin (1997) have analysed the genres within this wide category, noting their complexity. I eventually decided to use different short historical stories about the same personality in the past. This would not be as exciting as pure fiction, perhaps, as I had used in earlier research, (Hoodless, 2002) but I thought it probably more appropriate for the primary children who would be reading short stories with familiar content. The selection of texts was an important part of the methodology. For purposes of comparison, I selected texts commonly used by school children aged between 8 and 10 years of age during different periods in the twentieth century.

The stories were about Queen Boudicca, a popular figure in the distant past of British history. Boudicca was Queen of an Ancient British tribe, the Iceni, and had fought several battles in an attempt to repel the invading Romans, inflicting severe damage, such as in the burning of Londinium (London). The story of Boudicca required considerable awareness of chronology and also the texts that I had collected were themselves set in a number of different historical periods. For my modern text, I chose a chapter about Boudicca from the fairly recent 'The Rotten Romans' (Deary, 1994) because of its popularity with children and, although not a textbook as such, its increasing use as part of history lessons in England. I had a version of the story of Boudicca from 1957, written by a well-known writer of school history texts (Unstead, 1957), and a post-war version, in a volume called 'Our Island Story', dating from about 1948 (Marshall, c.1948), and finally a version from 1930, from the 'Piers

Plowman' series (Sarson & Paine, 1930). I hoped books taken from these different periods in time would give the children sufficient contrast to be able to make some useful comparative comments. A final decision was to use the original books rather than photocopied pages. The children would then be able to evaluate them as artefacts as well as texts.

Schoolbooks for the typical elementary school⁴ pupil would have been written in the serious style of 'Piers Ploughman'. During the 1930s in England, children would have been expected to develop a deferential attitude towards their rulers. The style of the 'Piers Ploughman' book underlines this view and embodies the philosophy and social attitudes of the time. By contrast, in the last decades of the twentieth century, a truly irreverent attitude towards all things linked to the upper classes and the monarchy had developed. It was becoming appropriate in society to mock great rulers of the past. 'The Rotten Romans' has an element of this attitude embedded within its style, particularly in the use of the popular television theme, 'This is Your Life', to illustrate the famous defeat of an Ancient British Queen. 'The Rotten Romans' has become a popular best seller at the turn of the century, and is commonly used in classrooms as part of a new, enquiry based approach to the teaching history to young children. Comments mainly based on these two texts have been selected for analysis in this paper, therefore, on the basis that they provide a clear contrast between the two periods in which they were written.

The children

Hicks and Martin (1997) refer to the constraints of asking young children to work with out-dated texts. On the assumption, therefore, that the books, particularly the older ones, would provide a significant challenge for young children, I decided to work with the more able readers in the final year of primary school and to analyse their comments on a variety of texts. The children were 10 and 11 year-olds, all above average or very able readers for their age. They were organised for the discussions in four groups of four, for clear communication and recording purposes, and matched for gender and reading abilities. The groups were drawn from two very different schools. School A was situated in a predominantly working class estate, with high numbers of children on free school meals and with behavioural and learning difficulties. School B was in a fairly wealthy, middle class area consisting mostly of professional families living in expensive private accommodation. However, both schools placed great emphasis on the children achieving high standards in literacy. I used schools in these very different kinds of areas to ascertain any marked differences in the children's responses and approach to the texts and also to obtain a small, but contrasting sample on which to base my conclusions. Despite the different social contexts, however, all the children in the groups were highly competent, well-motivated readers, who experienced no difficulties in reading the texts, although the children in school B were more adept at interpreting and commenting on them, since their skills in discussing the texts appeared to be more highly developed.

Findings

An extensive range of different understandings emerged from an analysis of what the children said, from which some tentative theoretical hypotheses can be drawn. The responses ranged from an initial appraisal of the books as artefacts, with children commenting on their surface appearance and detailing changes in style, to some very perceptive comments, which revealed considerable understanding of the past and of the skills and hidden agendas, or unwitting testimony of the authors.

Selections of fact

The group in school B noticed the different selections of fact in the stories from 1930 and 1994. For example, in discussing Boudicca's death, the 'The Rotten Romans' clearly explains what the historical sources say, and asks children to make up their own minds,

Big Boud faced another flogging. The Roman historian, Tacitus, said she took poison and died. The Roman Historian, Dio, said she died of a disease. Believe whichever one you like ... or neither. Perhaps she just died of a broken heart. Boudicca, that was your life.
(Deary 1994, p.44)

On the other hand, the version from 1930 does not mention the way she died at all:

She fought bravely and died gladly, rejoicing to think that she would be a slave no more.
(Sarson & Paine, 1930, p.66)

McGeorge, writing about the content of Victorian school reading books, comments how sensitive issues, such as death, were often dealt with in great detail in Victorian books, when a moral purpose underlay the story. Modern children's literature seems to be returning to this, he argues, after a period when such issues were considered unsuitable (McGeorge, 1998). This argument is certainly borne out by the stories cited here. While the version from 1930 carefully avoids even a mention of her death, the version from 1994 explains a variety of ways she could have died and asks the child to make their own mind up about it. With some prompting, the children discussed the possible reasons for these different ways of writing about Boudicca's death. Most of the children noted that the oldest version tended to skim over the facts and not really give useful detail, while issues like death or suicide were openly discussed in the most modern text.

Some children also pointed out that if you wanted to know how Boudicca looked, then the 1930 version told you nothing or very little, merely commenting how 'she had a husband', or 'she was a queen', while 'The Rotten Romans' gave great detail:

She was very tall. Her eyes seemed to stab you. Her voice was harsh and loud. Her thick, reddish-brown hair hung down below her waist. She always wore a great golden torc [band] around her neck and a flowing tartan cloak fastened with a brooch.
(Cassius Dio [trans E.Cary], 1917 in Deary, 1994)

The influence of the time

All the children were aware of the style of the texts and the changing devices used to appeal to the child reader, pointing out how 'The Rotten Romans' was 'done like a TV show', 'Boudicca, this is your life', comparing this to the romanticised story-telling style of the post war period and 1930s text. They thought that the term, 'Big Boud', used frequently to describe Boudicca in 'The Rotten Romans', sounded like slang. They thought this style would not have been acceptable in earlier times, because of the disrespect it showed to a queen. They were also aware that older versions of the story would not have used words like this or like 'wimp', used to describe Boudicca's husband, the king. They compared this with the description in the oldest text from 1930, which described Boudicca as, 'a young British Queen'. They thought the 1930 version was written 'like a basic story' and they found the old story more respectful to

her. Whereas in 'The Rotten Romans', Boudicca's husband is portrayed as a 'wimpy king', in the older version they noted that it says he 'did the right thing'. They felt that the treatment of the subject in 'The Rotten Romans' was harsh, while Boudicca was 'worshipped almost' in the 1930 book – she was 'the best', and 'did nothing wrong'. Some children thought that the style of the older texts was 'more mature', the author writes as if she was there, whereas in 'The Rotten Romans' the author just uses facts from other books. Some preferred the older version, because they thought the style was better and they thought it 'told the history better'. They liked phrases such as 'O brothers and sisters'.

Others understood that the writer of 'The Rotten Romans' had used slang expressions and humorous words to make the text easier to read and to aim it at children's interest level, 'in a way that we can understand it'. These children, thought that the use of speech bubbles to show that it was Boudicca speaking, made it much easier to follow for the reader. Several children commented how they thought the reading was harder in the past,

There was, like, different words that we don't use now. There was words that mean different from what they mean now.

They were conscious of the writer's purpose and how the style had been designed to suit the intended child audience.

Because the children had been able to analyse surface features, such as changing font and illustrative styles, they had little difficulty in ordering the stories chronologically. They were not able to place them in specific historical periods, or give accurate dates, but were easily able to place them accurately in the correct sequence in terms of publication, and were able to see how old they were in relation to each other. They were aware that in the past they would not have had books written or illustrated in the style of the 'The Rotten Romans':

Child: There wouldn't have been 'The Rotten Romans' in the 1960s would there?

Researcher: Why not?

Child: ... well things like 'Rotten Romans', I don't think they would have really appreciated that.

The children were aware that not only would such a book not have appeared at that time, but also that its style would not have been acceptable in an earlier age.

Viv Little (1986) points out how contemporary influences affect the writing of historical stories and comments how the heroes of G. A. Henty, whether cast in his novels as Ancient Greeks or Tudor adventurers, are always the same modern young gentlemen from English public⁵ schools. Little recommends discussing with children how historical fiction is written, and the findings of this study appear to confirm the notion that some young children are able to understand contemporary influences on writers of history. One child in school B noted the way the stories were influenced by the prevailing spirit of the time in which they were written, 'it seems to come out of the time'. He commented of 'Our Island History':

This reads like it was just written after the war, all proud about how we defend ourselves.

The group in school B entered into an interesting debate about which text provided the most useful image of Boudicca. One child argued that:

You don't know when you read a description of Boudicca in the older stories, whether this was really what she was like, or just the image they had of her at the time it was written.

Another commented:

You have an image of what other people thought of her, how she was very brave. The problem with that is, that because of the time it was based in, you don't know if that's what she was actually like ...

The first child replied,

I think it's like based on the time. Stories change in the time they're told. If at that time you don't think much of people, you kill people, you'd be writing about them in a horrible way. It can completely change the image of someone.

Phrases such as 'because of the time it was based in' and 'stories change in the time they're told' clearly demonstrate the awareness of the children in school B that the attitudes and values held at the time of writing can be more significant than the content of an historical story.

Adult agendas

During the discussion, the most able readers were able to see how the teaching of history itself has changed depending on the view of childhood held by the authors. The story telling changed from 'here is a story that I think will be suitable for you', in 1930, to 'here is the gist of two sources that contradict each other. Make up your own mind' in 1994. The children in school B noticed how 'different books missed different bits out' and began to think about possible reasons for this. In talking about the way the earlier story explained Boudicca's death, they commented,

In there it (suicide) was something they were ashamed about...not many people did it and it was kind of like a weird thing to do...if they put it down, and they probably thought it was a bad thing to do.

Also, they wanted somebody like Boudicca to set an example.

They argued it was '...so bad that children might think it was the right thing to do.' They were aware of the moral purpose of the author of the 1930 version, whereas the modern version set out recorded facts, not avoiding the unpleasant details or aiming to show Boudicca in a heroic light.

Children in both schools commented how they preferred making their own decisions to just hearing 'they did this, they did that.' They argued that if they were constantly taught in this way, 'children might think that everything was just a story.' They were aware of the fact that learners can use different sources and versions to create their own image of the past. One child even suggested that they might be disadvantaged in later education by writing history in a story-like style themselves. They seemed to be beginning to grasp the quite sophisticated point that some fiction obscures and distorts the truth. At the same time they recognised that although 'The Rotten Romans' was written in a 'jokey way', there were more facts in it, for example:

The 10,000 Romans were well organised. The 100,000 Britons charged around the way they always did. The result was a great victory for the Romans.
(Deary, 1994, p.44)

While some enjoyed the romantic tales of the past, most of the children in the discussion groups thought it was better to allow children to make their own minds up, and one child in school B pointed out that people's opinions, written up as stories, might be wrong, a highly perceptive comment for a ten-year-old.

Discussion

'History stories' from the past are an immense resource already used in teaching literacy skills in England. Children in both sample groups were able to analyse them as artefacts, noting the subtle differences in style and presentation of books published in different eras. They enabled the children to reveal sophisticated understandings of chronology and change, as well as their developing inferential skills. Some children in the sample were able to go beyond the surface features of the stories and analyse their authors' preconceptions and also the prevalent social attitudes of the times of writing. Several children in School B related their readings of the stories to their knowledge and understanding of different historical periods, demonstrating inferential skill in distinguishing between authors' perceptions of what was appropriate for their child readership at different points in the past. The children then began to appreciate the values and attitudes of those different times about sensitive issues such as death, war and suicide and to understand how the telling of history changes with each re-telling according to the attitudes and agendas prevailing at the time. Possibly, because of well-developed skills in source analysis, the children in School B were able to treat the stories primarily as sources and apply considerable evaluative skill to their discussion of them.

There are also wider implications of this type of learning for children in other countries in Europe and other parts of the world. Changes in values and attitudes have been very gradual in Britain and are often difficult to identify. However, in societies where there has been considerable, rapid political and social change, and where democratic values are now promoted, such as in Eastern Europe, learning about how and why life has changed can be significant at a number of levels. Children can not only learn about the material changes in their country's past, but also the changes in values, attitudes and beliefs that underlay shifts in policy. Reading earlier history text books and stories can, for example, reveal a great deal about the values that underpinned the choice of curriculum content and the style in which it was taught.

These seem very sophisticated ideas for young children. However, it was clear from the comments they made during these informal conversations, that some are quite capable of these insights and understandings. Indeed, one child brought to the discussions considerable prior knowledge and understanding of the values and attitudes of the early twentieth century. Knowing about different attitudes towards children at different times in the past is a valid area of study for able child readers and further research to identify suitable texts would enrich the resources available to develop these important skills. Knowledge about such texts at an international level would be useful for developing subject knowledge and with it, a deeper understanding of chronology in the form of contemporary attitudes and values. Spotting the adult agendas is another way of children 'doing history' and learning to appreciate and analyse the texts which transmit not only the history itself, but also the unwitting testimony of the time in which the texts were written.

Notes:

1. Primary schools in England include children between 3 and 11 years.

2. In the English education system, Key Stage 1 refers to children aged from 5 to 7, Key Stage 2 to those from 7 to 11, and Key Stage 3, to those aged 11 to 14.
3. Year 6 refers to children in the final year of primary school, aged 10 to 11.
4. Elementary School: A term used in the first half of the twentieth century in Britain to denote schools run by the State.
5. English 'public' schools: private, or fee-paying schools used by the wealthy upper classes.

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Singapore Teachers' Characterisation of Historical Interpretation and Enquiry: Enhancing Pedagogy and Pupils' Historical Understanding

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Abstract *For many years, teachers in Singapore have been teaching history as a subject where there is a body of facts that pupils have to remember and recall during examinations. The majority of these teachers were also taught history in a similar manner. In 1998 syllabus revisions took into account the need to include the process of history. Assessment changed and pupils were expected to answer a compulsory source-based question. This revision was introduced to schools for the graduating classes in 2001. The first cohort of pupils to sit for national examinations and to answer compulsory source-based questions was 2002. However, because of the lack of lead time from syllabus implementation to the first national examinations, teachers were trained only in setting source-based examination questions and how to mark source-based questions. It is difficult for these teachers to 'know' how to teach historical understanding skills like interpretation and enquiry without proper training given to them. This paper discusses a continuing study and the initial findings on teacher characterisation of historical interpretation and enquiry, four years after source-based questions were included into the syllabi. Based on a pilot study of the research this paper discusses two teachers' characterisation of historical interpretation and enquiry and talks about the implications on this characterisation in training pupils for historical understanding.*

Keywords: teachers' characterisation, historical understanding, historical interpretation and enquiry

1 Introduction

The general perception of history held by most people is that it is a boring subject which requires teachers to provide a massive amount of information about the past to pupils who will then have to memorise and recall it during examinations. Thus history is perceived to bear no relevance to everyday life.

The United Kingdom (UK) has been debating this issue for many decades and since the 1960s school history in the UK has moved away from a purely knowledge-based one to one whereby skills of history are incorporated into the curriculum. In line with this debate, school history in Singapore has moved away from a content-based approach to one that incorporates skills into the curriculum objectives. This can be seen in the revised history syllabus of 1994 (the upper secondary syllabus has not been revised for over 20 years) whereby the skills objectives of history in schools aim to promote an understanding of basic historical concepts, such as cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference, encourage the development of literacy and essential study skills, including the ability to select, organise and analyse information and to construct a logical argument and to introduce students to the nature and uses of historical sources.

However, though there was an introduction to the nature and uses of historical sources in the form of sources introduced into the assessment format, these sources only act as stimuli. There was basically no change in the teaching style even though the Ministry of Education (MOE) held a series of workshops to get teachers to incorporate sources into teaching. Before the revised syllabus could set in, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong at the launch of the Seventh International Conference on

Thinking in June 1997 shared his vision of the concept of 'Thinking, Schools, Learning Nation' whereby schools were to better equip pupils in critical and creative thinking to prepare citizens to meet the challenges of the 21st century yet at the same time help Singaporeans to identify with their country through National Education. In line with this the Minister for Education Rear Admiral Teo Chee Hean (1997) in his addenda to President's Address at the opening of Parliament on 27 May 1997 stated that:

We will revise the school curriculum to stretch but not overload our pupils. We will reduce the amount of factual knowledge they must acquire, and do more to build thinking and process skills. We will review the system of assessment of both schools and pupils to meet this objective, while maintaining rigorous standards.

<http://www.moe.gov.sg/press/1997/st00197.htm>, referred 28th Jun 2004

Thus another round of syllabus revision to incorporate thinking skills and National Education in the school curriculum occurred. For history, the aims and objectives of the new syllabus are basically the same as those of the previous syllabus with greater clarification where skills are concerned. Thus the skills objectives of the new syllabus which was introduced in secondary one in 2000 and in secondary three in 2001 intend to enable pupils to understand history in its setting, understand points of view in history, process historical information and develop critical and creative thinking (MOE, 2000).

Though schools were advised to incorporate National Education where and when possible in the various subjects, a new subject was introduced to specially bring across the National Education Messages. This subject, Social Studies is a compulsory subject for pupils in the Upper Secondary level. The skills objectives of this subject however, are the same as those for history.

Thus historical thinking, namely that part of historical explanation which involves understanding, plays a key role in the aims and objectives of these syllabi. To ensure that teachers move beyond content teaching, the assessment of the history and social studies papers added in a compulsory source-based question which requires pupils to reflect thinking and understanding through source interpretation.

Singapore Education System

To better understand this study one needs to know some basics about the Singapore Education System. Education for Singaporeans starts at the kindergarten level. The pupils will then move on to six years of compulsory education at the primary level. At the primary level, pupils go through a four-year foundation stage, from Primary One to Four, and a two-year orientation stage from Primary Five to Six.

All pupils at the foundation stage follow a common curriculum which provides them with a firm foundation in English Language, their Mother Tongue and Mathematics. Science is introduced from Primary Three onwards, whilst Social Studies start at Primary One with the History component starting at Primary Four. To maximise their potential, pupils are formally streamed according to their learning ability at the end of Primary Four. All pupils then advance to the next stage of primary education, the orientation stage. At the orientation stage, pupils are placed in one of two language streams according to their abilities. At the end of Primary Six, pupils sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) which assesses their abilities for placement in a secondary school course that suits their learning pace and aptitude. Pupils who obtain the necessary standards are then admitted to the Special, Express or Normal stream in secondary schools.

At the secondary level, pupils have the choice of three courses designed to match their learning abilities and interests. Pupils undergo four to five years of secondary education with different curricular emphases. The majority of pupils enter the Special course or Express course while the rest enter the Normal course. The Special and Express courses prepare pupils for the GCE 'O' level examination in four years. The Special course provides able pupils with the opportunity to study English Language and the Mother Tongue at a higher level. Unlike pupils in the Special course, pupils in the Express Course study English Language, and the Mother Tongue as a second level language. Within the Normal course, pupils have the option of taking the Normal (Academic) course or the Normal (Technical) course, both of which lead to the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'Normal' - GCE 'N' level examination at the end of four years. Those who are competent go on to take the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary' - GCE 'O' level examination at the end of the fifth year. All secondary pupils are streamed at the end of the second year to decide whether they should enter the Science or Arts Stream.

At the end of secondary schooling, pupils will, depending on their examination results, either opt for a three year pre-university course, a two year junior college course, enter the polytechnics or the Institute of Technical Education. Secondary schools and Junior Colleges are also publicly ranked so that the public is aware of each school's performance. Though the ranking has evolved into one whereby it also looks at other aspects of school excellence, the one that the public is most interested in is the academic results. The system is thus one whereby examinations play a major role in a school's standing and deciding what the pupils' future path will be very early in their lives. The stakes are high and the public is very conscious of this as streaming at Secondary Two (14 years of age) basically decides the path your life will take.

(Further information about the Singaporean education system can be found on the web site of the Ministry of Education at www.moe.gov.sg.)

2 The Study

Premise for this study

The previous history syllabus revision was introduced into the schools in 1994. Before it could be fully implemented another revision was initiated in 1998 and this revision was introduced into schools for the classes graduating in 2001. The first batch of pupils to sit for national examinations whereby they have to answer compulsory source-based questions was 2002. The new upper Secondary Social Studies syllabus also followed the same time frame. However, because of the lack of lead-time from syllabus implementation to the first national examinations, teachers were trained only in setting source-based examination questions and mark schemes and how to mark source-based questions. For many years teachers in Singapore have been teaching history as a content-based subject where there is a body of facts that pupils have to remember and recall at the end of the year. The majority of these teachers were also taught history in a like manner. It is thus very difficult for these teachers to 'know' how to teach historical understanding skills like interpretation and enquiry without proper training given to them.

This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that evidential understanding is often linked with source work and especially source work of a narrow examination kind. Many teachers have got into the habit of 'teaching it as though that were its purpose and would leave pupils as helpless as they are at inquiry and interpretation skills at 16 as they were at 11' (Smith, 2001).

Singapore appears to be headed in the same direction as the UK when sources were first introduced into the curriculum. Since the teachers are not trained in this new area, they thus follow samples of the answer scripts that Cambridge has given and teach pupils how to answer examination questions and not the skills of interpretation and enquiry, key components of the discipline of history. Not only are they not teaching for evidential understanding, many teachers argue that in order to know how to answer source-based questions pupils need to know the context of the issue i.e. the content. Thus content-based teaching is still prevalent in many schools in Singapore. As in the UK, Singapore teachers seem to think that skills will be taught at the expense of content. However, skills and content knowledge in history should not be treated as two separate entities that require discrete treatment and assessment (Le Cocq, 2000). To reach a sophisticated historical understanding, content should be shaped by second-order concepts and historical procedures (Cercadillo, 2001). Teachers need to think through what teaching would be needed to incorporate both content and skills so as to teach their pupils to think through methods and strategies that would move them from low-level historical thinking towards a more sophisticated and enjoyable way of working with historical evidence, rather than content teaching followed by an examination style exercise that passes off as skills teaching.

The premise for this study therefore is that in order for teachers to develop in their pupils some level of historical understanding in the area of interpretation and enquiry, they themselves must understand what historical interpretation and enquiry is, be taught how to teach pupils to process these skills and how these can be taught in a structured manner so that second-order skills would be inculcated in their pupils and to incorporate sources into teaching, not separate from teaching content.

2.1 Theory

Teacher characterisation

Downey and Levstik in 1991 concluded that 'the research base for the teaching and learning of history is thin and uneven...[and that] there is a dearth of research on history teaching'. However, in the past decade this lack appears to have been addressed. In the area of research on history teaching, researchers explore teachers' subject knowledge, describe instructional strategies and how prospective teachers learn to teach. There were also personal accounts by historians, teacher educators and teachers about their teaching experiences.

However, the area this paper will be looking at is teachers' characterisation or what other researchers call teacher conceptions. Vansledright (1996) and other researchers suggest that what teachers teach 'might well be shaped by forces like beliefs about students and curriculum mandates' (Wilson, 2001). Wilson and Wineburg (1988) examined the relationship between teachers' beliefs about the nature of history and their ideas about teaching. Evans (1990) explored the relationships between teachers' conceptions of history and their teaching style as well as background factors that may influence those conceptions. Researchers like Quinlan, 1999; McDiarmid, 1994; McDiarmid & Vinten-Johnson, 1993 and Wineburg & Wilson, 1991 'attempt to explain good teaching by looking at teachers' knowledge and beliefs, as well as the myriad contexts of education-students, schools, policy mandates, curriculum reforms' and others (Wilson, 2001). However, Wilson concludes that there is a black hole in the research on connections between teaching and teacher beliefs and learning and student beliefs.

History, historical understanding, historical interpretation

The discipline of history is one whereby historians reconstruct the past by looking at the sources available through interpretation and enquiry skills. Thus learning history is more than memorising facts. Pupils of history should actively construct the past in their minds. Just as historians work to give meaning to historical facts so pupils must work to give meaning to their historical experiences (Bain, 2000) and understanding. Understanding is the ability to think with knowledge within a specific domain. Mansilla and Gardner (1997) talk about two dimensions of understanding. The first is understanding of 'domain-specific knowledge and the other is understanding of the disciplinary modes of thinking embodied in the methods by which knowledge is constructed, the forms in which knowledge is made public and the purposes that drive inquiry in the domain'.

Mansilla and Gardner consider understanding within a discipline, such as history as a multidimensional process. As such, it goes beyond the specific mastery of one or more symbol systems or the recall of a series of facts. To demonstrate historical understanding,

- Pupils need to be able to use important concepts, findings or theories and go beyond accumulating information and engage in performances that are valued by the communities in which they live. They also need to appreciate the carefully crafted methods and criteria that knowledgeable people have developed to build a comprehensive historical account. They need to appreciate the purposes that inspire the writing of a historical account and they need to use samples of such work to orient their own actions or perceptions of the world.
- Historical understanding includes concepts of time, evidence, change, causation; understanding of events and issues from the perspective of people in the past and, historical interpretations and enquiry. (Haydn, Arthur & Hunt, 1997)

Of the three areas which Hadyn, Arthur and Hunt classify under historical understanding, historical interpretations and enquiry are what source-based assessment in history and social studies in Singapore basically address. These are what the UK calls second-order ideas/concepts – notions of evidence, of historical explanations, of change of historical accounts i.e. the discipline of how history works (Lee et al., 1997) and what John (1991) calls syntactic structure. This relates to the set of ways by which truth or falsehood, validity or invalidity, reliability or unreliability can be established.

Wineburg (1999) claims that historical thinking is neither 'a natural process, nor something that springs automatically from psychological development'. Research has substantiated that students do not find it easy to understand the ways in which history approaches the past. Thus history education as reflected by history teaching should give pupils the intellectual apparatus for handling history (Lee, 2001).

According to Fling (1994) historical method cannot be taught successfully by a teacher who does not know what it means or who has never applied the method. It can thus be seen that historical understanding and its sub-category of interpretation and enquiry requires the teacher to go beyond teacher-centred methods and content feeding. However to expect teachers to teach the skills of historical interpretation and enquiry when they themselves have not been trained for this would be truly challenging. Moreover, teachers must realise that these skills are not generic skills like analysis or critical thinking, but must understand how the particular discipline of history works (Lee, 1998). It is now generally accepted that the more sophisticated your pupils' understanding of these concepts when related to historical content, the

greater will be the depth of their historical understanding. Thus for pupils to enjoy the full benefits of history as a subject, the aims and objectives of school history must be in line with these understandings of historical understanding and teachers need to have the subject matter knowledge.

2.2 Method

This paper is part of a broader study. The broader study is a qualitative research which hopes to answer the question whether an intensive collaborative-researcher intervention will change teachers' beliefs and practice in secondary history education in Singapore. (The study however, is not trying to make any generic causal link between the intervention and changes in teachers' beliefs and practice.) The study is divided into three phases.

First phase

The first phase of this study investigates through interviews whether history teachers are aware of historical understanding. (For the purpose of this study the area of historical understanding that will be studied will be historical interpretations and enquiry.) If so, what are their understandings of historical understanding? It will also look at how teachers teach school history at the secondary level and whether there are attempts to facilitate the development of historical interpretations and enquiry in their pupils. Research by Levstik and Gregg has shown that learners and teachers come to their classes with a sense of history. Research in other subject areas has shown that we cannot hope to prove a meaningful educational experience for teachers or students unless we have some sense of these other understandings (Leinhardt, 2000). Thus the following questions will frame this part of my study:

Teachers

- What are the beliefs of our history and social studies teachers about education and teaching?
- What are their beliefs about history, history/ social studies teaching?
- What do they understand by historical understanding in a particular historical interpretation and enquiry?
- What are their beliefs and attitudes towards the enquiry approach?
- How do they teach these historical skills?
- How comfortable are they in teaching historical interpretation and enquiry?
- What are their educational backgrounds?

Students

- What is history?
- How do we know about the past?
- How would you find out about the past?
- Do you like history? Why? Among your school subjects, where would you rank history? Why?
- Have you learnt history before Secondary One? How was it taught?
- What happens during your history lessons? (Motivating? Helps you to think clearly? Chance to ask questions about history? Besides the textbook, what else does your teacher use to build your understanding of history?)
- Does your teacher use sources? How?
- Did your teacher teach you how to read sources? How?
- Are different stories about the same bit of history possible? Why?
- Source work – why do the historical accounts differ? What if you had only been given one account of life during the Japanese Occupation?

In the larger study, twenty-four history teachers will eventually be interviewed and their interviews analysed. Of these twenty-four teachers, six interested teachers have been identified for the study. These six teachers have been observed. The data collected from the observations will be analysed and compared to that of the interviews. Four students from each of these teachers will be chosen for the pre-intervention interviews and pieces of their work will be collected.

Second phase

The second phase of this proposed research is based on the understanding that pupils cannot learn second-order understanding by practice i.e. pupils can read a document and answer questions on it without engaging in the thinking that characterises true historical interpretation and enquiry. The challenge for teachers is to design activities that engage pupils in historical cognition without yielding to the tempting assumption that disciplinary tasks mechanically develop historical thinking (Bain, 2000). 'Anything that impels teachers to treat history in an algorithmic or mechanical way is likely to be disastrous' (Lee, 2001). Pupils will meet rival historical accounts outside of school, and unless they are given some tools for handling such differences they will fall back on the 'fact/opinion/propaganda/choice' mode that has been mechanically taught to them by their teachers. The second phase of the study hopes to answer these questions:

- How do pupils construct meaning?
- How can teachers help pupils move from surface to deep understanding?
- Do pupils need scaffolds to help them interpret sources?
- What kind of objectives and progression should teachers look at when planning to teach for historical interpretation and enquiry?

The second phase will be a collaborative-researcher study using what Stake (1994) calls the collective case study. Intervention has occurred in the form of the training of these teachers to teach historical interpretation and enquiry in a systematic and progressive manner. The teachers will be observed teaching their lessons from January till April 2005. Feedback will be given and the cycle will be repeated.

Third phase

In the third phase these six teachers will again be interviewed to study what they have learned from this experience and the implications for their teaching of history in schools. The same pupils will also be interviewed and pieces of work will be collected to analyse whether intervention has enhanced their historical thinking.

In the choice of schools and teachers for the second phase of this research, the following considerations were taken into account. The schools were picked based on the standing of the school in the previous school ranking exercise. Classes were chosen that span the spectrum of pupil ability and teachers who came with these classes thus became the focus of the study. One school is an autonomous school and the class chosen is a Special Stream class. The other five schools are what Singaporeans term 'neighbourhood' schools, four with pupils of average ability and the sixth with pupils entering the school with fairly low Primary School Leaving Examination scores. These classes will be a mixture of Express and Normal (Academic) stream. The pupils will be from classes that range from Secondary Two (fourteen years of age) to Secondary Three (fifteen years of age).

This paper will discuss the preliminary interviews with two teachers in the phase one and the pilot test of phase two of this study.

3 Main Results

The following will discuss two teachers' pre-intervention interviews, observations and post intervention observations and feedback.

Phase One - Interviews

Kelvin, a teacher in his late twenties, who has been teaching for just a year

When asked about his beliefs about education Kelvin says that he believes in broad based education but due to time constraints and the focus on his other school duties, he finds that his beliefs are not carried into fruition. However, he has no regrets at this point in time. He entered the teaching profession because he thought it was a fulfilling profession though he finds himself tired out performing duties other than teaching. When he applied to be a teacher, he remembered choosing Physical Education as his Curriculum Studies 1. He did not remember choosing history but was quite happy with MOE'S offer as he did history as a minor in the university.

When asked about his beliefs about history, he replied that he sees history as a subject that trains pupils to analyse and to be discerning as well as develop their life skills. However, when asked whether history is unique, he could not explain why he said it was unique. Though he was able to identify the second-order concept of interpretation, he was quite hesitant when it came to concepts of change and causation, stating that he had heard about them when he was at the National Institute of Education (NIE), but have not really focused on these concepts when teaching his lessons. He studied at NIE from 2001 – 2002 but was not taught the skills of source interpretation and enquiry.

Kelvin's belief that history is not just a recall of facts was formed during his university days when he had to write essays for his political science and history modules. Though not overtly taught, the process of writing essays for these two subjects made him realise that he had to search for information, interpret and analyse the information and come to a considered conclusion.

However, when it came to articulating exactly what these skills are, he was very hesitant and there were long pauses in his speech, unlike his answers for the more generic beliefs. As he was not taught overtly the skills of a historian, he thus has problems articulating them. When asked whether he was comfortable teaching historical skills, he said he was uncertain about what I meant by historical skills and then asked whether it was about using sources. He then said that he was, but when prompted further about how he felt when he first had to teach it, he said, 'Ah terrible (laughs)'. On further prompting by what he understood about teaching using sources, it became clear that it was teaching for examination purpose.

On his beliefs about history teaching, Kelvin states that he tries to make his lessons fun by including group work, quizzes, little and big role plays and other strategies. However, since he is teaching the weaker pupils from the Normal (Academic) Stream, he has to 'drill' the information into their heads as he believes that when he uses learner-centred strategy, their weak language hinders them from understanding and discussing the issue at hand. So most of the time his lessons include a PowerPoint presentation and pupils are given worksheets to take down notes from the PowerPoint. He believes that in the end the grades are the bottom line. He tries to pace the teaching of skills for his pupils, what he calls 'baby steps'. He has become quite comfortable at teaching skills but when it first started it was 'terrible'. However, upon further questioning his claim of teaching skills was basically the

teaching of examination skills, teaching pupils how to reach the targeted levels in the mark scheme.

When asked whether he thinks there is a dichotomy between content and skills teaching, Kelvin states that in theory there should not be but in practice he has to content feed as his pupils' language skills are so weak that he has to go through the content with them before he teaches them the skills and even then these are examination skills whereby he teaches them how to write a model answer – 'you're taught thinking skills by rote learning'.

When asked about his beliefs concerning pupils learning, Kelvin says that pupils find it difficult to understand the concepts and to use the skills of historical interpretation. His Secondary Three pupils could not even differentiate between a paraphrase and an inference even though inference was something that was taught to them since Secondary One. This supports Smith's (2001) view that skills taught in the narrow examination oriented manner leave pupils as helpless at eleven as when they leave school at sixteen.

In my pre-intervention observation of him, Kelvin did a fun lesson on trade. Pupils acted as traders and buyers, with a certain amount of goods and a limited supply of money. They were given the freedom to either buy the goods they need or barter trade. Though many of his pupils were not using English, it was obvious that they knew how to go about 'trading'. It was only when he summarised the lesson that it could be observed that the pupils ran into difficulty. He asked his pupils to discuss in groups two questions that he put up on the board. Both questions were obviously too difficult for his pupils to answer. More scaffolding could have been done to help his pupils with the discussion.

Soon Beng, a teacher in his thirties who has been a teacher since 1986

Soon Beng trained to teach both Geography and History. However, he has just returned to school to teach in January 2004, having been with the Educational Technology Division of the Ministry of Education, Singapore for ten years.

Soon Beng believes that education is not only about teaching but about the sharing of knowledge and moulding the pupils and, though teaching was not his first choice, he was quite happy taking up the job as he believes that he would be able to impart his knowledge to his pupils.

When asked about his beliefs about the discipline of History, Soon Beng had difficulty answering until I rephrased the question to what he thinks history is about. He then quoted the textbook that history is the study of past events and that yesterday was history. Upon further probing he said that history helps one to compare, and source out other materials to help one see the bigger picture. He was able to say that sources disagree because people have personal opinions but could not tell me what historical interpretation is. When probed about historical concepts, he again had difficulty but when prompted said that terms like 'independence' and 'unity' would fit the category. He has not heard of the term second-order concepts but realised he has unconsciously used some of them, like comparison, to teach history.

He has a problem with the skills component of the subject as he was away at MOE when the new syllabus was introduced in 2000 in secondary one. He has therefore not taught his pupils the skills of history. He said he needs to go on courses to help him teach the skills. Although he believes that there should be no dichotomy between content and skills he said that we need to know the content first, otherwise we would not be able to handle the skills. He has signed up for one course in March 2004 but it

is on setting and marking examination papers and when I spoke to him towards the middle of 2004 he said that when he taught his pupils skills, it was examination skills.

In the course of my working with him it was obvious that at the moment Soon Beng's first priority is the acquisition of knowledge for himself since he has not been teaching for ten years. This is reflected in his teaching. When asked to describe a typical lesson of his, Soon Beng said that it is normally with the use of the textbook, drawing a concept map, using OHTs and explaining the points to them. He then gives them worksheets to fill in. In my first observation of one of his history lessons, Soon Beng was giving an introduction to the origins of the Indus Valley civilisation. The entire lesson was teacher directed. Although there was a lot of questioning, pupils got the answers from the textbook. He feels that his weaker pupils need a lot of hand holding, especially in the form of worksheets, whereas if he had better pupils he would use more independent learning methods like getting them to surf the Internet.

Pilot of Phase Two - Observations

During the school break Kelvin and Soon Beng were trained by me on using frames and asking the 'what, why, when, where and how' set of questions to help scaffold their pupils to interpret sources as a first step to pupils' independent learning. Several frames were given to them as examples, but they were told that they could change the frames to suit the lessons and their pupils. I observed Kelvin and Soon Beng twice after the school break.

Kelvin prepared a lesson whereby his pupils had to interpret a painting. He had adjusted the frame given to him for interpreting photographs to suit his evidence which was a piece of painting. He also gave the pupils a set of questions to help scaffold their interpretation of the painting. In the post-lesson consultation, he told me that he had used the same painting before, but he just asked the pupils some questions to get them to interpret the source. With the frame and the set of 5W and 1H questions, he could see that his pupils were better able to interpret the source. I advised him to set an enquiry question for the pupils to focus on when looking at the source. In the next lesson observation, an enquiry question was given to the pupils. In the feedback session, he told me that previously when he tried to get answers from his pupils about the source, they could only give him one or two answers, but with the frame and set of questions for scaffolding the pupils could come up with six to seven pieces of information from the source. For him this was a big breakthrough as his Normal (Academic) pupils usually struggle with source interpretation.

It was thus obvious that though Kelvin was a believer that history is about historical process, not just recall of facts, his lack of support and training for bringing this process across to his pupils hindered his ability to transform his beliefs into practice and even when he tried to do so on occasion, it was what was taught to him, teaching for the examinations.

I had difficulty contacting Soon Beng after the March school holidays. When he finally contacted me to invite me into his class it was quite some time after the workshops. He told me that he was busy teaching his pupils content as well as examination skills as he had to prepare them for the term assessments. He therefore could not afford to spare the time to try out a lesson which scaffolds pupils' interpretation of sources, my first step before pupils use sources to carry out an enquiry into an issue. Soon Beng had prepared a lesson using a map as a source as he was doing the topic of Land and Sea Travels in ancient times. It could be seen that he was struggling with scaffolding pupils' interpretation of the source. His tendency was to give them the information. After a reflection and feedback session, he was slightly clearer about what the project required of him. In my second observation of him, Soon Beng once

again used a map, this time a map of China and surrounding countries to generate ideas from pupils as to why China suffered from attacks from the nomads in ancient times. This time, because I was in contact with him to help him plan the lesson, he was able to build in scaffolding questions for his pupils to read the source. Though the second lesson was a more rewarding lesson than the first one, it was obvious that Soon Beng had difficulty planning a lesson to scaffold pupils' interpretations of sources and would need more handholding than Kelvin.

Like Kelvin, Soon Beng had problems with teaching the processes of historical interpretation; however, his dilemma was greater than Kelvin's as he has been away from schools during the implementation of the new history syllabus and is trying to play catch up with content.

3.1 Conclusions and Implications

From this small amount of data collected and analysed several tentative conclusions can be reached about teacher characterisation in Singapore. Firstly, both Kelvin and Soon Beng appear to have a weak grasp of the disciplinary knowledge of history and the vocabulary to converse about it. Although they both believe that history is about looking at perspectives, they are constrained by what they consider to be outside forces: the drive for producing good grades, the inability to control the syllabus, the need to follow strictly the MOE Assessment Guidelines and fall back on drilling and teacher-centred teaching most of the time. Thus they do not see themselves as 'curricular-instructional gatekeepers' (Thornton, 1991).

Their training or lack of training in source handling skills was also a hindrance. Although they tried to teach their pupils the skills of source interpretation, these skills are examination skills, as MOE only trained the teachers to set and mark examination scripts when this new syllabi was implemented at the Upper Secondary level in 2001. Their beliefs about how pupils learn, especially the weaker pupils, convinced them that they have to feed information to their pupils so that they would memorise and regurgitate the information given. Thus the majority of their lessons are of the 'PowerPoint and take down notes' type of activity. Moreover, since only two periods of about thirty to thirty five minutes each are given to the teaching of the subject, this further convinces them that they should teach content since process skills teaching takes time.

One implication is in the area of future curriculum review and planning. Research by Lee, Dickinson & Ashby suggests that insights into the development of children's ideas about history offer the prospect of basing history education on progression rather than aggregation and of allowing history teaching objectives to be couched in terms that are discipline-determined rather than content-determined (Dickinson, Gordon & Lee, 2001). If one wants to encourage teachers to teach for thinking, curriculum planning will have to bear this in mind when the syllabus is reviewed.

Another implication is in citizenship training. The benefit of training teachers the proper methods of teaching second-order concepts is that it should help to create citizens who will develop the ability and disposition to arrive independently at a reasoned and informed opinion. Pupils are faced with conflicting historical interpretations everyday. They need the means to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations. Without this skill, citizens are less likely to be able to make informed judgements in a world that is rapidly changing and becoming more multicultural and interconnected. Schools' failure to teach history's disciplinary procedures is more likely to lead to relativism (Stearns, Seixas & Wineburg, 2000, pp.24-25).

Improvement would first have an impact on the role that developing pupils' historical understanding plays for National Education. One cannot deny that school history can be and has been used to engineer social responsibility or to redefine national or group consciousness and it has the potential to intensify or focus the patriotic impulse or group identity (Stearns, Seixas & Wineburg, 2000, p.84). In Singapore social studies and to a large extent history are supposed to carry the National Education messages across to our pupils. However, research has shown that the danger of teaching in this manner is that, although there is an official history, people may choose to believe what they want to believe. Pupils find National Education boring, forced and rigid and about 40% see it as government propaganda. This is where teaching pupils the skills of historical interpretation and enquiry can change mindsets. Pupils can be encouraged to study sources and thus come to a conclusion as to whether the text they read is plain government propaganda, thus engaging the pupils not only by touching their hearts but by appealing to their minds.

So far twenty-three teachers have been interviewed. Pre-intervention lesson observations have also been completed. The second phase was pilot tested from March till September of 2004 involving four teachers and four classes and feedback from this pilot test has been fairly positive. Based on my analysis of the pilot test and the feedback from teachers, I've built in a component on explaining to them what is history and what is social studies, as I realised that without proper understanding of the discipline, the implementation of some of the strategies suggested by me did not get translated well in classes as the teachers did not fully understand the discipline themselves. The second phase of the research has started. Workshops have been conducted with the six teachers directly involved in research and observations. Reflections and feedback sessions will begin next year. From preliminary scanning of the data collected it would appear that these two teacher characterisations are not unusual for history teachers in Singapore.

Footnote

All teachers' names have been changed.

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Historical Reasoning: A Comparison of How Experts and Novices Contextualise Historical Sources

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Abstract *In order to make progress in the design of teaching methods that are able to provoke, support and measure high level historical reasoning, it is necessary to know more about important components, modes and specific problems of historical reasoning. In this paper we present a model with six related components of historical reasoning. This model is based upon a review of literature about historical reasoning and results of an expert-novice study that we conducted to get more insight in processes and difficulties of historical reasoning. We discern six components of historical reasoning 1) the asking of historical questions 2) contextualisation 3) putting forward claims and supporting them with arguments 4) the use of sources 5) the organisation of information to describe processes of change and explain or compare historical phenomena and 6) the use of (substantive and methodological) historical concepts. In this paper we focus on contextualisation.*

Subjects in the study were students from secondary education and experienced history teachers. All subjects worked together in dyads and received a task in which they had to situate historical sources (one text and two cartoons) in time. We transcribed the discourse of all dyads and analysed the transcripts and the written answers. Results of the study show that both experts and novices use several tools to contextualise, such as a chronological frame of reference, historical concepts and schemata for processes of historical change. We also found some important differences between experts and novices on several components of historical reasoning.

Keywords: Historical reasoning, Contextualisation, Expert-novices, Mediating tools

Introduction

Reasoning about history and with information about the past is an important cultural practice of societies and an important part of the history curriculum. Rosa, Blanco and Huertas (1998) consider historical reasoning important for it is a way of empowering students for their understanding of history and social life in general. They argue that the ability to argue about historical artefacts rather than accept uncritically what is presented, is important for participating in a democratic society (see also Kuhn, Winestock & Flaton, 1994). In line with this, Barton and Levstik (2004) argue that history should promote reasoned judgment about important human matters. This requires the appreciation of context, the ability to deliberate and judge, reflection on the causes of historical events and processes and their relative significance, the potential outcomes of alternative courses of action and the impact of the past on the present.

An important element of reasoning is the fact that it reflects a transformation of knowledge and information: new information and knowledge is generated. Voss, Wiley and Sandak (1999) characterize reasoning as a process in which an individual moves from a given state to a new state via an inference. To explain the reasoning process it is necessary to determine what enables the individual to go from the given state to the new state. Leinhardt, Stainton, Virji and Odoroff (1994) describe historical reasoning as a process in which central facts and concepts are arranged to build an

interpretive historical case. Building a case then requires synthesis, hypothesis generation and interpretation.

Although there is a growing body of literature on learning and understanding history, research on how students and expert historians understand and reason about the past is still limited (Wineburg, 1991; Kuhn et al., 1994). Not only from a theoretical perspective is it important to gain more insight in historical reasoning, but also from a practical perspective. Knowledge about the practice of historical reasoning and the way it is mediated by internalised and external tools is important for the design of teaching-methods, learning tasks and supportive tools. Therefore, it is important to develop an analytic framework that can be used to analyse verbally explicated reasoning in speech or writing and in different settings, such as individual writing, small group and whole class discourse, and across different levels of age and expertise.

In this paper we first present a model of historical reasoning. This model is based upon a review of the literature about historical reasoning. We conducted an expert-novice study, to get more insight into processes and difficulties of historical reasoning. In this paper we focus on contextualisation, although we will also show how other components of historical reasoning, such as the use of historical concepts and argumentation are an integral part of the contextualisation activity.

We distinguish six related components of historical reasoning. These components are described in Fig. 1.

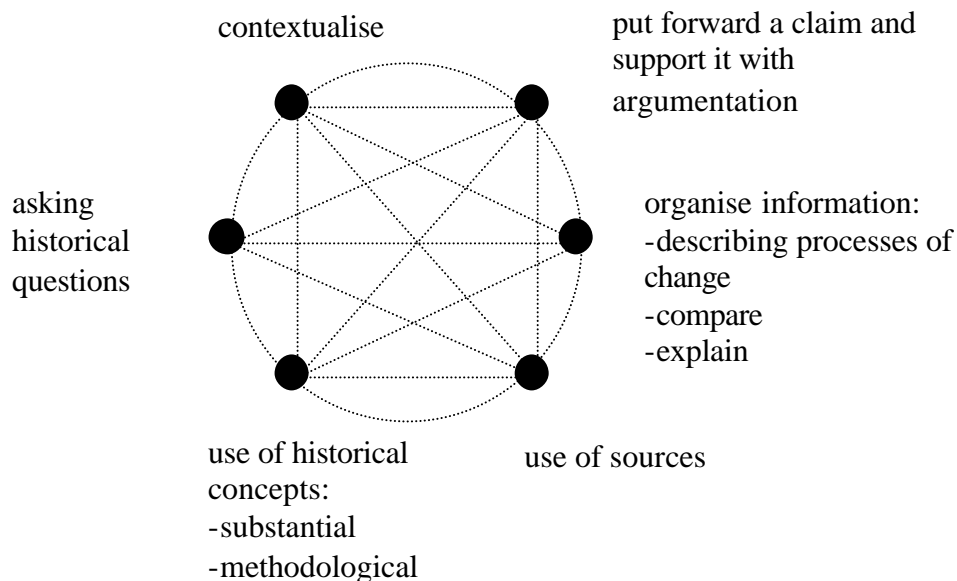


Fig. 1. Six components of historical reasoning.

Some of the components that are described in Fig. 1, such as the asking of historical questions, the use of historical concepts and 'heuristics' to organise historical information, are more specific to the domain of history than the other components. The combination of these components together makes it possible to discern reasoning in the domain of history from reasoning in other domains. The importance of each of these components in historical reasoning depends on the complexity and level of the historical problem or question one wants to address, the information and means that are available, the product that is asked for and the person's knowledge and experience. The components must not be considered as separate activities.

They are separated only for the purpose of analysis. Fig. 1 also shows how each component in an instance of historical reasoning is related to other components. For example, when explaining the actions of people in the past, one has to situate their actions and motives in their specific time and use information from sources as evidence in the argumentation.

The failure to grasp the nature of historical context is often described as an important source of student misunderstanding (Husbands, 1996; Wineburg, 2001). Students often borrow a context from their contemporary world and view the past through the lens of the present. In order to interpret historical events one has to find the appropriate historical context and then interpret the phenomenon in accordance with that context (Halldén, 1997). Situating a historical phenomenon in a historical context can be considered as a key activity in historical reasoning. However, only few empirical studies have focused on this component of historical reasoning. What means are used to situate historical phenomena in the context of time, location, general phenomena or particular events?

First, knowledge about characteristics of time and place, can be used to contextualise phenomena. De Keyser and Vandepitte (1998) distinguish different frames of reference that can be used: a chronological frame of reference (knowledge of periods, significant events and developments), a spatial frame of reference (knowledge about locations and scale) and a social frame of reference (components of human behaviour and social activity, such as socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural conditions of life).

Second, Barton and Levstik (2004) show that particular narratives are used as a means of conceptualizing history. A narrative organizes historical information in a coherent way and therefore helps students to remember these events and processes. In a study of fourth and fifth graders Barton found that children equated changes in history with progress in social and material life, such as better clothing and better houses. Children used this general narrative of progress to arrange pictures in chronological order.

Third, empathy is an important tool to think about the past in its own terms. The CHATA project carried out by Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (1997) in primary and secondary schools in England, resulted in a model of progression for rational understanding in history. At the highest level called *contextual historical empathy*, actions of people in the past are set in a wider context of beliefs and values. It is recognized that there are differences between past and present mind-sets. Wineburg and Fournier (1994) described in detail how two prospective public school teachers practiced contextualised thinking. Their research concentrated on a brief passage of the words of president Abraham Lincoln on the topic of race relations. One of the teachers tried to create a context by reconstructing the climate of opinion in which Lincoln dwelt. The fact that this teacher contextualised the words of President Lincoln also affected the evaluation of these words. This teacher was able to disapprove without being astonished and to reject and still understand.

Expert-novice study

We studied the historical reasoning of experts and novices during a task to contextualise sources in time and to relate each source to significant historical phenomena. The main question we wanted to address was: How do experts and novices within the domain of history contextualise sources in time? Based upon our model of historical reasoning and the literature about contextualisation, we wanted to answer the following questions: Which frames of reference and narratives do novices and experts use? How do novices and experts use substantive concepts? To what

extent do novices and experts support their claims with arguments and evidence from the source? How do novices and experts use a source to contextualise it in time?

Design of the study

Subjects in our expert-novice study were students from secondary education from four different schools and experienced history teachers (with a masters degree in history). We have chosen to investigate history teachers instead of professional historians, for historians use historical reasoning to make a contribution to the body of knowledge and scientific discourse within the academic discipline of history, whereas for teachers historical reasoning is an important mean to construct and negotiate understanding of past phenomena and to understand and make informed judgments about current phenomena (see also Seixas, 1993). We included two groups of novices. Half of the students came from third year pre-vocational education and were 14 or 15 years of age.

The other students were 16 or 17 years of age and in their fifth year of pre-university education. The students voluntarily participated in this research. All subjects worked together in dyads and received one essay task (on which we will not report in this paper) and three contextualisation tasks. The topics of the tasks were not recently studied in the history lessons and the given sources were unknown. The contextualisation task involved figuring out what a source was about, to which historical phenomena it could be related, and what period or year it belonged to.

The first source was a Roman text, translated from Latin and somewhat simplified, about Roman large-scale ownership and gives a description of a large Roman farm with rooms for slaves, baths, and storage of wine and grain. The second source was a cartoon about women suffrage in the Netherlands that showed women demanding suffrage. The third source was a cartoon about Stalin's proposal in 1952 to unite and neutralise Germany (see Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. The Stalin cartoon

TABLE 1 shows the tasks and the number of dyads per task. Each student received his own work sheet with the source and some questions about the source. The subjects were asked to study the given text or picture and to discuss the period or year it belonged to. They were instructed to discuss these questions before writing down their answer on their own worksheet. The answer could be written down in a timeline (500 BC to 2000 AD). The subjects were informed that when they could not give the precise year or period, they could colour a broader part of the timeline that they thought most appropriate. Furthermore, the subjects were asked to discuss and

write down the indicators from which they derived the year or period and the event(s) or development(s) the source could be related to. They also had to write down one or more phenomena the source could be related to. The discussion phase of each task was recorded on video and transcribed. Transcripts of the video recordings and the written answers were used to describe the nature of historical reasoning of both novices and experts.

	Novices 14 / 15 years	Novices 16 / 17 years	Experts History teachers
Roman large-scale ownership (text)	3	5	4
Women suffrage (cartoon)	4	5	4
Stalin (cartoon)	4	5	3

TABLE 1. Novice and expert dyads per task

Results

In the sections below we present the results of the study and try to answer the question how experts and novices contextualised the sources in time.

The use of frames of reference and narratives

None of the third year novices was able to give a correct time reference for the text about Roman large-scale ownership, whereas three fifth year dyads (out of five) and all experts were. The cartoon about women suffrage was easier to date, only two third year dyads gave an incorrect period (1300 to 1700 and 1800 to 1850). The three expert dyads all succeeded in giving a precise and correct time reference for the Stalin cartoon. Only one of the fifth year novice dyads came up with a correct year. Two of the third year novice dyads contextualised the cartoon incorrectly. One of the students believed that the cat was Hitler and related the action of the cat to the persecution of Jews. One of the students related the cartoon to the fall of the communist regime in Germany. One dyad concluded that the cartoon was about Japan who wanted to conquer land during the Second World War. Another dyad stated that the cartoon was about the 'domino reaction', which they incorrectly situated in the nineteenth century.

Which tools did subjects use to contextualise the given sources? Both expert and novice dyads used a chronological frame of reference and a spatial frame of reference. For example, in both expert and novice dyads, the subjects used their knowledge of the periodization of Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance and Modern Times. In a fifth year novice dyad, for example, triggered by the word slaves, the students tried to infer when slavery was abolished:

Something like that, 1700 to 1800. Yes, but that's just after the Middle Ages; and then you have Renaissance, isn't it? When was it abolished, before or after that? After. In 1800.

Both novices and experts tried to connect information that was given in the source to their knowledge of significant historical phenomena. Two third year novice dyads associated slavery with the sixteenth to eighteenth century and did not discuss the possibility of Antiquity. In the Stalin cartoon task both novices and experts mentioned the Second World War, the Cold War and communism. Experts discussed more historical phenomena. Examples of phenomena that were only referred to by experts in the Stalin cartoon task were: the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, and the

reign of Stalin. The fragment below is from the discussion of Lara and Sanne (fifth year novices) during the Stalin cartoon task. In lines 24 to 28, Lara relates the situation that is represented in the cartoon to the Cold War.

- 14 Lara: that cat is communism
15 Sanne: that cat liberates that angel to make peace with the mice, or something like that
16 Lara: yes
17 Lara: look [points] all these countries, these are not communist, these are communist aren't they, Poland, Czechoslovakia
18 Sanne: yes, they are taken by the Russians, yes
19 Lara: these are
20 Sanne: perhaps they try to catch it with that small angel [points], or something like that
21 Lara: yes that it is a trap
22 Sanne: yes, a trap, yes I think so
23 Sanne: thus it is
24 Lara: and in the Cold War Germany was divided then, wasn't it?
25 Sanne: yes
26 Lara: and with that wall, that ehm Russia also had the east and tried to make it communist, isn't it?
27 Lara: that was the case in the Cold War
28 Lara: in the Cold War they tried to make Germany communistic
29 Sanne: yes

It appeared clearly that experts could use a more detailed chronological frame of reference. The third year novice dyads did not contextualise on the level of specific events, whereas the fifth year novice dyads used this type of contextualisation sometimes, and the experts did so more often. During the task about Roman large-scale ownership, for example, the subjects used their knowledge of significant events in history to decide whether the situation described was before or after that year, for example the collapse of the Roman Empire, or the abolition of slavery. In the cartoon task, events that were mentioned by the experts and some of the fifth year novices were the division of Germany, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the death of Stalin and the peace proposal of Stalin. Sometimes the novice dyads did mention a significant event, such as women suffrage, but could not remember the precise year in which the event took place.

Both novices and experts tried to understand the sources by discussing characteristics of locations. For example, slavery was related to the United States and the Roman Empire, but also to the Greece. Wine was related to a Mediterranean region. Lara and Sanne (see the excerpt above) stated that the countries of Poland and Czechoslovakia were communist and that Germany was divided. Third year novices hardly situated the description or cartoon in a specific location.

Especially novices made use of a narrative of progress to contextualise the sources. For example, they noticed the missing of gas and light or the fact that the described farm was very large and luxurious and therefore had to be recent. Or they discussed the old fashioned clothes in the cartoon about women suffrage. They used these clues to infer the correct period or year. In one dyad a student realised that this reasoning was too simple. When his partner said '*It is a farm, thus it must be a long time ago*', he reacts with '*Of course not! We still have farms today.*' Also more specific narratives were used, such as the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, to situate the text more precisely.

The use of substantive concepts

Discipline-bound concepts are tools to think about, question, describe, analyse, synthesize and discuss historical phenomena (Van Drie & Van Boxtel, 2003). Substantive concepts were very important tools to contextualise the sources. Lara and Sanne, for example, used the concept communism (lines 14, 17, 26 and 28) and the concept Cold War (lines 24, 27 and 28) several times. Although all dyads used substantive concepts, there were also some important differences between the novices and the experts and between the younger and older novices. TABLE 2 shows that, in general, the older novices used more and more different substantive concepts compared to the third year novices. The experts used more and more substantive concepts than the fifth year novices. In the task about Roman large-scale ownership, for example, the younger novices mainly used the concepts Romans and slaves, whereas the fifth year novices also used concepts, such as Antiquity, civilisation, slave trade and Roman times.

The experts also used the concepts latifunda and colonists. In the Stalin cartoon task, the fifth year novices used substantial concepts in almost the same amount as the experts. Concepts that were used by the fifth year novices, but not by the third year novices are Berlin Wall, Allied powers and Stalin. Experts also use the concepts German unification, power blocks, Blockade of Berlin, Adenauer and demilitarisation. These differences reflect the more extensive topical knowledge of experts, which is organised through a kind of web of interrelated concepts.

	Novices 14 / 15 years			Novices 16 / 17 years			Experts		
	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max	Mean	Min	Max
<i>Roman large-scale ownership</i>									
-total substantive concepts	5.7	3	9	6.8	4	14	16.3	13	21
-different substantive concepts	2.3	2	3	3.8	3	5	5.7	4	8
<i>Women suffrage cartoon</i>									
-total substantive concepts	8.7	3	13	8.6	4	14	8.7	3	44
-different substantive concepts	2.3	1	4	3.3	1	5	3.3	1	7
<i>Stalin cartoon</i>									
-total substantive concepts	5.3	2	9	11.2	6	21	12.7	5	18
-different substantive concepts	2.5	1	5	3.6	2	5	5.3	2	7

TABLE 2. The use of substantive concepts by expert and novice dyads in the three tasks.

Argumentation and the use of the sources

Better reasoners tend to generate different types of arguments and also generate arguments opposed to their own position (Voss & Means, 1991). Kuhn (1991) found that subjects performed poorly when trying to consider alternative theories or to think about evidence that ran against their viewpoint. Our study on writing essays showed the same pattern (Van Drie, Van Boxtel & Van der Linden, in press). Especially the younger novices generated claims about the historical context of the sources without giving arguments. Dyads differed in the number of aspects of the cartoons and text that they used to infer the historical context. In the Stalin cartoon task, third year novice dyads explicitly discussed two to five aspects. Fifth year novice dyads discussed two to six aspects. Expert dyads discussed five to seven aspects. Many of the questions asked were related to aspects of the cartoon or text, for example, 'I

don't understand that mouse, or *'Doesn't he look like Stalin?'*. Especially in the fifth year novice and expert dyads questioning was an important aspect of the historical reasoning process. The third year novices discussed and weighed fewer alternatives. Novices more often rushed to a final judgment or conclusion.

Conclusions

The expert-novice study we conducted provided evidence that the components that we discerned in the model are important activities in which students engage during a historical reasoning task. It should be noted that sound historical reasoning does not always have to reflect all six components. It depends on the goal and complexity of the task and the information that is provided. In the task to situate sources in the context of time, location and historical phenomena, important components were: contextualisation, asking historical questions, use of substantive concepts, use of sources and argumentation. Both experts and novices used a chronological-spatial frame of reference and narratives, which they tried to cohere with information in the sources. We also found some differences between experts and novices. The experts used a more detailed chronological frame of reference; they discussed more historical phenomena and especially more events. Furthermore, the experts used more historical concepts and also discussed and weighed alternatives. It turned out that, especially when the chronological-spatial frame of reference runs short and the conceptual knowledge is not organised well enough to infer the historical context, the students rely on a general schema of historical development as progression.

More research is needed to investigate which teaching methods can help novices to appropriate the tools that are needed for creating a historical context to interpret historical sources and phenomena.

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'Stepping into Other Peoples' Shoes': Teaching and Assessing Empathy in the Secondary History Curriculum

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Abstract *The concept of empathy has re-appeared in professional discourse about history teaching. The authors offer a conceptual analysis of this problematic concept, re-visit the objections raised in the 1980s and 90s and conclude that it is a valuable aim for history teaching today. Problems and objections to teaching and assessing empathy are discussed and principles to guide practice are suggested.*

Key words: Concept of empathy, History teaching, Assessing empathy, Teaching empathy

Introduction

Empathy is a problematic subject in history teaching circles (Skidelsky 1988a, 1988b; Jenkins, 1991; Low-Beer, 1989) As Phillips (2002) states:

Few aspects of history teaching in the late twentieth century became more hotly debated and contested than the teaching of empathy ... empathy was particularly singled out within the 'discourse of derision' of the New Right – by politicians and media – as the epitome of the apparently misguided, woolly and ideological new history ... because of the controversy associated with empathy, many history teachers lost confidence in seeking to teach anything that could be construed as the "E-word" (p. 45).

This debate occurred in the United Kingdom following major changes to the way history teaching was approached in the 1980s. The Schools History Project of the 1970s had placed a new emphasis on a child-centred approach to teaching and a focus on the procedural nature of history, which became part of a new national examination in history. The 'New Right' was afraid that an emphasis on skills would downplay the value of content, with a dilution of common cultural values and sense of identity. Skills, it was argued, would promote scepticism, stress the problematic nature of knowledge, and taken to its logical conclusion, show that the past is unknowable. The child-centred approach also led to an emphasis on making history relevant, leading to new areas of historical study, moving away from traditional views of the past. Instead the 'New Right' argued for history to create a sense of shared values and cultural identity, based upon a certainty of the past. Empathy was targeted for particular attack as being too complex, woolly, and, in Deuchar's phrase, 'generalised sentimentality' (1987, p.15). Teaching approaches such as role play and simulation were attacked for being poor teaching, supposedly allowing pupils free reign to imagine themselves in the past, based on a spurious notion of making history relevant. As a result of such attacks, empathy disappeared from professional discourse.

Recent changes to the National Curriculum in History (DfEE & QCA, 1999) and the introduction of the new Citizenship National Curriculum (DfEE & QCA, 1999) in England entail the teaching of empathy¹, although the word is not used. The idea of empathy also appears in recent professional discourse about the teaching of history and social studies in the United Kingdom, the United States and New Zealand (e.g. Cooper, 2000; Luff, 2000; Davis Jr, 2001; Levstik, 2001; Dawson & Banham, 2002). It is therefore timely to reconsider the position of empathy within history since

it is an important concept implicated not only in historical understanding but in children's moral development.

The strategy of the paper is to revisit the concept to see if it can be 'mapped out' in order to meet the objections raised in the 1980s and 1990s. First we analyse the concept in order to delineate it, then we review past definitions and objections to the concept of empathy in the context of its application to history teaching in schools. We end by suggesting an analysis of the concept that meets past criticism and provides some sounder principles for practice.

What is meant by empathy generally and in historical thinking?

'Empathy' is generally used in an everyday sense in the context of understanding someone else's state of mind, usually when they face a predicament or unfavourable situation. It is commonly used to express a complex form of subjective understanding. For instance social workers are expected to be able to empathise with children who are being abused by their 'carers'. It is generally used to imply not only appreciating someone else's beliefs, values, and thoughts but also the significance their predicament or situation has for them and the feelings they must be experiencing. The ability to empathise requires an effort of the informed imagination. In literature the imaginative effort is 'eased' for the reader by the use of simile and metaphor. For example saying that someone is 'like a stone in your shoe' conveys feelings of insistent irritation or pain that one seeks to remove (Foreman-Peck, 1983) Empathising can become a disposition exercised in circumstances where insight is needed into the minds and situations of others. It could be argued that some degree of empathetic thinking is necessary for moral development since the consideration of others necessitates understanding others. Understanding the emotions and feelings of others is achieved through a process of analogical thinking (Barnes & Thagard, 1997) with our own experiences. We cannot experience another's feelings in a literal sense (an impossibility) but it does involve understanding the feeling state of another person. We do not say 'I feel your sorrow', except in a metaphorical way, but we might say 'I understand what you are going through'. These sorts of claims are generally warranted by personal experience. Bereaved parents for example, can draw on their personal experiences and infer what other bereaved parents are likely to be feeling. They are able if they wish to make comparisons between what they experienced and what they imagine other parents feel.

Personal experience is not the only source of comparisons however. Where one has no previous personal experience, the 'virtual' experience offered by literature, drama, role-play and television drama can be a source of insight. Empathetic understanding differs from 'ordinary' understanding in that it is knowing the other person's cognitive (reasons) and affective (feelings) state and how they relate. The character of the 'knowing' is important: it implies that one has an insight into the experience of the feeling being undergone by someone else. However this may not be accompanied by feelings of sympathy. If the person one empathises with is disapproved of, one may be unsympathetic and not wish for their comfort or restoration to a better state of mind. For example one may be in a position to empathise with a parent who has lost a child, but feel no sympathy for the parent if the parent is someone who is reprehensible. One can empathise without compromising one's ability to judge or evaluate the actors and the events.

We have noted that empathising is something we can choose to do. And generally, in everyday contemporary lives, it is used in moral contexts when we need to decide how to evaluate a situation and what (if anything) to do. The thinking involved in empathising may also be used in order to understand fictional puzzles. The detective

story is a good example. Indeed Collingwood (1946) suggested that the historian reconstructs past events rather as a detective does. Although Collingwood did not believe that we could reconstruct sensations or experiences as we could past thoughts, we do draw on our general knowledge of human nature, such as knowledge of typical intentions and motivations in order to make sense of historical facts. He illustrates this point with the story of the murder of John Doe. Mr Doe was discovered dead, on a Sunday morning lying across his desk with a dagger in his back. One important clue was some fresh green paint on the handle of the dagger, similar to the fresh green paint on the gate between his garden and the rector's. In the course of the investigation other facts are established: John Doe was blackmailing the rector about the fact that his dead wife had had a pre-marital affair, resulting in an illegitimate daughter who the rector had passed off as his own child. The rector kills Mr Doe and in doing so discovers that Doe had been his wife's lover. The detective reconstructs suspects' movements using not only physical clues but the likely knowledge they possess (e.g. medical knowledge), the known character traits of the suspects (e.g. the rector was broadminded) and the general plausibility of actions (e.g. people do not usually spend evenings sitting at empty desktops - they are usually doing something) (Collingwood, 1946, p.266-273).

In other words we draw on our understanding of what people generally do and feel to make inferences about what they are likely to feel given the facts of the case and our own personal life experiences. So the 'facts of the case' allow us in certain circumstances to infer what someone was possibly feeling, knowing or doing, even though we have no evidence for this. Detectives like historians are faced with gaps in evidence.

Consider a contemporary non-fictional and rather tragic case. There have been recent attempts by James Hanratty's family to have him exonerated for the A6 murders. There is an information gap that makes the A6 murders hard to explain. Hanratty was identified as the murderer by a victim and later DNA samples seemed to confirm his guilt, yet he denied it and no plausible motive has been found. As an exercise we may examine the facts of the case and hypothesise a state of mind that could explain Hanratty's motivation. To understand Hanratty we need to empathise with someone who was a petty thief, living in a lodging house, with no friends. What might such a person feel in the presence of two successful middle class people in love with each other? What are we drawing on to make a guess? It must be knowledge of loneliness and exclusion, rooted in real or virtual experiences, and the emotional states (sadness, resentment, anger, jealousy) that this could induce. Thus although Hanratty denied the accusation of murder, we can see that his situation might have driven him to murder.

However it could be claimed that we could reach this level of understanding by simply appreciating Hanratty's circumstances - we need not empathise to see that he could kill two strangers. However the facts by themselves are not as compelling as when they are imbued with feeling. Loneliness can be experienced as an unbearable physical pain: exile was a punishment. Knowing this gives the facts more force. It therefore becomes pertinent to the situation in a way that another fact may be ruled out, as for example his age.

Engaging in empathetic understanding is perhaps more difficult when focused on the distant past. Suppose Hanratty had lived in the 16th century. In our 21st century existence loneliness is an unhappy state to be in. In the past it might have been an accepted part of life for many people, and would have had no implications for action. Empathising with a 16th century Hanratty is likely to be more problematic because we cannot assume that 'loneliness' was experienced in the same way, without some

source as a warrant. The inferences we make have to be more cautious. For example can we assume that parents felt the same way about the death of children as we do now? It might seem not so as childhood death was common in say the 16th century yet we might find evidence from the period (e.g letters) indicating that although loss and bereavement was common it was still nevertheless experienced by some, as it may be in the 21st century. The key question for empathetic understanding seems to be; 'Is this person's situation such that we can infer a state of mind genuinely similar to my real or virtual experience?'

Empathy is a complex concept and the discussion above has highlighted areas where clarity is needed if teaching empathy is not to be a confused enterprise. In particular the sense in which the following ideas make sense needs to be grasped:

- experiencing someone else's feelings, sensations
- reconstructing someone else's thoughts and values
- choosing to empathise or not
- degrees of empathy depending on life experiences/virtual experiences

Definitions of empathy in history

Within the discipline of history, empathy is an important idea. The work of Leopold von Ranke (cited in Tosh (1999) and Marwick (1989)) was seminal in this respect. He argued that the past was different to the present and should not be judged by present values. As Tosh (1999) explains:

What was new about the historicists'² approach was their realization that the atmosphere and mentality of the past ages had to be reconstructed too, if the formal record of events was to have any meaning. The main task of the historian became to find out why people acted as they did by stepping into their shoes, by seeing the world through their eyes and as far as possible judging it by their standards (p.5-6).

Thus it became acknowledged that there is a gulf between our own age and previous ages, and to understand the past we have to appreciate the values and attitudes of that time. The ability to see things from another perspective became important to the practice of history. Elton (1967) stated an historian has 'to understand a given problem from the inside' (p.31). This in itself suggests that the historian must immerse himself or herself in the period. This requires a mastery of whatever record has been left so that they can see how the historical actors would have reacted to situations and so understand their motivation. Collingwood (1946) argued that all history was history of the mind; in other words to make sense of the past we have to make sense of people's mentalities in the past. Empathy allows the historian to obtain a more fully informed appreciation of the past, through a closer examination of the motivation of individuals.

The publication of *History in the Primary and Secondary Years: An HMI View* (DES, 1985) identified one of the underlying aims of history teaching as the promotion of empathy, which HMI described as:

the ability to enter into some informed appreciation of the predicaments or points of view of other people in the past. (p.3)

In order to help teachers make sense of empathy and understand how to promote an ability to empathise amongst pupils, Shemilt (1984) carried out research into pupil explanations concerning actions of people in the past. From this he derived a

scheme describing stages of empathetic understanding, suggesting that it is both teachable and assessable. Cooper (2000) also did work that showed how pupils in primary schooling were able to engage in a degree of empathetic thought. Shemilt analysed pupils' responses into four stages. These four stages are:

1. people in the past were stupid
2. past actions are explained using present values and attitudes
3. peoples' actions in the past are judged by contemporary ideas yet are applied to all
4. an understanding that different people at different times in the past could have different views values, interests and so on from each other (pp.50-54)

He claimed that these levels represent a progression in pupils' thinking. The final stage, according to Shemilt, represents a true sense of empathy. The work of Ashby and Lee (1987), as part of the project 'Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches' (CHATA), also independently came up with similar categories outlining how children engage in empathetic thinking. These levels became embodied in the assessment objectives in the new General Certificate of Education (GCSE)³ that emerged in 1986. One of these was for candidates to show 'an ability to look at events and issues from the perspectives of people from the past'. This is very similar to the HMI (1985) definition although 'informed appreciation' was left out. This objective was commonly assessed through course work units. For example when studying the American West, it would be possible to focus on George Armstrong Custer and his famous 'Last Stand'. Typically, having looked at the circumstances prior to the battle, plus an understanding of Custer's previous actions and character, pupils would be asked to account for his seemingly reckless actions that led to his defeat. Empathy was not just the application of unfettered imagination, for Shemilt (1984) claims that the account also needed to fulfil four criteria to be historically rigorous. These are:

1. coherence - it has to be convincing
2. consonance - it has to be seen to fit into its historical context
3. efficiency - it has to take into account the range of available evidence
4. parsimony - there isn't a more obvious alternative explanation (pp.48-49)

That empathising is not a fictional exercise, but closely related to use of evidence contemporary to the period being studied, was emphasised by, amongst others, Ashby and Lee (1987). They argued that the process of empathising must be based on 'evidential reconstruction'.

Though there is some broad consensus over definitions and agreement that empathy in history rests on some form of evidential reconstruction of the past, there is dispute over the kind of mental act involved in empathising and therefore what should be the object of assessment. Shemilt (1984) sees empathising as a cognitive skill, Ashby and Lee (1987) refer to it as a disposition and an achievement, and Low-Beer (1989) sees it as part of the affective domain. Knight (1989) highlights the problems of viewing empathy as a unitary construct, rather than as a multi-dimensional concept. The confusion caused over the precise understanding of empathy resulted in confused teaching. As Knight rightly points out:

effective teaching goes with a clear grasp of the central ideas of the subject matter. A term such as empathy seems unhelpful to clear thinking (1989, p.45).

However as we have seen from our analysis in section 2 empathy is all three, a cognitive skill in that it involves reconstruction of agents' thoughts from the evidence,

a disposition or tendency (one can choose to empathise) and an understanding of the possible feelings of past people compared with our own (with certain caveats, of course). It is a task and an achievement word.

Why empathy became contested

The objections to empathy in history are varied, and can be categorised as theoretical, assessment related and practice related.

Theoretical objections

Jenkins and Brickley (1989) claim that it is impossible for adults, let alone children, to achieve empathetic understanding, partly due to the meaning of words and syntax from the past changing, which thus creates an extra barrier to understanding the people in the past. There are obviously limitations to what we are entitled to infer about the past. Where information is missing about the meanings of words and syntax our claims have to be qualified and provisional i.e. open to revision in the light of new evidence. But this applies to all our knowledge claims and does not therefore seem to be a telling objection.

Jenkins (1991) expands his objections from a post-modernist viewpoint by restating categorically that empathy is impossible to achieve, due entirely to the fact that history is the product of historians, therefore to understand the past we should be trying to understand the historians who have written about the past rather than the past itself.

This position trades on the fact that history is written by people who bring to their reconstructions their own predilections and life experiences. This is obvious in the act of selecting something to investigate and write about. So history is subjective and personal in that sense. However as we saw in the fiction of John Doe even objective facts (unassailable truths such as the presence of green paint) have to be incorporated into interpretations according to generalisations about human nature. These generalisations are not idiosyncratic but shared social facts. They are at the same time objective (i.e. public and shared) and subjective (i.e. about motivations). They can however be anachronistic. The story of John Doe would not be convincing unless we all agreed that generally speaking people do not sit in front of empty desktops all evening. Sophisticated readers of history can no doubt simultaneously appreciate and hold in balance the personal in the writing but nevertheless still evaluate what is claimed about the past. Shemilt's evaluative criteria (outlined above) are useful here.

Were Jenkins right history would be reduced to fiction. Fiction writers are given the freedom to knowingly falsify the 'facts' if this helps the narrative, for example they can alter chronology. They must be careful, however, not to lose the credibility of the fiction with their readers (Foreman-Peck, 1983). Historians on the other hand have to base their work on the evidence and their interpretations must be warranted by that evidence. Any attempt to equate history with fiction is dangerous, as it allows any interpretation to have equal validity; it creates moral relativism, where those who deny the Holocaust have equal place with those that tell of its horrors.

Jenkins and Brickley (1989) also claim that empathy imposes a liberal ideology on the past. They argue we live in a society where we try to understand the actions of others in a rational way. This, they claim, is based upon on J. S. Mill's idea of exercising free will in a way that does not harm others. Consequently we try to judge others in a balanced, rational way, thus ascribing rational motives to people that may be inappropriate. This stress on rationalism effectively imposes a pattern in pupils'

responses. They argue that we face a contradiction, based on seeing the need to empathise yet the imposition of liberal thinking distorts our ability to empathise with people in the past. However, we would argue that once we reflect on our own value positions and our own version of rationality this objection becomes less serious.

Assessment problems

Assessment proved to be a particular problem at GCSE. Low-Beer (1989) raises a number of objections linked to this area. Her concern is with response mark schemes for GCSE assessment that prescribe affective outcomes. Partly this is a concern that pupils' responses are necessarily grounded in their own experiences so may be limited because of their lack of life experience. But it also stems from the fear that history teaching may become a form of moral propaganda with pupils being expected to respond to events in a particular way. This idea can sit uncomfortably with some history teachers who regard the need for an authentic response from pupils as important and accepting a range of responses as equally valid. Thus assessment is seen as a key problem, given that empathy was being assessed within the new GCSE exam. In response to this Clements (1996) argued that perhaps the simplest solution would be not to assess empathy at all. But, we argue that these objections about assessment are not valid, and if we wished to, we could assess empathy. Both Shemilt (1984) and Ashby and Lee (1987) offer a framework that could be used as the basis of assessment. Of course pupils will have limited (and different) life/virtual experiences but the focus of the assessment is structural i.e. do they reconstruct thinking imbued with feeling in a way that accords with the evidence available to them? It may be that their attempts are unsophisticated given their youth but that is beside the point. The evidence of empathising can be there even if the writing has reached an unconvincing interpretation for someone more life experienced and much better read. On the other hand, drilling 'correct' empathetic responses is no solution: it short circuits the act of empathetic reconstruction that the pupils have to do for themselves and if historical thinking is being taught it is a self defeating strategy.

Low-Beer (1989) also criticises the type of empathy question that pupils were commonly set. These were often of the 'How would you feel' type of format or 'Explain how the German people would have reacted' format. The use of the word 'would' (interpreted as 'might') shows the provisional and tentative nature of the questions being set, that, in turn, could encourage fictitious responses, especially as pupils were often asked to write from the point of view of an imaginary person. However this kind of objection seems to presuppose that no teaching of empathy has taken place. There are approaches, notably role play, that can help pupils entertain different perspectives from themselves. Luff (2000)⁴ has written convincingly of the necessity of engaging pupils in role-play so that they can gain the virtual experience necessary to engage in analogical thinking. For example, a recreation of the mood of the Reichstag in the early 1930s allows pupils to understand how normal modes of political operation had broken down; from there they can start to explore more fruitfully how Hitler was able to exploit the situation in the Reichstag to his own advantage. If such experiences are not in place then pupils will have nothing to draw upon. Secondly, attention needs to be paid to the necessity for interpretations that relate to the evidence. This seems to be an objection to poor teaching and question setting rather than to the possibility of assessment.

Finally, Low-Beer makes the point that questions that require pupils to see different perspectives of people in the past (Shemilt's stage 4 thinking) do require historical knowledge and understanding, but she doubts whether this is actually empathy. It might be possible for a pupil to use only their own knowledge to explain an answer, without having to draw on any affective ideas. But is this possible? She seems to be

saying that we only draw on our knowledge of the evidence but, as we argued in section 2, the evidence has to be interpreted in the light of our knowledge of human nature. The detective in the story of John Doe discounted various confessions to the murder on the basis of his knowledge of people and how they typically relate to each other (loyally, vindictively, for example) This knowledge is knowledge about how people generally feel about things. As we saw in the case of Hanratty plausible hypotheses about the feeling state of individuals can make puzzling events intelligible. Even less hypothetical cases however still involve some general knowledge of the way people generally act and feel. However there are undoubtedly exercises that do not require an empathetic response such as descriptive accounts of a place a character may be in.

Skidelsky (1988a), though supportive of empathy as a goal, objected that empathy questions did not attempt to get pupils to associate with historical actors, but rather with some imaginary 'ordinary' person. This would necessarily lead to answers that draw heavily on imagination and would tend to lead to generalisations, which, according to Shemilt, would automatically restrict the level at which pupils could operate. While it seems to be obvious that it is easier to reconstruct the thoughts and feelings of particular individuals about whom we know concrete details, empathising with 'ordinary' people should not be ruled out. Ian Luff (2000) has demonstrated how it is possible to give children the virtual experience of 'practice' and 'fear' which was necessary for the discipline of the Roman Army through role playing Roman soldiers. Assessment clearly has to be closely related to teaching aims.

Practice related objections : Problems facing children learning to empathise.

Portal (1983), whilst arguing effectively for the use of empathy in teaching history, highlighted some of the problems facing pupils. More recently, Husbands and Pendry (2000) discuss the problems that pupils have in making sense of the past:

Inviting pupils to 'imagine that they are...' or to 'put themselves in the place of...' are phrases that actively encourage pupils to be themselves in the past, with all that means in terms of making sense of that past. At best they will be able to recreate the historical context but will then 'act' as they are, drawing on their existing emotions and explanatory frameworks (p. 133).

The essential difficulties facing pupils are the need to get into the mind-set of a person in another period of time⁵. The person may be a child but more often than not they are required to appreciate an adult mind-set. Thus the problems of history teaching are not necessarily purely cognitive but also peculiarly affective, as pupils are expected to appreciate adult emotions and sentiments. In addition, Tosh (1999) explains:

a more realistic (and also more rigorous) interpretation of empathy dwells on the effort of imagination needed to penetrate past mentalities which are irremediably removed from anything in our experience ... in any scholarly enquiry it is the otherness of the past that tends to come to the fore because the passage of time has made exotic what once seemed commonplace (p.7).

What therefore seems to be lacking from empathy work in the classroom is the contextual knowledge, the life experience and the historical evidence needed for children to make the necessary leap of imagination.

The result was that empathy was thought to be too difficult to teach to pupils. It led to the removal of empathy as an objective in the History GCSE syllabuses. Yet these

critics, ironically, do argue for its importance. Skidelsky (1988a) calls empathy 'a valid historical idea' and claims:

No one can object to the attempt to get students to understand the past was different from the present. Indeed, one of the most important uses of history is to free the mind from the tyranny of present fashion.

In a similar fashion, Low-Beer (1989) says:

... empathy exercises are ways of making sense of this historical evidence and coming to see that at other times, in other contexts, things were different (p. 11).

This presents a dilemma for history teachers. Do they attempt to get children to do an admittedly hard task of attempting to empathise with the past for themselves, which may result in an unsophisticated empathetic response, or do they present children with a given view of how people in the past would have thought and felt about particular circumstances? Clearly, if the aim of history teaching is to teach historical thinking then the latter is not a solution with integrity.

Getting the problems into perspective

The problems for pupils being asked to engage in historical empathetic understanding should be clear. Firstly, they have a limited range of life and virtual experiences to draw upon for making analogical inferences to another's possible feeling state; secondly, they may be at a less advanced stage in their own moral development than that of the past adults they are trying to empathise with (Peters, 1963); thirdly, they need a quite sophisticated grasp of historical evidence to see that some analogies are invalid.

In reply to the first consideration it should be noted that there are many experiences that seem very unlikely to have changed their significance for people over time, and that are within the experience of pupils, for example being hungry, tired, frightened, intimidated, hopeful, being friends. Judicious use of role-play, poetry and literature can extend the range of experiences that are available to pupils. In designing exercises the likely limitation of pupils' experiences, depending on their age, needs to be taken into account.

The point about moral development also needs to be borne in mind although there is not space to develop it here. Children may be too young to have a sense of moral autonomy and may be unable to appreciate fully the moral reasoning of past adults.

On the third point the issue of pupils projecting their own values back on to the past can be challenged through teaching and the use of role-play. An implication of this is that empathetic understanding exercises should in the first instance be based on particular characters rather than categories of people (such as soldiers) in situations that require, description, understanding and explanation. What would we require in terms of evidence for the presence of empathetic understanding? Probably an accurate description of the salient facts and situation a character was in, and an appreciation of probable motivation where sources are missing. The logic of the task then is not 'How would I react in such and such a situation?' but 'Given what we know about X and the period they lived in can we understand why they did Y?'

Can we distil any principles to guide good teaching and assessment practices in teaching historical empathising?

Many of the problems linked to the teaching of empathy are theoretical. Theoretical confusion can lead to confused teaching and a weak grasp of the criteria by which empathetic writing should be judged. Aspects of empathetic writing that constitute poor practice, would seem to stem from tasks that are generalised, lack contextual knowledge, and allow the use of current values to permeate the work. Pupils are required to catalogue facts that may well not be salient to the reconstruction of the particular person in that context (see also Portal, 1983). Pupils are asked to imagine that they themselves, rather than a past figure, are a character (e.g. a soldier in the trenches) and asked to write about their reaction to events. The following discussion criticises two prevalent practices in history teaching utilising the conceptual analysis we have presented, and goes on to suggest more fruitful approaches.

The characteristics of a typically poor assignment feature in the following real life example observed by one of the authors. Based on the Fetterman massacre, a GCSE class of mixed ability pupils had to imagine they were one of the Indians at the battle and describe what they saw and felt. The task had been constructed using a factual account of the attack, but had provided little contextual information for pupils to draw on, nor had any contemporary evidence been provided in which to root the accounts. The responses were predictably lurid and lacked any historical value. Even so it might have worked if the teaching prior to the assignment had guided pupils responses to salient ideas (such as courage, honour or whatever). As it was, the pupils treated the task more as a fictional story. The weakness here was the fact that pupils were writing only as themselves and brought nothing but their own feelings and reactions to the event. Obviously the more historically minded, life experienced and morally mature may be better placed to tackle such tasks without the requisite teaching intervention. Davis Jr (2001, p.1-2) also notes an empathy task that produced similarly poor results. We are not claiming that such poor practice is universal, but that poor conceptualisation of empathy will not help teachers design good assignments.

Diary writing or letter writing from historical characters, especially imaginary ones, can also create problems. Many schools use the idea of a letter home from the trenches in World War One to describe conditions for ordinary soldiers. Pupils are often directed to incorporate the terms 'rat', 'trench foot', 'mud' and so on. Again, pupils may well be writing as themselves, but are also required to catalogue a number of facts, that may not be salient. Portal (1983) criticises such exercises as being nothing more than recounting factual information under appropriate headings. Though the aim may well be laudable, the result is also going to be generalised and stereotyped. Pupils will come away with the idea that all soldiers experienced the same conditions, all the time and felt the same emotional responses. This seems to negate one of the crucial ideas that school history is trying to promote, namely the diversity of experience in the past. The emotional responses to such tasks invariably get pupils to empathise from their more comfortable 21st century experiences. This tends to gloss over the distinctiveness of past individuals' experiences depending on factors such as social status and actual time spent on the front. These tasks are also difficult to assess, because it is not exactly clear what the purpose of the task is. If it is to describe conditions, then this is a fairly low level skill, and could be better accomplished by another task such as a spider diagram. If it is to examine the emotional responses of people to events then this is extremely difficult to make a judgement about. If, however, the task was to write about a known character's response to a particular event, then empathy may well be a valid approach to the task. Having a much clearer focus to the task would also help overcome the

problems associated with assessment. Where empathy is simply used to recreate situations it can become a meaningless exercise lacking in rigour. Empathy has more force when it is used to recreate perspectives.

If we are to help pupils see things from someone else's point of view we need to create tasks that do just that, which will overwhelmingly require pupils to analyse and explain, as well as describe, and it must be well grounded in the available contemporary evidence. Pupils must have a good sense of period and depth of knowledge regarding attitudes of a given era. Activities that engage and puzzle pupils are important (see also Portal, 1983 and Phillips, 2002). For example pupils could be introduced to the story of John Stubbs, a Puritan who had his right hand cut off on the orders of Elizabeth I. The story matter is likely to gain the attention of most pupils, but they could then be asked to hypothesise about Stubbs' likely reaction to the Queen's orders. Having done that, they could then be informed that he merely used his left hand to doff his hat and cry out 'God Save the Queen', an outcome that will surprise many. This could then lead into an examination as to why he may have reacted in that fashion, opening up an enquiry into the mindset of Stubbs and the political and religious climate of the time, such as concepts of submission to authority that help explain his reaction. This activity should prove effective as it is based on an actual person, will force pupils to draw on contextual knowledge and evidence, and is challenging them to tackle a puzzle. Contextual knowledge can also be drawn on in other circumstances. When examining Custer's actions at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, pupils can be challenged to account for his actions at key points during the episode, making use of their prior knowledge. Drawing on their knowledge of his ambition, lust for glory and possibility of gaining political office, pupils can be asked to discuss what options were available to Custer at these moments, and then be introduced to his actual choice. After that pupils can debate the possible reasons for that choice. This task again has the advantage that it is based on a known character, uses contextual knowledge and has a problem-solving element. Other suitable tasks are directly related to understanding the ideas and attitudes of people in the past. This can come in the form of role-plays or linking ideas together. To modern minds it appears ridiculous that Robert Hubert, despite his confession, was executed for causing the Great Fire of London, as part of some great Catholic conspiracy. Pupils can examine why he would have admitted to the crime, as well as look at the reasons behind the willingness of the judges to convict him, thus also throwing light onto the mindset of the time. Games and simulations or exercises that involve some form of decision-making can provide the necessary stimulus to look at events from different perspectives of individuals, e.g. looking at the arguments for and against the execution of Charles I, and trying to justify them using 17th century values, but using real people involved in the arguments such as the royalist Robert Filmer or the Parliamentarian apologist Henry Parker. Looking at events from different perspectives can make imaginative use of the concept of interpretations. Thus a study of the Middle East from both Palestinian and Israeli viewpoints would deepen a pupil's appreciation of this most difficult of circumstances, but would have more force if based on real characters.

In terms of assessment, an analytical approach appears easier to assess as the purpose of the task is more precise, can be judged on the evidence and quality of argument used to present a case and the insight into the probable emotional experience of the person in that predicament.

It would appear that empathy, as a teaching objective, is both desirable and feasible. Teachers though need to be clear about what constitutes good practice. Tasks that are based on real individuals, grounded in evidence, offer a problem-solving element

and examine people's perspectives and motivation are more likely to elicit worthy empathy work.

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Footnotes

¹ In History, at KS2, pupils are asked to look at “characteristic features of the periods and societies studied, including the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and experiences of men, women and children in the past”, whilst at KS3 it is expressed as “characteristic features of the periods and societies studied including the experiences and range of ideas, beliefs and attitudes of men, women and children in the past”. The Citizenship orders seem more explicit in asking pupils to “Use their imagination to consider other people’s experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own”. Luff (2000) claims this implies historical empathy, and Ashby and Lee (2001) in O. L. Davis Jr, E. A. Yeager & S. J. Foster (Eds) *Historical Empathy and Perspective Taking in the Social Studies* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield) talk of empathy as involving reasons, beliefs and attitudes.

² historicist is the term given to those who view eras in the past as different to their own. Each age has a distinct mentality and outlook, so should not be judged by present day standards.

³ The General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) was first examined in 1986 and is the main examination taken by all 16 year pupils in the United Kingdom.

⁴ Luff seems to have sparked a renewed interest in the value of role play. There are of course earlier teachers who advocated a place for role play, such as Jon Nichol in the *Evidence* series published by Blackwell and Chris Jordan and Tim Wood (their works include a series of textbooks such as *The Ancient World*, *England in the Middle Ages* and *Old World, New World*, and Wood’s book of role plays *Playback: History Roleplays* (1982)). See also www.ex.ac.uk/history resource.

⁵ This is a point noted in Shemilt and Ashby and Lee’s categorisation of pupils’ empathetic understanding. Those who fail to appreciate an alternative perspective from the ‘inside’ of the period are seen to be operating at stages one or two.

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Thinking Skills and the Learning of Primary History: Thinking Historically through Stories

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Abstract *This paper derived from a piece of research undertaken in an Oxfordshire primary school in the summer of 2002. Part 1 introduces the question of thinking skills. Part 2 examines how thinking skills might enhance children's learning of history via a case study of a project in an Oxfordshire primary school. The project's focus was on the potential of narrative, and in particular counterfactuals, in this respect.*

PART 1

Thinking about thinking

The perceived usefulness of thinking skills as instruments for curriculum development has fluctuated over the years, usually as a result of the stance of any one particular government at the time. The importance given to them is inclined to occur when more formal approaches to learning are perceived to have failed and, in this respect, it has become something of a holy grail. I was reminded of this recently when reading the DfES's evaluation of the literacy and numeracy strategies which asserted that too much time in a maths lesson was being dedicated 'to test practice and refining test techniques' (TES, September 2002). The alternative suggested was 'a focus on thinking skills, which would move away from the present concentration on English, maths and science'. These skills, 'based on the psychology of learning', would 'involve a variety of methods but all encourage pupils to grasp a topic at deeper level than simply recalling information'.

The idea of thinking skills as being fundamental to learning has a long and illustrious history. There is a considerable canon on the subject, much of it influenced recently by the work of Robert Fisher (1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2000) who seeks to establish approaches to help children develop critical, creative and imaginative states of mind. He argues that this can be achieved by improving their thinking skills, thus helping them make more sense of their learning and their lives. The work of Guy Claxton (2002) has extended thinking in this respect in order to give children a better understanding of themselves as learners. These principles have provided the focus for much recent work on thinking skills and learning history (Dean, 2002; Wallace, 2003) but Fisher's ideal of the 'philosophical classroom' has been seen by some to be counter-productive to the infusion of skills within a subject-based curriculum. In an important article Beyer (2001) differentiates between solution strategies, critical thinking skills and 'thinking dispositions' while advocating the 'infusing (of) disciplined thinking into history and social science courses' (Beyer, p.321). This principle of infusion is a central precept of Carol McGuinness's 'Thinking Skills and Thinking Classrooms' programme which include some of Fisher's ideas about the 'philosophical classroom' but suggest strategies whereby 'the teaching of curricular content is infused with the explicit instruction of thinking skills' (McGuinness, 2002, p.2). These positions are important and will be developed later in this paper.

Thinking about History

In history education the relationship between thinking and historical learning was given particular definition by a seminal paper by Jeanette Coltham in 1971 (Coltham, 1971). In this she extended historical thinking beyond the Piagetian into social areas of learning and understanding. This prepared the way for an important collaboration with John Fines (Coltham & Fines, 1971) which resulted in the HA pamphlet,

Educational Objectives for the Study of History. Using the idea of a taxonomy, similar in principle to that originated by Bloom and Krawthwol (1956), they devised a model around educational objectives for identifying key skills for the study of history. They posited that educational outcomes resulting from historical study included features such as 'insight' and 'knowledge about values' – areas normally associated with the affective domain. The pamphlet linked thinking with developing attitudes towards learning and historical knowledge in a novel and harmonious way. At the time the teaching of history was under particular scrutiny and their intention was to re-establish the relative value and place of their discipline in the school curriculum. They also wanted the subject to be engaging, well taught and made relevant to children's lives. There are clear resonances here with the sort of rationales that Dean, Wallace and others are advocating for thinking skills now. Jeanette Coltham's concluding statement could be taken from any recent text:

If, by use of their interests and through work aimed to develop their understanding, children gain satisfaction from their study, then the urge to continue is kept alive and motivation is strengthened – and what more can teachers of history ask! (Coltham, 1971, p.43).

In more recent times the debate has been focused on how best to incorporate these skills explicitly within the history curriculum through consistently applied methods. The work of Cooper (1992,1993,1994) in the early 1990s focused attention on primary-aged children's thinking in history through a series of thought-provoking books and articles. Her points of reference at the time were the cognitive psychology of Piaget, Peel and the early work of Bruner but her key principle was 'that if children are taught consistently, applying the same teaching strategies to new material, they learn patterns of thinking which can be transferred to new evidence independently of the teacher, and that the quality of thinking improves' (Cooper, 1992, p.12) .

The skills of learning history

In the 1990s some history educationists turned their attention to discovering ways in which a systematic approach to thinking skills could result in their productive incorporation into the history curriculum. Some have advocated (Nichol, 1999) the importance of students discovering over-arching skills that transcend the discipline and contribute to other areas of learning, whilst utilising those skills in their growing understanding of history. These are fine principles but the danger is that processes and practices will be adopted not because they are appropriate to children's learning, but because they are deemed to have a property that solves, at a stroke, the problems of educational achievement. The central question remains as to whether it is more desirable to develop a thinking state of mind in children, independent of subject constraint, or whether thinking is better 'infused' into the curriculum through subject teaching.

My concern is that generic thinking skills, whilst being laudable in respect of children's intellectual development, do not necessarily help them understand history better. What, I feel, is needed is the identification of those skills which are particular to the learning of history, and the incorporation of these into the curriculum. This, of course, raises broader and more wide ranging questions about the purpose of history education in the 21st Century – in simple terms, what history is worth knowing – but whatever the outcome of this debate I feel that the explicit use of thinking skills as a feature of historical enquiry will need to be included somewhere.

The key problem, therefore, when devising programmes that use thinking skills as an integral part of pupils' work, is to ensure that the learning of history is kept to the

fore of the activity and not subsumed in a series of tasks that, though worthy in themselves in terms of developing their cognitive abilities, do not necessarily enhance their historical understanding. Consider, for example, 'predicting' as a thinking skill in a broader strategy for learning. In this a number of key questions can be identified and offer a framework through which the child can 'think through' the strategies they need to employ to solve a problem. Some of the questions that arise will be appropriate for speculating on a historical situation e.g. Which are the most important ideas? What are the arguments for and against? Others are less so. The difficulty is that 'predicting', in terms of learning history, is a very specific skill requiring an understanding of the historical context, a consideration of this when weighing options and, finally, the use of the historical imagination in order to arrive at a conclusion. The student needs to recognise that any historical situation can result in a variety of 'more likely' and 'less likely' outcomes; an elaborate and particular form of historical thinking which is explicitly bound up with an understanding of the times. See Part 2 for a consideration of this mode of thinking in some detail. In the devising of programmes for teaching history it is essential that children are given an understanding of a particular time and place and also have revealed to them something of the nature of the historical process, the way history is made. This is a sophisticated intellectual activity, but not outside the capabilities of mainstream children. However, for it to be managed successfully there needs to be clear understanding on the part of the teacher and the learner on the nature of the concepts being studied.

Appropriate tasks for children?

The key factor in ensuring this comes about is task design: the devising of activities that are sufficiently engaging and interesting to give children genuine insights into the historical past. QCA (1999) have gone some way to addressing this problem. Their Scheme of Work for history at Key stages 1 and 2 provides a structure and coherence to planning as well as offering some good sessions for teachers to teach. The problem is that, in many schools, they have become *the* curriculum, as opposed to being a structure to enhance and develop it. For this reason it is important that the curriculum be kept flexible and open. The development of positive attitudes to learning is, of course, fundamental here. If we believe that developing children's capacity to think is the single most important purpose of any teaching session, then the curriculum needs to be continually modified and adapted to accommodate thinking skills. It was this premise that provided the starting point for our teaching/research project undertaken last summer.

Up until recently, most studies of thinking skills and cognitive strategies in learning history have been centred in secondary education¹. The development of more sophisticated modes of thinking and cognitive skills evolved as Key Stages 3 and 4 priorities in order for students become more directly involved in their own learning. However, it is easy for programmes of this kind to get bogged down in a morass of structural and organisational concepts, cross-curricular transferable skills, cognitive strategies and syntactical knowledge as well as fall foul of the current government priorities for the curriculum. Nichol (1999) recognised this when he reviewed the 'state of the art' in thinking skills in history and, whilst finding much to recommend, was somewhat inconclusive on how best to proceed. He writes:

The links between a thinking skills course and the teaching of history is apparent. The National Curriculum of the 21st century will challenge us to integrate history within programmes built around key themes such as literacy and citizenship. However, while working with other disciplines we need to accept that each has a

unique contribution to make to the rounded education of citizens in the 21st Century. (1999,p13).

Since that time programmes for helping children to organise their learning have begun to emerge in primary history. A good example of this is the work of Dean (2002) and Nuffield Primary history. In what she calls 'The Real E-Learning' she identifies four key skills for thinking and learning history in primary aged children. The features she identifies - engagement, enquiry, examination and evaluation - provide a model for children to learn history whilst, at the same time, keeping historical knowledge and understanding in sharp focus. Belle Wallace has also been active in this area (Wallace, 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2002) and has turned her attention recently to history (2003). She takes a similar structured approach to Dean through the use of TASC, Thinking Actively in a Social Context. She provides a 'Problem-Solving Framework' which takes the children through a series of structured stages in order to carry out an historical enquiry.

Approaches to Learning

There is currently in vogue a belief that only through meticulous and detailed planning can the process of learning be carried out, and be seen to be carried out, successfully. There is no better example of this than the use of learning objectives. In the TTA guidance for training teachers (TTA, 2000,2001) the trainees teaching history before the camera submerge their planning in a deluge of learning objectives, some related to the learning of history but many linked to associated areas, such as literacy, geography, ICT etc. It is easy to see how thinking skills could produce another batch to ultimately confuse both teacher and learner simply because they cannot all be achieved or assessed. In many ways, the approaches advocated by Dean, Wallace and others are thoroughly laudable. They provide a framework for learning that can help children organise their enquiries in a most useful manner. However, they do little for preparing children for studying the complexities of the discipline at Key Stage 2. History teachers in secondary schools have been wrestling with this problem longer than primary colleagues and we have a lot to learn from their experiences! Both Dean and Wallace recognise the importance of infusing the skills within the discipline. As Dean writes:

Thinking skills are not exercised in a vacuum: we need something to think about, and a context to think within. (2001, p.1)

However, it is important to keep to the fore of our thinking the distinction between skills which help children understand the historical process and those which help them organise enquiry. The problem with models and frameworks is that they can artificially shape study not necessarily for historical purposes but because the child (and/or teacher) feels it expedient to apply the routines rigidly. The tasks we designed tried to balance historical knowledge and understanding of period with an experience of the process through which we have come to know about these times. In this way we intended to give children the opportunity to 'think through' the difficulties and complexities of 'making history' as well recognising the process by which public knowledge comes to be known. The use of key conceptual words and phrases are essential here and in Part 2 we highlight these and explain how they were developed through the tasks.

Much of the organisation of this research /teaching topic features familiar activities, whilst others break relatively 'new ground'. This is because we felt much of the construction of this topic was intended to examine the new orthodoxy that has been unintentionally established by the QCA and their units of work. For many schools,

where performance and achievement is assessed on pupils' standards in literacy, numeracy and, to a lesser extent, science, developing the history curriculum has become a very low priority.

The Project

The project arose from two concerns that I had about the teaching of history in primary schools. The first, as I have outlined, was the impact of QCA 's history units of work on classroom teaching and the second was the lack of thinking, historical or otherwise, in the activities taking place. For this reason two teacher-colleagues and I decided to devise a unit of work which would prioritise dynamic and interactive teaching methods which would focus on utilising thinking skills as an explicit element of the work. They both teach in a large suburban primary school in Oxfordshire. We chose a Year 6 class for, by this age, the children would already have a good grounding in history and we would be able to develop areas of thinking that had been part of their earlier history learning as well as introduce new ones. The topic we selected was Home Front Britain 1939-1945, as it was the only National Curriculum history topic they hadn't already studied! We decided to teach 6 one and a half hour sessions to take place in the latter part of the summer term with an introductory session taking place before half term. Our approach was not to make thinking skills overtly explicit but introduce them as a feature of the lessons as and where they arose as a feature of the study. We also wished to make historical fiction a significant element in our sessions for the role of narrative, and in particular the relationship between fiction, fact and historical fact are important, and largely unexplored, features of the way children imagine the past². Fictions appear, therefore, in a number of contexts: in the artefacts stories in Session 2, in the anecdotes and 'memories' of Charlie Vass ARP warden, and in the culminating activities, inventing the counterfactual and making the tableaux (see below). The ordering and organising of these stories was through a system we called 'event framing' which is explained in more detail below. We chose a range of research tools to determine the children's learning including semi-structured interviews of six selected children, our own field notes of class discussions and individual comments, lesson observations and the children's own writing and illustration.

In the sections that follow I highlight different types of historical thinking, describe the activities promoted them and reflect on children's responses to them.

PART 2

Narrative, fiction and fact

Historical understanding is the exercise of the capacity to follow a story, where the story is known to be based on evidence, and is put forward as a sincere effort to get at the story as far the evidence and writer's general knowledge and intelligence allow. (Gallie, p. 51)

When Gallie refers to *the* story he hints at the unknowable that is assumed to be part of any historical narrative, the part that the historian 'invents'. Evidence, in this context, is more or less secure as attempts are made to 'fill the gaps' in order to create as sincere and as evocative impression as possible. Lang (2003) when writing on an extract from Simon Schama's *Citizens* (Schama, 1989), compares his approach to writing narrative with that of a film maker where the central character is tracked through a landscape that the historian creates. The good historian, and Schama is a good historian, is careful to ensure that time and place are accurately represented, but bold enough to paint pictures with prose for the sake of historic evocation. This does not make the former 'hard evidence' or the latter 'a flight of

fancy'. In fact, the prose can often have a better grounding in actuality because it is the outcome of the historian's reflection. As Lang writes:

What might seem the historian's vivid but unsupported imagination at work can have a surer basis in evidence than one might think (2003, p. 12).

If we want children to imagine the past they, too, must take on the mantle of the history writer. They need to experience the problems of maintaining a historical stance while allowing the creativity of the storyteller to evoke a past that will be vivid and real to the reader. We had a firm belief that narrative is still the key component to much of the learning of history in primary schools and is the way most teachers expect children to imagine the past (Vass, 1996). The techniques adopted by many teachers and the approaches suggested by Bage (1999) testify to improving practice in classrooms. However, the thinking skills employed by children when experiencing stories need to be placed in a clear historical context. Only in this way will historical knowledge and understanding be the outcomes of their labours.

Starting positions

For a definition of historical narrative we took, as a starting point, the words of Jack Hexter, who described the outcome of the historian's labours thus:

any patterned, coherent account, *intended to be true*, of any past happenings involving human intention or doing or suffering' (Hexter, p.3).

This definition fixes 'historical storytelling', as he describes it, at the centre of the historiographical process. Making connections, establishing coherence, creating order out of the chaos of past events are, he argues, all skills required of the historian. He allows a degree of latitude in the way historians interpret from their sources as long as the ultimate aim is 'to convey knowledge, understanding and truth about the past as it actually was' (Hexter, p.238). That the historian's 'intentions' should be to tell the truth is interesting here. Hexter recognises that 'truth' in history is in the mind of the historian; in the writing of historical narrative, what he or she believes to be true is about as good as it can possibly get. This, at first glance, might seem far removed from some of the fictive approaches we employed in our teaching. However, 'truthfulness' in our case was established by the children through their researches into the subject, not by a requirement to discover a definitive position of certainty.

If historical narratives are an attempt to convey the truth of the past then historical fiction needs to be seen as the creation of a writer, set in the past and portraying that past, but imagined by them. The thought processes involved in constructing these narratives is of particular interest here. The division of the *logos* from the *mythos* in ancient Greek thought provides a useful starting point for considering the role narrative plays in human thinking about the world. The *logos* encompasses those areas of knowledge that can be demonstrated through observation and examination. This distinction has provided the basis for scientific explanation that is now such a significant feature of Western thought. *Mythos*, on the other hand, is related to speech, dialogue and, most significantly in our context, narrative. These ideas have been developed by Bruner into what he calls the narrative mode of thinking (Bruner, 1986). It is the narrative mode, he posits, that makes experience meaningful through "good stories, gripping drama, believable, though not necessarily true, historical accounts" (Bruner, 1986, p.13). He develops this thesis further when he argues that, whilst devoting much time to teaching the sciences and developing rationality in children, we live our lives according to the rules and devices of narrative. By this he

means that we make sense of experience through the stories we tell and the stories we have told to us – the narrative construal of reality, as he calls it. (Bruner, 1996, p.130f). This thinking is as true for children as it is for adults.

Evidence from artefacts

We decided that artefacts should play a major part in the formulating of the narratives. Our requirement was for children to create historical fictions from the objects, not re-tell old stories. We also wanted to establish the notion that artefacts can testify to the past in which they were made and used. More than that, they can have special meanings to individuals that can transcend place and time – family heirlooms are a good example of this. But most importantly we wanted children to recognise that objects have a provenance i.e. an origin, a history, a story to tell, and it was their stories, set in the context of war-time London, that we asked them to imagine.

For primary aged children evidence usually needs to be tangible and concrete. For this reason we chose artefacts that have become icons of their time around which to structure their stories. These included a gas mask, a ration book, a section of blackout curtain, a rattle that ARP wardens would use in event of a gas attack and an authentic World War Two teddy bear that had accompanied its owner on many nocturnal trips to the Anderson Shelter! Session Two began with a discussion of these items, the offering of theories as to their possible use and what they tell us about the way people were living in Britain during the war. The children were then given an event frame (see next section) and asked to organise a story about one of the artefacts set in the context of Home Front London.

Some of these objects re-appeared from an ARP warden's haversack in the third session as props to his anecdotes and experiences during the Blitz. This teacher/role player technique was familiar to the children and they understood the conventions of confronting characters this way. There has been much progress in this approach since my plea for teachers to make this a more explicit feature of their practice (Vass, 1993). For many children these objects – the gas mask, the rattle, the ration book provided firmer evidence of the actuality of the past than the stories. Interestingly, the children accepted without question my role playing of my grandfather but the veracity of his stories was viewed more suspiciously. 'Charlie Vass's stories were good and I'm sure some of it was true, but how can you actually know? He was biased, wasn't he? When you've got an object though, a thing, that can't lie'. The question of provenance resulted in some interesting thinking on narrative, particularly when the children invented their own stories. 'Because the object was real it sort of made the stories real even though we made them up.' 'The place was real, London was real and the Teddy was real which made the story real.' This form of thinking history has resonance with the literary voice functioning as historical evidence rather in the way that Zemon Davies (1985) employed it in her researches into the 16th Century story of the deserting soldier, Martin Guerre.

The inter-relationship of fictive and non-fictive worlds should be as important to the historian as the mindsets of those that lived them. A phrase that emerged with the children during the course of the project was the notion of the narrative 'feeling right' in the context of the times. It is certainly true that some historical fictions persuade us of their veracity through the sheer power of the narrative and the writer's attention to detail; *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulkes is a good example of this. In the same way, some historical films evoke a sense of authenticity because of their look and style despite their fictive elements. Evidence, in this context, is not only about the reliability of the sources but also the persuasiveness of the narrator. As a child put it: 'I think

Jodie's story was more like it was than mine. There was more evidence.' The children were discovering that evidence, in historical terms, was not as tangible or obvious as they imagined.

Event Framing

The children organised their fictions using a system of event frames that the teachers and I devised. These were not unlike 'story boards' which has been a feature of storying in primary schools for some years now. The frames imposed quite a rigid structure and we were ambivalent initially about imposing something that might inhibit their ideas. However, as our intention was to keep historical thinking to the fore, and the deployment of a literary format enabled us to include a chronological feature which would help the children order their stories through passing moments in time. It was very important for the children to appreciate the relationship between time and narrative for this is implicit in all historical narrative. As Muntz (1997, p.852) writes:

In order to do justice to time, it must be described in a narrative form...(it) is the only literary device available which will reflect the past's time structure.

The children's use of the frames produced a variety of remarkable and highly imaginative narratives but it was through the ensuing discussion and debate in the plenary that the historical and generic skills they employed were identified. This focussed predominantly on questions of sequence and significance which feature in other papers in this series.

The ordering and organisation of these historical stories involved many skills which are not peculiar to history. These have been described by Nichol as being 'cross-curricular transferable' and have been identified by him (Nichol, 1999, p.7) in the work of Feuerstein (1980). These skills involve the adoption of cognitive strategies which can help the child better understand the concepts that underpin it. Nichol highlights seven structural concepts that provide the framework for historical thinking, namely: cause, continuity, chronology, evidence, change, consequence and situation. These structural concepts are not only central to the epistemology of history but without their presence it is difficult to argue that children are actually going through the process of 'doing history'. For this reason we endeavoured to include them when circumstances allowed without making them central to the activities. However, cause and effect are such important features of any historical study we ensured they took precedence in the children's stories.

Causation and Narrative

A cause is something that operates in the real world; it is what it is, whether people understand it or not. The milk turns sour because of the presence of certain bacteria. The fact that everyone believes it is sour because a witch put a curse on it affects not the milk at all. (Sandford, p.193)

This 'scientific' distinction between actual cause and believed cause highlights a key problem for the historian in the study of mentalities for it is belief that often provides the greatest insights into historical perceptions. For the children in our project the recognition that historical narratives are more focussed on belief than scientific certainty or 'truth' evolved as a major objective. Causation, therefore, began to emerge as a key element in their thinking. In Session 3 most children were able to decide on the key factor that determined the origin of the stories. In many instances it was a dramatic event that caused the central character/s to lose the artefact e.g. a rush to an air raid during which a child dropped her teddy bear or a ration book that was stolen by a burglar in the blackout. Causes were also a major feature in the

structuring of the event frames. Event 2 required the children to say how the artefact came to be lost, 3 how it came to be found and 4, how the artefact got the finder into trouble.

It is interesting that in his standard text on the study of history, Sandford writes about cause in the context of 'history as sequence' (Sandford, p.193). In a thorough examination of both historical and philosophical positions, he not only differentiates thoughtfully between causation and explanation but also raises some key questions about causation in history. These include 'Why do things happen as they do?', 'Can there be more than one cause?' and, most interestingly in the context of the next section, 'How can we explain unique events?' and 'What is meant by 'counterfactual?'. The questions here were emerging not out of any procedural system but a genuine desire to establish the historical veracity of the narrative. What is also interesting is the close relation between the structural thinking of the historian and the historical fiction writer. The ordering and sequencing of narrative depends as much on the successful answering of these questions as it does on the careful and critical textual analysis. These questions, and others like them, provided the foundation for the reflection by the children on their Wartime London event frame narratives. The following answers are drawn from field notes and children's interviews and we used some of Sandford's questions as a focus.

Why do things happen as they do?

I think my story explains that. It all makes sense. How the teddy was lost, how it was recovered, how we've got it today. It all makes sense.

My story's a good adventure, it's about a greedy person and a forgetful person and someone who takes chances. People are like that now and were like that then.

How can we explain unique events?

All events are unique. No two stories are the same even in history books. Someone might write such and such a thing and someone else write something else. It depends on who is writing the story.

Do some things happen by chance?

Most things do. They did in my story. It was a chance that the air raid took place. It was a chance that Sheila forgot her Teddy and it was a chance it was found 70 years later.

There was always a good chance of an air raid in London during the war and that people would be killed and things get lost. That happened a lot. But you never know, do you?

Thinking Counterfactually

Today one need not be ashamed of telling a story, so long as it is as true as one can make it. One feels free to speculate as to how things might have gone if a crucial decision had been taken differently, or if the fortunes of war had swung the other way in a key battle, or if this man had lived longer or that one died earlier. One can give due (but not undue) weight to human choice and human error, and to sheer contingency (Woolrych, 2002 p. 52).

So writes Austin Woolrych in a review of evolving perspectives on the English Civil War. A feature of the article is that today he feels that the historiography of the period has been liberated from the ideological straight jackets of previous generations and that contemporary historians have room to speculate and imagine in a way that would not have been acceptable in the past. This attitude and approach to writing history has evolved in a climate that recognises that our knowledge of so much of the

past is built upon individual, often strange and peculiar narratives, that give a complex and contrasting view of human experience. This notion of idiosyncrasy can trace its genesis back to the pioneering work of Robert Darnton (1984) who analysed the intriguing and perplexing world of ordinary people in France in the 18th Century and Natalie Zemon Davis (1985) whose speculative stories based on likeness ran parallel to the literary voice which has a key role to play in understanding particular and peculiar mindsets. The focus here is more on *mentalities* and belief rather than hard historical fact. In writing about her most famous book *The Return of Martin Guerre* Daniel Snowman says:

Davis believes that, by allowing an element of fabrication, or 'creative fiction', into her writing, she has probably come closer to the truth than anyone else who has written about what remains a supremely enigmatic historical episode. (Snowman, 2002, p19)

However, the process of historical speculation gained greatest credibility with the publishing of *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals* by Niall Ferguson in 1997. He argues for a 'chaotic' model of historical forces where the actuality of the past is seen as only one of many possible outcomes. Ferguson compiled a collection of essays which speculate upon alternatives to history – 'What if Nazi Germany had defeated the Soviet Union?' and 'What if Home Rule had been enacted in Ireland in 1912?' to name but two. Ferguson's intention is to sink, firmly and finally, the credibility of deterministic methods of historiography and in his introduction he presents a formidable indictment on the failed attempts to formulate general rules for history. This approach has its critics, most significantly Richard J. Evans (Evans, 2002) who rounds on Ferguson for using counterfactuals to lambaste the old school of left wing history and condemn their methods. Certainly it is no coincidence that many of the essays included in *Virtual History* come from, what Evans describes as, the 'young fogey' school of history. However, it is the implications these ideas had for teaching and learning history that provided particular food for thought. It was clear, from reading the essays, that these were no mere flights of fancy by the contributing historians. All their reasoning was based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of their subject and they argued that the exercise actually helped them understand it better. If this was true for historians, could it also be true for children? And if true, could the skills they employed in 'thinking counterfactually' be ones that give them a greater understanding of history? In order to answer these questions it is important to identify the thinking skills involved.

Thinking skills as defined in the History Update 2000 recognises the creative aspect of 'doing' history. The business of generating and extending ideas, suggesting hypotheses, applying the imagination and, most significantly, looking for alternative outcomes are given proper emphasis. But how can this translate into practice in classroom teaching? We decided to make counterfactuals a significant feature of our Home Front topic.

The Scenario

Making stories had already been a feature of their work in Session 2 (see Evidence from artefacts above). The business of ordering and sequencing narrative had been discussed and practised, as had the process of event framing. It was in Session 5 that the children utilised this narrative structure to organise a counterfactual narrative of their own. The decision to place this activity near the end of the project was a conscious one in order that the children could draw upon recently acquired knowledge of the subject. As the previous session had focused on The Blitz it was logical that the story we chose should centre on an air raid. The incident in question was the attack on Bethnal Green that took place on an evening in March, 1943. The

firing of a recently installed rocket battery from a rooftop in the district precipitated panic as hundreds of people rushed to get off the streets. The vast majority made towards the tube station where deep underground platforms offered safety from attack. However, there was only one small entrance and in the ensuing crush 143 people, including 62 children, died.

We described the historical scenario to the children up until the point when the rocket salvo was fired and then asked them to speculate on what happened next. We told them that this was a true story and there was only one actual outcome, but that at that particular moment in time any one of a number of things might have happened. We asked the children to draw up a list of possible conclusions and then select from that list their 'most likely' outcome. The reasons for their choice were discussed at some length and an interesting debate on likelihood, possibility and probability ensued. We then asked the children to organise their narratives chronologically using a series of Event Frames. This sheet allowed children to select 6 key moments in the historical time of the narrative culminating in an event 30 years after the original incident. This mirrors the outcome of the actual historical scenario when the victims of the accident were commemorated with the unveiling of a plaque at Bethnal Green Station in the 1970's.

Although this activity is far removed from the counterfactual and alternative essays collected by Ferguson, the sort of thinking required to imagine an outcome are, in many ways, the same. The starting point, for both historians and children, is the historical scenario. Certain circumstances in time and place have evolved through previous events to produce a precise and particular historical location. Clearly, the children's scenario is not a 'big event' in the same way that the American Revolution or JFK's assassination were big events but, for the children, they can be imagined in the context of a subject recently studied and understood. They were then required to suggest hypotheses, again using the historical scenario as a starting point, by reflecting on the scenario, its features and possibilities. This not only focused their attention but also helped them to understand the scenario better. For historians, a true understanding of an historical moment can only be achieved when there is speculation about the alternatives that were available at the time. As Ferguson writes:

to do this (construct plausible alternatives) is a *historical* necessity when attempting to understand how the past 'actually was'..... as we must attach equal importance to all possibilities which contemporaries contemplated before the fact, and greater importance to these than to an outcome which they did not anticipate.(Ferguson, 1997, p.87)

History Update uses an interesting word in the creative aspect of thinking. It suggests that children might look for alternative *innovative* outcomes in their history activities. Given that innovation is about 'novelty' and 'change' it seems that unless tasks are specifically designed by teachers for this purpose they are unlikely to have this experience in the normal course of 'doing history'. Our counterfactual activity gave them that opportunity and they responded remarkably.

Learning History – understanding the context

A requirement of the narratives created in the event frames was for the children to make them as true as they were able in the context of the particular historical time. We found very few anachronisms or 'howlers' and, in the vast majority of cases, the final frame in the 1970s was invariably appropriate by being different without being contemporary. The range of ideas produced by the children was testimony not only to

their imaginations but also their newly-acquired subject knowledge. They included an American plane being hit by accident (interesting modern parallels here), a curious girl who pulled back the blackout curtain and precipitated an air raid and a gas attack that was hushed up for fear of creating panic. All the stories had qualities of 'likeliness' that meant that the children had clearly understood the historical context. The vast majority (91%) were variations on a theme of destruction. They ranged from rockets hitting the planes that then crashed on Bethnal Green to a phosphorous attack resulting in a firestorm and a deadly gas attack. When asked to consider likeliness the children thought, and predicted, logically. Their enquiries into the Blitz and the likely outcomes of an air raid, led them to believe that the narrative that followed would be one of material destruction of buildings and the death of many people. For most children the 30 year frame correctly predicted commemoration although 7 concluded their narratives with the discovery of something archaeological – the wing of an aeroplane, a fuselage and, in one case, an unexploded bomb which blew up!

The event framing activity gave the children the opportunity to consider carefully the outcomes from a particular moment in time. The decision, on our part, to put times to the frames did, to a certain degree, shape the narratives they constructed. However, the children were prepared for this as we had discussed earlier the relationship of time to historical stories and how the writer/historian selects significant elements for inclusion. We emphasised that their decision making, though imaginary, used the principles adopted by historians to create their historical narratives.

It was the rockets that did it

An interesting outcome of the event framing activity was the degree to which it intensified interest in the real event. By the time we got round to telling the children the actual outcome of the 'raid' on Bethnal Green, there was a powerful and excited air of anticipation. The overall reaction was one of genuine amazement. Many were surprised at the 'un-war' like nature of the accident. 'I was expecting something.... that was more like the war. I expected bombs to drop and hit something, something important, perhaps' said Jade, while James commented, 'Yes, I could imagine my story but your story didn't seem to be in the war. It didn't seem like it happened'. The sessions we taught and the enquiries the children undertook seemed, in some cases to have created in their minds a stereotype of war. The Blitz was a rolling event of raid, destruction followed by a sort of recovery before the next raid. Anything outside that pattern wasn't contemplated and why should it be? It's not the stuff of popular history. It might also be argued that this is testimony to the success of the government's propaganda machine at the time. The children were quick to pick up on this. One child commented in the plenary, 'You just hear the war stories. Stories like that (Bethnal Green) might make people question what the government was doing so they'd have to keep it quiet'. Most children felt their stories were much more likely than the real event and they were, of course, correct in that. However, the most telling statement came from a boy who had thought long and hard about the new rockets and asked a number of questions about them. He said: 'It was the rockets that did it. The sirens worried the people but it was the rockets going off that caused the panic. You said when you told us the beginning that the rockets were new. People had never heard that sound before. It made them panic. It was the rockets that did it.'

Notes

1. My initial interest in this area stems from the work of a secondary teacher colleague who was studying for an M.Ed. with me at Exeter University in the late 80s under Jon Nichol. His dissertation adapted Feuerstein's programme

for Instrumental Enrichment and the Somerset Thinking Skills Course for use in the teaching of history.

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2. The March 2003 of *Teaching History* has some very interesting articles on this subject, most significantly Sean Lang's 'Narrative: the under-rated skill', pp8-17. *Teaching History* 110.

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Notes for Contributors

- 1.The manuscript should be single spaced with 2 cm margins
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Introduction

Text: the position of all illustrations should be clearly indicated in the text if not included in it.

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Acknowledgements

References -

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