TEACHING HISTORY

in this issue

A grounding in history

What does it mean to have a 'grounding in history'? Just what, exactly, are pupils being grounded in? The term carries connotations of foundations and basic structures that we hope pupils will learn at school, but this leaves open the question as to what constitutes those foundations and what the relationship between the basic structures are. This is, at heart, a curricular question for it encourages us to consider *what* we teach as history teachers, and not just *how* we teach it.

Questions about the structuring of this foundation have been at the core of history teacher discourse for many years. What kinds of questions do we want pupils to answer in history, and in what ways are these questions derived from the practice of academic historians? What is the relationship between overview and depth? At what scales can history be taught, and in what ways might one 'switch' between scales in a curriculum? Where does narrative enter the equation? What kinds of concepts do we want pupils to learn, and at what places in a curriculum are those concepts encountered? Even where history teachers are presented with a curriculum model – such as the National Curriculum or an exam specification – it is still necessary for such questions to be addressed in order to interpret the curriculum being provided.

In this edition of *Teaching History* all of the articles address such curricular questions. This is not to say that history teachers do not need also to consider *how* to teach history: they clearly do, and indeed every article addresses pedagogical questions as well as curricular questions. It is important to note, however, that the pedagogical questions are closely related to, or even derived from, the answers to curricular questions. It is only by uncovering the deep structures of the thing being taught that teachers are then able to consider the pedagogical question of *how* those structures might be taught. Writers for *Teaching History* frequently show the close relationship between curricular and pedagogical questions, between the 'what' and the 'how' of teaching.

Stacey-Chapman deals directly with the question of how an exam specification might be interpreted in a way that does not leave pupils with the idea that history is divided into 'units' or 'modules'. He makes a strong case in his article for finding ways to show pupils that particular events and developments in the past might serve different roles in different narratives: in doing so, he raises an important question regarding the use of 'enquiry questions' as the knowledge gained from answering one enquiry question is not limited to that question, but might well serve a purpose in answering *other* questions. His conclusion is that history teachers need to think carefully about the ways in which knowledge is transferable.

One form of transferable knowledge in history is substantive concepts such as 'empire', 'peasant' or 'revolution'. Palek builds on recent work by history teachers in looking at the relationship between substantive knowledge and pupils' understanding of second-order concepts. In particular, Palek argues that there is a strong relationship between a pupil's mastery over substantive knowledge and his or her ability to address disciplinary questions regarding the causes of events or the nature of change over time. This relationship – between substantive knowledge and historical practice – is similarly revealed in the work of Huijgen and Holthuis who show the importance of contextual knowledge to a pupil's ability to make sense of a source or an interpretation, and they share in their article an evaluation of recent work on a pedagogical strategy for managing this relationship.

If substantive knowledge of the past is a prerequisite of answering historical questions, then so too is knowledge of how history works as a discipline, which is required in order to make sense of the substance of the past. Fielding, in her article on the ways in which pupils understand the second-order concept of change, shows how their misconceptions about change and continuity might only become manifest at a relatively late stage in their history education. Her article demonstrates ways in which such misconceptions can be addressed, but she argues too for careful long-term planning to ensure that pupils can develop in their conceptual understanding throughout their schooling.

Questions about substantive and disciplinary knowledge often come to the foreground when teachers teach history at a variety of scales. This requires teachers to consider the different kinds of 'framework' that they would like their pupils to have on leaving school. Hawkey picks up on a long tradition of teacher theorisation about overview and depth in this journal, showing how recent work on 'big history' might be used to enhance the ways in which history teachers think about the nature of 'overviews'.

History, as Stacey-Chapman reminds us, is complicated. Studying history requires that pupils knit together a variety of kinds of knowledge – both substantive and disciplinary – into some kind of structure that is meaningful. One cannot be said to have a grounding in history unless one has had the opportunity to acquire and structure this knowledge: the articles in this edition all continue a rich tradition of history teachers working out what this grounding might look like for pupils at different stages of their history education.

Michael Fordham
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HA Secondary News

Dear members

One of the most exciting things about belonging to the Historical Association is the way in which it brings together teachers, students, academics and enthusiasts with a shared love of the subject. The interplay between these communities and the buzz that animates them all was highlighted at last month's House of Lords celebration, which helped to launch the HA Quality Mark. Lord Hennessey, Professor of Contemporary British History at Queen Mary (University of London), who hosted the evening, reminisced about the first branch meeting to which he'd been taken by an inspirational history teacher. Equally enduring memories were being created that evening for the primary and secondary pupils who came along from some of the history departments that have already achieved the Quality Mark. Their teachers were similarly thrilled to discuss their work, not only with interested politicians (from across the political spectrum), but also with some of the leading historians who have inspired, informed and provoked them!

Similar opportunities to move between the worlds of school and university history (and out to explore the history that shapes the world around us) will also be available at the HA Annual Conference, in Bristol in early May. The shared keynotes and the chance to switch between historical scholarship and inspirational pedagogy in the workshops make the conference a highlight in the history calendar. Even if your school can't release or fund you for both days, it's well worth coming on the Saturday. Combine fact-finding about the new GCSE specifications with informal networking and the chance to explore what other schools are doing and how they're developing their approaches to assessment and planning for progression. The workshops will be supplemented by drop-in 'surgeries', allowing you to ask the practical questions that really matter to you.

With a general election looming, it's obviously difficult to predict how the wider educational landscape may look after May, but it is perhaps worth noting some recent developments and possible future trends. The first is the report of the Carter Review into Initial Teacher Training, published at the end of January. One of its strongest messages is about the importance of the subject – both subject knowledge in itself and subject-specific pedagogy. Although the review stopped short of recommending *funded* subject-knowledge enhancement for secondary teachers (as it did for primary teachers), it clearly stated that subject knowledge should be seen as an essential component of professional development for *all* teachers – a point you might want to stress to senior managers, particularly as you embark on preparation for new A-level and GCSE courses! It also emphasised the importance of the subject community, insisting that all trainees should have opportunities to learn with others training in the same subject and that they should have access to high quality subject expertise. They need, for example, to understand the nature of pupil thinking within the subject, along with common misconceptions and how they could be addressed. They should also be encouraged to explore phases of progression within the subject.

Mentors, unsurprisingly, are seen to play a vital role and the review therefore recommends that they should be 'resourced appropriately' and provided with 'rigorous training…that goes beyond briefing about the structure and nature of the course, and focuses on how teachers learn and the skills of effective mentoring'. As I noted in the last edition, the HA will do all it can to equip history mentors (particularly though the Move Me On 'problem pages' and the 'New Novice or Nervous' feature), but if you are asked to take on a mentoring role, especially in a new partnership without a strong subject focus, do use the recommendations of the review to argue for adequate attention to be paid to the subject-specific dimension of teaching.

Many of the review's recommendations are referred to a future professional body, such as a 'Royal College of Teaching'. The DFE has expressed its own support for such a body, including an offer of start-up funding, and it recently ran a consultation about the idea. While the HA is, of course, fully committed to strengthening the voice of teachers and to ensuring that they have access to high quality professional development, we are also wary of some proposals that seem to ignore both the current role played by subject associations and the different kinds of contribution that universities might make to professional development (particularly in relation to subject expertise). In order to better understand the role that subject and subject identity play in history teachers' thinking, we're currently conducting a very quick poll on the website (takes less than a minute!), but we will also be looking beyond that (and building on the criteria established within the Quality Mark) to develop our own conception of a 'Chartered History Teacher'. Watch this space – and do join the discussion.

Hot on the heels of the Carter Review comes another DFE commission, focusing this time on assessment without levels. While it is not yet clear what evidence or advice the commission may seek, we will do our best to ensure that not only your questions and concerns but also the pioneering practice shared by experienced and expert history teachers – through the HA regional forums, through the pages of *Teaching History* and at the annual conference – are all effectively represented.

Best wishes

Katharine Burn
Chair: HA Secondary Committee

HA Update

Thinking about …
… New GCSE specifications
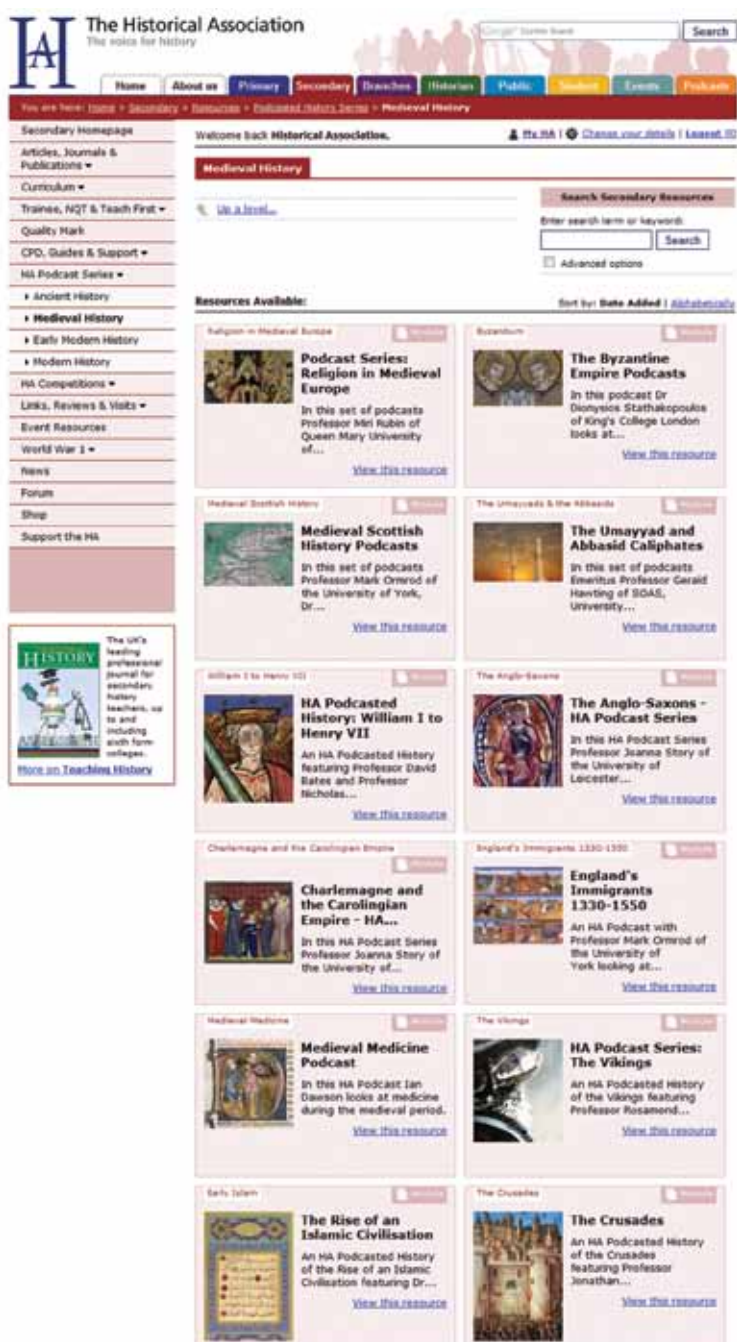
GCSEs are changing and that change will represent a greater shift in content and style than has been seen for many years. The new criteria, published by the DfE in 2014, outlined a new linear history GCSE course comprising of five elements:

- a British depth study
- a wider world depth study
- the historic environment
- a period study
- a thematic study.

The criteria require a minimum of 40% British history and the study of more than one historical time period from medieval, early modern and modern study topics. The wider world and British depth studies must not be from the same time period and the thematic study will need to cover history ranging across all three chronological periods.

The introduction of a requirement to cover a far broader chronological range may well present some challenges, not least in resourcing and in updating your own subject knowledge. HA podcasts provide an excellent way to ease you back into those periods of history that may feel a little distant or rusty.

The new GCSE specifications will represent a quite significant change and you will need to study the options available from the awarding organisations carefully. You may decide to adopt a specification that allows you to hold on to as much as possible that is familiar and where you have existing resources. Alternatively, you may decide to overhaul your GCSE options completely and go for quite radical change. Or you may choose a middle route. Whatever the case, awarding organisations will be making different interpretations of the criteria in their design and structuring of specifications so it is important to make the right choices for you,

your department and your students. Our advice is to look at all the available specifications before making any decisions.

Time-line

Awarding organisations are currently working to develop new GCSE specifications which will be submitted to Ofqual in April. Some awarding organisations have already published draft materials while others may well follow suit after the April submission to Ofqual. Subject to accreditation, it is hoped that specifications will be in schools for September 2015, for first teaching in 2016 and first examination in 2018. It is unlikely that accredited specifications will be published by awarding organisations before the summer.

This time-scale may be a particular issue for schools which operate a three-year Key Stage 4, given that students taking examinations in 2018 may well be starting courses in September 2015. Awarding

organisations have recognised this and are working to assist schools in such circumstances.

If your school does have a three-year Key Stage 4, you may want to review how this will work in history. Will the linear nature of the new GCSE examinations pose problems for pupils who will need to recall content over a three-year period? Have you built this into your planning? Perhaps the specifications will provide an opportunity for a broader reconsideration of your Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curriculum planning.

The Historical Association and the awarding organisations will keep you informed about the details of new specifications as they are published so keep an eye on the relevant Twitter feeds, websites and of course your HA e-news.

In addition, a new grading system will be adopted numbered 1-9, with 9 representing the highest level of achievement. While representing

some change, assessment objectives and levels of response will remain familiar. The history GCSE will become 100% externally assessed.

The HA Conference in Bristol on 8 and 9 May will provide an opportunity to talk to all the main awarding organisations and to see what the publishers have on offer to help support new specifications. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss the potential impact of change with your peers and with members of the HA's secondary committee.

At the conference this year we will be running drop-in surgeries that will allow you a moment to sit and talk to members of our committee and make suggestions to as to what you might want in terms of support for these forthcoming changes.

As we know more about the details of new specifications we will be developing more specific support so please do keep an eye out for your HA e-news and on our website.

Spring and Summer
CPD Events from the HA

The Historical Association together with our partners have a fantastic selection of CPD events for secondary teachers.

Northern History Forum: Ringing the Changes

Sponsored by Hodder Education
Leeds Trinity University, Leeds
29 April 2015
2015 is a year for ringing the changes in history education and whether you see the changes to the National Curriculum, GCSE and A-levels as a change for the better or not the Northern History Forum is here to help.

Join us for a fantastic evening of high-quality professional development helping you to go beyond the boundaries, to understand and cope with change and equip you with practical ideas for new approaches. With a keynote speech from Ben Walsh, a selection of great workshops, a large exhibition and a wine reception and buffet sponsored by Hodder, all for a very affordable price, the Northern History Forum is a must on your CPD calendar.

Book the Northern History Forum at **www.history.org.uk/go/events**

Booking Now:

HA Annual Conference

Sponsored by AQA, OCR, Pearson
Royal Marriott Hotel, Bristol
8 and 9 May 2015
Book now at: www.history.org.uk/go/events

coming Soon:

New GCSEs: SSAT, RGS and HA	**Doing history at top universities**	**Black Georgians**
Royal Geographical Society, London – 18 June 2015	York July 2015	London 17 September 2015

www.history.org.uk/go/events

Historical Association
The voice for history

Annual Conference
8 and 9 May 2015 – Bristol Marriott Royal Hotel

At the HA conference you'll find resources and advice for every secondary practitioner

Four Keynote Addresses

We have four outstanding keynote addresses from:

Justin Champion – Sophia Electress of Hanover: 'the Queen that never was'

Juliet Gardiner – Life on the Home Front during the Second World War

Dr Lucy Worsley – How to build an anniversary: 2014, the year of the Georgians

Jamie Byrom – The 'Peepo Principle' and progression in history

36 workshops and sessions

Our secondary programme includes a wide variety of workshops offering the latest resources and advice for secondary practitioners. There will be sessions on topics from assessment and global learning to historical thinking, mentoring, A-levels and GCSE specifications, subject knowledge and much more as well as local visits and general and primary workshops.

Resource Exhibition

An expanded exhibition with a fantastic selection of exhibitors including: WJEC, Inside Japan Tours, Waterloo 200, Oxford University Press, Hodder Education, Pearson, AQA, OCR and many more.

The place to be: the HA Annual Conference

The HA Conference is still the place to be and offers excellent CPD for teachers whether you are new to the profession or looking to enhance your career. Don't just take our word for it:

'Really enjoyed being part of the HA community for a day. Lots of really good stuff on offer.'

'A great conference – really good to have the chance to listen to a range of ideas.'

Book your place at: www.haconference2015.com

From a compartmentalised to a complicated past:

developing transferable knowledge at A-level

Students find it difficult to join up the different things they study into a complex account of the past. Examination specifications do not necessarily help with this because of the way in which history is divided up into different 'units', a problem exacerbated by textbooks being designed for particular exam topics. Stacey-Chapman describes this problem as one of students needing the ability to see how one bit of history might serve a role in multiple narratives. He reached the conclusion that careful thought about long-term planning is needed, particularly in terms of explicitly teaching students how knowledge of the past can be transferred from one context to another.

Andrew Stacey-Chapman
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History is complicated. We all know that. But I'm not sure my students really do. I know some of them think history is difficult, but that is not the same thing. Those students who find history a struggle are not – in general – consciously battling with the overwhelming complexity of a past made up of countless overlapping and often contradictory processes. Even among A-level students, it often seems that they do not appreciate quite how complicated the past actually is. If anything, perhaps encouraged by examination specifications that compartmentalise the past into tidy 'chunks', this tendency is more evident in my Year 13 students than in my Year 7s.

This article explores one particular problem I observed in my A-level students' historical thinking: their tendency to make the past too simple by compartmentalising the content they were required to master for the course rather than building up a transferable knowledge of a complex past.

The issue of students compartmentalising content and therefore developing a fragmented picture of the past is not a new one. Indeed, there has been considerable debate within the history teaching community about the ways in which medium- and long-term planning can best help students to avoid such a fragmented vision of the past. In summarising the research of the 'Usable Historical Pasts' research project, Howson highlighted the serious problem of students developing a fragmented picture of the past. He also noted that 'to find meaningful ways of overcoming that fragmentation with some appropriate form of coherence is no straightforward matter'.[1] Howson and Shemilt have presented a predominantly theoretical response to this issue in their work on 'frameworks of knowledge' as ways of helping students to contextualise historical content and build historical knowledge in meaningful ways.[2] These ideas have been implemented by Rogers, who used 'topic based frameworks' introduced at the start of a topic to help students to see the big picture and to synthesise the knowledge they accumulate.[3]

Gadd was also concerned with helping pupils to make connections across topics and time. She took a different approach to Rogers, investigating how the exploration of many 'small', in-depth stories could help students to construct 'bigger' narratives. Gadd found that this approach enabled some of her students to move beyond a fragmented view of the past to what she called 'blended narratives', in which students wove different aspects of the past into meaningful, bigger stories.[4]

Although I was also concerned by pupils' fragmented knowledge of the past my particular concern was how to help GCSE and A-level students who are introduced to historical content primarily through an enquiry-based approach to develop knowledge that is transferable and can be used to answer different historical questions, I will outline a few different strategies that I have experimented with in an effort to help students to move beyond merely mastering content and towards building a sophisticated, flexible historical knowledge.

Taking an enquiry-based approach at GCSE and A-level

The principle of using enquiries (short sequences of lessons organised around an enquiry question) is now well established among many history teachers in the UK. In his highly influential article about the principles underlying good medium- and long-term planning in history Riley highlighted the importance of enquiry questions in ensuring rigour and engagement in history lessons at Key Stage 3.[5] Developing these ideas three years later, Byrom and Riley described a

Hitler's Germany, 1929–1945

Key issue: How and why was Hitler able to become Chancellor in January 1933?

- The impact of the Wall Street Crash and Depression in Germany; growth in support for the Nazis and other extremist parties

- The Weimar system of government and the failure of democracy; the elections of 1930 and 1932; invitation to lead a coalition government, 1933; reactions among German people

Key issue: How did Hitler change Germany from a democracy to a Nazi dictatorship, 1933–1934, and then reinforce this?

- The Reichstag Fire; the election of March 1933; the Enabling Act

- The elimination of political opposition: political parties, trade unions; the Night of the Long Knives; the death of Hindenburg; Hitler becomes Führer

- One party law and order: SS and Gestapo; concentration camps; propaganda; censorship; the media; control of education; youth movements; control of the churches

- The nature of continuing opposition and resistance in the Third Reich: the White Rose Movement, the Edelweiss Pirates, the Kreisau Circle, 1939–1944, the Stauffenberg bomb plot, 1944

Key issue: To what extent did Germans benefit from Nazi rule?

- Economic policy: increased employment through public works programmes, rearmament and conscription; self-sufficiency

- Social policy: standards of living; promises to the German people; effects of Nazi policy on the lives of women; effects on culture

- Racial persecution: the Jews and other groups, e.g. gypsies; the Final Solution

- The effect of the war on the civilian population: bombing, rationing and propaganda

- The impact of the Second World War on the German economy

process of 'wrestling' with enquiry questions. They explained the importance of history departments engaging in serious thought about the selection of substantive historical content to be included in an enquiry.[6] Burn, McCrory and Fordham have argued convincingly that engaging pupils in answering real historical questions – in the way advocated by Byrom and Riley for Key Stage 3 – should also be the driving force behind curriculum planning at GCSE level.[7]

Inspired by these principles, in my first year of teaching GCSE and A-level I based my medium- term and long-term planning on the use of enquiries: short structured sequences of lessons that were based around rigorous and engaging historical questions. Like Fordham, I found the 'key questions'

provided by the examination board a useful starting point for planning enquiries at GCSE.[8] What is particularly helpful about these key questions is that the examination board uses them to divide up the 'chunks' of substantive content that students are required to master. Figure 1 shows a section from exam board AQA's Twentieth Century Depth Studies paper.[9] It demonstrates how – in terms of planning, delivery and assessment – the chunks of content for each topic at GCSE can be divided neatly according to the key questions to which they relate.

No such key questions are used in AQA's current AS and A2 specifications: the specification for AQA's unit on the Soviet Union between 1941 and 1991 divides content

under a number of headings, under which are listed key areas for students to study (see Figure 2).[10] In England, this 'chunking' of content has been reinforced by the growing trend amongst publishers to write textbooks for each exam specification, even going so far as to organise the content of the book around the structure of the specification.[11] As a new teacher, the exam boards' approach to structuring the content of the specification lulled me into a false sense of security. All I needed to do – or so I thought – was to separate these fragmented chunks of content into enquiries based upon rigorous questions and hey presto! students would engage in sophisticated historical thinking *and* be well prepared for their examinations.

Clarifying the problem: the need for 'double vision'

As I taught my carefully-planned enquiries for the first time, the problems inherent in my approach became increasingly apparent. Students were generally able to use the knowledge developed over the course of an enquiry to answer that particular enquiry question. What they were struggling to do, however, was to see that some of the content covered within a particular enquiry was also relevant to answering other historical questions. Thus they could not see that the outcome of Khrushchev's 'secret speech' of 1956 was relevant to both the question of how he secured the sole leadership of the USSR and the question of why and how he initiated the process of 'de-Stalinisation' that began in the mid-1950s. Nor did students recognise that the interpretation of Brezhnev's leadership as an 'era of stagnation' belonged as much to the story of Gorbachev's justification for his own political agenda in the late 1980s as it did to the historiography of the Soviet Union in the 1970s. This was a particular problem for my A-level students, as they have to be able to use their knowledge flexibly in order to answer questions that cut across and span different 'chunks' of content outlined in the specification. It became clear to me that by basing my planning so closely on the structure of content outlined in the specification I had made it harder for my students to see how the knowledge they were developing could fit into multiple narratives and therefore be used to answer more than one question.

I needed my students to develop the kind of 'double vision' that allows historians to see the same 'chunks' of content – the same events, individuals, processes and themes – as part of multiple narratives. I needed them to move beyond mastering content and towards developing flexible historical knowledge. This was important for two reasons. First, the demands of the exam require it. Related to (but also distinct from) this, students need to develop this double vision because it is essential to the practice of the discipline of history.

Examples abound of historians situating the same events within overlapping yet distinct narratives. In his volume of the *Oxford History of the United States*, Daniel Walker Howe describes in detail the story of 4 July 1826, when both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Howe's detailed telling of the story is not just an extravagant aside. He uses the story to mark both the end of an early republican era of principle and virtue in American politics and the beginning of a period of

great and terrifying transformation for the people of the United States.[12] Another example comes from the *Short Oxford History of Europe*. The two consecutive volumes covering the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – both in the same series and edited by the same person – overlap by a period of 26 years. Maintaining that the long eighteenth century lasted until 1815 and that the long nineteenth century began in 1789 demonstrates that the era of the French Revolution belongs to two different stories. It simultaneously represents the culmination of the enlightenment atmosphere that characterised eighteenth-century Europe and the unleashing of the liberalism that would drive Europe forward in the following hundred years.[13] Double vision is not just a way for students to succeed in external examinations. It is a vital part of their development as students of history.

Compartmentalisation of content at AS and A2 level

The need for students to develop a double vision of the past became starkly apparent as I taught my A-level students about the so-called 'Anti-Party Conspiracy' of 1957. In this controversy – four years after Stalin's death and seven before Khrushchev's removal from office – several of Khrushchev's most powerful rivals attempted to remove him from office by calling a vote of the Presidium, the supreme policy-making body of the Soviet Union. Khrushchev's future was in serious jeopardy, but his position was more secure than his opponents had calculated. Khrushchev called in support from powerful allies – most notably from army leaders – and a vote of the Central Committee of the Communist Party saved him from political disaster.[14]

Even a cursory glance at works of academic history shows that the Anti-Party Conspiracy fits into multiple narratives. Norman Lowe places the Anti-Party Conspiracy into the story of Khrushchev's rise to power as the moment after which Khrushchev was, 'certainly the most powerful politician in the USSR'.[15] Writing in 1985 before historians had access to the bulk of Khrushchev-era archives, Geoffrey Hosking placed the conspiracy alongside the 1956 Hungarian Revolution as a disaffected response to the de-Stalinisation programme Khrushchev had set in motion.[16] This approach has been echoed more recently by Peter Kenez.[17] In contrast, the textbook we use to teach the course emphasises the conspiracy as the starting point for the process that led to Khrushchev's eventual removal from office in 1964.[18]

In my first year teaching the course, I dutifully followed the textbook and introduced students to the Anti-Party Conspiracy at the beginning of an enquiry called, 'Why was Khrushchev removed from office in 1964?' While this helped students to identify the role the conspiracy played in Khrushchev's fall from power, it did not help them to place it into the other narratives within which it also fits. They were not looking at the conspiracy with double vision.

Attempts to deal with the problem

Since my first attempts at teaching the Anti-Party Conspiracy, I have tried to address students' lack of double vision in three different ways. My first approach involved tackling the problem at the end of the course as part of a revision

Triumph and Collapse: Russia and the USSR, 1941-1991

The Great Patriotic War and its Outcomes, 1941-1953

- The impact of the USSR on German invasion and Nazi ideology from 1941; Stalin's role in the management of the war effort; the nature of the wartime Soviet economy; the actions of the Communist regime to enlist mass patriotism for the war effort, including propaganda and religious concessions

- The extent of wartime opposition within the USSR and the Stalinist regime's treatment of opposition; the relationship between the Soviet people and Stalin's regime by the time victory was achieved in 1945

- High Stalinism: Stalin's dictatorship, 1945-1953; the cult of personality; economic recovery after 1945; the impact of Cold War politics on the USSR

Destalinisation, 1953-1968

- The emergence of new leaders after the death of Stalin, and Khrushchev's victory in the power struggle; the 1956 Party Congress and reaction to Khrushchev's 'secret speech'

- Khrushchev's leadership; Khrushchev's motives for industrial and agrarian reforms and their impact; the reasons for the ousting of Khrushchev in 1964

- The impact of Destalinisation within the USSR and on Soviet relations with the satellite states

The Brezhnev Era, 1968-1982

- The leadership of Brezhnev

- Brezhnev's political, economic and social policies: the era of conservatism

- Attitudes towards the Brezhnev regime: the repression of dissidents and opposition to the war in Afghanistan

- Economic stagnation and the costs of the arms race

The End of the Soviet Union, 1982-1991

- Leadership changes from 1982: the leadership of Andropov, Chernenko and Gorbachev, problems facing the USSR by the 1980s

- The motives for, and impact of, Gorbachev's reforms

- *Ideas of glasnost* and *perestroika* and their effects; opposition to glasnost and perestroika

- Economic and political problems; the growing threat of nationalism from republics within the USSR; the impact on the USSR of the collapse of Communist regimes in the satellite states at the end of 1989; the August coup of 1991 and the overthrow of Gorbachev; the end of the USSR

programme. In subsequent years I sought to address the problem of double vision as students encountered the content for the first time.

Strategy 1: using revision effectively to help students situate their historical knowledge within multiple narratives

Having first noticed the lack of flexibility in students' deployment of their substantive knowledge when teaching the course for the first time, I sought to provide an opportunity for students to develop the double vision they needed through the revision I did with them at the end of the course. After two lessons revising the substantive content about Khrushchev they needed to master for the examination, students spent an entire lesson considering how these same events could fit within different narratives. I hoped that through this students would develop a transferable knowledge of the events of the Khrushchev era. During the lesson students completed a card-sort, in which they were given cards with different key events and asked to place them in a 'zone of relevance' if they thought the event on the card was relevant to a particular question (see Figure 3). The card-sort activity drew on the principles Counsell suggests for helping Year 7 students to prepare for extended writing.[19] In particular, it attempted to make the abstract relationships between the chunks of content they had mastered temporarily concrete through physically moving the cards in and out of the 'zone of relevance' depending on the question being asked. I hoped students would be able to see that the same chunks of content could fit into different historical narratives.

This strategy met with mixed success. To begin with every student decided that each chunk of content was relevant only to the question linked to the enquiry within which it had been originally taught. This meant, for example, that the 1956 'secret speech' and the 1957 Anti-Party Conspiracy were excluded from students' zones of relevance when they were asked 'Why did Khrushchev become sole leader of the USSR?' Through a mixture of class discussion and explicit prompting, some students were persuaded that these events were indeed relevant to the question of Khrushchev's rise to power. Students lacked confidence, however, when it came to identifying the relevance of a particular fact or piece of information to a historical question other than the one in which they had first encountered it. The activity reinforced my suspicion that students had mastered the content of the course but did not have a transferable knowledge of the Khrushchev era that they could use flexibly to answer different historical questions. Attempting to instil double vision after the original enquiries had been taught had failed.

Strategy 2: reading historical scholarship

The second year I taught the course, I decided to place much more emphasis on using historical scholarship as a way of helping students to build a wider and deeper knowledge of Soviet history. By reading the work of professional historians, I hoped that students would be able to develop more thoroughly what Hammond usefully describes as the outer 'scales' of historical knowledge – their period knowledge and their general historical knowledge – as well as secure their more in-depth 'topic' knowledge.[20] When we reached the Khrushchev era, historical scholarship played a vital

role in my attempts to help students to build knowledge that was transferable. This time, the Anti-Party Conspiracy was introduced to students in an enquiry addressing why Khrushchev became sole leader of the USSR. The lesson concluded, however, with students reading two passages about the conspiracy written by academic historians – one which situated the conspiracy within a narrative of Khrushchev's rise to power, and one which situated the conspiracy within a narrative of Khrushchev's downfall. Unsurprisingly given that students had first encountered the conspiracy in an enquiry exploring the reasons for Khrushchev's rise, almost all students agreed that the Anti-Party Conspiracy fitted best within this particular narrative.

I had attempted to instil double vision in students by exposing them to the works of historians who situated the same event within two different narratives. This approach did not seem to be immediately successful because the majority of students left the lesson convinced that the conspiracy was the final chapter in Khrushchev's rise to power and were therefore slightly bemused about why they had been reading about Khrushchev's fall before they had studied his period in office. Nevertheless, by raising the problem at this early stage of their study of the Khrushchev era, students were forewarned and forearmed when revisiting the same event as part of a different historical enquiry.

Strategy 3: adding a change enquiry

Having been introduced to the Anti-Party Conspiracy as part of an enquiry exploring the reasons for Khrushchev's rise, students then revisited the conspiracy several weeks later at the beginning of an enquiry exploring the reasons for Khrushchev's fall from power. For the majority of students, the earlier reading they had done on the conspiracy seemed to have stuck. They were able to recall that some historians situated the conspiracy within a narrative of Khrushchev's downfall, and by the end of this second enquiry they were able to explain why. For the purposes of their examination, this was enough. Students had not only mastered the content relevant to this part of the course, they were now able to apply it to both the examination questions for which it formed an important component of their answer.

But although I could have left it there, I was still not satisfied with students' understanding of the conspiracy. A close look at their essays suggested that they seemed to treat the Anti-Party Conspiracy as two separate events: one in which Khrushchev cleverly outwitted his rivals in order to secure his position and the other in which Khrushchev's colleagues mounted a serious and enduringly damaging challenge to his leadership. Mastery of the content did not mean the students had constructed a truly transferable knowledge of the event and its context.

I therefore experimented with a third strategy: at the end of their study of the Khrushchev era I added a one-lesson mini-enquiry that explored how Khrushchev's position changed between Stalin's death in 1953 and his own eventual ousting in 1964. The lesson comprised three main elements. First, students completed a living graph – individually and then as a group – tracking Khrushchev's power at each key point between 1953 and 1964. This activity helped students to see very clearly for themselves how the Anti-Party Conspiracy

Figure 3: Cards used for 'zone of relevance' revision activity

Beria's fall and execution	Power struggle with Malenkov	1956 Party Congress: 'secret speech'
Division of the Party	105 regional economic ministries created	Virgin Lands Scheme announced
1957 Anti-Party Conspiracy	Failure of Virgin Lands Scheme	Cuban Missile Crisis
UN shoe-banging incident	'Peaceful co-existence' with the West	Virgin Lands Scheme announced
De-Stalinisation programme	Legal reforms	Conservative opposition to reform

fitted into Khrushchev's story as playing a part in both his rise and his fall.

Second, students' graphs were used as the basis for a class discussion on how the role of the conspiracy could best be characterised. Students readily deployed the idea of a 'turning point' to describe the events of 1957. But this term did not seem adequately to sum up the double role that the conspiracy had. I remembered Woodcock's recollection of being introduced to the word 'latent' during his own schooling – a term that he found unlocked more sophisticated historical thinking.[21] While Woodcock provided his students with a menu of words to unlock their causal reasoning, Fordham had found that arming students with a single word – 'fluctuate' – could unleash more sophisticated historical thinking in his Year 7 pupils.[22] I followed Fordham

by providing my Year 13 students with a single word, and decided that the word they needed was 'zenith' – a word that marked the conspiracy out as being the point at which Khrushchev was most powerful, alluding to both a recent rise and an impending fall. Students were then asked to write a short explanation of why the conspiracy marked the high point on their graph and strongly encouraged to use 'zenith' as a part of their explanation.

Finally, students were set a homework task to write a narrative account of the Khrushchev era. With a limited number of homework tasks that could be set and marked through the year, asking students to write a narrative rather than an essay was a difficult decision. There was a chance that students would simply describe each event in Khrushchev's premiership without placing any of the events into any

Figure 4: Extract from one student's narrative account of Khrushchev's leadership. This student has recognised that the Anti-Party Conspiracy fits into the narratives of both Khrushchev's rise to and fall from power. The student continued with a paragraph describing Khrushchev's fall.

> With Beria dead, Malenkov all but defeated, the other opponents not being important enough to make it into this brief narrative, Khrushchev was all but ready to become the sole leader of the USSR. Khrushchev was ready to go all out. In 1956, he was secure and powerful enough in his position to make his Secret Speech, condemning the Terror of the 1930s, and the involvement of Beria. I think this is the key event at which one can say Khrushchev had been victorious in the power struggle, given that he was powerful enough and secure enough in that power to talk down a man who had been virtually considered a god. However, the beginning of Khrushchev's rule was not quite so smooth as all that. Almost immediately we can begin plotting the points on the chart of his fall from power, as the Anti-Party Conspiracy took place. However, Khrushchev, being in possession of aforementioned political skills, found it remarkable easy to swat this particular fly by postponing the actions of the conspirators he could rally his own supporters to his side.

Figure 5: Extract from another student's narrative account of Khrushchev's leadership. This student has placed the Anti-Party Conspiracy solely into the narrative of Khrushchev's downfall.

> However alongside people recognising Khrushchev wasn't doing as good a job as he'd said he was – there was also suspicion amongst the people that the ways he was introducing weren't sustainable. That's when the Anti-Party Conspiracy happened. The Anti-Party Conspiracy decided that he needed to be removed – a power Khrushchev had given them. Luckily Khrushchev had a friend in Zhukov who reminded the people wanting rid of Khrushchev that a central committee meeting would need to happen. The plotters all gave in. Yet, instead of thanking Zhukov, Khrushchev sacked Zhukov as he thought he was becoming too powerful! Everyone was annoyed with how Khrushchev's behaviour was, such as the embarrassing shoe banging in the UN meeting, along with other foreign affairs mess-ups like the Cuban Missile Crisis.
>
> Everyone was fed up of his reforms and therefore when Khrushchev was on holiday in Sochi by the Black Sea a meeting was planned to get rid of him. When he returned to Moscow, he was told a list of his shortcomings and resigned.

wider context at all, let alone placing them into several different stories all at once. But I wanted to give students the opportunity to demonstrate in writing how far they had acquired a truly transferable knowledge of the Khrushchev era without restricting them by asking only one question. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate that while some students did seem to possess a genuine form of 'double vision' when looking at the Anti-Party Conspiracy, others did not. The effect these strategies have had on students' ability to answer a range of essay questions on the Khrushchev era will, however, remain largely obscure until the revision process begins prior to this summer's examinations.

Conclusions

So what conclusions can be drawn from this process of experimentation? The most important is that – at least for my students – there remains a real problem of how history teachers should help their students to build a kind of double vision towards the material that they encounter. This is crucial not only to the goal of preparing students as well as possible for external examinations, but also to the goal of building a meaningful, transferable knowledge of different periods of the past. My experiences in teaching the Khrushchev era have shown me that – as with other key areas of historical thinking – students do not develop this double vision automatically. Like reading academic texts and writing analytical essays, how

to exercise double vision when considering the significance and placement of historical events within a narrative is something that needs to be carefully planned for. The attempts to teach double vision described here – through card-sorting, reading historical scholarship, adding a change enquiry and writing narratives – each have their weaknesses. But they have persuaded me that the ability to build a transferable knowledge of the past is something that needs to be explicitly taught, even to our highest-attaining students.

It is also worth broadening our perspective to consider how this thinking could be developed in students before they face the challenges of external examinations. This is not something I have yet experimented with, but perhaps it is worth considering how the explicit teaching of double vision could be incorporated into enquiries at Key Stage 3 by ensuring that there are key chunks of historical content that students are both encouraged and required to apply to several different historical questions, well before they are tested on their ability to do so by GCSE and A-level examinations.

Finally, ideas about building up a double (or triple, or quadruple) vision of the past in our students should be linked in our thinking and practice with recent moves in the history education community towards a greater focus on historical knowledge in our students.[23] The aim of my experiments was to help my students to get beyond mastering discrete chunks

of content for their exams and build a more sophisticated, transferable knowledge of the past. Perhaps some of the answer to the problems discussed here lies in the approaches taken by Donaghy or Carr and Counsell to building a more meaningful historical knowledge in our students through regular, low-stakes testing or well-placed use of time-lines.[24] For if we are to help our students to see how the past really fits together – in all its complexity and nuance – surely it is essential that we provide them with opportunities to build a body of meaningful historical knowledge.

Furthermore, we must also help students to realise that the past did not happen in neatly compartmentalised chunks that historians can simply place into a single narrative. Everything that happened in the past belongs to many different overlapping narratives. We know that history is complicated, and that's what makes it fascinating. We must help our students to see it too.

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Cunning Plan

for teaching about the history of the UK Parliament

2015 is something of a year of anniversaries. It is 50 years since Churchill's death, 200 years since Waterloo, 300 since the Jacobite 'Fifteen', 600 since Agincourt, 800 since Magna Carta. Clearly every year brings around its own crop of anniversaries; this year just seems to have quite a few with a peculiarly British flavour. As a new head of department I was asked if I would create some resources for students to share in tutor time, which focused on one anniversary in particular.

For 1215 is also 750 years since the first elected Parliament in England. As a political obsessive, I was also very aware that there is a general election coming (at the time of writing it does not seem like too much of a hostage to fortune to call it a very close one). It seemed like a perfect opportunity to build a sequence of lessons in which history and citizenship could come together. Even better, this wasn't even going to have to happen in my curriculum time: the more time for history to be taught, the better!

Context and rationale

These lessons are designed to be delivered in half-hour tutor time slots spread over the year. Our tutor groups are arranged vertically, containing students from Years 5 to 8. I have also been able to link the lessons with the teaching in the history department, as when Year 5 studied the English Civil War and Year 8 visited the Palace of Westminster; later in the year I expect Year 7 to provide plenty of knowledge about the context in which Magna Carta was originally issued. The effect of this has been to ensure that different members of each tutor group have had plenty of opportunities to contribute their own knowledge to the sessions.

There is of course no reason why these lessons should not be delivered to any year group in more or less the same way in which we have delivered them. I am, though, very much in favour of having at least some of the political context delivered outside history lessons. I want my students to think about the history of the English/ UK Parliament both as historians and as British citizens. Back when citizenship education was just coming into the National Curriculum, Davies *et al.* published an excellent article in which they argued persuasively for a view of citizenship which was not entirely based on high constitutional concepts, being instead based on notions of tolerance. Their argument that students should be encouraged to ask themselves whether their own and other contemporary views would appear quite so obvious in the future – how would history judge us as citizens? – is a good one. They also, however, made a statement with which I disagree (or at least, with which I do not quite agree):

'[Teaching about the British Constitution]… is a very unrealistic (and boring) way to teach people about how modern society works. Colourful representations of arcane rituals are at best an interesting diversion from real life and at worst a deliberate attempt not to ask critical questions about topics that really matter.'[1]

I wanted to enable my students to decide this for themselves. What is the relevance of British constitutional history to today's British citizens? Lee and Shemilt, who argued that history teaching should always be complementary to citizenship teaching, also argued that history (and historical consciousness) have a unique contribution to make to any citizen's understanding of who they are.[2] I'm not sure whether this is true – but I think it's worth thinking about. Figure 1 shows the scheme of learning that I am currently halfway through.

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Figure 1: Scheme of learning for lessons about the history of Parliament

Enquiry	Citizenship lesson	Support in history lessons
How important are MPs? (Autumn term)	**What do MPs do?** Begin with a photo montage of various MPs including famous MPs and the local incumbent. Ask students what they already know. What questions would we like to ask our local MP when he comes to visit? What should MPs do/be like? Visit of local MP to speak to students	Display created of MPs from the past – Churchill, Gladstone, Disraeli, Cromwell, etc. Students encouraged to do their own research into these people.
	How good is our MP? Ask students to rate the MP's answers and then to consider: • what kind of person the MP is; • what the MP thinks would make the country better; • what the MP thinks would make this constituency better; • why the MP thinks MPs are important.	
	What are political parties? Start with some basic political spectrum questions – should tax and spending be high or low? Then introduce the main political parties and what they stand for, while also establishing the way in which the parties' ideologies developed over time.	Work with Year 8 students on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century revolutionary thought (England, USA, France) – link this into what we do (and don't do) in Britain.
	What is power? This is the lesson where Simon de Montfort is formally introduced – it is a summary of different ideas about the nature of power, from 'might is right' to modern democracy. The first punchline is that 750 years ago Simon de Montfort decided to call representatives of the people together to constrain a king. The second punchline is that a few months later he was dead.	
How important is voting? (Spring term)	**What does Parliament do?** Students assess the ability of Parliament to perform its functions – deliberation, legislation, legitimation, scrutiny, representation and providing an executive. They also assess why the Queen's power is so limited.	Year 5 can bring in their newly-acquired knowledge of the causes of the English Civil War at this point.
	Year 8 visit to Parliament, with follow-up in history lessons about the value of the dignified ceremonial parts of Parliament, which Year 8 can then feed into tutor sessions.	
	What are elections? This is a very simple lesson. Simply ask the students to decide where they would like to go for a free dinner. If they can decide, they can go. Of course, they cannot decide (if they look like they're going to, insist on unanimity). Use their experiences to draw out the fundamental issue of an election which is how we decide how to decide.	
Who will win the election? (April-May)	**How do elections work in the UK?** Clearly introduce the 'first past the post' (FPTP) voting system – and then ask how individuals might decide how to vote. Ask Year 8s to pitch their own party positions (using the real parties) to their own tutor groups. This is the launch event for our mock election.	Year 8 are primed for party leadership in history lessons at this point.
	Who will win our election? As the campaign moves on, introduce opinion polls. In late April, try to identify how much difference there is between your school-based election and the national election.	
	Election day/ What just happened? This works best if you can deliver it the day after the election – provide the facts and figures and ask the students to suggest why the result is as it is, and compare their ideas with those of the major news providers.	
Is there anything peculiarly British about modern democracy? (June)	Two things to do – the first is to analyse the rights which students think they should have against the rights which they do have. The second is to evaluate our democracy. A crucial point might be whether those defeated in the election have accepted their defeat – and isn't it rather splendid that they do? Alternatively students might argue that there are large numbers of people effectively excluded from any real say by the voting system/capitalism itself/etc.	Magna Carta is introduced via Year 7, who have been studying King John and know why matters came to a head in 1215 – but also know that Magna Carta gained its significance at other times.

'What exactly is parliament?'

finding the place of substantive knowledge in history

The relationship between knowledge and literacy is a central concern for all teachers. In his teaching, Palek noted that his students were struggling to understand complex substantive concepts such as 'parliament' and decided to explore the relationship between students' understanding of a concept and their wider substantive knowledge that rendered the concept meaningful. Through a careful analysis of students work, Palek concluded that there is a close relationship between a student's ability to construct a causal argument and his or her 'security' in understanding relevant substantive concepts. Such a conclusion further supports a renewed emphasis by history teachers on the role played by substantive knowledge in the process of learning history as a discipline, and raises questions about the means by which pupils' progression in history might be assessed.

Dominik Palek
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'Sir, what exactly is "parliament"?', Martin asked. It was in one of my history lessons with my Year 8 class on the English Civil War that I exposed my students to this word. As a department, we had looked for ways to enhance our students' literacy. Ofsted requires outstanding departments to 'ensure that pupils have high levels of literacy'.[1] One idea we agreed on was to give students a vocabulary book and to teach them the words that the unit requires by copying the definition into the book. Accompanied with regularly testing students to ensure that they know what the words *mean,* we assumed that this would work well. Martin had just copied the word 'parliament' and my attempt at a simplified definition: 'a national body that makes and decides on the laws of a country'. He had also listened to me trying to explain it. Using this definition, however, he was not a step closer to knowing what the word meant. I could see equal confusion in the other students' eyes. A little more questioning on my side confirmed my view. My students had no idea what the word meant. They could pronounce it. They could read out or memorise what they had written, but understanding had not been achieved. In short, I realised that the vocabulary book was insufficient.

The debate about the role of knowledge in history education in England

In recent years, there has been a great deal of debate about the role of knowledge in education.[2] These debates have played out in a peculiar way in the subject of history in England. The past 40 years can be seen primarily as a continued series of oscillations between a focus on substantive knowledge and second-order conceptual thinking. Before the dawn of the so called 'new history' in the 1970s, history was invariably taught as a discrete subject but what characterised it was a largely uncritical effort to teach knowledge of the past as information, without any reference to how it was structured or constructed as knowledge. Knowledge was transmitted mainly through teachers' oral accounts and textbooks.[3] Several government reports investigating school history across the age and ability range had concluded that history was extremely difficult to teach successfully to most children in primary schools and to lower-attaining students in secondary schools. The result, in primary schools, was a vogue for replacing history with 'topics' based on several subjects and, in secondary schools, with various moves away from history as a discrete subject and the beginning of hybrid studies such as 'humanities'.[4]

Only in 1968, when Mary Price wrote an article about the danger of school history completely being subsumed by these hybrid studies, did battles for the retention of history as a discrete subject for all students begin (at least in secondary schools) to gain a head of steam.[5] One consequence was the Schools Council History 13-16 Project (SCHP) which aimed, by drawing out its distinctive disciplinary characteristics, to revive and renew history as a discrete subject taught in schools. Ultimately, it would lead to changes in the way history was taught. In his evaluation study on the SCHP, Shemilt stated that the SCHP aimed at exploring ways of moving school history from a purely propositional knowledge-based curriculum to a curriculum in which pupils also examined the ways in which historical

Enquiry question: Why didn't the Cold War turn into a proper war?		
Key question	**Aims**	**Activities**
1 **Why did the USA and Soviet Union become friends in the first place?**	Students will familiarise themselves with the state of Europe's alliance system after WWII. Students will analyse why the USSR and USA chose a temporal alliance although there were massive ideological differences.	Students to explain different ideologies and to familiarise themselves with the keywords in light of Russian and American history, using a card-sort. Essay-writing exercise to demonstrate understanding of key words of lesson and apply learning.
2 **Why was Berlin symbolic for the Cold War?**	Students will familiarise themselves with three focal points that shaped Berlin during the Cold War. Students will analyse why Berlin can be seen as symbolic for the Cold War. Concept of Iron Curtain introduced	Note-taking exercise on the three different focal points to consider how the Cold War developed in Berlin. Correction activity with wrong statements that need to be rewritten. Students to show understanding with the keywords, as differences are very subtle. Debate about the Iron Curtain and the impact on Europe.
3 **Why did the world nearly end in 1962?**	Students will examine another hotspot in the Cold War and look at the causes for the Cuban Missile Crisis. Students will explain why there was no atomic war between the USSR and the USA and the importance of Cuba in that respect.	Essay assessment on the Iron Curtain and ideological differences between the USSR and the USA. Note-taking exercise based on two videos and teacher talk. Role-play activity on the importance of Cuba and on the concept of deterrent and mutually assured destruction (MAD).
4 **Why did this girl not see her family for over 10 years?**	Students are to familiarise themselves with the Prague Spring and personal history as a way to narrate that story Students to understand the difference between various ideologies and the impact on the Iron Curtain	Students to listen to personal history of a girl who lived through the Prague Spring and ask questions about key words. Discussion with students about what makes a good narrative and what the success criteria are for a good story. Students to write a first-person narrative about the Prague Spring, using the slides as an orientation.
5 **Why didn't the Cold War become a proper war? – Preparation**	Students to prepare for the podcast assessment next lesson by creating a road map that will serve as an anchor during the final outcome activity.	Students will discuss and plan how to answer the podcast question.
6 **Why didn't the Cold War become a proper war? – Podcast**	Students to use high-level thinking to answer the enquiry question and thus explain what kept the Cold War 'cold'	Students to create 5-minutes podcasts. Students work in pairs.

Figure 2: Data collection methods

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Research Question

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What was the relationship between substantive knowledge and second-order analysis in students' concluding performances?

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Data

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- Written first-person narrative on the Prague Spring
- Spoken podcast that answers the enquiry question
- Semi-structured interviews

knowledge is formed.[6] This transition to 'new history' in the 1970s and 1980s led to an increased focus on the 'skills' and the 'syntax' of history as a discipline. Gradually, an emphasis on second-order concepts (such as causation, change or evidence) helped to describe the nature of history and provide an understanding of history as a discipline or form of knowledge.[7] In many secondary history departments, substantive knowledge, as opposed to knowledge about disciplinary structures, began to play a supporting rather than a driving role.[8] Instead, students were now required to *do* something with history, such as analysing the rate, pace or extent of change or to do source analysis.

Certain research traditions have helped refine some of these original concepts.[9] Turning such principles into teaching approaches, however, let alone assessment structures, proved extremely difficult. This can be seen clearly in the wake of the first National Curriculum (NC) which amounted to an endeavour to give the second-order dimension an equal status to that of the substantive, but which in fact resulted in atomised 'statements of attainment' that separated the second-order from the substantive and downplayed the substantive altogether. Further problems occurred in the way in which history teachers implemented such structures, accelerating some of the difficulties already noted before the National Curriculum in which work with historical sources became atomised, reductive and de-contextualised, often in an attempt to make it accessible to students as well as other layers of confusion created by terminology loaned from other subjects, especially the word 'skills'. More recently, history has become an endangered subject again, with two-year Key Stage 3 courses, the revival of humanities, cuts in timetables, and, most notably, the rise of whole-school curricula based on generic (rather than subject-specific) skills.

It is within the field of history teacher-authored research and debate, however, that we see a most interesting and complex convergence of a sustained renewal of England's critical traditions of history education in the 1970s with a new emphasis on substantive knowledge. The latter has taken various forms, from a focus on narrative to an emphasis on more knowledge context for source work. Some history teachers have, sometimes as a reaction against and sometimes as a consequence of the above-mentioned developments, tried to foster students' understanding of the distinctive characteristics that mark history as a *discipline* and not an ordinary subject that is purely based on content or 'skills'.[10] The ability, for example, to link substantive knowledge and historical thinking by enshrining a historical topic within an enquiry or lesson sequence driven conceptually by an 'enquiry question' has been used to foster students' efforts to construct informed, historical claims and to critique those of others.[11] More teacher research has shown ways to implement second-order concepts such as causation or change as disciplinary tools in history teaching.[12] Banham has shown how an interplay between overview and depth can lead to an increase in knowledge, while LeCocq argued that precise substantive knowledge is almost a prerequisite for conceptual, critical thinking.[13] Hammond has shown the value precise knowledge has in the construction and substantiation of an argument.[14]

Alongside the English tradition, the role of substantive concepts and how students might acquire fluency in them has been closely examined by Dutch researchers. Haenen and Schrijnemakers proposed a distinction between three types of substantive concept that pupils have to deal with: everyday concepts such as 'messenger', unique concepts such as 'D-Day' and inclusive historical concepts such as 'parliament'.[15] Haenen and Schrijnemakers argued that progression in this third type is possible through adaptation of existing knowledge by 'linking new information to prior knowledge' so that pupils can 'truly make the new information their own'. The teacher's role was to help the pupils 'in organising and practising it'. In later research, Haenen, Schrijnemakers and Stufkens focused on progression in substantive concepts exclusively.[16] They argued that the 'process by which pupils will gradually make meaning out of a concept is […]affected by the sheer complexity and mutability of any concept we call

historical'. The teacher has thus the responsibility to give students the opportunity to 'come to grips […] with their own historical concepts' by allowing them to construct their own meaning based on new information adapting existing knowledge. Van Drie and van Boxtel also stated that students construct their own meaning by a process of 'negotiation of the meaning of concepts', which involves applying new concepts to already existing conceptual understanding.[17]

The professional-scholarly research traditions of history teachers thus provide various means of accommodating both second-order and substantive knowledge, sustaining and renewing emphases on criticality emerging from the SCHP/SHP alongside a variety of resurrections of substantive knowledge. Substantive knowledge is not conceived so much in opposition to more critical or process-led curricular trends as in an effort to renew them while factoring new emphases on knowledge into the mix, whether through narrative, through insistence on knowledge contextualising sources, through interesting blends of a focus on factual knowledge with subject-specific skills or through more emphasis on scholarship as the referent for school practice and as focus for pupils' study.[18] Building on the history teachers' various arguments for a renewed focus on the substantive, and addressing the current gap in the literature in finding ways of defining and assessing the curricular properties of substantive knowledge, I decided to explore what ways there might be of characterising student accomplishment in substantive knowledge.

Research design

Using a case study of my own practice, I decided to pursue the following research question:

Research question: What was the relationship between substantive knowledge and second-order analysis in students' concluding performances?

In order to address my research question, I chose a theory-seeking case study.[19] This would be best suited to test whether or not the studied issue can result in very tentative 'fuzzy propositions' that might serve a more generalised hypothesis which could be of use in future research. The research question, which explores the implication of substantive concept security on second-order thinking, also calls for a detailed examination of students' thinking. I wanted to create a workable curricular conceptualisation which could be applied and used by other teachers in the future. I chose to conduct my research with a mixed-ability Year 8 class on the topic of the Cold War. This topic was particularly well-suited to my investigation, given the range of complex substantive concepts that could be explored in depth. Figure 1 (see p. 19) shows an overview of my scheme of work. A causal conceptual focus was chosen with an enshrining enquiry question to ensure historical rigour.[20] The resulting enquiry question was: 'Why didn't the Cold War turn into a proper war?' Figure 2 summarises the methods I deployed with regard to each research question. It was particularly important to me that I not only captured students' written work (see Figure 3, p. 23), but also their speech in oral activities.

To conduct my analysis, I used van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological approach.[21] Van Manen tries to capture the essence of a phenomenon's meaning through systematic reflection on and interpretation of texts.[22] Van Manen suggests three approaches for this kind of thematic analysis, of which I chose two. His 'line-by-line' approach requires careful coding of every single sentence or sentence cluster according to what it reveals about the phenomenon under study. In his 'sententious' approach, the researcher attends to the text as a whole and tries to generate a 'sententious phrase' which captures the fundamental meaning or main significance of the text as a whole. When reading my data with the research question in mind, I chose to use these two approaches. The emerging themes were then formulated into analytical statements through which I proposed tentative answers to the research question.

What was the relationship between substantive knowledge and second-order analysis in students' concluding performances?

I used three sets of data, all of which were part of the students' concluding performances. These data were i) their podcasts with which they answered the enquiry question; ii) a written first-person narrative on the Prague Spring; iii) some interviews conducted at the end of the lesson sequence. I then started to devise my analytical statements and carefully tested them against the remainder of the data. The written narratives, the transcripts of the podcasts and the subsequent interviews allowed students to show their understanding of the second-order concept of causation. In history educational research, there have been many attempts to show what strong causal analysis encompasses.[23] I was very much aware of how this research influenced my understanding of what a strong causal reasoning consists of and what I was therefore looking for when analysing the podcast and the interviews.

Finding 1: Students' insecurity in substantive concepts hinders a realisation that they are in a causation argument

The first feature of a strong causation analysis is when students realise that they are in a causation argument. Not all students managed to achieve this state, however. My reading of the data suggests that where students failed to show awareness that they were supposed to be building a causal argument they were also insecure with the essential substantive concepts. This insecurity was severe enough to have impeded their ability to shape a causal argument, leaving them clinging to a sequence of facts whose confused interconnections reveal weaknesses in substantive knowledge. Consider, for example, this passage from Zoe's podcast:

Due to this, the two ideologies, the Soviet Sphere of Influence and the Capitalist countries did the Iron Curtain, which blocks the East from the West. The … Iron Curtain has an ideology …ehm …i-d-e-o-logical line […]

Berlin helped to keep the Cold War cold as it symbolised the Cold War. It showed on a small scale what was happening in Europe. We call this … pars … pro toto … a small part … stands for something bigger… They used Berlin … as a competition to show which side was better.

Notice the verbs Zoe uses to link one substantive concept and another: the two ideologies 'did' the Iron Curtain; the Iron Curtain 'has' an ideology (then corrected to 'ideological line'). Moreover, Zoe is simply repeating explanations given in class (e.g. Berlin as a *pars pro toto*) but seems unable to give them any meaningful causal status in an emergent causal argument. Zoe had to answer the same causation question as everyone else. However, when reading her work together with this passage, it seems that she is just giving information that she has been taught during the lesson, like a list that has no coherent structure to it. The only structure which she appears to be following is the way she has been taught, lesson by lesson. There is no sense or drive to create an overarching narrative that answers the enquiry question. Zoe's lack of fluency with substantive concepts such as 'ideology', however, renders this unsurprising. She seems unable to relate on substantive concept to another with sufficient ease to move into her own argument.

Finding 2: Students' security in substantive concepts enhances second-order understanding

Conversely, it is possible to explore the relationship between secure and accurately elaborated substantive concepts and meaningful, defensible causal argument. A comparison of Zoe's data with that of Daniel's and Anna's illustrates the kinds of relationships I was able to find. Counsell and Fordham have both already shown intricate relationships between ways of teaching substantive concepts and ways of teaching argument using a second-order concept; what I was seeking here, however, was a more basic account of how that relationship manifests itself positively in student speaking and writing.[24] In her interview, Zoe stated:

Because…it [the Cold War] was only like about which ideology was better and which ideology had more people on their side.

Such remarks, when taken together with all her written work, seem to betray an uncertainty about how such 'ideology' worked in practice. This appears to hinder her ability to make historical meaning out of the 'why?' of the causation problem.

Daniel's data possibly indicates more elaborate causal reasoning than Zoe's. When asked how the Prague Spring movement helped to keep the Cold War 'cold', he offers, at first, the following, simplistic explanation:

Well…I think it might just have been because …like … innocent people were dying then ehm…and..that just shouldn't happen…so people would obviously try to come to their right mind <u>and keep it cold…and not warm.</u>

Notice how Daniel is trying to answer the question. He has a drive to explain it, but does not quite manage it in the first excerpt. When asked for a second time, however, he offers a much more sophisticated causal explanation that illuminates his understanding:

<u>Well…Communism…it was like quite troublesome… nobody liked it in the end…back then, it wasn't very good idea….ideology</u>. So it became a failure. And then people would want to go to Capitalism […]

Daniel thus manages to establish a causal link between the Cold War and the Prague Spring movement on an ideological basis. By stating that Communism as a theory had problems, he offers an explanation as to why the Prague Spring movement helped to keep the war cold.

Anna also has a very similar explanation when asked about the Prague Spring's contribution to keeping the war cold:

Ehm…I don't actually know because I think that it was kind of inside itself because the Prague Spring movement was not so much about Capitalism and Communism, it was more like Communism against Communism because it was a different type of Communism. So it wasn't kind of…although it was hugely involved it wasn't as involved as the actual competition between the ideologies.

In her podcast, she confirms this by stating:

But it was worse, because later on, the Iron Curtain was intensified and all contact was cut off. <u>This keeps the war cold …because there was</u> [sic] <u>problems with Communism</u>.

These two passages indicate that Anna is able to offer an explanation because she is very secure with the substantive concept of the Prague Spring. This is noticeable in the interview, where she analyses the Prague Spring as an internal Communism problem that did not have that much to do with the fight between the two ideologies. This security has thus led her to offer a very in-depth explanation as to why the Cold War stayed cold and might be taken as an indicator for a link between substantive knowledge security and second-order knowledge. Such secure knowledge of context seems to have been an important factor in enabling students such as Anna to look for causes and to stay driven by the causal demands of the question.

Finding 3: Students' security in substantive concepts led to an improved causal reasoning.

There are several indicators that can be used to judge an improved causal reasoning. Because of space constraints in my research, I focused on two aspects which I judged to be indicators of this and then proceeded to link students' ability to weave substantive concepts into this. Chapman points at counterfactualism to classify causes by their relative importance, whereas Counsell also stresses the ability to link causes together.[25] Harriet , for example, states in her podcast:

The War stayed cold because <u>if someone bombed the other, it would result in everyone bombing everyone. It would cause</u> a nuclear bomb ….ehm … Nuclear Winter. The atmosphere <u>would be</u> polluted and so much of the sun's light <u>would be</u> blocked out. So people were afraid of this. <u>Nobody attacked and the war stayed cold.</u>

The use of the counterfactual to assess the Cuban Missile Crisis suggests that Harriet is aware of the importance

Figure 3: Written task set for students

Suggested structure:

Why didn't the Cold War become a proper war?

Ideology
- Introduce the Cold War. What was it?
- Ideology
- historical development

Capitalism   Communism

Berlin
- How Berlin helped to keep the Cold War 'cold'

Cuban Missile Crisis
- How the Cuban Missile Crisis helped to keep the Cold War 'cold'.

Prague Spring
- How the Prague Spring Movement helped to keep the Cold War 'cold'.

Conclusion
- You must answer the question. Make sure you have an argument developed and a justifiable answer as to why there was no war between the USA and the USSR, using these events as an example. You can also sum up your main points.

this event played in relation to the Cold War. Therefore, security with this substantive concept in relation to other concepts might be a reason for her ability to argue in a more sophisticated way. Daniel also made this form of causal reasoning very explicit:

So that's why the war stayed cold. They only threatened each other. If it hadn't put them off, it would have destroyed the world. There would have been so much pollution that the sunlight wouldn't be able to get through and the whole world would have freezed [sic] *to death.*

In this passage, there is an indication that Daniel uses an if-clause type 3 to express a possibility that was there, but did not happen while simultaneously providing an alternative. This is only possible with an understanding of the substantive concept that is discussed here. In his concluding statement, he then links all his paragraphs together to answer the enquiry question:

So, all in all, the reason why the Cold War didn't become a proper war was… everyone was afraid of being attacked so they didn't end up attacking. They wanted to show off who's better. So it was just a whole lot of movement for nothing.

Here, Daniel provides a very sound analysis of the Cold War and provides a judgement as to why he thinks that the Cold

War didn't break out. He does this by linking all his previous arguments together, arriving at the conclusion that the Cold War was in fact *a whole lot of movement for nothing.* Even though this statement could be disputed, it suggests that his security with substantive concept has enabled him to arrive at this conclusion.

My research question required me to analyse a relationship between substantive concepts and second-order knowledge. The present data seemed to indicate that there is a strong correlation between the amount students know about the substantive concept and their ability to reason in a causal way. The most pertinent indicator for this statement was the fact that students who did not have security in their use of substantive concepts were not able to free any mental capacities for a second-order analysis because they struggled, first, with the substantive concept. Only a secure use seemed to enable them to develop a more sophisticated causal reasoning, such as counterfactual arguing or the linking of reasons to form an argument.

The role of substantive knowledge in historical learning

Fordham has called for more research to characterise and assess the place of substantive knowledge in history

teaching.[26] My research has suggested ways in which that substantive knowledge might be characterised, thus showing possible avenues for shaping future curricular and assessment entities. The data collected seems to indicate that students used specific historical disciplinary knowledge to enhance their general understanding. The teaching and specifically the assessment of substantive concepts has led me to suggest that relevant background knowledge on the topic might have an impact on students' learning, for example when they were trying to construct a causal narrative. It seems that students who had a limited understanding of substantive concepts struggled to create a coherent, interesting and relevant narrative of the events of the past. They were, on the contrary, merely able to present a series of facts that they had learned without thinking about the greater context. They also seemed to be confused about the nature of the topic we were studying.

Rogers' emphasis on growing security with substantive concepts and Brown and Burnham's instincts that such concepts may be worth assessing over time gain support from my findings.[27] Those students who had a secure understanding of substantive concepts were able to make a variety of connections that made their work cohere within defensible patterns such as narrative and elements of analysis. The data thus indicates that it might be worth encouraging teaching substantive concepts more explicitly, as Fordham suggested.

The interplay between substantive knowledge and second-order knowledge in history teaching

Counsell, Counsell and Hall, Hammond and Fordham all place an emphasis on the importance of substantive concepts with relation to second-order thinking.[28] Counsell suggests that the two are very reliant on each other, and Hammond, confirming Counsell, states that the understanding of different causes relies upon their substantive knowledge. My research is also in line with these statements. My data suggests that students who were able to argue causally at the highest level (with counterfactualism and linking of causes as an indicator) were very secure in their substantive concept usage. Hammond also suggests that students draw on a wide range of their own historical knowledge to make sense of the documents she gave them. I did not observe this in my data, but my students were much younger than Hammond's and had only studied history at secondary level for two years. Also, the nature of most of my substantive concepts was such that students had not encountered them before in another one of their enquiries. This was maybe partly due to the fact that students had for the first time studied a topic past the 1950s. The literature and my findings therefore suggest that there needs to be more work done to characterise the precise nature of the relationship between substantive concept security and second-order thinking. My suggested contribution, drawn from the data, is that students who possess a greater security in substantive concepts are able to link these together with other concepts and the wider topic and are therefore able to develop a more sophisticated causal reasoning using counterfactual statements and linking of causes to form an argument.

Recommendations for the history education community

My data suggests that the history education community needs to continue to shift back from exclusively assessing second-order thinking to assessing substantive knowledge as well. My suggestions, however, are formulated very tentatively, since I want to encourage further discussion within the history education community. We need further debate about how we teach substantive concepts in relation to a second-order focus. We also need to think about whether we teach substantive concepts explicitly or implicitly in lessons and how we ensure progression and interlinks between the different substantive concepts and the topics students study. We might also start to consider if some substantive concepts are more important than others and thus need to be prioritised when teaching. It might even be feasible to identify particularly important substantive concepts (such as 'slavery') and then devise our schemes of work around them. With this, it would be necessary to decide how much we leave to overview teaching and how much in-depth knowledge students need to be able to gain security with substantive concepts.

The history education community may also need to consider how we should assess security with substantive concepts. Existing and earlier assessment schemata in history arguably assess substantive knowledge implicitly, in that higher levels of GCSE mark-schemes, for example, do require accurate supporting detail, but the kinds of secure, underpinning structures, evident indirectly in the secure deployment of substantive concepts are rewarded neither directly nor indirectly.[29] It may be that my research is most useful for interim or formative assessment, in that diagnostic assessment of a students' security in a substantive concept may tell us more about the underpinning structures of students' knowledge than the current emphasis on merely replicating examination questions in advance. This might give the teacher an opportunity to assess the occurrences of that phenomenon and hence make a judgement on how secure the understanding of a particular substantive concept is.

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triumphs Show

Walls, pillars and post-it notes

Year 10 use an interactive learning wall to cement their understanding of substantive vocabulary

It is the first term of their GCSE course and Year 10 are already starting to flag a little. They are enjoying studying the Russian Revolution, but are struggling to remember all the new words they have encountered. They just won't stick. Time for a wall, some pillars, and some post-it notes…

If you were to hear or read the word 'peasant', what comes to mind? You might well say that it depends on where and when you are talking about. Yet how often do we as teachers stop and really think hard about just how much you have to *know*, the layers and layers of knowledge you have to possess before it becomes possible to make sense of a particular word in the particular context in which you encounter it? Now what about these words? Working class, middle class, aristocracy, church, army, Duma, Cossacks, zemstva, communism, marxism, capitalism?

The challenge: developing students' knowledge and understanding of substantive concepts

As a Newly Qualified Teacher, teaching a GCSE course (OCR Modern World B Russia Depth Study) for the first time, these concerns quickly began to plague me. Students were in danger of being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of new substantive vocabulary and concepts which a study of Russian history entails. Some of these words are period-specific, technical words (Duma, zemstva), others are conceptual (peasants, aristocracy), words that students had encountered in Key Stage 3 but whose meaning shifts across time and space. Thus the problem ran deeper than simple comprehension. Even if I successfully drilled the words into students' heads, it wouldn't help them unless those words held meaning for them. This problem was particularly acute because the course was new to the school, meaning that I had not had the opportunity to plan for how to develop the kind of transferable knowledge of substantive concepts that Christine Counsell argues is such an important component of historical understanding:

Consider most of the abstract nouns that trip off your tongue, and especially those historical terms that have

a technical, period or shifting meaning. Each one gains meaning through a hundred stories or situations that have passed through your head and left some residue behind. This is where the word lives – in your head. Your comprehension or deployment of the word would not be so secure, it would not resonate so easily with your eye as your eye breathes it in from a text, if it had simply been looked up in a dictionary and noted in a vocabulary book. There must be a connection between the layers and patterns of the knowledge we hold, and our facility with language.[1]

The implications of students' lack of working knowledge and understanding of key substantive concepts quickly became evident when they attempted to explain how the events of 1905-1917 weakened the Tsarist system of autocracy. In their written explanations students massively over-generalised when describing how particular events affected opinions towards the Tsar: regardless of the development or event (the creation of the Duma, the October Manifesto, Stolypin's land reforms), they only ever seemed to affect 'people'. It was clear that students were not operating with any kind of picture in their heads of what kind of society Russia was or the different relationships that different groups had with the Tsar. As Kate Hammond has pointed out, the deficiency in their answers seemed less to do with their conceptual reasoning than with their substantive knowledge.[2]

A final complicating factor was that a high percentage of the students studying GCSE history have English as an additional language, with a significant proportion of these students recent arrivals to the school. For these students I could not assume the existence of any kind of residual knowledge from their previous schooling as in some cases students might never have studied history or else studied it within a different context with emphasis on different skills. This meant that the substantive concepts they needed to learn could well be completely new to them.

Orlando Figes

Orlando Figes is a historian of the Russian Revolution. He says that the Tsarist government was 'upheld' by four pillars of support.
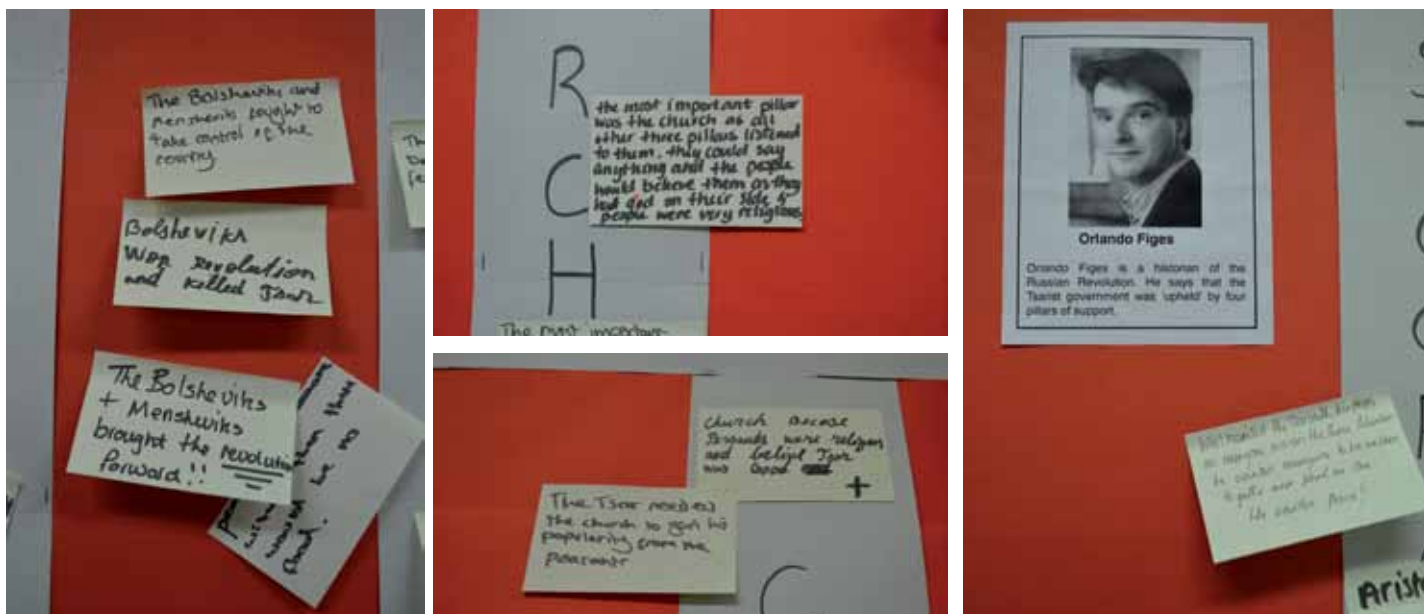
I realised that I needed to help students to develop a richer, more nuanced understanding of key substantive concepts. But just how could I get students to read words such as aristocracy and think of the 5% of the Russian population who owned 25% of Russia's land and whose fate was inextricably intertwined with that of the Tsar's? Or read the word army and visualise its structure, conventions and place in Tsarist government? How can such words become meaningful and not merely dictionary definitions?

Furthermore, the story of Tsarism's collapse is complicated. If students are to explain why the Tsar was forced to abdicate in 1917, they need to be able to explain how different groups' attitudes towards the Tsar differed and changed over time. How could I help students see the 'bigger' picture so that their explanations of the Tsar's fall recognised these long-term developments? It was clear that whatever meanings students attached to key substantive concepts could not be static and fixed but had to be flexible, shifting and developing to reflect the changing circumstances in Russia.

Using a learning wall to build knowledge of substantive concepts

In order to develop my own substantive knowledge of the period I had immersed myself in academic scholarship. I was particularly inspired by Orlando Figes' *A People's Tragedy*, which is written in a lively narrative style that vividly captures the sense of chaos within Russia in the lead-up to and the aftermath of the 1917 Revolution.[3] I noticed that Figes talks about the Tsarist system as being upheld by four key pillars of support: the aristocracy, the church, the army and the peasants with the Tsar resting comfortably at the top of the pillars. This got me wondering: how might introducing Figes' ideas as a visual metaphor help develop students' knowledge of these substantive concepts? At first, I thought the metaphor could just be a recap activity within each lesson ('how have the events we have looked at today affected the pillars of support?'). But then I began to wonder if a visual metaphor might help students to track the story

across an extended sequence of lessons, visibly changing as the narrative unfolded.

I decided to create a learning wall that would act as an interactive working wall – something that could be used to record, visualise and assist students' learning throughout the enquiry. The wall was used each lesson, its use evolving over the course of the enquiry. Initially it was used as a visual prompt for whole-class questioning, such as asking students to explain how in control the Tsar was at different points in time, what forces were acting to weaken his control, how he sought to 'prop up' his support and how events and developments affected the support of different groups. Then I started to give students post-it notes to record their thinking. One student from each group would place their post-it note on the learning wall and then explain their answer to the class. This often encouraged debates as other students could compare their responses with those of other groups, challenging their explanations and advancing their own claims.

The learning wall seemed to be effective in part because students had ownership over it. Students were motivated by seeing their own ideas on the wall alongside many others. Interestingly, students often referred to the wall when they were writing answers to questions, using it as a prompt for vocabulary but also to aid their explanations. Using a visual metaphor that tracked the weakening and erosion of support for the Tsar among the different social groups seemed to help fix the narrative more firmly in their heads. Through the learning wall they could literally see the crumbling of the Tsar's regime.

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[1] Counsell, C. (2001) 'Knowledge, writing and delighting; extending the historical thinking of 11 and 12-year-olds' in *Welsh Historian, 31*.

[2] Hammond, K. (2014) 'The Knowledge that 'flavours' a claim: towards building and assessing historical knowledge on three scales' in *Teaching History, 157, Assessment Edition*, pp. 18-24.

[3] Figes, O. (1996) *A People's Tragedy,* London: Pimlico.

Transforming Year 11's conceptual understanding of change

For all that history teachers appreciate the need to build substantive knowledge and conceptual understanding systematically over time, they are also likely to have experienced that sickening moment when they realise that a Year 11 pupil has somehow missed something fundamental. In Anna Fielding's case, her pupil's misconception was related to the process of change, which was to feature as *the* most important second-order concept within their final GCSE module. Resisting the temptation to panic, but nonetheless working under tight time pressure, Fielding set out to first to examine and then to reconstruct her pupils' ideas. The tightly-planned sequence of lessons that she outlines and discusses in this article demonstrates the way in which she drew on insights from other teachers' classroom research in combination with her own systematic analysis of her pupils' urgent needs to transform their capacity to write analytically about the process of change.

Anna Fielding
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After several lessons focused on the persecution of Jews in Nazi Germany, I was intending to ask my Year 11 class to analyse the changes that had occurred in their treatment from 1933 to 1939. To support this analysis, I first encouraged the pupils simply to chart the development of Nazi policies by plotting the dates of specific events and relevant laws on to a living graph, indicating the level of severity of each. During the activity one of the girls was struggling and complained that she could not find the event that happened in 1937. When I explained that there was no specific event that occurred in that year, her response was, 'Oh, I see. So I can just leave that year blank then'. Her approach to the task revealed a serious misconception. She had mistakenly set aside the messy realities of the past in favour of a neat, ordered approach in which it was assumed either that one event of persecution conveniently took place every year; or, indeed, that there were years in which 'nothing' happened. Such a fundamental misunderstanding in what was intended as a straightforward introductory task, made me realise that characterising the nature of change over time was likely to be much more challenging for the class than I had anticipated. Working from this baseline, it was very unlikely that merely plotting events on a graph would enable the pupils to frame any kind of analytical description of the process of change.

It was a shocking realisation. In only a few months' time, these pupils would be tackling their GCSE exam which included a module on twentieth-century China – a module specifically intended to assess their capacity to describe and analyse the process of change.[1] Clearly I had to do something.

The enduring importance of change

I suspect that I am not alone in needing to address this issue within my GCSE teaching. While the substantive focus of such questions will vary from one exam specification to another, a conceptual focus on change is common to all the awarding bodies at GCSE level, particularly within the Schools History Project specifications offered by all three of the exam boards in England.[2] When new GCSE specifications are introduced, for first examination in 2018, the requirement for all specifications to include a thematic study over time seems likely to make the teaching of change and continuity more important still.[3] Teachers wrestling with new content may in particular struggle to balance the need to provide sufficient detail about the characteristics of each period and its specific developments with the simultaneous construction of a broader overview of the main trends and turning points. Beyond the demands of the exam boards, any hope of providing young people with a meaningful picture of the past – a usable framework within which to locate their developing knowledge, that will allow them to relate the past to the present and to plausible futures – we have an obligation to make the processes of change and continuity clearly visible and to avoid unhelpful fragmentation.

Since Counsell first alerted us to the relative lack of attention given to the demands of this particular second-order concept, other researchers and teachers have risen to the challenge, sharing the results of their exploration of children's thinking, their reflection on historians' approaches to characterising change and continuity and their experiments with different ways in which such analytical description could be developed in the classroom.[4] Foster in particular has led the way in providing practical and well-theorised examples of effective teaching approaches.[5] Drawing inspiration from this work, and acutely aware of the challenges that my own pupils faced, I set out to plan a series of lessons which would help them first to get to grips with the complex nature of change in the period that they were studying next – twentieth-century China – and then to express their appreciation of that process effectively in writing.

There were a few added complexities to my task. The first was the nature of the module that we were studying: while the pupils were genuinely intrigued to know more about China, its history was entirely new to them and the foreign names and terminology added further complexity. There were few familiar landmarks by which they could even begin to sketch an outline map. The second

Figure 1: Spiral approach to the series of lessons

Initial pupil work:
This demonstrated misconceptions in their understanding of the concept of change, such as a propensity to focus on the past as episodic and driven entirely by individuals. The diversity of experience and the pace of change was rarely considered.

First Step:
Different pace of change.
The use of a familiar metaphor (a pedometer in the gym) to encourage pupils to consider how quickly changes occurred in China.

Second Step:
Different experiences of change.
Pupils used graphs to investigate and demonstrate an understanding of the changing experience of different groups in society. By putting these graphs together they started to develop an understanding of how change in history could be experienced differently by different groups in society.

Third Step:
The application of vocabulary.
Put in place once conceptual understanding of change had been developed. Creating word tables with 'change words' that could be used to demonstrate the different aspects of change that had been studied.

Conclusion: Pupils demonstrated a developed conceptual understanding of the concept of change and continuity in history through effective pieces of writing. Their writing included many different aspects of the concept of change: pace, diversity of experience and extent of change. The repetition of conceptual challenges had helped pupils to build up their knowledge gradually. The initial use of analogy and visual representation allowed conceptual understanding to developed before language was applied.

was the proximity of the GCSE examination. Working with a Year 11 class only a few months away from their final exams created considerable time pressures. I still had to ensure that I completed the course, leaving sufficient time for revision. I did not have the luxury of knowing that if a particular activity failed there would be time to catch up or recap. Indeed, the issue of time is a particularly pressing one for me since our pupils only join the school in Year 9, leaving comparatively little time to secure strong foundations for GCSE. It was often with a little envy and frustration that I had read about the ideas of those such as Jenner or Murray who had worked with younger years in highly creative ways to encourage them to start exploring patterns of change and development much earlier in their school careers.[6]

Fortunately, these complexities worked together in my favour: the looming exam focused the pupils' attention, helped of course by the intriguing and fascinating twists and turns of China's history in the twentieth century. Knowing that the pupils' understanding of this second-order concept was particularly weak encouraged me to break it down to the very basics: the process of delineating each distinct element and tackling them separately before seeking to reassemble them eventually proved to be one of the most significant reasons for the success of my intervention.

Underlying principles in designing the series of lessons

My first decision in tackling the combined challenges of developing pupils' understanding of the process of change and their capacity to write analytically about it *while* equipping them with detailed substantive knowledge about

such an unfamiliar topic, was to intersperse lessons dealing explicitly with change between those in which pupils got to grips with the factual content. I was determined to ensure that the conceptual challenge was not something bolted on at the very end of the course.[7] Pupils' conceptual understanding and analytical skills needed to be built up gradually (insofar as anything could be gradual at this point in the GCSE course!) alongside their mastery of new information and substantive concepts. As we came to consider each new aspect of change, so pupils could not only apply those ideas to the specific developments in China's history that we had been examining, they could also revisit the ideas about change that we had previously explored. The scheme of work is summarised in Figure 1, using a spiral to capture this process of revising and reframing their analysis as we worked through it.

Starting with a time-line: the helicopter approach to big periods of history

My first concern was the fact that I was asking 15- and 16-year-olds to learn about and be able to process almost 100 years of history. In order to describe and analyse the nature of change, they would have to master *and retain* knowledge of various events over a long period of time – not simply recalling them as a chronological time-line, but also developing a sufficiently secure appreciation of their individual and cumulative impact to be able to compare one period effectively with another. My first tactic in tackling this challenge was to run through the whole period that we would be studying in just one lesson, furnishing them with a simple visual time-line. This approach was inspired by

Figure 2: An example of the one of the pupil's completed time-lines
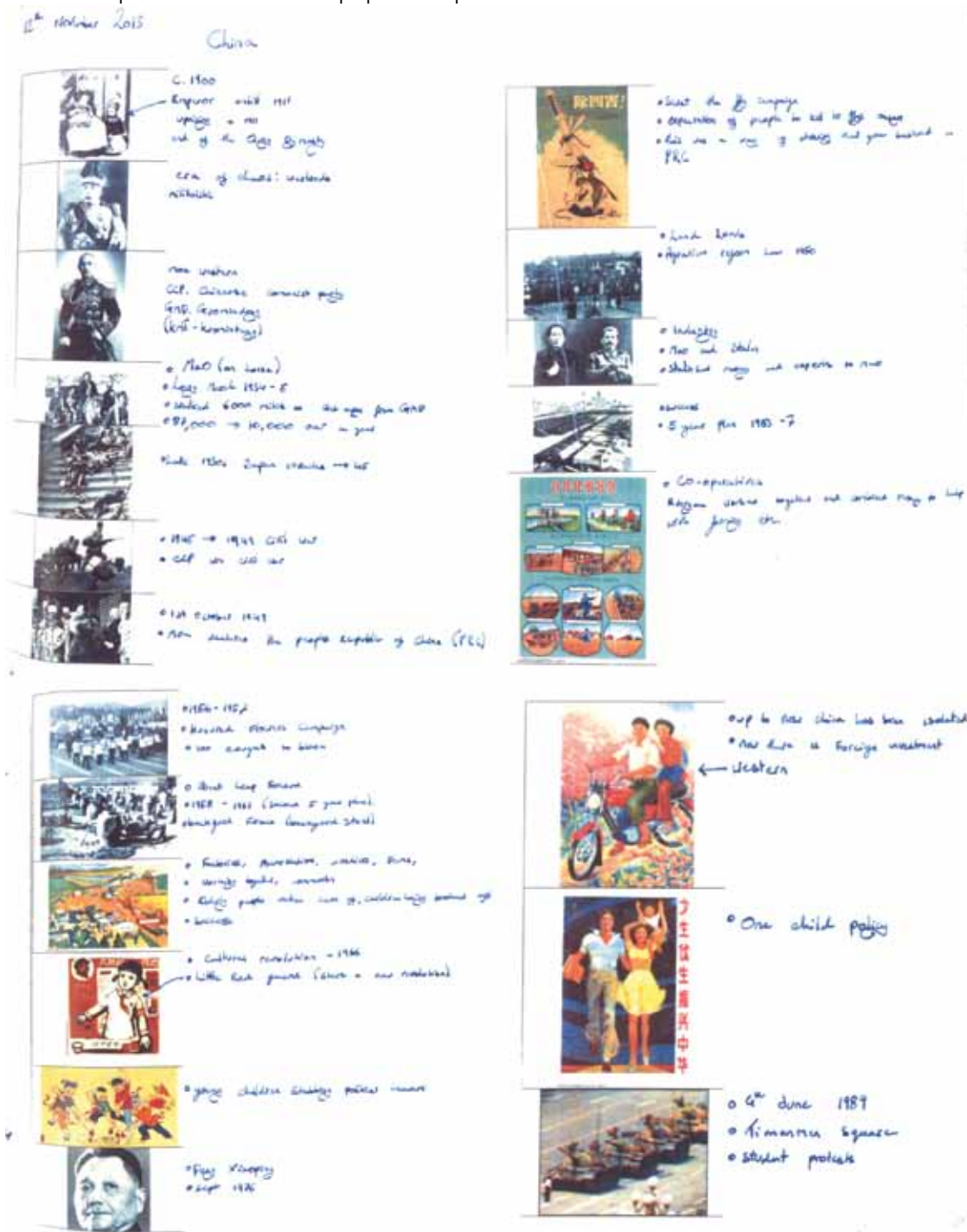
researchers such as Dawson and Shemilt – and the teachers who have experimented with some of their ideas – who have argued that pupils are much more likely to construct usable 'big pictures' of the past if they are first offered provisional frameworks around which to structure their developing knowledge.[8] My work was far less ambitious in scope than theirs but, even in a diluted form, the idea of regularly revisiting an initial outline to flesh out or refine initial hypotheses about patterns of change resonated with my intention of establishing certain ideas about the nature, extent and pace of change that could be progressively adapted as the pupils acquired more factual knowledge and analytical rigour. An example of the kind of time-line that my pupils created is shown in Figure 2. They were constructed around a series of images showing key events in China's history over the course of the twentieth century. As I described the event that each picture represented, the images helped to provoke

debate and interest among the pupils. For example, the image of lines of trucks intrigued them: 'Where had they got the money to make them?'; 'Where were the factories – hadn't they been destroyed during the years of fighting?'

These time-lines turned out to be vital in helping pupils to feel secure and knowledgeable when the more conceptually challenging idea of change was brought in. When I later talked to them about their understanding of the course I was surprised to discover that many turned back to these pages in their books as often as every lesson. There seemed to be three key benefits to the time-line:

1. When they were asked to consider themes, such as agriculture or politics, the time-line helped them to remember various events, the impact of which they could then compare.

Figure 3: Samples of the pupils' first 150-word summaries

'/1/14

Summary of changes in China 1900-1990

1911 was the last emperor to give up the throne and then the warlords took over. Then in 1934-5 the 'long march' occured, it lasted 365 days and there were lots of casualties. 1931-45 Japan invaded china (the long march took place during this time.) The civil war took place in china from 1945-49. mow then became in charge. mow became in charge and changed the pests control, Agriculture and the industry. Next was the 5 year plan; which was the first figre of success. from (1953-57). Everything was modernised, the Red guards were created and then maw died and then Deng Xiaoping became in charge. (in 1976). Finally Tiananmen Square took place on 4th June 1989.

Summary of the changes 1900-1990
07.01.14

- The emperor is forced to abdicate
- China starts to become more western
- Warlords come to power.
- Mao comes to power and china becomes communist
- China works with russia
- China developes economically and agriculturally
- Mao dies and Xiaoping takes over

Summary of Changes in China 1900-1990

Mao leader

1911-End of Qing Dynasty, Warlords ruled from 1912-1929, CCP +GMO fight for control, 1934-5 Long march, 87000 men~100000 at CCP ran away from GMO for 368 days, 1931-45 Japan invaded Civil war 1945-49 GMO against CCP, 1st October 1949 People's Republic of China, Mao leader, 1950 Agrarian Reform Law 1953-1957 Five year plan. 1956-7 Hundred Flowers Campaign 1958-1963 Great Leap Forward. Little Red Guard 1966, Mao dies 1976 September.

Figure 4: A blank pedometer graph that pupils used to plot the changing speed of change within Chinese agriculture
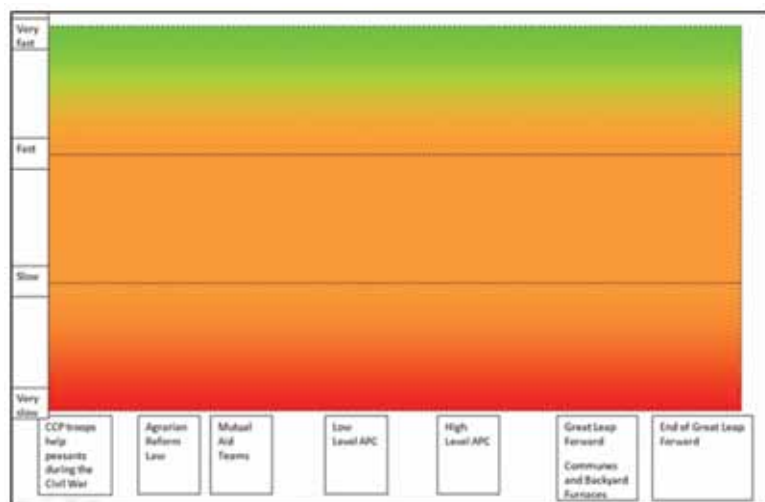
2. Since we were studying developments thematically, the time-line was a simple way for them to locate specific developments, such as the Cultural Revolution of 1966, within the wider chronology of the period, enabling them quickly to identify what had happened before and afterwards.

3. Finally, the visual element gave them a quick reference point – a visual cue – by which they could recall each event, and the changes associated with it. The pupils were literally visualising the past, as illustrated by one pupil's comment that when she thought of the westernising policies of Deng Xiaoping she always thought of the picture of the two young people on the motorbike that had come at the end of her time-line. In fact, although it was not intentional, during the series of lessons I frequently found myself using the same images as those that I had chosen for the time-line. Pupils later told me that they found comfort in the familiarity of images in a period that was factually confusing and in a course that had conceptually high demands.

The importance of the time-line was brought home to me by the wonderfully perceptive analogy that Chris (one of my pupils) drew:

If you're, like, going to war and they just dropped you into a forest and you had to find out where you were going or something then you would get lost. But if you were in a helicopter and looked over the forest beforehand, when you were dropped in you would have an idea of where to go.

It is often the case that history is taught as a mysterious enquiry that brings excitement and engagement as the sequence of events unfolds. On the face of it, the time-line approach appeared to be undermining this potential for excitement. However, as Chris suggested, with a challenging course, just like the dense and intimidating wilds of a forest, the work seemed more manageable if he knew roughly what to expect. Fortunately, of course, the substantive detail within the course was far from dull and predictable: the specific detail of extraordinary events such as the Cultural Revolution continued to fascinate and engage them.

Under constant pressure to complete the GCSE syllabus and allow enough time for revision, I did not deliberately set aside

time to review and revise the time-line as the course went on.[9] Despite this, many pupils later drew my attention back to the time-line to point out its errors. One of them, for example, told me that the image of the Cultural Revolution needed to be changed because '[the girl in the picture] looks quite happy whereas actually it wasn't happy'. The fact that pupils felt that they were able to challenge representations that they felt were 'wrong' demonstrated to me how confident they had become in their understanding of the period. They were developing pictures in their mind of what the past 'looked like' rather than merely seeing the past as a series of dates and events to be learnt for an exam.

Establishing the pupils' starting points in a 150-word summary

In order to judge how much pupils understood about the concept of change – or at least how effectively they could use that understanding to describe and characterise the nature of change – I asked them each to complete a short piece of writing in which they drew on their initial time-line to summarise the change that had occurred in China over the course of the twentieth century. Since this was a diagnostic task, I asked them to complete it individually without any further intervention or support from me, or any discussion with each other.

I was pleasantly surprised by some of the pupils' summaries. There were several pupils who had considered the idea of change in a relatively successful way, for example taking a thematic approach. The majority, however, had merely reduced the period to a list of events. Their sentences often began with list-like or temporal connectives such as 'And then ...', 'In the 1900s ...', 'After that' which suggested that they were telling a story rather than describing or analysing patterns of change. This narrative approach was frequently emphasised by writing in the present tense, 'Japan invades in the late 1930s, fights until 1945.' The samples shown in Figure 3 confirmed that the event-driven approach seen in the earlier exercise on the persecution of Jews was fairly typical of the pupils' understanding. The majority of them saw the past as a series of events or episodes conveniently happening one after the other, creating 'a uniform and linear pattern'.[10] My task was to help them see that the process of change in history was complex and multi-faceted. To be able to discern and describe the pace, extent and experience of change they needed to be able to transform historical facts into historical knowledge.

Using a pedometer to track the speed of change

The first aspect of the concept of change that I decided to tackle was the speed of change. In seeking to build my pupils' conceptual understanding and analytical ability, I opted at this point to avoid the additional challenge of *writing* about the concept, focusing on establishing conceptual understanding of one dimension of the nature of change without the simultaneous linguistic challenge of using the correct vocabulary.[11] I therefore followed the approach of Murray and opted for a visual outcome.[12]

Figure 5: Time-lines showing the experiences of people in the cities, the leaders of the CCP and the peasants

I introduced the concept of the speed of change through the analogy of a pedometer on a running machine in a gym. Metaphor and analogy are common tools used in explaining complicated concepts or events.[13] Alphonse the Camel or a barrel of gunpowder frequently feature in lessons on causation.[14] As McCarthy and Leinhardt have explained, an analogy 'maps features of a familiar concept … to an unfamiliar one' thereby helping pupils to understand patterns and concepts that might otherwise prove too challenging.[15] Having established the way in which a pedometer captures the changing speed of a runner on a treadmill, I used the image shown in Figure 4 to demonstrate how a similar recording system could be used to represent changes in the speed with which new agricultural practices were adopted. Whenever an agricultural directive was enacted quickly throughout Time country, the line on the pedometer would move into the 'fast zone'; if the rate of change in response to a subsequent directive took much longer, the line would fall into the 'slow zone'. Rapid adoption, followed by a period of stability in which the new approaches were sustained or consolidated, would see the line move to the stationary point.

The pupils had already spent one lesson learning about the different agricultural directives and I encouraged them to consider how fast they thought each directive would lead to change. Extending the analogy, I asked them to consider their own response – and the impact on the pedometer – if their PE teacher shouted at them to run faster and I encouraged them to draw parallels with a peasant being given greater encouragement to take part in Communist Party initiatives with incentives and pressure from the government. Working in groups, using worksheets which summarised the agricultural directives and the policies used to promote their implementation, along with descriptions of their impact, the pupils plotted lines over time on their own copies of the pedometer graph. From the worksheet, they picked up on words like 'gradual' and 'explosive'; words that many then used to annotate the line they had drawn on the pedometer, as if justifying their decisions. Their completed graphs, with fluctuating and sometimes swiftly jumping lines, captured a new awareness that history was a process which could occur at a different pace at different times.

Figure 6: Time-lines for the different groups plotted on to one graph

Key:

- - - - Chairman Mao – given as teacher demonstration
──── CCP
──── Peasants
──── People in the cities

Note the decision taken by the group plotting the experience of people in the cities to split their line in two, representing a division of opinion as to whether people would be shocked or thrilled by the introduction of 'capitalist' shopping centres.

On its own, this activity may have seemed confusing or even pointless. At a time when other teachers were beginning to set practice exam papers, detailed exam-style essays and revision tests, several of the pupils were unnerved by my request that they start drawing lines on coloured graphs and imagining that they were going for a run. With pupils that are preparing for exams, and acutely aware of their ever-watchful parents keen that their children achieve the very best grades, there may sometimes be a reluctance to carry out activities like this. However, as I found in reviewing the lesson series with pupils at the end, it was small, creative and interesting activities such as this that proved to have captivated them, and more importantly, provoked them to think – a process that was vital to success in those all-important exams.

Differentiated time-lines: capturing the diversity of people's experience of change

The next aspect of change that I wanted the pupils to grasp was that change could be experienced by different people in different ways. I also wanted them to appreciate that the implementation of a policy that had disastrous consequences or the outbreak of famine was still a change; not all developments had to be positive to count as change.

I split the class into groups, each considering one specific section of society: members of the government, the peasants and the people in the cities. Each group was given the task of creating a time-line to reflect the changing experience of their

particular section of society, using their existing knowledge of the events together with a bundle of source cards which provided images, statistics and personal accounts. I hoped that through these cards each group would develop a sense of empathy for the people that they had been charged with studying. This investigation into the details of the personal experiences of individuals drew particularly on the work of Banham and Jones.[16] An emphasis on specific individuals, as illustrated in Jones's work on witchcraft trials, serves to 'inform, shape and illuminate' pupils' understanding of the bigger picture and bring a personal element to their understanding of the experience of change in the past. [17]

After first organising their cards in chronological order (allowing them the chance to re-familiarise themselves with the events), pupils placed the cards on to a new time-line: above the line if their group in society was experiencing a positive change and below if the change had a negative impact on them. The placement of the card would also indicate just how positive or negative the change was: highly beneficial developments would be placed at the top of the page while those regarded as disastrous would be placed right at the bottom, well away from the line. Pupils completed the time-line with a trend line tracing the general experience of that group over the whole period.

As a group task, the activity had the benefit of encouraging debate: would the peasants, for example, like joining the collectives for the facilities they provided or would they be frightened at the loss of freedom? In fact, the group working on the people in the cities argued so much about whether people would be pleased or shocked at the implementation of 'capitalist' shopping centres that they ended up splitting their line, as shown in Figure 5. This proved to be a fantastic demonstration of their understanding that different people (even within the same broad category) would have experienced change in different ways.

Finally, each group plotted their lines on to the board together, as shown in Figure 6. This helped the pupils to see the different impact that the changes had made on people's lives and to appreciate that different people had experienced the various events of the twentieth century in different ways. For example, it was particularly clear to them that the group studying the peasants saw the Great Leap Forward as a dreadful time of starvation and famine while the people in the cities were largely protected from this, still enjoying the benefits of modern life. Therefore, the class as a whole developed a multidimensional narrative of the period.

Developing the language of change: capturing new conceptual understanding in writing

I could see from Foster's work that her pupils had achieved a high level of conceptual awareness through her inspiring and innovative use of road maps.[18] My pupils' understanding, however, would ultimately (and quite soon) be assessed through their writing. Adapting the assessment process to take into consideration pupils' drawings and diagrammatic representations of change, as Murray did, is a fantastically

Figure 7: Vocabulary lists – with words added by pupils shown in italics

Speed	Whether it was a good thing	How much it changed	How important it was
Explosive	Momentous	Transformation	Symbolic
Gradual	Great	Significant	Important
Slow	Frightening	Huge	Incidental
Fast	Fantastic	Small	Revolutionary
Swift	Violent	All-encompassing	Imperceptible
Hurried	Superficial	Widespread	Insignificant
Continuous	Beneficial	Piecemeal	*Influential*
Triggered	*Just/fair*	Considerable	*Immense*
Rapid		Profound	*Minor*
Evolving		Revolution	*Vital*
Fluctuation		Continuity	*Crucial*
Slight		Noticeable	*Partial*
Negligible		Shift	
Constant		*Spontaneous*	
Quick		*Drastic*	
Steady		*Miniscule*	
		Barely	

creative approach, but something else needs to be done for pupils sitting written exams.[19] After my earlier lessons using visual representations of change, it was now necessary to transform this understanding into written form. I hoped that by introducing new vocabulary at this point, my pupils would find, as Foster's had done, that 'the vocabulary might have greater meaning and power if it expressed an understanding that the pupils had *already* developed'.[20] Interestingly, one of the pupils perceptively pre-empted my next step when she commented that she felt she understood the concept of change in history quite well but wondered if I could provide her with a list of words that she could use if she ever had to write about change. This was a perfect demonstration to me that the pupils were ready to move on to the next stage within my series of lessons.

When thinking of ways to approach this list I was particularly inspired by Woodcock's use of 'word mats': laminated sheets that had been created by the pupils through a process of discussion, supported by the use of dictionaries that ultimately provided a source of reference when writing and rewriting pieces of work.[21] Focusing on the different aspects of change that we had been studying (i.e. its speed, and the diversity of different people's experience of it, along with consideration of both the nature and extent of change), I presented the pupils with a list of possible words that could be used when describing change. Sadly, the constraints of time prevented me from allowing the pupils to invest a similar amount of effort as Woodcock had done in helping the pupils to create these lists themselves. Having said that, it was important to me that pupils had ownership of the list of words so, through paired and then whole-class discussion, I encouraged them to add further words. The completed list is shown in Figure 7.

Using these word lists, I asked pupils to write a new summary of the changes that had occurred in twentieth-century China, focusing either on social or on political life. On the whole, these summaries were much more successful than the pupils' earlier endeavours. Their new understandings had transformed their overviews of the nature of change from a list of events that had happened in the past to descriptive, varied, developed pieces of analysis. That is not to say that everyone had mastered all the new ideas or that all the problems had been eliminated. Several pupils had mechanically copied words from the word list without demonstrating any real understanding of what they actually meant. Some merely used the list as a teacher-pleasing tool: most obviously the one pupil who managed to use every word in consecutive order! Others used words from the lists inaccurately. In the majority of cases, however, the word mats had become a tool that enabled the pupils to express their new-found understandings of the complexity of change. This can be seen in the following extracts from pupils' work:

In the past women had virtually no rights. Female babies would be drowned and girls could often be sold as servants or prostitutes. Mao was determined to change these rules and made a huge transformation with the Marriage Law in 1950 which placed women legally on an equal basis with men and it made a fantastic break-through to how the male dominated families had been in the past.

Peasants' lives were changed hugely when they became part of Mao's commune system. Eventually, each commune would contain roughly 5,000 families, and all of these families would share their tools and animals, changing both the rich peasants' and the poor peasants' lives dramatically, as the latter would gain a considerable amount of new ways to support their families and the former would lose sole access to their own equipment.

Pulling it all together: pupils' final 150-word summaries

Following feedback and discussion of these summaries of one dimension of change I set one final challenge – a repetition of the very first task that I had set the class. Presenting the question in exactly the same way, I again asked the pupils

to summarise the change that had occurred in twentieth-century China.

These new pieces of writing showed a significant improvement in the pupils' ability to understand and write about the concept of change. In the very first sentence many started by considering the whole period: 'During 1900-1990…' or 'There are many ways that China changed in the period 1900-1989' rather than just starting with the first item on a list: 'In 1911 …' or 'The Emperor abdicated …'. They had come to understand that explanations of change require a review of the whole period rather than the sequential outline of a list of events. Moreover, their own big picture understanding of the twentieth century enabled them to write about the change that had occurred with confidence. Many chose to write in a thematic manner, following the approach of my lessons and demonstrating much higher-order thinking. The improvement in the quality of their description could be seen not just across the whole class but on an individual level. Even pupils that had written relatively successful first pieces were still able to develop further while those with the weakest first drafts had made significant progress, as the comparison in Figure 8 reveals.

Lessons for the future

The series of lessons had demonstrated that through the cumulative effect of providing an outline overview, and employing analogies, visual metaphors and group tasks, pupils' understanding of change had been improved. By breaking down the very complex nature of change into a number of small, clear and distinct elements, working on each element and then putting them together while providing assistance with vocabulary, I had enabled the pupils to develop a much richer understanding of the concept. At a basic level this was another demonstration of general good teaching practice: the need for a mix of activities and approaches to ensure that every learner could access the curriculum. Furthermore, a crucial factor had been the breaking down of the concept into some of its basic elements and approaching each one separately. Had I attempted to throw every element of change at the pupils in one go, it is likely that the complexity would have provided too much challenge for some, if not all, of them – especially, perhaps, so close to their exams.

Just as Foster found when breaking down the concept of change and continuity, I became aware of the range of aspects that could usefully be considered: its direction for example – was it positive or regressive? Its speed – fast or slow, or imperceptible?; its scale and importance; and the different ways in which it was experienced.[22] In my series of lessons it was not possible to cover all of these dimensions in detail, but my experience suggests that maintaining the same approach of a cumulative development of distinct, clear investigations into each aspect would allow additional complexity to be added. One particular area in which I hope to focus in the future is the issue of continuity, by building on the ideas already put forward by Murray.[23]

Looking back to the task that first alerted me to the scale of the problems that my pupils faced, I'm keen to revisit the unit on Nazi Germany, having first put in place strategies that will help pupils to recognise change as a process that occurs unevenly and sporadically rather than a series of regular, episodic events.

One lasting lesson for the future is the fact that a clear and determined focus on a second-order concept (in this case, change) proved to be a beneficial rather than distracting influence. At a time when it might have been easier to focus on securing pupils' knowledge of the substantive content – with factual tests, handy mnemonics and matching exercises, for example – it was in fact the conceptual focus that kept the pupils thinking. It kept them actively involved in examining and processing the developments and the details, rather than becoming passive 'sponges', soaking up as much as they could. Furthermore, taking a cumulative, or spiralling, approach in which the substantive and conceptual were intertwined had a great many benefits. It ensured that I did achieve the all-important goal of finishing the whole syllabus with time to spare for revision, while providing enough time and focus for the gradual development of the necessary conceptual understanding. There was certainly no panicked sense at the end of the course that they now needed to learn to 'fit' their knowledge into the requirements of the exam. Their knowledge and understanding had developed in such a way that they were able to answer questions that dealt with broad patterns of change with relative ease.

In looking ahead, it is also clear that the concept of change is one that should be introduced to children much earlier in their school career. Although our pupils only join the school in Year 9, we recognised that we could certainly make more effective use of that year, and have already started adapting our scheme of work to introduce comparative study of the First and Second World Wars. By keeping the study relatively small-scale and focusing it on subject matter with which the majority of pupils are relatively familiar, we can focus on gradually building pupils' conceptual understanding. Our aim is to introduce them as soon as possible to the idea that events in history do not follow neat ordered patterns, that change occurs in different contexts at very different rates, and that the same developments may be experienced by different people in different ways. Whether they are dealing with the gradual intensification of the persecution of the Jews in Germany, the profound upheavals experienced by peasants in twentieth-century in China or the very specific evolution of tank warfare, ultimately pupils will achieve a greater understanding of historical processes and a more meaningful picture of the past. These fundamental understandings will enable them to make more sense of the specific kinds of descriptive analysis demanded by exam specifications.

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Figure 8: Examples of two pupils' original and final 150-word summaries

Pupil 1 original 150-word summary
1911 was the last emperor to give up the throne and then the warlords took over from. Then in 1934-5 the 'Long March' occurred, it lasted 365 days and there were lots of casualties. 1931-45 Japan invaded China (the long march took place during this time). The civil war took place in China from 1945-9. Mao became in charge and changed the pests control, agriculture and the industry. Next was the 5 year plan; which was the first figure of success from (1953-7). Everything was modernised, the Red guards were created and then Mao died and then Deng Xiaoping became in charge (in 1976). Finally Tiananmen Square took place on 4th June 1989.

Pupil 1 final 150-word summary
During 1900-1990 China went through many changes. This was mainly down to the rapid changes in leaders. The warlords took over Emperor Yan Shakai in 1916. Yan had only been ruler for a small amount of time (5 years). Soon the GMD and CCP took over and the warlords which eventually led to the ruling of Mao Zedong. During the change in emperor many rules and regulations were manipulated. Industry and Agriculture changed from the peasants living in horrible and terribly hard working environment to a friendly and more laid back one.

Pupil 2 original 150-word summary
Last Emperor of China was forced to abdicate, marking the end of the Qing Dynasty. The warlords then took over and there was a period of chaos. The GMD and the CCP fought for control and in 1931, Japan invaded China. There was a civil war between CCP and GMD – CCP won. Mao became leader. Inforced the laws of communism – they were very successful. However, things fell apart when people started to criticise Mao. The one child policy was introduced and then industry fell through. Mao died in Sept 1976 and Deng Xiaoping took over.

Pupil 2 final 150-word summary
During 1900-1990 in China there were many changes in the leadership, from Emperor Puyi to the warlords to the GMD and finally the CCP. This was a period of chaos, each bringing their own values. When the CCP took power there were substantial changes in the lives of women and children, and in agriculture and industry. However, whilst many changes were positive, many were negative such as the Red Guards and the Great Leap Forward. When Mao eventually died, Deng Xiaoping took over, dramatically improving agriculture, science, industry and defence, however after the Democracy movement, no one could oppose the CCP, making the Chinese people very controlled and living in a very constricted environment.

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J. (2007) 'Is it the Tuarts and then the Studors or the other way round? The importance of developing a usable big picture of the past' in *Teaching History, 127, Sense and Sensitivity Edition,* pp. 40-47.

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Revolutionary emperor?
Reinterpreting Napoleon

Malcolm Crook

This summer, on 18 June, the two-hundredth anniversary of the great battle of Waterloo will be commemorated in Britain and on the continent (though not in France). It will represent the climax of the Napoleonic bicentenary, which has been in full flow since the turn of the twenty-first century. Fresh biographies of the great man continue to appear on a regular basis – nearly all of them weighty tomes – while the key battles on land and sea have also received renewed attention in the form of books, conferences and exhibitions. Political, social and cultural facets of the Napoleonic era have also been examined, which at last explore the mechanics of the emperor's regime and encompass the experience of his subjects. Biography and battle have thus been supplemented by the sort of broader research that has long characterised approaches to the preceding revolutionary decade. This historiographical coming of age offers an excellent vantage point from which to survey the field and to highlight the new interpretations that have been put forward.

Outright hostility towards Napoleon, who has been anachronistically compared to Hitler and Stalin, is much less evident these days, likewise hero-worship. Academic historians are not involved in a blame game, but seek to understand behaviour by reference to the context in which an individual was acting. Moreover, biographers are increasingly aware of just how much Napoleon relied on his 'collaborators' (as Isser Woloch calls them), heavily dependent on a team of seasoned advisers, who were hand-picked by him but had their own spheres of influence.[1] His own adolescent compositions, like a new, expanded edition of his correspondence, reveal him as a complex figure, whose Corsican origins made him an ambitious outsider endowed with greater objectivity than most Frenchmen. He is best regarded as the first modern dictator, who rose as a result of the Revolution and whose seizure of power in 1799 was endorsed and subsequently confirmed by popular votes (though the figures were always doctored). In dealing with the widespread unrest he inherited, he was certainly not averse to harsh repression, creating what has recently been labelled a 'security state'.[2] That said, there was also a constructive response to opposition: the rule of law was generally observed and one of his greatest achievements was bringing to fruition a long-lasting legal code.

The Napoleonic regime, which evolved from Consulate to Empire in 1804, represented an ingenious synthesis of old and new elements, which successfully tackled many of the problems thrown up by the preceding revolutionary decade.[3] Reconciliation was especially evident in the religious sphere, where Napoleon believed that church and state might co-operate to mutual advantage. He drove a hard bargain with the Pope, sealed in the Concordat of 1801, which enabled Catholic worship to revive but which, unlike the *ancien régime*, was closely regulated by the government. Clergy were paid by the state and were treated as civil servants, though their loyalty was later strained to breaking point by deteriorating relations with the Papacy'. Nomination generally replaced election for all office-holders, within a streamlined administration, though the local studies that have recently been undertaken suggest that the system was not as centralised as once thought. By drawing on talent from across the political spectrum, Napoleon achieved an authority capable of delivering effective rule and, above all, supplying the huge resources consumed by the military machine.

For continuing warfare, which had commenced in 1792, dominated the period. Napoleon must take responsibility for failing to conclude a conflict which the French people wanted to end, as studies of public opinion clearly indicate. In 1813 he spurned proposals for peace and fought his way to defeat, wrongly convinced that only continuing victory would maintain his throne.[4] The great campaigns that marked what David Bell has recently dubbed 'the first total war' took a terrible toll: France itself lost a million dead and perhaps four times as many were killed overall, not to mention the impact of accompanying conflict overseas, where France was losing valuable territory.[5] Comparisons with the First World War have drawn criticism, but there was a step change in the scope and intensity of Napoleonic warfare, if not its technology. As a consequence, older preoccupations with strategy and tactics have been replaced by attention to the experience of battle, from the perspective of common soldiers, who were conscripted, and often deserted, fought and frequently died. Nor is the military effort, of this period like others, solely concerned with the armed forces, for the experience of civilians on the 'home front' is also an object of research, across the continent.[6]

It is all too easily forgotten that at its height in 1811, Napoleon was ruling a European Empire of 40 million inhabitants that stretched beyond French borders into the Low Countries, and parts of Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Whereas most histories of the Napoleonic regime focus upon France, this wider 'transnational' dimension is finally being recognised. Napoleon is no longer the exclusive preserve of the French, and British historians are now viewing his imperial regime from the periphery rather than the centre.[7] The development

of a European community has encouraged co-operation between researchers from different countries and drawn attention to the territorial integration that was occurring. Although we must certainly beware taking Napoleon's comments about promoting unity at face value, what this collective research has revealed is not simply conquest, but a significant process of cross-fertilisation. Local elites often collaborated in the extension of French institutions into their territory. These innovations left an enduring legacy in administrative, legal and religious terms, though there was much resistance, from ordinary people in particular. Napoleonic reforms were also applied in client kingdoms, ruled by members of the emperor's own family, while even countries that remained free of French control could not escape his influence. In Britain, literary sources and visual imagery suggests grudging admiration for 'Boney' as well as determined opposition.[8]

Napoleon abdicated in 1814, but less than a year later he had returned from exile in Elba for the astonishing episode of the 100 Days, which marked a return to revolutionary principles. By exploiting discontent with the restored Bourbon monarchy he was able to mobilise wide-ranging support and briefly re-establish his authority in France. The allied powers, still meeting in Vienna where they were redrawing the map of Europe, reacted rapidly, but this final Napoleonic fling, which ended at Waterloo and was followed by definitive exile to St Helena, was deeply significant. It helped forge the legend of the people's emperor and would render Bonapartism a formidable ideology during the century that followed providing an afterlife for the 'little corporal'.[9] As the historical research stimulated by the bicentenary has amply demonstrated, we are by no means finished with Napoleon yet.

Designing enquiries to help pupils think about interpretations of Napoleon

Key Stage 3: 11 to 14 years

History is a dialogue between the past and the present and it changes as the present changes. Create a collection of representations of Napoleon from a range of time periods that can be compared and contrasted relatively quickly – representations in popular culture (film, television, popular song, prints, brandy labels), in art (painting, poetry) and in history book covers and 'blurbs'. Ask students to sort these representations, on the basis of similarity and difference: in what ways has Napoleon been represented in different media? Then ask students to arrange representations chronologically. Have the ways in which Napoleon has been represented changed over time?

A-level: 16 to 19 years

How might changes in historiography over time be accounted for? Use the material in this article to generate resources for a 'historiographic trends' card-sort but without providing any information about the dates of developments Ask students to speculate about the sequencing of the cards and to suggest chronologies for changes in interpretation, relating these, if they can, to what they know about changes in history and historiography. Start to feed information about the actual chronology in to discussion and pose questions (for example, why might transnational approaches have begun to emerge in our time?).

The Editors

Further reading

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This edition's Polychronicon was compiled by Malcolm Crook, Emeritus Professor of French History at the University of Keele

Polychronicon was a fourteenth-century chronicle that brought together much of the knowledge of its own age.

Our Polychronicon in *Teaching History* is a regular feature helping school history teachers to update their subject knowledge, with special emphasis on recent historiography and changing interpretation.

Moving forward, looking back – historical perspective, 'Big History' and the return of the *longue durée*:

time to develop our scale hopping muscles

'Big history' is a term receiving a great deal of attention at present, particularly in North America where considerable sums of money have been invested in designing curricula and assessment tools to help teachers teach history at far larger scales of time than normal. Hawkey considers the pros and cons of incorporating components of 'big history' into history curricula , recognising some of the limitations of the approach, but nevertheless finding important ideas upon which history teachers might draw. In particular, Hawkey identifies three ways in which teachers might start to think about how some of the ideas of 'big history' might find a home in current history curricula.

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One of the most significant changes in the 2014 History National Curriculum is, arguably, to do with the scale at which we ask students to engage with history.[1] Getting to grips with individual units is not sufficient: students also need to make sense of the history they encounter across units and across their entire secondary career. The last aim of the Programme of Study for Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14) states that pupils should:

...gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.[2]

Towards this aim, Byrom has focused attention on the phrase 'historical perspective', which he suggests is a key goal of a history education, defining it as 'a disposition to view the world with an informed sense of historical context' and 'an enduring historical perspective that helps young people make sense of their world and their own place in it'.[3] Furthermore, the new curriculum foregrounds substantive concepts by stating the aim that pupils should 'gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as "empire", "civilisation", "parliament", and "peasantry"'.[4] To achieve this involves a shift in scales so that concepts are revisited throughout the study of history, with the aim of developing ever more sophisticated understanding of terms as they are encountered in new contexts.

History teachers have not always been good at this, with Ofsted commenting that, in some schools, pupils 'are not good at establishing a chronology, do not make connections between the areas they have studied and so do not gain an overview, and are not able to answer the "big questions"',[5] and 'understanding of developments across time was hazy, and their ability to link together the topics and issues they had studied or to draw out themes and show how they had evolved was poor'.[6] It is as if, as Hughes-Warrington expresses it, 'the lens through which we view the past has got stuck at a certain magnification'.[7] There is a need to do more to develop students' confidence in scale-hopping, and their ability to make sense of history as they move between the micro and the macro. I think, therefore, that the shift in the 2014 History National Curriculum is to be welcomed.

As a community of history educators, there is much good practice that has already been developed in this area. For example, schools teach studies in development, such as medicine across time, and teachers often structure programmes of study around 'thematic stories';[8] depth studies are taught and teachers have become adept at finding the 'overview lurking in the depth';[9] teachers understand the importance of teaching large overviews or synoptic frameworks quickly over a single lesson, before using these to anchor subsequent enquiry.[10] Looking through new school textbooks written to address the 2014 curriculum,[11] it is clear that these principles have informed the textbook activities, which strike me as both thought-provoking and exciting, as well as purposeful in developing 'historical perspective'.

Figure 1: Four possible synoptic frameworks (Shemilt, 2009)

- Political and social organisation
- Modes of production
- Culture and Mind
- Growth and movements of peoples

For Modes of production, Shemilt suggests this as an enquiry:

'From snails to snacks'.

'Had you been born 60,000 years ago, you would have been outside on your hands and knees grubbing for roots and snails to eat. Why aren't you doing that now? How did we get from grubbing for roots and snails to buying coke and crisps from a talking machine?'

All this is to the good and, from my experience of working with teachers in classrooms, engaging in these types of activities is likely to strengthen students' scale-hopping muscles and expertise. But I want to push further in this direction to suggest new challenges that I believe need to be addressed too. Living in a globalising world calls into question what we prioritise to teach. One aspect of globalisation, living in an increasingly diverse society today, for example, has been the mainspring for shifts in the curriculum to include a greater focus on diversity within societies, and teachers have become more adept at addressing the complexities, similarities and differences in people's experiences in the past.[12] There are, however, other challenges still to be addressed and ones which will move us from our 'comfort zones'.[13]

Why 'big up' your history?

Moving beyond a focus on English classrooms, two historians writing in the USA, Guldi and Armitage, present the case for a return to the *longue durée* within history, bemoaning the current position where 'we live in a moment of accelerating crisis that is characterised by the shortage of long-term thinking'.[14] They identify three imminent and urgent global political crises, namely: climate change, international governance and inequality. They argue that, not only does each of these challenges have very long-term origins, but also that decisions about how to deal with them are necessarily historical in nature. In other words, Guldi and Armitage argue that historians have much to contribute to such pressing problems, drawing on their expertise in long-term thinking. Similarly, I suggest that in history classrooms an engagement with historical issues which have an impact on lives today, and which are likely to stretch into the future, are very much what teachers need to attend to in developing students' historical perspective. I limit my discussions below

to a consideration of climate change and how teachers might begin to engage with that in a history curriculum.

In one of his last publications, Aldrich, the late education historian, warned that, 'we live on an overpopulated spaceship whose life support systems are running out. Our major concern is no longer the origin, but rather the death of species – especially our own.' He concluded that 'human history needs to be re-positioned within the context of physical history, the four and a half billion-year history of the Earth itself'.[15] Two shifts in how classroom history might be approached are suggested here. First, Aldrich's concern is as much about the future as it is about the past, in keeping with Lee's view that classroom history needs to do more to erode the 'temporal apartheid [which] cuts the past off from present and future'.[16] Both the interpretation of the present, and the formation of hopes and ideas for the future, are connected to the way in which the past is understood, and all of these aspects, in my opinion, need to be included within the scope of a history curriculum. As Shemilt comments, 'the disposition to investigate and analyse the past from the perspective of possible futures is a key development in historical consciousness'.[17] Developing pupils' scale-hopping muscles, by locating history within the continuum past, could enable pupils to see the past as inherently connected to present and future.

Second, Aldrich's call to re-position history within the history of the earth appears to present a radical shift that challenges the commonly-perceived boundaries of history. In a similar vein, projects that stretch back to before humanity, such as 'World History for us all' and 'Big History' [18] have emerged as growing fields of study, influential in some universities and now taught in some schools around the world.[19] In *Maps of Time*,[20] for example, Christian, a key proponent of Big History, places human history as simply one phase

in the evolution of the whole earth, while the aims of Big History courses include 'a goal of revealing common themes and patterns that help students better understand people, civilizations and our place in the universe'. [21] The scales talked about here are formidable indeed, stretching across the largest possible arcs of time. Furthermore, history on this scale calls for the use of more porous boundaries between 'natural' or 'environmental', and 'human' or 'cultural' factors within historical explanations. In developing scale-hopping muscles students would, therefore, need to be open to the factors beyond those typically associated with history, including those of the natural world.

Why classrooms have not been the 'natural' place for Big History

Why have factors which relate to the natural world often been neglected in historical explanations? Why has climate change been neglected within the history curriculum? One answer, of course, is to suggest that climate change is quite outside the realm of a history curriculum; rather it is a topic better addressed by science and geography departments. It is a perfectly sound answer in my opinion. Another way of addressing the same question of 'why the neglect', however, involves a deeper engagement with the nature of history and with the origins of the discipline. Many of the traditional subjects taught in schools today developed as disciplines during the Enlightenment, each developing its own concepts, processes and boundaries, making each subject distinct from other disciplines.[22] The emergence of the scientific method, embracing all things 'natural', led to the development of the specialist fields of physics, chemistry and biology.[23] History, as a discipline, grew up in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alongside the development of nation states, and the nation has remained one of the key units of analysis that historians still use. The study of documents, and particularly those kept in national archives, became the key process in doing history, and sourcework remains a key characteristic of activity in history classrooms.[24] Furthermore, the emergence of separate disciplines led to ever-greater specialisation within each subject, with history becoming characterised by detailed in-depth study in which the 'truffle-hunter' was rewarded.[25] In this way, history developed as a subject embracing political and military factors, and, more recently, social and cultural factors. While the scope of each discipline has expanded, and these sharp distinctions have become much more blurred in recent years, especially at a higher education level, the school curriculum still divides subjects into those which prioritise 'natural' factors in their explanations and those which prioritise 'cultural' factors. Such legacies still have an impact on classroom activity today.[26]

Against this view of separate spheres of knowledge, there are compelling arguments for consilience and the 'unity' of all knowledge, although this, of course presents challenges to organising a school curriculum in practice.[27] The achievements of separate subject disciplines are considerable and, as a community of history educators, shared language and processes strengthen the quality of classroom work. Nonetheless, I would argue, the challenging complex realities that face humans today need to inform the way

in which each subjects' curriculum development moves forward. My starting premise, therefore, is that all curricular subjects need to re-evaluate their position in light of these current global challenges. Furthermore, I uphold the view of multiple futures, that the future is always uncertain, thus rejecting the despondency that any action will only amount to 'rearranging deckchairs on the *Titanic*'.[28]

But is it history?

In constructing how to move forward, there is much to build upon. Shemilt's articulation of usable historical frameworks offers helpful theorising (see Figure 1),[29] while Nuttall and Rogers both set out the advantages, as well as the limitations, of taking such Big History approaches within the classroom.[30] Hughes sets out hazards to be wary of in the teaching of environmental history (see Figure 2),[31] and Hawkey examines them in the context of secondary history classrooms.[32] One of the hazards in the teaching of environmental history, identified by Nuttall, is that using evidence does not fit easily with Big History. In my study of how Big History might be explored in history classrooms, I considered that this hazard deserves special attention, not least because it is often presented as an argument against any pursuit of Big History at all. Wineburg, for example, argues against the methodology used in the Big History Project. Living in the country of Fox News, it is perhaps not surprising that he comments:

What is most pressing for American high-school students right now, in the history-social studies curriculum, is: How do we read a text? How do we connect our ability to sharpen our intellectual capabilities when we're evaluating sources and trying to understand human motivation? [33]

Furthermore, Wineburg argues that evaluation of sources is simply not possible in relation to Big History, since it would involve highly technical engagement with original scientific reports of the Big Bang, and this is clearly beyond the scope of secondary history classrooms. These criticisms are fair ones in my view. While evidence-based work is clearly an essential part of what history teachers do, however, it is not the only aim in a history curriculum. There are other aims in a history curriculum which also need to be addressed and these may sometimes sit in tension with one other. The inclusion of Big History in a history curriculum is there, not usually as a sourcework-focused aim, but rather to serve a different purpose within the history curriculum, namely to help in the development of larger-scale historical perspectives.

A focus on evidence and a focus on Big History are both essential elements of a history education, I would argue, although they can sometimes pull in different directions.[34] Similarly, a focus on the human-scale story, as well as Big History, are both essential. The better a student becomes at history, of course, the more they can 'hold together' these potentially contradictory processes in their thinking. The complexity therein becomes the mainspring for developing higher-level, more nuanced and insightful history. This is perhaps not quite so straightforward for those in the early stages of learning history in secondary school. In the process of developing children's disciplinary knowledge

Figure 2: Some of the hazards and misconceptions to be alert to in the area of Big History

- Students regarding a Big History account as an accurate representation of the past. To address this, students need to become confident in their understanding of the nature of generalisations, including a focus on the exceptions which do not fit the general pattern.

- The past as a rigid concept; students need to understand that change and continuity can co-exist.

- The role of human agency; for example: who invented farming? In contrast to a view of history where individual human agency is stressed, Big History places a greater focus on the nature of gradual change on a historical, non-personal level.

- Inevitability in history. Because what happened in the past actually happened, students will often assume that the past has to be the way that it was.

- Comfort zones / too much too soon for staff

- Student-created grids include too much detail

- Plundering history to explain the present

- Confusing 'most powerful' with 'best'

- Open to political agendas and abuse

From Rogers (2010) and Nuttall (2013), where these issues are discussed in greater depth.

- Advocacy or 'is teaching with an environmental focus just teaching citizenship, and ecological correctness, by another name?'

- Environmental determinism or 'are the forces of nature too strong so it's all out of our hands anyway?'

- Declensionist narratives or 'are we heading for an environmental apocalypse anyway and it's too late to do anything about it?'

- Political-economic theory or 'is environmental history more revolutionary than we thought?'

From Hughes (2006) and Hawkey (2014), where these issues are discussed in greater depth.

and understanding, teachers necessarily prioritise different aspects at different times. A history teacher might focus attention on evidence in one study before focusing on a big-picture overview in the next. Ideally, and depending on the readiness of the students, teachers could also start to problematise the very process of this prioritising, to enable students to glimpse more sophisticated ways of approaching an issue. This may enable those students to see, for example, how the evidence study connects up to bigger pictures in history and the development of historical perspective.

In summary, I consider that developing historical perspectives is a welcome aim of the new curriculum. I have suggested that, in addressing this, a curriculum should be developed that is both futures-facing, by seeing a continuum between past, present and future, as well as one which aims for more porous boundaries between human and natural factors in the historical accounts students construct. Furthermore, a focus on Big History does not mean abandoning other key disciplinary elements which characterise the best history lessons.

1 Problematising dominant perspectives

There is a wonderful activity in the newly-published textbook *Sense of History, 1509-1745* (Hodder, 2014). On one page the authors describe how they discussed what they might select as the defining event of the period. They end up selecting the famous woodcut of the execution of Charles I, and follow this up with a question, 'What does this tell us about the period?' They follow this on the next page with a different defining image that they might have chosen, namely a graph of the Mini Ice Age. This is then followed by a question to engage with, 'What does this choice tell us about the period?'

There are other examples which could be used that begin to problematise dominant perspectives:

- 20th century. Which defining image of the 20th century will you choose? Figures of the number of deaths in the Holocaust? Or figures of population growth during the course of the 20th century? What does our choice tell us about the period?

- When did the Anthropocene (an informal geological term for the proposed epoch that began when human activities had a significant global impact on the earth's ecosystems) start? With industrialisation or with the start of agriculture?

- When did history start? At the Big Bang? From the migration out of Africa? With the start of written records?

- Was the general crisis of the 17th century social, economic or environmental in origin?

- How far does population growth account for the Rwandan genocide of 1994?

2 New vocabulary

New inclusions in a history curriculum call for the inclusion of a new vocabulary. Perhaps we need to start talking in terms of environmental factors, alongside those we are more familiar with using, such as social, economic, and political. A study of many familiar topics would benefit from the inclusion of 'environmental' as a factor when considering causation and consequences, for example, in relation to: the Black Death, the French Revolution and the industrial revolution.

Here are some other terms we might want to start including in our history curriculum:

- Holocene
- Anthropocene
- Deep history
- Little Ice Age
- Medieval Warm Period
- The Great Acceleration

3 Thematic stories / little big histories with more porous boundaries between human and natural factors

e.g. i. Thematic story of energy use over time. This could include: how the harnessing of sources of energy transform societies, from fire to human and horse power; solar energy and agriculture; the intensification of agriculture; the development of industry; current use of fossil fuels.

e.g. ii. Thematic story of sustainability over time. This could include: foraging-hunting; shift to agriculture; the rise of civilisations (including the importance of irrigation); the fall of civilisations (including the importance of salination of irrigation; climate change); examples of (arguable) sustainability (e.g. rationing in World War II; Clean Air Act following the Great Smog of 1952; North American Indians) and the challenges to, and collapse of, sustainable societies (e.g. Easter Island); utopian ideas about sustainability, theory and practice (e.g. More's *Utopia*; Study of the Diggers); the question of whether human societies can live in sustainable ways.

e.g. iii. A little big history of climate change

Task 1: Can you sequence these events and add dates? (card-sort activity).
Aim of task: to provide a little big history of climate change and introduce some key terms.

Younger Dryas	Big Freeze	12,000 years BP
Holocene	10,000 years BP	_____ Warm Period
_____ Warm Period	250 BC – 400 AD/CE	563 CE event
Warm and wet	Drought	Drought
Little Ice Age	Laki eruption	Cool Period
The Great Acceleration	1783-84	Drought
The year without a summer	1815	Tambora eruption
Anthropocene		

Task 2: Can you identify the impacts of these events (and match with the dates in the first task?)
Aim of task: to link changes in climate to cultural and historical change.

Stradivari violins made	Witch hunts	Development of fireplace hoods
Development of the enclosed stove	Development of buttons and button-holes	Swiss Alp villages destroyed by advancing glaciers
Food poverty, famine	Food poverty, famine	Settlement of Greenland
	Egyptian civilisation declines	More food
Population growth	Better growing conditions	3000 BC
Growing wine in England	The Great Famine	1315-17
Start of agriculture	17th-century General Crisis	Black Death
Migration Period	400-800 AD/CE	

Moving forward, looking back

So now, back to climate change and what might be done practically to develop students' historical perspectives towards this in history classrooms. I want to suggest three levels at which teachers can begin to engage with the issues (see Figure 3).

I have run sessions with PGCE groups focusing on the teaching of thematic stories (or 'little big histories') such as climate change and, unsurprisingly, the biggest problem encountered has been that of a lack of subject knowledge. [35] This, of course, is always the case when a curriculum shifts to include new elements. There is a need to address this, not only to introduce teachers to new perspectives they can include in the curriculum, but also to create materials suitable for classroom use. There are signs that this is beginning to happen in relation to classroom materials, but these are still small beginnings in my opinion, and much more is needed.[36] An audit of what is already available would be helpful. In particular, more is needed in relation to developing support for teachers extending their subject knowledge and confidence in this area.

I have argued that a part of the requirement of the 2014 National Curriculum to develop 'historical perspective' needs to include an engagement with the historical nature of some of the most pressing issues facing society today, and I have focused principally on the issue of climate change. While the readiness of some teachers to take on such a challenge may be some way off, there is clear scope for such issues to be included within the 2014 History National Curriculum where, for example, teachers could focus on climate change in the requirements to include 'at least one study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments.'[37] As with all curriculum development, moving forward will involve risk, teachers taking 'chances', and experimenting in their teaching. [38] Let us hope the pages of *Teaching History* can share these experiences among the wider history education community as we continue to move forward, looking back.

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Migration into Britain since Roman times

Exam board OCR introduces a challenging new strand into GCSE History for 2016

OCR will be offering students the chance to explore migration over the centuries in new History GCSEs for teaching from 2016. Mike Goddard, OCR's Head of History, explains the thinking behind the new GCSEs.

What's the thinking behind this new GCSE topic?

From 2016, all GCSE history courses will have to contain a thematic element. Migration to Britain is an ideal lens through which to study change and continuity over a long sweep of history, and also to deepen understanding of the major events of our past. It works so well as a thematic study that we were keen to provide it as an option in both of our reformed GCSE specifications.

We wanted to provide a range of theme options. The migration theme (in different formats) will be one of three that history departments can opt for in each of our two GCSE qualifications (as an alternative to health or crime in the new OCR SHP specification, or to power or war and society in our new Explaining the Modern World course). We were trying to do three main things in developing the migration themes: to create an interesting and relevant new element to GCSE History courses that will appeal to both students and teachers, to work in partnership with subject associations and experts, and to reflect recent academic research. So much work is being done in universities on migration at the moment (such as the fascinating and ground-breaking work by the England's Immigrants project which

has shed new light on England's population during the period 1330-1550 – but there are many other examples) and it is great to be able to get this fresh, up-to-the-minute research straight into the classroom. OCR will ensure that a lot of this recent research will be worked up into resources for use in GCSE classrooms, and, by working closely with development partners – such as the Schools History Project (SHP) and Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA) – during the writing of the specification content, we can support teachers who opt to teach this course.

What are the benefits for students?

We think this is going to be a really engaging and thought-provoking course for students. Students will be required to demonstrate that they understand the reasons people migrated to Britain, the experience of migrants in Britain and their impact on Britain.

By understanding the broader context of migration into Britain over time, we also hope that they'll see a particular relevance to today's society – not just regarding the arguments about immigration played out daily in the news but also about themselves and their communities.

One of the DfE's subject aims for GCSE History is that students' courses 'should

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Martin Spafford, secondary school teacher for more than 20 years, SHP fellow, HA honorary fellow and member of the BASA education committee, is excited about the new Migration theme.

"In The Prelude (1805), William Wordsworth describes his arrival in London and the people he sees:

'The Italian ... Jew ... Turk ... Swede ... Russian ... Frenchman ... Spaniard... from remote America the hunter-Indian ... Moors, Malays, Lascars, Tartars, Chinese ... And Negro ladies in white muslin gowns.'

"Our cultural diversity is nothing new. The movement of people to and from these islands which was happening long before the Romans arrived and continues until now, has shaped fundamentally who we are. Migration has always been at the heart of our political, economic, social and cultural story."

"The course will zoom down to a 'history from below' full of personal stories: Dutch brewers and clothmakers kickstarting East Anglian industries, kidnapped Icelandic children in the West country, Jewish families under attack

in York, Italian bankers keeping medieval England's economy afloat, Huguenot silk merchants thriving in Spitalfields, African communities in Early Modern England, Irish navvies building roads and railways, Bengali and Yemeni seamen settling in multicultural port communities, Germans and Austrians interned as 'enemy aliens', postwar arrivals of our students' grandparents and great grandparents, refugees from 21st century conflict. The story is sometimes of antagonism and resistance but often of acceptance and assimilation. The course will also zoom out to look at major turning points in Britain and the wider world that shaped migration: religious turmoil, European and global wars, the rise of capitalism, enslavement and empire, industrial revolution, decolonisation and European 'open borders'."

"The unit is both about 'ordinary' lives – reasons for migration, experiences undergone and the extent of impact – and about Britain's complex relationship with the world and how this affected the lives of communities. It offers an opportunity for meaningful local study, whether through oral histories and the resources in local history museums and archives, or by investigating the evidence of population change in the

environment around a school. It is rigorous and informed by current scholarship: students will be at the cutting edge of historical research such as the England's Immigrants database launched in February this year, ("In the late middle ages, no one was more than 10 miles from an immigrant" – Prof Mark Ormrod, University of York) or the parish records collected by BASA showing that people of African and Asian origin were widely dispersed throughout England from the 16th century. It equips students with the historical understanding to enable them to grapple with key current issues under debate. It provides a context to understand the modern world and Britain's place in it."

"Offering a fresh but essential way of looking at this country's history, it should excite and fascinate young people, help them make sense of an apparently changing world that also embodies surprising continuity, and enable them to see the relevance to their lives of an approach to history education that encourages them to 'see themselves in the story' whether they are in a multicultural urban environment or a small community that – they will discover – is far less monocultural than we may think."

prepare them for a role as informed, thoughtful and active citizens'. Our GCSEs will provide many opportunities for just that, as well as drawing students into the study and hopefully love of history through the exploration of previously unheard but fascinating stories.

What feedback have you had from the history community?

Enthusiastic! After more than a year of consultation, working with our partners at SHP and BASA, and bouncing ideas off the teachers on our forums, we announced our plans for the new migration strand at the end of 2014. We expected a fairly big reaction, and that's what happened. Academics and publishers, keen to work together in producing support materials and to bid for funding to keep research into this vital area of history going, got in touch.

Even the Daily Mail welcomed our plans, if cautiously, with an acknowledgment that 'from the earliest times, immigration has played a central role in shaping the story of our maritime nation. Indeed there can barely be a British citizen alive without ancestors from overseas – whether Saxon, Roman, Jewish, Irish, Indian, African or from anywhere else.'

As well as new textbooks and interactive resources, such as timelines, we're confident that more locally-based resources will be produced: a key part of one of our new migration themes (in the Explaining the Modern World specification) is a study of urban environments. This is a real chance to see that history doesn't just exist in books, but is all around us. Teachers have been particularly enthused about this, and, for example, the opportunity to use local museums and archives.

Above all, it was great to see common understanding that this won't be a politically partisan course, pushing any particular argument, but rather an opportunity to present what up-to-the-minute research suggests has happened and to report the existence of contrary views. All signs are that this will be a vibrant and well-supported addition to GCSE history, and we hope that teachers and students will really enjoy the course.

The Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury docks in June 1948, with nearly 500 Jamaicans on board who had responded to an advert offering cheap passage for anyone who wanted to work in the UK.

Photo: Daily Herald Archive / Science & Society Picture Library

'Why am I accused of being a heretic?'

A pedagogical framework for stimulating historical contextualisation

One of the challenges facing students who want to make sense of a source or an interpretation of the past is the need to place it in its context. Various research studies have shown that students tend instead to approach sources and interpretations with a form of 'presentism' resulting in a number of misconceptions and misunderstandings. Huijgen and Holthuis share in this article the results from a research project conducted into how students might be helped to overcome presentism through an emphasis on historical contextualisation. In particular, they outline a three-stage pedagogical model that was used to help pupils reconstruct the context of a source, and they set out their findings from their evaluation of this strategy.

Tim Huijgen and Paul Holthuis
Tim Huijgen and Paul Holthuis teach at the Department of Teacher Education of the University of Groningen, Netherlands.

In the very popular Dutch novel for young adults *Crusade in Jeans*, written by Thea Beckman, the teenager Rudolf Wega is accidently transported back in time to the thirteenth century in Germany.[1] At that moment, the German children's crusade of 1212 is occurring, and Rudolf decides to join this crusade. With his twentieth-century mind-set, he is wondering about many things along the way, such as the treatment of diseases, people's clothing and being accusing of being a heretic. Although Rudolf has made many close friends among the participants in the children's crusade, he succeeds in travelling back to his own time at the end of the book. For history education, it is unfortunate that time-travelling, such as that described in *Crusade in Jeans*, will remain the exclusive domain of writers and Hollywood because of limitations of time and space. As many students experience the past as an open book, it would be very effective for a teacher to have the opportunity to travel with a group of students back to medieval Britain when teaching about the medieval state and society, or to travel to Verdun in France when teaching about the First World War.[2] Such an opportunity would be especially useful for history teachers because, in contrast to teachers of school subjects such as math and languages, they often cannot refer to an existing and familiar world for students.

Many students view the past from a present-oriented perspective and tend to see history subconsciously (rather than consciously) through their own ethical, moral and cultural perspectives formed based on their personal experiences.[3] Research in social psychology discusses 'the curse of knowledge'. This cognitive bias makes it difficult for people who have more knowledge to think from the perspective of less-well-informed people.[4] This form of *presentism* can generate a difficult problem for students because in contemporary history education, they are asked to consider that the past differs from the present.[5] Students' present-oriented perspectives can obstruct their understanding of historical phenomena and historical decision-making and can easily lead to drawing the wrong conclusions about what actually happened.[6] For example, students without historical contextual knowledge find it difficult to explain why a person in Germany in the 1930s voted for Hitler or why women who were accused of witchery were burned to death in the Middle Ages.

In order to overcome their present-orientated perspective, students need to be able to understand the past in its own context. Historical contextualisation involves interpreting and understanding historical phenomena by creating in one's mind a specific historical context based on the characteristics of the time and place of the phenomena.[7] Having such a context in one's mind is a necessary condition of numerous other historical tasks, such as using sources, developing a line of argument and dealing with chronology. For this reason, the ability to perform historical contextualisation is incorporated into the history curricula of many countries, including the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In the United Kingdom, for example, the purpose of the history curriculum is for students to 'gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales'.[8]

In this article, we present a pedagogical framework consisting of three consecutive stages that can help teachers and students contextualise the past. The framework was

Figure 1: Poster for the English film *Crusade: march through Time* (2006), directed by Ben Sombogaart.
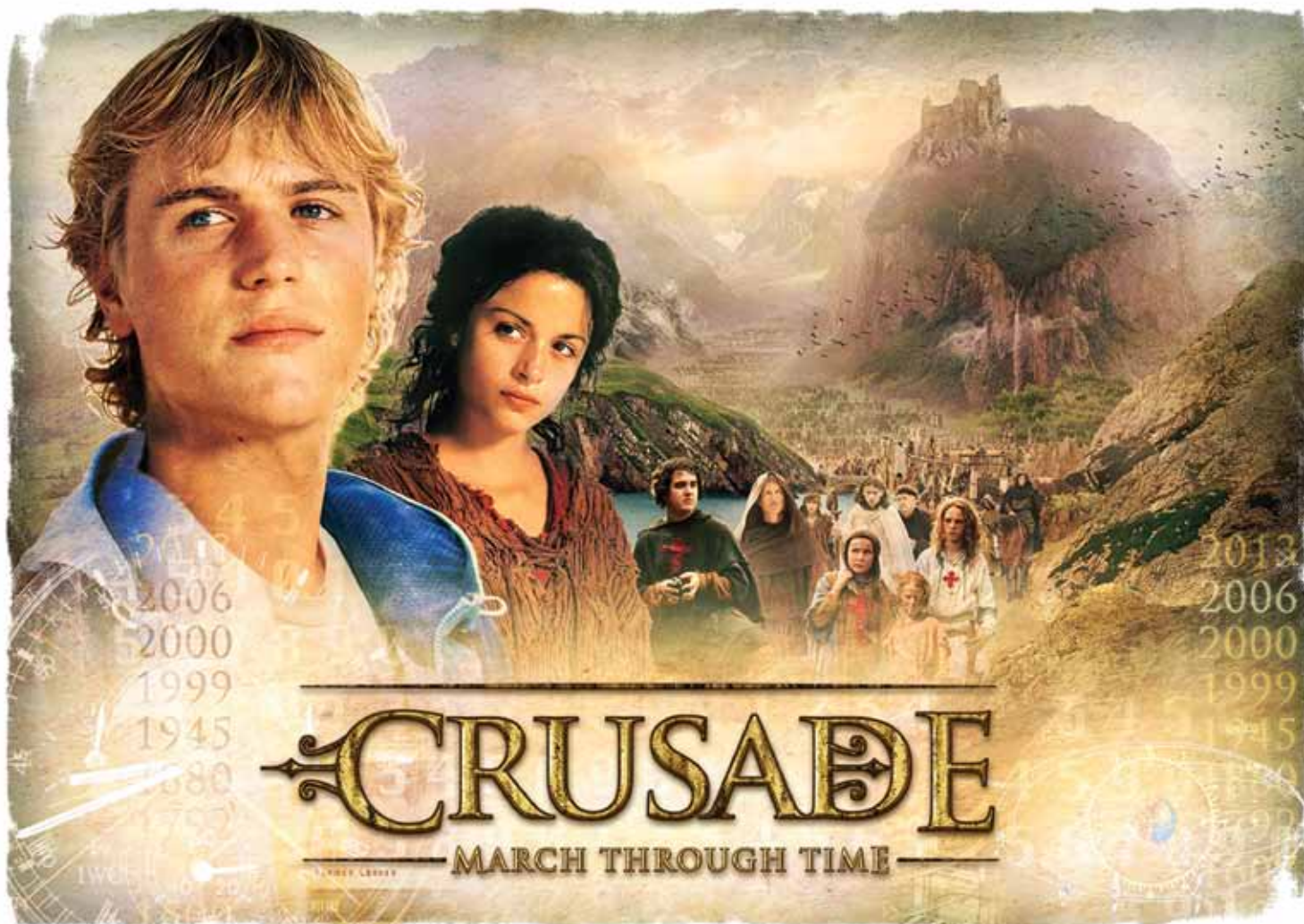
developed and tested among 82 pre-university secondary-school students in a two-year research project led by the Department of Teacher Education of the University of Groningen. We first present some background information on the research project. Next, we present the different stages of the framework and present our findings from testing the framework, and, finally, we discuss the practical implications of the framework.

The research project

The framework for stimulating historical contextualisation was developed within the Dutch research project *VEKOBO*.[9] This research project was a collaboration of the Department of Teacher Education of the NHL University of Applied Sciences and the Department of Teacher Education of the University of Groningen and was financed by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences. Three history teacher educators from the NHL University of Applied Sciences and two history teacher educators from the University of Groningen were involved in the research project. Furthermore, two expert elementary school teachers and three expert secondary-school history teachers completed the research team.

The project's aim was threefold: 1) to examine which practical problems history teachers encounter during their lessons, 2) to design and evaluate practical tools for helping students and history teachers with these problems, and

Figure 2: Students' score for historical contextualisation and present-oriented-perspective (n=1,270)
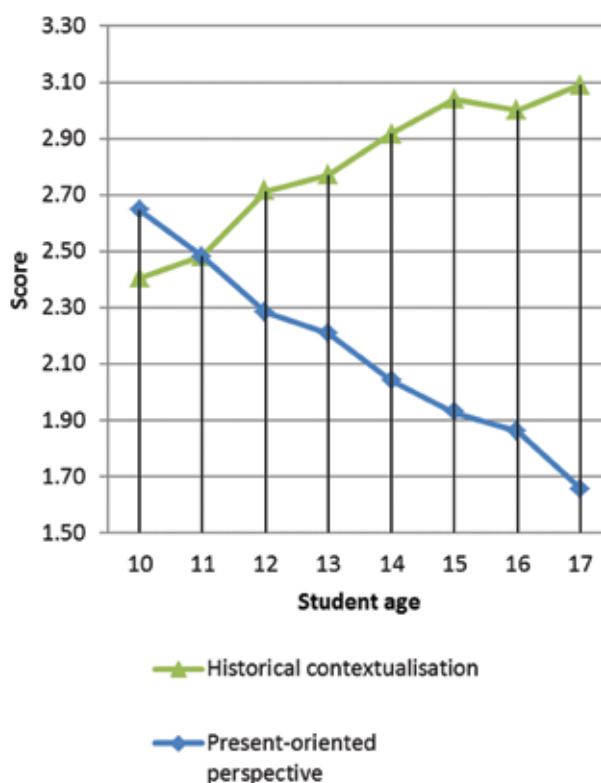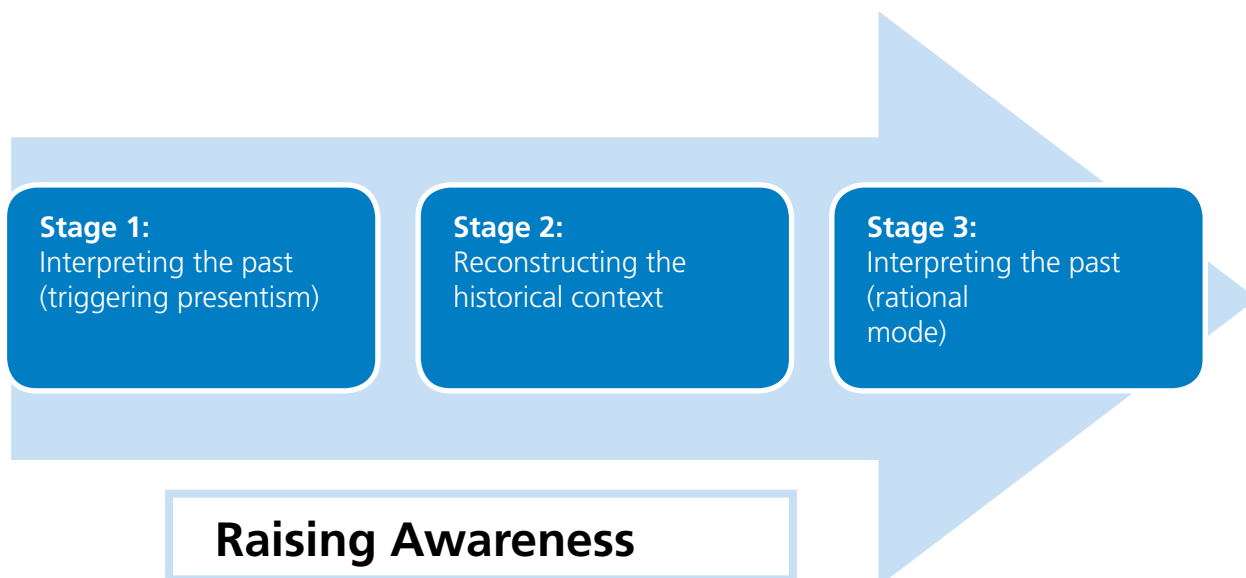
Figure 3: Pedagogical framework for stimulating historical contextualisation

Stage 1:	Stage 2:	Stage 3:
Interpreting the past (triggering presentism)	Reconstructing the historical context	Interpreting the past (rational mode)

Raising Awareness

3) to increase the expertise and academic skills of the teachers and teachers' educators who participated in the research project. The research methodology of the project was action-based research, and reliance on continuous feedback from the work field and a widespread dissemination of the project results were two important principles of the project.

Developing the framework

In research conducted earlier, we tested 1,270 upper elementary and secondary-school students aged from 10 to 17 years old using a validated instrument to measure their ability to perform historical contextualisation and their present-oriented perspective taking.[10] The results are displayed in Figure 2. The scores for present-oriented perspective and historical contextualisation are shown on a four-point scale. A high score for historical contextualisation reflects strong student ability regarding historical contextualisation. A high score for present-oriented perspective reflects a high score for students' present-oriented thinking. The older students performed better in historical contextualisation compared with the younger students. Having said that, even students between 11 and 17 years old obtained no higher than 3.10 out of a maximum score of 4.0 for historical contextualisation.

Based on these results and their own classroom experience, the participants in the project chose to examine the problem of historical contextualisation and developed a pedagogical framework that could stimulate historical contextualisation among students. This framework consists of three consecutive stages, as we present in Figure 3. The framework is based on the theory of *constructive controversy*. This instructional procedure is designed to create intellectual conflict among students, and this theory has proved to be very effective for student learning.[11] Be that as it may, research shows that many teachers do not stimulate intellectual conflicts in classrooms because they lack knowledge about operational procedures to guide them.[12] With the development of the framework, we hope to provide guidance for history teachers on how to stimulate constructive controversy to achieve

historical contextualisation. In the next section, we provide a description and explanation of each stage of the framework.

Stage 1:
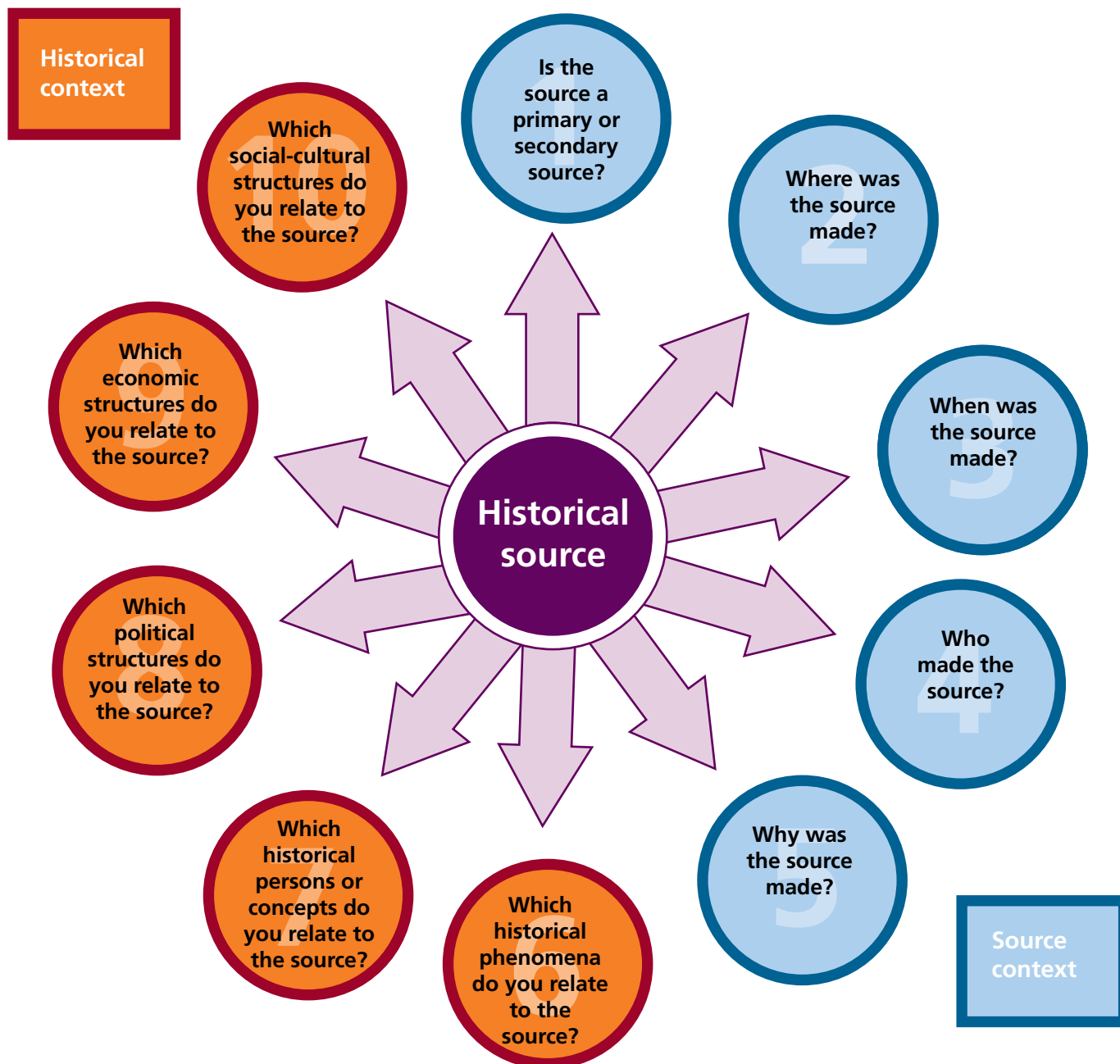### Interpreting the past (triggering presentism)
When interpreting the past, students should be taught to be aware of the biased nature of their assumptions and of the moral values that they already possess. More often than not, the foundations on which interpretations are built are constructed by a present-oriented perspective.[13] Therefore, the first stage of our teaching is aimed at triggering and visualising the present-oriented perspectives (presentism) of students and making them aware of their biased position. This stage also gives teachers the opportunity to examine the extent to which presentism plays a role among their students. There are many ways for teachers to trigger and visualise present-oriented perspectives among students. For example, teachers can confront their students with provocative historical sources or statements and have them react to them. Teachers can also ask their students to explain historical phenomena that students may find controversial, such as the persecution of Christians or slavery.

Stage 2:
Reconstructing the Historical Context
Whereas stage one focuses on triggering presentism, stage two asks students to reconstruct in their minds a historical context for historical phenomena. To help do so, we developed the historical contextualisation tool shown in Figure 4. The first five steps of the tool consist of questions related to the context of a source, such as 'When was the source constructed?' (question three) and 'Who made the source?' (question four). These questions are crucial because students too often tend to examine only the content of historical sources and not the source itself (the context of the source), although considering the source is viewed as a crucial part of achieving historical contextualisation.[14]

Questions six to ten consist of more associative questions aimed at structurally reconstructing the historical context using different frames of references. In other research that we

Figure 4: Tool for reconstructing the historical context

Historical context

- **Which social-cultural structures do you relate to the source?** (10)
- **Is the source a primary or secondary source?** (1)
- **Where was the source made?** (2)
- **Which economic structures do you relate to the source?** (9)
- **When was the source made?** (3)
- **Historical source**
- **Who made the source?** (4)
- **Which political structures do you relate to the source?** (8)
- **Why was the source made?** (5)
- **Which historical persons or concepts do you relate to the source?** (7)
- **Which historical phenomena do you relate to the source?** (6)

Source context

conducted focusing on the strategies and knowledge students use to perform historical contextualisation, we found that many students often use one-dimensional knowledge. For example, they use only knowledge about social-economic circumstances to reconstruct the historical context. They do not consider other dimensions, such as social-political or social-cultural knowledge, in their reasoning. Students who do use and combine more distinct frames of reference achieved higher scores for historical contextualisation.[15]

By allowing students to answer these questions regarding the source context and the historical context to reconstruct the historical context, we expect that a constructive controversy may arise in the form of intellectual conflict for students who exhibited a present-oriented perspective. Students will begin to distance themselves from their possible intuitive (and present-oriented) judgements made in stage one, moving towards interpreting historical phenomena from a more rational perspective in stage two.

Stage 3:
Interpreting the past (rational mode)
In the last stage of our framework, students again interpret the past, but in contrast to stage one, students should become more conscious of the importance of being critical of their own intuitive beliefs when interpreting the past. In this stage, students should be aware that the past differs from the present in many aspects; for example, people in the past had different moral beliefs and norms. Teachers could test and check the progress of their students, for example, by asking them whether and why their explanations and statements about historical phenomena have changed relative to their explanations and statements in stage one. Are students now more aware of their possible present-oriented perspectives? Did students reconstruct the historical context, and does this lead to students' improved abilities in argumentation, reasoning and explanation of the historical phenomena? Do students in the third stage explain and evaluate the past more from a rational mode than from the perspective of presentism?

The aim of the entire framework is to make students aware that present-oriented perspectives can hinder the ability to explain historical phenomena and that reconstructing a historical context can assist in explaining and interpreting historical phenomena. Wineburg argued that historical thinking is not a natural process: on the contrary, historical thinking contrasts with how people naturally think.[16] Teachers who use the different stages of the framework as an instructional procedure could therefore help students in doubting their first intuitive reactions and stimulate critical historical thinking.

Testing the pedagogical framework

We tested this pedagogical framework among 82 Dutch pre-university secondary school students from two different schools in two age categories: the first category consisted of 51 students aged 14-16. The second category consisted of 31 students aged 16-18. In Figure 5, we display the source that we centralised in the different stages of the framework: a 1932 election poster of Hitler's political party: the Nazi Party.

### Testing the first stage: interpreting the past (triggering presentism)

The source was presented on a separate hand-out and students first had the opportunity to examine the source. The hand-out also contained specific questions aimed at triggering present-oriented perspectives, which students had to answer on the hand-out. One of the questions, for example, was whether students could have voted for Hitler. After the students answered the questions, their answers were discussed in a full classroom discussion.

Students in the age category of 14-16 years old displayed far more present-oriented perspectives: 12 of the 51 students displayed in their reasoning a present-oriented perspective compared with three of the 31 students in the age category of 16-18 years old. As an example of a present-oriented perspective, one student in the 14-16 age category noted 'I would never vote for Hitler, because he was responsible for the death of millions of people'. The poster, however, is dated 1932, before the outbreak of the Second World War. This student used the knowledge that we now have but forgot that Germans in 1932 did not possess the same knowledge. In the 16-18 age group, most students realised that an answer to this question would now be different compared with the situation in 1932. One student noted that 'many Germans were being manipulated during those times. Hitler was being glorified, and many people did not see any evil in the man. Today, nobody would ever be able to vote for Hitler because we now know what he has done'.

Testing the second stage: reconstructing the historical context

Next, students in both age categories used the contextualisation tool to reconstruct the historical context for the election poster of the Nazi Party of 1932. First, the students received a short instruction and explanation of the historical contextualisation tool. Because our goal was to stimulate historical contextualisation rather than to test historical content knowledge, the students could use their textbooks if they needed to find information to answer questions

Figure 5: 'Our last hope: Hitler'.
Election poster of the Nazi Party of 1932.
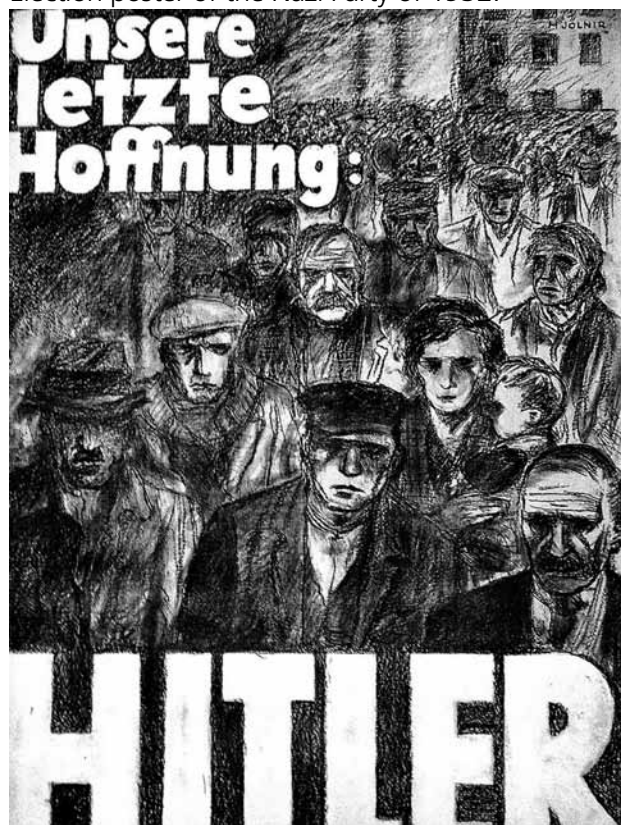
while using the tool. The students could write down their answers on a separate hand-out, and their answers were subsequently discussed in a full classroom discussion.

The source context questions (Figure 4, Questions 1-5) often resulted in the same answers for students in both age categories, though students in the 12-14 age category were less explicit in their formulations compared with students in the 16-18 age category. Furthermore, the students aged 14 to 16 struggled more with Q5 (Why was the source made?) than the older students did. All students in both age categories succeeded in answering the historical context questions (Figure 4, Questions 6-10), but the students aged 16 presented more sophisticated and extensive answers compared with the students in the 14-16 age category.

Testing the third stage: interpreting the past (rational mode)

After discussing the answers to these questions, the students progressed to the third stage and were asked to react to the question of whether the contextualisation tool had changed their answer to the question of whether they might have voted for Hitler. In the first age category (ages 14-16), 40 out of 51 students (78%) claimed that their answer had not changed compared with 11 students (22%) who answered that it had changed. In the first stage of the framework, there were 12 students who displayed presentism. Only one student could still not understand why somebody could vote for Hitler ('I still cannot imagine that somebody in the 1930s could not see the evil of Hitler. This is just obvious, is it not?'). For the older students (ages 16-18), out of a total of 31 students, 28 (nearly 90%) did not change their initial answer, whereas three students (10%) did change their answer. These three students had exhibited a present-oriented perspective in stage one.

Younger students from the first age category explained their changed answers using arguments such as 'now you

know more about the political chaos from which Hitler benefited' or 'I did not know that there was an economic crisis in Germany back then, and, therefore, I changed my interpretation of the source'. Interestingly, some students aged 16-18 in stage one correctly outlined why a person in the 1930s could have voted for Hitler but noted that the historical contextualisation tool used in stage two helped to shape their argumentation, as the following explanation demonstrates: 'I used to know only a few consequences of Hitler's approach. When I arrived at stage two, I was forced to think a bit longer on the issue, and I concluded that I missed some other things, such as the Germans having almost no experience with the concept of democracy'.

What did the students think of using the framework?

After completing all three stages of the framework, we used a questionnaire for all students and augmented this with semi-structured interviews with four students (two from each age category) to analyse whether the students regarded the framework as a useful tool. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions with a five-point response scale. In general, younger students appreciated the framework more than older students did. Almost 70% of the younger students claimed that the framework helped them to understand historical phenomena. The historical contextualisation tool used in stage two was considered particularly useful: nearly 80% of the students thought that it could be a helpful tool in solving assignments that included using and interpreting historical sources. The students from the older age category found the tool less helpful: only 65% considered the tool to be useful. One student from the 16-18-year-old category noted in the interview that the tool did not change his answers to the questions in stage one but that the tool changed his perspective on the source material. 'It forced me to spend more time thinking about the historical situation, and it made me see that there were even more factors that played a role'.

Practical implications of the framework

This article presents a pedagogical framework for stimulating historical contextualisation based on the theory of *constructive controversy*. The framework consists of three consecutive stages and focuses on triggering present-oriented perspectives, reconstructing the historical context and making students aware of their present-oriented thinking when interpreting the past. We tested our framework among 82 pre-university students divided into two different age categories, and our findings regarding the use of the framework are positive. We assume that younger students profit more from the framework than older students do because younger students appear to suffer more from present-oriented thinking. Having said that, for students who did not suffer from presentism, the framework still strengthened their argumentation when interpreting the past because the framework demands reconstructing a context as completely as possible. History teachers could therefore use the framework not only for discouraging present-oriented thinking and stimulating historical contextualisation but also for evaluating historical sources and providing guidance for argumentation when interpreting the past.

Because many teachers struggle with shaping instruction to create constructive controversy in the classroom, we hope that our framework can contribute to stimulating constructive controversy – in a structured manner – in history classrooms. In the words of Seixas and Peck, 'History education should be about teaching students to critically study the past – to prevent them from being overwhelmed by it […] Students' ability to use testimonies for this reconstruction does not, however, evolve automatically: it demands a development of structured education'.[17]

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move me On

The problem page for history mentors

This issue's problem:

Arthur Wellesley is struggling to model tasks effectively for students

Arthur has made a positive start to his training, but remains rather nervous in the classroom. He recognises the importance of well-planned lessons and his outline plans generally have a clear, logical structure. His mentor thinks that he is pretty good at identifying the central objectives and ensuring that there is a strong line of connection between his intended outcomes and the sequence of activities that he has devised. In trying to execute his plans, however, his own understanding of the nature and purpose of the particular tasks seems to get in the way of explaining them to students. Because he is familiar with the activities, he tends to assume that the students share his awareness of what is required and will know automatically what they should be doing and why. As a result, his instructions tend to be quite vague and many of the students simply miss the point altogether or become very confused about what is expected of them.
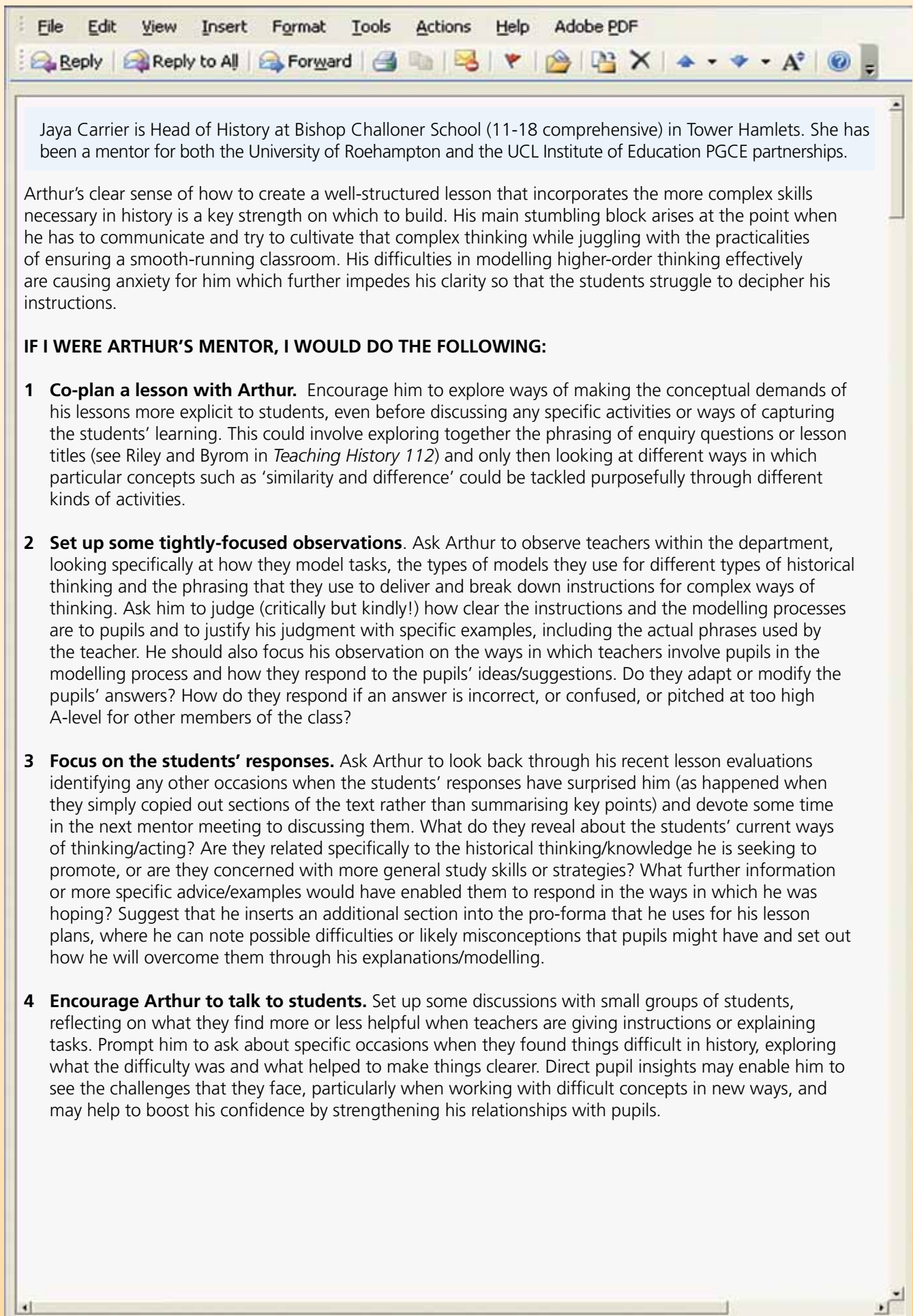
Arthur is becoming much more aware of the problem, although this has been quite a slow realisation. Initially he tried to check on understanding by asking a student to recap on the instructions, explaining in their own words what the class needed to do. Unfortunately, he has still tended to under-estimate what is required, particularly failing to recognise some of the conceptual demands that he is making until he actually looks at the students' work or hears their questions as he is going round the class. He still tends to focus in planning on the mechanics of what has to be done, and was encouraged in this respect by recent success in organising his Year 8 class quickly into mixed groups, allowing them to share with one another what they had each learned from different case studies. He still isn't thinking enough about how to make the cognitive demands explicit, however, and therefore fails to illustrate the kind of thinking or argument in which the students need to engage. On the one or two occasions when he has really tried to take account of the students, and has tried to model it *with* them, he has quickly become overwhelmed by the challenges of trying to listen carefully and respond to their answers, while also capturing them in some way on the board so that they can serve as a reminder for other students. He becomes easily flustered and his anxiety tends to result in even more garbled explanations or instructions. On one recent occasion (with the same Year 8 class) he found himself writing up an example that wasn't really valid, which left the students more confused than ever!

An extract from a recent lesson plan, with Arthur's own reflections

Overarching enquiry question: **Was Britain really 'alone' after the fall of France?**

Lesson objective(s)	• Identify and explain the range of roles played by volunteers from across the Empire. • Describe the extent of variation in the experiences of different volunteers.

Timings	Activity	Evaluation and reflections
9.20 – 9.35	Give out individual case studies (seven copies of each, with Billy Strachan's case for the weaker readers). Explain task – to fill in first row of their table with information about their particular individual.	Handed the sheets out OK – weaker readers got the shortest, most straightforward case. I hadn't expected so many to copy out whole sentences rather than summarising the role the individual played within the RAF, and the way they were treated. I need to model the process of summarising key information (difficult when they're all looking at different examples).
9.35 – 9.55	Re-organise the class into seven groups of four students (so each group includes an 'expert' about each of the four individuals. (Display seating plan for groups.) Explain that they need first to share with each other what they have learned about their particular individual then they need to consider the extent of similarity/difference between the experiences of all four men.	Sorted the groups quite smoothly – great to have group numbers on individual sheets and a seating plan. Sharing information was poor – most just dictated to the others what they should write, or swapped sheets and copied. Several groups never got to the similarities and differences. Those that did weren't sure what to compare – just the work that different individuals did, or the reactions they encountered as well? Only one group really got the idea of *some* similarities and *some* differences – but didn't know whether/how to write down their decisions. One group seemed to be trying to find the best matched pairs! Needed much more help with the 'extent' of variation – and how to express it.
9.55 – 10.05	Display series of four statements (generalisations) on the board. Explain task: decide whether each is true or false. Copy the true ones and write a corrected version for those that are false.	True/false aspect seemed engaging. They did use specific examples to explain why some statements weren't right – but hardly anyone actually wrote a modified version, using qualifying language. Needed to model this.

Extract from the mentor's observation notes on a subsequent lesson

Observation focus	Explanations and instructions – ensuring that the students are confident about what they are being asked to do and understand how to tackle the task.

Strengths in relation to focus	• You recognised the need to model the task with them, rather than simply giving instructions. • Excellent idea for them to hear the text of the radio broadcast read aloud. (*But see my comments below!*) Really important with unfamiliar vocabulary or if it seems daunting. It also helped them to realise that people would have heard it on the radio. • Good to see how you made the text accessible for Alex and Iram. Cutting the final section made it less overwhelming and better spaced, and good to have one example already marked up on the text.
Aspects for further development	• Asking a student to read aloud was problematic *for this particular source* – you needed to read/perform it yourself, to give an impression of the tone of voice and style of delivery. When you want them to draw inferences from the tone/ style of the text (not just from the content) about the speaker's attitude to their audience, students need help to 'hear' those tones. • An excellent idea to use three different colours to note different features of the text – but you got really muddled when it came to asking for examples of each. After the early mix-up about which pen was which, you became so preoccupied with getting the colour right for the next one that you didn't actually ask the students to *explain* how that particular phrase told you about the audience or about the speaker's attitude. The thinking got lost in all the mechanics. • You *did* spot the problem and tried hard with the last example. Unfortunately the phrase Fiona picked wasn't well chosen and you got into a mess trying to help her to justify it, rather than asking whether it was fair to read quite so much into it.

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Reply   Reply to All   Forward

Jaya Carrier is Head of History at Bishop Challoner School (11-18 comprehensive) in Tower Hamlets. She has been a mentor for both the University of Roehampton and the UCL Institute of Education PGCE partnerships.

Arthur's clear sense of how to create a well-structured lesson that incorporates the more complex skills necessary in history is a key strength on which to build. His main stumbling block arises at the point when he has to communicate and try to cultivate that complex thinking while juggling with the practicalities of ensuring a smooth-running classroom. His difficulties in modelling higher-order thinking effectively are causing anxiety for him which further impedes his clarity so that the students struggle to decipher his instructions.

IF I WERE ARTHUR'S MENTOR, I WOULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

1 **Co-plan a lesson with Arthur.** Encourage him to explore ways of making the conceptual demands of his lessons more explicit to students, even before discussing any specific activities or ways of capturing the students' learning. This could involve exploring together the phrasing of enquiry questions or lesson titles (see Riley and Byrom in *Teaching History 112*) and only then looking at different ways in which particular concepts such as 'similarity and difference' could be tackled purposefully through different kinds of activities.

2 **Set up some tightly-focused observations**. Ask Arthur to observe teachers within the department, looking specifically at how they model tasks, the types of models they use for different types of historical thinking and the phrasing that they use to deliver and break down instructions for complex ways of thinking. Ask him to judge (critically but kindly!) how clear the instructions and the modelling processes are to pupils and to justify his judgment with specific examples, including the actual phrases used by the teacher. He should also focus his observation on the ways in which teachers involve pupils in the modelling process and how they respond to the pupils' ideas/suggestions. Do they adapt or modify the pupils' answers? How do they respond if an answer is incorrect, or confused, or pitched at too high A-level for other members of the class?

3 **Focus on the students' responses.** Ask Arthur to look back through his recent lesson evaluations identifying any other occasions when the students' responses have surprised him (as happened when they simply copied out sections of the text rather than summarising key points) and devote some time in the next mentor meeting to discussing them. What do they reveal about the students' current ways of thinking/acting? Are they related specifically to the historical thinking/knowledge he is seeking to promote, or are they concerned with more general study skills or strategies? What further information or more specific advice/examples would have enabled them to respond in the ways in which he was hoping? Suggest that he inserts an additional section into the pro-forma that he uses for his lesson plans, where he can note possible difficulties or likely misconceptions that pupils might have and set out how he will overcome them through his explanations/modelling.

4 **Encourage Arthur to talk to students.** Set up some discussions with small groups of students, reflecting on what they find more or less helpful when teachers are giving instructions or explaining tasks. Prompt him to ask about specific occasions when they found things difficult in history, exploring what the difficulty was and what helped to make things clearer. Direct pupil insights may enable him to see the challenges that they face, particularly when working with difficult concepts in new ways, and may help to boost his confidence by strengthening his relationships with pupils.

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Arthur's core difficulty seems to be in making the cognitive demands of his lessons explicit. The task for his mentor is to help him to realise this, rather than simply focus on modelling tasks. While Arthur is aware that the students can't decipher his instructions, he needs to learn how to illustrate and model the kind of conceptual thinking he expects of them. The problem, which has been reflected here in tasks dealing with similarity and difference, is broader than any particular second-order concept. It may be wise for the mentor to address it through a more accessible concept, making it easier for Arthur to help his students see what they are missing.

IF I WERE ARTHUR'S MENTOR, I WOULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

1 **Choose an enquiry where the conceptual demand is clearer than it is in relation to similarity and difference**. This may help Arthur to see the stages that students need to go through if they are not to bypass the point completely and end up engaging in activities with no clear historical purpose. A great deal has been written about these problems in relation to cause and consequence, for example, and this reading can be built into training activities for Arthur. In preparing an outline plan for an enquiry related to causation, ask him to read Evans and Pate's article (*Teaching History 128)* and to summarise its central principles. What do they suggest can go wrong if students just do the activities but fail to grasp the deeper purpose, nature and interest of the historical question they are tackling?

2 **Use a mentor period to review some of Arthur's previous lesson plans in light of Evans and Pate's concerns**. In each case explore with him how the lesson is structured to allow students to recognise the conceptual demands made of them and how it could be adapted to illustrate the kind of thinking needed.

3 **Negotiate a specific target for improvement in the next two weeks.** This should be limited to just one specific second-order concept. Devise a focused package of training activities directed towards that target. This might include observation of a number of teachers, with Arthur directed to analyse and discuss with them how they model the thinking required and makes the demands of the concept clear. After teaching his own lessons, he should be required to complete a focused evaluation of the ways in which he made the cognitive demands explicit and illustrated the kinds of thinking and arguing required.

4 **Invite Arthur to design a sequence of lessons intended to tackle specific misconceptions or difficulties.** Identify a class in which students have experienced specific difficulties or expressed particular misconceptions that Arthur could be directed to tackle through a carefully-planned enquiry. Allow sufficient time to review the plans together, encouraging him to articulate in some detail the understanding that he is seeking to promote and the ways in which he will help the students to 'see' what they may previously have missed or misunderstood.

Next issue's problem:

Hannah Mitchell would like to be able to wean students off the use of writing frames. For details of her mentor's problem, contact Martin Hoare at the Historical Association email: martin.hoare@history.org.uk
Responses are invited from mentors and trainers of trainee history teachers.
Responses for the March edition must be received by 31 April 2015
Arthur and Hannah are both are both fictional characters. Thanks to Katharine Burn, Department of Education, University of Oxford, for devising the Move Me On problem.

Mummy, Mummy...

Mummy, mummy, what has Peter got to do with religious studies, and why does he have a hearse?

Not now dear, Mummy is trying to design 'flight paths' for her Key Stage 3 pupils even though she knows quite well that pupils do not 'get better' at history in a linear way, nor in a manner that can be modelled on one, tidy, single calibration. But the deputy head is insisting on it so she is randomly and arbitrarily forcing a complex discipline into a simplistic model that bears little resemblance to anything she might call history: it's like 1991 all over again. One would think senior managers have no memory of…

Mummy, do be quiet, I want to know about Peter and his hearse!

I think you are probably referring to R.S. Peters and Paul Hirst. Peters was a philosopher of education and one of the founders of modern analytical philosophy of education in the UK. He encouraged educational philosophers to use the tools of conceptual analysis to make sense of education, examining ideas such as 'discipline', 'teaching' and indeed 'education' itself. With Paul Hirst, Peters developed a philosophy of curriculum that derived school subjects – what ought to be learned at school – from the theoretical tools that made sense of reality, which Hirst called 'forms of knowledge'. These were predominantly the academic disciplines, including mathematics, the sciences and history. Peters developed the argument that such forms of knowledge were 'worthwhile'.

Is Daddy worthwhile?

Probably not, from a curriculum point of view, nor possibly from any other for that matter. Whether or not something is worthwhile of course depends on the criteria one uses. Peters and Hirst had their arguments challenged, particularly on the grounds that the academic disciplines are not *a priori* forms of knowledge, but rather historically-derived curricular traditions. If the structure of the curriculum is simply based on what used to be the case, the argument runs, the divisions inside it are arbitrary: there are after all many other ways in which knowledge can be organised. Breaking down the boundaries between academic subjects on the school curriculum is an idea that comes around with some frequency: it was popular in the 1980s and it became possible again in the 2000s as schools were increasingly freed from the National Curriculum, which was (and still is) based on the traditional academic subjects. Schools were offered alternative curriculum models such as the Royal Society of Arts *Opening Minds* curriculum.

So academic disciplines are not worthwhile?

Well, this is an argument that has increasingly been challenged. Curriculum theorists have drawn on the philosophical ideas associated with 'social realism' and 'critical realism', and the sociological ideas of Basil Bernstein, to argue that, although academic disciplines are historically derived, they are not arbitrary. Instead, the argument runs, the academic disciplines are communities that sustain and develop our knowledge of the world with their own peculiar epistemological structures. One of the challenges facing curriculum designers and teachers is to 'recontextualise' these academic disciplines as school subjects. Instead of thinking through the complex process of recontextualisation, however, Mummy has instead found herself constructing spurious 'flight paths' based on very little at all. There now, you've got me going and it's time for bed. Run along now...

Mummy, are we still labouring under transcendental idealism?

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