

1

Web Preface

The history of history and history education: A context for the book

This chapter considers the process of historical enquiry in order to construct an account of the past, which underpins each case study in the book. It considers how this process emerged as the discipline of history. Then the implications of constructivist learning theories for teaching approaches are considered, with references to practical examples. Finally, we review debates surrounding an enquiry-based National Curriculum and discuss the importance of enquiry which recognizes that both significant questions and resulting accounts are dynamic, in the context of recent international research.

A first requirement of learning history is that students understand that history is, as Oakeshott (1983: 6) has said, 'an engagement of enquiry, with its own identifying marks, some characteristic organising ideas and a vocabulary of expressions to which it has given specialist meanings'.

In each case study students plan and carry out a historical enquiry which involves them in all aspects of historical thinking: designing an enquiry, making inferences and deductions from a variety of sources, selecting and combining sources in order to create some form of account or interpretation of what a time in the past may have been like or to suggest reasons for an event or for changes over time. Having agreed a significant question to investigate, students will encounter and address some of the problems that arise in doing so, and they will begin to understand the reasons why accounts of the past may be different, even when equally valid, and why this understanding is essential to democracy.

During each case study pupils will be involved, at their own levels, in some of the processes which lie at the heart of historical enquiry.

1. Why are we asking this question? Why do we think it is important, significant? Are we interested in the question from a gender perspective, or from an ethnic perspective, or from the perspective of an individual or of a particular class or social group? Is it a local, national or international question?
2. How are we going to investigate the question? Which sources shall we select? Are different groups of students going to undertake investigations

from different perspectives, or different aspects of the enquiry? What do we know for a fact about a source? What might we infer? How valid is the inference and why? Do we all make the same inferences? Are they equally valid or can we argue a case for a particular inference? What do we not know? Can we find out? How? What arguments can we extrapolate from the inferences and deductions we have made?

3. Which sources shall we select as relevant to the enquiry? How shall we combine them to present an account, an interpretation?
4. Are we describing a time in the past and considering how and why it was the same and/or different from today or are we sequencing events or changes over time and considering their causes and effects?
5. How shall we communicate our findings to others (a PowerPoint presentation, a video, a model, a role play, a slide show, a museum exhibition, a book, a website, an article for publication)? Who would have genuine reasons to be interested in our findings (local councillors, a local history society, local residents, younger pupils, older residents, a wider community of enquiry)?

The chapter on each case study will explain how it reflects these processes, taking into account the particular area of study and the age of the students. There will be examples of planning and assessment and examples of students' talk and work.

The Evolution of History

Significant questions

Significant questions change over time. In the oral traditions of myths, legends and folk tales, folk memory is essential to the identity of a society and as a memory to an individual. Stories evolve with the telling but transfer the values, attitudes and social patterns of a society. West African folk tales deal with the problems of communal living and the extended family. Native American oral culture is about journeys of nomadic peoples; Australian stories about family patterns and tribal organization.

Ancient Greek perspectives of Herodotus and Thucydides and Imperial Roman perspectives of Livy and Tacitus are military – uncritical, idealized views of glorious conquests.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (Swanton, 2000) and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (McClure and Collins, 1990), written in the Middle Ages, emphasize the theological, because they were written from within a theocracy. In the Renaissance, following the sacking of Constantinople in 1453, and the removal of documents from the Ancient Greek civilization to Western Europe, there was a humanist focus; Machiavelli, in his *History of Florence* (1522), Walter Raleigh, in *The History of the World* (1614), William Camden's *Britannia* (1588) and Edward Hyde's *History of the Great Rebellion* (1641) have a new, secular perspective.

By the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century there was a growing awareness of the 'New World' and Asia, of other cultures, new wealth through trade and a changing social structure. Voltaire saw religion as comparative and thought that due attention should be given to India and China. Hume's *History of England* (1778) was concerned with prices, wages and dress. John Millar in *The Origin of the Destruction of Ranks* (1771) tries to explain changes in the power structure and of groups in society, due to changes in the ownership of property.

Following the French Revolution in the eighteenth century, and the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century some historians, for example Ranke, were preoccupied with perspectives of national chauvinism and pride. Economic factors and the effects of capitalism became important factors in influencing change; Marx saw the capitalist economy as the catalyst for change. In Britain Macaulay, in his *Constitutional History of England* (1827), Carlyle, in *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845) and Stubbs's *Select Charters* (1870) and *Constitutional History of England 1874–78* (1878), all developed the idea of the central 'democratic' character of the British people and the development of Parliament.

As history emerged as a discipline its scope broadened. Maitland (1850–1906) justified history as the study of law. Bloch (1886–1944) drew on new disciplines to study human settlement: place name study, technology, social sciences. Namier (1888–1960) analysed political life. Braudel (1902–85) linked geography and history, exploring the role of large scale socio-economic factors.

By the first half of the twentieth century the scope of history had broadened to include all aspects of history and everyday life, because of the influence of new disciplines: sociology was concerned with group, psychology with mental attitudes, geography and linguistics with place names, for example. Also, because of the importance of 'ordinary people', perspectives tended to be left wing or working class. Barbara Hammond wrote about *The Village Labourer* (1911), *The Town Labourer* (1917) and *The Skilled Labourer* (1919). Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote *The History of Trade Unionism* (1894) and R.H. Tawney published *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* in 1926.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a new emphasis on the perspectives of ordinary people: Christopher Hill in *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972), E.J. Hobsbawm in *Labouring Men* (1964) and E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). Family history emerged, for example Lawrence Stone's *Family, Sex and Marriage in England* (1977). Women's history flourished: *Women in the Middle Ages* (Lucas, 1983), *Suffer and be Still: Women in the Victorian Age* (Vicinus, 1972), *The Pre-Raphaelite Sisterhood* (Marsh, 1985).

Black and Asian perspectives emerged: *Black People in the British Empire* (Fryer, 1989), *Ayars, Lascars and Princes* (Vishram, 1988). By now the content of history embraced individuals, groups, societies; economic, constitutional, cultural, in-depth studies or broad-brush strokes.

Evolution of the processes enquiry

Deductions and inferences from sources

The medieval chroniclers tended not to make inferences, analyse, evaluate or reflect on their statements, although Bede did list his written sources and attempt to evaluate the oral tradition. Events were seen as a reward or punishment from God. There was little attention to chronology, and events were seen as of equal importance. From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries a gradual emphasis on sources emerged; for example Hume used prices and wages as sources.

In the nineteenth century there was increased emphasis on documentation and on the particular rather than the general. Macaulay used documents of varying status: broadsheets, songs, maps, party propaganda, political documents. By the end of the nineteenth century research techniques of history were being taught at Oxford, Cambridge, Berlin and the Sorbonne. In the twentieth century sources proliferated: archaeology, cartography, folklore, oral sources, place names, statistics, demography, parish registers, folk songs, children's games, old sayings.

Collingwood (1939) said that philosophy had found it necessary to accommodate a revolution in thinking about the natural world, based on empirical observation and deduction, in the seventeenth century and that it must encompass a similar revolution in the ways that it studies man, in constantly changing societies. Collingwood saw historical enquiry as beginning with a complex of ordered, specific questions, in the tradition of Plato, Descartes and Kant. He said that the 'right' questions to ask about sources are those which lead to a larger complex, which do not draw a blank and that there is no limit to the kinds of questions to ask or to relevant evidence.

Time

Chronology Herodotus and Thucydides used no precise chronology. Bede did not pay attention to the sequence of events; the date of Easter had been fixed but each of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms began the year at a different time. By the eighteenth century there was still little emphasis on the process of change. Precise chronology emerged with the scientific and industrial revolutions and the new emphasis on population, trade and wages. It was not until the twentieth century that the great debates began about the causes and effects of 'key' watersheds: of the Magna Carta, the English Civil War, the French and American Revolutions, the Industrial Revolution, the British Empire, the two World Wars.

Similarity and difference From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries there had been an interest in the past (in Ancient Greece and Rome, and in chronicles on which Shakespeare's histories were based) in order to explain and inform the present. The nineteenth century of Walter Scott and the Pre-Raphaelites, looked at the past through 'Victorian spectacles'

although they seemed not to see the differences and to overestimate the similarities. By the twentieth century there was an understanding that people in the past may have thought, felt and behaved differently from us, that they had different attitudes to women, children and slavery, for example, and historians such as Kitson Clarke and Keith Thomas recognized the need to try to understand and explain the feelings, experiences and prejudices which formed people's minds.

Historical Enquiry Today

What are significant questions?

What matters in history? What should stand out about a period, on the basis of what criteria, for whom and why? Historical questions then may be broad or in depth. They may be about individuals, groups or movements. They may be local, national or global. The reasons for their significance may vary with time and with the interests of the questioners, and it is up to them to justify why their question is significant.

Lomas (1990) listed thinking processes he sees as central to significance: understanding

- that some events are more important than others
- that significance changes with time
- that different people will have different ideas about significance
- why they do
- that significance is determined by the nature of the historical enquiry
- that relatively minor events can be highly significant symbolically
- that an event or change usually becomes significant because of its connection with other events.

Criteria for assessing the significance of events, people, issues, must be established and there must be a distinction between the consequences of an event and its significance.

As Monaghan and McConnell (2005: 24) remind us, 'The professional historian rarely has an enquiry imposed from above; she has to generate her own in a recursive process involving looking at evidence, assessing which questions might be genuinely difficult enough to be worth pursuing and which questions might generate interesting answers'.

Significance depends on:

- its importance to people at the time
- how deeply people's lives had been affected by it
- how many lives were affected
- how long people's lives were affected
- the extent to which an event had contributed to an understanding of present life.

Phillips's (2002) criteria for the significance of the Great War were 'GREAT':

- Groundbreaking
- Remembered by all
- Events that were far reaching
- Affected the future
- Terrifying.

Yet these cannot have universal application.

Counsell (2004) has developed her own set of criteria for structuring pupils' thinking about historical significance and encourages all teachers to do so. She focuses on the extent to which an event, person or development is 'Remarkable, Remembered, Resonant (across time and space) Resulting in Change and Revealing'. Bradshaw (2006) however, considered the problems he encountered in trying to devise criteria, and concluded that we should enable our students to devise their own criteria on which to make their own judgements about which events and people are, or are not, historically significant.

Barracough's notion of significance, in *An Introduction to Contemporary History* (1964) remains relevant today. He saw 'contemporary history' as 'the history we need to know to illuminate and understand the present' (1964: 17–18). It begins with tracing when the problems which actually exist in the world today first took visible shape. We investigate what we need to find out to create our personal, social, political and cultural identities. Rüsen (1993: 162) connects history and everyday practical life; our interests drive our understanding, but then, as Megill (1994: 51) has said, 'academic history does not simply respond to demands from everyday life; it produces a "theoretical surplus", which must be seen as the distinctive rationale achievement of research-oriented historical narrative'. 'It can therefore take a critical stance towards the interests and demands of practical life' (Rüsen, 1990: 120).

Investigating historical questions

Sources

Collingwood worked out a philosophy of history through constant practical application in archaeology. He proceeded from specific questions about the significance and purpose of objects to the people who made and used them, whether they were buttons, dwellings or settlements; visual evidence, such as photographs, paintings, artefacts, maps, diagrams, or a variety of written sources, ranging from laws and literature to diaries, newspapers and advertisements. Since sources are often incomplete, because they were created for different purposes, some of which we may no longer understand, and since they have varying status, interpretations may vary. Collingwood's sequence always proceeds from asking what is known about an object, then what can be 'guessed' and, finally, what he would like to know in order, if possible, to support, contradict or extend

his 'guesses'. Interpreting historical evidence involves not only internal argument but also debate with others, testing deductions against evidence from other sources and accepting others' points of view. It means supporting opinions with arguments, accepting there is not always a 'right' answer, that there may be equally valid interpretations and that some questions cannot be answered (Cooper, 2000: 1–31; 2007: 9–23).

Interpreting sources may involve explaining a sequence of events, or the behaviour of an individual or a group. It may involve explaining how something was made or used, or what it may have meant to the people who made and used it.

Historical imagination

A source is only the reflection of the thoughts and feelings of the people who created it. In order to interpret a source it is necessary to understand how people in the past may have thought, felt and behaved differently from us because they lived in societies with different knowledge bases, belief systems, views of the world and different social, political and economic constraints. The disposition to make a variety of valid suggestions about incomplete evidence, which takes into account that people in the past may have thought and felt differently from us, is therefore an integral part of interpreting sources. This may be termed 'historical imagination'.

Historical imagination involves making suppositions about people's thoughts and feelings which underlie their actions, artefacts or any other historical source they created. Suppositions are only valid if there is no evidence to refute them, if they fit in with what is known of the period and if they accept that people in the past behaved rationally. Yet within these criteria rival interpretations are generally possible. Historical imagination is the disposition to make a range of valid suppositions about a source. Lee (1984) has said that if pupils infer, with insight, selecting the most likely possibilities, based on what is known, what is likely and there is no contradictory evidence, they are using historical imagination. Historical imagination gives rise to a range of valid suppositions and so makes it possible to switch viewpoint and to suggest what the evidence may have meant to people in another society with values, beliefs and social practices different from our own.

Collingwood (1939) attempted to clarify the relationship between interpreting evidence and interpreting the thoughts and feelings of the people who made it, saying that we may imagine the thoughts and feelings underlying an action through shared humanity, although the historian is not in the same real-life situation as a person in the past. Collingwood develops this idea (1946: 147): 'Man does not live in a world of hard facts to which thoughts made no difference but in a society with a moral, economic and political structure and rule, and as the structure changes, man's thoughts and behaviour change too.' Analysis of Collingwood's other philosophical

writings (1938; 1943) suggest that historical evidence (an action, an artefact or a building, a painting or piece of writing) is created by observed behaviour. This observed behaviour is the result of rational thinking. Rational thinking has its roots in feeling and imagination. We can only try to understand the thinking and feelings of people in the past through the way they are represented in the evidence.

Using historical vocabulary

Some concepts used in history describe the process of historical enquiry: source, chronology and interpretation, for example. Others are terms invented by historians: Victorian, feudal. Some words are terms no longer in use: cheorl, workhouse. Others are concepts not solely historical, but central to studying changes in societies: agriculture, communication, beliefs, trade, and their subsidiary concepts.

Constructing interpretations

An interpretation has been defined as an account of a period written in a subsequent time. Accounts, as discussed above, vary because they reflect the times in which they are written. They also vary because of the evidence available, and because of the particular interests of the writer and the writer's social, gender, ethnic and political perspectives. They may differ in status depending on the purposes for which they are constructed (scholarly, entertainment, education), and because of the medium of the presentation (for example, video, museum display, role play). Constructing interpretations of findings enables students to consider the reasons why interpretations may differ, why history is dynamic, and why there is no single, static view of the past. The rationale for different interpretations developed during the nineteenth century.

Acton argued (Fears, 1986) that history was not the art of accumulating material but the more sublime art of investigating it, of discerning truth from falsehood and certainty from doubt, and J.B. Bury (1920) defined three stages in historical enquiry: collection, connection and interpretation. Popper (1945) has argued that, 'There can be no history of the past as it actually did happen; there can only be historical interpretations, none of them final, and every generation has a right to frame its own'.

The validity of accounts of the past may be evaluated as answers to questions in terms of the range of evidence they explain, their explanatory power and their congruence with other knowledge (Bevir, 1994; 1999).

More recent contributions to defining the process of constructing and evaluating

Interpretations These include the notion of historical consciousness which, it is often claimed, brings the past into the present, shaping a prospect of the

future. The concept of historical consciousness emphasizes the importance of culture and its influence on what we see as significant (Jong, 1997: 273). Carr (2006: 236) also describes representations of the past as, 'an expression of our culture and values'. The cultural and psychological processes involved in creating historical representations suggest that students' accounts of the past are now oriented around a 'socioculturally provided narrative' to connect understandings of their own lives to the past which, Wertsch suggests, leads to only one perspective (for example, Wertsch, 1994; 1998)

Postmodernism, however, has questioned the possibility of objective history, reducing the historians' task to elaborate historiographical critique. But have we not long recognized that creation and evaluation of different interpretations is at the heart of historical enquiry? Seixas and Clark (2004) analysed students' decisions about the preservation (or destruction) of traces of the colonial period in Columbia and found that the most advanced decisions, which they term genetic historical consciousness, showed 'complex understanding of continuity and change'. They subverted the original intention of monuments and memorials, not by destroying them but by studying them as products of their time. Quite so.

Constructivist Approaches Applied to Learning History

If the content of history and the processes of enquiry are essentially linked and there is no 'master narrative', students can only engage with history through drawing on their existing knowledge and experiences, asking or being asked questions and trying to answer them by acquiring new information. They may assimilate this into their existing mental structures, or be challenged to rethink their existing 'mental maps'. However, if their initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp the new concepts and knowledge, or learn them for test purposes but not internalize them into their 'mental maps' (Donovan et al., 1999). Since history involves continuous conflict of views and reappraisal, the constructivist theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and those who have developed their work are essential in the teaching and learning of history.

Their work can be applied to each aspect of historical enquiry and, albeit imprecisely, in the ways in which each aspect of this process develops. Piaget's theory of qualitatively different stages of thinking has some relevance for history as pupils' causal reasoning (Piaget, 1926; 1928), probabilistic thinking (Piaget, 1951) and ability to discuss values and moral issues (Kohlberg, 1976; Piaget, 1932) develop. Students gradually rely less on concrete sources, directly experienced, and more on abstract reasoning. Arguments become more complex and abstract (either ... or, if ... then, when ... is not, both ... and). Bruner (1963; 1966) posits structuring a discipline by identifying the key concepts, questions and methods of enquiry which lie at the heart of it. He says that, by presenting these in an accessible

form, (artefacts, images or 'symbolic') and asking questions which are challenging but not too hard, teachers can promote the development of abstract concepts and complex questioning. Vygotsky's work (1962) shows how concepts develop at different levels of abstraction, through class and group discussion and the use of new vocabulary, and through trial and error.

Both Vygotsky and Bruner see the role of the teacher as 'scaffolding' progression and taking students forward by working with slightly more competent others, by cueing, labelling, questioning, and providing appropriate resources. In these ways students learn the processes of thinking in a discipline and can apply these independently to new material, avoiding a 'mental overload'.

Bruner (1966) emphasized the importance of different 'modes of representation', 'kinetic', 'iconic' and 'symbolic'. Accounts or interpretations can also be presented in any of these forms.

Vygotsky and Bruner, in particular, emphasized the crucial importance of discussion, in pairs, groups, whole class, in cognitive progression.

Identifying a significant question

Although practitioners have attempted to define guiding criteria for significance it is agreed that significance is dynamic and that students can decide on their own criteria for a significant person, event or movement as long as they can justify it. This depends on their knowledge and experience, their interests and perspectives, and their ability to construct an argument.

Phillips (2000, cited in Counsell, 2004) applied criteria for significance in investigating these questions: Why was the First World War called the Great War? How important is the Industrial Revolution to our lives today? Olaudah Equiano – Role Model for today? He found that theorizing about what is meant by historical significance, then applying these ideas in practical contexts, was highly motivating.

Counsell (2004) tried out her criterion, the extent to which a person is 'revealing', in a study on Josephine Butler, the nineteenth-century campaigner against contagious diseases, 'because the issues at stake are eternally relevant' (ibid.: 32) and so interest students, although she admits this is only a partial explanation of significance.

Deductions and inferences from sources

Deductions and inferences require internal and external discussion, defending ideas with arguments, listening to the views of others, using probabilistic language and possibly changing an opinion, or understanding that there can be no single 'right' answer. Chapman (2006) has suggested techniques which improve students' thinking about the assumptions which underlie argument and how to scrutinize inferences

critically and evaluate the degree of probability and of uncertainty. He raises the awareness of Year 7 and Year 10/11 students about the ways in which they make inferences based on facts, using 'so' and 'therefore' to reach, then evaluate, a conclusion. (See also Cooper, 2007: 191–203.)

Woolley (2003) used a Hardy short story, rather than a textbook, as a source, with her class of 'weak readers', during an English and history project, because it was a more interesting way of unlocking the mood, message and unwitting evidence of the period, and presented them with the 'Big Picture' of an enquiry. After reading and discussing 'The Withered Arm', which deals with beliefs, crime, punishment, class, the position of women, rural life and enclosure, the class was split into groups of four and each given a different topic, collecting anything relevant to their theme on their 'data collector'. This was divided into categories: 'What historical details are there in the story? What does it tell us about nineteenth-century England?' and 'Questions we might ask'. This was so successful that it became a model for using literature as an historical source.

Davies (2001) offers a model, developed from Collingwood (1939), for making deductions and inferences from sources, categorizing the types of question to ask about an artefact: materials, use, production significance and other written and visual information.

Butler (2003) has used rock and pop music to encourage students to construct layers of meaning and to consider perspective. The lyrics to this type of music also provide opportunities to analyse text at different levels, as well as to pose rigorous historical questions about significance and interpretation and to combine depth and overview. He shows how he used a variety of songs, for example, by Billy Bragg, 'The World Upside Down' (The Civil War), Orchestral Manoeuvres (Hiroshima), Paul Weller (Holocaust) and The Specials (South Africa). Sweerts and Grice (2002) delivered a history and music unit on African Americans in the twentieth century. They show the skills and the methods these Year 9 students used to address such questions as, 'How useful are spirituals for telling us about the lives of slaves?' (history) and, 'What can the style tell us about the history of African Americans?' (music). 'How do the songs of African American prisoners in the 1930s compare with the spirituals?' (music and history). 'Why did things start to change between 1900 and 1950?' (history) and 'How does the music change between 1900 and 1950?' (music). Sweerts and Grice became very convinced of the meaningfulness of cross-curricular work in other subjects and of the opportunities to transfer skills.

Time and Change

Understanding values and attitudes different from our own: moral dilemmas

Ashby and Lee (1987) found that 14-year-olds were able to differentiate between the point of view, beliefs and goals of a person in the past and

that of the historian, and could employ strategies to understand what a person may have believed, in certain circumstances, in order to have acted in a particular way. Shemilt (1984), working with 15-year-olds, found that at the lowest level they attributed different practices and beliefs to intellectual and moral inferiority and did not consider motive. At the next level they considered motive but were puzzled by the beliefs of their predecessors. At the next level they would try to think themselves into a situation and to reconstruct ideas of the past as analogies to their own experience. At the next level they would think themselves into an 'alien mind', and at the highest level they were concerned with what is involved in trying to understand values and attitudes different from their own. Shemilt concluded, however, that students should not be underestimated, but should be asked suitable questions, requiring them to reconstruct evidence, to make inferences and to critically discuss their explanations.

Barton and McCulley (2007: 17) encourage teachers to 'look for subtle forms of diversity in their classrooms, to exploit the full spectrum of views and to use the historical context to tease out the subtleties', discussing controversial issues and such questions as, 'Is violence ever justifiable?' Byrom and Riley (2007) reflect on thinking about what historical identity might mean and, by considering the history of encounters between the West and Islam, they suggest that history can shake up simplistic and singular notions of identity and help students to think in plural and complex ways. Perhaps, because history deals with events remote from students' lives they can be less biased and think more clearly than they can about current situations. Traill (2007) has drawn attention, through her work with African-Caribbean students, to their experiences of and attitudes to school history, asking how often history teachers consider the emotional responses of pupils to the topics taught.

Salmons (2001) warns that 'many of the big historical questions we want our students to investigate are a function of the moral questions that continue to trouble academic historians. He argues that framing such historical questions as, 'Why wasn't there more opposition to the Nazis in Germany?' or 'Why didn't the outside world do more to prevent the Holocaust?' creates a danger that we reduce our students' understanding of complex events to straightforward lessons of right and wrong, and that denigrates people in the past whose behaviour we have not explained and congratulate ourselves on our superior moral values. But there is also the opportunity to use these seemingly stark moral choices to stimulate historical enquiry in depth and to raise awareness that only when people's actions or inactions are judged within the context of their time can we draw meaningful lessons for today. He offers case studies undertaken by Year 9 students in which moral dilemmas stimulate historical enquiry, which reflect those of Piaget and Kohlberg in promoting moral development which is cognitive.

Constructing and understanding interpretations

The following examples from recent practice illustrate ways in which students have considered the reasons for interpretations or accounts constructed from the points of view of different social and ethnic groups, different political groups, gender perspectives, interpretations of one period in another period, and the tensions arising in constructing a museum interpretation to serve different purposes.

Howells (2005) offers practical examples to illustrate how students can be taught to think about the interpretations of historians at different periods, through systematic evaluation of sources or by sorting cards to ask such questions as, 'Why are popular historical views of Charles II different from those of historians?' Wren (2001) shows pupils how to analyse the tensions and balances between a museum's aim to attract, preserve, commemorate and educate, in the 'interpretation' it constructs.

Mastin and Wallace (2006), on the other hand, focus on why historians construct different interpretations, why the values, beliefs and experiences of one period are projected onto the past in interpreting another period or event. This requires understanding of both periods. Pupils were given written, visual and musical sources and asked to hypothesize what the sources suggested about the views which different Victorians had about their Empire. The sources included an 'Empire plate'. They then presented a revisionist view, using film, images and text, and discussed why some British people were thinking differently in the 1970s. Students then designed alternative Empire plates, and annotated them to explain what has been revised, the reasons for the revision and why a historian in the 1970s might have thought differently from the designer of the original plate.

Interpretations also change because of new information available. Card (2004) describes the need to understand the ideas and values of both the period being represented and of the period in which the interpretation is made, distancing oneself from twentieth-century values. She showed how her Year 8 students explored how and why Delaroche painted *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey* in the way he did, in 1830, overlaying a Tudor story with ideas and values belonging to his own age.

McCully and Pilgrim (2004) emphasize the importance of understanding that the meanings we ascribe to the past are not fixed but are subject to our own prejudices or goals. They provided fictional characters, which encouraged students in Northern Ireland to examine their own interpretations. Some pupils used these skills to enhance their understanding of an extremely complex history, while others, disappointingly, used these skills to further support their tribal identity.

Walsh (2003) shows how the National Archives Learning Curve and many other types of database make available a rich variety of previously inaccessible sources. Tudor (2002) provides a fascinating interpretation of Europe in the twentieth century, using a range of sources and methods, to

reveal connections between work, family, culture, war and politics. This illuminates issues far wider than 'how women were treated' and considers other themes for finding out about women in the past, for example, ideal and reality, diversity, women and motherhood, women and political power, women and political activism, and women and war.

These examples provide imaginative ways of understanding why interpretations differ, but there is little evidence of pupils learning this through themselves engaging in the process of constructing their own interpretations.

Enhancing motivation

Recent theories of motivation endorse constructivist learning theories (for example, Whitbread, 2000; Wiener, 1992). If pupils are encouraged to have ownership of their enquiries, deciding (within constraints) on the question(s) to ask and working collaboratively, through whole-class and group discussions, to collect and interpret sources in order to construct and communicate accounts, and if they are encouraged to use a variety of types of sources, they are most likely to be well motivated. Wiener and Whitbread emphasize the need for self-determination and the need for social support which gives students the autonomy to make their own choices. Wiener identifies the teacher's role as monitoring the amount and level of difficulty of the material presented, frequent interaction with students and giving positive feedback which includes acceptance of their ideas. Teachers, he says, should promote problem-solving and meta-cognitive strategies and enhance self-worth which does not depend on ability. They should develop co-operative classroom structures and peer tutoring. Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the sources of action required to manage prospective situations. Rudham (2001) describes how her department systematically planned for the integration of speaking and listening in history lessons with a feast of practical examples, for example, analysing a play about the divorce of Henry VIII as an interpretation, using documentary sources to create a 'story' of the Black Death, identifying causal factors in the growth of the Muslim Empire, and evaluating sources to examine the growth of medieval towns. Luff (2001) describes further contexts for speaking and listening and Minikin (1999) has shown how children with low ability were motivated to write outstanding poetry about the First World War.

Snelson's article (2007), "'I understood before but not like this": maximizing historical learning by letting pupils take control of trips', describes an approach to learning outside the classroom in which Year 7 students were given the opportunity for ownership of a site visit by helping to shape it, as a process of enquiry, a 'necessarily unpredictable and holistic process'. The pupils agreed on the research question, 'How important was the Minster to Medieval York? They then discussed and agreed a long list of questions, categorized as, for example, 'Things to do with power and control', 'Things to do with building work' and 'Things to do with people

working at the Minster'. They discussed how they might answer them. Following their visit, each group constructed an account of positive and negative aspects of the effect of the Minster on the city.

Teamwork

Effective working as a group has to be learned. O'Neill (2003: 216) defines a team as 'a small group of people who recognize the need for constructive conflict, when working together in order for them to make, implement and support workable decisions'. Belbin (1993) has identified what makes an effective group or team: defined tasks, inclusive processes and deep commitment. He stressed the importance of team members having different skills and qualities to bring to bear on a project, to make complementary contributions; he discovered that teams made up of solely high achievers are unlikely to work productively together. Teams draw on people with different skills: having ideas, finding resources, working as team members, keeping the project on course and meeting targets, evaluating the work, making, drawing, researching and recording.

The Importance of a Dynamic Curriculum

The battle for an enquiry-based history curriculum

Constructing interpretations of the past through selecting, interpreting and combining sources is central to history at an academic level. The application of learning theories to each aspect of this process has shown how students are able to engage in historical enquiry, in increasingly complex ways. *The National Curriculum for History* (DfEE, 1991) is based on the interaction of enquiry skills and content. Yet there was extensive national debate about this, in the media and among academic historians and teachers of history in schools. Often the debate was represented as a polarization of 'facts' as opposed to the 'whys' and 'ifs' of learning history. Margaret Thatcher naively imagined that history was simply an account of what happened and could not be controversial.

The *History Workshop Journal* and Ruskin College Oxford sponsored heated debates (in 1989 and 1990) on such issues as: 'Skills versus Knowledge' (John Fines, a pioneer of the 'new history' versus Chris McGovern, founder of the History Curriculum Association, who was sacked for teaching 'traditional history'); 'Child-centred Education and its Critics', and 'The History Working Party Report' (Robert Skidelsky, Professor at Warwick, a leading critic of both 'new history' and Norman Stone, versus Martin Roberts, chair of the Historical Association Schools Committee).

This may sound mild enough but it was very intimidating being followed around the Medieval Rooms of the Victoria and Albert Museum in

1993, during a workshop on studying interpretations in medieval images, by a well-known member of the Campaign for Real Education, and knowing that any remark about pupil enquiry could become a banner headline in the tabloid press the next day.

The Historical Association had caused an outcry with its paper *History in the Core Curriculum* (1987), which recommended 60 chronological topics for pupils aged from 5 to 16. However, following two rounds of lively regional conferences in 1987 and 1988, a consensus was achieved among teachers in the Historical Association on the essential interaction of process and content, on the criteria for defining these, and on the need for outlining continuity and progression in developing pupils' historical understanding.

We have come a long way in the past 15 years, in terms of enquiry-based approaches to history education. For example, at the History in British Education Conference, Identity, Progression, Dialogue (14 February 2005), organized by the Institute of Research, there were sessions on 'The Media, Heritage and Museums', and on 'History and Social Inclusion'. Christine Counsell spoke about, 'Tradition, Innovation and Renewal in Secondary School History Teaching'. Yet the newspaper headlines were dominated by such headlines as 'Starkey Blasts History Teaching Catastrophe' (*Times Educational Supplement*, 18 February 2005), in which David Starkey 'denunciated skills', and insisted that history is just 'content, narrative and characterisation'. As Alasdair Smith recorded in the letters page the following week (*Times Educational Supplement*, 4 March 2007): 'He loathes any notions of history from below and wants a celebratory version of British History in which the Royal Navy ended slavery! Yeah right!' Smith, on the contrary, suggests that successful history teaching has contributed to the rapid growth in the adult audience for written and television history and accounts for the success of, for example, *Stalingrad* (Bevor, 1998). And yet we must remain vigilant. The readers of the *Daily Telegraph* have recently republished and offered to all primary schools Sybill Marshall's *Our Island Story* (1905), a moralistic and nationalistic narrative par excellence (Cooper, 2007: 1–2).

Enquiries, interpretations and democracy

The huge achievement of teaching students about the discipline of history over the past four decades in the UK has been noticed by other countries and seen as the way forward: in previously Communist countries of Eastern Europe, in previously Fascist countries, for example Spain, Portugal and South America, in North America where, until recently, history was controlled by the dominant ethnic group; in countries with politically contested histories such as South Africa and Canada or religious sectarianism, as in Northern Ireland; and in countries where there are cultural tensions, such as Turkey. Research into new approaches, through which pupils learn that there are multiple interpretations and that history is

dynamic, can be found in the *International Journal of History Teaching, Learning and Research* and on the website of the History Educators' International Research Network (www.heirnet.org).

This chapter has referred to many imaginative ways of engaging students in the various aspects of historical enquiry. The case studies which follow show how pupils combined these aspects to initiate and carry out enquiries in order to construct their own interpretations.

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