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The voice for history

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in this issue



The Historical Association
59a Kennington Park Road
London SE11 4JH
Telephone: 020 7735 3901
Fax: 020 7582 4989

PRESIDENT Professor Justin Champion
DEPUTY PRESIDENT Chris Culpin
HONORARY TREASURER Richard Walker
HONORARY SECRETARY Dr Trevor James
CHIEF EXECUTIVE Rebecca Sullivan

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EDITED BY

Katharine Burn, University of Oxford, Department of Education
Christine Counsell, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education
Rachel Foster, Comberton Village College, Cambridgeshire
Michael Fordham, University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Arthur Chapman, Institute of Education, University of London
Tony McConnell, Northwood Prep School, Hertfordshire
Paula Worth, Bristol Grammar school, Bristol

PUBLISHER Rebecca Sullivan

DESIGN & LAYOUT Martin Hoare

COVER DESIGN Reid Smith reid.smith@btopenworld.com

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The fact that two articles in this issue of *Teaching History* open with the same quotation from the Department for Education, announcing the abolition of National Curriculum 'levels', gives some indication of what a momentous declaration this was for teachers in England. More than a year after it was made, the need for direct quotation seems to reflect a slight sense of disbelief that subject- and school-leaders really are expected to develop new systems that will better serve the purposes of assessment and reporting within their own contexts.

In some history departments the news was greeted with delight. Careful critiques had long ago demonstrated that it made little sense to try to use the same measurement scale for multiple purposes. A series of descriptions, intended to encapsulate students' performance *at the end* of each key stage as a 'best-fit' characterisation, could not possibly *also* serve as a measure of progress *and* as a diagnostic tool to enable students and teachers to pinpoint the particular ways in which they needed to develop their work at any given point in time. This limitation became all the more apparent as teachers were prevailed upon to sub-divide the necessarily broad-ranging descriptions into absurdly graduated sub-levels and apply them to individual pieces of work. This happened even as Ofsted (in whose name the demand for atomised progress measures was often made) urged them *not* to do so!

But perhaps the dominant reaction in history departments across the country has been one of confusion and bewilderment. The Historical Association's annual survey showed history teachers almost equally divided between a number of competing options. Two-fifths planned varying degrees of adaptation of the existing levels, while fully one-fifth intended to carry on using them exactly as they were. While a further fifth was embracing the chance to forge a new path altogether, the final fifth was simply awaiting the elaboration of new GCSE grade descriptions which they believed they could simply extend 'downwards'. For all its flaws and distortions, the system of NC levels did represent a single national system (across England) around which a degree of consensus had – at least on some local levels – been achieved. In many ways it seems better than complete fragmentation or the widespread adoption

of pre-packaged programmes sold by enterprising publishers and software companies.

Indeed, perhaps the most distressing outcome of the DFE decision is that even where history teachers are keen to exploit their new-found freedom, the incessant demand to demonstrate 'progress' seems likely to restrict their options, imposing a strait-jacket on subject-leaders in the interests of maintaining coherence and simplicity. While coherence certainly matters, the call for simplicity should be resisted. Clarity of purpose and an appreciation of the specific needs of different 'audiences' (students, teachers, parents, inspectors) is vital, but it is nonsense to suggest that we must therefore have a single, simple system.

Progression in history is all about increasing complexity: not merely handling several causes, for example – causes of different kinds, operating on different time-scales – but also about judging their relative importance, which depends on an appreciation of the distinctive role that each one played and how they interacted with one another! Understanding the nature and patterns of change *and* continuity or similarity *and* difference in the past requires nuanced judgements of degree. Handling historical interpretations requires students to discriminate between, and explain the reasons for, multiple perspectives as well as competing methodologies. A developed understanding of historical significance recognises its *contingent*, and therefore shifting, nature. No single, simple system can hope to achieve all that is required within such a rich and fascinating discipline. And that is before we acknowledge the final, most important, dimension of complexity: the interplay between substantive knowledge and conceptual understanding. This is the critical dimension that the abolition of levels finally gives us the opportunity to address – an opportunity that the authors here all embrace.

Two themes thus dominate this issue. The first is the importance of students' substantive knowledge – not merely the vital role that such knowledge plays in answering any question about the past, but the ways in which it can be developed and secured, retained and retrieved as students need it, equipping them to construct, and to challenge, historical narratives, frameworks, arguments and analyses. The second is the range of ways in which the different purposes of assessment can be met by means of a 'mixed constitution' (in Fordham's phrase): a series of different types of assessment, used together to generate the feedback that meets the needs of different stakeholders.

Kate Hammond's article, based on meticulous research into the role that knowledge plays in the work of high-achieving GCSE students, serves to demonstrate the power and importance of knowledge constructed over time. Building on that fundamental insight and on research rooted in cognitive science, exploring how to strengthen students' retention and retrieval of knowledge (in ways that facilitate its use), Lee Donaghy shares his experience of the impact of regular, low-stakes factual testing. In similar vein, Elizabeth Carr and Christine Counsell demonstrate the capacity of the humble time-line to empower students. In demonstrating their departments' own 'mixed constitutions' Geraint Brown and Sally Burnham reprise arguments they first made ten years ago in a seminal article about the value of task-specific mark-schemes, and further developed in the light of Hammond's work. Both they and Alex Ford share their current models of assessment, recording and reporting, illustrating the methods they have found to satisfy both the needs of their students and the legitimate concerns of data-managers.

Katharine Burn
Christine Counsell
Rachel Foster
Michael Fordham
Editors



HA Secondary News

Dear members

A few weeks ago I was privileged to act as a judge for my local heat of the Historical Association's Great Debate: 'What does Magna Carta mean to me?' Its sheer scope made it a challenging topic, with the (strictly time-limited) answers focused as much on how others have appealed to, and made use of, the document over time and in vastly different contexts as on the terms of the original charter. Yet I was deeply impressed by the range of the sixth-form students' independent reading and investigation of the issues, as well as by their obvious passion and ingenious argument. If you've never previously encouraged your A-level students to enter the Great Debate, do think seriously about it – not least for the chance that it gives them to venture well beyond the parameters of defined exam syllabuses. The HA website features many of the previous winners' entries to give you a sense of what's involved and of the historical thinking and engagement it inspires. If you missed out on this year's heats, you can always run your own event as part of next year's anniversary celebrations!

Another exciting event scheduled for 2015 is the launch of the HA's Quality Mark, established to secure recognition of the rich and dynamic practice of the best history departments. Piloting work is almost complete and it has been wonderful to see the variety of ways in which dedicated and skilful teachers work to make the study of history accessible, meaningful and enjoyable for all young people. It will be a delight to acknowledge and share publicly the value and impact of that work. Once launched, the Quality Mark will offer an important new way of supporting (in its accreditation process) and celebrating history teachers' achievements – recognising and rewarding the creativity and rigour, passion and scholarship, enthusiasm and sheer hard graft that goes into creating inspirational history departments.

Another upcoming event of importance to all concerned with the quality of history education is the report of the Carter Review into the 'quality and effectiveness' of initial teacher education (ITE). Drawing on your responses to the last HA survey, we made a detailed submission to the review panel, in which two messages stood out. One was the conviction of most respondents (90%) that *all* history trainees, regardless of their training route, should be entitled to a minimum amount of university-based input – essentially because of the access that this provides to subject-specific research in learning and teaching and to current historical scholarship. The other was an emphasis on the value to *mentors* and other *experienced teachers* of this kind of connection, through ITE, to the subject community at university level, providing access to, and encouragement to engage in and with, history-specific education research.

Unfortunately, even before the review team had completed its data collection, the National College of Teaching and Leadership announced its allocation of teacher-training places for next year, reducing the number of 'core' history PGCE places in 'university-led' partnerships by a third (from 363 places for 2014-15, to 242 places for 2015-16). This reduction was applied to all 'university-led' history courses regardless of their quality as judged by Ofsted inspections of ITE providers. It leaves most university providers of core history places with numbers that make their courses non-viable. Only 12 universities now have more than ten places (making a course financially viable), and several of those are perilously close to the brink. Schools that valued their well-established partnerships with local university providers and that had tried to sustain them by bidding for School Direct places to be offered in conjunction with those universities also found that a large number of their requests for places had been rejected.

The rationale offered by the DfE for these decisions is that schools are enthusiastic about training their own teachers and that NCTL is simply responding to that demand. Such an argument does not seem to reflect HA members' views as reported in the survey, which is why we urge you to make the case for the kinds of partnerships that *you* value to all those who might influence the decisions that matter – to senior leaders in your schools, perhaps, as well as to your MP!

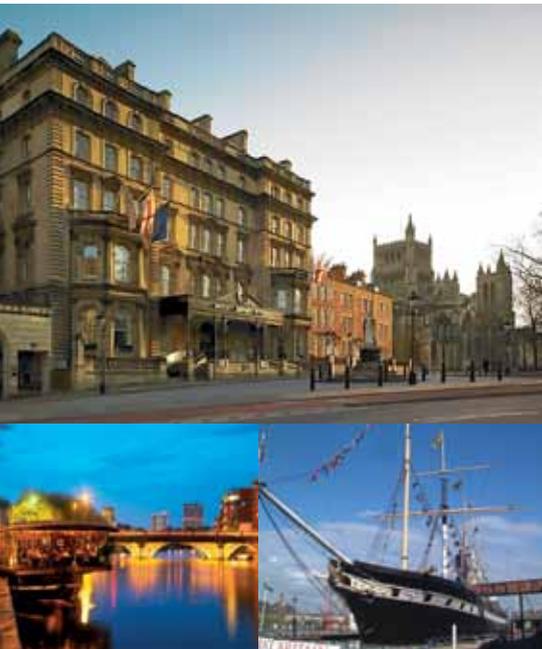
This is not to claim that school-based courses cannot offer high-quality subject-based ITE. School-based teacher educators are necessarily at the heart of all effective provision – and I know that it is the history mentors that play the most important role within my own partnership. My concern is that most employment-based routes and SCITTs have too few *history* trainees within them to devote time to building strong networks of experienced history mentors with ready access to university history departments and subject-specific pedagogical research. If established partnerships are broken up, those communities will be very difficult to rebuild.

Of course, the HA will continue to support all those involved in history teacher education on every kind of route – through the Move Me On problem page and the 'New, Novice or Nervous?' feature, of *Teaching History* in particular, and through the wealth of resources on our website!

Best wishes



Katharine Burn
Chair: HA Secondary Committee



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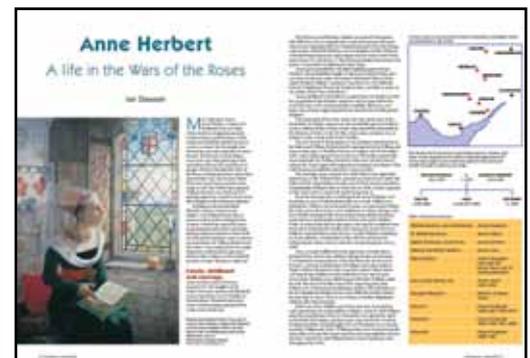
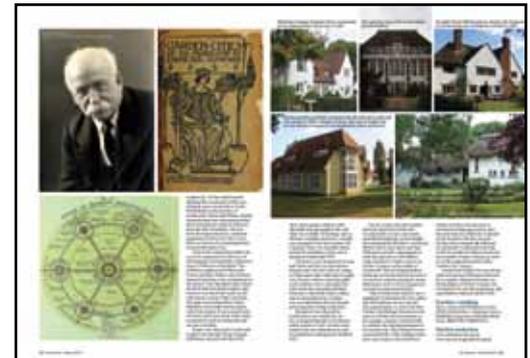
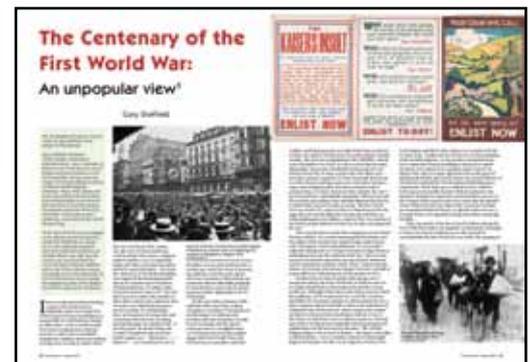
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Assessment after levels

Ten years ago, two heads of department in contrasting schools presented a powerfully-argued case for resisting the use of level descriptions within their assessment regimes. Influenced both by research into the nature of children's historical thinking and by principles of assessment *for* learning, Sally Burnham and Geraint Brown argued that meaningful assessment could not be achieved by reference to a single measurement scale. Instead, they proposed the use of task-specific mark-schemes that properly acknowledge the interplay between the development of conceptual thinking and substantive knowledge in history. In light of their own continued experimentation and critical evaluation, and drawing insights from other history teachers' research, Brown and Burnham here take readers back again to first principles – the varied purposes of assessment – to help determine the approaches that will best achieve each of them. They share further examples of task-specific mark schemes from across Key Stage 3 (illustrating their conception of students' progress in characterising change and continuity) and provide some essential 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' for history departments reviewing or re-designing their assessment practices.

Geraint Brown and Sally Burnham

Geraint Brown teaches history at Cottenham Village College (11-18 comprehensive), where he is also Assistant Headteacher. Sally Burnham teaches history at Carre's Grammar School (11-18 selective) in Sleaford, Lincolnshire.

We didn't want to start this article by saying, 'we told you so', but... we were certainly celebrating, as I am sure many history teachers were, when the Department for Education (DFE) announced that 'levels' had been consigned to the dustbin of history:

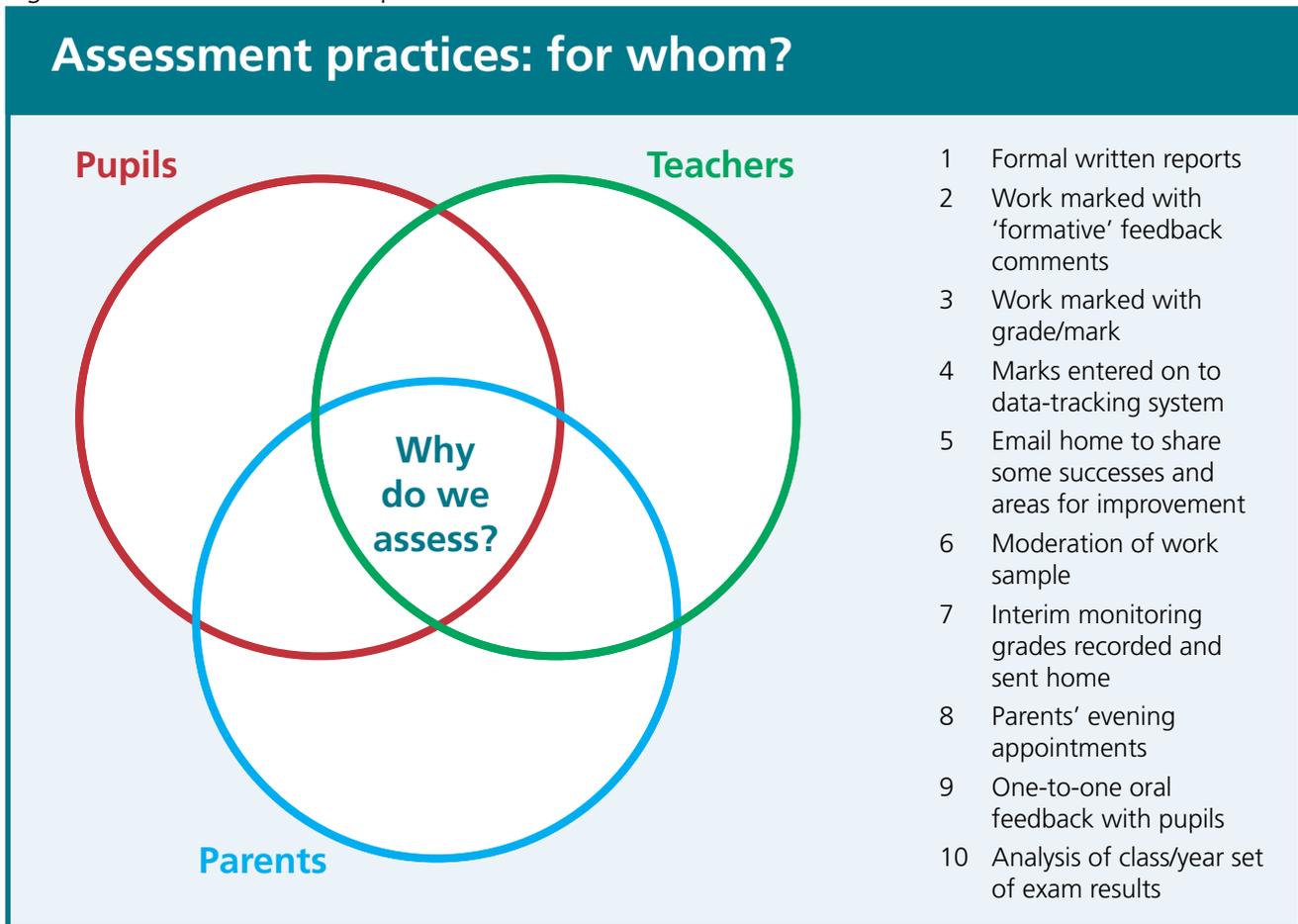
As part of our reforms to the national curriculum, the current system of 'levels' used to report children's attainment and progress will be removed. It will not be replaced.¹

In our previous joint article, written ten years ago, we explored the problems associated with using the National Curriculum Level Descriptions as a means of assessment at Key Stage 3.² In our experience, we had found that while level descriptions could be used as best-fit statements at the end of the key stage, they were inadequate for use on a half-termly basis and next to useless for characterising individual pieces of work. While level descriptions had never been intended to be used in this way, this fact was more often than not ignored by senior leaders who seemed desperate for departments not only to apply level descriptions to individual pieces of work, but also to sub-divide each of those descriptions into three further 'sub-levels' (5c, 5b and 5a, for example) so that pupils' progress over increasingly short periods of time could be readily discerned from a spreadsheet.³ We don't want to repeat ourselves or detail the extensive abuse of level descriptions – most people are only too aware of the problems – but it appears that the abuse is set to continue, at least in the short term, as schools delay decisions about what to replace them with.⁴

When we wrote ten years ago we were determined to focus attention on the purposes of assessment, ensuring that the process was useful to pupils, teachers and parents, as well as serving to provide senior leaders with meaningful and useful data. We also wanted to make sure that assessment wasn't reduced to narrow prescriptions – 'If you define monarchy correctly, you will reach level 5b' or 'If you give three causes, you will reach level 5c' – but rather that the process would give both pupils and teachers a better understanding of how to get better at history. Indeed our aim was to generate further meaningful discussion about what exactly that process involves – a question with which we have not stopped wrestling ever since. In this article, we revisit some of the original principles and practices that we first discussed in 2004 and consider where to go next in light of our own continuing search for the most effective approaches to assessment.

Over the last ten years we have remained adamant that level descriptions are not the way to provide meaningful assessment. While we continued to experiment in our use of task-specific mark-schemes, we also explored other approaches. For example, a pilot group of Year 9 pupils were given copies of the mark-scheme before they completed specific assessment tasks. There is an argument that making the 'success-criteria' as clear as possible to pupils – familiarising them with the standards by which their work will be marked – will enable them to make the best progress and produce the highest-quality work. In fact, we found that such a strategy actually had the reverse effect. Pupils were simply not excited by the assessment task; it was almost as though it had become another tick-box exercise. Rather than the challenge of the enquiry question igniting their enthusiasm and their desire finally to answer

Figure 1: Common assessment practices to consider in relation to their intended audience



a question that they had been investigating for some time, all the pupils' learning seemed to have been washed away by the appearance of the dreaded mark-scheme. Needless to say, we moved away from this strategy by re-focusing on the engaging historical question – with positive results. We also experimented with non-linear mark-schemes, using sets of statements to try to capture the range of thinking that might be required in responding to questions about, say, significance or interpretations. These statements were then used to assess particular responses, allowing us to identify the types or aspects of thinking that the pupils had employed. These groups of statements, however, proved too vague and abstract. While they encouraged a focus on thinking and argument in relation to essential second-order concepts, they completely neglected the development of substantive knowledge and could not adequately accommodate issues relevant to the specific planning and teaching for each individual enquiry. So we returned to the idea that our assessment measures needed to be rooted in a specific task. Time and time again, our experience confirmed that we and the pupils learnt most from using task-specific mark-schemes.

When the demise of level descriptions was announced, we had expected there to be rejoicing in the playgrounds. In fact there has been considerable reticence both about celebrating their departure and about seeking alternatives. Senior leaders are keeping the levels 'for one more year' in the hope that someone will tell them what to do. To some extent, we understand this restraint, given the considerable external pressures and measures that teachers regularly face. However, we believe that now is the time to press forward with further experimentation: to use department meetings

to reignite discussions about what it means for pupils to get better at history; about how to use assessment effectively; and about how to create meaningful information about pupils' attainment and progress. In the sections that follow, we offer our own answers to these questions and share the processes by which we have arrived at them, in the hope that this account of our journey will encourage others to embark on their own.

Why do we assess?

While it ought to be simple to answer the question, 'Why do we assess?', the system of levels seemed to generate the answer, 'So we can collect data and measure progress' rather than, 'To help pupils get better at history'. Even the DFE's *Assessment Principles* begins its definition of 'effective assessment systems' by stating that they are ones that, 'Give reliable information to parents about how their child, and their child's school, is performing.'⁵ The central purpose appears to be to judge *how* pupils are doing, rather than to improve learning; measurement and the comparison of outcomes predominate and the accountability agenda drives policy and practice. The unfortunate consequence, as Biesta has observed, is that 'we end up valuing what is measured, rather than that we engage in measurement of what we value.'⁶ In the last ten years, it has therefore felt like the tail has been wagging the dog in terms of assessment in schools. While we do not dispute that it is important to track progress, we stand by the principle that we endorsed in our previous article that assessment is *for* learning. Yet many of the systems that teachers now operate seem largely (if not entirely) divorced from that central purpose. Although the notion that assessment should be *formative* has certainly not

disappeared since we last wrote together, what have clearly changed are the purposes for which assessment has been used and the ways in which it has been deployed. If we are to respond to the challenge and the opportunity presented to us by life after levels, it is time to ask again, 'Why do we assess?' before evaluating and changing *how* we assess.

There exists a great deal of tension between different activities that come under the umbrella of assessment in schools, especially between summative and formative assessment. Consider the list of ten common practices shown in Figure 1 – practices that might typically be conducted (among others) as part of the process of assessment in schools – and think for a moment about why we conduct each of them and for whom: for pupils, for teachers or for parents? There is a place for all these activities if used effectively, yet it quickly becomes clear which have most, and least, value in helping pupils actually to get better at history. Different people in school may well answer the question of why we assess in quite different ways. A data manager may argue that it is to 'monitor and track progress', which is why he or she tends to prefer data presented in an apparently accessible format, whether that is a level (or more commonly a sub-level), a mark or a grade. However, what actually makes assessment *useful* is that it helps pupils, teachers and parents to know and understand precisely what lies behind the superficial score or symbol and what needs to be done to help secure further progress.

The purpose of assessment for pupils

For pupils, therefore, effective assessment and feedback is an essential part of helping them to make progress. Indeed, for pupils, that *is* its purpose. We have not changed our approach in the last ten years with regards to pupils and have continued to give comment-only feedback, to which pupils respond in follow-up activities, both inside and outside the classroom.⁷ The only way to give *effective* feedback, in our experience, is by giving precise, diagnostic formative feedback based upon task-specific mark-schemes, as detailed previously and further illustrated below. Summative assessment data for individual pieces of work is recorded, as are holistic judgements about attainment and progress at key points, although this is not attached to the pupils' work and is not shared with them during feedback. Therefore, the focus of assessment is not on helping pupils simply know where they are in terms of attainment scores, but on helping pupils know exactly what to do to get better at history. Black and Wiliam's influential work did much to establish the concept of 'assessment for learning' in schools, and we have continued to adhere to the principles of formative assessment that they set out.⁸ Ensuring that the assessment experience is positive and useful for pupils is far more likely with comment-only feedback and where time is given for pupils to respond to that feedback.

The purpose of assessment for teachers

For teachers, assessment helps to establish how, and how far, they are changing pupils' understandings in lessons, thus enabling them to evaluate their teaching and carefully plan for the next steps in the short, medium and long term. This is obviously a very complex process, requiring

in-depth specialist knowledge about history teaching and learning and about particular pupils, which cannot be easily captured in a simplistic overarching assessment framework or numerical data. For teachers to succeed in adapting their teaching effectively, assessment needs to be appropriately related to the specific context. The particular question asked, the wider context of the enquiry, the topic, the lesson and the pupils are all important if assessment is to help teachers work out how to teach better and to take pupils' learning forward. While school leaders will no doubt continue to demand data for tracking progress, such data should not replace the deep and rich knowledge we, as teachers, have of the pupils, and which we use to inform our planning.

The purpose of assessment for parents

In our experience, one of the most alarming changes in the last ten years relates to the way in which summative assessment data has been used with parents. While we were perhaps lucky in being able to resist using levels and sub-levels for individual pieces of work, many schools not only recorded such data but began sharing it 'live' with parents. The problem is that this did not help pupils get better at history because it did not help parents to understand *how* to help their children to do so. The knock-on effect was that conversations via email, over the phone and at parents' evenings began to be about whether a particular pupil was performing at Level 6a or 7c, rather than talking about the pupil's progress in history and what they might do to improve. Thankfully the government eventually recognised this problem, acknowledging in 2013 that one of the main reasons for abolishing the system of levels was because it was, 'complicated and difficult to understand, especially for parents.'⁹ Nonetheless, many schools continue to use levels (by which we mean the levels descriptions and not just the numbering system), and are planning to do so for the foreseeable future, at least for whole-school monitoring purposes.¹⁰

So, as we enter the brave new world of assessment without levels, let us not forget one simple but essential point: assessment is *for* learning and therefore whatever we do next must be planned and evaluated with this principle in mind.

Developing Key Stage 3 assessment

In wrestling with the question, 'how should we assess in a post-levels era?', we have been reading professional literature, talking with our department colleagues, discussing with other departments in school, debating with colleagues from other history departments and talking to our senior leaders. At the moment we are working on a model that includes our end-of-enquiry outcome tasks and shorter knowledge-based tests. Inspired by Riley's ground-breaking article on the power of enquiry questions to shape the curriculum, the outcome tasks that we have devised help us to assess a range of types of historical thinking and have become diverse in nature, including essays, spoken presentations, television documentaries, annotated cartoons and historical narratives.¹¹ These enquiry-based tasks ensure that assessment is integral to the teaching, bringing together the learning that has taken place rather than being bolted on at the end of a 'topic'. To mark them we use task-specific mark-schemes, which enable us to assess the development of pupils' substantive knowledge

Figure 2a: Task-specific mark-scheme for a Year 7 enquiry relating to change and continuity

	
Excellent	Good
<p>The analysis categorises the <i>types</i> of changes taking place (e.g. in relation to the feudal system and loyalty, law, religion, language) as well as characterising the <i>nature and extent</i> of that change (whether things were switched, uprooted, replaced, reshaped, altered, maintained, etc.).</p> <p>Selects, organises and deploys a wide range of knowledge effectively in order to support their analyses and arguments about change and continuity, perhaps contextualising it beyond the period studied using prior learning</p> <p>By examining how changes after 1066 were experienced by <i>different groups</i> in medieval society (lords, monks, peasants), identifies and explains the co-existence of change and continuity and identifies when things changed, for whom and in what ways.</p> <p>In the context of the work, terms such as ‘feudal system’ ‘religion’ and ‘law’ are used confidently and meaningfully to support explanation and analysis.</p> <p>Reaches a substantiated conclusion about how far England was transformed, which is persuasive. These conclusions are compared and contrasted to the conclusions reached by Schama, which are also explained in outline.</p> <p>A clear argument is conveyed through well-organised paragraphs; the structure is purposefully and deliberately constructed and the written style shows a sense of audience and employs some carefully chosen ‘language of change and continuity’.</p>	<p>Accurate and sometimes rich descriptions of changes that took place (e.g. in relation to the feudal system and loyalty, law, religion, language) and some analysis of those changes is offered. For example, may focus on describing and categorising the types of changes or characterising the nature and extent of change/continuity, but probably does not analyse all these different aspects. Justification of the analysis may show some weaknesses.</p> <p>While different groups in medieval society might be mentioned, they may not be linked to specific changes and pupils are unlikely to describe how change and continuity co-existed.</p> <p>Substantive knowledge will be selected according to some discernible criteria, even if they are not explicit. This is organised into a structured account, although the role of the knowledge in supporting explanations may be left implicit and undeveloped. Terms such as ‘feudal system’ and ‘religion’ are used when exploring types of change but not always in direct support of analysis.</p> <p>There is an attempt to address the claim that England was ‘transformed’ but any conclusions are not fully justified. Schama’s argument may be described accurately but his claims are not compared explicitly to the pupil’s own description and analysis.</p>
Very good	Fair
<p>Direct analysis of the types of change taking place by categorising them, as well as by characterising the nature or extent of change in order to develop simple arguments about change and continuity after 1066.</p> <p>The experiences of different groups in medieval society are described and there is evidence of comparisons being drawn between groups to identify change and continuity happening concurrently.</p> <p>There is a conscious development of the analysis and the account shows evidence of careful, deliberate selection and organisation of information to produce a structure that is directly and explicitly analytic. Terms such as ‘feudal system’ are used confidently, demonstrating a working understanding of them.</p> <p>There is a reasoned conclusion, effectively linked to the substance of the essay, in which pupils consider how far England was transformed. Schama’s argument is described and there is some consideration of how far the pupil agrees or disagrees with his claims.</p>	<p>The response describes some changes that took place or contrasts ‘before’ and ‘after’ without explicitly characterising the nature, extent or type of change. Events described (such as feudal system) have relevance but are not used to form clear explanation and analysis. Continuities are likely to be ignored.</p> <p>Some evidence of planning and structure but not used purposefully, for example to examine the type or nature of change. Different groups may be mentioned, although there is no deliberate attempt to compare their experiences.</p> <p>Terms such as ‘feudal system’ and ‘law’ are used but there is no evidence that these are securely understood.</p> <p>Reasonable use is made of substantive knowledge, although its selection and deployment may appear random. Some pupils may use everything they have studied whereas others omit key details that could have strengthened their explanations.</p>
	Ungraded
	<p>Does not directly answer the question. Reference is made to the Norman invasion, and to aspects of life in Britain or to key events, but no apparent attempt is made to identify or describe change or continuity.</p>

and their capacity to deploy it effectively and in increasingly sophisticated ways, as well as their ability to think historically.

Another key assessment technique with which we are currently experimenting is the use of short knowledge-based tests. We are beginning to use these on a regular basis to help us to analyse how well pupils are developing their long-term knowledge retention, enabling them to select and deploy the specific information that they will need in answering each

enquiry question and in making comparisons across time and place as their knowledge grows. Some of the questions test factual knowledge – dates of key events, names of key individuals – while others probe pupils’ understanding of substantive concepts such as ‘imperialism’ or ‘peasant’ or test pupils’ ability to construct time-lines from memory or to sequence events. This is a technique that we have always used with GCSE and A-level classes, but it seemed to fall off the radar when teaching Key Stage 3. Since introducing the

knowledge-based tests we have been able to identify those whom Fordham described as the ‘chronologically lost’ much more quickly than when we relied purely on question-and-answer sessions in class.¹² Such regular tests help to ensure that pupils are not left floundering until the final outcome task identifies them as struggling. Pupils have quickly got used to this type of assessment and we have been impressed by the development of their answers in the outcome tasks, as they have become much more adept at using substantive historical knowledge when they have it at their fingertips.

In many ways the assessment strategies that we have been using match Fordham’s ‘mixed constitution’ approach to assessment.¹³ Although we have been adapting our approach to fit this principle, we have still had to think hard about how we are assessing each aspect of pupils’ historical knowledge and understanding. The factual recall is relatively easy and ‘marks out of ten’ are uncontroversial in this respect. Writing task-specific mark-schemes is not so easy, however. While we have been using these for ten years now, the fact that we end up re-writing them on a regular basis shows how demanding – but necessary – the process is. Every year, after pupils have completed an outcome task and we have marked it, we look back as a department team to the task itself and to the mark-scheme to see if there are ways to improve it, based on the pupils’ responses. Their work always reveals new things to us about learning in history and sometimes we shift our ideas about what it means to get better as a result. We see assessment as an iterative process, which means we are constantly updating and improving the assessment tasks.

So how do you go about writing a task-specific mark-scheme? We tend to start by considering – again as a team – what we think would constitute a ‘gold standard’ for a particular group of pupils (such as a year group) in answering a particular type of question, in a particular context. By drawing on historical scholarship about that topic and on both professional and research literature about the development of historical thinking, we are able to reach a shared understanding of what progress and attainment should look like and what we need to do in terms of teaching. This often involves considering what we want pupils beyond Key Stage 3 – at GCSE and A-level – to be able to achieve. Such discussions are therefore part of wider conversations about the planning across a key stage and in relation to each individual enquiry and involve rigorous intellectual wrestling with the kind of question being asked and our objectives: what it is we want to see pupils learning *about* and learning to *do* as a result of each particular sequence of lessons. In the following section, we have tried to illustrate this process by sharing our recent experience of developing, improving and assessing some of the enquiries within our Key Stage 3 curriculum that are focused on students’ understanding of change and continuity.

Analysing change and continuity: what does it mean to get better?

The concept of change and continuity has been a focus of considerable recent attention. Like Foster, our department teams felt that we needed to ‘confront our collective confusion’ about this particular concept.¹⁴ Although we may

not yet have a perfect plan for progression across the key stage in relation to this aspect of historical thinking, we feel far less confused than before, having planned new enquiries, developed existing ones, considered what it means for pupils to make progress and found ways to assess that progress.

The series of assessment mark-schemes shown in Figure 2 a-c were developed as part of the planning for individual ‘change and continuity’ enquiries in Years 7, 8 and 9. The sequence of tasks and their associated mark-schemes therefore reflect a planned model of progression in change and continuity enquiries for our pupils. In planning each enquiry and each assessment task, we have considered where and when pupils should revisit similar types of question and have drawn on the work of Foster and Counsell, in particular, to ensure that pupils’ thinking is being moved forward across Key Stage 3 and that we understand exactly what kinds of progress we are looking for in their work.¹⁵ Overall, at different points across the key stage, we wanted pupils to encounter opportunities to analyse change in terms of its extent, nature, type, direction and speed; to appreciate the interplay between change and continuity, and to examine how those processes were experienced by different people in the past. Without explicit planning at enquiry, lesson and activity level to engage pupils in these different kinds of analytical thinking, we knew that they would continue to fail to see change as a process (rather than as an event) and would be stuck at simply organising events into chronological sequences without actually using ideas of change and continuity to make sense of their developing knowledge of events.

So, for example, early in Year 7 pupils tackle the enquiry question ‘Did the Normans transform England?’ – an enquiry which uses extracts from Schama’s *A History of Britain, Volume 1* as a way of engaging pupils with historians’ arguments about how England was changed after 1066.¹⁶ Across the sequence of lessons, pupils focus on characterising the nature of change (whether it was violent or abrupt, for example) and the various types of change (political, social and cultural) and consider the experience of different groups in society (distinguishing between peasants and lords). At the end of the enquiry their task is to write to Schama explaining how far they agree with his argument. As you can see from the mark-scheme (Figure 2a), what we are looking for is whether pupils are able to select and deploy their knowledge in ways that support their descriptions and analyses of the extent, nature, type and scope of change. In considering the experiences of different groups, we are looking to see whether they can identify and explain the co-existence of change and continuity and whether they recognise when things changed, for whom and in what ways.

In Year 8, inspired by Foster’s work, we ask pupils, ‘What kind of reform was the Reformation?’¹⁷ This builds on their work in Year 7 by engaging them in characterising the nature and type of change (religious, social, political). In blending stories studied in depth with overviews across time, our intention is to enable pupils to analyse continuities and to reach conclusions about the balance between change and continuity. We encourage pupils to experiment with different metaphors chosen to help support – and challenge – their thinking about the nature and process of the change. As reflected in the mark-scheme (Figure 2b), pupils are

Figure 2b: Task-specific mark-scheme for a Year 8 enquiry relating to change and continuity



Year 8: What *kind* of reform was the Reformation?

Excellent

A thorough analysis categorises the types of change taking place (religious, political, social) as well as characterising the nature and extent of that change using discernible criteria of their own choosing. There may be recognition that within a particular type of change some changes were more or less 'radical' than others, showing understanding of complex patterns of change. Pupils may discuss the continuity of ideas between the reformers and earlier reform movements (e.g. the Lollards) by drawing on prior learning and showing contextualised understanding. They will show understanding of the way that change affected different people in different ways, and was perceived and construed by different people in different ways.

Careful and deliberate selection, organisation and deployment of a wide range of knowledge are used to sustain an argument and explanation about the kind of change that the Reformation represented, leading to a well-substantiated and thought-provoking conclusion.

Confident and purposeful use of terms such as 'parliament', 'protestant', 'reform' and 'foreign policy' shows that pupils can use these terms to support their explanations about change and continuity. A range of analytic ideas and language is used to express and provide support for the claims that are made.

Very good

Describes and explains the *types* of change taking place through categorising and begins to characterise the nature and extent of change using some kind of criteria. They may discuss the continuity of ideas between the reformers and earlier reform movements (e.g. Lollards), drawing on prior learning to contextualise the analysis of change. Analysis reveals knowledge and understanding of some of the complexity of change, such as how different people experienced and perceived change, though this may not be fully justified.

The selection, organisation and deployment of a range of knowledge and images is well-considered and will help to support nuanced descriptions and an argument and explanation about the kind of change that the Reformation represented, leading to a substantiated conclusion. This conscious and deliberate exploration of the question is supported by a structure that is directly and explicitly analytic.

Terms such as 'parliament', 'protestant', 'reform' and 'foreign policy' are used to support explanations of change and continuity. Different analytic ideas and language are used to express and provide support for the claims that are made.

Good

Offers some analysis of the *types* of change taking place, as well as an accurate description of them. Characterises aspects of the nature or extent of change, although the characterisation may not be fully justified (criteria may not be explicit, for example). Shows awareness of the continuity of ideas between the reformers and earlier reform movements (e.g. Lollards) but these may not be fully explained or explicitly analysed.

Conscious selection, organisation and deployment of knowledge help to support the analysis and explanation of the kind of change that the Reformation represented, although historical details may be juxtaposed rather than compared or connected. The conclusion will largely be substantiated by and linked to the substance of the essay, though some points may be undeveloped.

Terms such as 'parliament', 'protestant', 'reform' and 'foreign policy' are used to support some of the explanations. Some well-judged language may be used to support and express the analysis.

Fair

A description of changes that took place during the Reformation rather than any explicit characterisation of the type/nature/extent of change, although some analysis may be implicit. Where they do seek to characterise change, they are unable to justify their characterisation or the evidence they use to support their characterisation may conflict with it.

The range of knowledge and images used may be organised with some sense of logical structure although it may lack evidence of careful and deliberate planning. The conclusion may be thoughtful although it may not be sustained or fully substantiated.

Terms such as 'parliament', 'protestant', 'reform' and 'foreign policy' are generally used accurately, but they are not deployed effectively to support the analysis and description.

Ungraded

Does not directly answer the question. Reference is made to key aspects of the Reformation but there is no apparent attempt to identify or describe change or continuity.

encouraged to employ new vocabulary to help them express their ideas and to improve the precision of their analysis.¹⁸ In the final outcome task, pupils produce a double-page spread for a textbook, in which they draw together and sum up their analysis, characterising and categorising the nature and types of changes in religious beliefs and practices and making a judgement about the extent of that change.

By the time pupils encounter the enquiry 'How radical were changes in British politics 1800-1928?' in Year 9, they have (we hope!) begun to recognise the types of question being asked about change and may therefore have a greater sense of what is required. This means that they can choose to explore different ways of answering the question. In tackling this enquiry pupils further expand their thinking

about the nature of change and about the interplay between change and continuity by considering the experience of different groups in society, both in terms of class and gender. (See Figure 2c.) There is also a focus on analysing the direction, speed and extent of change by considering how members of those different groups would have viewed particular changes (such as the Reform Acts) in terms of progression, regression or continuity. Pupils evaluate how radical reforms were from the perspective of those who lived at the time and finally from their own perspective, standing back to reflect as historians in the essays they complete at the end of the enquiry.

While all these enquiries are concerned with the processes and patterns of change and continuity, progress is not defined

within and across each enquiry simply in terms of this second-order conceptual thinking. Since the introduction of the revised National Curriculum we have started to re-engage with what it means for pupils to get better at history in terms of their historical knowledge. Although we are only beginning to sketch out exactly what that might mean within these revised mark-schemes, we have considered questions such as whether acquiring historical knowledge simply means knowing more or having a growing ability to use knowledge purposefully through the thoughtful selection and deployment of specific information. We have also asked about the role played by an enhanced understanding and more sophisticated use of substantive concepts such as 'parliament' or 'democracy' in enabling pupils to make connections and comparisons across periods and geographical settings. Although we may not yet have got the balance right – and we are sure there will soon be more to read in the pages of *Teaching History* on the role of knowledge in 'getting better at history', (stimulated in large part by the research and development work reported by Hammond in this issue) – the process of debating such questions as a team has made us think afresh about this issue.¹⁹ It is the freedom offered by the removal of levels that has ignited this debate, since the previous level descriptions made it perfectly possible to ignore the importance of knowledge.

How should you give feedback and report outcomes?

One of the most worrying trends in recent school practice has been the way in which assessment, recording and reporting have essentially been merged, through a process intended to simplify 'pupil progress data' into a numerical format (or a scale marked out by letters or colours) that means very little, particularly when sent home as a report to parents. Many teachers will probably be under pressure to continue to record outcomes in this way, so that progress can be monitored and under-achievement detected. Despite the good intentions driving this process, there is a danger that subject teams are restricted in trying to design effective assessment practices by whole-school monitoring systems. The question for subject leaders (and one that ought to be asked by curriculum leaders) is how to stay true to the discipline while also providing clear, meaningful information for senior leaders, parents and pupils that is not too simplistic and reductive. Let's forget, for a moment, about the unhelpful practices that others may be seeking to force upon us and consider instead what *would* be appropriate and useful.

The task-specific mark-schemes exemplified in Figure 2 a-c are intended as professional tools to be used by teachers to judge progress and to inform the feedback that we give to pupils. The mark-schemes themselves are not shared with pupils; nor are they simplified or broken down so that pupils can jump through the hoops, since our focus is on teaching and learning history and not on teaching to the test. Written feedback, such as that exemplified in our previous article, is given to pupils for each of the final outcome tasks.²⁰ This feedback includes annotations on the work to pinpoint specific strengths, or pose thought-provoking questions, as well as a summary of the overall strengths of the work and suggestions as to how the pupil might develop their thinking in future. Feedback such as this

relies on each teacher's knowledge of the individual pupil, of the sequence of lessons and specific enquiry question, and on their understanding of what progress means in terms of substantive knowledge, historical thinking and communication of their understanding. In other words, the teacher is using professional knowledge, informed by the carefully constructed mark-scheme, and operating, 'with a working sense of a gold standard' in order to assess and give feedback effectively.²¹ There is, importantly, not a level or a grade in sight. This would immediately distract the pupil from what is important – the feedback with which they need to engage. The approach described is largely the same as that described ten years ago in terms of giving feedback to pupils for 'milestone' pieces of work, i.e. the significant outcomes to each enquiry. Such an assessment policy enables us to provide useful guidance to those actually trying to get better at history so they have a clear sense of the specific features of historical knowledge and thinking that they need to develop and further refine.

Pupils' assessed work, stored in a book or portfolio, obviously contains detailed, useful data about their progress, particularly for teachers and pupils. Such collections of assessed tasks may be less convenient than a spreadsheet, but they are far more useful! Where simple data must be recorded for individual pieces of work, it is easy to assign numerical values to the various 'levels' in the mark-schemes we have exemplified here. These criterion-referenced scores will thus record pupil attainment so that 'progress' from each individual's starting point, as indicated by detailed information about their previous work, can be monitored. The careful wording of each mark-scheme enables us to record something far more meaningful than the previous generic levels could ever hope to provide. Although there is a need for staff to work closely together to create such mark-schemes and to moderate work to ensure that assessment is both valid and reliable, we would argue that this is still more robust and informative than simply using the levels for purposes for which they were not intended.

Figure 2 a-c shows how mark-schemes can be used together to monitor pupil progress in a far more meaningful way. Pupils' responses are assessed in terms of their development and use of substantive knowledge (in relation both to specific periods and topics and to a wider contextual framework) as it is used to create historical narratives, explanations and arguments. Each task involves new knowledge and, even though the second-order focus is the same, it is clear that the final outcome tasks become more analytically demanding. Thus, what constitutes a 'good' response in Year 7 to the question of whether England was transformed as a result of the Norman Conquest is quite different from what is expected as a 'good' response in Year 9 to the question of how radical changes in British politics were in the period 1800-1928. The differences encompass pupils' knowledge, their use of substantive concepts and their abilities to think historically (i.e. their use of second-order concepts) and to communicate their understanding. Where numbers are assigned to these 'levels' for data collection purposes, it is important to note that if a pupil continues to score 7 out of 10 across different pieces of work, according to the planning and the assessment mark-scheme, they will have made huge progress because of the increasing demands represented by

Figure 2c: Task-specific mark-scheme for a Year 9 enquiry relating to change and continuity

	
Excellent	Good
<p>Clear recognition of the kind of question being asked and an effective choice of foci to address in developing a response. Effectively conveys a thoughtful argument about the direction, nature or process of change. Exploration of the interplay between change and continuity in relation to different groups in society. Claims about change and continuity are nuanced and patterns or trends in enfranchisement may be considered (progression, regression). They may distinguish between different experiences of change <i>at the time</i> and <i>subsequent</i> analyses of significance of particular developments such as the Great Reform Act.</p> <p>Detailed substantive knowledge is used highly effectively, through measured selection and precise deployment, to characterise the nature/extent of change and support and sustain an argument about how radical particular reforms were. A broad range of knowledge across different periods of study (from enquiries in Y7/Y8) is drawn upon to contextualise the period and strengthen the analysis of change.</p> <p>Use of a range of analytic ideas and language to examine the direction/nature/process of change and to characterise the perceptibility/imperceptibility of change from different perspectives. The argument is conveyed through coherent and meaningful paragraphs leading to an effective and well-substantiated conclusion. The structure has been purposefully and deliberately planned to support the analysis and argument.</p> <p>The written style is mature and fluent. Spelling and use of technical terms is accurate. The response comes across as an original piece of work which engages the reader.</p>	<p>Some analysis is offered of the direction, nature or process of change in British politics, although not all claims are fully explained. Change and continuity are identified for different groups identified, although there is limited analysis of the overall patterns and trends and little consideration as to how they represented regression, progression or continuity.</p> <p>A range of substantive knowledge is used to support explanations and a simple argument is advanced about how 'radical' the reforms were, although this argument may not be fully reflective of the main body of the essay.</p> <p>Some attempt is made to use analytic language to describe and explain the direction, nature or process of change. Different perspectives and experiences may be explained and analysed.</p> <p>The response is organised to produce a structured account, although the relationships between different elements may be left implicit.</p>
Very good	Fair
<p>Thoughtful argument and analysis of the direction, nature or process of change in British politics, although this may be under-developed at times. Change and continuity are considered in relation to different groups in society. The overall pattern of change and continuity in relation to enfranchisement may be explored (in terms of progress and regress) though such claims may not always be fully supported.</p> <p>Deliberate and effective use is made of substantive knowledge to support an argument about whether the reforms were 'radical'. Wider knowledge of earlier periods in British history is drawn upon to contextualise change.</p> <p>Analytic language is used to describe and explain the direction/nature/process of change. Different perspectives and experiences are explained and analysed.</p> <p>This conscious and deliberate exploration of the question is supported by a structure that is directly and explicitly analytic, leading to an effective and substantiated conclusion. The written style is fluent, with correct spellings and accurate use of technical terms.</p>	<p>There is a recognisable focus on describing the change/continuity in British politics, through this is not always carried through to attempt an analysis of the direction, nature or process of change. Change and continuity may be identified for different groups, although these differences may be identified in rather simplistic terms and remain unrelated to the overall direction or process of change.</p> <p>Accurate knowledge is used to support descriptions. Claims are offered about how 'radical' the reforms were, although they may not be fully reflective of, or supported in, the main body of the essay.</p> <p>The organisation of the account shows some evidence of planning, but the structure is not used deliberately and purposefully to support the explanation advanced.</p>
	Ungraded
	<p>Does not directly answer the question. Mention may be made of voting and of the experience of different groups, but there is no apparent attempt to identify or describe change or continuity.</p>

each successive enquiry and associated mark-scheme. Should their marks drop, they may have produced work of a similar 'standard' to that on a previous task, but this would suggest underachievement or a lack of progress. A higher mark would suggest that, in the context of that enquiry and mark-scheme, the pupil had responded particularly well and made excellent progress. While the mark-schemes and scores show attainment, since they reflect planning for progression across

enquiries (in a year or key stage), the scores will also represent progress in concrete subject-specific, knowledge-specific and discipline-specific terms. In schools where the data manager is obsessed with seeing numbers increasing – and cannot accept that a sustained mark of 7 out of 10 as tasks become more challenging represents appropriate progress – it may be necessary simply to shift each column up to make visible the step up that is actually involved. In such a system pupils

would be awarded more marks – a higher score – reflecting the step up they had achieved in tackling a more demanding task successfully.

Many schools' data tracking systems also involve RAG-rating pupils in terms of progress. This often happens automatically where the data entered (say, a level for a piece of work) is compared with a target based on national expectations of progress from KS2 to KS4. The relevant cell turns a particular colour, with red representing a level 'significantly below target', amber a level 'below target', green 'meeting target' and purple 'exceeding target'. Such a flagging system is not a terrible idea in itself, but it disregards the wealth of knowledge that teachers have about pupils' progress in a sequence of lessons, or over a longer period, that may not be fully portrayed in a final piece of work or represented by the levels. If we were to accept that data systems are simply to 'flag up' possible underachievement we could use it for that purpose and use our judgement to choose the appropriate colour. Pegging it to the numbers entered often means, in our experience, that people choose the level to award a piece of work based on the colour it will turn the relevant cell on the spreadsheet, rather than basing their choice on what the level actually represents in terms of attainment. We would suggest that by using a task-specific assessment scheme, a department would generate more valid and useful data. Separating such task-specific mark-schemes from the flagging system is likely to make both much more reliable when judging how much progress has, or has not, been made.

Parents also need reliable, valid and useful information about pupils' progress. Sharing numerical data is never meaningful *on its own* and cannot help parents understand how to support their children to make progress. In our experience, sending assessment work, even assessment portfolios, home has always proved to be very valuable and is well worth the risk of them not coming back immediately! We tend to do this at fixed points in the year, usually about once a half term, so that parents can read the feedback on specific tasks and therefore understand what the pupil needs to do to improve. Parents are asked to sign the feedback to show that they have read it before it is returned to school. Comments from parents and pupils about this process have been very positive, as parents like to see what their children have been doing and how they are progressing. In addition to communicating with parents at a parents' evening or through a written report, we have found this sharing of the work and of our feedback to be an effective way of helping parents understand the learning in which their child is engaged and how they might help and encourage them to do better. The more we reduce and simplify information about assessment the more likely we are to fail in helping pupils actually to make progress in history.

Principles and practices to take forward

In light of our experience since drafting our original plea for 'Assessment without levels' and in the spirit of the new freedoms offered by the abolition of levels, we offer the series of principles and warnings set out in Figure 3. We hope that they will inspire and guide other history teachers and heads of department to act boldly in this brave new world. A world without levels is an exciting opportunity. Seize it!

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- 2 Burnham, S. and Brown, G. (2004) 'Assessment without level descriptions' in *Teaching History*, 115, *Assessment without Levels?* Edition, pp. 5-15.
- 3 Ofsted criticised this kind of practice in the 2011 subject report *History for all*, pointing out that in most of the history departments visited by their inspectors 'teachers were using sub-levels in their assessments, usually in response to demands from senior leaders'. Such practice, according to the report, 'was largely unhelpful since the levels were not intended for such minute differentiation or to be used so frequently. They were intended to be used sparingly and holistically to judge several pieces of work at the end of a key stage or, at most, at the end of a year. They were never intended to be used, as inspectors observed in some of the schools visited, to mark individual pieces of work.' Ofsted (2011) *History for all: history in English schools 2007/10*, p. 29.
- 4 For more detail of some of the criticisms see Lee, P. and Shemilt, D., 'A scaffold not a cage: progression and progression models in history' in *Teaching History*, 113, *Creating Progress Edition*, pp. 13-23; Fordham, M. (2013) 'O Brave New World without those levels in': where now for Key Stage 3 assessment in history?' in *Teaching History*, *Curriculum Evolution Supplement*, pp. 16-23; Ford, A. (2014) 'Setting Us Free? Building meaningful models of progression for a "post-levels" world' in *Teaching History*, 157, *Assessment Edition*, pp. 28-41. Teachers' uncertainty about how they will respond to the new freedoms is revealed by their responses to the Historical Association annual survey. In June/July 2014 around a third of respondents indicated that they were still unsure about how to proceed. Of those who were able to suggest what they would do, responses varied quite evenly between those who intend to continue applying the level descriptors as set out in 2008; those who intend to adapt those 2008 levels in some way; those who will look to GCSE grade systems to devise a related scale and those intending to develop their own measures of progression. See Burn, K. and Harris, R. *Historical Association Survey of History in Schools in England, 2014*, Historical Association, p.1. Available online at: www.history.org.uk/resources/secondary_news_2303.html
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Thanks to Rachel Foster and Matt Stanford, who have contributed enormously through their invaluable discussions with us to many of the ideas and practices presented within this article.

Figure 3: Dos and don'ts in developing assessment policy and practice



Begin with what you want pupils to learn and then consider how to design assessment systems and practices to reflect this. This will involve planning in the long-, medium- and short-term to ensure that assessment is fully integrated into planning for teaching and learning and may well mean adopting a 'mixed constitution' for assessment across the key stage.²²

Think deeply, as a department, about progression and reflect critically on current assessment practice. Although challenging, it is this process that distinguishes teaching as a form of professional practice. An unfortunate consequence of the level descriptions, for some, was that it closed down thinking about what progression looks like and how it might be assessed.

Collaborate with other schools and draw on existing good practice, such as that shared on the pages of *Teaching History*, in order to design assessment systems and develop practice. Not only will this help to share the workload, it will challenge and improve your thinking and help ensure that there is a clearer understanding of what 'expected progress' means in history.

Get involved at whole-school level. Don't wait to be told what system you will have to work within and then have to meet its requirements. By offering to help develop school practice, you are far more likely to influence policy in positive ways. Communicate with senior leaders to ensure that they understand what you need from assessment policy as history teachers.

Analyse and evaluate the quality of any new assessment system regularly and rigorously. Consider using (at least some of the questions checklist devised by Professor Robert Coe and shared on his blog to help you evaluate the quality of the assessment you design. It is certainly worth using this list to arm you against any 'weak' externally-imposed structures and systems.²³



Use the levels as they exist or create something largely similar to the levels. The level descriptions were never intended to be used for formative assessment or individual pieces of work. So, don't try creating a generic linear model of progression that fails to capture the complexity of historical progression and ignores the importance of historical knowledge.

Use GCSE mark-schemes from Key Stage 3 onwards. Such generic mark-schemes that reduce progress to small steps in a simplistic, linear way will simply encourage more teaching to the test. GCSE mark-schemes are weak models of progression that largely ignore substantive knowledge and the complexity of second-order conceptual development, so will not help pupil progress.

Use a single taxonomy (e.g. Bloom's) as a structure for assessment, as suggested by the NCTL's 'Beyond Levels' 2014 research report.²⁴ Designing assessments and creating displays about making steps from 'description' to 'explanation' and 'analysis' will be meaningless and confusing, particularly out of subject context. It would also be wrong: a rich description characterising a period might be far more complex than a simplistic causal analysis, for example.

Plan your assessment system around external, generic or whole-school structures and systems such as data tracking or league tables. These are not rooted in subject discipline and are too simplistic to be useful. Find a way to make this work after you have the rigour in place.

Use numbers or grades rather than descriptions in an effort to make things easy to do and easy to use. Data has its uses but carefully-crafted descriptions will enable you to capture the complexity of subject-specific progression. Perhaps Einstein had levels in mind when he (allegedly) said, 'Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.'

The knowledge that 'flavours' a claim:

towards building and assessing historical knowledge on three scales

While marking some Year 11 essays, Kate Hammond found her interest caught by significant differences between one kind of strong analysis and another. Some scored high marks but were less convincing. The achievement in these essays was superficially high, but somehow fragile. But in what way? And why?

Putting GCSE mark-schemes to one side, Hammond used her Year 11 students' work to investigate the true nature of their historical accomplishment. What was really distinguishing the strongest from the rest? Her research led her to the role of historical knowledge and to a quest to classify the types of historical knowledge that seemed to help certain students not only to gain high marks but to do so with a fluency and security that marked them out from the rest. She found herself considering how these

layers of knowledge were making effective historical analysis possible.

Her research led her to question a teaching approach that is driven by GCSE mark-schemes rather than by a determination to build deeper and more wide-ranging knowledge. It also led her to rethink the mark-schemes themselves.

It all began one Saturday in September. I sat down with a rather-less-than-positive attitude to mark a set of Year 11 essays on the Tet Offensive. My students were enthusiastic and had written substantial pieces of causal analysis: this was going to take some time.

It did turn out to be something of a marking marathon, but by the time that I had finished, something had captured my interest. My students had all written well, but there were marked differences between those students who produced the best historical analyses of the Offensive and those whose work was secure but less convincing. The GCSE mark-scheme led me to explain these differences in terms of the students' differing success in grasping and analysing the causal problem.¹ It seemed to me, however, that rather than their second-order concept knowledge being the biggest variable, it was their substantive historical knowledge that seemed to be having a larger effect on the success of their work.²

This is hardly rocket science. Many in the history education community have acknowledged the interplay and interdependence of substantive historical knowledge and second-order knowledge in any well-developed piece of historical analysis.³ It was in trying to establish the nature of this interplay, however, and in trying to articulate exactly what students were doing with their substantive historical knowledge that I began to struggle. The existing mark-scheme could not account for it. This was not to do with how many relevant, accurate, facts they were using to 'support' their points. It seemed that better pieces of historical analysis did not rest on the superior *quantity* of substantive historical points that a student deployed, but that there was some sort of deeper *quality* to this knowledge that was allowing them to use it in clever ways. It also seemed to me that students were displaying, in indirect yet powerful ways, different *types or forms* of substantive historical knowledge, although, again, I was struggling to articulate what these might be.

It was at this point that I decided that something had to be done. If certain students were producing superior pieces of historical analysis due, in part, to the nature of their substantive historical knowledge, I needed better to understand what forms of knowledge they possessed and what they were doing with them in their essays. Armed with this understanding, I would be in a stronger position to help *all* my students both to gain and to make better use of substantive historical knowledge in order to analyse the past effectively. I therefore decided to embark on some research. I decided to examine my students' work with a view to theorising the underlying properties of knowledge that were indirectly contributing to success.

History teachers' insights into substantive historical knowledge

It is an interesting exercise to review what the history education community has written about substantive historical knowledge and its interplay with second-order knowledge. Many teachers have made reference to the close integration of the two, but there seems to be a tendency to comment briefly on the relationship rather than to explore it in depth. For example, Vermeulen states that substantive knowledge is 'underpinned' by second-order knowledge and that substantive knowledge is needed as a base on which

Kate Hammond

Kate Hammond is Head of History and a Specialist Leader in Education (History) at Bottisham Village College, Cambridgeshire (11-16 comprehensive).

Figure 1: Example of a student's completed 'Hitler climbing the Reichstag' diagram

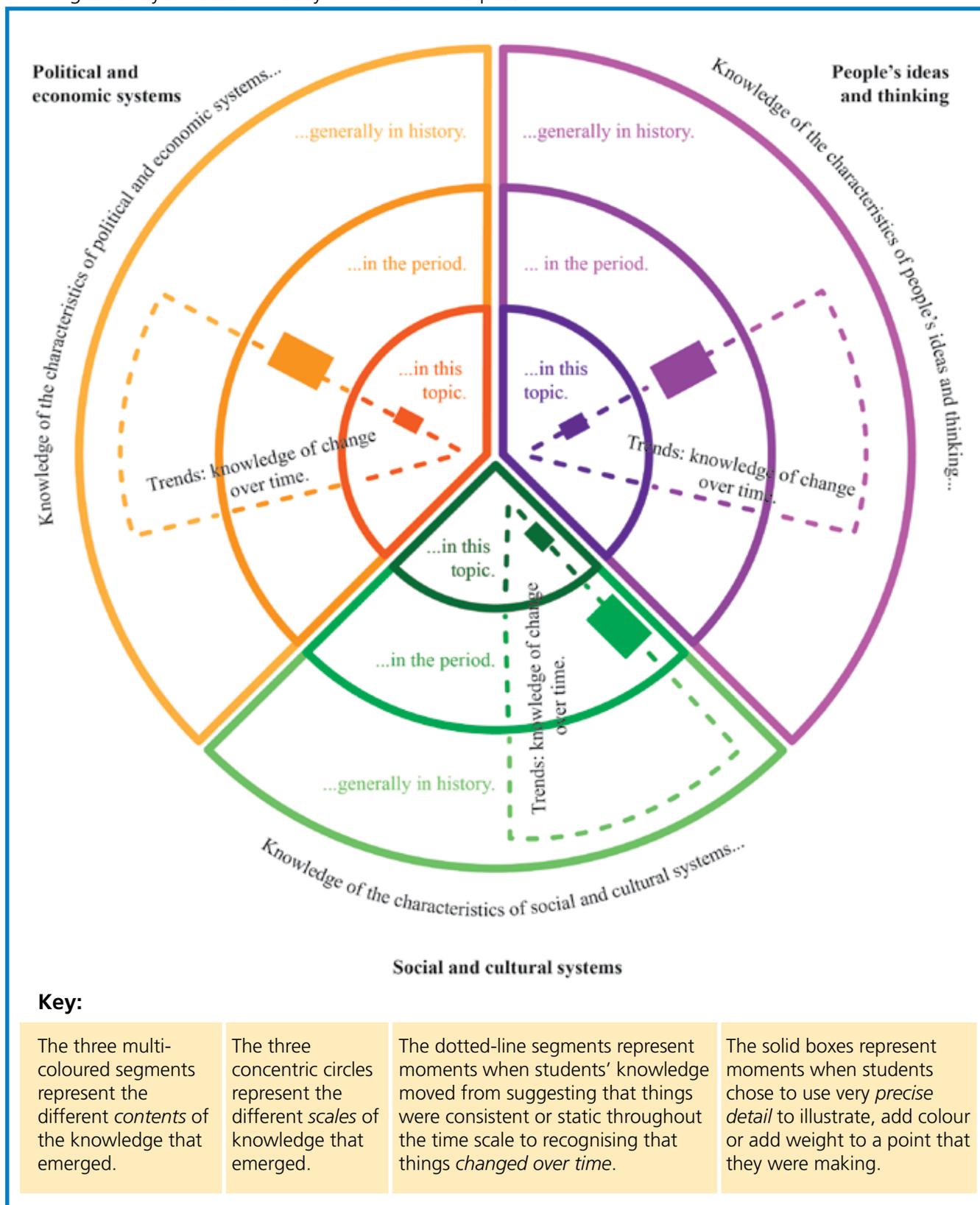


to 'hang' evidential understanding, but does not dig into this relationship any further.⁴ Similarly, Reisman claims that substantive historical knowledge 'enables' second-order enquiry but does not go on to explore *how* this occurs.⁵ This fairly common practice of stating connections between substantive and second-order knowledge but not really exploring them suggests that our understanding of this relationship is under-theorised.

An important exception to this generalisation is Pickles, who reported on her attempts to explore the way in which her Year 8 and Year 13 students' substantive historical knowledge affected their ability to make meaning from historical sources.⁶ Pickles concluded that her students

seemed to be operating with three types of historical knowledge (substantive knowledge of the topic and context, second-order knowledge of how to handle historical evidence and second-order knowledge of empathy) and that the second-order understandings were an essential precursor if students were to make the most effective use of their substantive knowledge. Pickles' research added a new angle to our understanding but there is still a black hole over the issue of substantive historical knowledge. Can substantive knowledge be simply divided into 'topic' knowledge and 'context' knowledge? And what happens when – as they marshal material or advance conclusions – students use substantive historical knowledge *implicitly*? Pickles seems to address neither tacit knowledge nor its implicit manifestation.

Figure 2: Summary diagram of the forms of substantive knowledge that students seemed to possess when writing an analytic causation essay on Hitler's rise to power



Further insights into the nature of substantive historical knowledge come from Lee who drew out the important distinction between factual and conceptual substantive historical knowledge.⁷ Counsell distinguished between students' 'fingertip' knowledge (temporary, detailed substantive working knowledge necessary to hold in ready memory when working on a topic) and their 'residue' knowledge (longer-lasting substantive knowledge of period structures and characteristics that needs to outlast

a particular topic focus and which will make it possible to recognise recurring features in future topics and to make links across topics).⁸ Returning to my Tet Offensive essays, I could see, to some degree, how these characterisations helped me to explain the differences between the stronger and weaker pieces of historical analysis, but I was still unable to say what *exactly* students were doing with their substantive historical knowledge that made certain essays shine. It was time to start theorising for myself.

Figure 3: The first paragraph of Luke's essay

How important was the Nazi propaganda campaign in helping Hitler to become Chancellor in January 1933?

Hitler began his run for Chancellor as the leader of just another minority party with votes struggling to break the tens. It would take something massive to pull Hitler into the public eye and to make them vote for him. Hitler's furious propaganda campaign run by his close Nazi ally Goebbels meant that he could blast into the public eye and seem to smash down the other parties, concentrating on their faults. However, just little posters and the occasional radio broadcast would not be enough to really catch the public's attention and draw them away from the parties they had voted for consistently in previous elections. It would take massive city-wide rallies to make people interested. Most people that would attend the rallies would not be going to support the Nazis but just to see what was going on. The patriotic singing and marching would then have the power to pull the whole crowd into a salute to Hitler and to Germany, gaining the Nazis votes.

- Knowledge that becoming Chancellor of Germany requires time: it is not an instant achievement.
- Knowledge of the German political scene at this time, characterised by minority groups and coalitions.
- Knowledge of specifics of Nazi fortunes during the 1920s.
- Knowledge of what is needed to attract public attention, and the realities of getting people to vote.
- Knowledge of the fact that the Nazis need votes in order for Hitler to become Chancellor.
- Knowledge of the pace and scale of the propaganda campaign that the Nazis undertook.
- Knowledge of individuals connected to the events.
- Knowledge of realities of discrediting opposing groups as a tactic to win support for your own.
- Knowledge of the kinds of propaganda available at this time.
- Knowledge of voting patterns in previous elections, knowledge that people have voting habits which are difficult to break.
- Knowledge of what is needed to secure votes and win acclaim, and that this is what Hitler needs to do.
- Knowledge that it takes time to persuade people, and that people might attend rallies for other reasons.
- Knowledge that the Nazis used patriotism as a tactic and that the German voters would respond to it.
- Knowledge of the behaviour that did occur at certain rallies.

What kinds of substantive historical knowledge do students seem to have in their heads?

My Year 11 class had moved on to the final unit of their GCSE, a depth study of Germany from 1918 to 1945, and were ready to write a causation essay in which they would build an argument concerning how Hitler rose to become Chancellor in 1933. I decided to analyse these essays in some depth to see if I could characterise the types or forms of substantive historical knowledge with which my students seemed to be operating.

My students had completed a five-lesson sequence in preparation for the essay. During the sequence, they had been encouraged to consider the role of differing factors in bringing Hitler to the Chancellorship. Using the metaphor of Hitler 'climbing' the Reichstag, students had considered *how* different factors had helped Hitler to reach the top and *how far* each factor had moved him towards his goal (see Figure 1, p.19). The essay then asked them to take one particular factor (the Nazi propaganda campaign) and to analyse its relative importance in helping Hitler to become Chancellor, a fairly standard essay for our examination board.

Reading the essays in order to establish the forms of substantive historical knowledge that students seemed to possess was a fascinating experience. By probing each sentence and paragraph, and by comparing stronger pieces of historical analysis with weaker ones, I discovered patterns beginning to emerge. I attempted to capture these in a diagram (Figure 2). For me, the most interesting feature of

the diagram is the concentric circles. These represented the range of knowledge that students brought into their essays. The inner circle represents the knowledge of the essay topic (Hitler's rise to power), the middle circle represents period knowledge (what was happening in Germany in the early twentieth century) and the outer circle represents wider historical knowledge (knowledge of systems, characteristics and ideas that were drawn from outside the Germany topic). It was clear that those students who produced stronger analyses of Hitler's rise to power drew, in some very important way (not necessarily through an explicit, overt reference) on all three levels of knowledge, while those students with weaker analyses tended to remain in the inner circle, perhaps venturing into the middle circle on occasion. This took me back to Counsell's 'residue' knowledge – the more successful students seemed to have more of it. It also raised further questions: did they *just* have more 'residue' knowledge or did they know when to make use of it to drive home a point?

I will return to the way students seemed to *use* their substantive historical knowledge presently, but this observation about the existence of different forms of substantive historical knowledge calls for a moment's reflection. How much time do we, as history teachers, devote to ensuring that students are building up knowledge on all three scales? What tactics are we employing to ensure this week's topic knowledge becomes next week's period knowledge and next year's wider historical knowledge? I was humbled to reflect that I had done very little to help students retain their substantive historical knowledge across Years 7 to 11, and yet such knowledge seemed to be making a significant difference to their ability to explain past events well.

Figure 4: The second paragraph of Abbie's and Alice's essays

How important was the Nazi propaganda campaign in helping Hitler to become Chancellor in January 1933?

Abbie

Another factor would have been the flexible policies which I would conclude were quite important towards Hitler's achievement. The Nazis are making their policies flexible with the public so that anything that doesn't appeal to them is thrown off the table to some extent. This will gain huge support because the Nazis are basically feeding in to the public and giving them what they want. Policies that Hitler knew would gain popularity were Hitler's promises to men: farmers promised higher prices, workers promised jobs and shopkeepers promised protection against competition. This will make the Nazis look fair to people straightaway and also trustworthy due to Hitler trying to overcome what the women from the election poster were saying.

Alice

However, it could be argued that the Depression was the most important factor in helping Hitler to become Chancellor as the Nazis relied on it to be noticed at all. In times when the public as a whole were more than happy with their situation and the situation of Germany, votes for extreme parties (the Nazis were one of those) decreased rapidly. So the Nazis could be argued to be relying on the Depression and the apparent lack of leadership caused by it to be noticed by the public and to retain their attention from that point. This allowed them to gain more seats in the Reichstag and ended in Hindenburg having no choice but to appoint Hitler as Chancellor.

What do students appear to be doing with their substantive historical knowledge when they write strong historical analyses?

Students were undoubtedly doing a variety of different things with their knowledge. Two features, however, particularly interested me.

1 More successful students seemed to hold multiple pieces of substantive historical knowledge in mind and to use them to 'flavour' the claims they made.

The paragraph from Luke's essay in Figure 3 offers a fascinating example of this feature.⁹ In that figure, I have drawn out just some of the substantive knowledge that seems to be resident in his mind as he writes this paragraph. In order to write convincingly about Nazi propaganda, he appears to draw on a wealth of knowledge of other characteristics, structures and ideas which are 'flavouring' the overall point that he is trying to make. Because he understands not only the realities of politics in Germany in this period but also the realities of getting elected *in modern Western democracies generally*, Luke is able to argue that the propaganda campaign made a difference to the Nazis. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Luke is referencing many pieces of substantive historical knowledge, and it seems to be Luke's solid grasp of them which is allowing him to argue well when making his point about Nazi propaganda. I am not talking here about explicitly supporting a claim with facts, examples or evidence. Luke's referencing of his knowledge is indirect, immanent and complex. In other words, this is a quite different phenomenon from that of

deployment or substantiation – achievements which mark-schemes normally privilege and which history teachers typically teach directly.

Again, this raises important questions for us as history teachers. Should we place greater emphasis on developing students' wider knowledge so that it is sufficiently secure to enable them to 'flavour' their points, or should we focus our time on the immediate topic knowledge needed to answer a question? How much time have we invested, throughout students' earlier secondary schooling, in considering what forms of substantive historical knowledge our students would later need in order to 'flavour' their points in a particular context? Should we model this 'flavouring' as we teach, showing students how to bring in wider knowledge in order to illuminate its role more sharply?

2 More successful students seem to choose wider historical knowledge as their first port of call when constructing their arguments.

Although this observation is a more tentative one, based on the sample of essays with which I was working, there did seem to be a pattern emerging concerning the type of substantive historical knowledge that students preferred to use when substantiating an argument. This is seen most clearly by comparing Abbie and Alice's second paragraphs (see Figure 4). Using the GCSE mark-scheme, both Abbie's and Alice's paragraphs would have secured an 'A': they both had a 'sustained focus' on the question and they both used 'accurate and relevant material' to support their arguments. Yet when substantiating her argument on flexible policies, Abbie's instinct was to stay within the realms of topic knowledge, while Alice's instinct was to go out to period knowledge and to wider historical knowledge in order to

Figure 5: A first attempt at a mark-scheme which credits substantive historical knowledge more fully than existing examination mark-schemes

How important was the Nazi propaganda campaign in helping Hitler to become Chancellor in January 1933? (10)	
Mark	Possible characteristics of the essay
1-2 marks	The student fails to tackle the question in any meaningful way, simply listing factors or describing elements of the topic.
3-4 marks	There is a strong sense that the student does not understand that Hitler's rise to power was situated in a particular time and place. The student attempts to answer the question using knowledge that is pertinent to the topic, but fails to demonstrate a grasp of its relation to other events, ideas and characteristics of the period. Judgements on the role or importance of factors seem to be made without an appreciation of the bigger picture within which these factors were situated, and tend to be weak as a result.
5-6 marks	The student demonstrates some understanding of the broader characteristics of the period in which Hitler's rise to power is situated. He/she draws on this knowledge intermittently when trying to make judgements on the role or importance of various factors with occasional success, or might draw on inaccurate wider knowledge to flavour their claims without realising its inaccuracy, leading to weaker conclusions.
7-8 marks	The student has a fairly secure understanding of the characteristics of the period in which Hitler's rise to power is situated, although some errors or gaps in understanding may be indicated. Although some claims about the role and importance of factors may be made without apparent appreciation of the wider context, carrying less weight, there is a genuine sense that the student understands the need to make use of wider substantive historical knowledge to shape their conclusions and is attempting to do so.
9-10 marks	There is a strong sense that the student understands the characteristics of the period in which Hitler's rise to power is situated. He/she is able to use that knowledge (although this knowledge may be revealed implicitly) to make perceptive and accurate claims about the role of various factors and which ones were most important to Hitler's success.

Comments on the mark-scheme

Writing such a mark-scheme is tricky! My key aim is to try to help markers recognise the vital role of substantive historical knowledge in creating a strong piece of causal analysis and to credit it. In trying to communicate the possible features to which a marker might need to stay alert, however, the mark-scheme might give the sense that the student will be including these things consciously. For example, in the 7-8 mark bracket, I have used the phrase '...understands the need...' which implies an explicit decision on the part of the student to draw on wider knowledge. In the worst mishandlings of the mark-scheme, this could lead to teachers training students to include wider substantive historical knowledge to 'tick off' that level.

Such an approach would actually damage the students' developing understanding of the past. If they are constantly foregrounding all wider knowledge rather than leaving it in its proper place doing an important job in the background, surfacing through informed choice of words or patterning of phrases, they have distorted their picture of the past. This would be to miss the point of a students' accomplishment in 'flavouring' a claim with period sensitivity informed by underlying factual security.

Any such attempts by teachers to 'teach to the mark-scheme' or to try to make their students explicitly aware of flavouring and 'able' to do it would result in some horrible

responses which would fail to achieve what the mark-scheme is designed to do: to see what kinds of period and wider knowledge students can draw on when they are *not* focused on it. This is why writing this mark-scheme is so tricky: I am trying to help markers credit what is not *explicitly* occurring as well as what is, and that is something that we teachers have had very little experience of doing. Furthermore, in trying to keep the mark-scheme manageable, I am aware of having used some sloppy and vague phrases ('some understanding', 'occasional success') which would understandably irritate and even distract an annoyed marker from focusing on the key issue of flavouring with substantive knowledge.

create a context before focusing in on topic knowledge. Although there are multiple reasons why Alice's essay is a stronger piece of historical analysis than Abbie's, these decisions about the type of historical knowledge on which to draw as they built their claims did seem to make a notable difference to the overall success of the argument.

My judgement is that existing mark-schemes are both a poor reflection of these issues and a poor guide to the

deeper reasons why a student might be more likely to be more successful in any history examination. Although they scored similarly on this essay, the fact that Alice's work is far better, for these subtle, knowledge-rooted reasons, is almost certainly indicative of the greater security of her wider foundations for success.¹⁰

Of course, any theories as to *why* students made certain decisions when deciding how to substantiate their arguments

would need a further investigation. I did wonder, however, whether these choices were indicative of the different ways in which students fundamentally 'see' the past – as a jungle of detailed stories through which they have to hack their way, or as a journey over the jungle in a hot-air balloon which gives them the opportunity to zoom down or up as circumstances require. And if this metaphor provides an insight into genuine differences in their approach, how do we help more students both to get into the balloons in order to see and know the broad territory in the first place, and to operate the balloons well?

Where might we go from here?

I am conscious that my observations about the students' use of substantive historical knowledge are based on the essays of one class on one particular topic, and that there are grounds for questioning any generalisations made on the basis of my findings. Despite these limitations, I think that this investigation may have important implications that are worth considering carefully.

First, if we accept that students' grasp of period and wider substantive historical knowledge does enable them to write more effective historical analyses, then arguably aspects of our teaching may need to change. England's 2014 National Curriculum expects students to be gaining a 'coherent, chronological narrative' and to be placing 'their growing knowledge into different contexts'. This hints at the idea of building up a body of substantive historical knowledge.¹¹ We need to consider how we will build up this body of substantive historical knowledge and how we can help students to retain and adapt it in the light of new understanding. Fordham has suggested that regular chronological tests might begin to help build some of this knowledge, with end-of-year exams requiring students to revisit knowledge built throughout the year, making use of it in new contexts.¹² Certainly we would do well to revisit our enquiry sequences in order to see what opportunities exist to return explicitly to previous knowledge. We could thus make sure not only that their earlier knowledge is not being wholly forgotten but also that pupils are using it to 'flavour' the new knowledge being acquired.

Second, if we accept that students' grasp of different forms or types of substantive historical knowledge allows them to write better historical analyses, arguably our mark-schemes need to reflect this. I am not calling for some kind of tick-box exercise ('Ah, there's an example of wider knowledge – into Level 4 then!') but for something more sophisticated. Presently, many GCSE mark-schemes reward, within the higher levels, greater detail and precision of substantiating material. Such mark-schemes fail to acknowledge that it is not the independent inclusion of detail in an answer but its *situated and indirect use* that displays more profound historical understanding and argument. It is not about flinging in some precise facts to show detailed knowledge (as the current mark-schemes might lead us to conclude); rather, it is about making use of detailed knowledge to 'flavour' the construction of a claim, knowledge which may be revealed implicitly rather than explicitly (and which the current mark-schemes ignore).

This is where we need to return to the contentions of Burnham and Brown back in 2004 and to develop topic-specific and task-specific mark-schemes which give meaningful examples of the sophisticated way in which students might blend different forms and scales of substantive historical knowledge, considering how we might credit knowledge that is revealed implicitly.¹³ My first attempt at constructing a basic mark-scheme for my Year 11 students' essay on Hitler becoming Chancellor can be seen in Figure 5. I am keen to stress, however, that there are multiple objections to which it might be open. I hope, however, that it will trigger further ideas about how both teachers and examiners might reward students' proper use of wider substantive historical knowledge and also how we might better define its relationship with the much more familiar territory of second-order knowledge (such as knowing appropriate patterns of analysis for arguments about causation or change).

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- ² Throughout this article, I will be drawing a distinction between substantive historical knowledge (knowledge of what happened in the past; the product of a historian's work) and second-order knowledge (knowledge of the concepts, disciplines and procedures that allow people to study history; how historians construct their accounts of the past). Although this distinction is probably well known to readers who are familiar with the National Curriculum for England and Wales, it is worth noting that not all would agree that historical knowledge should be 'carved up' in this way. Rogers, P. (1978) *The New History: theory into practice*, London: Historical Association, offers a fascinating insight into one theorisation of types of historical knowledge before the National Curriculum laid down guidelines. It uses the distinction between 'know-that' and 'know-how' knowledge. VanSledright, B. (2011) *The Challenge of Rethinking History Education: on practices, theories and policy*, New York: Routledge, gives an alternative way of theorising the types of historical knowledge that students use.
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Polgehroneon

Reinterpreting police-public relations in modern England

David Churchill

The relationship between the police and the public has long been a key subject in English social history. The formative work in this field was conducted between the 1970s and 1990s, but the past few years have witnessed something of a revival of research in the area. By focusing on new sources, new periods and new topics, recent work has led to new interpretations of an already well-researched topic.

Much early work in the social history of policing – loosely inspired by Marxist ideas of class relations – emphasised conflict between the police and the people. Robert Storch claimed that the newly-formed, professional police forces of the early Victorian period were met by a combination of derision and riotous resistance.¹ According to this view, ordinary people understood the police as ‘blue locusts’ – as parasites, sent by the ruling class to discipline working people. Some scholars supported Storch’s interpretation, yet over the years it increasingly drew criticism from others who felt that police-public relations were more complex and nuanced than this. By the 1990s, a consensus had developed among historians that encounters with the police were contingent and contradictory – sometimes good, sometimes bad, depending on the situation.² Furthermore, most agreed with David Taylor that ordinary people became more accepting of the police over time, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³

Some historians, however, have recently challenged the argument that popular perceptions of the police had improved considerably by the end of Victoria’s reign. The darker side of police-public relations – which saturated Storch’s work – has once again taken centre stage. One aspect of policing which stands out from recent research is violence. For example, in his book on Liverpool, John Archer devotes considerable space both to police violence and to violence against the police.⁴ He suggests that policing remained distinctly unpopular with working people throughout the nineteenth century, even if overt hostility had mellowed somewhat by the 1890s. This kind of work is underpinned by the growth since the 1990s of historical research on violence more generally, a move which signals a reaction against the overriding preoccupation of early crime historians with property offences and their relation to the class system. Scholars are now concerned just as much with the importance of gender in attitudes towards violence in the past, and what violence therefore can tell us about ideas of appropriate conduct for men and women. These sophisticated approaches to violence have also informed my own work on policing in Leeds, which shows

that assaults on policemen still served as an expression of masculine independence and self-worth late into the nineteenth century.⁵ Moreover, by using police occurrence books – a previously neglected resource – this study reveals the abuse and insult encountered by constables on the street, and suggests that a vocal section of the public continued to hold the police in contempt. In these ways, recent research has cast some doubt on earlier claims that police-public relations improved considerably in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

As well as going over familiar material with a new eye, historians have unearthed forgotten sources of friction between the police and the populace. Over the past decade, several scholars have shifted the focus of their work from the Victorian era to the more recent past as, with the passage of time, an ever-greater portion of the twentieth century invites the attention of historians. Among others, John Carter Wood has drawn attention to a series of press scandals concerning the Metropolitan Police in the 1920s.⁶ Revelations in this decade relating to police harassment, interrogation tactics and corruption threw public trust in the police into question. Furthermore, research on this previously under-studied era has exposed a political dimension to police-public relations, by highlighting the role of Labour and Liberal representatives in pursuing investigations into police abuses. Like new studies of the Victorian period – though from quite a different angle – this work raises doubts about public consent in policing.

Yet just because historians now conduct their research differently, it does not mean that all are agreed on a new interpretation of police-public relations. In fact, some recent work has supported the consensus of the 1990s, rather than undermined it, by demonstrating once again that police-public relations were complex and multi-faceted. This position is best represented by Joanne Klein’s study of policemen in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham between 1900 and 1939.⁷ Having delved deeper than her predecessors into the often fragmentary and unwieldy internal archives of police forces, Klein is able to document the great diversity of police encounters with the public. Her focus on topics such as gossiping between policemen and ordinary people, and the ambivalent approach constables took to working-class women, also reflect the current interests of social historians at large – whether in the minute details of everyday life in the past, or in gender relations, a subject often neglected in police history. Yet Klein’s work

shows that new perspectives and methods do not always conflict with established interpretations. In fact, her pioneering use of internal police sources lends much weight to a conclusion very similar to that previously reached by Taylor: popular attitudes towards the police were varied and volatile, yet they tended to improve with time.

Debate on the quality of police-public relations has clearly moved on substantially in the last few years, and the arguments of the previous generation of police historians are being scrutinised once again. What has led to these new interpretations and insights? First, the shifting focus of research from the nineteenth to the twentieth century has presented historians with new research opportunities. Second, the use of new sources – particularly internal

police records, like occurrence books – has allowed a more detailed exploration of public interactions with the police. And last, shifting interests within social history at large – for example in favour of gender relations, or violence – has sharpened concentration on particular aspects of police history. Such developments as these do not necessarily produce radically different interpretations from those which have gone before; sometimes refreshing and original research remains consonant with established viewpoints. Some historians, however, have begun to develop a more pessimistic account of police-public relations in England's past. No new consensus has yet to emerge, yet for that very reason the subject remains at present an exciting topic to research and to teach.

Designing enquiries to help pupils think about changing interpretations of police-public relations in modern England

Key Stage 3: 11 to 14 years

Histories are written in answer to questions and the problems that historians set out to explore often change as the present changes. Labour history and Marxist historians tended to focus on the problem of class and on 'social control'. History has diversified since the 1970s and new problems have arisen, driven by awareness of multiple dimensions of difference and by a focus on new issues (such as violence). Present students with the titles of a range of histories (works by Storch and Emsley, for example). Ask them to use a Venn diagram to organise the titles in terms of similarity and difference of focus. How far does focus change with time and what seem to be the continuities?

A-level: 16 to 19 years

Interpretations change and develop as new questions arise, new sources are sought and found and the past itself continues to expand. Share the ICHCPJ archive and ask students to consider the uses and limitations of 'Occurrence Books' as historical sources. Next, examine the introductions, bibliographies and footnotes of histories of policing from different periods and ask students to use a quadrant diagram to consider similarities and differences in how their authors interrogated sources. How far were they asking the same questions and using the same sources?

The Editors

Further reading

Archer, J.E. (2011) *The Monster Evil: policing and violence in Victorian Liverpool*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Emsley, C. (2009) *The Great British Bobby: a history of British policing from the 18th Century to the present*, London: Quercus.

International Centre for the History of Crime, Policing and Justice (ICHCPJ), *History from Police Archives: study courses and resource material for students of social history*: www.open.ac.uk/Arts/history-from-police-archives/welcome.html

Klein, J. (2010) *Invisible Men: the secret lives of police constables in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, 1900-1939*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Taylor, D. (1997) *The New Police in Nineteenth-Century England: crime, conflict and control*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

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- 1 Storch, R.D. (1975) 'The Plague of Blue Locusts: police reform and popular resistance in northern England, 1840-57' in *International Review of Social History*, 20, pp. 61-90.
- 2 Emsley, C. (1996) *The English Police: a political and social history*, second edn, Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman.
- 3 Taylor, D. (1997) *The New Police in Nineteenth-Century England: crime, conflict and control*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- 4 Archer, J.E. (2011) *The Monster Evil: policing and violence in Victorian Liverpool*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- 5 Churchill, D. (2014) "'I am just the man for Upsetting you Bloody Bobbies": popular animosity towards the police in late nineteenth-century Leeds' in *Social History*, 39, pp. 248-266.
- 6 Wood, J.C. (2012) 'Press, Politics and the "Police and Public" Debates in Late 1920s Britain' in *Crime, Histoire et Sociétés/Crime, History and Societies*, 16, pp. 75-98.
- 7 Klein, J. (2010) *Invisible Men: the secret lives of police constables in Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, 1900-1939*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

This edition's Polychronicon was compiled by Dr David Churchill, Research Fellow in Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Leeds

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.



Setting us free?

Building meaningful models of progression for a 'post-levels' world

Alex Ford was thrilled by the prospect of freedom offered to history departments in England by the abolition of level descriptions within the National Curriculum.

After analysing the range of competing purposes that the level descriptions were previously forced to serve, Ford argues that the three distinct tasks of measuring current attainment, assessing the rate of students' progress and providing guidance to them about the next steps forward simply cannot be accomplished with reference to a single scale. Drawing on range of historical scholarship as well as on educational research and the practice of history teachers in other contexts, his department have developed their own conception of progression, inspired by the principles of serving an apprenticeship within the historian's craft. Ford shares the early stages of this development process, illustrating both the kind of assessment tasks and the tracking systems that he and his colleagues have developed. In outlining their exploratory work and the principles on which it is based, his hope is that it will inspire similar creativity and courage among others in resisting simplistic systems that fail to acknowledge either the nature of the subject or the range of purposes that any assessment and reporting system must serve.

Alex Ford

Alex Ford is Head of History at Guiseley School (11-18 comprehensive) in Leeds.

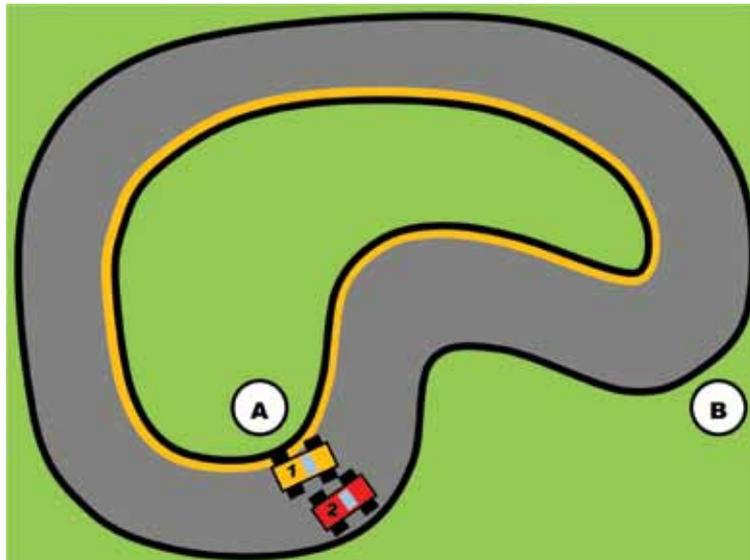
As part of our reforms to the national curriculum, the current system of 'levels' used to report children's attainment and progress will be removed. It will not be replaced. We believe this system is complicated and difficult to understand, especially for parents. It also encourages teachers to focus on a pupil's current level, rather than consider more broadly what the pupil can actually do. Prescribing a single detailed approach to assessment does not fit with the curriculum freedoms we are giving schools.¹

My heart leapt when I first read this declaration by the Department for Education in England that it would abolish level descriptions within the National Curriculum (NC) – a system that had been in place, albeit subject to a range of revisions, since the first introduction of a national curriculum nearly 25 years ago.² My reaction was widely shared, especially by those who had invested a great deal of effort in pointing out the woeful inadequacy of NC level descriptions – both as a means of assessment and as a guide to planning for progression in history.³ The perversion of level descriptions over the years to become the sole reporting and monitoring tool in all subjects had become increasingly problematic for history, especially as they were forced to serve as a description of student progression. In the worst cases, level descriptions became the end point of teaching itself, despite a wide body of evidence to suggest how unhelpful this was in developing students' understanding of history.⁴ This trend was already in full flow when Lee and Shemilt argued that, 'Under no circumstances is it valid to report levels to parents as "measures" of individual attainment or progress, to set levels as targets for individual pupils or colleagues, or to use levels as a basis for grade predictions or value-added calculations.'⁵ Despite this, and numerous other calls for reason, there had been a growing fetishisation of NC level descriptions as a means of doing everything from describing students' progress, to targeting under-performance, setting programmes of intervention, or even predicting paths to GCSE and beyond. Indeed, in some settings, teachers were being asked to assign levels or sub-levels to students' performance in individual lessons, or even parts of lessons. The absurdity went further with the subdivision of GCSE grades, in some instances, into similar sub-grades to ensure that students could visualise their 'flight path' to exam success. To borrow from Fordham, the growth and mutation of the level descriptions might be described as '...a tragedy where the ship of historical education foundered upon rocks of good intention.'⁶

What is striking, however, now that the national system of 'levels' has been formally abolished (from September 2014), is the fact that they seem almost to have taken on a life of their own. Although the NC Attainment Targets and level descriptions were revised several times in the two decades of their existence, their core remained remarkably stable, meaning that many state-school teachers trained in the last 20 years are unlikely ever to have used another means of assessment at Key Stage 3 (with students aged between 11 and 14).⁷ The level descriptions are so ingrained that many teachers are unsure how assessment, or indeed progression in history, might be conceived once these 'ladders' are removed. This claim is not idle speculation: it is based on a multitude of conversations with concerned teachers, trainees and indeed heads of department. A survey last year conducted by the school-leaders' support website, 'The Key' found that over 45% of schools had little idea of how they were going to assess from 2014, while 35% were awaiting alternative models of assessment to be published by the Department for Education.⁸ More recently, the annual survey of history teaching in England, conducted by the Historical Association, found a third of respondents were unsure about how they were going to respond to the removal of level descriptions, while those who could

Figure 1: The problems associated with describing progress in terms of specific points

Let's take an example: two racing cars are travelling on a track. Their speed (attainment) is measured at point A and point B. Now because they are cornering, Car 1 is measured at 60mph at point A and 60mph at point B. Has the car made no progress? Clearly that would be ridiculous; it has covered the distance between the two points. Then Car 2 is measured. It is travelling at 60mph at point A and 70mph at point B. This could be regarded as representing progress, yet it might also be true that Car 1 is ahead of Car 2 by point B. All the measures of speed show is that Car 2 is able to take one specific corner at a greater speed than Car 1. If we want to know who is winning, we need to know how long each took to get between point A and B. This is a measure of progress as it describes a change!



The increasing demand to show pupil progress by Ofsted has led to NC levels being used to place a linear numerical value on progress. This suggests that pupils improve in all aspects of the National Curriculum Levels at a constant rate over time. It also implies that two single point measures can describe progress, when in fact they describe attainment. The result is that teachers end up using best-fit labels to create the illusion of the progress they know has happened, by perverting the NC levels and using them as descriptions of linear progress, rather than as measures of attainment. The net result is that the progress ladders now end up floating in mid-air; they are no longer based on evidence and are giving the false impression that the work conducted at the beginning of the year is directly comparable to the work completed later. There is an impact on students as well, since they stop seeing progress as understanding accumulated over time and instead see it as a result of flashes of inspiration or some other mystical force.

explain their intentions were split fairly evenly between those who planned to keep the 2008 descriptions and those who were seeking to modify them in some way. In many cases modification involved making only small alterations to the existing descriptions or basing models on the GCSE grade system.⁹ This brings to mind the old Soviet joke in which Gorbachev announces his programme of perestroika. He informs factories that they are now free to set their own goals and targets and declares an end to centralised planning controls. Two days later he begins to receive official memos from the industrial leaders reporting that 'We have implemented perestroika and await further instructions'.

Two main factors perhaps serve to explain the reasons for such conservatism. First, although many history departments would like to experiment with new ways of assessing, time and resource constraints make this very difficult, especially given other curriculum reforms competing for teachers' attention. Second, policies within particular departments are shaped by the direction taken by their whole school and many senior leaders seem unwilling to test the waters with new forms of assessment, or perhaps do not appreciate the full extent of the problems associated with NC level

descriptions in history. The main purpose of this article is to suggest that, despite the work involved, leaving behind the old system of NC levels is imperative if we are to build a meaningful system of assessment. It is also my contention that 'staying put', either as departments, or whole schools, is simply not a viable option, especially in light of the enormous upcoming changes at GCSE and A-level. Finally, I hope to offer some potential solutions to the question of how assessment and progression might look in a 'post-levels' world. In many senses such a world has the potential to be a brighter one; the real challenge, now that the door has been opened, is taking that first step out of what Lee and Shemilt describe as the 'levels-cage' and into the light.¹⁰

Recognising the prison – the need for change

In an extensive report into the purposes of assessment in schools, the National Association of Head Teachers suggested that good assessment should give pupils and teachers a sense of current achievement, inform them on rates of progress and suggest next steps to build understanding.¹¹ These three purposes might be defined more simply as assessing

Figure 2: Generic progression in NC level descriptions

In this example I have selected those parts of the most recent level descriptions which relate to students' explanation of historical causation. The differences between each level provide little to aid students in developing their historical thinking. While they are expected to move from 'describing' causes, to 'explaining' them to 'analysing' them, there is no more developed explanation of what each of these processes might actually look like. The gradations also seem to suggest that 'description' is an historical 'skill' which can essentially be forgotten once operating at the higher levels of the Attainment Target. Clearly this is madness, as anyone who has read Orlando Figes' extended descriptions in *A People's Tragedy* would confirm.

LEVEL 5

They describe events, people and changes. They describe and make links between events and changes and give reasons for, and results of, these events and changes

LEVEL 6

They examine and explain the reasons for, and results of, events and changes

LEVEL 7

They use these links to analyse relationships between features of a particular period or society, and to analyse reasons for, and results of, events and changes

attainment, describing progress and providing meaningful models of progression. For the last decade or more, NC level descriptions have been used to provide the basis for all three of these pillars of assessment. However, there are a number of fundamental problems with this conflation which explain why retaining the descriptions is not only problematic, but also potentially harmful to students' progress.

Key Problem 1: the attainment cage

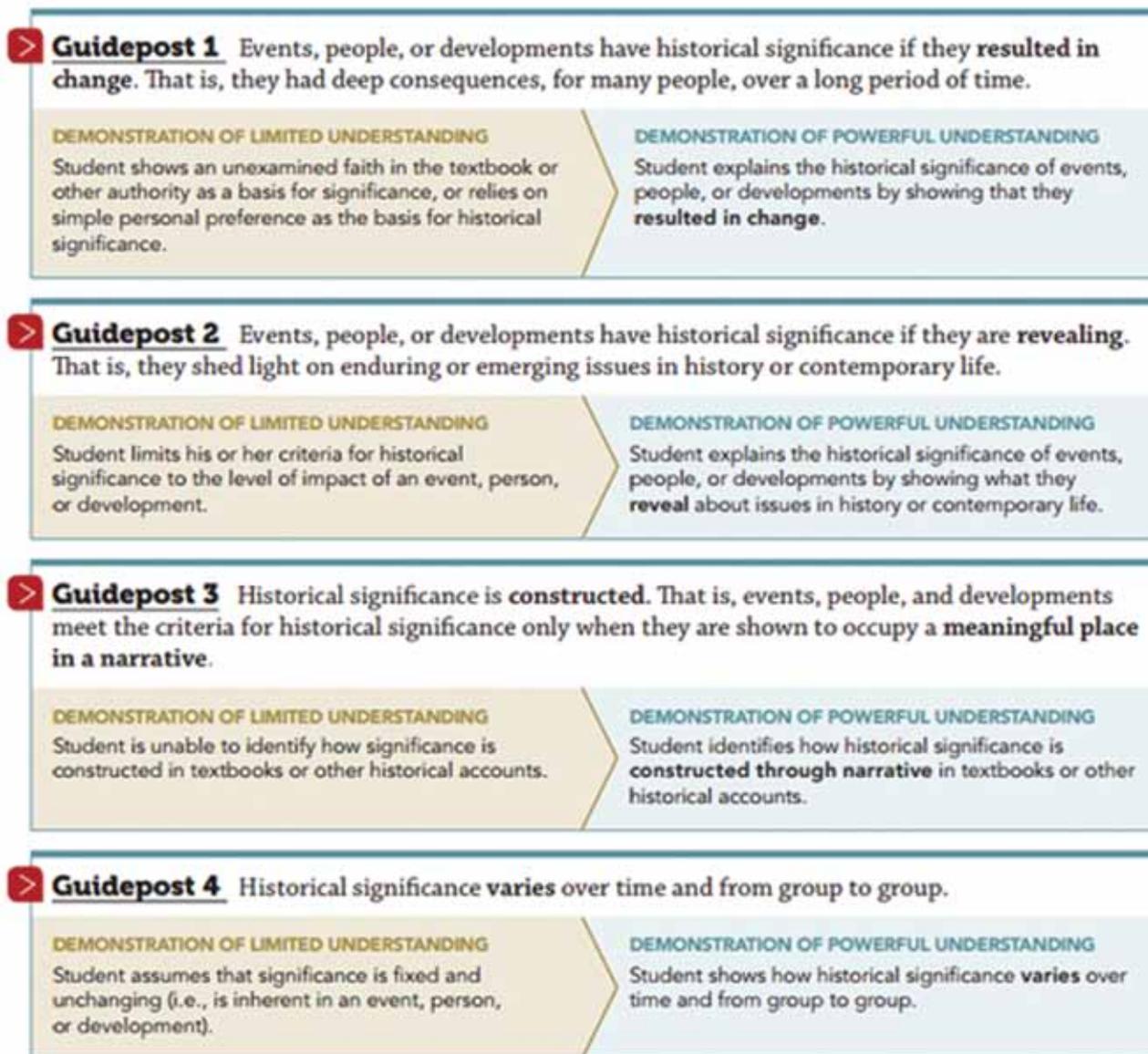
Descriptions of attainment, by definition, should be measures of understanding at a particular point in time. NC level descriptions were designed as attainment measures that would encapsulate the broad abilities of students within a particular subject at the end of a key stage. They were never intended as a means of assessing individual pieces of work and, in many respects, were inadequate for this task. First, being generic descriptors, they made no mention at all of the specific substantive knowledge that students should develop within a given unit. A student's explanation of causation in accounting for William's victory at Hastings is quite different from a student's explanation of the causes of the English Reformation. Second, the level descriptions were divided into arbitrary rungs, supposed to represent approximations of what students might be expected to achieve at the end of the key stage; but again, they lacked the resolution to be applied to individual pieces of work. To assess for example whether a student had achieved the description 'show their knowledge and understanding of local, national and international

history by beginning to analyse the nature and extent of diversity, change and continuity within and across different periods...' in a piece focused entirely on ten years in and around the Norman Conquest would be difficult indeed.¹²

Yet, even when used as they were intended, at the end of a key stage, there was a niggling feeling that the level descriptions didn't quite work. They were far too broad and unspecific with a range of historical concepts being addressed at each level and little idea of the weighting for each. What if a child was judged to have achieved a 'Level 3' in their understanding of historical causation but a 'Level 7' in their appreciation of historical significance? This issue led many schools to atomise the level descriptions still further, breaking them down into constituent concepts or 'skills', each with its own attainment 'ladder'. Having mapped a student's achievement against the atomised descriptions for each constituent component, teachers were then asked to provide a 'best-fit' or overview from these separate data points to give an end-of-key stage level. Lee and Shemilt illustrate the problems of this 'best-fit' approach by applying it to a darts match:

Imagine a darts match in which three darts miss the board but hit the ceiling, the barmaid and the dog in the corner. With the aid of a tape-measure each dart can be 'best-fitted' to a particular cell in the board; the dart in the ceiling, for example, might 'best-fit' to double-twenty! In like manner, it is possible for assessment data to be

Figure 3: Seixas and Morton's model for significance¹³



'best-fitted' to a level descriptor that they fail to match on the grounds that the mismatch with other levels is even greater. Thus it is that issues of validity are sidestepped.¹⁴

It is clear, therefore, that despite the NC level descriptions being designed as measures of attainment, their use and misuse as the only acceptable means for reporting attainment at any given point became a huge stumbling block to their retaining any reasonable meaning.

Key problem 2: the progress cage

Further problems emerged when NC level descriptions were used as measures of progress, something which became common in many school tracking systems. Progress might be best thought of as a description of a student's development over time in terms of their abilities, knowledge or understanding. Crucially, progress is a process – the *accumulation* of knowledge and *increasing* proficiency in modes of historical thinking. Progress might therefore be described as being 'rapid' or 'slow', but it certainly cannot be attributed to a student on the basis of a single assessment. As Counsell takes pains to point out, 'moving from National Curriculum Level 4 to Level 5 (or whatever) is not an adequate description of progress let alone a prescription for

progress'.¹⁵ The notion that the difference between these two points can form a description of progress is frankly ludicrous, as Figure 1 (p. 29) illustrates.

Key problem 3: the scaffold that became a cage

By far the most serious issue with the NC level descriptions was the way in which they formed a pseudo-progression model for historical understanding. While the highest level offered a view of what the 'gold standard' for history might look like, the sequence of levels leading up to it did not provide an accurate or helpful description of what the *development* of students' historical understanding actually looked like. Work by Lee and Shemilt, and more recently, by Fordham highlights the crucial problem that level descriptions were split into a series of eight or nine arbitrary stages, mostly divided by linguistic distinctions, or based on the hierarchies of Bloom's Taxonomy, rather than reflecting genuine steps forward in conceptual understanding related specifically to the historical domain.¹⁶ These distinctions are illustrated in Figure 2 (p. 30), which shows the steps involved in moving from 'Level 5' through to 'Level 7' in relation to the concept of cause and consequence. In essence, as this example illustrates, the NC level descriptions failed to provide a meaningful scaffold for students' understanding

Figure 4: An overview of the key historical concepts included in our model

1) Causation		4) Historical interpretations	
SIGNPOST 1 Causal webs	Change happens because of MULTIPLE CAUSES and leads to many different results or consequences. These create a WEB of related causes and consequences.	SIGNPOST 1 Identifying interpretations	Historical interpretations are everywhere. Every piece of historical writing is an interpretation of some sort. The past is not fixed but CONSTRUCTED through the process of interpretation.
SIGNPOST 2 Influence of factors	Different causes have different LEVELS OF INFLUENCE . Some causes are more important than other causes.	SIGNPOST 2 Drawing inferences from interpretations	It is possible to draw INFERENCES from interpretations of the past, just as with historical sources. INFERENCES will reveal the MESSAGE of a particular interpretation.
SIGNPOST 3 Personal and contextual factors	Historical changes happen because of two main factors: the actions of HISTORICAL ACTORS and the CONDITIONS (social, economic etc.) which have influenced those actors.	SIGNPOST 3 Evaluating interpretations	The APPROACH of an author must always be considered. This means considering their VIEWPOINT, PURPOSE, AUDIENCE and the EVIDENCE chosen to build their interpretation and what impact this might have on the final interpretation.
SIGNPOST 4 Unintended consequences	HISTORICAL ACTORS cannot always predict the effects of their own actions leading to UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES . These unintended consequences can also lead to changes	SIGNPOST 4 Interpretations in context	Historical interpretations must be understood on their own terms. This means thinking about the CONTEXT in which they were created, the conditions and views that existed at the time, and what impact these factors might have on the final interpretation.
2) Change and continuity		5) Significance	
SIGNPOST 1 Identifying change	Past societies are not fixed: there are changes which have occurred spanning centuries. Changes in the past can be identified by looking at DEVELOPMENTS between two periods.	SIGNPOST 1 Resulting in change	Events, people and developments are seen as significant because they RESULTED IN CHANGE . They had consequences for people at and/or over time.
SIGNPOST 2 Interweaving continuity and change	Change and continuity are INTERWOVEN and both can be present together in history. CHRONOLOGIES can be used to show change and continuity working together over time.	SIGNPOST 2 Revelation	Significance is ascribed to events, people and developments if they REVEAL something about history or contemporary life.
SIGNPOST 3 Flows of continuity and change	Change is a process which varies over time. Change can be described as a FLOW in terms of its PACE and EXTENT and can be described in terms of TRENDS and TURNING POINTS .	SIGNPOST 3 Identifying significance criteria	Significance is seen as something constructed. Therefore CRITERIA are needed to judge the significance of events, people or developments within a particular historical narrative.
SIGNPOST 4 Complexity of change	Change and continuity are not a single process. There are many FLOWS of change and continuity operating at the same time. Not all FLOWS go in the same direction	SIGNPOST 4 Provisional significance	Historical significance varies over time, and in relation to the INTERPRETATIONS of those ascribing that significance. Significance is PROVISIONAL .
3) Historical evidence		6) Historical perspectives	
SIGNPOST 1 Inferences from sources	When we write history we need to create interpretations of the past based on evidence. INFERENCES are drawn from a variety of primary sources to create interpretations of the past.	SIGNPOST 1 Appreciating world-views	There are major differences between modern WORLD-VIEWS and those of people in the past. Differences are seen in their beliefs, values and motivations. We must avoid PRESENTISM .
SIGNPOST 2 Cross-referencing sources	Historical evidence must be CROSS-REFERENCED so that claims are not made based on single pieces of evidence. CROSS-REFERENCING means checking against other primary or secondary sources.	SIGNPOST 2 Perspectives in context	The perspectives of HISTORICAL ACTORS are best understood by thinking about the specific CONTEXT in which people lived and the WORLD-VIEWS that influenced them.
SIGNPOST 3 Source utility	Historical evidence has multiple uses. The UTILITY of a piece of historical evidence varies according to the specific enquiry or the questions being asked.	SIGNPOST 3 Perspectives through evidence	Looking at the perspective of an HISTORICAL ACTOR means drawing INFERENCES about how people thought and felt in the past. It does not mean using modern WORLD-VIEWS to imagine the past.
SIGNPOST 4 Evaluating sources	Working with evidence begins before the source is read by thinking about how the AUTHOR , intended AUDIENCE and PURPOSE of an historical source might affect its WEIGHT as evidence in relation to a particular question.	SIGNPOST 4 Diversity	A variety of HISTORICAL ACTORS have very different (DIVERSE) experiences of the events in which they are involved. Understanding DIVERSITY is key to understanding history.
SIGNPOST 5 Sources in context	Historical evidence must be understood on its own terms. This means thinking about the CONTEXT in which the source was created and the conditions and views that existed at the time.		

Figure 5: The process of enquiry within our model

SIGNPOST 1 Asking questions	There is a recognition that an historical enquiry involves ASKING QUESTIONS about the past. Historical ENQUIRIES are rooted in SECOND-ORDER concepts and can be pursued INDEPENDENTLY.
SIGNPOST 2 Suggesting answers	There are a range of POSSIBLE ANSWERS to historical questions. Some of these may be less VALID than others, however.
SIGNPOST 3 Refining	Historical claims need to be refined by seeking EVIDENCE and asking FURTHER QUESTIONS.
SIGNPOST 4 Supporting with evidence	Claims made in historical enquiries need to be SUPPORTED by EVIDENCE.
SIGNPOST 5 Communicating certainty	Historical claims need to be communicated with CLARITY and PRECISION. Some historical claims have a greater degree of CERTAINTY than others.

of second-order concepts.

Connected with this concern was the fact that the level descriptions were entirely divorced from the knowledge that must underpin any claim to historical understanding. In some cases this fed into a shift towards assessing students' progress purely in terms of their grasp of key second-order concepts such as causation or continuity and change. It does not take much of a search through my own archived assessments to find examples of tests essentially designed with a series of hoops for students to jump through to prove that Level 5, 6 or 7 understanding had been achieved. I cannot count how many times I have rewarded students for 'making a link' or 'adding a judgement' rather than demonstrating a genuine understanding of the period being studied. I am fairly sure that I am not alone in this. The challenge of restoring the link between substantive knowledge and conceptual understanding is one which the whole profession needs to address.

Stepping out of the cage – building new models

The next section presents an outline of a series of experiments which we are conducting within the assessment procedures and progression models used in my own school. It is important to acknowledge that what I am presenting here is very much in an embryonic stage of development, and that I am sharing it in a spirit of collaboration. I hope that it might spark further experimentation and dialogue so that meaningful solutions might be constructed by the whole history teaching community. It is certainly not meant to represent a final and finished product.

In taking our first steps outside NC level descriptions, it is crucial that we do not lose sight of the key principles that should underpin progression within the subject. To begin, we need a clear vision of what the history curriculum is intended to achieve. As Byrom points out, the new Programmes of Study for history go some way to providing a focus and purpose for the subject.¹⁷ It would be difficult, however, to build a whole progression model on such broad aims. We need a clear 'gold standard' for which students and teachers

can aim. This might not be a standard which all, or indeed any, students actually achieve during Key Stage 3. Rather, it should be an aspirational description of what the very best history does. What dispositions of thought underpin the best history? What attitudes do good historians adopt? These are vital questions for history teachers to address.

In building our own departmental model, we drew on a whole range of influences from personal experience, school context, academic articles and of course popular and academic history.¹⁸ In the end, the 'gold standard' which we agreed upon rested heavily on two key works: *The Historian's Craft* by Bloch and *The Big Six* by Seixas and Morton of the Canadian *Historical Thinking Project*.¹⁹ From Bloch we took the idea that history is a craft which students might master, through diligent practice, with the support of a mentor. Seixas and Morton's work offered a more practical solution as to how a 'craft' approach to history might be conceived. Their focus on the idea that all students tend to hold various misconceptions – derived from everyday rather than historical thinking – which can be overcome through focused and disciplined enquiry, was a guiding influence in the process of defining our historical 'gold standard'. The following extract from a conference piece by Seixas became the core of the progression model we then developed.

Competent historical thinkers understand both the vast differences that separate us from our ancestors and the ties that bind us to them; they can analyse historical artefacts and documents, which can give them some of the best understandings of times gone by; they can assess the validity and relevance of historical accounts, when they are used to support entry into a war, voting for a candidate, or any of the myriad decisions knowledgeable citizens in a democracy must make. All this requires 'knowing the facts', but 'knowing the facts' is not enough. Historical thinking does not replace historical knowledge: the two are related and interdependent.²⁰

We saw it as essential to recognise that the subject exists on two separate planes. On the surface, history is an engagement with the past, a passing on of traditions from one generation to the next, the notion of sitting at the feet of

Figure 6: Materials used to make the key concepts and processes explicit to students



This sheet aims to give you an overview of the things that good historians are able to do. During Key Stage 3 you will be given opportunities to improve your skills as an historian. Your feedback this year will keep referring back to the seven things we believe good historians are able to do. It is important to remember that these seven things are not just a tick-list of things you have to do. You will keep coming back to all of them over the course of Key Stage 3, especially 'Enquiry' which will underpin all you do.

What do good historians do?



1

Good historians explain why things happen (SP1)

They can show how events have many causes and how these causes link together. They see that some causes are more important than others and things happen due to the actions of people as well as other causes e.g. the economy or politics.

2

Good historians understand how things changed or stayed the same (SP2)

They understand that things in the past developed and changed over time. They understand that sometimes things stayed the same while other things developed rapidly. They can talk about turning points in history, and judge the pace and amount of change.



3

Good historians are skilful at using evidence (SP3)

They can use evidence to make suggestions about what the past was like. They can compare different sources and decide on the most useful ones to find out about a topic. They are also careful to think about how reliable evidence is.

4

Good historians think about interpretations of the past (SP4)

They examine historians' interpretations carefully. They think hard about why people interpreting the past have made particular claims and about the kind of evidence on which they were based. They think about the context in which historical interpretations were created and how this affects them.



5

Good historians understand historical significance (SP5)

They can explain the significance of events by looking at the changes that resulted from them. They are able to select and justify criteria for making judgements about significance.

6

Good historians understand historical perspectives (SP6)

They understand that people in the past had very different ideas about the world than people today. They think about the time in which people lived and how this affected them.



7

Good historians can conduct historical enquiries

They know how to ask questions, suggest possible answers, refine their claims and support them with evidence. They can communicate their findings clearly and pursue enquiries with independence.

our grandparents and being connected to generations long gone. History in this mode of thinking, much like Burke's society, is a contract 'between those who are living...those who are dead, and those who are to be born.'²¹ History also exists on a second, more obscure plane, however. History is a discipline, a mode of thinking, which, as Wineburg suggests, 'is neither a natural process nor something that springs automatically from psychological development ... it actually goes against the grain of how we ordinarily think.'²² Good history therefore demands that we engage with the complexities of the past, that we are rigorous in our use of sources, that we interrogate the mentalities of the people whom we struggle to understand and that we recognise the limits of our understanding. The models of progression we choose to build need to reflect this.

Research-based models of second-order conceptual thinking were especially helpful in considering what students might be expected to 'master' as part of this craft of history. Lee and Shemilt also suggest that such models may help teachers to perceive the range of ideas and misconceptions that they are likely to encounter in the classroom, allowing them to tackle the unhelpful assumptions and so helping students to move on in their historical thinking.²³ Planning for progression might therefore be better represented, not by the creation of a series of level-like steps from the most basic operations to the most complex, but by setting out clear descriptions of good-quality history and then slowly challenging the misconceptions that prevent students from producing such work. This is very much the model used by Seixas and Morton, an example of which can be found in Figure 3 (p. 31).²⁴ At the same time, we wanted to ensure that the conceptual maps did not become the only element seen as important in students' historical development, leaving us merely with a new set of generic criteria, however appropriate they might be in that particular respect. We therefore also sought to keep a strong focus on the substantive content which students needed to master, both at the level of each particular unit and across the whole curriculum.

From cages to scaffolds to apprenticeship

From these initial meetings, the department moved on to plan a model for historical thinking which could underpin the new schemes of work we were developing. Grounding our model in a theory of conceptual mastery and the notion of apprenticeship inspired by Bloch, we have endeavoured to encourage students to undertake disciplined enquiry into the past. Students are encouraged to see the subject as a craft which might be mastered through perseverance, involving the slow accumulation of abilities, knowledge and ways of thinking. While end-of-unit assessments will of course feature in the final departmental schemes of work, they will not be tied directly to descriptions of progress and certainly will not be utilised to provide simple numerical descriptions of students as historians.

The model we have developed is based on six second-order concepts as well as the process of enquiry (see Figures 4 and 5, pp. 32 and 33). While, there are strong similarities to the second-order concepts addressed within the NC level descriptions, we also made a number of modifications to

better reflect some of the issues that we thought were under-represented in the previous conceptual frameworks. The progression model is not however intended to be translated into 'student-speak' and atomised into levels; it is designed to be applied where relevant and to inform teacher practice and feedback.

For each second-order concept (or process), and in line with the work of Seixas and Morton, we have identified a number of key 'signposts'.²⁵ These indicate important steps in overcoming particular misconceptions – steps that are essential to achieving mastery in relation to the concept in question. There is, however, no necessity for students to tackle each 'signpost' in turn, and indeed students may master more difficult aspects of the concept while still struggling with more straightforward elements. We found this approach liberating, as it meant that we were now thinking about activities and lessons which could address genuine historical misconceptions, rather than aspects of a tangential taxonomy. These concepts and our awareness of the signposts became the basis for all the units we planned after this point, guiding the focus of enquiry questions and shaping our approach to the use of historical evidence. Despite the time it has taken so far, we felt that without adopting this approach, we would have been continually retro-fitting a progression model on to a curriculum which addressed different goals. So far, all our assessment tasks have been rewritten to match aspects of the progression model explicitly, and we will continue to address the key signposts through the learning sequences we go on to develop. Although we are not going down the road of presenting second-order concepts as student 'tick-lists', we have decided to share our main aims with the students in the terms set out in Figure 6.

On historical knowledge

It is worth outlining here our current thinking about the importance of historical knowledge; a view which has been strongly influenced by Kate Hammond's research, reported in her own article in this issue of *Teaching History*.²⁶ Clearly, students' understanding of historical events, changes, people and periods is dependent on their ability to marshal large amounts of historical knowledge. As Brown and colleagues suggest in *Make It Stick*, the more factual knowledge students command, the easier it is for them to make connections between new learning and their existing mental models of history.²⁷ There are, however, different qualities to students' understanding of historical knowledge which can help to distinguish between those whose understanding is fairly shallow, and those for whom the knowledge goes deeper and is understood in a broader context. Hammond's work on historical knowledge was significant in helping us to think about how we should knit together historical concepts and substantive knowledge.

We began by asking ourselves the question: 'If good knowledge is fundamental to good history, then how should such knowledge be defined?' The response to that question led us into some very important debates about the nature and role of knowledge within the history curriculum and about how it should be appropriately assessed. As a result of debating this issue, we brought into our departmental rationale a number of key statements that deal specifically

Figure 7: A sample unit of work

Key question 1	Why did the French overthrow their king in 1789? (five lessons)
Target Concepts	LO1 – Causation (1.1, 1.2, 1.3); LO6 – Historical Perspectives (6.4)
Aim for the end of the enquiry	This unit will tie into the Civil War unit which was studied at the end of Year 7. Students will now be looking to explain why the French Revolution broke out in 1789 using some similar approaches. By the end, students should be able to construct a plausible explanation for why the French overthrew their king, which takes into account both long- and short-term factors and the motives of different groups. The best students will be able to draw links between these factors.
Core content	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A link between the events of the English Civil War and the French Revolution should form a starting point for this unit. • The nature of the <i>Ancien Régime</i> including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Estates system; the role and experiences of the bourgeoisie, city workers (<i>sans-culottes</i>) and peasants in the Third Estate; Louis' personal rule • Long-term causes of the Revolution including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Growing bourgeois class; declining living standards; Louis' indecisive nature; the Enlightenment; Marie Antoinette; • Short-term causes of the Revolution including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Poor harvests 1787-88; American War of Independence; taxation & the Estates General; the Tennis Court Oath • The Revolution and the removal of the king – briefly cover the events of the storming of the Bastille and the removal of the monarchy • Key concepts: Divine Rights, inequality, political representation, revolution 	<p>INFORMAL ASSESSMENT In-class/homework assessment – reasons for the overthrow of the king. Suggestions for tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'messy time-line' of all the events leading up to Revolution • A news report explaining why the king was overthrown • A textbook double-page spread covering political, social, economic and intellectual reasons for the overthrow of Louis • A simple essay on the subject with feedback <p>FEEDBACK Comment marking and effort grade as part of normal marking cycle i.e. ☹☹ = unacceptable; ☹ = poor; 😐 = below par; 😊 = good; 😊😊 = very good. Progress mark i.e. (+) Making Progress (=) Staying put (-) Going backwards!</p>

with historical knowledge. First, that a command of relevant substantive knowledge is vital to students' understanding of any historical period. Testing such knowledge is therefore an important diagnostic tool in measuring students' development as historians. In addition, broader contextual knowledge is crucial if students are to make sense of any particular topic or period.²⁸ Our schemes of work have therefore put an increased focus on the specific historical knowledge required for students to access the history, as illustrated in the example shown in Figure 7. Second, students' knowledge needs to extend beyond a very narrow time-frame, which means that they should be encouraged to learn and recount history on different scales. For example an exploration of the causes of the Holocaust would be incomplete without a broader focus on the development of antisemitism at least through the nineteenth century, if not earlier. By planning for this at a curriculum level, we can help to develop students' contextual understanding and therefore their command of more complex historical narratives.²⁹ Finally, teachers need to be aware of the subtle ways in which historical knowledge might be displayed in students' work. We have to make a real effort to go beyond

rewarding factual regurgitation and place greater emphasis on how well students' contextualise such knowledge. As Hammond suggests, the ways in which different students present the same historical 'facts' can reveal a great deal about their contextual understanding of the period.³⁰

As a department, we identified a number of obstacles which needed to be overcome in order to help students marshal historical knowledge confidently. The first was the problem of retaining knowledge in the long term. We noted that many students tend to forget much of the substantive content they have studied as they progress through school. This means that they are less able to use knowledge of those prior topics to inform their understanding of subsequent ones. As teachers we need to tackle misconceptions in students' substantive knowledge in the same way as we would those in their conceptual understanding. This creates an expectation that teachers too will develop and refine their own historical knowledge through reading and further study – a process we intend to support through reading and discussing a range of current historical works as a core part of departmental professional development.

Figure 8: A 'levels of response' mark scheme to an assessment task entitled 'How far did the French Revolution change the lives of the Third Estate?'

Low Pass *

400-700pts – A minority of students

Students at this level will tend to produce work which contains limited knowledge of changes brought by the French Revolution. Knowledge will be asserted where available and there may be inaccuracies in the knowledge given. In other cases, the knowledge used may be generic rather than specific e.g. lots of people were killed during the Revolution, this was a big change. Students may also repeat planning notes with limited links or explanation. At this level, students are unlikely to grasp the nature of change over time, and may well refer to change in a very generic way, discussing some of the big differences between France before and after the Revolution. At the top of the level, students may be able to make some valid, if general comparisons between pre- and post-revolutionary France. e.g. Before the Revolution, France had a king, but he was killed which was a big change. If specific details are given in a number of cases, this might be rewarded at the bottom of the next level.

The structure will tend to be narrative. Command of language will be weak.

evident thanks to the planning frame. Links back to the question will be implicit at best. There will be some evidence that the student understands at least the main changes brought by the French Revolution i.e. the deaths of thousands during the Terror, the removal of the king and the power of the people. A conclusion, if offered, will be unlikely to deal with the impact for groups, but may assess change as a whole.

Merit

1200-1500pts – The vast majority of students

Students at this level will have a good understanding of the changes over the course of the Revolution for different groups. They will include some specific detail on how lives changed at different points, although this may be stronger for some groups than others. For example they may refer to the fact that the peasants suffered most under the period of the Terror, giving relevant details to support this. The accuracy of evidence will be generally good, demonstrating a good understanding of the fact that different groups were affected at different points during the Revolution. There may be some minor inaccuracies. Students will go beyond simply restating work from their planning and there should be reference made to other parts of the unit, for example, providing contextual detail of the Terror, or Napoleon's ascent to power. Students will implicitly or explicitly cover issues of the pace, nature and extent of change for different groups.

There will be a logical structure to the work, with paragraphs being formed logically, most likely around different groups' experiences, although a chronological approach may also be acceptable. Some conclusion, even if only short, should be reached. The explanations given in paragraphs may still be implicit in their links to the question; however the conclusion will make an attempt to provide a direct answer to the question. Command of language will be adequate.

Distinction

1600-1800pts – A minority of students

Students at this level will have a very good understanding of the changes over the course of the Revolution for different groups. They will include specific detail on how lives changed at different points in a coherent way for at least two of the three groups. For example they may refer to the fact that the bourgeoisie initially

gained much power through the National Assembly, but then lost this during the Terror; giving relevant details to support this. Evidence will be used to support most points made. There will be a reasonable sense that the student understands the changing patterns over time and can explain this in a valid way. Language will reflect this to some extent, with reference being made to the pace and extent of change (though not necessarily in these words) and some attempt might be made to describe turning points. The accuracy of evidence will be good and students will bring in contextual detail from the rest of the unit to support their answer: for example explaining how the *sans culottes* had achieved their aims by 1793, or noting that the experience of women was different from that of men.

The structure of the essay will be largely analytical with a focus on the question which is sustained for the majority of the time. The account will show a deliberate engagement with the question and the conclusion will show an independent reflection on the question itself. At this level students should structure their work around each group. Command of language will be good.

Starred Distinction

1900-2000pts – Exceptionally rare

As above but also, students at this level should produce a sustained and well-focused answer which is analytical. The answer will use a range of specific and accurate evidence to explore the nature of change for different groups during the Revolution. All three groups should be considered in some degree of depth. There may still be some limitations to the analysis but the conclusions will demonstrate clear, justifiable and independent thinking and a good command of language. There will be clear evidence that contextual knowledge and not just specific planning has influenced the answer and students will consider the evidence they give in context. Students will have a strong grasp of the idea that changes happened at different rates and to a different extent for each group. They will provide a convincing analysis of this over time, reaching a substantiated conclusion.

* If a student's work does not meet the requirements of the 'low pass' it is given a fail grade (with a small number of points awarded for specific positive features within it). Failing the assignment would prompt an appropriate intervention and the student would be required to undertake another similar task after a programme of work intended to help him or her to bridge the gap.

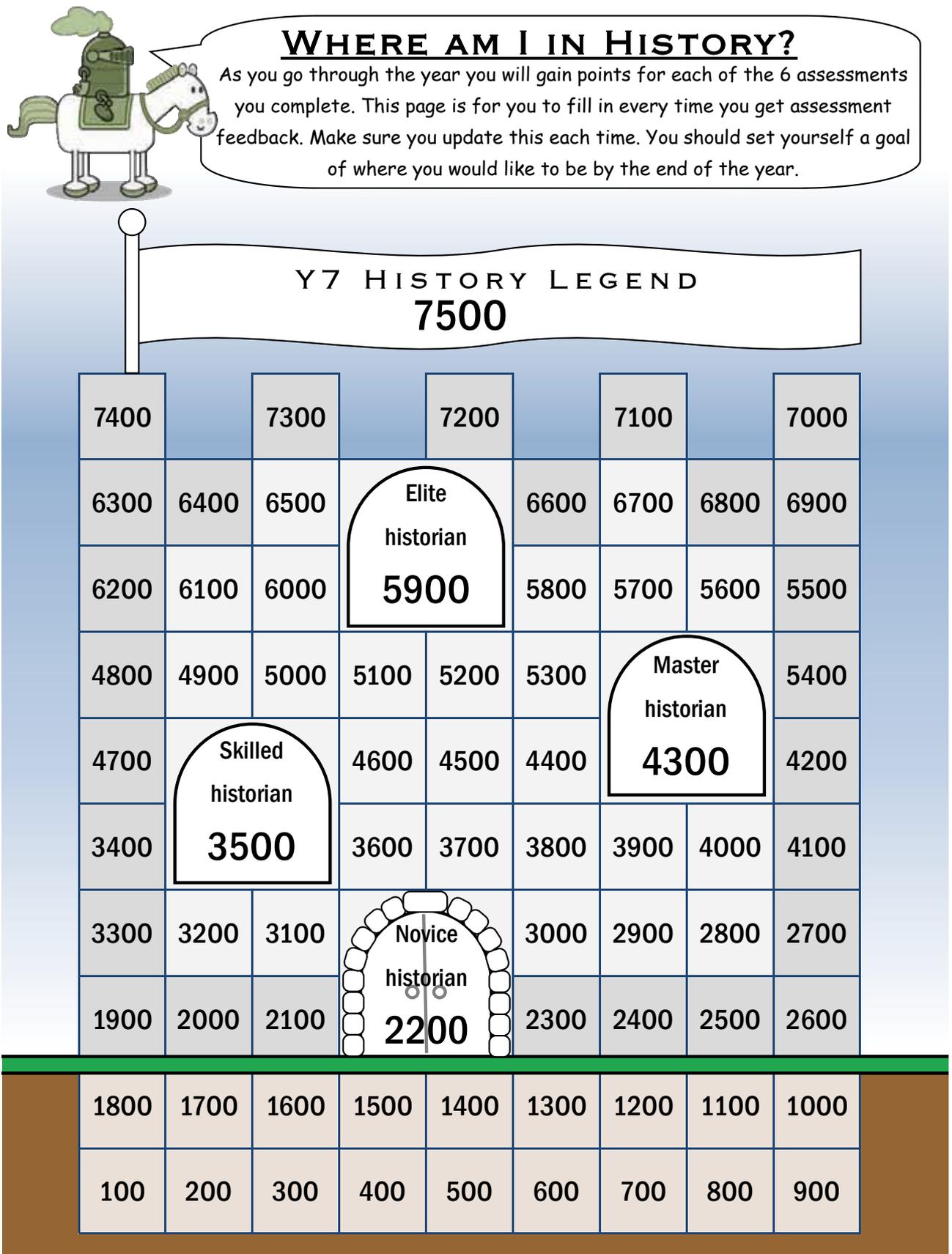
Pass

800-1100pts – Some students

Students at this level will have at least some knowledge of the changes over the course of the Revolution. They will include some detail on how lives changed at different points, although this may be stronger for some groups than others. The evidence at this level may be drawn more from planning materials than contextual knowledge. For example they may refer to the fact that the peasants gained very little from the French Revolution in the end as they did not achieve many of their aims. They will provide some details to support this, but the support may be fairly limited. The accuracy of evidence will be satisfactory, although errors may appear. Students at this level will show some understanding that things changed over time, but they may not express this clearly. For some groups they may focus almost exclusively on one period rather than describing the flow of change. Alternatively they may cover different periods but with limited explanation for why fortunes changed, or limited links between the aspects. Some contextual knowledge should be shown and students should have a reasonable idea that France changed significantly between 1789 and 1804.

The structure will tend towards narrative, although some paragraphing may be

Figure 9: Student materials for tracking progress



From models to assessment

From the development of the model and outline curriculum, the next step was to build meaningful forms of assessment for students. To promote students' grasp of the substantive content, we decided to use a range of informal assessment techniques including quizzes, time-lines, and synoptic essays to promote and monitor its development and retention throughout the year. These factual quizzes fit in

with Fordham's notion of regular 'health checks' to identify those students who are getting 'lost in the chronology'.³¹ Such testing can form an important part of securing and retaining learning, while synoptic essays can encourage deeper learning through generative memory processing.³² Such 'health checks' also offer teachers a valuable set of data that they can use to assess students' understanding (reinforcing more holistic judgements), and they can be used as part of the informal reporting arrangements in school.

We have also endeavoured to place emphasis on the development of second-order concepts alongside substantive knowledge, through meaningful enquiries and 'formal assessments'. To make these more in-depth, conceptually-focused assessments meaningful it became necessary to split notions of reporting on *progress* from the assessment of students' *attainment*. We have therefore opted to mark students' assessments on a simple, five-stage scale. This allows teachers to make a judgement about the quality of the history being written, as illustrated in the sample mark-scheme shown in Figure 8 (p. 37). The stages have been established through reference to the specific content being covered, the relevant second-order concepts and, where appropriate, the process of enquiry. For example, in our assessment on the Battle of Hastings, students are assessed on their knowledge of the context and on specific causes of the outcome, as well as on their conceptual understanding of causation in history.

Students are given a grade for their assessment using the five-stage scale shown in Figure 8. It is made clear that the grade they receive is for the specific task rather than representing a measure of their overall progress. We explain that it is possible to produce a high-level answer in one assessment and a moderate level answer in the next, and still be making progress overall, as the students gain greater experience and tackle increased demands within each assessment tasks. This idea is strengthened by the fact that each level of the specific mark-schemes corresponds to a particular number of 'experience points' which they are awarded. This system is designed to give students a sense of their development over time, without resorting to sticking copies in their books either of the mark-schemes or of atomised level descriptions which are to be ticked off. As students record their 'experience points' over the year, we hope that they will get a more vivid sense of their rate of progress over time. The power of the 'experience point' approach is that it helps to create a sense of motivation and progress and unifies the assessment experience by means of a common thread which runs throughout the year. Figure 9 illustrates the kind of cumulative tracker that students will be using to record their progress.

Students are also given formative feedback on relevant parts of their assessments. Such feedback is grounded in an understanding of the misconceptions identified in the progression model, as well as in the substantive knowledge students are expected to develop in each unit. Comments are intended to help students to address specific weaknesses in relation to the task being tackled, rather than referring to the concepts generically. They therefore need to be specific to the task. For example, in a piece on why William won the Battle of Hastings, teachers may encourage students to find links between factors leading to William's victory. The teacher might want the student to connect the knowledge that William had prepared and drilled his troops with the fact that Harold's army was exhausted. In this instance, a comment which says 'You need to explain the link' is less useful to a student than a specific comment such as 'Why do you think Harold's men fared less well than William's once they actually met in battle? Is there a link here?'

Responding to formative feedback is also an important part of the learning process. We will therefore be dedicating time

in lessons for students to respond to comments and correct or improve their work. This corrective feedback should ensure that new understanding becomes more securely embedded. Drawing on all these sources – the health checks, work in lessons and formal assessments, it should be possible for teachers both to construct a comprehensive picture of students' abilities, conceptual understanding and historical knowledge, and to determine the nature and speed of the progress that they are making within the subject.

Tracking and reporting

In order to satisfy the need for tracking and reporting – an issue which has become a key focus for school accountability – we have sought to develop a system which is simple for parents and students to understand. One part of the process of simplification is to agree across departments to use a standardised approach to reporting achievement in formal assessment tasks (a common grading scheme or use of a percentage mark, for example). More importantly it involves drawing a fundamental distinction between attainment and progress – with separate grades used to report on each. Formal reporting is also supported by many informal approaches to sharing information about students' learning, and here departments may enjoy a degree of freedom.

In history we have therefore agreed to reporting the following information to parents, either formally or as part of an ongoing dialogue on students' work and in their books:

- 1 Formative feedback within students' exercise books which students are given time to act upon within their lessons.
- 2 Measures of attainment:
 - a The results from the 'health checks', which are given to students at regular intervals, and recorded in their exercise books.
 - b Students' grades for specific assessment tasks, graded either as 'fail', 'low pass', 'pass', 'merit', 'distinction' or 'starred distinction', and reported formally, along with the number of experience points that the student has accumulated so far.
- 3 Measures of progress:
 - a The formal report also includes a qualitative judgement specifically focused on the student's progress, which might be described as 'little or none', 'slow', 'good' or 'rapid'. Such descriptions are deliberately similar to the kinds of measures or judgements that Ofsted has applied in lesson observations. One possible model for this process of making judgements and reporting on progress can be seen in Figure 10 (p. 41).

Concluding thoughts

The experience of researching and designing a system of assessment and monitoring for Key Stage 3 over the last 12 months has led me to draw a number of tentative conclusions about the direction in which history departments, and indeed schools, might now need to travel. First, a more robust system of assessment and reporting for use in schools

is needed to fill the enormous gap which has been left by the withdrawal of NC levels. However well they were used, levels were perverted from their original purpose and only partially fulfilled their role as measures of educational attainment or progress. Second, NC levels and other linear models used to assess progress are not well aligned with the recommendations and findings of research in history education. My own exploration of assessment practices confirms that we should avoid conflating measures of attainment and descriptions of progress in the quest to develop a more meaningful understanding of progression in our subject. The third point is that history departments have a wonderful, if slightly daunting, opportunity to embrace the challenge of creating viable progression models based on professional and pedagogical understanding. Such models should weave together aspects of conceptual mastery, with the development of students' historical knowledge. Finally, there is an urgent need for collaboration. As a profession we have a wealth of experience with which to create credible alternatives to linear progression models. It is important that these models are shared to prevent a *de facto* return to the systems which have been removed. It is my hope that the next few years will see history departments up and down the country engaging with, and collaborating in the creation of, new and improved progression models, assessments and reporting systems based on the principles outlined above. The history community was amazingly strong in providing ways of conceptualising student understanding when NC levels still existed. This creativity can now serve to generate something even more exciting. The cage we have been in is now fully open; we just need to walk out.

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Figure 10: Reporting on progress

PROGRESS DESCRIPTOR	INDICATIVE EVIDENCE
Little or none	<p>Students are a cause for concern because they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fail to grasp new ideas and concepts introduced in lessons and regularly fail to demonstrate acquisition of specific historical knowledge in health checks and other knowledge-recall situations; do not deploy new ideas or concepts in their written, or other work. They struggle or fail to elaborate on historical knowledge and make limited or no connections to their existing historical knowledge. fail to communicate their ideas effectively; do not respond to feedback in a meaningful way, or ignore feedback altogether; repeatedly make the same mistakes, and do not move beyond misconceptions they have developed about the subject, despite being given feedback and assistance; show little or no understanding in assessments, either failing them or achieving only a low pass level.
Slow	<p>Students need further support because they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grasp new ideas and concepts more slowly than their peers, and seem less confident in their understanding. Students at this level may struggle to recall key information about topics or have a below average command of specific historical knowledge. struggle to deploy new ideas and concepts in their work, or may need prompting in order to do so effectively. They do not elaborate on historical knowledge to any great extent and struggle to make meaningful connections between existing knowledge and new knowledge. struggle with some aspects of communicating their ideas effectively; respond to feedback to some extent, but do not always address the issues being identified; overcome some of their misconceptions about the subject but continue to make similar mistakes. This improves with support. show some understanding in assessments, although this may vary over time. Students may for example achieve pass grades on most assessments.
Good	<p>Students are making good progress because they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grasp new ideas and concepts in line with their peers for the most part, although they may not always be fully confident in their understanding. Students at this level will show a sound grasp of knowledge in health checks or other knowledge recall situations. deploy new ideas and concepts in their work with limited prompting. Students will be able to elaborate ideas in their own words and make connections between new and existing knowledge with a fair degree of confidence. have an awareness of the links between ideas and concepts previously studied and newer ones being introduced; communicate their ideas effectively most of the time; respond to feedback in the majority of tasks, modifying and refining their ideas and work with reasonable effectiveness; work on overcoming misconceptions about the subject, meaning that repeated mistakes about ideas or concepts are uncommon; show sound understanding in assessments, with some variation over time. For the most part students should achieve merit grades in assessments.
Rapid	<p>Students are making rapid progress because they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grasp the vast majority of new ideas and concepts quickly and confidently, showing excellent recall in health checks and other knowledge tests; deploy new ideas and concepts in their work confidently. Students will be able to elaborate historical knowledge and ideas in their own words and make connections between new and existing knowledge confidently. show good awareness of the links between ideas and concepts previously studied and newer ones being introduced; communicate their ideas effectively for the vast majority of the time; respond well to feedback and refine ideas and work effectively; work to overcome misconceptions about the subject, seldom continuing to make the same mistakes in work; show good understanding in assessments with little variation over time. Assessments will generally be of merit standard or higher, with no evidence of dipping below this standard.

triumphs Show

What makes art history?

Year 7 exploit the resources of the Victoria and Albert Museum's Medieval Gallery to create and curate their own answer

What do 14 Year 7 students, an art teacher, a history teacher and the Victoria and Albert Museum have in common? They are all part of the 'Stronger Together' Museum Champion project run by The Langley Academy and the River & Rowing Museum and supported by Arts Council England, designed to engage students, teachers and museum staff further in bringing museums into schools and vice versa. Sarah Copey reflects on her experience of this particular project to highlight the value of museum learning and the way in which it enriches students' experience within, across and beyond the school curriculum.

When the opportunity arose to become a Museum Champion for my school, I jumped at the chance to apply. Working together with Lindsey Parsons, a colleague and friend who teaches art, we developed a proposal to address the question 'What makes art history?' Not only were we lucky enough to have the proposal accepted as part of the project, but we found that we had been partnered with the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. We were ecstatic and determined to make it work.

Our aims were to use the Medieval Gallery at the V&A to explore our key question as a truly integrated cross-curricular project. Part of the brief included effective use of new technologies – equipping and encouraging students to use digital applications and tools such as Pic College and Prezi. As my history department was also designing a new scheme of work, establishing the foundations for history in Year 7, it was a perfect opportunity to focus on that particular year group, enriching my own understanding of the medieval period and ways of bringing it alive to all students. The project itself was run as a series of after-school sessions and although we could only include a limited number of students, we sought to include as wide a variety as we could in terms of the backgrounds and current levels of attainment of the 14 selected. It was launched with a special evening event to showcase the importance of museum studies to the students and their parents.

The programme (outlined in Figure 1) was developed in collaboration with Holly Burton, our link within the Learning Department at the V&A. The meticulous nature of her planning for our first visit to the museum was inspirational and it contributed enormously to the success of the project. The outcome for which we planned was that the students should be required to create, curate and provide a digital presentation of an exhibition answering

the central question 'What makes art history?' The students have relished the challenge and are currently working on fine-tuning their final exhibitions in preparation for our second visit to the V&A, where they will present their work to the members of the Learning and Curatorial Departments, as well as to their families.

We found the experience as fascinating and engaging as the students did, and learned much from Holly about framing questions to extend students' thinking in analysing and interpreting medieval artefacts, moving from detailed investigation of what they can see to the history that it reveals. Year 7 learned far more from an illustrated hymnal about a monk's life than a simple focus on their daily timetable could ever have revealed. Holly too found the experience invaluable, developing her understanding of teachers' specific curriculum needs and of the constraints they face in terms of time and resources.

A completely unexpected outcome was the impact which involvement in the project had on the students' performance in both art and history within the school curriculum. About six weeks into the project, our standard history assessment task revealed that the students involved in the project had achieved more highly than expected and/or demonstrated much clearer and fuller explanation of their ideas than those who had not participated. They are constantly surprising me in lessons with their deep questioning of the medieval world. Their responses to a questionnaire we used to evaluate the first museum visit suggested that even they were shocked at how much they enjoyed it!

But it is not just institutions in London that make these projects possible. The whole point of the project is to integrate museum learning into everyday school life anywhere in the country. Most local museums have learning departments or

Figure 1: Outline of the extra-curricular Museum Champion Project 'What makes art history?'

Week	Theme	Activity
1	Saints and sinners	Introduction: give out sketchbooks and introduce the task. Students examine the Gloucester Candlestick, with probing questions to elicit analytical thinking about its use, the artistry involved in its creation and the historical insights it provides.
2 & 3	Saints and sinner (cont'd)	Students work in groups to design and construct their own version of the candlestick, using their knowledge of medieval religious ideas to depict a 'Doom' theme of heaven and hell. (See Figure 3)
4	Communication	Students examine and analyse a number of illuminated manuscripts, considering their purpose and construction before producing their own illuminated letters.
5	Knights and heraldry	Students examine a coat of arms on a stained glass window, considering content, meaning and design before constructing their own (modern day) coat of arms, using the app Pic Collage.
6	Castles and kingship	Students examine and analyse The Tristan Wall Hanging, developing their knowledge of the story of Tristan and the dragon, with tasks focused on annotating the story and drawing a section from observation.
7	Trip to the V&A	Students spend the day in the medieval gallery, completing the six degrees of separation sheet, focusing on their own exhibitions, choosing their own theme and the objects that they will include.
8	Feedback from the trip	Students create a mini-Prezi presentation, first to summarise what they learned from the visit, and second to explain which theme they had chosen and why.
9 & 10	Create and curate the exhibition	Visit from Holly Burton in week 9 to help students begin to construct their own digital exhibition – by first modelling her own idea and then working with the students on their ideas. Continued work in week 10, encouraging an explicit focus on answering the question 'What makes art history?'
11	Practice and presentation	Second trip to the V&A for students to present their exhibitions and their sketchbooks to members of the Learning and Curatorial Departments (and the students' families)

Figure 2: The students' first visit to the Medieval Gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum



education officers available to support teachers not just with prepared resources related to common curriculum topics but also by tailoring a visit to your particular purposes. Many will even lead sessions in school, bringing some of the museum's resources with them. The emphasis on digital technologies has certainly alerted me to the wealth of materials available online from national and local museums, to which I will now direct students of all ages, spanning topics from medieval life to the Cold War.

Lindsey and I plan to take the project forward, inviting the Year 7 who participated to act as Museum Ambassadors for the school, sharing the knowledge they have gained from

Figure 3: One of the medieval 'Doom' candlesticks created by the students



being involved and giving other students the confidence to access this wealth of resources, enhancing lessons across the curriculum as well as their personal cultural development.

Sarah Copsey is Head of History at Matthew Arnold School (11-18 comprehensive) in Oxford.

Using regular, low-stakes tests to secure pupils' contextual knowledge in Year 10

Lee Donaghy was concerned that his GCSE students' weak contextual knowledge was letting them down. Inspired by a mixture of cognitive science and the arguments of other teachers expressed in various blogs, he decided to tackle the problem by teaching and testing knowledge more intensively. The result was a rapid improvement in secure factual knowledge in tests, and a clear manifestation of the benefits in students' ability to call up and deploy that knowledge in extended written answers.

Introduction: how could I justify spending time on frequent, low-stakes tests?

Park View Academy is a high-achieving, urban, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual school. Ninety-five per cent of our pupils have English as an Additional Language (EAL). Ninety-nine per cent of our pupils are Muslim and 70% attract extra funding in the form of the 'pupil premium'.¹ In this article, I set out my rationale for adopting a policy of regular, low-stakes, knowledge tests with my Year 10 history students and I offer some early reflections on the impact of this approach.

For their 'depth study' within our GCSE history course, our students study a unit entitled 'The USA, Land of Freedom? 1945–1975'.² This unit is broken down into four 'key questions' each addressing one of the following: the Red Scare; the black civil rights movement in the 1950s; the black civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s; civil rights for 'other groups', such as Native Americans, Hispanics and women. Having taught and assessed the content for the first key question on the Red Scare in the run-up to Christmas 2013 with my Year 10 class, the pupils' assessment results showed that 19 out of 21 pupils achieved lower than their target grade (see the third column of Figure 1). Analysis of these pupils' assessment responses revealed a worrying lack of contextual knowledge. This troubled me. Every question on the exam paper specifically asks for contextual knowledge, with instructions such as 'use the source and your own knowledge to explain your answer' or 'use your contextual knowledge to explain your answer'.³

Searching for a remedy for this lack of knowledge, I read two, related posts by David Didau on his blog, *Learning Spy*.⁴ Drawing on some principles emerging from cognitive science, such as those expounded by Bjork and by Willingham, Didau suggested that repeated testing of material after one study session was actually more effective in leading to long-term retention than repeated study of material followed by a single summative test.⁵ This emboldened me to try something that I had been mulling over for a while, namely identifying specific items of knowledge – people, dates, concepts, laws – for each topic taught and explicitly requiring pupils to commit them to memory. This would be achieved by way of 'quizzes', in every lesson, that would be cumulative. I would test ten items of knowledge during Week 1, with these items being re-tested until the class achieved 'mastery', while also introducing and testing ten new pieces of knowledge in Week 2, ten more in Week 3 and so on. In each of the tests, each previous set of ten items would continue to be included until mastered.

A major concern in doing this – as with so much else – was time. Testing pupils in this way would, I calculated, take up to 15 minutes of each lesson, a total of up to 45 minutes out of the 180 we had together each week. Yet, as my class's Red Scare assessment results showed (see Figure 1), I needed to take seriously the task of identifying the contextual knowledge that my pupils would need *as a minimum* if they were to support their analysis of sources and judgements about the relative importance of historical figures. I also needed to give time to the process of embedding that knowledge in their long-term memories, such that they were better able to retrieve the knowledge when they needed it during their assessments.⁶ It might take a great deal of time, causing me to

Lee Donaghy

Lee Donaghy is Assistant Principal at Park View Academy (11-16 comprehensive), Birmingham.

Figure 1: Pupils' end-of-unit assessment grades before and after regular testing.

Student	KS4 Target Grade	Red Score (previous unit where no testing was used)	1950s Civil Rights (unit where regular testing was used)	1960s Civil Rights (unit where regular testing was used)
1	A	C	B	A
2	B	A*	A*	A*
3	A	A*	A*	A*
4	B	D	C	D
5	B	D	B	D
6	B	E	C	D
7	A	B	B	C
8	A	B	B	B
9	B	D	B	B
10	B	B	B	A
11	A	B	A*	A
12	B	C	A*	A
13	B	D	B	B
14	B	D	E	B
15	A	E	D	D
16	A	B	A	A
17	B	C	B	C
18	B	D	A	A
19	B	D	A	A
20	A	C	A	B
21	B	G	A	B
Average grade		D+	B-	B-

Dark green = +2 or more grades from Red Score assessment

Light green = +1 grade

Amber = same grade

Red = -1 grade

'Average grade' based on mean grade, calculated where G = 1 point up to A* = 8 points

spend longer completing the unit as a whole, but it was time which I decided would be justified in improved assessment performance; there was little value in *covering* the topic at the expense of *learning* the topic, a balance I had clearly misjudged when teaching the Red Score. I was further emboldened in this when, shortly after embarking on the experiment, I read Michael Fordham's series of blogs on assessment 'beyond levels', where in the third of the series he posits the idea of 'developing a mixed constitution' of assessment, with 'mode 1' being what he called 'frequent, low-stakes, testing of chronological knowledge'.²⁷ Fordham's argument that such quick quizzes should be part and parcel of teaching made a huge amount of sense when placed in the context of the 'mixed constitution', with its different forms of assessment for different purposes. It convinced me that frequent, low-stakes tests had their place in my lessons.

Identifying the important knowledge

The first step towards implementing this new strategy was to identify the knowledge that pupils needed in order to underpin their understanding of the historical developments and which they could then include in their assessed answers. I did this in a relatively unsophisticated way, through a combination of extrapolation from the specification's 'specified content', studying past paper questions and mark-schemes to pinpoint previously required items of knowledge and reading relevant pages in the course textbook in order to pick out key dates, events, people, concepts and statistics. I then studied the 'focus points' that the examination board provides for each of its 'key questions'. I created one set of roughly ten items of knowledge per focus point. For example,

Figure 2: Examples of test questions, first and third tests on civil rights in the 1950s.

Test Number 1 – Position of Black Americans in 1950	Test Number 3 – Desegregation of education
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Between which dates was the US Civil War fought? 2. Who was the American President during that conflict? 3. What document did that President issue during the war which abolished slavery? 4. Which US Supreme Court decision of 1896 established that segregation was constitutional? 5. Which phrase sums up the basis upon which segregation was ruled constitutional? 6. What nickname was given to the laws passed across the South which enforced segregation? 7. What was the name of the campaign in the South which involved black Americans being subjected to vigilante justice? 8. Which method of execution was often used against black Americans in the South? 9. How many black Americans moved to the North between the end of the Civil War and the 1920s? 10. What was the process by which black Americans in the North ended up concentrated in poor, run down inner city areas, while white Americans moved to the most prosperous suburbs? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the name of the young black girl who had to walk 20 blocks to school due to segregation, a situation which sparked the legal challenge to segregation of education in the South? 2. What was the name of her father who brought the case? 3. What was the name of the case? 4. In which year of which month was the case brought to the Kansas state court? 5. The case was then taken to the Supreme Court. On what date did this court give its ruling declaring segregation of education to be unconstitutional? 6. What was the name of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who issued the judgement? 7. What phrase did he use to describe how desegregation should be implemented? 8. What was the name of the document signed by a number of southern senators, which pledged to resist integration? 9. How many school boards had been desegregated by May 1956? 10. How many black children had been able to go to formerly all-white schools by the start of the 1956-57 school year? 11. In which year was the incident at Little Rock? 12. In which state is Little Rock? 13. What was the name of the state governor who tried to prevent the integration of Little Rock High School? 14. What was the name of the black student who became separated from the other eight students and who features in the iconic photograph of the incident? 15. Which organisation was used by the state governor to prevent integration and then by President Eisenhower to enforce it?

the examination board had broken down the key question 'How successful was the struggle for civil rights in the 1950s?' into these four focus points:

1. What was the state of civil rights in America in c.1950?
2. Did the Second World War have an impact on the position of African-Americans?
3. Why was the struggle over desegregated education in the 1950s important?
4. What was the importance of the Montgomery Bus Boycott?

I was therefore able to produce four separate sets of questions, testing each set cumulatively until each was mastered. Figure 2 shows the questions that I produced for Focus Points 1 and 3. In Test 3, I included 15 knowledge items, rather than ten.

Pupils' performance in the tests

Figure 3 shows the improvement that pupils made in their recall of one set of ten items of knowledge (with the quiz marked out of 13 due to some two-part answers) once they had been tested four times on those same ten questions. Figure 4 summarises the class performance in all four sets of ten question on the 1950s civil rights movement. It shows the growth in pupils' knowledge between first and last testing of the same sets of questions. For example, in the set of questions on the 'position of black Americans in 1950', the first time that they were tested, the class averaged 7.1 out

of 10. By the third time they were tested on the same set of questions the average score was 9.9 out of 10. Thus mastery had been achieved and these questions dropped out of the cumulative test. The results show the 'study – test – test – test – test' pattern advocated by Didau to have been effective in enhancing pupils' ability to retrieve the specific items of knowledge, evidenced by the rises in the class average score for each set of questions. This was encouraging, and seems to suggest that by being explicit about the items of knowledge that pupils need to commit to memory and by testing them repeatedly, pupils will much more effectively retain key contextual knowledge. The acid test, however, would be in whether pupils could now enhance their performance in the end-of-unit assessment, bringing this knowledge to bear in their extended written answers.

The impact on pupils' assessment performance

Figure 1 shows the change in the pupils' performance in the two end-of-topic assessments where frequent, low-stakes tests had been used to build pupils' contextual knowledge (1950s civil rights and 1960s civil rights) compared with the Red Scare topic, where no such tests had been used. Out of the 19 pupils whose grade could have improved (two got A*s in the first assessment), 15 did so in each of the next two assessments, with only one pupil seeing their grade fall between the first and second assessment (but which subsequently improved again in the final assessment). The class average grade improved from D+ in the Red Scare assessment to B- in the next two. In the final assessment, 15 out of 21 pupils achieved at least in line with their target grade (up by two from the Red Scare assessment). While it is impossible to say definitively whether it was the use of frequent, low-stakes tests that caused this improvement, nonetheless the improvement is stark. It seemed to justify my decision to use the intensive knowledge-testing approach and to take more time teaching each topic.

It is possible, however, to find evidence which may show more directly the impact of the knowledge tests. By analysing some samples of pupils' extended responses in formal assessments using examination questions, one can discern ways in which secure knowledge appeared to manifest itself within pupils' later writing. Using the work of three pupils, Figure 5 compares responses to similar questions from the first assessment on the Red Scare with responses to the final assessment on 1960s civil rights.

In the first example, Pupil 21 was asked in both questions to combine interpretation of a visual source with their contextual knowledge. This pupil's response to the Red Scare question (Figure 5, Example 1) interpreted some aspects of the source by stating the meaning of the visuals. The pupil missed opportunities, however, to explain why the source was produced (to warn Americans of the threat of a communist takeover) with reference to, for example, the expansion of communism in Eastern Europe or

Figure 3: Pupils' individual scores on a single set of questions, re-tested multiple times, showing improved retention of knowledge.

Student	Score out of 13			
1	8	8	7	12
2		9	10	13
3	12	11	13	13
4	9		10	13
5	10	10	12	12
6	10.5	13	13	13
7	9	12.5	13	13
8	11	13	13	13
9	9.5	12	13	13
10	8.5	10	10	13
11	13	13	13	13
12	9.5	10.5	12.5	13
13		9	5	13
14		9	11	13
15	5	9		10
16	8.5	11	12	13
17	8	9.5	7	13
18		10	8	10
19	9	11	12	13
20	10	13	13	13
21	9	13	13	13

Class average	9.382353	10.825	11.025	12.61905
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the introduction of Marshall Aid. As a result, Pupil 21 only received two marks out of a possible seven. In the second example, however, Pupil 21 was able to place the (fictional) event shown in the cartoon – President Kennedy watching a sand-timer run out while crowds of African-Americans

Figure 4: Class average scores in the four tests on the 1950s Civil Rights movement, showing growth in pupils' knowledge between first and last tests.

Test topic	Position of black Americans in 1950	Position of black Americans in 1950	Impact of World War Two	Impact of World War Two	Desegregation of Education	Desegregation of Education	Montgomery Bus Boycott	Montgomery Bus Boycott
Test No.	Test 1	Test 3	Test 1	Test 4	Test 1	Test 3	Test 1	Test 2
(Maximum mark)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(10)	(15)	(15)	(10)	(10)
Class average score	7.1	9.9	5.9	9.7	9.3	14.1	8.6	9.5

Figure 5: Pupil responses from assessments on the Red Scare (Example 1) and on 1960s Civil Rights (Example 2), showing the more extensive incidence of contextual knowledge in the latter.

Typed as written, with SPaG uncorrected. Comments in square brackets are mine.

<h1>Pupil 21</h1>	
Example 1	Example 2
<p>Question:</p> <p>Why was this source published in 1947? Use details of the source and your own knowledge to explain your answer.</p>	<p>Question:</p> <p>What is the message of this cartoon? Use details of the source and your own knowledge to explain your answer.</p>
<p>Pupil response (use of precise contextual knowledge highlighted):</p> <p>Source B was published in 1947 as it was when there was a heightened fear of Communism. In the source Americas flag is burning which shows that they are under threat of violence and destruction due to the rise of communism. The words 'Is This Tomorrow' shows that America will be under threat of communism as communism is spreading quickly. In 1947 there was an increase fear in communism.</p>	<p>Pupil response (use of precise contextual knowledge highlighted):</p> <p>The message of the cartoon is that the African Americans are demanding for their civil rights and president Kennedy is doing nothing.</p> <p>In the cartoon there are a large group of African Americans who are demanding for their civil rights and are outside the white house. This cartoon had been published in August 1963, which was the day of Martin Luther King famous speech 'I have a dream' where millions of African Americans had attended to gain their rights.</p> <p>Also in the cartoon there is a sandtimer which the time is running out and which shows that Kennedy is not doing anything and eventually time will run out.</p>
<p>Marks received:</p> <p>2 out of 7</p>	<p>Marks received:</p> <p>6 out of 7</p>
<p>Overall grade for assessment:</p> <p>G grade</p>	<p>Overall grade for assessment:</p> <p>B grade</p>

Pupil 19

Example 1

Question:

How useful is this source as evidence of why support for McCarthy declined? Use details of the source and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

Pupil response (use of precise contextual knowledge highlighted):

Source D is useful to some extent in supporting McCarthy's popularity declining. This statement made by Whittaker Chambers in January 1954 [*this information was provided in the source attribution*] provides evidence to some extent that support for McCarthy has declined. McCarthy thought that communism was a real threat this led to him accusing high profile individuals and his popularity decreasing.

Source D is reliable to a certain extent as it was written by Whittaker Chambers. He had supported McCarthy and stood for everything he believed in [*this information was provided in the source attribution*].

On the other hand, source D is not quite reliable because it is written in a form of a letter because they could be one-sided also the person is unknown.

To conclude source D is reliable because whatever Whittaker Chambers said about McCarthy the public also thought too. He was then eventually stripped of his senatorship [*this is a badly articulated reference to McCarthy subsequently losing his Senate seat*].

Marks received:

2 out of 6

Overall grade for assessment:

D grade

Example 2

Question:

How useful is this source as evidence of Martin Luther King's contribution to the civil rights movement? Use details of the source and your own knowledge to explain your answer.

Pupil response (use of precise contextual knowledge highlighted):

I think this source is useful to a certain extent as evidence about Martin Luther King's contribution to the civil rights movement.

In 1963, Martin Luther King organised a civil rights march in Birmingham [*this information was provided in the source*] Alabama. Birmingham was still quite a segregated state. The aim of this protest was to turn media attention to Birmingham and expose its policies.

Later in the same year, in August 1963, Martin Luther King led a march to Washington in demand for civil rights for the black African Americans. The stated aim of this protest was to pressure President Kennedy into introducing a civil rights bill. They believed that if there was a civil rights act it would safeguard the rights for black people in law and prevent racism, e.g. in Birmingham Alabama.

So this source is useful to a certain extent as he organised a march in Birmingham and in Washington in demand for civil rights and this was a big contribution he made to the civil rights movement.

Marks received:

5 out of 6

Overall grade for assessment:

A grade

Pupil 9

Example 1

Question:

How far was McCarthy supported by the American people up to the mid 1950s? Explain your answer.

Pupil response (use of precise contextual knowledge highlighted):

McCarthy was not supported as far as he thought by the American people up to the mid 1950's this was because the Americans had started to figure out that McCarthy used fake evidence and had fake documents to support his accusation. In the speech 'I have in my hand' he said 'I have 57 cases' which all turned out to be false. McCarthy did this so that the American people knew what he would do if he found out if a person was supporting or giving messages to the USSR.

Marks received:

2 out of 10

Overall grade for assessment:

D grade

Example 2

Question:

'President Kennedy and President Johnson were equally important in the move towards racial equality.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

Pupil response (use of precise contextual knowledge highlighted):

I agree with this statement as president Kennedy and president Johnson were equally important in the move towards racial equality. President Kennedy had announced the Civil Rights Bill which was giving equality to the Black Americans. Also, when the 'freedom riders' was taking place he supported them to increase racial equality to Black Americans. Lastly, Kennedy had sent troops to the Old Mississippi university to allow Black Americans to enter without anyone saying anything to them.

President Johnson was also equally important in the move towards racial equality as he passed the Civil Rights act in 1964. So, the Bill that Kennedy had announced, which was the Civil Rights Bill was passed as Johnson passed it. Also, in 1964 he passed the Anti poverty act which Johnson gave money to the education department, job seekers department to give money to everyone that is living in bad conditions. In 1965 he passed the voting rights act and abolished the literacy test. this made it illegle for Black Americans to take the test and made it very easy for them to vote. Also, he made Thurgood Marshall the first black Supreme court justice.

Marks received:

8 out of 10

Overall grade for assessment:

B grade

gather outside the White House – into its proper context, by explaining that it is a reference to Martin Luther King's march on Washington in August 1963. For correctly identifying the message of the cartoon and explaining this using both interpretation of the visuals in the source *and* some contextual knowledge, the pupil was awarded six marks out of seven.

The second example again shows responses to two, source-based questions. In order to answer the question fully, pupils needed to combine analysis and interpretation of the source content with their contextual knowledge, but this time in relation to source utility. In the Red Scare response, Pupil 19 used what *appears* to be contextual knowledge, such as when the statement was made, but that knowledge was actually provided in the source attribution. Unable to call on much genuine contextual knowledge, Pupil 19 was forced to make stock statements about utility, based on the type of source (a letter) or by whom it is written, and to become repetitious, thus scoring only two out of six for this answer. In contrast, the same pupil's answer to the question concerning Martin Luther King's contribution to the civil rights movement drew on several pieces of contextual knowledge, helping them to fulfil the mark-scheme criterion that the answer should be balanced. Pupil 19 was able to use this knowledge to help explain why King chose Birmingham for the protests in 1963 as well as identifying another example of his contribution by discussing the march on Washington. The answer gained five marks out of six.

In the final example, we see Pupil 9's responses to the final question of each assessment. Each was worth ten marks and did not require use of sources, making the responses completely reliant on the pupil's contextual knowledge. In the Red Scare response, the pupil struggled for material and wrote very little. Some of the writing is vague and one has the sense of a pupil lacking the knowledge of the evidence of McCarthy's relative popularity needed to adequately address the question, limiting their response to two out of ten. In the second response, however, the pupil showed a firm grasp of the major contributions of each President and used them in a focused, purposeful way. This enabled Pupil 9 to confidently state that Kennedy and Johnson made equal contributions. Even though Pupil 9's justification of this judgement was never sufficiently convincing to reach the very top marks, the answer was nonetheless backed up by examples of what each President did, thus gaining eight marks out of ten.

Conclusions

- Being very explicit about the items of contextual knowledge that pupils needed to commit to memory inevitably concentrated their minds on that knowledge, enabling them to focus on what was most important.
- Using frequent, low-stakes tests enabled pupils to retain these items of knowledge effectively and meant they had a greater store of knowledge on which to draw when completing the assessment questions.
- Teaching of the topics took longer – often to the frustration of my head of department! – but the extra time was fully justified by the much-improved

performance in the end-of topic assessments, both of individuals and of the class as a whole.

I have now extended the use of frequent, low-stakes tests to all my classes, for all topics, confident that this will enable them to build up and retain a greater amount of contextual knowledge throughout the GCSE course. I now plan to extend their use to incorporate Fordham's suggestion of testing knowledge from throughout their schooling, which I hope will help pupils cope with the demands of a return to linear examination courses – a powerfully seductive reason to do so with such a demanding change upon us.⁸

Such a benefit of this approach is, of course, merely in addition to the most gleaming prize of all: my urban, largely EAL and working-class pupils having access to something that more advantaged young people take for granted, namely broad knowledge. I am increasingly convinced that the various 'gaps' we hear much about in education, and the link between demographics and destiny that my school aims to break, are to a great extent rooted in a knowledge gap which facilitates the educational 'Matthew Effect', where the knowledge-rich get richer and the knowledge-poor get poorer.⁹ If we are to confront this effect head on, then we need to lose some of the collective squeamishness we hold as a profession about the learning of 'mere facts', rote methods of doing so and repeated low-stakes testing of pupils throughout secondary school. I hope that what I describe above can make a contribution to encouraging others to insist, unapologetically, that their pupils can and must *know* more in order to flourish as historians and to be able to count themselves as well-educated young people.

REFERENCES

- ¹ The pupil premium is additional funding given to publicly-funded schools in England in order to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. www.gov.uk/government/policies/raising-the-achievement-of-disadvantaged-children/supporting-pages/pupil-premium
- ² The General Certificate of Education (GCSE) examination has been the 16+ public examination in England, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1988. We follow the OCR B Modern World syllabus. This article is based on our preparation for the 'depth study' in Paper 1.
- ³ Extracts from typical examination questions for the OCR B Modern World depth study.
- ⁴ The two posts from David Didau's blog, *Learning Spy*, were: www.learningspy.co.uk/featured/deliberately-difficult-focussing-on-learning-rather-than-progress/ www.learningspy.co.uk/assessment/afl-have-we-been-doing-the-right-things-for-the-wrong-reasons/
- ⁵ Willingham, D. T. (2009) *Why Don't Students Like School? A cognitive scientist answers questions about how the mind works and what it means for the classroom*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass. See also: Richardson-Klavehn, A. and Bjork, R. A. (2002) 'Memory: long term', *Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science*, Vol. 2, London: Nature Publishing Group, pp. 1096-1105.
- ⁶ Willingham, *op.cit.* explains the importance of embedding knowledge in long-term memory so that working memory space is freed up. The effort of retrieval itself appears to strengthen long-term retention.
- ⁷ <http://clioetcetera.com/2014/02/19/beyond-levels-part-three-developing-a-mixed-constitution/> See also Fordham's earlier, fuller account of the 'mixed constitution' in Fordham, M. (2013) 'Oh Brave New World, without those levels in't: where now for Key Stage 3 assessment in history?' in *Teaching History, Curriculum Evolution Supplement*, pp. 16-23.
- ⁸ The introduction of a linear GCSE, meaning a switch to examinations *only* at the end of the course, has been exercising the minds of history teachers in England over the last two years. See, for example, Burn, K., McCrory, C. and Fordham, M. (2013) 'Planning and teaching linear GCSE: inspiring interest, maximising memory and practising productively' in *Teaching History, 150, Enduring Principles Edition*, pp. 38-43.
- ⁹ Some sociologists and psychologists in education have adopted the term 'Matthew effect' to express the cumulative advantage of a certain kind of knowledge or skill. It comes, originally, from the Gospel of Matthew, 25:29: 'For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.'

Beyond Hitler and the Henrys

exam board OCR broadens A Level History on offer for 2015



OCR has taken the opportunity of the reform of A Levels to add topics to its History A Level specification and broaden the history that A Level students can learn from 2015. Here, Mike Goddard, OCR's Head of History, explains the thinking behind the new A Level to Teaching History.

What's the thinking behind OCR's new History A Level?

"We really wanted to be sure that we preserved all the many good aspects of the current A Level, and, most importantly, that we created a structure for the new specification that would allow teachers to construct courses that would best exploit their areas of expertise, their resources – and their students' interests. Alongside this, we wanted to give A Level students the chance to tackle new subjects, so as well as some more familiar areas of study, we've added new topics, including Alfred the Great, Genghis Khan and pre-colonial African Kingdoms. And we've looked very closely at assessment, and have developed very clear and user-friendly question papers and mark schemes."

What are the benefits for students?

"This is a rigorous and broad course that will be excellent preparation for university. We consulted closely with Higher Education over topic content and question style. Overwhelmingly, universities wanted to see a breadth of knowledge in their incoming students – and OCR's A Level guarantees that, while providing a unique level of flexibility for teachers to put together options in an attractive and stimulating way. We're glad students will still complete coursework for A Level History, and have improved our coursework unit – again in consultation with universities – so that it really develops the independent research skills and passion for the subject that will serve the students well, whatever they go on to do."

What feedback have you had from the history community?

"We're pleased with the feedback we've had so far. The vision behind the new A Level has really caught on. The feedback from teachers has been really positive: whether or not they're planning to teach any of the new topics we've developed (and the Genghis Khan one, in particular is going down really well – we know of one school planning to kick off the course delivering lessons from a yurt!). Having separate question papers for each topic has also been appreciated – with the guarantee that helps bring of specialist marking. Overwhelmingly though, it's the unique level of freedom that this specification provides teachers that is appealing; that and our commitment to innovative support."

"The development has been well received by the wider history community too. For example, Professor Peter Mandler, President of the Royal Historical Society, backs the principle of broadening school history. He told OCR: 'History tells us not so much about who we are, as about who we have been and what we might yet be. We stand ready to work with schools to make exciting new curricula come alive for young people, to show them how much more history there is than Hitler (and Stalin) and the Henrys.'"



Which of the new topics on OCR's History A Level for 2015 have been attracting the most interest?

"It's difficult to say for certain at the moment, although the launch of our unique specification creator tool (see below) will give us precise information shortly. But the following are all attracting substantial interest:

- Alfred and the Making of England 871 – 1016
- The Early Anglo-Saxons c 400 - 800
- Genghis Khan and the Explosion from the Steppes c1167 – 1405
- Japan 1853 – 1937

- African Kingdoms c 1400 – c 1800
- The Rise and Decline of the Mughal Empire in India 1526 - 1739
- The Rise of Islam c 550 – 750
- The Ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire 1453 – 1606
- China and its rulers 1839 – 1989
- The Middle East 1908 – 2011, Ottomans to Arab Spring.

"With the new A Level and examples of our resource materials on our website (www.ocr.org.uk/history), plus a hard copy of OCR's new A Level coming to all history departments, there's plenty of time for teachers to familiarise themselves with the changes."

African Kingdoms

The new topic on four African Kingdoms, from c1400 to c1800, was developed with the help of Toby Green of King's College London. He states:

"Studying precolonial African history is something which is entirely new to the A Level history options, but it's my belief that it could become a real benchmark of the syllabus. Studying the distant

African past enhances our abilities as historians by questioning our methods and approaches to history. Historical traditions in Africa are as much oral as written, and as much discernible through material as written cultures, and this brings in a welcome element of interdisciplinarity to the study skills set which students can take on with them to university.

We also learn an enormous amount about the emergence of world cultures through looking at the African past, learning about the

interactions between Africa and both Islamic cultures to the North and East and Christian cultures in the Atlantic world, and how culturally mixed the frameworks which produced modernity really were. This is something that helps us to understand not only how Africa came to be as it is today, but also the heritage which we all share in the mixed societies of the present."

"The new OCR option is structured around four key kingdoms in precolonial Africa: Benin, Dahomey/Oyo, Kongo, and Songhay. Each left major marks on world history in the era between around 1500 and 1800, and one of the fascinating things which students will learn is the range of cultural, economic and social transformations which occurred in these kingdoms in this period."

"That's why the new OCR option is something that I really believe in, and want to help to develop as much as possible. When the next cohort of first year undergraduates comes into my classroom and tells me that, actually, we know much more about precolonial African history than people used to think, I'll know that we've done a good job."



To support schools to broaden the history they teach, OCR will be providing plenty of help, including a web-based tool, 'specification creator', which schools must use to confirm that their option choices meet requirements. But it will do so much more than that. With teachers' permission, we'll be able to put them in contact with other teachers teaching exactly the same option, and we'll be able to build communities and share best practice and resources – including alerts about new resources as they become available. We're also working closely with Hodder and are delighted to see a brand new and full range of British History textbooks being published to support unit 1, and comprehensive plans to support units 2 and 3 as well.

Using time-lines in assessment

Bridging a twenty-year gap in their practice, Elizabeth Carr and Christine Counsell bring out the similarities in their use of timelines in their planning, teaching and assessment. What they also have in common is the fact that their experimentation with timelines as a way of strengthening cumulative knowledge emerged in remarkably similar policy contexts. In 1994, history teachers in England were being encouraged to develop their own assessment systems, ones that built both knowledge and second-order thinking, just as they are now.

Introduction: freedom returns

On the eve of the implementation of England's 1995 National Curriculum (NC), no one expected to use the new level descriptions other than at the end of the key stage.¹ To judge an isolated piece of work with a level description was unthinkable. All that had gone wrong with the assessment system of the first (1991) NC, especially its conversion of second-order concepts into isolated increments of skill, had caused history teachers to cry 'never again.'² Instead, professional judgement was to return to history assessment, with history departments generating their own subject-sensitive, useful structures with which to assess progress, isolating and integrating attributes of historical learning, both substantive and second-order, as they saw fit. This meant generating assessment information of different types, resulting in mixed-method but meaningful recording systems. Sadly, by the early 2000s, to the frustration of history teachers, much of this was pushed aside or underground, with level descriptions twisted into a purpose they were not designed to serve.³ Management memory must have been short: within ten years, 'progress' once again came to mean climbing upwards, in spurious increments, within a single calibration. The square wheel of 1991 had been re-invented.

Twenty years on, freedom has its second return. In this article, we, Christine and Elizabeth, heads of history separated by twenty years, share one feature of our history assessment methods, time-lines, as generated in these two eras of new freedom. Of course, time-line tasks are only one element in the panoply of assessment information that Christine generated then and Elizabeth generates now. Thorough attention to chronology is not where history ends; it is a foundation for wider goals such as historical analysis and argument. But in this foundational area, we noticed interesting continuities across our practice.

1994: Christine

The time-line in Figure 1 was created by 12-year-old Peter, in the mid-1990s, in an urban comprehensive. It is a category of test that I called, perversely, a 'fun test'. Fun tests were surprise tests. They popped up without warning. Pupils bought into the irony and would cheer in mock excitement when a 'fun test' was announced. 'Let's do one of those fun tests where we see what we can remember, right from the start of the year!', or, for Year 8, 'Let's amaze ourselves at what has stayed in our heads *ever since the beginning of Year 7!*' And while 'fun test' was, of course, an oxymoron, pupils did seem to enjoy them. They discovered that it is immensely satisfying to try to retrieve all one's knowledge, to feel the power that it confers and to play a game of outdoing oneself.

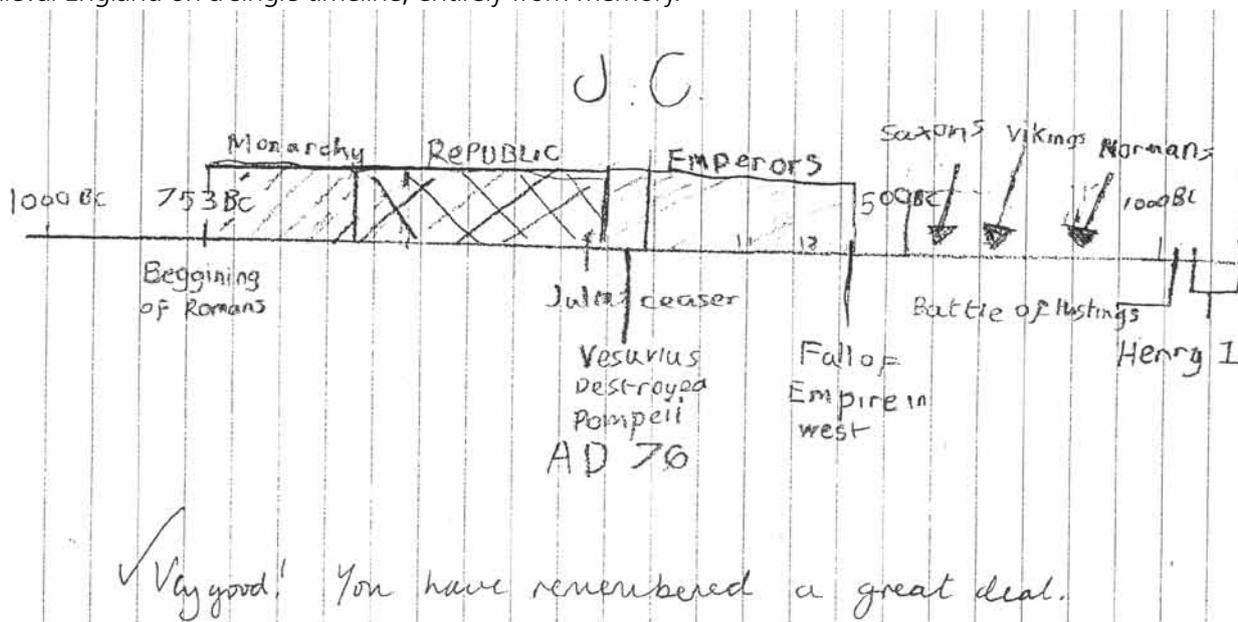
They were also critically important: 'We've been so busy with these Normans that we must zoom out again and remind ourselves where they fit in ...' 'But these words "monarchy", "empire", "republic", were used *earlier* than the twelfth century! Let's remind ourselves where, when, how...'. Fun tests were often positioned just before a moment when we needed to do some thinking, armed with knowledge from an earlier period. This was not, therefore, quizzing for random information. It was making extra sure that every student was ready either for the next stage of analysis or argument or for making sense of new knowledge (a previous empire being compared with a new empire for example, or a reminder of *how long* the Normans had been in England relative to other invaders). Thus pupils could join a sensible, interesting conversation without floundering for want of basic structural information.

The desire to do this arose from my growing certainty that the earlier material we had covered was functional in making all subsequent historical learning much better and sometimes even in making it possible at all. A view common in the 1980s and early 1990s was that knowledge was 'inert' and 'non-functioning', whereas 'skill' was transferable. By the time I taught in this, my second school, that view did not accord with my experience. It seemed to me that knowledge from one topic was highly 'functional' in a quite different topic, and definitely transferable. The time-line test was not, therefore, just a test; it was a learning activity. The act of striving to

Elizabeth Carr and Christine Counsell

Elizabeth Carr is Head of History at Presdales School (11-18 girls comprehensive) Ware, Hertfordshire. Christine Counsell is Senior Lecturer, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

Figure 1: While studying Henry I, Peter was asked to place his knowledge of the Roman empire and medieval England on a single timeline, entirely from memory.



remember fostered resonance with comparable new material. Thus the retrieval of old knowledge, triggered by the test, assisted in the assimilation of a new topic or development of a new argument.

At the same time, these surprise tests supplied me with crucial assessment information. It was a quick way to get a sense of the maps and stories in pupils' heads, and of their gaps, and thus allowed timely intervention using anything from a quick five-minute reinforcement to a more substantial tweak in planning. This was really useful assessment, not commuted into a number on a scale, just a piece of work that told me precisely what was needful *at that stage*, while also giving pupils an immediate sense of the quality of their own mental maps. In my mark-book, I just made a quick indication of whether they had hit a certain threshold or fallen below it, with a further code to show when we had satisfactorily remediated the problem. Nothing else was needed. I did not expect to use *that* data (unless it threw up a striking pattern of deficit unredressed); rather, I expected to use, in a finely-grained and immediate way, the qualitative data that was their actual time-lines.

I vividly remember Peter's time-line in Figure 1. It worked well as a surprise. I had just told the story of the White Ship. Our enquiry question addressed the causes of the ensuing anarchy in Stephen's reign and I gave no warning that we were suddenly going to zoom backwards. So I chose the moment partly for devilment, as a way of keeping up my classroom culture of surprise associated with these tests, and partly for specific content reasons: we were about to climb into dynastic tangles and to meet far, far too many women called Matilda. I wanted pupils to feel secure, really rock solid, on where we had been, before we charged pell-mell into this enchanting and illuminating example of medieval dynastic complexity. Peter was at the lower end of the attainment spectrum. He was clearly beginning to enjoy getting caught out when least expecting it; it triggered a kind of fight-back at my mock-capricious imposition of a test. Peter's smile said, 'I'll show you. I can remember loads'. By this stage he had gained immense pride in creating such time-lines from memory.

The time-line in Figure 2 was different in purpose, context and execution. While also completed from memory, it was anticipated by the pupils and revised for. Rather than straight recall, unrelated to analysis (as in Figure 1), it was an intricate part of a journey led by the puzzle at the heart of the enquiry question, and thus had clear analytic intent. It was carried out as explicit preparation for a structured debate in the following lesson, the final lesson of the enquiry. The enquiry question was 'When did Parliament develop most rapidly?' Students had just completed a two-part homework after Lesson 5 of this six-lesson enquiry. For the first part of their homework, they had to choose four dates and events or developments which they considered crucial in the development of parliament, and for the second part, they had to commit those four dates to memory. Thus each student arrived in Lesson 6 with a nascent argument about rate of change, one which would culminate in a nuanced characterisation of the pattern and process of change in English governance at this time. On this occasion, I wanted them to present this argument orally, and to develop that argument under fire from other students, who would doubtless argue the case differently. To do that well, I reasoned, they needed minimum knowledge *at their fingertips*. I wanted their arguments to have the confidence and power that comes of being able to depend on secure memory. They were allowed to look up further material during the debate – using textbooks, information sheets, sources, notes recorded from exercises I had set earlier in the enquiry, and so on – but I wanted them to have internalised a core of knowledge so that every student would quickly interpret others' arguments and advance their own with confidence and energy. If they could draw on more, from notes and sources, that would be marvellous, but insisting on a memorised core and, in this instance, a core that the student himself had chosen *with specific analytic intent*, was a way of ensuring that every student could perform above a minimum expectation. It prevented sloppy, vague arguments that took refuge in the abstract, 'I think it was a rapid/gradual change', grounded in nothing.

This time, I put something more developed in my mark-book, again, peculiar to this situation and again, both useful in the moment and useful in the longer-term. First, for the time-line,

I wrote a mark out of four to indicate appropriate choice of four dates, their accurate recall and appropriate summary of an event or development with each. The aim here was for 'four out of four' for all students. If any secured less than four, intervention could be immediate. Such students were given additional practice time so that, before the debate began, they became newly secure in the precise area of deficit. It was easy to motivate students to do this: they knew that speedy, agile use of facts would be crucial in the debate.

A second mark, given by me after the lesson, was for the quality of their performance in the ensuing debate – how well they deployed material to argue a well-informed case concerning turning points or other patterns of change and continuity, as they strove to outdo one another in their oral response to the enquiry question. This was based on a topic-specific, task-specific mark-scheme written especially for this end-of-enquiry, 'final outcome' activity. Any mark of more than seven represented strong progress, *even if they had secured seven and a half or eight on a previous occasion*, because seven was my 'knowledge threshold': if they gained seven or more, they had gained completely new knowledge, sufficiently well retained to be able to argue and adequately linked with previous knowledge to make sense (a mark below the threshold would trigger an intervention to ensure that knowledge was sufficiently secure to move on). That main achievement underpinned all other achievement. Of course, the mark-scheme also allowed me to reward layers of technical ability and historical maturity, such as skilful use of evidence for their case or analytic insights into a nuance of change. But because the historical question was more demanding than previous comparable questions (that is, earlier enquiries culminating in a change/continuity argument about political affairs), to get the *same* mark as last time was a further sign of substantial progress.

But end-of-enquiry tasks were merely one form of assessment, one kind of information recorded in the mark book. Alone, they could not give a sufficiently complex picture, such as allowing me to spot where things were going right and wrong as new knowledge was being acquired. I needed to notice where prior learning had not resulted in knowledge sufficiently secure for students to make comparisons or pick up on resonances. This is why other types of interim assessment, such as time-line tests of many different types, were an invaluable assessment device in the mix: some expected, some unexpected; some with analytic force (Figure 2), some straight chronologies without a driving question (Figure 1); some resulting in a recorded mark, some revealing deficits to be tackled there and then. Each was crucial in the overall package of teaching approaches that moved students forwards. Our mark-books might have seemed messy: varied metrics on calibrations with contrasting purposes. But the overall pattern of data was meaningful. Understood by the whole department, it told fine-grained stories of progress.

Two factors drove my decision-making about what to choose from this plethora of time-line possibilities. These could be summed up as 'residue' and 'fingertip' knowledge. Attention to 'residue' meant ensuring that Peter (Figure 1) did not forget that the Romans moved from monarchy, to

republic, to empire. These terms could then resonate and be instantly interesting as their variants were encountered in new contexts. It also meant that Peter kept on weaving new, bigger stories of which the Romans were a part. Attention to 'fingertip' meant ensuring that Aaron (Figure 2) committed his four dates to memory, so that short-term memory was freed up to manage other information and to engage in quick-thinking analysis and rebuttal of others' arguments in the oral debate.

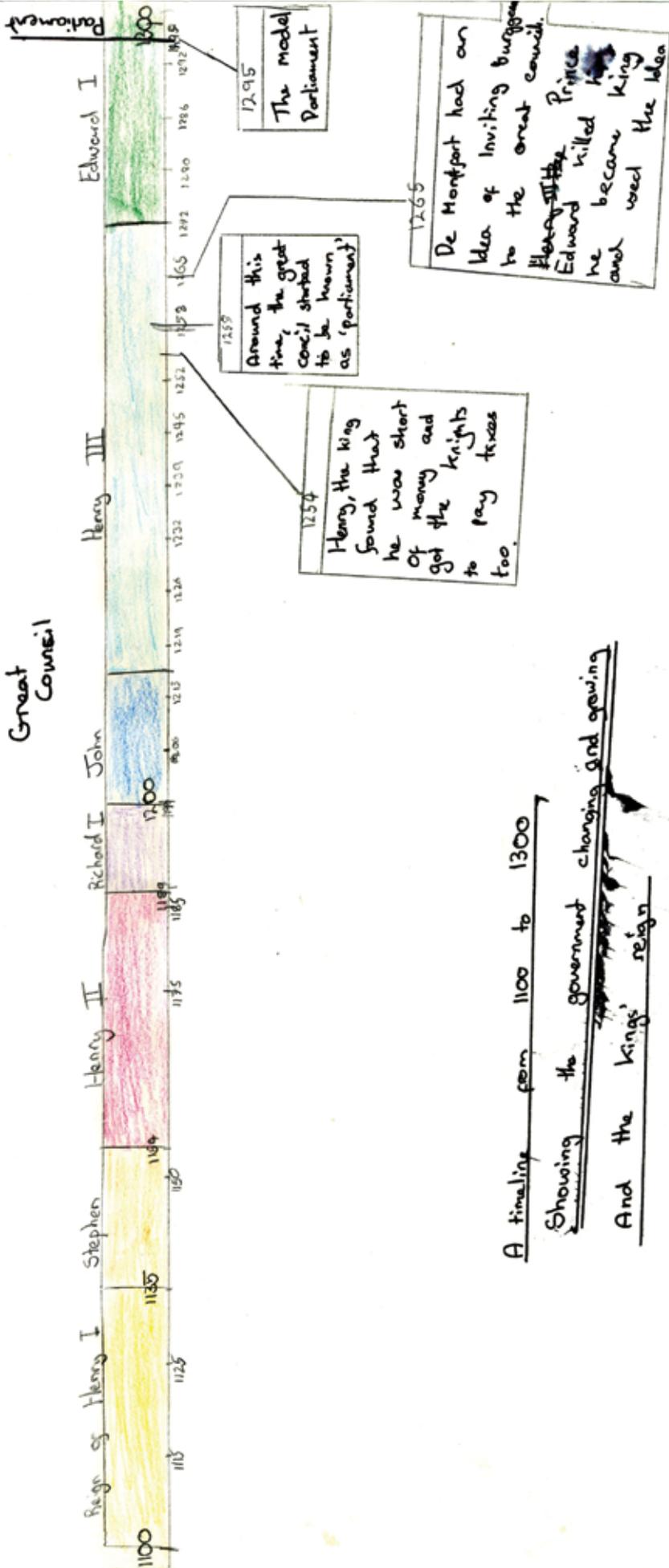
A few years later, in 2000, I published an article arguing for closer attention to 'fingertip' and 'residue' knowledge in long-term planning.⁴ But by 2000, managerial pressure to collapse all assessment into level descriptions was gathering pace. Now that there is once again freedom and encouragement to develop diverse packages of assessment approach, what are history teachers doing with time-lines? What practices can come out of the closet? Elizabeth takes up the story. She, like me, twenty years ago, is free of level descriptions and is blending time-lines into a range of assessment strategies within a 'mixed constitution'.⁵

2014: Elizabeth

Our department's planning at Key Stage 3 carries the implicit assumption that some kinds of historical knowledge are transferable from one topic to another. The removal of level descriptions from the NC created opportunity and incentive to examine what we really mean by progress in history, and the role of knowledge in this. Drawing inspiration from cognitive science and from the professional community within and beyond history, we have concluded that knowledge plays a more important role in student progress than our planning, teaching and assessment had hitherto acknowledged.⁶ Our history curriculum continues to be structured by enquiry questions, each embodying a second-order historical concept and engaging students in genuine historical debates; but we now plan more consciously and explicitly for the development of students' knowledge in each enquiry, and we look for multiple ways of assessing this to ensure that that knowledge is both growing and functional in subsequent learning. Examples A to G in Figure 3 show various small-scale tasks trialled in lessons in recent weeks, using time-lines in different ways to assess students' historical knowledge, to support its recall and use, and to inform our planning and teaching. We have thought both about the role of 'fingertip' knowledge within the enquiry (as Christine did for Aaron in Figure 2) and about the role of a 'residue' of knowledge in pupils' long-term memories (such as Peter was recalling in Figure 1) and how to secure this between enquiries and within and across key stages.

Example D in Figure 3 was a response to departmental moderation of Year 9 essays on the end of British rule in India. Reading these essays, we diagnosed the underlying cause of less successful arguments as weak knowledge of chronology. Students for whom events such as the Amritsar massacre and the Salt March slotted into a broader, chronological framework noticed certain things much more readily than those lacking such a framework. For example, these students noticed that, powerful though the Salt March

Figure 2: Aaron chose four moments which he decided best captured the pattern of change in Parliament's development. After memorising the four dates, he drew this timeline from memory.



A timeline from 1100 to 1300
 Showing the government changing and growing
 And the Kings' reign

Wellness + well-remembered!
 (but late 12th century!)
 number to get that right in the date!

My timeline shows that most of the events are clustered up in the late 12th century. This shows that power the model parliament and the king lost power in a short time of space.

Figure 3: Time-lines 'as you go along' – mid-enquiry and between enquiries

EXAMPLE A: At the start of Year 7, in order to diagnose chronological knowledge and sense of period.

1. Students are asked to assign an historical-period label to drawings of 'period-typical' people and buildings taken from a Year 7 textbook.
2. Students list these time periods in chronological order.

EXAMPLE B: After the first Year 7 enquiry (When did toilets in Britain really change?), prior to commencing the second enquiry (Is Simon Schama right about the Norman Conquest?)

1. Draw a time-line that shows the periods of history you have learned about this term.
2. Focus on the part of your time-line that shows the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. Add what you may have learned about those periods of time.

EXAMPLE C: Year 8 at transition between an enquiry on Roman Britain (Why did Roman Britain end?) and an enquiry on medieval Islamic and Christian Cordoba (When was the Golden Age in Cordoba?)

The bigger picture – how does it all fit together

Britain	0	43AD	410AD	1066
Spain	218BC	0	c.415AD	756
The Romans conquer Spain Spain is part of the Roman Empire		The Visigoths, a German tribe fight the Romans, the Vandals and themselves for control of Spain. In the fighting, conflict and chaos, Roman buildings, administration and culture collapse.		Abd al-Rahman arrives in Spain having fled from Syria.

EXAMPLE D: Year 9 mid-enquiry (How important was Gandhi in ending British rule in India?)

1. Draw a time-line of events that you have studied which link to the end of British rule in India.
2. Which was the most important event on your time-line and why?
3. Mark the moment when you think Indian independence became:
 likely
 inevitable

EXAMPLE E: Start of Year 9 diagnostic test prior to commencing an enquiry on the end of the British Empire

Year 9 quick diagnostic time-line test: how good is your chronology?

1. Write these time periods onto the time-line in order (earliest to latest):

Tudors and Stuarts; Iron Age; Victorians; Georgians/Industrial Revolution; Middle Ages; Romans; Islamic Cordoba; Anglo-Saxons and Vikings.

2. Which period of time do each of these events belong to? a) The Norman Conquest 1066
b) King John, 1199-1215 c) The first railways were built in Britain d) The Civil war, 1642-49
e) Hadrian's Wall was built f) The slave trade was abolished in the British Empire, 1807

3. In which century was the:

a) The Great Fire of London in 1666?

b) The death of Queen Victoria in 1901?

EXAMPLE F: Year 9 at transition from an enquiry on the end of the British Empire to an enquiry on the First World War

Zoom out and see the big picture

The British Empire

1750

1950

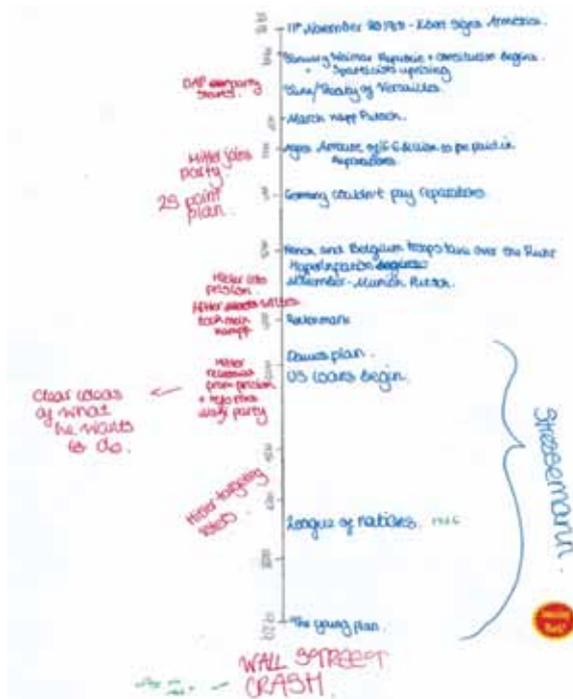
Britain

1750

1950

EXAMPLE G: Year 10 mid-enquiry (Why did Hitler become Chancellor of Germany in 1933 – but not before?)

Task: Draw a time-line to tell the story of the Weimar Republic and of Hitler and the Nazis so far.



was, independence was not achieved for another 17 years. These students produced much more sophisticated causal analysis than students who treated these events in isolation. The exercise in Example D was designed to ensure that more students had sufficiently secure knowledge to be able to do this. By asking students to generate their own time-line, we focused their attention on recalling the sequence, timing and spacing of events, as well as selecting and justifying events to include. Discussion, based on such secure knowledge, could then lead naturally to turning points and to the causal focus of the enquiry question. The task shown in Example G fulfilled a similar role with Year 10, enabling me to check recall of key events in the course so far. What students remembered and chose to include indicated the parts of the story they knew best. Moreover, it showed how far they were able to connect and run concurrently the parallel stories of the Weimar Republic and the early years of the Nazi Party. This knowledge would form the foundation for analysing why the Nazis gained power in Germany only after 1929.

These assessed tasks are proving valuable for three reasons: they quickly identify whose knowledge is secure; they prompt students themselves to patch up small knowledge deficits and to see relationships between different events; and they allow us to intervene with those students whose sequencing of events is entirely at sea, before this confusion surfaces in disappointing historical analysis.

A greater challenge, however, has been to plan for the transfer of historical knowledge between enquiries and between periods. Our history curriculum is designed to provide a coherent course through which students build a good residual knowledge on which to draw later. Integral to this is the revisiting of themes across the curriculum. We want students to build their own, larger narrative frameworks by making links across stories and periods.⁷ As we began to reflect on assessment in our history department, we had to admit that we did not have a rigorous means of assessing how successfully students were, in fact, retaining and linking knowledge from earlier topics and previous years, let alone discerning and shaping new narratives. It was therefore time to do something about it. The time-line tasks in Examples B, C and F were designed to support students to make connections between topics and periods and to transfer residual knowledge from one topic or enquiry to another. For example, when students study the end of the British Empire in Year 9, we ask them to formulate hypotheses, drawing on their knowledge of the end of Roman Britain, studied early in Year 8. A quick diagnostic test (Example E) at the start of Year 9 revealed that many students were not linking sequences of events in British and non-British topics. Example C was designed to reveal to Year 8 how their knowledge of the Iron Age, Roman and post-Roman periods in Britain was relevant to their new and apparently unconnected enquiry on medieval Islamic and Christian Spain. Students annotated the top time-line with summary knowledge on Roman Britain, providing an on-the-spot assessment of what they had retained. Class discussion then drew out parallels with Roman and medieval Spain. This helped the students to contextualise their new knowledge, and informed their analysis of the timing of a 'Golden Age' in Cordoba. For example, using knowledge of post-Roman Britain as well as of Spain, several students argued that the

'Golden Age' began as early as the arrival of Abd al-Rahman in c.750, seeing *this* as a turning point relative to the chaos of the post-Roman period, rather than the more impressive achievements of later rulers.

The task in Example F was a late-night, last-minute solution to helping students to transfer useful knowledge from previous enquiries to studying the First World War. The task challenged them to think about what they already knew from Year 7 and 8 enquiries on the Industrial Revolution, the extension of suffrage, the Victorians and the British Empire. In the context of the new enquiry, this prior learning proved empowering. Using the knowledge recalled in their time-lines, I asked students to suggest a hypothesis in relation to at least one of the following questions: Why was Britain involved in the First World War? Who was involved in the war? What was the fighting like? What effect did it have on Britain and the world? Warming up their prior knowledge generated little sparks of inspiration. Daniella, enthusiastic but usually lower-attaining, suggested, 'Britain must have got involved for something to do with power and money', and justified this using knowledge of the British Empire. Others, meanwhile, remembered that, back in Year 7, the First World War had had some connection with female suffrage, and used their knowledge of Victorian society to speculate further on the role of women in the First World War, or their knowledge of the Industrial Revolution to wonder about the role of technology in the war. By prompting recall and refreshing their knowledge, this task contributed to students' 'sense of period'. At the same time, it indicated the 'residue knowledge' that students had retained, and the errors or gaps which might hinder their analysis or lead to misconceptions or anachronisms.

Seeking to diagnose knowledge deficits to inform our teaching focused our attention on what Year 7 bring from primary school. The test in Figure 3, Example A, completed in Year 7's second history lesson, provided valuable information about their chronological knowledge and 'sense of period'. Significant confusions exposed how shaky would be the foundations of the framework we wanted them to build in Key Stage 3. The first enquiry of our Year 7 course, 'When did toilets in Britain *really* change?' was an opportunity explicitly to address these shortcomings in knowledge.⁸ The task in Example B then served a dual purpose. It allowed us to assess how far students' knowledge of historical periods had been strengthened since the initial diagnostic test; it also drew out their nascent Anglo-Saxon and medieval 'sense of period', ready to support their next enquiry on the Norman Conquest.

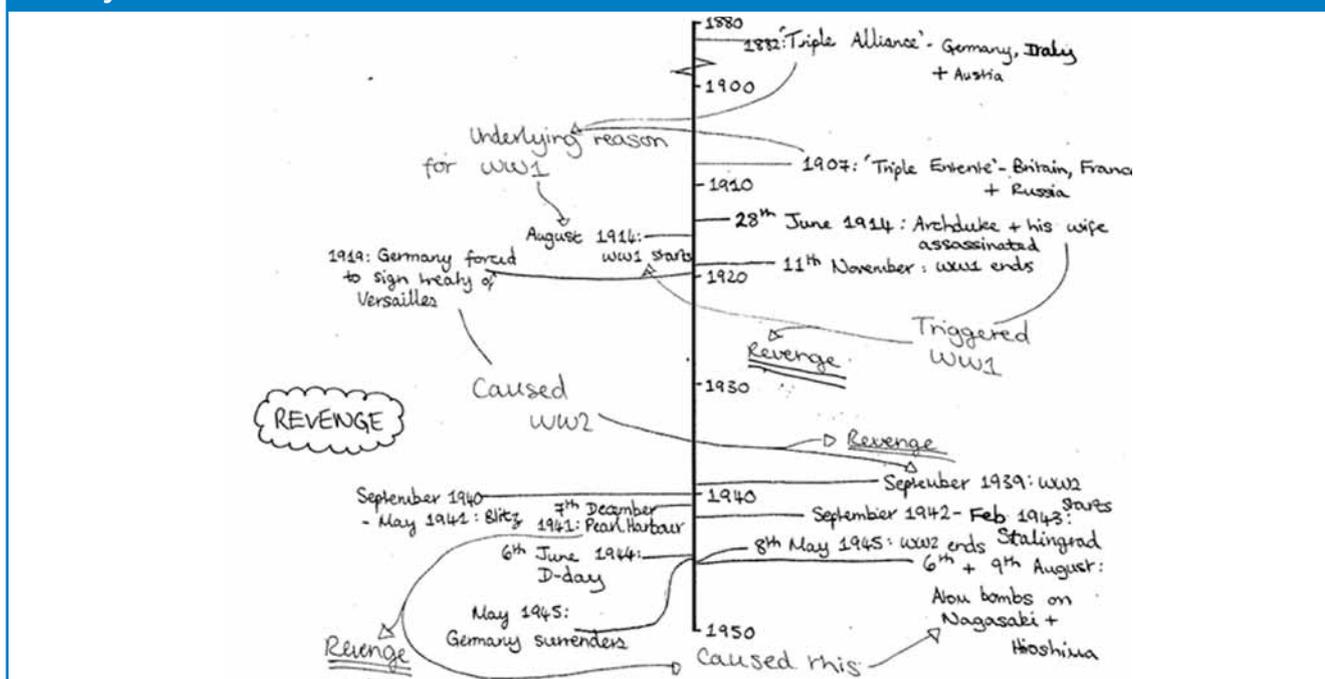
The examples described above have allowed us to assess in an informal and ongoing way the developing state of students' knowledge, both fingertip and residue. The results have directly informed our planning from lesson to lesson, and are feeding into our medium- and long-term planning. They also raised the question of how we should measure, at the end of a year, whether students had retained those frameworks of knowledge, ready for use in the following year. Figure 4 shows a task that we trialled as part of the end-of-year examination for each of Years 7, 8 and 9. In their examination, each year group was required to construct a time-line relating to a theme that had featured during the year, and then to comment on that theme. As preparation,

Figure 4: An extract from the Year 9 summer exam with Millie's answer on her chosen theme of 'militarism'

1. a) Choose one of these themes that you have learned about this year. If you prefer, name a theme of your own.

- The British Empire
- Imperialism and nationalism
- The causes of conflict between peoples and countries
- The role and experience of ordinary people in conflicts and wars
- [another theme you have thought of]

1. b) Complete this time-line with a selection of events you have studied this year that fit with your chosen theme.



1. c) Write a paragraph on what you have learned this year about your chosen theme. Think about patterns, similarities and differences. Be as specific, detailed and complicated as you can. Use your time-line to help you.

Militarism played a key role in the late 19th century and early 20th century. This is where politicians think that war is the answer to their problems. It is one of the main causes of the First World War beginning. Austria-Hungary and Serbia had already been having rows over power and land, and they wanted a war. This meant that Serbia went and assassinated Austria-Hungary's Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife. This meant that Austria Hungary declared war on Serbia, and all of their allies started declaring war on each other, which led to a full scale world war. Militarism comes up again in India in 1919 with the Amritsar Massacre. The British killed nearly 400 innocent people (men, women and children) whose only crime was holding a meeting. Hitler then used militarism in the 1930s when he built up the German army and began to invade other countries. Britain and France were therefore forced to step in, which led to another war. In conclusion I think that the wars could have been prevented if militarism hadn't played such a key role.

they were alerted to the task in advance, and so were able to revise a chronology of events. A discussion activity in class also allowed them to generate and share possible themes from the year. They were *not*, however, taught explicitly how to complete this particular examination task because we wanted it to be a mere 'proxy' for their broader historical knowledge and understanding. In other words, we did not prepare them specifically for this test, lest we collapse into the old trap of 'teaching to the test' at the expense of teaching to the full domain, of which a test is just a proxy.⁹

Writing mark-schemes for these tasks forced our department to think hard about how historical knowledge and thinking

would manifest itself in a 'gold standard' response. Millie's response in Figure 4 seemed to show the task's potential as an assessment tool. Despite its simplistic idea of 'revenge', Millie's time-line demonstrates accurate recall and underlying knowledge sufficient to generate ideas about historical patterning. She deploys her knowledge to make causal links between events studied in discrete enquiries. She also spaces and clusters events with a sense of historical scale. Her paragraph provides further evidence of the links she has made across topics: the strength of her understanding of the substantive concept of militarism is revealed both in her insight concerning an overall pattern across an entire year's topics, and in the precise, topic-based examples with which

she illustrates this pattern, interweaving the First World War, the British Empire and the Second World War.

We are still wrestling with this as a department. The ideas shared here have all the imperfections and problems inherent in trying anything for the first time. We are beginning, however, to discern rewards both in student progress, and in planning made more effective by more precise knowledge of our students' strengths and weaknesses. The challenge in end-of-year examinations in subsequent years will be to get our Year 9 students drawing on knowledge from Years 8 and 7 in order to construct time-lines that match and exceed the sophistication of Millie's in Figure 4. For last year's Year 9, that would have been a daunting prospect. By securing knowledge throughout the year, through activities such as those in Figure 3, and by valuing and assessing the overall framework of students' knowledge at the end of each year, we want to ensure that our current students build stronger frameworks across Key Stage 3, are able to demonstrate these confidently at the end of Year 9 and can use that knowledge to underpin success in later examinations.

Conclusion: towards messy mark-books

The above account shares nascent practice in two settings – Christine's from two comprehensive schools in the west of England, two decades ago, Elizabeth's from one comprehensive in the East of England, right now. It offers only one slice of our assessment approaches: time-lines. We leave

readers to find the continuities and we offer these examples in the hope that they encourage experiment and foster debate at this exciting time when mark-books can once again be messy and a 'mixed constitution' of assessment can once again be crafted in the interests of defining proper progress, for all.

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- ⁷ We do not use the term 'framework' in the technical sense of Howson, J. and Shemilt, D. (2011) 'Frameworks of knowledge: dilemmas and debates' in Davies (ed.) *Debates in History Teaching*, London: Routledge or Nuttall, D. (2013) 'Possible futures: using frameworks of knowledge to help Year 9 connect past, present and future', *Teaching History*, 151, *Continuity Edition*, pp.33-44. While our aspirations have much in common with Nuttall, rather than *beginning* with a generalised factual scaffold, our approach has more in common with that of Brooker, E. (2009) 'Telling tales: developing students' own thematic and synoptic understandings at Key Stage 3', *Teaching History*, 136, *Shaping the Past Edition*, pp.45-52. Our approach is one of moving from relative depth to overview, as illustrated in Carr, E. (2012) 'How Victorian were the Victorians? Developing Year 8 students' conceptual thinking about diversity in Victorian society', *Teaching History*, 146, *Teacher Knowledge Edition*, pp.9-17.
- ⁸ This enquiry was inspired by Michael Riley's presentation at the Historical Association conference in York, May 2013.
- ⁹ On 'domain' and 'test', see Koretz, D. (2008) *Measuring Up: what educational testing really tells us*, Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. For an overview, see Daisy Christodoulou: <https://thewingtoheaven.wordpress.com/2014/01/19/why-teaching-to-the-test-is-so-bad/>

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New, Novice or Nervous?



The *quick* guide to the 'no-quick-fix'

This page is for those **new** to the published writings of history teachers. Every problem you wrestle with, other teachers have wrestled with too. Quick fixes don't exist. But if you discover others' writing, you'll soon find – and want to join – something better: an international conversation in which others have explored, debated and tackled *your* problems. *This edition's NNN problem is:*

Teaching overview

Overwhelmed by overview? Bewildered by how to teach bigger pictures? Tied up in mental knots by trying to work out the difference between thematic stories, frameworks and outlines? You are not alone. Like many history teachers, you feel more confident when teaching depth studies but find yourself beating a rapid retreat when faced with the challenge of teaching coherent overviews. More by accident than design, your schemes of work tend to consist of a series of in-depth enquiries. Pupils undoubtedly enjoy their history lessons and demonstrate a secure knowledge of particular episodes, which they use to construct answers to historical questions. But at the back of your mind nags the awareness that they are unable to join these little stories together into any kind of coherent big picture.

What do you do?

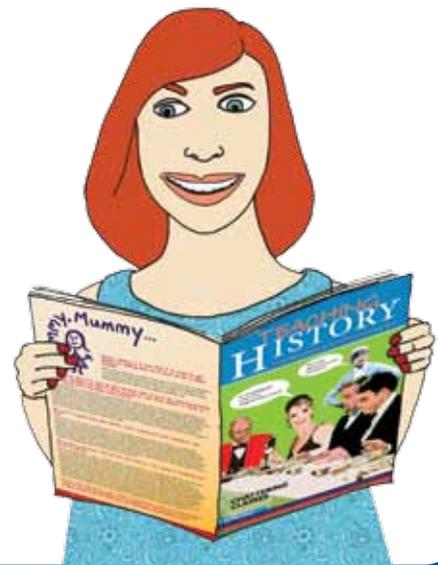
Teachers have long wrestled with the challenges posed by teaching overview. Start by reading **Riley (1997) TH 88**, who suggests that we need to think flexibly about what constitutes outline knowledge and offers a range of practical strategies for building different types. Riley's emphasis on thinking carefully about how overviews and depth studies are positioned relative to one another has influenced much subsequent work by teachers.

Banham (2000) TH 99 models one possible approach, using an extended depth study to establish particular understandings that make the subsequent, demanding overview more easily digestible. Explicitly building on the work of Riley and Banham, **Barnes (2002) TH 107** proposes a model in which the overview 'frames' an entire unit of work. Unlike Banham, Barnes chose to start with a big overarching enquiry question into which subsequent depth enquiries fed, arguing that this promotes an overall coherence, enabling pupils to grasp some of the essential characteristics

of the period as a whole. **Gadd (2009) TH 136** also wanted her pupils to come away with a coherent big picture but in the form of a large-scale narrative. In contrast to Barnes, she taught a series of depth enquiries before asking pupils to construct their *own* big narrative.

Dawson (2008) TH 130 is concerned with even bigger narratives – the kinds that pupils construct across an entire key stage. Arguing that coherence is unlikely to be achieved if topics are *only* linked by a chronological thread, Dawson suggests that by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils should be able to tell several thematic stories across time; stories, for example, about power and democracy, everyday life and empires. **Rogers (2008) TH 133** takes a different approach to developing pupils' big pictures of the past. Inspired by the work of Lee, Shemilt and Howson, he used a topic-based 'framework' (defined as a flexible, outline structure to which pupils are introduced at the start of a topic and which is then modified

and refined during the course of teaching) not only to develop pupils' big pictures by helping them to synthesise and contextualise new knowledge, but also to nurture their historical consciousness. For further suggestions, read **Nuttall (2013) TH 151**, who took inspiration from Rogers to develop the teaching of frameworks of knowledge across a number of units. Finally, for an evaluation of both Dawson's and Rogers' approaches, look at **Howson (2009) TH 136**.



move me on

The problem page for history mentors

This feature of *Teaching History* is designed to build critical, informed debate about the character of teacher training, teacher education and professional development. It is also designed to offer practical help to all involved in training new history teachers. Each issue presents a situation in initial teacher education/training with an emphasis upon a particular, history-specific issue.

Mentors or others involved in the training of student history teachers are invited to be the agony aunts.

This issue's problem:

Rose Valognes feels she hasn't got enough ways of getting knowledge across to the students before they can do something with it

After a positive start to her training year, Rose Valognes seems to have got stuck in a rut in her thinking, with her lessons falling into a very predictable pattern. She sums this up as 'find a way to get the information across then get the kids to do something with it'. While she recognises that her lessons are becoming very formulaic and often dull, her assumption is that if she could just find new ways of tackling the first stage, the problems would all be sorted.

This two-stage strategy essentially represents Rose's understanding of what the history curriculum ought to look like. She fully accepts that understanding or doing history depends *both* on a secure body of knowledge *and* on the ability to ask and answer worthwhile historical questions about it – questions about why things happened, how they were experienced, what difference they made to different people and why they have been interpreted differently. Her assumption is that students can't tackle any of these questions effectively without sufficient knowledge, so the logical sequence is to begin with the substantive content and then move on to ask more interesting questions about it. Unfortunately, the process that she regards as an essential first step often takes longer than she expects and ends up squeezing out time allocated to raising questions and analysing or debating the possible connections, patterns and explanations.

This problem is exacerbated by two particular features of practice in her training school. The first is a tendency to treat each lesson as a separate entity. This means that although Rose has built a good repertoire of more thoughtful and engaging tasks intended to get the students asking worthwhile historical questions, they are usually very limited in their focus, related only to the new material introduced in that particular lesson. The second is a strong emphasis in the department on GCSE exam practice, which often also includes the use of GCSE-style questions in Key Stage 3. This means that in many cases 'doing something with the knowledge' turns into little more than answering a particular kind of exam question. Although Rose has been keen to experiment with different kinds of activity – card-sorts and living graphs, for example, or playing with different kinds of analogies and metaphors – these are the activities that get cut when time is short. As a result the students' history diet is increasingly restricted to some kind of note-taking exercise followed by a very predictable but more extended question, with only occasional scope to develop their thinking and understanding in more expansive ways.

Rose's plan for a Year 10 lesson on the collapse of Tsarist rule in 1917

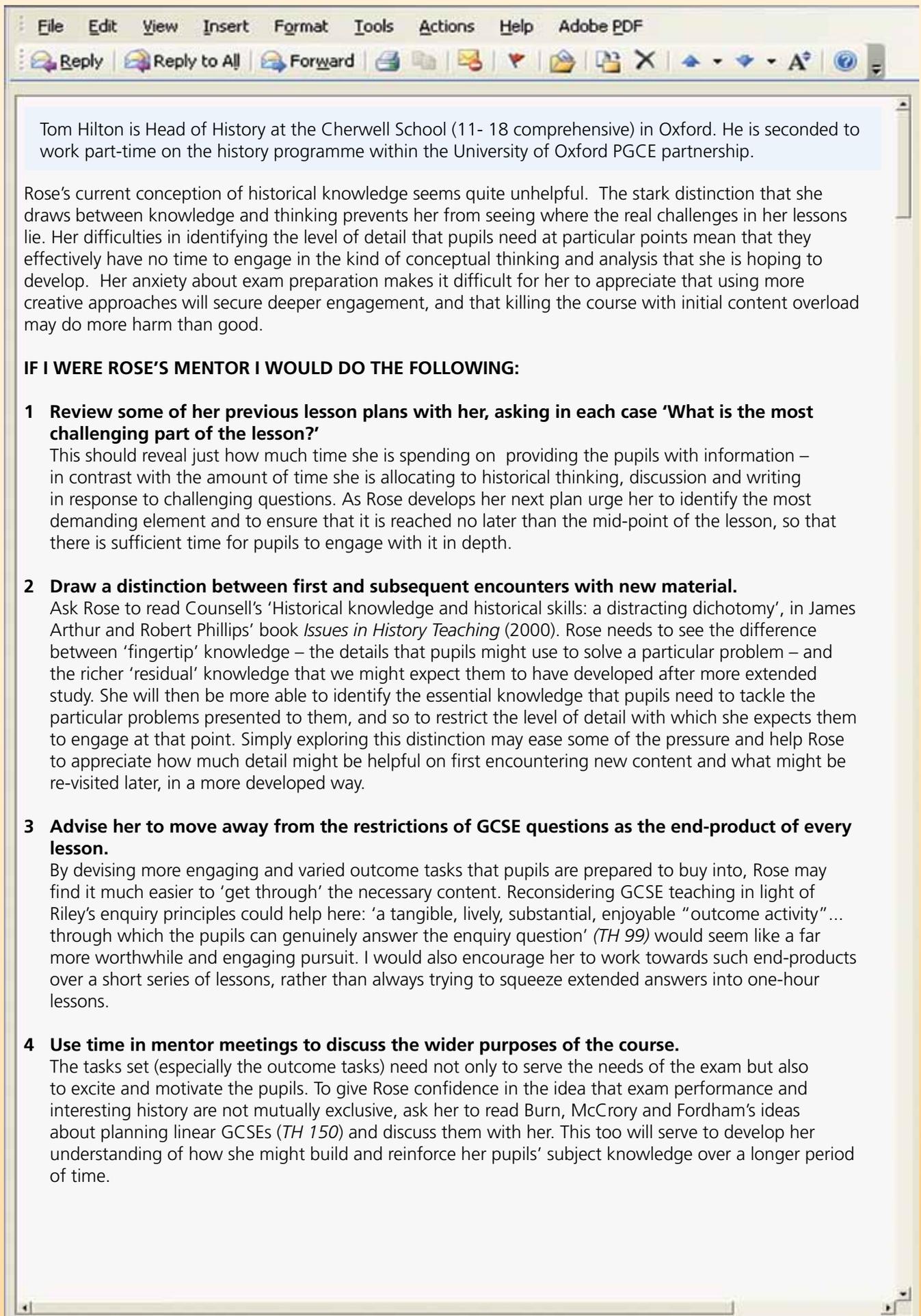
Timings	Activity	Instructions & modelling
9.00 – 9.10	<p>Starter: Pie chart showing numbers of casualties (9.15 million) rate as proportion of total soldiers mobilised (13 million) – displayed with arrows pointing to and from the pie chart with space for labels.</p> <p>Students to give three causes for this high casualty rate and to speculate about three possible consequences.</p> <p>Feedback to set up lesson objective.</p>	<p>Pie-chart displayed on board and hand-outs ready on desk, to start as they come in.</p> <p>Explain task when most have arrived – using student responses to model one cause (recall from last lesson) and one suggested consequence.</p> <p>Work on task in pairs (while I take register)</p> <p>Feedback range of answers – and use suggestions for possible consequences to explain that in this lesson they'll find out what happened, as a result, in March 1917</p>
9.10 – 9.30	<p>Information finding to complete chart:</p> <p>Working from textbook to complete chart summarising the effects of the war on, and responses from: (a) Army (b) Peasants (c) Workers in the cities (d) Middle classes (e) Aristocracy</p>	<p>Present outline table for students to draw and complete. (Partially completed charts for Ayesha, Tanya, Tom, Farid; also with simplified text to read for Saima, Luke and Darren)</p>
9.30 – 9.40	<p>Role play: Decision-making task in role as soldiers and officers when ordered to put down the revolt on 12 March. What would your response be and why?</p>	<p>Divide class (one-third officers and two-thirds soldiers) with character cards given to pairs of students to decide on response and be able to explain why. Hear a range of responses (all if time) and conclude with vote.</p>
9.40 – 9.45	<p>Explanation: Use PPT to explain that the army refused to put down the revolt and demanded that Duma take over – on the same day as revolutionaries set up the Petrograd Soviet. On 15 March Tsar Nicholas II resigned.</p>	<p>Student copy this statement of what happened on 12 and 15 March into their books.</p>
9.45 – 10.00	<p>8 mark GCSE question: Why did Tsarist rule collapse in March 1917?</p>	<p>Give students 12 minutes to complete answer. Circulate to respond to any concerns and identify two or three responses for students to read aloud as plenary.</p>

Extracts from the mentor's observation notes

- The starter was very promising in terms of providing a recap on last lesson and encouraging the students to speculate about possible consequences in light of what they know so far.
- Completing the table took *much* longer than you had allowed for in your plan. Although you had certainly tried to make it more accessible and less demanding for certain students, it was still really all about finding the right bit of information and copying it into the right box.
- Your idea for the discussion in role had the *potential* to build on the interest that you had begun to generate in the starter, but interest was flagging by now and you had run out of time to include it as a discussion task in pairs. Using whole class Q & A instead meant that the decision was only properly considered by the two or three students who answered. Quite a lot of the class were still filling in their table.
- With the exam question effectively coming straight after the table, many students resented another task with lots of writing. You will obviously check their answers but I fear that many of them may just have repeated the information about different groups' war experiences pretty much as they summarised it in the table, rather than really tackling the question.

Message from Rose on the history trainees' discussion forum

Can anyone help with some more interesting ways of getting across new information to students? I always seem to get stuck with the first part of my lesson. I can see what I want the kids to be able to do by the end, but all the ideas that I have for interesting activities depend on the kids actually knowing something first and that's what I'm really struggling with – especially making sure that they've got enough written in their books to be able to do the next activity. I always seem to end up with some kind of table to fill in or time-line to annotate – but they seem to take for ever! I've tried doing group tasks where they each find out about one aspect and then share with one another – but that just ends up with lots of copying and little understanding. They're certainly not explaining things to each other – just dictating notes! I've also tried reading races, which get the kids very excited and competitive, but I can't work out how to make sure that everyone records and remembers what the answers were or what they meant.



Tom Hilton is Head of History at the Cherwell School (11- 18 comprehensive) in Oxford. He is seconded to work part-time on the history programme within the University of Oxford PGCE partnership.

Rose's current conception of historical knowledge seems quite unhelpful. The stark distinction that she draws between knowledge and thinking prevents her from seeing where the real challenges in her lessons lie. Her difficulties in identifying the level of detail that pupils need at particular points mean that they effectively have no time to engage in the kind of conceptual thinking and analysis that she is hoping to develop. Her anxiety about exam preparation makes it difficult for her to appreciate that using more creative approaches will secure deeper engagement, and that killing the course with initial content overload may do more harm than good.

IF I WERE ROSE'S MENTOR I WOULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 Review some of her previous lesson plans with her, asking in each case 'What is the most challenging part of the lesson?'**

This should reveal just how much time she is spending on providing the pupils with information – in contrast with the amount of time she is allocating to historical thinking, discussion and writing in response to challenging questions. As Rose develops her next plan urge her to identify the most demanding element and to ensure that it is reached no later than the mid-point of the lesson, so that there is sufficient time for pupils to engage with it in depth.
- 2 Draw a distinction between first and subsequent encounters with new material.**

Ask Rose to read Counsell's 'Historical knowledge and historical skills: a distracting dichotomy', in James Arthur and Robert Phillips' book *Issues in History Teaching* (2000). Rose needs to see the difference between 'fingertip' knowledge – the details that pupils might use to solve a particular problem – and the richer 'residual' knowledge that we might expect them to have developed after more extended study. She will then be more able to identify the essential knowledge that pupils need to tackle the particular problems presented to them, and so to restrict the level of detail with which she expects them to engage at that point. Simply exploring this distinction may ease some of the pressure and help Rose to appreciate how much detail might be helpful on first encountering new content and what might be re-visited later, in a more developed way.
- 3 Advise her to move away from the restrictions of GCSE questions as the end-product of every lesson.**

By devising more engaging and varied outcome tasks that pupils are prepared to buy into, Rose may find it much easier to 'get through' the necessary content. Reconsidering GCSE teaching in light of Riley's enquiry principles could help here: 'a tangible, lively, substantial, enjoyable "outcome activity" ... through which the pupils can genuinely answer the enquiry question' (*TH 99*) would seem like a far more worthwhile and engaging pursuit. I would also encourage her to work towards such end-products over a short series of lessons, rather than always trying to squeeze extended answers into one-hour lessons.
- 4 Use time in mentor meetings to discuss the wider purposes of the course.**

The tasks set (especially the outcome tasks) need not only to serve the needs of the exam but also to excite and motivate the pupils. To give Rose confidence in the idea that exam performance and interesting history are not mutually exclusive, ask her to read Burn, McCrory and Fordham's ideas about planning linear GCSEs (*TH 150*) and discuss them with her. This too will serve to develop her understanding of how she might build and reinforce her pupils' subject knowledge over a longer period of time.

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Reply Reply to All Forward

Hannah Dawson is acting Head of History at Norbury Manor Business and Enterprise College and is a mentor for PGCE students in partnership with the Institute of Education.

Rose has important strengths on which to build: she is already good at reflecting on the learning taking place in her lessons and is clearly keen to make her teaching more interesting and engaging. Unfortunately, her fundamental expectations of 'good history' are currently limiting her ability to develop her own teaching and her students' learning. The most pressing issue is her misconception that the substantive should be separated from second-order concepts so that the latter can be successfully 'tackled'. Once this assumption has been challenged, other issues associated with learning objectives and an insistent focus on exam questions should be easier to manage.

IF I WERE ROSE'S MENTOR I WOULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. Arrange a time to plan an enquiry sequence together.**

Rose is clearly suffering from the department's focus on exam preparation and lessons taught as separate entities. It is therefore important to engage her in discussion about the value of second-order concepts in framing students' historical knowledge and understanding. This will provide scope to challenge her thinking about the lesson as 'two separate halves', and help her to reconsider her expectations of 'good history' as essentially comprising a lot of writing in an exercise book. Ask Rose to read Counsell et al. 'Bridging the divide with a question and a kaleidoscope' (*TH 149*), which evaluates several attempts at designing an enquiry. Focus her attention in planning not simply on marrying substantive and second-order concepts in the same task, but also on making the learning objectives more conceptually challenging as the enquiry proceeds.
- 2. Set up some observations of other history teachers in the department, looking in particular at how content is built into conceptual challenge.**

Rose's current learning objectives have a very limited focus on second-order conceptual development ('Explain what happened and why'). Observing other history teachers will allow her to see how more conceptually-challenging learning objectives are used, and how teachers seamlessly interweave content with concept.
- 3. Set Rose a challenge based on Card's 'Talking Pictures' article (*TH 148*) to plan a lesson in which knowledge can only be gained through the use of images.**

Although Rose might need considerable help to ensure that this was successful, this challenge might prove effective by encouraging her to think about the problem of 'giving students knowledge' in a different way. It would also provide a platform for later discussion about the nature of knowledge and establish a foundation from which to re-evaluate the assumptions that she has made about the necessary separation of 'knowledge' and 'concept'.
- 4. Ask Rose to add a 'learning development' column to her lesson plan.**

Currently there is no scope for Rose to articulate or demonstrate her thinking about the conceptual development that she is seeking to promote in her lessons. A 'learning development' column would require her to justify the activities in relation to her (increasingly challenging) learning objectives, and to identify where she is allowing time for analysis, evaluation and metacognition.

Next issue's problem:

Arthur Wellesley is struggling to model tasks effectively for students. For details of Arthur's 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 January 2015. Rose and Arthur are both fictional characters. Thanks to Katharine Burn, Department of Education, University of Oxford, for devising the Move Me On problem.



Mummy, Mummy, why should we see tea in ancient Egypt?

Not now, dear. Mummy's trying to conduct a root-and-branch reform of her entire post-16 offering. She is contemplating the way in which thinking about change has become consideration of inevitability, wondering how much of what she thinks she knows is wrong, and hoping that someone can write a textbook faster than she can write a scheme of learning. She thinks she might need to re-write GCSE as well but she's a little hazy on the dates for that. And the Deputy Head's coming down the corridor with some documents about how a 30-point scale of grades could replace levels...

Mummy, tea!

Why thank you dear, don't mind if I do. I think you are probably referring to the British Museum's exhibition based on CT-scanning mummies – don't worry dear, I'm perfectly ok – to see what they've got inside their bandages. Computerised Tomography Scanning (insert the word Axial if you'd prefer to call it CAT Scanning, which might be appropriate for the Egyptians) is not a new technology, but it has become increasingly precise over recent years and allows us to see inside packages without unwrapping them. This is very useful for looking at mummified corpses because opening them up is destructive and extremely unpleasant, not to mention disrespectful. Now that's an interesting question, isn't it – when does a corpse become an historical artefact rather than human remains...?

Does Daddy like CATs?

No dear, he likes GATs, preferably down the Six Bells on a Friday night, and ideally out of a VAT. For the first time it's been possible to look again and again at the precise way in which amulets and jewels are distributed throughout the bandages a mummy is wrapped in. They've found a tattoo – a Christian tattoo, suggesting that the early Christians of the Nile Valley wore their icons on their skin, and raising interesting questions about how far one can generalise from very little evidence. Historians have been able to work with pathologists to figure out how people died, and actually gain a second opinion. We know a little of the kind of diet that people had. And we know how Tutankhamun died.

Really?

Well, Professor Albert Zink told the BBC he was confident he knew how Tutankhamun died, although when you look at what he says in more detail it's not quite as certain as that. He has demonstrated that Tutankhamun had substantial weaknesses including very fragile bones, and suggested that he would not have been able to drive a chariot at all and so cannot possibly have died in a chariot crash. I'm reminded of the discovery of the body of Richard III, and the subsequent research suggesting that he might have been a formidable fighter as long as he was wearing the right armour and on horseback. It just seems a bit of a leap to say that Tutankhamun cannot possibly have driven a chariot – just as it was perhaps pushing it too far to claim that he had died in a chariot crash in the first place. CT scanning has at least made the process of evidence-gathering repeatable and verifiable. So far, so scientific. What it hasn't done is produced more evidence. Given the scale of Ancient Egypt – in time and in geographical extent – we still haven't got very much. Some of the mummies are natural mummies (they died in the desiccated desert) which suggests at least that not all our evidence is about the rich, but we're still a very long way from making any real generalisations. There now, you've got me going and it's time for bed. Run along, now...

Mummy, have we started a chain reaction which could bring about the next apocalypse?

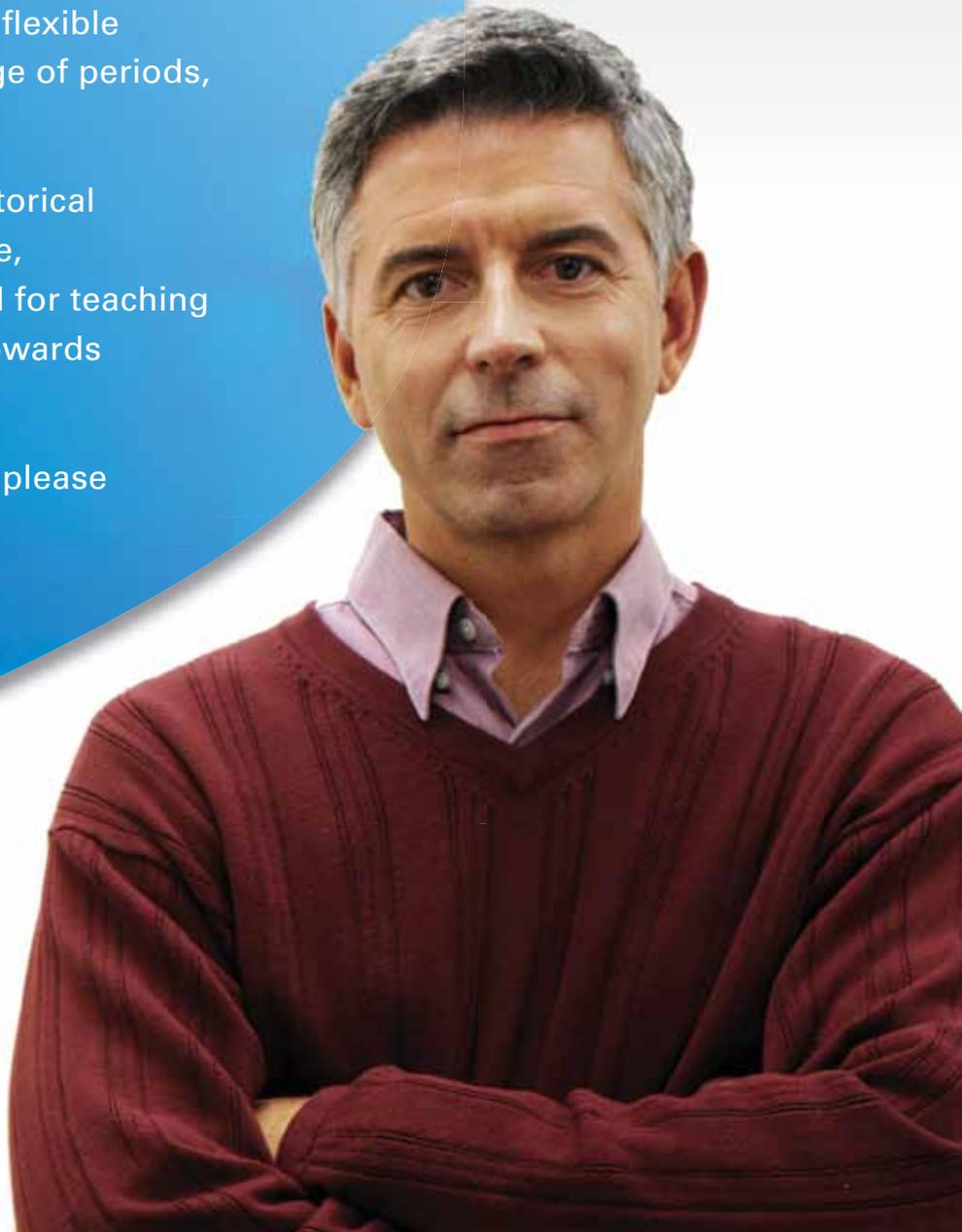
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Small group? Save up to £40 per head on smaller parties when using a midi-coach compared to a 49-seater vehicle

For further details contact (quoting TH-J2014):

Freephone: 0800 801 560

or visit our website to see our full range of tours:

www.schooltours.co.uk

History & Battlefield Tours (Oct 2014 & March to July 2015)

Ypres: 1 Day: £59; 2 Days: £119; 3 Days: £215
(1-day tours are designed for schools within 100 miles of Dover)

Ypres, Somme & Vimy Ridge: 4 Days: £279

The D-Day Landings: 4 Days: £285

Amsterdam & the Dutch Holocaust: 4 Days: £275

Developments in Medicine (London): 2 Days: £129

Based on 44 students & 5 free staff
Quotations for smaller groups
Prices via Dover (where applicable)
Departures also via Hull
Current low season prices quoted

Galina

Curriculum relevance is our business

