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HISTORY TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND TOLERANCE

A HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS

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Dedication

For Mrs Janet Boyd
Founder of the Wiles History Trust at Queen's University Belfast
for the improvement of the teaching of history.

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FOREWORD

This handbook is divided into two parts:

Part A focuses on the philosophical debate about the nature and potential of history teaching.

Part B focuses on the methodology of the subject and of classroom practice.

Each section begins with one or two questions on which the discussion which follows is focused. Issues for reflection and discussion with colleagues are offered at the end of each section.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The contents of this handbook are the product of many years of teaching, thinking and reading about the nature of school history. Some of the ideas put forward are drawn from the work and writings of others. These are indicated in the footnotes and in Appendix 2.

Part A

The potential of history teaching

History is a political battleground .... Near universal literacy raises the stakes. In the days when only a minority could read and write, popular memory took shape more spontaneously and relatively free from interference; but today the mainstream establishment's interpretations of our history penetrate everywhere through school textbooks, the press and television.

John Tosh, *'The Pursuit of History': Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, Longman.

Teachers are not the only influence on the development of children, but they are a vitally important one. There is a limited time in which to help children acquire knowledge and understanding sufficient to become good citizens of their own nations, of our troubled continent and of our endangered global village. The history teaching profession is being asked to assume great responsibilities. History teachers may not welcome the compliment but they cannot refuse it. They must take up this challenge. If history teachers opt out, then the opportunity is missed and the children betrayed.

Professor David Harkness: *'History, democratic values and tolerance in Europe: the experience of countries in democratic transition',* Council of Europe Symposium, Sofia, October 1994.

1. THE DEBATE ABOUT THE FUNCTION OF HISTORY TEACHING

Focus

What kind of influences have affected the nature of history teaching?

How have views of the function of history teaching changed over time?

1.1 Introduction: The evolving debate

The nature of the influence which history can have upon people's beliefs and actions is central to the debate about the content and approach to history teaching in schools. That debate, like the events of history itself, will be coloured by the perspectives of the period and the values of the society in which it takes place. In these closing years of the 20th Century, the debate involves consideration of the values and attitudes which education in general should be promoting and the potential contribution of history teaching towards the goal of creating a more tolerant and democratic society.

1.2 19th and early 20th Century influences on history teaching

The emergence of nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, and the need to consolidate the State, led many governments to take an interest in the political, as well as the educational role of schools, and to influence national history as a means of legitimising their authority and developing loyal citizens.

The goal of creating loyalty and stability involved the use and, sometimes, the misuse of history to portray the history of the nation as a closed chapter, not an agenda for change. That is not to suggest that history was transformed into myth and propaganda. In most cases, that would be an exaggeration. But all history is selective. The quest for a national identity often led to a particular type of selectivity which produced sanitised versions of history in school textbooks. Anything that could be shown to contribute to the building of the nation tended to be commemorated and described as good, and anything that did not tended to be condemned or ignored as irrelevant.

1.3 The influence of school texts

School textbooks were widely influential in propagating a view of history as a body of reliable knowledge which became a kind of unchallenged 'public property'. The school version of the history of nation states, old and new, was often presented as an accurate and unquestioned account of what happened in the past, but with a selective tendency to highlight the contribution of the great and the good. These were generally famous military or political figures, explorers or pioneers. The contribution of ordinary people, native peoples, migrants, minorities, regional neighbours, and especially women, (except for the odd woman who happened by accident of birth to become a queen) was invariably absent. The language used often created powerful images of rebels, overlords, invaders and oppressors under whose unjust yoke the righteous laboured until set free from tyranny by national liberators.

1.4 The potential impact of strongly nationalistic history teaching

Most régimes did not resort to overtly propagandist methods, although Stalin is an example of someone who ruthlessly imposed his own interpretation on Russian history. Nevertheless, highly selective nationalistic history teaching of this type has been accused of creating, at best, feelings of national, racial, religious and cultural superiority and, at worst, prejudices of all kinds, including stereotypical views of others and even hatred and violence leading to the oppression of others.

1.5 Present day influences

In the late 20th Century, although the socialising role of schools is accepted, most education systems shy away from any suggestion of overt social engineering. Yet there is evidence to suggest that politicians, pressure groups and vested interests within many societies continue to seek to influence the content of school history. In most cases, this is motivated by a relatively benign desire to inform some form of national consensus or cultural identity. In some cases, it may also spring from a fear of the potentially subversive possibilities of historical enquiry, in that 'new' approaches to history teaching are viewed by some as encouraging too much scepticism about received ideas.

1.6 Re-appraisal of the nature and purpose of history teaching

In the 1990s, the fundamental nature and purpose of history teaching has been re-assessed and the earlier view of school history as a 'body of knowledge', simply to be learned and re-gurgitated, has been challenged. The basis of history itself has been clarified as an outcome of the construction and interpretations of historians which is always unfinished and open to question.

School history has been re-defined as a form of knowledge which is derived from the process of using and interpreting evidence. The teaching of history in schools, therefore, should be an 'explanation-seeking' pursuit, as opposed to the transmission of a body of knowledge achieved through an enquiry-based, problem-solving pedagogy.

This approach to teaching history is based on the premise that pupils must understand something of the academic historian's skills, concepts and methods. Instead of being asked to accept one interpretation, as offered in the old school textbooks, pupils should be challenged to derive their own views from the study of a variety of evidence and perspectives. In other words, pupils should be trained to adopt a critical attitude to information, to think critically and be 'constructively sceptical'.

1.7 Aims of the 'process' approach

The main aim of this approach is to promote in pupils the ability to:

- develop understanding of how the past has been represented and interpreted;

- collect and analyse material from various sources and use sources critically in their historical context (bearing in mind the key features and characteristics of the periods, societies or situations studied);

- adjudicate between different versions and interpretations of the past and appreciate a range of points of view;

- distinguish fact from opinion and detect bias, prejudice and stereotypes with reference to visual representations, as well as language;

- make independent and balanced judgments and arrive at fair and balanced conclusions based on an analysis of the available evidence and examination of a broad range of perspectives;

- appreciate that these and other historical conclusions are liable to reassessment in the light of new or reinterpreted evidence.

1.8 Views about history teaching for consideration

Source A

This tendency created an attitude to the curriculum that saw the main object of history teaching as handing down a one-nation concept of a country's history. That object is still to be found today.

Dr Joaquim Prats i Cuevas, Council of Europe Colloquy on "The learning of history in Europe", Paris, 5 December 1994.

Source B

History teachers should take part of the blame for the First World War since it resulted, in a large part, from an excess of nationalistic and patriotic fervour on all sides - the result of the 'poison of history'.

H G Wells.

Source C

History is the most dangerous product which the chemistry of the intellect has ever evolved because it renders nations bitter, arrogant, unbearable and vain.

Paul Valery, "Regards sur le monde actuel".

Source D

Forbid history teaching in schools for the next fifty years.

Mr João de Deus Pinheiro, Portuguese Foreign Minister, commenting on the frustration of peace negotiations in Yugoslavia.

Source E

Pupils should be trained to realise that 'history and the way we interpret it is not carved in granite, that the past can never be totally reconstructed and that the study of history is always unfinished. History is never completely nor finally known; .... history is inevitably biased because its witnesses are never impartial .... it is authored by fallible, partisan human beings'.

David Lowenthal, Council of Europe Colloquy on "The learning of history in Europe", Paris, 5 December 1994.

1.10 Issues for reflection and discussion with colleagues

. To what extent do you agree with the analysis of nationalistic history teaching and textbooks offered here?

· Do you agree or disagree with the suggestion made by the writer of Source A that the tendency towards a 'one nation concept of a country's history is still to be found today'? Suggest possible examples.

· How far do you concur with the views expressed in Sources B, C and D about the potentially negative outcomes of history teaching?

· To what extent do you agree with the view of history teaching expressed in Source E?

2. THE CHALLENGE FOR HISTORY TEACHERS

Focus

Why is the nature of history teaching important in the 'new' Europe?

What kind of focus should history as a school subject have?

2.1 The 'new' European context[1]

National rivalry in Europe in the 20th Century has been the cause of two world wars in which countless people lost their lives. In many parts of Europe, the lessons of that carnage have been learned, and the spirit of national hatred and rivalry has been replaced by a spirit of tolerance and economic co-operation. The 'New' Europe is a source of immense hope that a new type of society can be created based on democratic values and tolerance. In the late 20th Century, we are presented with an historic opportunity to consolidate peace and solidarity and to help create a democratic, tolerant and prosperous Europe based on respect for diversity and the principles which are fundamental to a common European tradition: freedom from discrimination; equality before the law; equality of opportunity; freedom of association and assembly; and active participation in public life.

2.2 Concerns about the growth of intolerance

At the same time, the deterioration of the economic situation, in large parts of Eastern Europe in particular, threatens the social cohesion of many states and has bred a climate of intolerance, aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism which expresses itself in violence against migrants, people of immigrant origin, and minorities such as gypsies. The growth of political extremism and, in some places, the resurgence of racism, xenophobia and anti-semitism threatens to marginalise and deprive many groups of their fundamental human rights. This is made even more dangerous because of the apathy of many young people and adults towards the political process and their low participation rates in some local and national elections.

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1 The Declaration of the Vienna Summit and Resolution No. 1 of the 18th Session of the Standing Conference of the European Ministers of Education.

2.3 The resurgence of nationalism in Eastern Europe

The nature of history teaching is important everywhere, but is particularly pressing in the emerging democracies where previously there had been systematic indoctrination and distortion of historical truth. Misha Glenny, Central European correspondent of the BBC World Service, describes the situation in his book "The re-birth of history: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy": 'There is no political or social force that can match the power of nationalism in Eastern Europe .... 1989 was the finest hour of East European nationalism, when the natural desire for liberation was expressed through a reassertion of national identity. At the point of revolution this threatened nobody except the existing power structures, and for a short time it created an unimaginably warm sense of community that extended beyond national barriers. For a few days Marsaryk's dream of a single Czechoslovak nation came true; Romanians and Hungarians embraced one another in Transylvania; Turks and Bulgarians took to the streets to celebrate Zhivkov's fall .... Although the revolutions began as beacons of piercing sharp light, they have become dull, almost invisible glows behind the dark cloud of nationalist intolerance whose shadow swamps the region's history. In one country, Yugoslavia, the collapse of communist power was accelerated by nationalist conflict. To dismiss the threat of nationalism in Eastern Europe is to be lulled into a dreamy world of European integration'.

Neglect of balanced history teaching in these circumstances could result in the emergence of a cynical and vulnerable generation who are potential victims of extreme ideas.

2.4 Opportunities

In the multi-cultural context of European society, schools have an important role to play in helping young people to become informed, active and responsible citizens of a culturally plural Europe and a global village. The growth of democracy, tolerance and social change in the 'New Europe' will require both understanding of the past and sensitivity to ways of handling conflict in the future. History teaching has a potential contribution to make to the development of citizens who are open-minded, aware of diversity, willing to accept difference and to respect peoples of other cultures, religions and languages. This type of teaching implies an appreciation of a shared civilisation, the interdependence of nations and the contributions made by various civilisations and cultures within the global village.

2.5 The continuing importance of national history

We have seen how, in the past, history teaching was used to foster and uphold national identity, often having the effect of creating national stereotypes and negative images and prejudices. It would be reassuring to think that this kind of history teaching is itself now 'history'. But national curricula exist in many countries which dictate the focus of teaching and an emphasis on national history continues to be the prevalent and dominating perspective. It seems, therefore, that history continues to be viewed as a fundamental support for community and personal identity and to be subject to manipulation, particularly in circumstances where emerging identities are uncertain or are the focus of continuing conflict. To ask people to step back and examine their history critically is to ask a great deal.

2.6 Approaches to national history

But history teachers can create opportunities to make pupils aware that their nation, new or old, is the product of a variety of influences, past and present, including the influence of colonisation, migration and religion and of ethnic and regional minorities. Teaching an 'inclusive' national history, which recognises and respects the rights and legitimacy of all its constituent members, will make students more aware of their pluralistic origins and identity and the breadth of the heritage which forms part of their nation or state. Hopefully, this will allow for a more critical attitude towards one's own past and present.

2.7 The importance of regional history

History teachers can also emphasise that, for some, the nation is not the only basis for identity and does not necessarily have a higher dignity than other identities such as culture, ethnicity, dialect, custom or region. It is as important to stress what regional neighbours have in common, as well as what divides them, and how they have been interdependent in terms of trade, migration, inter-marriage, cultural exchange and legacy, as well as invasion and conflict, where it has existed.

2.8 The importance of European and world contexts

Despite distance and diversity, multi-cultural nations have evolved on the basis of trade, aid and empire, and global identities have been formed based on standards of civilisation such as democracy and human rights. History teachers need to draw attention to 'the bigger picture', the influence of the European and, where appropriate, world context and the positive mutual influences between different countries, religions and ideas.

2.9 The potential for human rights education

Where possible, young people should be made aware of some of the key figures, movements and events in the historical and continuing struggle for democracy, human rights and tolerance. The Council of Europe's publication 'The Challenge of Human Rights Education' suggests the following:

Recommendations concerning the historical dimension of human rights education often identify three distinct approaches (eg Lister, 1984). These are the analysis of key documents; the study of examples of the violation of rights in modern times; and the narrative of individual and group campaigns to entrench and extend human rights. Documents commonly cited as being of seminal importance include Magna Carta, the American Bill of Rights, the French Declaration of 1789, the UN Declaration and subsequent Covenants and the European Convention. Favourite historical topics often reflect the contrast between the principles of human rights and racial discrimination and persecution: slavery, Nazism and apartheid feature prominently in syllabuses. Political oppression in Latin America and the Soviet Union is also sometimes included. Some of these topics readily suggest personalities for fruitful study: Voltaire and religious intolerance, Lincoln and US slavery, Mandela and resistance to apartheid, for example .... In our enthusiasm to teach about the beneficence of the human rights idea we must not distort the main lesson that oppression and degradation have been the lot of the bulk of humanity for most of its so-called civilised existence.

2.10 Views about history teaching for consideration

Source A

History is a very powerful means to either bond or to separate people, to either generate friends or to create enemies, to either promote social cohesion or to plant social disruption .... Inter-ethnic conflicts are often fed by historical accounts emphasising longstanding differences among the various groups .... Usually it is that segment of society which constitutes the ethnic, linguistic or religious majority who has the power and the means to write national history .... Depicting minorities as the 'others' that are allegedly culturally and historically aliens often helps people constituting the majority to see themselves as members of one community, and it helps them to feel at home .... Belonging and the feeling of being at home are often created by identifying groups that supposedly should not belong and should not feel at home in the country - immigrants and traditional minorities.

Dr Gita Steiner-Khamsi, 'History, democratic values and tolerance in Europe: the experience of countries in democratic transition', Council of Europe Symposium, Sofia, October 1994.

Source B

The national history of course will play an important role within the curricula and the textbook and there is neither a need for denying the legitimacy of the nation and the national state. Textbooks do not have to refrain from drawing positive images of collective identity. But what we need is an integrative concept of plural identities .... The nation and the nation state certainly is the dominant form of collective identity in modern times, but it is neither the only one nor does it have a higher dignity. The nation itself is constructed by a variety of identities .... and should be 'a mirror of all layers'.

Wolfgang Höpken: 'History, democratic values and tolerance in Europe: the experience of countries in democratic transition', Council of Europe Symposium, Sofia, October 1994.

Source C

The role to be played by history in the national core curricula is an outstanding issue in the current situation of Europe. Both in Western, Central and Eastern European countries, the development of a European dimension is a major challenge for educational systems at present.

History in the Core Curriculum 12 - 16: Report of the Workshop organised by the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE), Madrid, November 1992.

Source D

Call for the abandonment of national and military history and its replacement by an emphasis on economic, cultural and social history. History should be taught so that it shows the unfolding of a spirit of world community, leading to a world state and resulting in people identifying themselves not as national citizens but as members of the human species.

2.11 Issues for reflection and discussion with colleagues

- To what extent do you agree with the assessment of the challenges and opportunities presented within the New Europe?
- What is the nature of the potential negative influences expressed in Source A?
- How serious a threat to the ideals of the 'New Europe' do you think they pose?
- What is the nature and extent, if any, of the negative influences in your area?
- To what extent do you agree with the need for particular caution in the approach to national history as expressed in Sources A and B and why?
- Consider your own syllabus or national curriculum against the suggestions made in this section.
  - How does your selection of content and approach compare with the suggestions made here?
  - Does your history teaching reflect a variety of different and even opposing perspectives on historical events?
  - Do the aims and objectives of your national history curriculum recognise:
    - the role of history in promoting democratic values and tolerance?
    - the importance of reinforcing mutual understanding and confidence between minorities and majorities, between the peoples of Europe, and between the peoples of Europe and those of other continents?
    - that schools are not the only influence on young people. To what extent do you consider the challenges posed to history teachers is fair and what can they be reasonably expected to do?

3. THE WIDER POTENTIAL OF HISTORY TEACHING

Focus

What views do history teachers hold about the function and potential of history? How can history teaching contribute to the development of values, critical thinking, moral reasoning, and conflict resolution skills?

To what extent do history teachers have a social responsibility to address issues of prejudice in their own societies?

3.1 Differing views on the role of history teaching

I would suggest there are three distinguishable views on the role of history teaching within the teaching profession:

- those who view education in general, and history teaching in particular, uncritically, seeing it purely in terms of the transmission of a body of knowledge. This type of teaching can involve the unquestioning transmission of uncritical versions of national history;

- those who view school subjects, among them history, as principally academic pursuits, educating children to pass examinations. This type of teaching may involve the development of subject skills for the purposes of deepening historical knowledge and understanding and ensuring examination success but with no wider social purposes;

- those who see the potential of education, and history teaching in particular, as a vehicle for values education and the development of critical thinking, moral reasoning and inter-cultural education. This type of teaching involves the conscious development of skills in historical analysis as valuable and relevant, not just in terms of an academic or leisure interest, but as the potential basis for forming personal attitude and values; for making reasoned judgments in relation to controversial issues; for considering the ethical and moral dimensions of actions which affect the dignity and rights of others; and, thereby, for promoting tolerance and democratic values.

3.2 The potential for the development of values

The process methodology of history encourages a multi-perspective approach to any issue and enshrines what might be described as moral principles: that judgment should be based on evidence; that there are always a range of points of view to be taken into consideration; and that views should be justified by reference to rational evidence and empathy for other

perspectives.

3.3 The capacity to develop critical thinking and media education

The fundamental premise of the subject is that information should not be taken at face value but should be examined critically with a view to analysing its purpose and message. These skills have much in common with, and are contributory to, media education which involves critical analysis of the aims or purposes of the media, the messages it seeks to convey, the audience it seeks to influence, the genre and constructions it uses, the images, representations and language it employs. All of these skills are intrinsic to the analysis of historical evidence and are referred to in more detail in Section 4.

3.4 The potential to encourage moral reasoning[2]

Moral reasons and principles .... become available to us, or manifest themselves as relevant through feeling and emotion. If we did not experience feelings of horror and disgust at gratuitous cruelty we would not know - except in an 'empty' (morally unmotivating) way that, for example, cruelty was morally wrong, apart from being merely unpleasant to those who are its victims.

F. Dunlop, 'The place of feeling in the moral life'

History provides many opportunities to consider disturbing or controversial issues, for example, how aggression, assertive ethnicity and corroded sensitivity takes hold and spreads, especially in situations which appear to defy reality, such as the Holocaust. There is the potential to dismiss such deeds as inexplicable and to view the darker aspects of human behaviour as unlikely to be repeated. Yet, if young people are to learn anything from history, in particular how not to repeat its most horrific episodes, it is important to try to grapple with the nature of the circumstances and feelings which create such phenomena and to offer opportunities for pupils to engage with some of the moral issues such as:

- what moved individuals to act as they did?

- why did many so calmly comply with their fate and why did others resist?

- what were the motives of the perpetrators, (obsession, compliance, conformity, obedience or fear)?

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2 Gorsky Jonathan, Teaching the Holocaust, published by The Council for Christians and Jews, London, 1994.

- who did not stand by, and how did they differ from their fellow human beings (the rescuers who sheltered people they did not know, the dissenters who refused to be complicit and who often shared the fate of the persecuted)?

- what moral dilemmas did they face?

- how would you have responded in the circumstances?

- could such events happen again?

- what sort of education and action is required to prevent their re-occurrence?

3.5 The potential to develop conflict resolution skills[3]

The methodology of history is also considered to have potential for developing mediating skills, similar to those required for non-violent conflict resolution. The processes described below, which are linked with successful conflict resolution, can be used in their own right by history teachers to develop a deeper understanding of historical issues, (particularly when the subject of the conflict is either directly experienced by the participants or close enough to their real-life situation for them to have some understanding of what it feels like to be directly involved). This three stage process is transferable to personal or community conflict situations, and it involves considerations relevant to the analysis of any historical situation, such as:

1. Analysis and critical thinking:

   Asking the questions, 'What happened? 'What is the problem?' This entails approaching problems and evaluating situations with an open mind, analysing the roots of conflict, being willing to change one's opinions in the face of new evidence and recognising bias, propaganda.

   In terms of furthering skills for conflict resolution, it is important that the facts are stated in such a way that everyone can agree with the definition of the problem and that feelings and value judgments are separated from facts. Parties to the conflict should consider the question, 'Do you think it possible that you may be mistaken?'.

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3 Leimdorfer Tom, 'Teaching creative responses to conflict', published in "New Era in Education", August 1990.

2. Empathy: Asking the questions, 'How do you, and others, feel about it?'. This entails the sensitive consideration of the viewpoints of other people, particularly those of the opposite sex, other races and cultures, those whose experience and situation differ from ours. In terms of furthering conflict resolution skills, pupils should be encouraged to respond with statements which contain 'I messages' which allow for admissions of feelings rather than making accusations ('I feel upset because ....', rather than 'you/he/she/they etc).

3. Commitment to justice and imaginative and creative thinking: Asking the questions, 'What would you (or they) ideally like to happen? What could you (or they) actually do?'.

   This involves developing awareness and respect for genuinely democratic principles, looking at new approaches and a variety of perspectives, envisioning positive outcomes and recognising that any form of positive or negative discrimination must always be justified with carefully argued relevant reasons.

   Once everyone's feelings and needs are known, participants can be encouraged to seek practical action steps, no matter how small, to dispel mistrust and bring about reconciliation.

3.6 The potential to address contemporary controversial issues

One of history's prime claims to relevance is assisting young people to understand the present in the light of the past. History offers the opportunity to contribute to an understanding of controversial aspects of one's own society. But it may be easier to talk about apartheid in South Africa or historical forms of fascism than about the situation of immigrant workers or gypsies in one's own country, or the revival of neo-fascism or religious and ethnic conflict which gives rise to sectarian murder or ethnic cleansing. The question of whether or not to contribute in a balanced way to increasing tolerance within contemporary society may be an ethical and moral, as well as a professional, question for history teachers.

3.7 The challenge of teaching history in a divided society

Versions of history in a divided society are caught up with peoples' struggle for identity, self esteem and, in some cases, survival, engaging emotions and passions, as well as intellect. Teaching such issues in divided societies can present heartfelt personal and emotional dilemmas. The challenge can become even more daunting the closer one gets to examining

the recent past, particularly if hostilities are on-going and interpretations of history are a living reality, confronted daily. In such circumstances of conflict, history continues to be viewed as a fundamental support for community and personal identity.

3.8 Teacher approaches to handling controversial issues

History teachers may be in difficult and vulnerable situations when they ask their students to step back and examine their history critically. They can run the risk of criticism from parents, and possibly from their own school authorities because they may be engaged in challenging folklore interpretations or calling into question views and standpoints cherished by large sectors of society. In the view of John Tosh, 'The historian has a significant negative function in undermining myths which simplify or distort popular interpretations of the past. In this role he has been likened to the 'eye-surgeon, specialising in removing cataracts'. (John Tosh, The Pursuit of History).

In any dispute in society about the truth of a matter, the teacher is best advised to teach about the dispute itself and the range of different perspectives on it. This implies valuing and protecting a divergence of opinion, rather than seeking consensus. It also implies that the teacher examines critically his or her own view of the situation and refrains from intentionally, or unintentionally giving legitimation to one particular view.

The safest approach is the constant recourse to the methodology of history, providing a range of evidence from different perspectives and attempting at all times to approach issues with balance and objectivity, remaining alert to the dangers of selectivity; opening eyes to the existence of other viewpoints which may be uncomfortable and with which many may not actually agree, but which need to be acknowledged nonetheless.

Steeping children from a young age in the methodology of history, which constantly has recourse to a range of points of view and which asks people to consider situations from other perspectives, may help young people to face some very difficult issues. It may:

- challenge stereotypical thinking and prejudice with evidence;

- develop positive attitudes and values which include tolerance, solidarity and respect for diversity;

- contribute to greater mutual understanding between communities in conflict in the hope that different views can be acknowledged.

3.9 Issues for reflection and discussion with colleagues

- List and discuss some of the challenges and dilemmas you face in relation to contemporary history in your own area.
- To what extent do you consider dealing with such issues to be the duty of the history teacher?
- How do you feel teachers need to be supported in approaching history teaching in this way?

Part B

The practicalities of history teaching

The Council of Europe's experts have argued that all pupils should study history, at every level of their education, because it has a value that cannot be provided by other subjects. History, they claim, 'is a unique discipline concerned with a special kind of training of the mind and imagination'.

Maitland Stobart, Council of Europe Colloquy on "The learning of history in Europe", Paris, 5 December 1994.

4. INTRODUCING PUPILS TO HISTORICAL SKILLS AND CONCEPTS

Focus

What skills and concepts does history help to develop?

4.1 Realistic contexts

School pupils are rarely academic historians in the making. As often as not, they require motivation to study, they find many of the concepts of history difficult and the grasp of complex situations demanding. They may often question the relevance of a subject which deals with the past. And who can blame them?

Invariably young people need to enjoy what they are doing and to understand why, as well as what, they are learning. It is helpful if they can see the relevance of the skills they are acquiring and if they can have an appreciation of the wider significance of the issues or periods they are studying. The level of difficulty of the history that they are addressing needs to be tailored to their level of ability and maturity. Unless their pupils are studying history at a high level, teachers need to focus only on the main issues of significance, rather than the full chronology and detail of events for its own sake. Above all, pupils need to be involved in a process of enquiry which interests and challenges them.

4.2 The distinctive methodology of history

A major part of the study of history in schools is concerned with the ways in which pupils become involved in history as a process of investigation. While acknowledging that school history is not about training professional historians, it is important that pupils should gain some understanding of what history is and what historians do. The distinctive methodology of history involves:

- a growing awareness of the range of historical evidence;

- developing increasing skill in handling evidence in order to construct a balanced and accurate picture of the past;

- understanding, at increasing levels of sophistication, the key concepts associated with history such as chronology, cause and consequence, change, continuity, progression, regression, sense of period and perspectives.

4.3 Familiarity with historical evidence

In order to grasp the fundamental methodology of the subject, opportunities need to be provided from a very young age for pupils to examine all kinds of evidence, to ask relevant questions of it, and to come to conclusions about it at levels appropriate to their age and ability. As pupils grow older, they should become increasingly familiar with the view that history is constructed from evidence and that evidence can be, and has been, interpreted in different ways and that there usually exists a range of perspectives on any issue which are coloured by peoples' standpoints and experiences. Examining increasingly complex sources of evidence should form part of the context of progressive historical study.

4.4 Types of sources

Studying history involves the activity of enquiring into the past using a range of sources, both primary and secondary in nature. The sources of history may be described as mere dust and dry bones until teachers and pupils make them come alive. It is, perhaps, useful for pupils to begin to see the raw material of history as comprising a haphazard heap of material which has survived from the past and which historians can use as evidence. The 'heap' consists of both primary and 'secondary' sources. If the core of the heap is primary source material (such as documents written at the time, artefacts, buildings, photographs and works of art which have survived from the past), the outer layers might be described as a kind of topsoil of secondary material (such as books written long after the events which they describe).

Historical evidence can include anything which provides information or clues about the past, for example, artefacts, oral accounts, visual materials, written and printed materials, evidence in the local environment. Pupils should become increasingly aware:

- of the variety of historical evidence, including artefacts, buildings, drawings, pictures and film, as well as written materials;

- that evidence about the past increases in both volume and variety as we approach more recent times;

- that evidence is incomplete and its survival is often a matter of chance;

- that evidence may be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the degree of information available and the standpoint of the historian interpreting it.

4.5 Visual evidence

Visual evidence has the power to make history come alive. It may take the form of illustrations, drawings, pictures, maps, posters, photographs or film, or even a more concrete form such as artefacts, archaeological sites, buildings or ruins. As with written evidence, pupils can be trained to 'read' visual evidence for clues about the past, discussing its nature and purpose and assessing its historical worth.

4.6 Oral evidence

Oral history, the spoken or recorded memories of older people, is particularly valuable in bringing pupils into close touch with the history of the recent past. Pupils can be taught to explore oral evidence in an interactive way by interviewing, listening carefully and asking further questions in order to extract relevant information.

4.7 Written evidence

Written evidence may take the form of sources such as books, census returns, diaries, letters, newspapers, memoirs, parliamentary papers, school registers, transcripts of speeches, or wills. Pupils should become familiar, in an interactive way, with using a wide variety of written evidence:

- extracting as much information as possible from it;

- asking increasingly complex questions of it; and evaluating its usefulness and reliability.

Written evidence requires careful selection and skilful management in the classroom. It may be necessary to edit and adapt material to make it accessible and useful to pupils of different ages and abilities, while ensuring that the meaning and balance are not altered.

4.8 Skill in using evidence

Pupils should appreciate that historians, like themselves, have to select from the mass of evidence which is available and that:

- there may be difficulties in interpreting the evidence;

- some elements of bias may creep in when selecting the evidence to be examined;

- the purposes and prejudices of writers of primary and secondary sources must be considered.

Learning to ask the following questions of evidence will help pupils to form a judgment of its usefulness and reliability:

· Who? Who made or wrote it? What position did he/she hold?

· What? What does it tell us? What does it not tell us?

· When? When was it written? What is the historical context? What were the period features or ideas which may have influenced it?

· Where? Where did the event take place or where does it relate to?

· Why? Why was it made or written? Was there any specific purpose?

Can the purpose be discovered through:

- finding out whom the intended audience was;
- examining the use and tone of the language;
- reading between the lines?

· How? How was it constructed or put together?

How does it compare with other available sources?

- Does it seem balanced or exaggerated, biased or distorted?
- Does it seem accurate or are there any detectable gaps?
- Are the gaps explicable or deliberate?

4.9 The potential for textbook analysis by pupils

As they grow older and develop their critical faculties, pupils should be encouraged to read textbooks critically and question them in the same way they might examine other sources of information. Pupils will enjoy evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of their own

textbooks against criteria such as:

- does the book provide a range of sources to allow pupils to develop skills in interrogating evidence?
- does the selection of sources represent a range of viewpoints?

- do the issues addressed offer opportunities for real investigation and discussion?

4.10 The value of local history

The visible remains of the past around us are as important a resource for pupils' understanding of history as written documents. The merit of a local study is that it serves to locate history in the real, as opposed to the written, world so that pupils come to realise that numerous examples of previous civilisations and ways of life exist within their own area, as well as in other locations. Where possible, local studies should be set in the context of national, European and world history.

Opportunities to work 'in the field', including work carried out at indoor and outdoor museums, will help equip pupils with the knowledge, skills and techniques to identify remains of the past, to study and interpret them and to place them in their wider historical context. Pupils should have opportunities to become directly involved in firsthand investigation in order to increase their awareness, at a simple level, of the way in which an historian might investigate a topic: engaging in observing, mapping, noting, sketching, measuring, interviewing, photographing, recording and dramatic reconstruction (including dressing up, cooking and role-playing), as well as using maps, photographs, statistics, oral and written evidence. The stimulus of an actual location can also serve to foster in pupils an interest in the exploration and preservation of the historical environment which can become a rewarding leisure pursuit outside school and in adult life.

4.11 Chronology

A grasp of the sequence of events in time is fundamental to an understanding of history. Although there is no requirement to approach the study of history in a strictly chronological way, it is important, nevertheless, that all historical study is set in the context of a chronological framework. Each period studied should be presented as just one aspect in a developing story of continuity and change through time. Time-lines are an important tool for building up such understanding.

4.12 Causation

History is concerned with explaining change, and this involves asking questions about why and when things happened and identifying the factors which affected the situation and

caused, prevented or delayed change. Developing an appreciation of the complexity of factors which influence causation and change and their inter-relationship, for example, short and long-term factors, the role of individuals, the role of chance, religion, technology or warfare, can be integrated into every historical study.

4.13 Change and continuity

There should be frequent discussion about change in history, with repeated reference to the chronological framework. Pupils should become aware:

- of how and why some features from the past have survived;
- of the factors which cause, prevent or delay change and that there are short and long-term causes and consequences of change;
- that there are variations in the pattern and rate of change because developments have occurred at different speeds in different places;
- of some of the processes through which change takes place;
- that the passage of time does not always lead to progress and sometimes leads to regression.

Developing these skills will require pupils to identify and discuss a wide range of factors affecting change, cause and consequence.

4.14 Sense of period, viewpoints, motivation and empathy

History is primarily about the experiences of people in time and place. 'The main task of the historian is to find out why people acted as they did by stepping into their shoes, by seeing the world through their eyes and, as far as possible, judging it by their standards.' (John Tosh, The pursuit of history).

An understanding of the characteristic beliefs, values and attitudes of people at any given time will help pupils to appreciate that there may be a range of contemporary viewpoints in any situation and that individuals acted within different parameters and value systems. Focusing on an individual or group in detail can assist pupils in identifying possible motives in an historical situation, bearing in mind that period beliefs, attitudes and experiences may influence the way in which individuals think and act. Taken together, these aspects create a sense of period and a capacity to empathise with people in another place and time, even though pupils may disagree with the decisions and actions they took.

4.15 Issues for reflection and discussion with colleagues

- How frequently do you use historical sources as part of your teaching?
- To what extent do the texts you use allow for the development of historical skills and concepts?
- How balanced are your school texts in providing a range of perspectives?
- In what ways might you extend pupils' critical skills
  - with the materials you have?
  - with the provision of additional materials?

A matrix outlining progression in the historical skills and concepts which pupils may develop over time is included in Appendix 1.

5. CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

Focus

What techniques can enhance the quality of teaching and learning?

What does effective group work, whole class work and active learning involve?

5.1 Whole-class strategies

To ensure maximum participation in a whole class situation, consideration should be given not only to the type of information which is being conveyed but also to the type of questions asked.

The 'good story well told' appeals to all age groups and ability levels and, used effectively in whole-class situations, promotes listening skills and can give rise to talking, discussion and questioning. Listening requires a high level of concentration by pupils, so care should be taken to choose the most interesting aspect of a topic which will hold pupils' attention for the required period of time. Relevant visual illustrations would be helpful, as would a dramatic presentational style.

Pupils need to be reminded, however, that this is one version of the story. Other contradictory versions can be used to highlight this point, eg the story of Little Red Riding Hood told from the perspective of the wolf. This technique can help even very young children grasp the concept that a range of points of view can exist about any issue. Pupils might be encouraged to write and tell their own versions of fairy tales and historical stories from different perspectives to illustrate this point further. Another extension of this idea is to develop newspaper front page headlines, stories and editorials from rival, or party political, standpoints and to analyse these for use of language, selectivity, propaganda, bias and omission.

5.2 Whole class questioning

In order to test pupils' ability to evaluate and analyse evidence, to come to terms with cause and consequence or to become aware of the perspectives of people in the past, carefully chosen evidence and carefully designed questions will be required, possibly written up for pupils to see.

Posing questions in advance, for every pupil to work on for a specified time, and then taking a range of possible answers from the class will involve all pupils in the work.

Challenging questions, requiring pupils to state some of the causes or consequences of an event or how people might have felt about it at the time and with hindsight, can lead to a deeper understanding of the event and should stimulate discussion within the class.

5.3 Whole class discussion

As in the previous example, pupils are only likely to be able to engage in discussion if they have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter, have had sufficient time to analyse and come to terms with the evidence related to it and are sufficiently stimulated by the issues involved. In attempting whole class discussion methods in history, careful consideration should be given to prior preparation.

5.4 Effective group work

Group work is the organisation of classroom activities to facilitate the involvement of all pupils at a level and pace appropriate to their abilities. The tasks set and the organisation of the groups need to involve all pupils in realistic and stimulating work. The layout of desks in the classroom may need to be altered to facilitate this.

No pupil should be allowed to dominate a group. For this reason, groups should be flexible, re-forming for different tasks, with pupils being encouraged to accept varied roles within the group, such as leader, scribe, reporter and observer. Groups should be encouraged to evaluate how well they worked together in carrying out a task and whether each member of the group was given opportunities to participate effectively. The teacher must take on the role of an unobtrusive facilitator and enabler of group investigation, rather than the main provider of information.

5.5 Group work skills

Through effective group work, pupils should learn to:

- take responsibility for the care of materials and equipment;

- take responsibility for their own learning, developing increased self-reliance;

- work co-operatively and listen to one another, developing a maturing awareness that everyone has a contribution to make, and that all contributions should be valued and respected;

- take on different roles and responsibilities in groups, for example as leader, reporter,

scribe and observer.

5.6 Role of the teacher facilitating group work

Teachers should bear in mind that:

- the tasks set and the organisational structure of groups allow for the maximum amount of interaction;

- appropriate stimulus materials, pitched at the right level, may be needed including, where possible, artefacts, visual evidence and written documents;

- clear guidance, in appropriate language, should be given to enable all pupils to participate effectively;

- extension activities should be available for any group which completes its task early.

5.7 Group composition and formation

Group sizes will depend on the number in the class, the availability of resources and the nature of the task to be carried out. Ideally, each group should not be made up of more than six pupils in order to ensure that all have opportunities to participate. Groups may be formed on the basis of age, friendship, ability, interest in the topic or other appropriate criteria. If groups are not pre-selected for any of the reasons set out above, teachers can use various activities, appropriate to the work to be undertaken, to form groups on a random basis. For example, evidence related to a topic can be distributed to pupils as they come into the classroom, and they can then be asked to find their appropriate group by asking relevant questions of each other about categories of evidence. This type of warm-up activity helps to create an appropriate atmosphere and reconciles pupils to working co-operatively with whatever group they find themselves in.

5.8 Group work activities

After an initial introduction by the teacher, pupils can be asked to work in small groups completing similar tasks. Findings may then be shared through reporting back to the whole class. Conversely, the teacher can set up various complementary activities based on a particular theme or topic. This method allows pupils to look at an aspect of a topic in more detail and then to take responsibility for presenting their findings to others. Each group is allocated one aspect to work on and then, after the initial investigation is completed, one or two pupils from each group move to make new composite groups, reporting their previous findings to their new colleagues. In this way, every pupil gains an overview of the topic. The teacher might ask one group to report to the class as a whole to check that accurate

coverage of the entire topic has taken place. Pupils have opportunities to build up confidence by working with other pupils in the first group and coming to a consensus on their task. This confidence is then exploited and communication skills further developed in the second group, when each pupil is solely responsible for the explanation of their original group's allocated aspect of the topic.

5.9 Active learning strategies

The term 'active learning' describes group activities which are highly structured and which use a particular technique to focus pupil activity, enhance learning, add enjoyment and variety for pupils, and produce a specific learning outcome within a given time period.

The first two activities described here are appropriate for younger pupils, aged 4-7, although the techniques can be adapted for use with older pupils. The rest of the activities described can be adapted to suit any age-group from about eight years of age upwards. Obviously, teachers need to ensure that the historical focus of the activity and the level of difficulty of any stimulus material used is appropriate for the age-group.

5.9.1 The time box

This is a useful medium for introducing pupils to the concept of time. Genuine objects, from a common period, gathered together from around the house, including the attic or the cellar, and placed together in a box or bag, help to create the atmosphere of another period. Pupils can then investigate the contents, using their senses of sight, smell and touch, and deduce that these objects are from a period 'long ago'. This can lead into the identification of objects that are old and new, and encourage them to bring objects from home from the period of the time box, to form the basis for a history corner in the classroom. By the end of Key Stage 1 (ages 5-7), they should be able to appreciate some of the recent advances in technology, for example when they compare older domestic appliances, such as an iron (c 1900), or a camera from the 1960s with more recent examples.

5.9.2 Sequencing

To develop in infant pupils a sense of chronology and change over a period of time, teachers need to extend and develop the numerous sequencing tasks that they already undertake. The very act of putting the days of the week, the months and seasons of the year into order means that teachers are already introducing children to 'time' words and 'time' sequences.

Sequencing exercises that gradually develop a sense of time should be introduced. They might start with the youngest children (non-readers) being given three or more

pictures to place in order with clothes pegs on a line. The pictures might be of objects or people; ideally of the same person over a period of, for example, 25 years. A sequence of each child's day might be made and then of the child's life over a few weeks. It might be possible at Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) to refer back to this daily diary when studying the reliability of sources, for example the issue of diaries as a 'true' reflection of happenings in the past. This idea could then be extended so that each child creates his/her own time-line and further extends it to cover an adult's life - whether teacher or parent. Children may then be able to progress to a century time-line and may be able to write, draw or use a computer to produce a time-line as illustrated in the example below.

5.9.3 Clarification by brainstorming, selecting and ranking

This is a strategy for producing a wide range of ideas on a topic in a very short space of time and for organising these into a clear line of argument. Each group is given a topic to focus upon. For approximately five minutes, each then makes a list, without discussion, of all of the relevant points which occur to its members. The teacher takes feedback from each group in turn until all of the points have been recorded on the blackboard, an overhead projector transparency or flipchart. Each group is then asked to select the most important points from the list and to write these individually on blank cards. They then have to put them in order which must be arrived at through full agreement in the group. This part of the process facilitates discussion and involves listening, interpretation, clarification, justification and compromise. The group should then draw together a composite statement based on the agreed rank order of points. The statement should be shared with another group or with the class and positive feedback given.

5.9.4 Ranking

This is a truncated version of the previous activity and involves the rank ordering of stimulus material provided by the teacher, for example, short statements, headlines, photographs, advertisements. Working in pairs or small groups, pupils are asked to rank the given items in order of importance and to justify their selection.

5.9.5 Role-play

Role-play is a particularly appropriate strategy for the development of an understanding of perspectives of people in the past. A detailed knowledge of the period could be built up gradually through the use of appropriate resources. Groups of pupils could then be asked to consider the available evidence for the perspective of one group or individual living at the time. The perspective should be arrived at on the basis of detailed discussion within the group, based on evidence which provides

sufficient detail on cause, consequence and motivation. Pupils can help each other to justify possible views, based on the available evidence, so that the role-play is based on real, as opposed to imaginary, circumstances and factors which may have influenced people's decisions. The original groups should then re-form into composite groups representing all perspectives and share their viewpoints. Follow-up discussion, either in or out of the roles, should seek to provide a clear overview for the whole class.

5.9.6 Standpoint taking

This activity is a variation on role-play and gives pupils opportunities to put forward points of view with which they may, or may not, agree. It helps them to clarify their own ideas and to understand and appreciate those of others. The same degree of prior research and examination of evidence and viewpoints should be carried out as in the preparation for role-play. Two concentric circles of an equal number of chairs are required, set facing each other. Those pupils in the outside circle take one viewpoint and those in the inner circle take the opposite. The aim is that each pupil, within two or three minutes, should persuade the other of the validity of his/her viewpoint. Each pupil should then be asked to argue the viewpoint from the opposite perspective, so as to appreciate the arguments advanced by his/her opponent.

5.9.7 Socio-economic line-ups

This activity can help to clarify and reinforce understanding of the range of perspectives which can exist within a society at any period. Pupils, in groups, research, or are provided with, information on a particular individual, representative of one socio-economic stratum within the society of the time. This information should contain insights into topics such as the house he/she lived in, the work he/she did, the type of education he/she might have had and what happened to the character at certain periods. Having grasped all the relevant information about the character, composite groups, representative of the range of characters, should then be asked to line up in rank order according to criteria which the teacher will indicate. Pupils in the new groups must discuss and negotiate with each other to decide their position in the line-up. Each time the criterion is changed, the same procedure of discussing and negotiating a rank order occurs and the pupils should physically change places to indicate the new rank order.

Some of the following criteria might be used for line-ups:

- economic wealth (for example, the richest character at the top of the line, the poorest at the bottom, the others negotiating a place between these two extremes according to their economic circumstances);

- education (for example, the best educated at the top of the line, the least educated at the bottom);

- living standards (for example, the character with the best house type at the top of the line, the one with the worst house type at the bottom of the line);

- views about an issue (for example, the character with the most extreme views at the top of the line, the character with the least extreme views at the bottom, with varying degrees of opinions represented in rank order in the middle).

The kind of line-up exercise, in which pupils physically represent strata or views within society, allows them to understand perspectives, to explain and negotiate their positions and to realise that characters or groups within society do not always remain static, eg the socio-economic experiences of domestic servants, factory workers and factory owners, in relation to homes, education, work or progress.

5.9.8 Debating or tribunals

The activity involves a more formal presentation of arguments for, or against, a particular issue. All pupils should be involved in the preparation of resources for the debating teams to consider. All pupils should take part as voters, or as members of a jury.

5.9.9 Teaching other pupils/learning from them

One of the most effective ways of learning something is having to teach it to others. Pairs or groups can be asked to present information, or teach some particular skill, to other pairs or groups. Apart from clarifying and understanding for themselves what they have to teach, pupils are required to decide upon the most effective way of presenting the information or demonstrating the skill to be taught. Diagrams and visual aids should be encouraged, and the pupils could instruct their audience to carry out some active learning strategies appropriate to the content that is to be taught and learned.

5.9.10 Verbal tennis

As a warm-up exercise or a revision exercise leading into the main learning activity, the class is divided into pairs. A topic is suggested, and the purpose of the exercise is to make as many relevant references to the topic within the time suggested, one pupil making one point, followed as quickly as possible by their partner making a further

point. This process is continued for one or two minutes.

No point may be repeated, and responses should be made quickly. This technique can be used, for example, to revise what pupils remember about a period by using verbal tennis in response to teacher prompts, such as 'List the features of ....' or 'List the work done in ....', 'List the people associated with ....', 'List the reasons for ....' or 'List the countries involved in..'.

5.9.11 Famous people

Pupils might be asked to list, in rank order, three people from the period studied whom they would like to meet and then, if they had the opportunity, what questions they might ask of them. In pairs, they could discuss their chosen characters and questions. It would be the partner's task to guess the rank order in which the three characters were placed. The teacher could then ask for feedback on the most interesting characters and questions. This could lead to a very full discussion.

5.10 Issues for reflection and discussion with colleagues

- What are some of the difficulties you face in using group work and active learning strategies?
- Consider how some of the active-learning strategies described might be applied to specific topics which you teach.
- What do you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of group work and active learning?
- Debate the view that:
  - pupils enjoy and learn more from being actively involved in group work and active learning;
  - teachers think it takes up too much time and preparation.

6. CHOOSING OR DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE RESOURCES

Focus

What kind of pupil textbooks and resources are required to develop good practice in teaching and learning history in schools?

6.1 Recommendations regarding the production of history textbooks[4]

In some areas, teachers and pupils will have access to a range of good materials, but, in other areas, they may be hard pressed to find any. In situations where resources are scarce, it is all the more important that efforts to create them take account of good practice in history teaching. The following recommendations are derived from collaborative discussions between authors, publishers and curriculum developers in the British Isles:

- There should be closer collaboration between writers and publishers and those involved in historical research so as to take account of more recent scholarship.

- Writers of texts need to consider their own potential bias and make every attempt to produce materials for pupils which:

  - are pitched at the right level, depending on age and ability;

  - are accurate and scholarly (taking account of recent knowledge);

  - are objective in offering a range of points of view and perspectives on the issues addressed;

  - contain enough information to understand the key issues of the period and, where appropriate, some of the problems in establishing what happened;

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4 "The impact of the National Curriculum on the production of history textbooks and other resources", a discussion paper published by the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority, London, 1994

- offer a range of approaches which might be considered to allow pupils to focus on some topics in depth and others in more general outline (the strategy of focusing on a key issue or question can be helpful);

- contain a range of sources appropriate to the age and ability of pupils to allow them to develop investigative skills;

- contain sufficient information on the provenance of the sources, if pupils are asked to evaluate sources. (In some cases, longer extracts would enable pupils to use sources in a variety of ways. The use of cartoons and imaginary dialogue needs careful consideration since, in some cases, they can encourage pupils to think anachronistically);

- involve activities which are appropriately challenging and varied in their approach;

- contain sufficient historical information, supported where appropriate with supplementary aids which encourage further study.

· Authors need to provide more guidance for teachers about ways in which materials can be differentiated for classes containing pupils with a range of abilities.

· Pupils should be encouraged to read textbooks critically and question them in the same way they might examine other sources of information.

· Where pupils are engaged in finding out about the past, they need access to a range of books rather than being dependent on one text.

· Teachers need to consider how they use textbooks in the classroom and whether all pupils are being sufficiently challenged by the materials and activities with which they are presented.

7. SUMMARY:

TYING THE PHILOSOPHY AND THE PRACTICALITIES TOGETHER

Focus

Why do we claim the right to give young people an education that includes history?

What kind of outcomes might be expected from the philosophy and practice of a skills-based approach to history teaching and learning?

This Handbook has considered how history teaching can contribute to the promotion of democratic values and tolerance. In doing so, it has reflected on the evolving debate about the nature and function of history teaching, and it has come down firmly on the side of a "process" or skills-based approach to history teaching which offers potential for the development of values, human rights education, critical thinking and moral reasoning.

It attempts to explain the distinctive methodology of the subject and argues that pupils should become increasingly familiar with the nature, range, selectivity and limitations of evidence and of the various viewpoints of historians in order to arrive at informed, and balanced conclusions. It suggests a range of methodologies to stimulate pupils' interest and maximise their involvement through whole-class strategies, questioning and discussion and active group work such as role-play, standpoint taking and debating. It advocates that, when pupils have become sufficiently familiar with, and competent in, the methodology of the subject, the pupils will have the basic skills to begin to address contemporary issues in divided societies from a balanced perspective, thus contributing towards the creation of a more tolerant and democratic society. It suggests that pupils should be engaged in a process of enquiry which stimulates them to think for themselves and to arrive at conclusions which take into account the perspective of the historical period and the range of possible viewpoints. History teaching of this type invites young people to go beyond, and outside, their own value system to try to understand sets of values which are patently different to their own, and which, in some cases, may even be alien or abhorrent. The challenge posed by the methodology of the subject in seeking to understand human behaviour in the past, therefore, may not be restricted to the past alone.

This shift from treating history as a body of knowledge to be remembered, to a perception of history as a process of rational investigation of the past, based on reference to a variety of evidence from different viewpoints, may have a profound impact on pupils' values.

Once the process of looking at issues from other perspectives is established, this may begin to affect everyday attitudes and positions. When history teachers encourage the use of skills related to evidence, they are promoting the view, which might very well be described as a "value", that we should seek the most convincing account of events or behaviour - not just in history but in all aspects of life. Over time, the application of certain skills may become "second nature" - transforming into an actual attitude of mind or value system which might roughly be characterised as a search for truth.

Whenever history teachers look at the contribution that their subject is making to the education of young people in their school, they might want to reflect, not just on the knowledge and the skills which it promotes, but on the values which permeate them. Teachers may need to analyse, assess and think critically and creatively about their culture and to look for ways of contributing to its future development by asking fundamental questions about what, as well as how, they should be teaching their pupils. The answers should reflect the particular environment (social, religious, political) in which the school is set.

Given the influence of other factors on the development of attitudes and values of young people and the enormity of the forces which shape some historical attitudes and distortions, history teachers themselves need to develop acute awareness of their own values and of how these values influence their selection of content, materials, questions, activities and methodology. Where appropriate, they should make adjustments to achieve a better balance in the interests of objectivity.

Source A

"In the long term, it is values and attitudes that have a more profound effect on our lives than either skills or knowledge, and we should at least build this dimension more deliberately into our thinking and planning for history lessons."

Dr Roger Austin, The University of Ulster, Coleraine, 1984.

Source B

"If history teachers really believe in the worth of their subject, they must ask themselves what it can do to bring greater understanding (to contemporary society)."

Alan McCully, The University of Ulster, Coleraine, 1984.

Issues for reflection

. What basic historical background do pupils need to acquire to help make informed judgments about the present day situation in which they find themselves?

. How can teachers help to clarify the myths which encroach on the pupils' perception of the contemporary situation?

. What particular skills and methodology will assist this process?

Appendix 1

Matrix illustrating possible progression in historical skills and concepts

This matrix is offered as a **non-statutory guide** to assist teachers in planning for progression.

The skills and concepts have been set out to align with the level descriptions, although levels have deliberately not been included to reflect the fact that pupils do not always make progress in a linear fashion and that the skills and concepts need to be continually reinforced in different contexts.

It is recognised that historical knowledge as such cannot be levelled. Nevertheless, the deployment of relevant knowledge is a crucial skill. When judging attainment **at the higher levels**, teachers might find it useful to consider:

the **extent/depth** of knowledge deployed by pupils:	how much is known and understood?
the **accuracy** of the knowledge deployed:	is the information used correct?
the **relevance** of the knowledge selected:	how effectively is the knowledge selected and how much of it is clearly related to the topic or question set?

This matrix should be used flexibly as a planning tool. Teachers are advised to refer to the **level descriptions** as a whole to arrive at a "best fit" judgment of overall performance for summative purposes at the end of the key stage.

Appendix 2

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