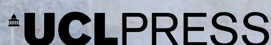
KNOWLEDGE AND THE CURRICULUM

Edited by **Arthur Chapman**

Knowing History in Schools

Powerful knowledge and the powers of knowledge



Knowing History in Schools

KNOWLEDGE AND THE CURRICULUM

Series editors
Arthur Chapman, Cosette Crisan, Jennie Golding and Alex Standish, UCL Institute of Education

The series promotes research, theorising and critical discussion about what we teach in schools and in teacher education. It explores the nature of knowledge in contemporary societies, academic disciplines, school subjects and other fields of knowledge production, to foster inquiry into the relationships that can and should exist between knowledge disciplines in schools and elsewhere.

Knowledge and the Curriculum aims to become a central hub for investigation into how disciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity can enable schools, teacher trainers and learners to address the challenges of the twenty-first century in knowledgeable and critically informed ways. The series explores questions about the powers of knowledge, relationships between the distribution of knowledge and knowledge resources in society, and matters of equity in access to justice and democratisation. It is committed to the proposition that the answers to questions about knowledge require new thinking and innovation. These are open questions with answers that are not already known, and which are likely to entail significant social and institutional change to make the powers of knowledge and of knowing equally available to all.

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Edited by

Arthur Chapman

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For Claire, Hannah, Ben and Sam

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1
Introduction: Historical knowing and the 'knowledge turn'

Arthur Chapman

This volume brings a sociologist of curriculum and history educators, from a range of contexts, into dialogue on questions of knowledge and knowing – questions about what school history should and could be, as an activity and mode of engaging with the world, and questions about what school history education should and could look like and be about. Like all true dialogues, it has yielded surprises, and, it has been shaped by the assumptions and backgrounds of its participant interlocutors. I do not pretend that this book gives any representative account of the full range of positions that exist on the topics discussed – most of the participants in the dialogue either are, or have previously been, academics at the UCL Institute of Education, an institution with distinct traditions and history in sociology of education and history education – and 11 out of 12 of us are, or have been, academics. None of us could have predicted the shape that the book would come to take when we started out on it; however, I am confident that the outcome will provoke – or, at least, contribute to – some reimagining of the problems of knowledge and knowing that it raises and, perhaps, contributes to answering.

Contexts

There has been much talk, in recent years, of a 'knowledge turn' in educational theory and in the school curriculum in England and elsewhere – a movement in curriculum studies that places disciplines and subjects at the centre of thinking about what schools are for (Morgan, 2012; Young and Lambert, 2014; Hoadley *et al*., 2019; Morgan *et al*., 2019).

Michael Young's notion 'powerful knowledge' (Young, 2009) and his advocacy of 'bringing knowledge back in' (Young, 2008) to debates on the school curriculum in the sociology of education have been among the most influential ideas shaping this 'knowledge turn' in education. Powerful knowledge was invoked as an organising principle in the English National Curriculum review of 2011 (DfE, 2011) and influenced the *Learning Compass 2030* (OECD, 2019). It is frequently deployed by policymakers (Gibb, 2018) and invoked by the schools inspectorate in England (Spielman, 2019), it has recently figured centrally in a curriculum guide published by ResearchEd, a key player in the 'knowledge turn' in schools in England (Sealy and Bennett, 2020), and it is much discussed in social media.[1]

The project of building 'disciplinary knowledge for all' (Counsell, 2011), which figures prominently in many narratives about the development of English school history, chimes well with many aspects of this 'turn'. It foregrounds epistemology – knowledge and knowing – and, both Young's concept of powerful knowledge that he developed with Joe Muller among others (Young and Muller, 2013; Muller and Young, 2019) and this project emphasise equality of access and universalising a knowledge-based curriculum. The epistemic approach to school history – modelling it as a way of knowing – has been influential in school history education in England in various forms and in different degrees for many years, notably since the implementation of the Schools Council's 'History 13–16' Project from 1972 (Shemilt, 1980, 1983: 1–3). This approach was generalised from 1988 to 1991 as Schools History Project (SHP) principles were embedded in the GCSE examinations (1988)[2] and the National Curriculum (1991). As Counsell (2011) argued, teachers took the central role in working out what a disciplinary approach looked like in practice in the 30 years after 1991, innovating in curriculum and pedagogic development and developing a rich discourse of curriculum theorising and practice shared through conferences and networks linked to the Historical Association and the SHP, through initial teacher education networks linked to universities, through blogs and other media, and in the pages of the Historical Association's professional journals *Teaching History* and *Primary History*.

As Young explains in Chapter 11 to this volume, it was Counsell's account of teacher theorising of disciplinary knowledge that drew his attention to work in history education and to the ways in which it aligned with the project of developing 'powerful knowledge for all' in schools. Young's engagement in discussion with history educators deepened subsequently, through involvement in a 2016 volume that aimed to bring

history teachers into dialogue with historians, philosophers of history, educationalists and curriculum theorists (Counsell *et al.*, 2016). This book arises out of the continuation of that collaboration and aims to deepen debate and discussion about what knowing disciplinary history in schools entails.

There are two key concerns that are shared by the contributors to this book. These are (a) a concern with the qualities and identity of the contents of the school curriculum – and in particular, the history curriculum, and (b) a concern with the status of knowledge, in general, and with historical knowledge and the kinds of historical knowing that can be built and developed in schools. These concerns arise for both sociologists of the curriculum and for many history educators for interconnected reasons. The interest in the question of the content of the history curriculum arises in response to shifts in curriculum policy over the last 15 years or so – a shift that can be book-ended rather neatly with two contrasting reports from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005, 2019), the first focused on 'key competencies' and the second on 'knowledge', including disciplinary, interdisciplinary, epistemic and procedural forms of knowledge and knowing.

In many national and international contexts, the first decade of the new millennium was characterised by a move away from models of curriculum associated with school subjects such as history, and by a move towards generalist models of what education should be about that drew on 'human capital' discourses, focused on learning – more than teaching – and on the development of generic competencies – such as 'twenty-first-century skills'. The direction of travel more recently has been back towards a focus on subject disciplines. This is partly a result of the failure, in some countries such as South Africa, of competency-based models to deliver what was expected of them (Young and Lambert, 2014: 53–8; Hoadley, 2017); partly as the result of the election in countries like England of culturally conservative political administrations advocating neo-traditional educational policies; partly as the result of the development of new arguments in curriculum theory – such as *Bringing Knowledge Back In* (Young, 2008); and also as a result of a number of other trends. This turn back towards disciplines can be evidenced locally, for example, in the revision to the English National Curriculum in operation since 2014 (DfE, 2013) and globally, for example, in the *Learning Compass 2030* (OECD, 2019). In this context the questions 'what can school history be?' and 'why should we teach it?' become empowering questions for many of us – just as cognate questions

become so in geography, religious studies and a number of other subject disciplines – in ways that they were not in the first decade of the new millennium. This contrast can be seen, perhaps most clearly, in the case of history, in the shift from a rather defensive stance in the 'Disciplined Minds' edition of *Teaching History* (Historical Association, 2007), that set out to counterpose a 'disciplinary' vision of what school history could be to the Royal Society of Arts' (RSA) 'Opening Minds' curriculum that seemed, at that time, to be carrying much before it, and subsequent editions such as the 'Knowledge' edition (Historical Association, 2018).

Related – perhaps – to these trends and running in partial parallel with them, have been developments in the culture and cultural politics linked to the rise and demise of cultural relativism connected, in the minds of many commentators, to the prominence of post-modernism. Whereas many historians – notably Evans (1997) – felt it necessary, around the turn of the millennium, to write 'in defence' of historical knowledge and knowing in the face of post-modernists' injunctions to forget history and other 'modernist' enterprises (Jenkins, 1991), the cultural climate seemed, to many historians, to have become more favourable to the discipline of history in the first decade of the millennium and beyond (Tosh, 2008). By 2020, one might say, any nervousness that historians might have felt in the 1990s that 'autumn' had 'come' to Western historiography (to borrow a metaphor from Ankersmit, 1989), had probably been replaced by fear that the tree might fall to (or at least be mightily pruned by) the economic not the epistemological axe. Like social realists in the sociology of education – such as Moore, Muller and Young – many historians turned social constructivist and cultural relativist arguments on their heads, in the effort to vindicate the rationality of history's knowledge-building practices. They did so by arguing that the social roots of historical knowledge practices in interpersonal scholarly communities were key to what objectivity those practices might claim rather than grounds to dismiss them as subjective, arbitrary and partial. This argument was summarised in a primer for student teachers as follows:

> Disciplined historical thinking is characterised … by an effort to make practices of interpretation explicit and available for scrutiny and an important purpose of history education is to make it clear to pupils that interpretation is open to rational discussion and evaluation … Different interpretive forms place differing degrees of importance on methodological debate: the discipline of history is distinguished from other forms of interpretation of the past by

> the fact that historians are expected to make their assumptions, concepts and methods explicit, so that they can be critically assessed by an academic community of practice, and to present *arguments* for interpretive decisions that they make. (Chapman, 2010: 98 and 101)

Knowledge turns and re-turns – Futures present and past

Knowledge needed to be 'brought back in' to discussions about curriculum for many reasons, Young (2008) and Young and Lambert (2014) contended, not least among which were an emphasis in educational thinking in the first decade of the twenty-first century on developing generic competencies and on competency-based curricula rather than on the development of subject knowledge.

Competency-based curricula – such as the RSA's Opening Minds curriculum – focused on children developing broad 'competencies that', it was believed, would 'help them thrive in the real world' (RSA, n.d.a), such as competencies in 'managing information' and 'relating to people' (RSA, n.d.b; Yates *et al.*, 2017: 23–6). Typically, competency-based approaches understood school subjects solely as bodies of knowledge, aggregating information about domains of human experience, and argued that education no longer needed to focus on such bodies of information in the age of digitisation and Google. When learners have vast searchable libraries at their fingertips: 'It is not important for learners to "know" everything. It is important for learners to be able to find out what and how to know—effectively and in the shortest possible time' (Mitra, 2014: 555).

Knowledge can be 'brought back in' to the school curriculum in many different ways, however, reflecting different assumptions about what knowledge is and about the role that it can play in children's education and development. It is possible to advocate a turn to knowledge-based curricula as a radical vision and one entailing dramatic social and educational change. It is also possible to advocate knowledge-based curricula as a *re*-turn to a traditional vision of what education should be in which things will 'again' be as they were (Gibb, 2012), which is what Conservative politician Michael Gove appears to have had in mind in 2010 when he advocated a return to 'a traditional education, with children sitting in rows, learning the kings and queens of England' (Gove, 2010, cited in Evans, 2012).[3] Young and Muller (2010) developed a typology to contrast two understandings of knowledge-based curriculum

Table 1.1 Three scenarios for the future (based on Young and Muller, 2010; Young, 2014: 67–9)

Scenario	Description
Future 1	• *Separation of school subjects*. • *Fixed and unchanging boundaries* between school subjects, whose nature and content is understood as given, and between school knowledge and everyday knowledge. • *Stipulation of curricular content* in *subject-* and *content-based* terms.
Future 2	• *Integration of school subjects*. • *Weak boundaries between subjects* and between school knowledge and everyday knowledge. • *Stipulation of curricular content* in *generic*, usually *skills- and activities-based* terms.
Future 3	• *Separation of school subjects*. • *Stable* and *not fixed boundaries* between school subjects, whose nature and content is understood to vary as knowledge changes/progresses, and between school knowledge and everyday knowledge. • *Stipulation of curricular content* in subject-terms, involving *content, concepts, skills and activities*.

and to distinguish both from curricula of the competency-based type (Table 1.1). This typology will figure centrally in this book and is worth elaborating in some detail.

The scenarios that Young and Muller developed were called Futures because the article they were elaborated in was reflecting on possible 'future scenarios' for education globally. All three futures are ideal types – they point to fundamental conceptual contrasts, but we should expect reality to be a little more messy.

'Future 1' models a traditional subject-based curriculum. In Future 1, as Table 1.1 indicates, children learn the given contents of traditional disciplines and are assessed in terms of their success in mastering this content. This, Young (2014: 68) argued, is similar to the kind of curriculum advocated by E. D. Hirsch and proponents of 'cultural literacy' who envisage curriculum in terms of 'lists of "what every child should know"'. To advocate Future 1, Young argued, is to define the future of education in terms of a return to how things have traditionally been done

in elite schooling, to treat 'knowledge as largely given, and established by tradition' and to accept that it would be a curriculum appropriate for a minority of pupils identified as academic. Conservative politicians such as Michael Gove later advocated this curriculum 'for all pupils', but without providing the resources that might make this a reality (Young, 2014: 59).

Where Future 1 is traditional, Future 2 is self-consciously radical – it is all about breaking down traditional boundaries and challenging 'rigidities and elitism' (Young, 2014: 61). Future 2 treats knowledge instrumentally – as having instrumental value only and as means to other ends (such as economic growth or individual and/or societal well-being). For Future 2, the content of the curriculum can be whatever it needs to be in order: (a) to be relevant to the perceived needs of pupils and communities; and (b) to achieve the ends to which policy directs education. Young and his collaborators (Young and Lambert, 2014: 120–4) see Future 2 as developing from the 1970s and as coming to dominate the thinking of the New Labour administrations of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in England between 1997 and 2010. Curricular expressions of this domination included earlier ideas about the curriculum such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in the 1980s and, later, the RSA's Opening Minds curriculum (Roberts, C., 2014; Roberts, M., 2014). Like other curriculum theorists such as Biesta (2006, 2011), Young and his collaborators regard the learner-focused New Labour approaches of 1997–2010 as an educational 'future' that has passed.

Despite the clear contrasts between them in focus and cultural style, Future 1 and Future 2 are, in at least one crucial respect, mirror images of each other. Future 2 models learning in terms of general skills and information (subject content) and regards the latter as, at best, of secondary importance and as not requiring particular attention, while Future 1 models learning in terms of mastery of information (subject content), which it valorises, and general skills which it regards as secondary and as not requiring particular attention.

'Groups of children can learn almost anything by themselves, using the Internet,' Sugata Mitra (2014: 549) argued. One might expect Mitra's vision of children spontaneously building world knowledge by collaborating together, armed with smart technologies and drawing on innate, or easily self-taught, general reasoning and problem-solving 'skills' (BBC, 2014) to be worlds away from Gove's Future 1 aspirations. The two visions are structurally identical, however, in evacuating the epistemic concepts that make disciplines ways of knowing and in a

common vision of education as consisting of a combination of information and general processing skills. This model is apparent, for example, in arguments developed by Nick Gibb, when promoting curriculum reform in 2012: history would 'come alive again in class', Gibb contended, as a result of reforms that would end what he called an 'ideologically-driven, skills-based approach' to history. This would be achieved by demoting 'skills-based aims' such as '"historical enquiry", "using evidence" and "communicating about the past"' and the teaching of 'the concepts of "change and continuity", "cause and consequence", "significance" or "interpretation"' and by promoting the mastery of the 'detailed narrative and complexity of … history' (Gibb, 2012, n.p.).[4]

Both Future 1 and Future 2 approaches are inadequate, on Young's account, because they both neglect – rather than nourish – powerful knowledge. Future 3, by contrast, is a powerful knowledge curriculum, or, as Young (Chapter 11, this volume) might now prefer to say a curriculum that concentrates on cultivating young people's agency by developing their grasp of 'the powers of knowledge'.

Young (2009, 2020), Young and Muller (2010, 2016) and Young and Lambert (2014) have provided definitions and revisions to definitions of powerful knowledge in various places and a statement of the concept's meaning is provided in Young's chapter in this volume. It is useful, nevertheless, to provide a brief explanation here of the concept's meaning (Box 1.1), not least in order to clarify the definition of Future 3 provided in Table 1.1.

Curricula that aim to develop powerful knowledge require expert teachers – cognisant of the conceptual knowledge structures of specialised knowledge domains, of the current state of knowledge in the disciplines that study those domains and of the history of those domains' development, including their current trajectories. Curricula that aim to develop powerful knowledge also require complex planning to deliver progression in knowledge and understanding of a number of dimensions of knowledge:

- *content knowledge* of what is known in domains;
- *conceptual knowledge and understanding* of the organising ideas that structure content into meaningful and dynamic wholes or systems;
- *procedural and epistemic knowledge and understanding* of how knowledge claims and arguments are developed to make sense of and to validate claims in the domain; and
- relevant *skills* needed to implement procedures, manage information and organise one's learning in the domain.

Box 1.1 Powerful knowledge (based on Young, 2014)

Powerful knowledge is:

- *distinct from everyday common-sense knowledge* derived from experience;
- *systematic* – the concepts of different disciplines are related to each other in ways that allow us to transcend individual cases by generalising or developing interpretations;
- *specialised* – produced in disciplinary epistemic communities with distinct fields and/or foci of enquiry; and
- *objective and reliable* – its objectivity arising from peer review and other procedural controls on subjectivity in knowledge production exercised in disciplinary communities.

Because it has these features, powerful knowledge can be described as having:

- *better claims to truth* than other knowledge claims relevant to the issues and problems it addresses; and
- *the potential to empower those who know and understand it* to act in and on the world, since they have access to knowledge with which to understand how relevant aspects of the world work and what the potential consequences are of different courses of action.

Enabling progression across these multifaceted aspects of learning simultaneously requires great pedagogic knowledge, understanding and skill. It also requires knowledge and understanding of relevant repertoires of activities to enable students meaningfully to build their knowledge and understanding. All of this clearly differentiates Future 3 from Future 2 – which aspires to be generalist rather than subject-specific and which is content-light – and from Future 1, which focuses solely on fixed content-transmission rather than on enabling students to join the discourse of the discipline and understand how and why its knowledge grows and develops over time.

In summary, Young's Future 3 curriculum can come to exist in education systems if and only if they are arranged to enable equality of access to powerful knowledge in specialised subject domains for all

children. The point of such curricula is to empower students – to school them in the 'powers of knowledge' that will enable to them to act in and on the world with confidence. The rationale driving it is a democratic one – all children become citizens equally and should have equal access to the knowledge resources necessary to exercise agency in the world. It is a radical proposition since developing a system capable of providing equality of epistemic access in these ways implies social and economic change (Young, 2018, 2020). It entails a number of things, including a radical levelling-up of resources between elite schools and non-elite schools – including that of pupil capitation funding, of learning resources and facilities and of access to well-qualified teaching staff. It is a radical proposition also in its implications for differentiated provision for learners who start from different points when entering school and when beginning their studies and whom, in many cases, will require additional support, including, in some cases, more time in which to learn, if they are to achieve equality of 'epistemological access' (Young and Muller, 2016: 190–204). Taking Future 3 seriously at a system level also entails spending a great deal more time and resource on teachers and the teaching profession, since, Young argues, we should envisage knowledge workers in universities, teachers in schools and their pupils as networked epistemic communities with strong links enabling the development and dissemination of subject expertise between sites of knowledge production in universities and teachers in schools, and such links as can help to forge meaningful relationships to knowledge and expertise among pupils (Young, 2020).

Future 3 history

How much do we know about the contours of a disciplinary history education that might meet the epistemic criteria that powerful knowledge sets up? There is a great deal of consensus on at least some of the outlines of an answer to this question and some indications of impressive progress towards adequate and robustly grounded models. It should be noted, however, that, many of these ideas remain debated and there is much scope for strengthening and refining conceptualisations – one of the things that a number of the chapters in this volume set out to do, as we shall see below. This section sets out some features of existing common ground in national and international thinking about disciplined history education in order to provide context for the chapters that follow.

The traditions of research and practice developed in England since the inception of the SHP contributed to the development of a model of what disciplinary historical learning looks like that is largely accepted in English history education (Counsell, 2018) and that has been widely adopted and adapted internationally (Lee, 2005a). In broad outline, this model corresponds very well with the broad outlines of Young and Muller's modelling of powerful knowledge – pointing to the importance of 'concepts, content and skills' (Young and Muller, 2010: 21).

A starting point is the fact that students do not come to history class as *tabula rasa* but, rather, with a tissue of assumptions based in prior learning in school, and in prior life experience outside school, some of which may, but many of which may not, be helpful in supporting historical learning (Figure 1.1).[5] These are the 'everyday' ideas about historical knowledge and knowing that disciplinary education seeks to move students on from.

Figure 1.1 asks us to think of children's everyday preconceptions as being of two kinds – assumptions about people and their life-worlds and assumptions about how we come to know things about them – what one might call ontological assumptions (1. Ideas about How the World Works and How People are Likely to Behave), on the one hand, and epistemological assumptions (2. Ideas about How we Know about the Past), on the other. One of the fundamental insights arising from the study of history – the insight that human nature is in large part an historical product and that, as the cliché has it 'the past is a foreign country' where people 'do things differently' (Lowenthal, 1985) – conflicts with many of our naïve everyday assumptions about people. Learning history involves educating children out of the historical insularity that imposes quotidian contemporary norms on the diverse range of human possibility that we find in past life-worlds. Another fundamental insight relates to knowledge building. Historical knowing is, to some extent, continuous with common sense, however, the non-existence of the past in the present as anything other than traces and the need to construct models of past situations to account for the traces that remain in the present make many aspects of historical knowing counter-intuitive and challenging to grasp (Lee, 2005a).

Corresponding to the ontological and epistemic categories in Figure 1.1 is the division between 'first-' and 'second-order' knowledge and understanding in Figure 1.2.[6]

First-order knowledge and understanding is world-knowledge about the past, and, many of the concepts we learn to use to help make sense of the past are also concepts that we use in the present – the 'general

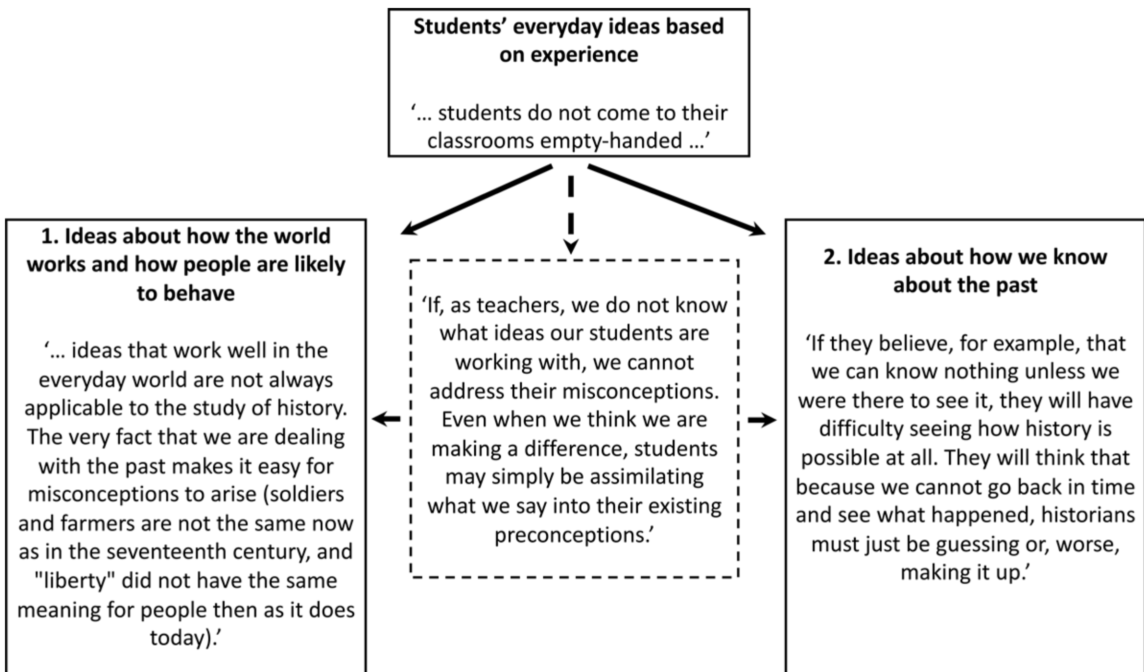

Figure 1.1 Pupil prior knowledge, based on experience (based on Lee, 2005a: 31)

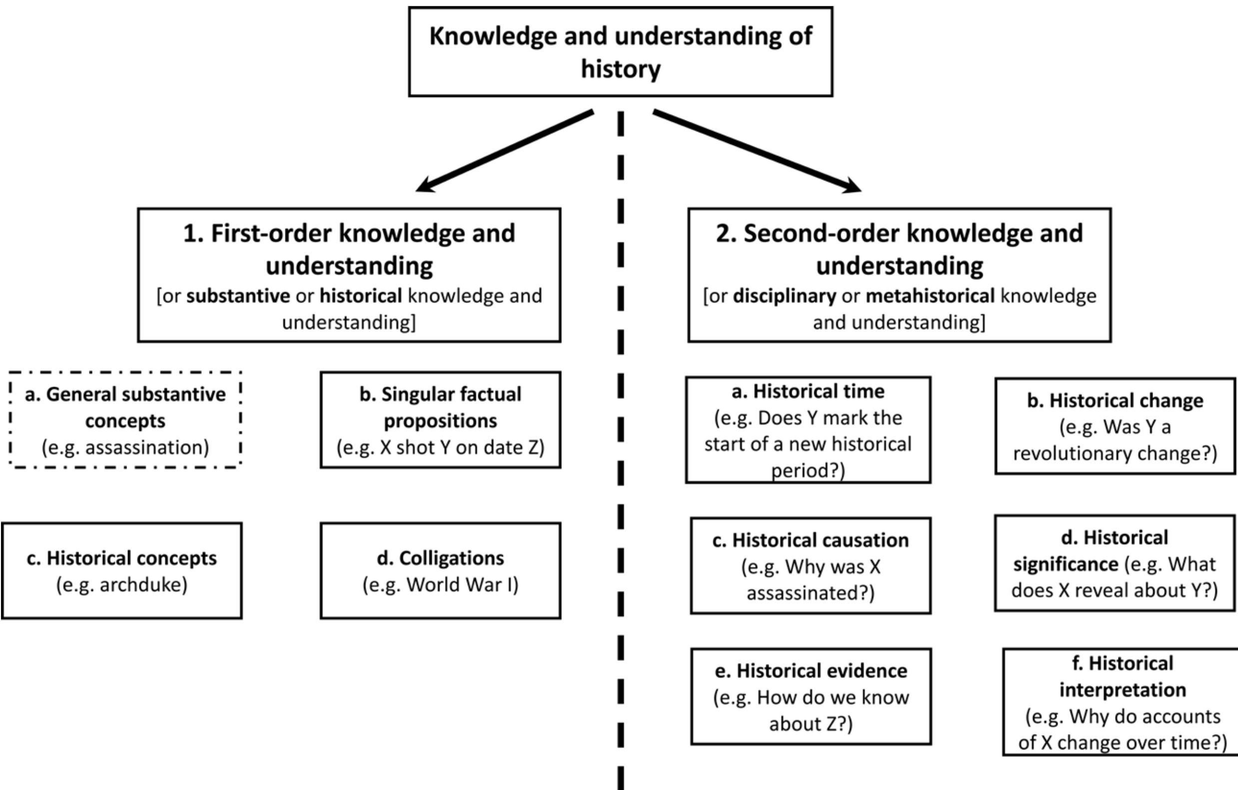

Figure 1.2 Dimensions of historical knowledge and understanding (based on arguments developed in Lee, 2005a; Shemilt, 2010; and Chapman and Hale, 2017)

substantive concepts' in the broken-bordered box in Figure 1.2 (other examples of such concepts might be 'inflation' and many common socio-cultural and socio-economic concepts). It also includes, however, facts about the past – singular propositions and singular propositions woven into larger units and wholes including nominalised pseudo-entities (colligations) of the kind of which history books are full (for example 'World War I', 'the Renaissance', and so on). First-order knowledge and understanding also includes knowledge of concepts used in past time to organise the world (for example titles, notions about obligation, categories such as 'Jacobin') and concepts that historians now use to denote past ideas, practices and entities (such as 'feudalism', as the term is used by historians influenced by Marxism).

If mastering – and failing to master – history is bound up with building and failing to build 'world-knowledge' about the past, it is equally, and inextricably, bound up with degrees of success and failure in building metahistorical or second-order knowledge and understanding (ideas about how history works). Second-order knowledge and understanding is of various kinds, for example: understanding of what history books (or other forms of historical representation) can be; ideas about how we come to know the past on the basis of the interrogation of traces and their manipulation to build models of past worlds through inference; ideas about how and why things happen in the past, and so on. Because these ideas are not known by recondite labels but, contrastingly, by common ones shared with other discourses (ranging from physics, to law or to common sense) they are sometimes assumed to be very ordinary and generic ideas – a mis-perception that fuels generalist talk of analytical 'skills'. Research shows, however, that ideas about historical evidence (for example) are counter-intuitive and that they present a significant challenge for both children and adults, where the latter are new to history (Lee, 2005a). What is true of historical evidence is true also of historical causality, significance and so on. To exemplify, with evidence (Ashby, 2011; Chapman, 2011): research has shown that historical novices tend to operate 'testimonial' or 'witnessing' epistemologies and to assume that our knowledge of the past derives – as much of our everyday knowledge does – from veridical reports provided by credible informants or witnesses. Much historical knowing, on the other hand, depends on abductive inferences from present traces to models built in the mind of the enquirer in order to 'explain the evidence' that remains in the present (Megill, 2007): there is no route back to the past other than through what Collingwood called 'the logic of question and answer' (Collingwood, 1939) and the past can be known even without

witnesses and often despite them (as, for example, the fact of archaeology demonstrates).

A number of models have been developed internationally – and in dialogue with each other – to help model conceptual aspects of historical knowing. Canadian models of 'historical thinking concepts' for example (Seixas and Morton, 2013) and American models of 'reading like a historian' that focus on evidential reasoning (Wineburg, 2001; Wineburg *et al*., 2013). Perhaps the most impressively comprehensive, multifaceted and empirically supported model is the conceptualisation of 'historical reasoning' developed by Carla van Boxtel and Jannet van Drie and their research group at the University of Amsterdam (Figure 1.3).

As can be seen, the Historical Reasoning Model draws on many of the components identified in Figure 1.2 – such as metahistorical or second-order concepts, historical concepts corresponding to first-order concepts and knowledge of historical facts. The model has the considerable advantage, however, of also figuring key cognitive processes and activities integral to putting these elements to work, ranging from the asking of historical questions to historical contextualisation. The inclusion of epistemological beliefs also has the considerable advantage of pointing to tacit or explicit ideas in the heads of children or adults about how we know, such as the testimonial notions discussed above. The diagram points to ways in which history lives both inside the academy but also in the everyday and, thus, to ways in which teachers can both draw upon ideas within children's experience (history around them) to educate – or draw them towards – knowledge and insights into the past that take them beyond that experience (moving from left to right in the diagram as it were); and to ways in which teachers can help children develop theoretical insights, informed by specialist historical knowledge, into the everyday (by moving from the right to the left). As has been intimated, we have an increasing impressive and weighty body of evidence developed since a first version of this model was proposed (van Drie and van Boxtel, 2008), warranting the model and providing research-informed recommendations for teaching strategies and approaches based on it (van Boxtel and van Drie, 2018).

There is more to say than there is space available here to include, about additional dimensions of knowledge building, as these are currently understood in the national and international research and practice literature. A weakness of many original approaches in the English tradition was their neglect of substantive knowledge-building (discussed in Lee, 2005b). Work building on CHATA and on a seminal paper by Shemilt (2000) focused on knowledge building at scale has

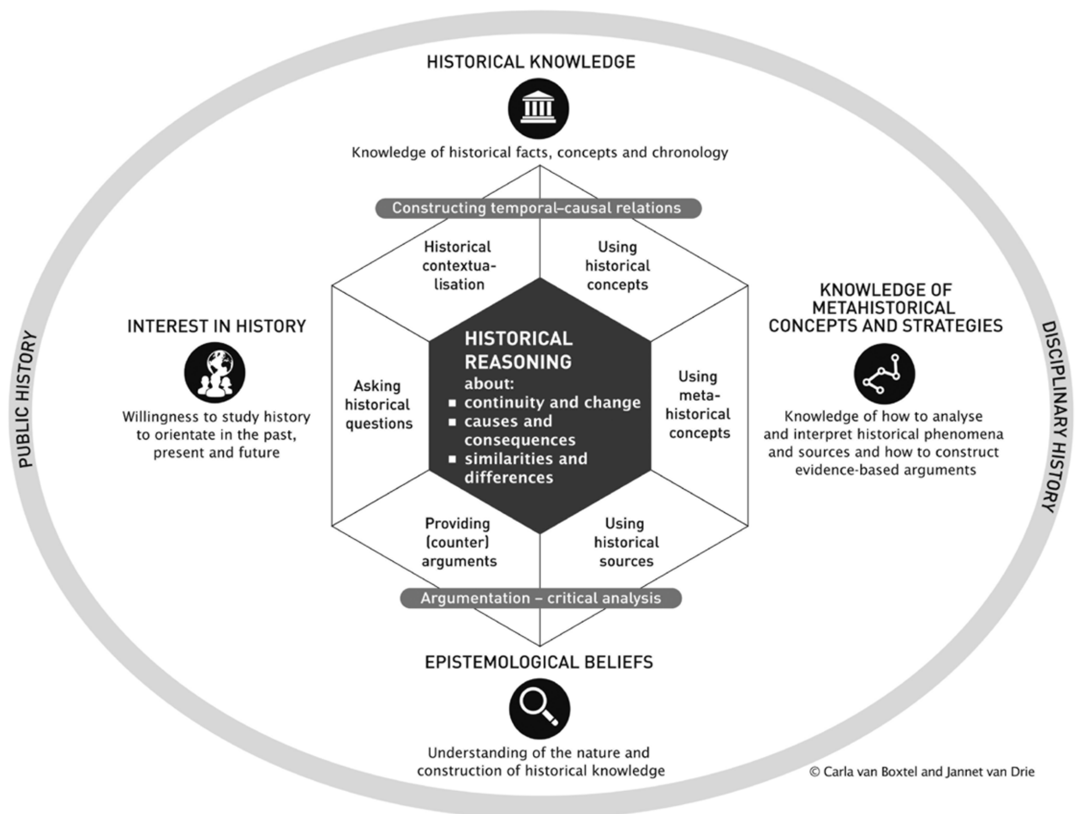

Figure 1.3 Types and components of historical reasoning and individual and sociocultural resources for historical reasoning (Van Boxtel and van Drie, 2018: 152, reproduced with the permission of the authors)

been conducted in Leeds (Rogers, 2008, 2016; Shemilt, 2009; Nuttall, 2013; Blow *et al*., 2015) and London, as part of the Usable Historical Pasts research project (Howson, 2007, 2009; Foster *et al*., 2008; Lee and Howson, 2009). Innovative work theorising aspects of substantive knowledge building has been reported in *Teaching History*, notably by Hammond (2014). Large-scale studies of the sequencing of substantive knowledge over time are lacking and are a vital area for future work to explore.

The contribution of this book

This book originated in a symposium that took place at the British Educational Research Association's annual conference at the University of Sussex in 2017, focused on the topic 'Building Powerful Knowledge in History: Challenges and opportunities'. It aims to build on a growing and important body of work explicitly exploring powerful knowledge in the context of school history – including the work of Ormond (2014), Young (2016), Nordgren (2017), Yates (2017), Yates *et al*. (2017), Bertram (2019) and Puustinen and Khawaja (2020).

Our original symposium proposal focused on many of the issues commented on above, in relation to the contrasts between Futures 1, 2 and 3. The aim of the symposium was to explore the relationships between research-based models of disciplinary knowing such as those developed by Lee (2011), general cultural literacy approaches such as Hirsch (1988) and powerful knowledge approaches (Young and Muller, 2016), and to extend and develop dialogue between social realist curriculum sociology and history education. The symposium included papers by Alison Kitson on what is 'powerful' about historical knowledge in the classroom, by Catherine McCrory on inferentialism in history education and conceptual meaning, by Arthur Chapman and Maria Georgiou on conceptual change research and historical interpretations, by Richard Harris on the extent to which access to powerful knowledge was enabled or denied in practice in English schools and by Joe Smith and Darius Jackson on radicalism and traditionalism in history's social realist discourse. Michael Young acted as our discussant in the symposium, responding to our papers. The symposium brought into dialogue two fields of discourse – 'methods' discourses and 'discipline' discourses (Young, Chapter 11, this volume) – in a way that was once rare.[7] We subsequently invited additional colleagues to take part in the discussion and in this book, that built on and developed the original

conference papers. We invited both Kenneth Nordgren, from Karlstad University, Sweden, and Mark Sheehan, from Victoria University, New Zealand, to broaden our horizons of reflection, by giving us perspectives on the powerful knowledge question from outside England. We also invited Katharine Burn to bring an Oxford perspective to what might otherwise be a London-centric approach, and also to give us vital insights from the perspective of a researcher focused on teachers' professional learning, and Nick Dennis, to keep us grounded by providing a perspective from curriculum leadership and practice in school. I will now briefly summarise the contributions that the chapters make to the issues and bring this introduction to a close.

Powerful knowledge aims to establish a curriculum principle – an entitlement for all school pupils to secure 'epistemological access' (Young and Muller, 2016: 190–204) to subject disciplinary knowledge, however, this still leaves an awful lot open to question in history, particularly in terms of content selection. Kitson (Chapter 2, this volume) sets out to work towards a more detailed theorisation and rationale for content selection in history. As has been argued above, a lot is already known about how to recontextualise the academic discipline of history in schools and the traditions of the SHP have enabled epistemic recontextualisation of the discipline for many years. However, many questions remain about content selection that the discipline itself does not answer, namely: 'How much substantive knowledge is needed for historical knowledge to be "powerful"?' and 'Are some content selections more "powerful" than others?'

Kitson argues – as others such as Bertram (2019) and Nordgren (2017; Chapter 8, this volume) have done – that factors other than the discipline enter into our choice of content, including ideological questions related to the kinds of identities that schools aim to develop. Drawing on the work of the academic geographer Alaric Maude (2016), who has developed a typology of the types of knowledge that school geography can develop, Kitson elaborates an 'enabling' view of the power of school history and identifies three types of disposition that powerful knowledge school history might help students develop and which can help guide content selection processes. Kitson also draws on geography education (Roberts, 2014) to develop an argument about the pedagogic implications of implementing powerful knowledge curriculum principles in schools, arguing, contrary to neo-traditional arguments, that the use of enquiry methods are vital to enabling pupils make connections between the disciplinary contents and disciplinary concepts that they learn. Kitson concludes that enquiry approaches are vital in helping pupils build usable frameworks of knowledge through their history education.

McCrory (Chapter 3, this volume) develops a critical exploration of the ways in which the history education community has come to think about the knowledge and knowing that we want to develop in history classrooms. McCrory is concerned that many of the analytical distinctions that we make – such as the distinctions between first- and second-order knowledge and understanding elaborated in Figure 1.2 – can end up creating problems and confusions, if not handled carefully and with attention to their relationships to reasoning.

McCrory notes that many of those who model historical learning in first- and second-order terms continue to observe limitations in students' learning. McCrory asks us to consider the possibility that these distinctions themselves may be contributing to the problem. Accordingly, she is sceptical of the suggestion advanced by many, including the current author, that we can solve these problems simply by readjusting the balance between disciplinary and substantive knowledge and understanding. Instead, McCrory asks us to deconstruct these polarities and to engage with the philosopher Robert Brandom's insights into the inferential nature of all meaning and meaning-making, be it what we call 'factual' or what we call 'conceptual'. Brandom's 'inferentialist' philosophy, McCrory contends, can help us move forward by enabling us to appreciate the ways in which all of the types of knowledge that we classify in our various binary contrasts in fact entail mental activity. Knowing in other words, entails working through the inferential relations between the various elements to be known. McCrory argues that curricular and pedagogic thinking needs to focus clear-sightedly on the activity involved in coming *to know* knowledge and she proposes a number of ways in which that agenda can be taken forward.

Shifting focus from curriculum and teaching to aspects of classroom learning, Chapman and Georgiou (Chapter 4, this volume) report work, undertaken in England and Cyprus, with post-16 students focused on historical interpretations in the tradition of CHATA studies. They worked with pencil and paper tasks, interviews and focus groups to elicit evidence of pupils' tacit and explicit knowledge and understanding of how history works as a discipline.

The studies are framed by a discussion of constructivism that argues that social realism may have been a little too quick to dismiss some aspects of constructivism. This includes those *psychological* (rather than social or ontological) varieties of constructivism that deal with the ways in which pupils' prior knowledge and preconceptions, typically grounded in their everyday experience, shape and potentially limit the sense that students make of new disciplinary knowledge that they encounter in

school. The findings of the two studies partially reported here indicate some similarities and some differences in student thinking – pointing to underlying shared epistemological understandings of historical knowledge and knowing, and pointing also to the difference that cultural context, curriculum and educational practices make to children's thinking. Overall, the implications of Chapman and Georgiou's findings indicate the vital importance of teachers considering and responding actively to their pupils' preconceptions and misconceptions about disciplinary knowledge, if they are to help move students beyond their experience and into understandings of specialised epistemologies.

Whereas Kitson and McCrory's focus is firmly on knowing and what powerful knowledge might mean in curricula and classrooms, Harris and Burn (Chapters 5 and 6, this volume, respectively) ask us to think more about systems and preconditions. As was noted above, Young's vision of an education system where all learners have equality of access to powerful knowledge is one with major implications for the resourcing and organisation of the educational system. Equality of access implies school reform, so that all schools are *able* to provide equal access to education in the 'powers of knowledge', and it implies changes to the initial education of teachers and to opportunities for continuous professional development, such that they are and remain connected to their subjects' knowledge communities.

To build a school system that provides access to powerful knowledge for all, we first need to establish the characteristics of the system that we already have in place. How far do young people have access to history education in our schools and to what extent does that history education approximate to a disciplinary model? Harris answers these questions by considering two data sets, the first arising from the Historical Association's annual survey of history teachers working in schools and the second arising from a study of curriculum in a sample of school history departments.

Harris' analysis of the Historical Association's survey data reveals a significant equity issue, disadvantaging students with low prior attainment in access to history in public examinations that links also to school type and the socio-economic character of the area where the school is based. There are significant variations also within schools which further amplify unequal opportunities for access: variations in the time allocated to history and in the provision/non-provision of specialist teaching staff.

Harris' study of curriculum making in departments also reveals a significant variation in the curriculum philosophies enacted in schools

and in the degree to which history is organised in disciplinary ways. Whereas some teachers thought largely in terms of substantive content when planning learning and progression, Harris found that others focused on disciplinary concerns – such as the epistemic warrant for claims and second-order aspects of historical knowing. Within this last group, clear differences were observed in degrees of disciplinarity and there was a marked tendency to the 'discipline light' over the 'discipline heavy'. Harris' discussion of the content that schools teach also opens up a discussion of what knowledge has value – for reasons similar to those that arise in Kitson's chapter. Powerful knowledge provides epistemological criteria for knowledge selection but this under-determines choice, since epistemic issues arise in the contexts of materials that may or may not appear directly valuable to young people and their communities. Harris concludes with a discussion of history teacher choices, pointing to the need to consider the question of the potential value to young people of the content being taught more rigorously.

Burn explores the implications for history teachers' continued professional development of Young's call for schools to provide broader access to genuinely powerful knowledge. This is something that depends, crucially, on the quality and professional identity of teachers as teachers of disciplines.

Burn's data arises from evaluation studies of 'teacher fellowship' programmes providing in-service teachers with opportunities to work with historians and archivists and typically mediated by teacher educators working in collaboration with these other professionals, often through university networks. The studies demonstrate the power of close engagements between professional subject experts and knowledge workers in disciplines and teachers. Burn reports the transformative effects of such programmes on many teachers, including feedback such as: 'becoming more knowledgeable'; '[it] increased their "interest", "pleasure" and "enjoyment" in what they were doing as teachers'; 'fired [their] imagination and creativity'; and inspired some in their teaching in ways that had effects on recruitment to exam courses.

Burn's findings point also to the role that institutional networks and varieties of expertise play. Teacher trainers in universities were particularly able to forge links between subject experts and schools – a structural linkage that is perhaps threatened if and where teacher education is moved increasingly into schools. Burn also notes that many teachers found learning new content in the presence of experts overwhelming at times and that they became increasingly aware of the importance of pedagogic mediation (provided by the teacher educators).

This tended to have positive effects in enhancing teachers' capacity to reflect on the position that pupils often find themselves in and about ways in which teachers can help mediate access for them.

The chapters by Smith and Jackson (Chapter 7) and Nordgren (Chapter 8, this volume) share common concerns, with understandings of the larger issues that framings of the curriculum talk to and with the theoretical and, in some cases, directly political issues that decisions about the framing of the curriculum can raise.

Smith and Jackson argue that discussions of knowledge and curriculum in England during the 'knowledge turn' are leading to the fracturing of the consensus about disciplinary approaches that they describe as having emerged since the introduction of the SHP in the 1970s and as lasting up to the time of the most recent revision to the English National Curriculum in 2013/14. As a result of this fracturing of consensus, they argue 'two distinct positions – radical and traditional social realism' – are beginning to emerge, both espousing 'the importance of disciplinary knowledge' but the latter coming, increasingly, to prioritise 'more concrete forms of knowledge' over disciplinary knowing. At issue in this contrast are competing visions of what powerful historical knowledge looks like and of what one might seek to achieve through teaching it.

Smith and Jackson devote their chapter to sketching out the defining features of these two positions – radical (RSR) and traditional (TSR) social realism. They develop these categories in the context of a discussion of history education although, it should be noted, they clearly point beyond history to wider stances on the curriculum as a whole. The two positions are described as ideal typical categories rather than as empirically grounded descriptions that fit any particular individuals or groups of practitioners or researchers. The authors survey the field and posit their analyses from an RSR position. The two positions are characterised in general and in terms of three dimensions of difference: (a) the political, relating to the purpose of the curriculum; (b) the pedagogical, relating to relationships between the child and the curriculum; and (c) the epistemic, relating to knowledge and the curriculum. In political terms, they argue, TSRs and RSRs can be differentiated in the kind of social change that they seek to enable – the former thinking in terms of increased social mobility within existing structures of society and the latter aiming to empower students to challenge and to change the structures in dominance. In terms of the relationships that might arise between students and the knowledge conveyed through the curriculum,

Smith and Jackson argue that the SHP tradition – and TSRs who continue this approach – tended to treat the status of knowledge as given and unproblematic and then to focus on securing the student's access to it. Smith and Jackson argue for an RSR stance that draws upon German 'historical consciousness' traditions and for a vision in which a 'historical education becomes something more than an education in disciplinary methods and foundational concepts', but 'becomes an education in thinking about what these mean in the present'. Finally, they argue, TSRs and RSRs can be differentiated in epistemic terms – in terms of the role and priority granted to metahistorical, substantive-conceptual and individual factual knowledge. Whereas TSRs tend to regard knowledge building as an inductive process leading from the factual and towards the metahistorical (and thus prioritise focusing on the former as the key starting point), Smith and Jackson argue that RSRs should prioritise the metahistorical and an approach that recognises that children come to their studies with ideas, linked to wider society and their social contexts. These ideas, they argue, play an essential role in how they mediate and make sense of the substantive conceptual and factual claims that they encounter in class.

Nordgren (Chapter 8, this volume) engages with a number of questions relevant to how history teachers can make historical learning powerful for their students – including considerations relating to how the role of a committed and professionally competent history teacher can be nurtured and maintained.

Drawing on Bernsteinian ideas about different knowledge structures and discourses and also on Young and Muller's thinking about powerful knowledge, Nordgren seeks to develop a *relational* approach in order to mediate *between* disciplinary goals and drivers in history education and key questions and considerations arising from the wider aims of education, which, Nordgren argues, are inescapable and non-disciplinary, being set by wider societal concerns which make pressing and legitimate demands on schools. How, Nordgren asks, can we 'tackle the relationship between specialised knowledge and the normative goals of education'? He advocates what he calls a 45-degree approach – 'a metaphor for a systematic recontextualisation of different discourses in subject-based learning'. Nordgren argues against 'a middle-ground compromise' and against the idea that disciplines have equal status to wider social demands on education ('curricula precede opportunities for learning' and have priority). Instead, he argues that school 'history must actively refer to the contemporary world to make sense'.

He goes on to provide three concrete exemplifications of how this 45-degree approach might be taken forward in the context of three contemporary agendas:

- the need to develop 'normative' aspects of education 'such as democratic values and intercultural learning';
- the need for education to bring specialised knowledge to defining features of our time 'such as the Anthropocene'; and
- the need to relate disciplined learning about academic history to public history and reflection on 'how history is used in the present to influence identities, values and choices'.

Addressing issues of this nature is vital, Nordgren argues, and also something that requires attention to continuing professional development and the creation of 'sustainable infrastructure to bring together teachers and researchers and teachers and teachers' so that they can pool the expertise necessary to address these complex issues.

Sheehan and Dennis (Chapters 9 and 10, this volume, respectively) relate questions of history education and socio-epistemic justice in the context of questions of decolonisation and structural and historic inequalities.

In a New Zealand context, Sheehan sets out to explore how disciplinary approaches to history 'can contribute to wider societal aims and the general goals of culturally responsive education as well as incorporate Māori perspectives of the past'. Among the advantages that Sheehan sees arising from a disciplinary approach is the potential that it generates for exploring the historical experiences of different groups in New Zealand, where a Future 2 approach has until recently restricted the presence of history in the curriculum. Culturally responsive pedagogy has a particular role to play in the New Zealand context in helping to address historic injustices resulting from early colonialism. However, Sheehan argues, 'Without historical knowledge of the difficult features of New Zealand's past, the culturally responsive curriculum will simply provide a series of vague, superficial, ambiguous guidelines that contribute little to young people being able to make authentic connections between the past and the present or to make sense of contemporary challenges.'

However, problems arise, inherent in the history of history, when trying to use the discipline to correct this Future 2 and content-light approach to the past – the discipline has historically been associated with the European model of the nation state and with non-indigenous values

and priorities. Furthermore, the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm – key in the resurgence of Māori communities in recent decades and in their recovery from the damage inflicted by colonialism in the nineteenth century – challenges 'Western models of knowing and knowledge-construction including the disciplinary protocols of history'.

Sheehan sees a way forward, if history is given a broad aim and function, accommodating more than just narrowly academic concerns. Like Nordgren, Sheehan is interested in exploring how this can be done rigorously, so that history retains its disciplinary power, but also in ways that are responsive to sociocultural as well as to academic considerations. Sheehan points to the role that teachers have played as curriculum makers to help develop a focus on New Zealand history – often ignored, in the past, for European narratives – and sees this as having the scope to develop critical thinking and awareness and appreciation of indigenous traditions in contextualised, respectful and dialogic ways. Nevertheless, tensions remain and the question of how to integrate settler and indigenous ontologies and epistemologies will be difficult to answer – although Sheehan is optimistic that ways forward can be found.

Dennis (Chapter 10, this volume) presents a welcome challenge to the stories that history teachers tell themselves – such as the narrative about the SHP and the development of disciplinary approaches that has been elaborated earlier in this chapter. It is a challenge, also, to the narratives developed through discourses on powerful knowledge, such as the three-future paradigm and narrative template elaborated above.

Dennis enacts this challenge in two ways. First, by reflecting on the experience of teachers in their everyday lives and using this to challenge the distinctions that the three future ideal types set up – all three futures arise simultaneously and every day in educational practice where teachers find themselves thinking about knowledge, he argues. Second, Dennis uses history and historical thinking to challenge and qualify the powerful knowledge narrative. He objects to the three future model itself, arguing that it expresses a rather monolithic and unidimensional approach to history – implying, as I read it, that we should expect real historical processes to be much messier and with multiple and often contradictory lines of development. Dennis' principal challenge, however, comes through the elaboration and bringing to light of an alternative hidden history, neglected both – he argues – in the history education community's stories about itself (for example in *Teaching History*) and in the narratives about knowledge development that social realists have developed.

Dennis' challenge is a sobering one and it works, in essence, through juxtaposition. There is a familiar narrative of the development of history education since the establishment of the SHP in the 1970s that history teachers like to tell themselves – it is simple narrative (with one key line of development); it is also, by and large, a self-congratulatory one. Dennis juxtaposes a second narrative to this, with a similar chronology – the story of the contestation of racism and cultural exclusion by the parents and children of West Indian heritage in England since the early 1970s. A story in which it has been repeatedly found that this community have been excluded, denied access and often marginalised and stigmatised, not least in the kinds of history that has been presented to them in school. The fact that this is a narrative of repetition in which similar findings arise again and again – from the Rampton and Swann reports in the early and mid-1980s, through the Runnymede Trust's 2000 report to the Royal Historical Society's 2018 *Race, Equality and Ethnicity* report – is, of course, particularly telling. Dennis also notes the scarcity of discussions of these issues in the archives of *Teaching History* and elsewhere since the 1980s – something that becomes particularly telling, juxtaposed to the progressive narratives that history teaching tells itself about itself.

Just as the symposium that launched this project was drawn together by Young, responding to the papers that were given, this book ends with a comprehensive set of reflections by Young (Chapter 11) on powerful knowledge and related themes – such as the 'powers of knowledge' referred to in passing a number of times above. I will not endeavour to summarise or outline Young's comments but only to explain their purpose and their form. As Young explains at the start of his contribution, he proposed that rather than structure the final chapter around a response to the rest, we take a more directly dialogic approach. We asked our contributors to suggest questions that they particularly wanted Young to respond to that might help illuminate the issues we are addressing in this book. I then edited the questions, for example, to prevent repetition. The resulting chapter ranges widely over a number of issues – including, for example, questions about the insulation of the disciplines of education in the academy, about the relationship between Young's ideas and the ideas of Hirsch, about the meaning of powerful knowledge, and about the future of the concept.

Notes

1 A Google search for '"powerful knowledge" + Twitter' on 5 July 2020 yielded 304,000,000 results.
2 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSEs) are national examinations usually taken at age 16.
3 Michael Gove, MP, was Education Secretary under David Cameron's Conservative-led Coalition government between 2010 and 2014. The Coalition government was a temporary alliance between two political parties, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, as no party on its own achieved a majority at the UK general election in May 2010.
4 Nick Gibb, MP, was Schools Minister under David Cameron's Conservative-led Coalition government between 2010 and 2012 and 2014–15 and again under Theresa May's and Boris Johnson's Conservative governments since 2015.
5 This assumption is informed by the findings of the United States' National Academies How People Learn project (Donovan *et al*., 2000) and is commonplace in 'conceptual change' traditions of research in cognitive psychology (Vosniadou, 2013; DiSessa, 2014).
6 Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches (Project CHATA) was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and ran between 1991 and 1996 at what is now the UCL Institute of Education. It focused on 7–14-year-old students' metahistorical or second-order ideas (for example about evidence, cause and accounts). A sample of 320 students across the age range completed a series of three pencil and paper tests focused on explanation and enquiry involving paired stories differing in theme, tone and timescale and 122 students were interviewed (Lee, 1997: 25–6). The 'first-' and 'second-order' were developed by the CHATA researchers Ros Ashby, Alaric Dickinson and Peter Lee (Lee and Ashby, 2000; Lee, 2004, 2005a).
7 Earlier examples of such collaboration include Counsell *et al*. (2016), to which Michael Young and John Elliott contributed. Many of the authors contributing to this book have continued and broadened this collaboration through UCL Institute of Education's Subject Specialism Research Group (SSRG, n.d.) and through participation in the international network KOSS (Knowledge and Quality across School Subjects and Teacher Education), funded by the Swedish Research Council (ROSE, 2019), which brings together experts in the subject disciplines of education and education methods from the UK, Sweden and Finland to explore the question of knowledge in curriculum, teacher education and classrooms.

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2
How helpful is the theory of powerful knowledge for history educators?

Alison Kitson

This chapter explores the implications of the general theory of 'powerful knowledge' to the specific case of school history. Although the context in which these issues are explored is rooted in England, the questions and debates apply elsewhere as they focus on the ubiquitous themes of knowledge selection, the balance between substantive and disciplinary knowledge and the role of pedagogy. I will argue that the theory of powerful knowledge, despite its timely and valuable contribution to curricular debates, is only a starting point and that the recontextualisation of knowledge from the academy into schools demands that we make choices that are deeply ideological. While not a significant feature of their work, the social realists have provided us with some insights here but the work of defining the goals of history education and the relationship these have to knowledge and to students is ongoing for all history educators.

Introduction: Social realism as a third way

The social realist theory of knowledge provides a solution to a knowledge 'dilemma': namely that knowledge is either over-socialised and relativist or under-socialised and regarded as fixed and unchanging (Moore, 2014). Social realists provide a way through this dilemma by arguing that while knowledge is indeed social in origin, when created within disciplinary communities which draw on shared and agreed methodologies it has value beyond the individual knowledge-creator. Such knowledge in fact represents the best available at any one time, even if its

fallibility means that its lifespan may be relatively short lived (see, for example, Young, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2013; Young and Muller, 2010, 2014). Thus, social realism frees us from a position where knowledge is a given on the one hand and from a wholesale postmodern relativism on the other (Lambert *et al*., 2015).

The most helpful articulation of how this theory of knowledge – referred to as powerful knowledge by Michael Young – might be manifested through school curricula was made by Young and Muller in 2010 in their description of three possible future curriculum scenarios, Futures 1, 2 and 3. Future 1 is a curriculum based on an under-socialised view of knowledge in which there is a fixed canon of knowledge representing, in effect, the knowledge of the powerful. Future 2, by contrast, over-socialises knowledge: no one type of knowledge is deemed better than another and what matters most are generic (often skills-based) outcomes. Future 3 is the realisation of a social realist theory of knowledge in which the knowledge created and verified within specialised communities *does* play a prominent role and provides young people with radically different ways of understanding the world than they could possibly hope to achieve through their everyday knowledge and experiences alone. What prevents Future 3 from slipping into a Future 1 curriculum are three particular features: first, that social realists are not advocating a particular canon of knowledge; second that they assume that what is deemed 'best' knowledge will be in a constant state of flux; and third, that children, in learning that knowledge, will simultaneously learn how the knowledge is created and the reasons it is fallible. Thus, it is possible to argue that powerful knowledge is also disciplinary knowledge where understanding the 'product' of a discipline (that is, substantive knowledge) is integrated with an understanding of its methodology and epistemology.

What does a social realist view of knowledge have to offer school history?

It is striking how similar the vision of a Future 3 curriculum is to the reasoning behind the emergence of the so-called 'new history' movement from the 1970s onwards in England which emphasised history as both a body and form of knowledge and found ways to make this explicit to young people through curricular devices such as the second-order concepts (Counsell, 2011) and enquiry-based methods (for example, Riley, 2000). These new approaches, pioneered by the Schools History

Project (SHP), have enabled the history education community to recontextualise the discipline of history as a school subject in ways that recognise its distinctive epistemology. As Counsell (2011: 202) wrote, SHP brought 'an epistemic tradition to a pedagogic site' and in doing so it anticipated a Future 3 curriculum where children learn about the past but also understand *how* we know about that past and what the *limits* to 'knowing' it are. Without this metahistorical dimension – without the 'systematic instruction in the methodologies and vocabulary of the discipline' – school history can become a 'sentimental affair where the past is to be admired or scorned (rather than analysed)' (Sheehan, 2013: 70).

Despite the widespread, albeit uneven, adoption of 'new history' in England through the introduction of the GCSE qualification in 1988 and various iterations of the National Curriculum from 1991 onwards, this did not mean that the social realists merely confirmed what we were already confidently practising in our history classrooms.[1] In fact, when Michael Young first published his book *Bringing Knowledge Back In* (2008), we were in the throes of what felt like a sustained attack on the importance of disciplinary knowledge and the gradual encroachment of a Future 2 agenda which threatened history's place on the curriculum in all but the most privileged or highest attaining schools. This is well documented elsewhere (see, for example, Harris and Burn, 2011) so I will not dwell on it here. Superficially, it may appear that this attack has subsided since the UK's Coalition government began its educational reforms from 2010: content-poor 'equivalences' at GCSE have been challenged, for example, and the English Baccalaureate has strengthened history's place in the post-14 curriculum for *some* pupils. Furthermore, examination reforms, especially at GCSE, have broadened and increased substantive knowledge demands while retaining a place for disciplinary historical thinking.

However, several key drivers of a Future 2 curriculum remain in place in England. A core problem, identified by Harris and Burn (2011), is the damaging consequence of high levels of autonomy for schools on the one hand (even greater now than in 2011 as academies and free schools have multiplied) and the stealthy restriction of that autonomy on the other. Measuring pupil outcomes now matters far more to most English head teachers than what is being measured (Young and Lambert, 2014) and the need to demonstrate continual increases in pupil attainment to satisfy the twin peaks of accountability – national league tables and school inspection – means that the choices that schools do have become distorted. One potential outcome of this is a creeping

genericism where schools seek 'one size fits all' solutions to complex issues such as assessment, differentiation, lesson planning and progression. Thinking historically is not generic and to claim that it is reduces historical knowledge solely to information (see Counsell, 2011; Harris and Burn, 2011; Lee, 2011b; Cain and Chapman, 2014) rather than as a discipline rooted in 'characteristic non-generic organising ideas' (Sheehan, 2013: 71) such as its second-order concepts and its requirement to juggle past and present mind-sets. Despite this, generic approaches to teaching particular disciplines remain in our schools, not least in the form of the ubiquitous Bloom's taxonomy (see Counsell, 2016) which some schools use indiscriminately across subjects in order to promote 'progression', for example by privileging 'synthesis' above 'analysis'. This is not about powerful knowledge; it is a model which assumes that there is a body of knowledge on the one hand and a collection of generic thinking skills on the other which are equally applicable in history and in English, in physics and in geography. This is a far cry from the disciplinary knowledge of a Future 3 perspective. That schools are turning towards these generic approaches as a way of boosting measurable outcomes is a reflection of a broader trend in education which privileges the learning *process* – what Biesta (2013) termed 'learnification' – over *what* is being taught.

Social realism provides us with robust arguments against such trends which take us into a Future 2 scenario. However, we may also need to deploy their arguments against a different, more recent trend which emphasises the role of substantive knowledge and which often invokes social realist notions of powerful knowledge in its defence. I am not simply referring to the 'knowledge turn' here (Lambert, 2011) which has seen helpful and renewed attention on the role of strong substantive knowledge within the broader framework of historical thinking. At the level of practice, history teachers have been encouraged to think about how to help young people retain and deploy particular pieces of knowledge which enable them to make sense of patterns and trends over time though the strategic use of timelines, factual recall quizzes and so forth (see, for example, Hammond, 2014 and Counsell, 2017). Such practices are a helpful reminder of why these methods have worked well for many of us in the past (for example, Burn *et al*., 2013) and why, in situations where such practices may have fallen out of fashion, they might helpfully be revived. Mitchell and Lambert (2015: 374) referred to similar practices in geography where the need to distance themselves from an 'unambitious, restricted but enduringly popular view of geography' – which could be described as a Future 1 curriculum – has led

teachers to underplay the importance of core substantive knowledge and practices such as the use of atlases.

More problematic is the position taken by neo-traditionalists such as the former Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove and the current Schools Minister Nick Gibb who have somehow managed to enter the knowledge debate diametrically opposed to the genericists only to end up in not too dissimilar a place. For although the neo-traditionalists have much greater faith in specialised knowledge than the genericists, they nevertheless commit the same mistake of defining school history as the acquisition of a body of knowledge about which you think in fairly generic ways:

> It is only when knowledge is secure in the long-term memory that it can be summoned up effortlessly and the working memory can be freed to deal with new and challenging tasks … the more people know about any subject domain the easier it is for them to store and utilise new information creatively … critical thinking skills – such as … interrogating sources in history – depend on extensive background knowledge – about what … might be suspicious omissions in a contemporary account of events. (Gove, 2013, as quoted in Cain and Chapman, 2014: 112–13)

Cain and Chapman compare E. D. Hirsch's arguments about core knowledge (1988) – often cited by Gove and Gibb – with the history educator and psychologist Sam Wineburg, a proponent of specialist historical thinking (1991), in order to challenge Gove's position that what matters is the accumulation of factual knowledge which can then be explored through generic 'critical thinking skills'. While Hirsch's – and Gove's – position that plenty of substantive knowledge is necessary is correct, it is not sufficient (Cain and Chapman, 2014: 117). Wineburg's research points to the equal importance of what Lee terms 'historical literacy' (Lee, 2011a). For example, to make sense of what a source might say (requiring background substantive knowledge), you also have to understand why the most important things it tells you may be far from self-evident. This certainly benefits from more knowledge (for example about the author) but also from an understanding of the concept of evidence itself in order to know what questions to ask, what further sources to look at and what the relationship is between the strength of a claim and the weight of evidence supporting it (Ashby, 2011). The ultimate danger of an agenda which fails to acknowledge the role of such specialised disciplinary thinking while simultaneously arguing for

copious amounts of substantive knowledge is a drift towards a Future 1 curriculum. Unfortunately, I know of schools which in adopting a 'knowledge-rich' history curriculum have seen disciplinary knowledge – in the form of the second-order concepts – considerably marginalised.[2]

It is regrettable that we have sometimes fallen back onto the dichotomy of 'traditionalist' and 'progressive' in these debates and unfortunate that the term 'traditionalism' has been consciously aligned with the theory of powerful knowledge (Fordham, 2015). As I explained at the beginning of this chapter, social realism provides a way through a knowledge dilemma and in doing so, simultaneously provides us with a way through the associated division between 'progressive', child-centred approaches emerging from a constructivist position and 'traditional' knowledge-centred approaches emerging from a positivist tradition (Moore, 2014). Social realists, in their advocacy for knowledge, are not aligning themselves with a traditionalist viewpoint: 'For traditionalists, the knowledge-based curriculum is a body of received wisdom inherited from the past defined by ineffable, eternal qualities and beyond question. For social realism, knowledge is historically produced through collective procedures within which critique is a constitutive principle' (Moore, 2014: 37–8).

In history education, 'traditionalism' conjures a vision of history teaching and learning that the 'new history' movement rejected, a vision of school history as the accumulation of factual knowledge to be memorised and accepted at face value and which is not what powerful knowledge in the context of a Future 3 curriculum is about.

What the social realists and the theory of powerful knowledge have contributed to history education is a strong theoretical case for specialised disciplinary knowledge. It is a matter of social justice that such knowledge is made available to all young people, regardless of school or background. However, defending the importance of this knowledge is only the beginning for teachers and schools and important debates remain about what powerful knowledge in history might look like in classrooms.

What debates about substantive knowledge can social realists inform but not fully resolve in school history?

There are two problems when choosing what substantive history to teach in schools. First, there is just too much of it and tough choices must be made and second, any choice of what to teach is inevitably underpinned

by a set of political and cultural assumptions. There are two questions in particular that I wish to explore:

- How much substantive knowledge is needed for historical knowledge to be 'powerful'?
- Are some content selections more 'powerful' than others?

Let us start with how much substantive knowledge is 'enough'. There are two principles drawn from the work of the social realists that we might start with. First, given the importance of knowledge that is powerful in providing ways of thinking about the world for *all* children, regardless of their background, it is reasonable to assume that any history curriculum should be underpinned by robust substantive knowledge that takes children beyond their everyday experiences. Second, given also that in achieving a Future 3 curriculum, young people need to learn this substantive knowledge as part of a wider disciplinary knowledge that makes the process of knowledge creation in history visible, they need enough substantive knowledge to make this possible (see my earlier example of source analysis). Neither argument is unfamiliar nor, I would suggest, especially contentious within the history education community although the existence of 'knowledge-rich' history curricula in some schools suggests that there is a concern that other school curricula are 'knowledge-poor'. It is worth pausing here to consider how big a problem this might be. An analysis of the English National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and the specifications of externally examined courses at ages 16 and 18 would suggest that substantive knowledge demands are fairly rigorous.[3] Indeed, anecdotal evidence drawn from my interactions with many teachers in English schools suggests that one of their biggest worries about the new GCSE courses is an over-abundance of content. What may be the case, however, is that some teachers have inadvertently over-played second-order conceptual knowledge at the expense of secure substantive underpinnings, particularly at Key Stage 3, and that assessment may be the main culprit here.[4] Luff (2016: 41) helpfully made the point that well-meaning (and in terms of National Curriculum or senior leadership demands, often essential) attempts to define 'every tiny nuance of progression in each second-order concept' can distort the subject: second-order concepts 'can only be meaningful in … [their] implicit contribution to the response to an enquiry'. However, Luff also warns us of the dangers of over-emphasising the assessment of substantive knowledge and urges us to focus our attention on the quality of students' responses to enquiry

questions in ways that bring first and second-order knowledge together in a balanced and constructive way.

My point here is that the key to realising a Future 3 vision in history classrooms remains what it has been for many years: an appropriate balance between what Hirst (1974) described as propositional (know-that) knowledge and procedural (know-how) knowledge. Winch (2013) further differentiated between inferential and procedural 'know how', the first relating to our understanding of how and when to make inferential connections between pieces of knowledge and the second relating to our understanding of how knowledge is created. Winch identifies know-how knowledge (in both its inferential and its procedural forms) as the principal feature of epistemic ascent in school curricula and certainly the relationship between substantive knowledge and *any* dimension of historical thinking, whether it be around evidence, historical interpretations, causation or change, is a critically important one. Postponing engagement in aspects of historical thinking until students know 'enough' could potentially postpone it indefinitely as whoever knows 'enough'? Conversely, how can we possibly expect students to engage in causal or source analysis without a strong underpinning of substantive knowledge? This is the balancing act that teachers juggle every day and is a critical one for the realisation of a Future 3 curriculum. The solution, as indicated by Luff above and that many practitioners have successfully pioneered is historical enquiry in the Riley (2000) sense of a sequence of lessons based around a challenging, puzzling and conceptually rigorous 'big question' that students puzzle over and propose an answer to. Answering this question simultaneously demands engagement with first- *and* second-order concepts or, to put it another way, with propositional and procedural knowledge.

In terms of selecting content that is likely to be most 'powerful', it is important to note that a criticism made about the theory of powerful knowledge relates to the wider question of 'powerful for what?'. Bernstein (2000) wrote about an ideological space that opens up when knowledge from the site of production – normally the academy – is recontextualised into schools. For Bernstein, this had much to do with the power relations inherent in pedagogical transactions but it could equally apply to the wider educational aims that come into play when a discipline is recontextualised, aims that the social realists have tended not to engage with much. Indeed, Young (2010b) disagreed that school curricula might serve a broad social function and argues that it is not the job of schools to remedy social and economic problems which originate outside them. Instead, Young argues that the 'power' offered by school subjects derives

from their integrity as academic disciplines. However, this only helps us to decide *what* to teach if the discipline itself makes this apparent. In fact, Yates and Millar (2016) convincingly argued that even in subjects like physics where, in Bernstein's (2000) terms, the 'logic' of the discipline might be expected to dictate the 'logic' of the curriculum, there is no consensus about what should be 'in' and what should be 'out'. For example, there are tensions between understanding core physical concepts on the one hand and understanding the role and possibilities physics provides us with in life on the other. Thus, it is not the case that even in hierarchical knowledge structures like physics, recontextualising a discipline into a school subject is simply a matter of deciding the sequencing and pacing of a body of commonly agreed content. Disciplinary boundaries will inevitably constrain content choices but do not precisely define them: there is too much we could teach. In making content selections, therefore, rationales must be sought and ideology comes into play; this is partly about knowing something about the children you will teach but also about deciding what is most important for them to learn and what social values should be conveyed to them (Yates and Millar, 2016). In history, with its much more horizontal knowledge structure than physics, these issues play out even more acutely.

Maude (2016), in his application of powerful knowledge to the specific case of school geography, observed that while social realists may, on the one hand, seem primarily interested in the *characteristics* of powerful knowledge, they have, on the other, considered what powerful knowledge may *enable* young people to do. He draws on the work of Young to identify five types of knowledge in geography education that he suggests are potentially powerful:

1. Knowledge that provides students with 'new ways of thinking about the world'.
2. Knowledge that provides students with powerful ways of analysing, explaining and understanding.
3. Knowledge that gives students some power over their own knowledge.
4. Knowledge that enables young people to follow and participate in debates on significant local, national and global issues.
5. Knowledge of the world.

In a similar vein, but this time with reference to the enabling 'power' of the social sciences in general, Young and Muller (2014: 62, emphases added) wrote that these subjects:

provide generalisations that are tied, sometimes only weakly, to specific contexts; they generate facts grounded in the relatively objective methods of their peer communities. *Their findings become a resource for debates about alternative policies, and they contribute in some cases to a society's conversations about itself.* Furthermore, they make testable predictions, albeit in most cases as probabilities not certainties, and remind policy makers and politicians that the consequences of their decisions may be more 'powerful' than their intentions.

I would suggest that, despite Young's rejection of a short-term instrumentalist approach to education, this quotation does offer us a way to think about both the 'how much' and 'what content' issues by its reference to 'generalisations' which provide a 'resource for debates about alternative policies' and which contribute in some cases to 'a society's conversations about itself'. The notion of 'generalisations' in history needs some unpicking, as it might take many forms. It is possible to make substantive generalisations both temporally and spatially, for example by tracking substantive concepts such as revolution and democracy across time and place. We might also track second-order concepts alongside substantive knowledge in order to discern patterns of, say, the causes of wars or the effects of colonisation. While we need to be wary of over-generalising in history (no two events were ever identical), it could be argued that making connections and recognising themes is the *only* way we can turn history into a 'resource for debates about alternative policies' and to inform 'society's conversations with itself'. This was the thrust behind Guldi and Armitage's (2014) 'call to arms' when they urged historians to return to bigger narratives which could better inform the decision making of policymakers in the present.

Arguing for adequate breadth and depth and for children to be able to make connections and generalisations which inform the present and the future sounds remarkably like notions of historical consciousness which draw on Jörn Rüsen's work (see, for example, Rüsen, 2004).[5] Rüsen's genetic mode of historical consciousness takes the position that although the past and the present are different, a critical sense of our orientation in time can inform our understanding of the present and the limitations and possibilities of the future. Underpinning this is a determination that historical knowledge should be usable – it should have some bearing on the way we see ourselves and make decisions in the future (for example, Lee and Howson, 2009). Peter Lee (2011b: 147), who led the Usable Historical Pasts project, made a strong case:

> It is important to stress the transformative nature of history because without any argued case that history changes how we see the present and future, knowledge of the past is taken to be the accumulation of facts or stories that are necessarily confined to that past, and therefore irrelevant to anything present. In these circumstances much current promotion of history in education falls back on short-term instrumental claims.

Lee cites many practical examples to illustrate his point but the one that has particular resonance for us today regards the European Union (EU). With considerable prescience, Lee argues that if the EU were to be conceived solely as 'just a matter of shifts in the financial balance sheet which produces losses or gains in the UK' then it will remain largely 'incomprehensible' to most Britons. But with some understanding of European history and the history of post-war European cooperation, the EU is transformed 'from an intelligibly purposeless bureaucratic institution into a complex representation of fears and hopes arising from the experience of Europe over decades, if not centuries' (Lee, 2011b: 152). Lee does not use this example to argue for the compulsory inclusion of the EU on our curriculum (although it is interesting in the light of the UK's 2016 referendum that while post-war European cooperation does feature in many European history curricula, it has hardly ever done so in England) but rather as an example of how an understanding of the past has a profound bearing on the present.[6]

If we accept that the power of school history lies partly in children's ability to make (careful) generalisations about the past and connect these in some ways to present and future understandings, then the question of how *much* knowledge needs to be rephrased as how should we help children to *organise* and make effective *use* of their historical knowledge? This shifts the debate away from how much or little children know, towards the challenge of helping them to 'acquire usable historical pasts' (Lee, 2011b: 130). While the choice of what to teach remains contested, this shift requires us to accept that a legitimate aim of learning history in schools is to explain and inform the present. Michael Gove, in an interview with *The Times* about the school curriculum, argued that 'we should pull back from seeking to make content more relevant to the contemporary concerns and lives of young people' (Haydn, 2012: 15). Despite Gove's views, the role of history in explaining the present does in fact appear in the revised National Curriculum for history in England which states that 'history helps pupils to understand … the challenges of their own time' (DfE, 2013). However, as Van Straaten *et al*.

(2016) argued, while history curricula commonly aim to use history to understand the present, research suggests that this does not happen automatically, perhaps because of the shortage of guidance about how to achieve it.[7]

Drawing heavily on Maude (2016), I have explored what an 'enabling' view of the power of school history might look like in Table 2.1, identifying three types of dispositions that powerful knowledge might enable students to develop. These include being able to discover new

Table 2.1 Examples of what powerful historical knowledge might enable young people to do (Source: Author, 2021)

What powerful knowledge might enable students to do	Examples of how history might contribute to these aims
Discover new ways of seeing the world today	By helping students to understand that: • things have not always been as they are now • decisions and developments in the past shape the present and the future • things do not happen because they are inevitable • people in the past (and in the present) were/are diverse and understanding their actions is difficult but important.
Engage in society's conversations and debates about itself	By helping students to understand that: • history can help us to understand the present • history can help us think about the future • a longer perspective (that is, 'bigger pictures' or frameworks) can help us to identify approaches to complex issues in the present.
Understand the grounds for accepting or rejecting knowledge claims	By helping students to understand that: • there is a relationship between a claim and the weight of evidence behind that claim • 'history' and the 'past' are different. History is deliberately constructed by someone after the event • the past is interpreted in different ways by different people.

ways of seeing the world today, engaging in society's conversations about itself and understanding the grounds for accepting or rejecting knowledge claims. In each case I have provided examples of how history education offers specific contributions to these dispositions. I offer these examples in order to support a wider conversation about the purpose of history education in the light of Young's work and also in the light of the challenges and opportunities that we find ourselves faced with in the twenty-first century. It is not intended to be definitive but rather to acknowledge that it is time to revisit what kinds of 'power' historical knowledge and historical thinking might offer young people today. There are similarities here with work on 'capabilities' in the context of geography education which relate to 'people's individual freedoms, particularly with regard to making choices about how to live' (Lambert and Morgan, 2010: 63). If we wish to think seriously about the power of historical knowledge to enable young people to think in different ways about the present, for example, this has quite profound implications for both what we teach and how we help young people to understand and organise this knowledge.

An area of work in recent years which provides one approach to the organisation of historical knowledge explores the potential of historical frameworks as a way of nurturing a 'big picture' understanding of history to help children orientate themselves in time. This has the potential to enable students to draw on the past to inform the present and future and to gain a sense of perspective about their lives today. Table 2.2 summarises a range of interesting and diverse frameworks, some of which draw more explicitly on current global challenges than others and all of which reflect an ideological position to some extent or another, from Hawkey's emphasis on climate change to Nordgren's emphasis on migration. Howson and Shemilt (2011: 79) acknowledged the dilemma of ideologically driven frameworks when they wrote that 'the pointlessness of disconnected tales ripped from the past entails a collateral harmlessness; in contrast, joined-up accounts of the human past have greater potential for both good and evil'. The possibility of distorting the past in the service of a particular framework is certainly present but I would argue that our choice of what to teach is always ideological in some way or another as we seek to fill the ideological space Bernstein (2000) refers to when subjects move from one context (the academy) to another (the school). Shemilt's frameworks offer a more expansive approach to understanding humanity as a whole but there are as yet few examples of how to develop such frameworks in the context of a school curriculum.

Table 2.2 Possible historical frameworks to shape (powerful) knowledge building (Source: Author, 2021)

Authors	Brief description of framework
Shemilt (2000)	Outlines four levels of narrative frameworks (chronologically ordered narratives, coherent narratives, multidimensional narratives and polythetic narratives). The third of these, multidimensional narratives, consisted of three dimensions which would interlink: modes of production, forms of social organisation and cultural and intellectual history.
Hawkey (2014)	Current issues demand a framework that goes beyond the nation state. An example is climate change, which requires either a history of the entire planet (with more porous boundaries between human and natural factors) or which acts as a lens through which to view events such as the Black Death and the Industrial Revolution.
Nordgren (2017)	Intercultural learning needs to be embedded within disciplinary frameworks (rather than as a vague cross-curricular concept) and our default narrative – that of a nation state – needs to be challenged as a political distortion which reduces migrations to anomalies.

Further work on how to incorporate these kinds of frameworks into school history curricula seems imperative if one of the ways that school history can become a resource for understanding the present requires that more than a series of unconnected topics are to be taught. Previous work on blending overview and depth (for example, Riley, 1997) may well be important to draw on here too, if we wish to enable students to continue to delve deeply into aspects of the past alongside their engagement with large-scale temporal patterns and the *longue durée*.

To summarise this section, social realists cannot tell us exactly *what* to teach nor exactly *how much* substantive knowledge children need in order to realise history's potential as powerful knowledge. Nevertheless, within their definition of powerful (disciplinary) knowledge as opposed to everyday knowledge are useful principles to inform curriculum

planning and curriculum evaluation. Furthermore, Young and Muller's particular argument about the social sciences could support the need for more 'big picture history' in the form of broad frameworks of the kind outlined in Table 2.2 and might suggest that part of the answer to the question 'powerful for what?' lies in the contribution that knowledge makes towards understanding the present and informing future decision making.

What might be the relationship between powerful knowledge and powerful pedagogy?

When 'traditionalists' define themselves as pro-knowledge, they logically position themselves against 'progressives' who must therefore be against it. There are two problems with this. First, it tends to conflate a knowledge issue with a pedagogical one in the sense that, in the wider educational discourse, progressives are defined not just by an attitude to knowledge but also (and in my view more commonly) a pedagogical approach. A second, related problem is that it supposes that there are teachers for whom knowledge is largely irrelevant ('the mistake in the past has been to assume that substantive knowledge is unimportant', Fordham, 2015: 62). I think this is an over-simplification: the issue is not one of importance per se but rather rests on different issues of quantity, quality and selection. Some teachers may not have strong views about *which* aspects of the past to teach or how to help pupils *organise* that knowledge or indeed how *much* to teach, but that is not the same as believing knowledge to be unimportant (see Husbands *et al*., 2003).

One extreme outcome of the 'traditionalist' and 'progressive' dichotomy which conflates issues of knowledge and pedagogy might be a notion that teachers who adopt 'child-centred' pedagogies are opposed to knowledge and that only those teachers adopting a 'traditional', teacher-led pedagogy can truly deliver a knowledge-rich curriculum. The Department for Education (DfE, 2018) made grants available for successful schools to develop curriculum 'programmes' in history, geography and science which 'are knowledge-rich, and have teacher-led instruction and whole-class teaching' at their core. The initial call for applications made it very clear that enquiry-based proposals would not be looked on favourably (Chapman and Leaton Gray, 2018).

Moore, drawing on Bernstein's concept of 'invisible pedagogies' (which was effectively a critique of progressive education), acknowledged that 'relativism' is the 'natural epistemological reflex' of constructivists

(Moore, 2014: 180). However, the traditionalist-progressive polarity does not, I suggest, reflect the current reality in which teachers move along a *spectrum* of teacher-led and pupil-centred approaches in their pedagogic practice. That is not to deny that some teachers may spend longer at one end of the spectrum than the other but rather to emphasise that it is neither an either/or situation nor one that is necessarily associated with a particular concept of knowledge. In other words, it is possible and, I am arguing, essential, to teach a curriculum rich in substantive and disciplinary knowledge while drawing on pedagogical approaches from across the full spectrum of possibilities.

Roberts (2014) argued that 'knowledge is only potentially powerful' and that a powerful pedagogy is necessary for the realisation of powerful knowledge in the classroom. Writing in the specific context of geography education, Roberts (2014: 205) outlined some of the ways that a powerful pedagogy might enable young people to 'make connections of all kinds: between existing knowledge and new ideas; between different pieces of information; between different concepts'. In history, this requires a sophisticated pedagogy which engages students, inducts them into the world of disciplinary history, helps them to move from the familiar to the strange and supports the construction of frameworks of knowledge which make connections and generalisations possible. I have already suggested that historical enquiry is the best way to meet these challenges. This is an example where the 'traditionalist' and 'progressive' dichotomy breaks down because historical enquiries should be rich in knowledge and are likely to include teacher-led instruction while also enabling the students to be actively engaged in knowledge construction as they wrestle to answer the enquiry question. It is also an example of a powerful pedagogy which promotes a Future 3 curriculum because good enquiry questions demand the blending of substantive knowledge and aspects of historical thinking to create powerful disciplinary knowledge. Another potential feature of a powerful pedagogy in history could be the increasing use of academic historians in the classroom which makes the historians' process much more visible to students (Foster, 2016). A third aspect, which helps students to discern emerging patterns in the past with reference to frameworks, still has some work to be done but the last decade has seen more discussion around this than previously (see, for example, Dawson, 2008; Rogers, 2008).

My point here is not to claim an exhaustive definition of powerful history pedagogy but to, first, emphasise that pedagogy should not be an afterthought to curriculum discussions but instead seen as a critical way of realising powerful knowledge in the classroom. I agree with the

definition of teachers as curriculum makers who blend curricular and pedagogic decisions not just at the level of a scheme of work or a yearly programme but at the level of the individual lesson, too (see Lambert and Morgan, 2010). Second, I would question advice that conflates a 'knowledge-rich' curriculum with an 'anti-progressive' pedagogic approach and ignores decades of innovative and exciting practice in history classrooms that have provided different ways of realising powerful knowledge. We have a rich tradition of practice on which to build within the history education community which does not need to draw from false dichotomies such as traditionalist versus progressive, child centred versus subject centred and skills versus content (Lee, 2011b).

Conclusion

Social realists have provided us with a robust defence of specialised, disciplinary knowledge which we can deploy against both neo-traditionalist and genericist agendas. They can also, I have argued, help us wrestle with enduring issues of knowledge quantity and selection. For a long time in England, our focus has been on developing valuable historical thinking with occasional nods towards the need to diversify our content. But if we are to take seriously our role in enabling young people to think differently about the world and to use history as a resource 'for debates about alternative policies' which 'contribute in some cases to a society's conversations about itself' (Young and Muller, 2014: 62) we must also raise the level of debate about what substantive knowledge we teach and how we organise that knowledge. Finally, I agree with Roberts (2014) that we need a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between curriculum and pedagogy which acknowledges history teachers' roles as curriculum makers and which takes seriously the importance of a 'powerful pedagogy' which is best suited to realising history's potential as powerful knowledge in schools. This involves reasserting 'enquiry' as the most effective way to deliver a Future 3 curriculum where young people learn the best knowledge currently available but understand that it is fallible because of the social means of generating that knowledge.

Notes

1 GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education and is an externally set and assessed examination that students in England sit at the age of 16.

2 I am not suggesting that a 'knowledge-rich' curriculum inevitably marginalises disciplinary knowledge, only that I have first-hand experience of this being a *possible* consequence.
3 For example, see Oxford and Cambridge and RSA (OCR, 2016, 2019).
4 Second-order conceptual knowledge relates to history as a form of knowledge and way of thinking. Current second-order concepts in England include cause and consequence, change and continuity, evidence, interpretation, significance and similarity and difference. Key Stage 3 is the first phase of secondary school education that usually spans Years 7–9 (that is, students aged 11–14).
5 I am not the first to notice this – see, for example, Harris and Burn (2011).
6 In other research I recently conducted with Julia Huber, only one focus group of 14-year-olds out of six believed the EU to be a significant aspect of British history and all members of this group had moved to Britain from elsewhere in Europe. None of the other students thought it was an important part of the 'British story' (Huber and Kitson, 2020).
7 By contrast, in New Zealand, where the curriculum does not specify historical content and where history forms part of social studies before the age of 16, a common starting point in curriculum planning is the present in the form of current controversies or particular local issues, demonstrating an agility to respond to shifting priorities.

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3

Inferentialism in history education: Locating the 'power' and the 'knowledge' by thinking about what it is for a concept to have meaning in the first place

Catherine McCrory

The debate concerning the role of knowledge in the school curriculum has gained vitality since Young and Muller used the concept of 'powerful knowledge' to ask what schools should teach and why (Young, 2008, 2009, 2013; Muller, 2009, 2014; Young and Muller, 2010, 2013; Young *et al*., 2014). According to Young and Muller powerful knowledge takes students beyond their own experiences enabling them to predict and explain. Educationalists, however, often locate power in the appropriateness of students' understanding of the knowledge deemed powerful. Identifying knowledge worth knowing and students who know its worth seem like complementary concerns. This chapter explores why educationalists need to move beyond simply thinking of these considerations as complementary.

Separating the question of 'what we should know' from 'what it is to know' is one example of a *what–how* distinction so prevalent in education. The classification of knowledge into disciplinary product and practice is another. Educationalists, however, can only get so far with these what–how distinctions if superficially understood. I argue that while these distinctions helped us to take initial steps, a superficial understanding of this distinction is preventing educationalists from taking the next steps needed to advance teaching and learning and knowledge theorisation in education.

While there is a role for thinking of curriculum separately from pedagogy, and while it is possible to imagine an interplay between knowledge types such as disciplinary products and practices, drawbacks arise when educationalists see only distinctions and fail to recognise that the distinctions are analytically based. Separating the question of 'what knowledge students should know' from 'what it is to know' fails to recognise the difference between a representation of knowledge and knowledge itself, a failure that cannot be solved by the addition of a concern for students' meaning-making. The usefulness of the analytical separation of *what* is taught, from *how* it is learnt, or between *what* we know and *how* we reason with what we know, is diminished by our failure to fully appreciate and act appropriately upon the seemingly obvious difference between a representation and that which is represented. In this chapter, the phrase *conceptual-how* will be used to place importance on concept meaning, a matter that is at the heart of any account of knowledge in the context of educational concerns. A consideration of the conceptual-how sheds light on education's what–how distinctions helping educationalists to see their appropriate scope.

Powerful knowledge: A varied response

Working within the sociology of education Young and Muller (2013) drew attention to educationalists' obligation to offer a *truly* discipline-informed curriculum to all learners as a matter of social justice. Young and Muller valued both the practices and the heuristics of disciplines, and their products. They were concerned by the limitations of teaching dominated by conveying the *what* of reified disciplines. Fearing an under-socialisation of knowledge, they worried that concentrating on disciplines' products distorted disciplinary knowledge by ignoring experts' disciplinary practices. They were also concerned by the limitations of teaching dominated by a concern for the *how* of teaching methods and the processes by which students learn to develop new knowledge and transferable skills to face the unknown challenges of the future. Fearing an over-socialisation of knowledge, they worried that the *what* of disciplinary knowledge risked being sidelined in favour of attending to the *how* of students' learning.

Their work has been hugely influential. Powerful knowledge has been welcomed by some, for example, members of the geography education community, who felt that consideration of *what* geography

should be taught had been eroded by an inappropriate focus on *how* students learn (Lambert, 2011; Standish and Sehgal Cuthbert, 2017). Powerful knowledge was welcomed by others, for example, members of the history education community who felt the concept supported the community's sustained interest in disciplinary practice (Counsell, 2011; Harris and Burn, 2011).[1] Within other subject communities such as English, there has been a more cautious response to the concept of powerful knowledge (Yandell, 2017).

Problematically, terminology appears poorly understood in curricular discussion as proponents of largely incompatible persuasions claim to be advocates of powerful knowledge despite sharing little beyond a desire to increase the premium placed upon factual knowledge.[2] Some have hollowed out the concept of powerful knowledge by remaining closer to a curriculum of reified disciplinary product than the disciplinary product *and* practice powerful knowledge envisaged (Gove, 2008, 2013; Gibb, 2015). Thus, the concept of powerful knowledge gains support from some who, by Young and Muller's own estimation, are unsure of its intended meaning (Lambert, 2018; Muller and Young, 2019).

Others within history education share the government's desire to attend to facts, not to regress to the reified products of disciplines but to further efforts to realise the powerful knowledge. These educationalists wish to redress problems they locate within the enactment of a curriculum that already aspires to teach students history's products and practices. While there have been impressive advances in history educationalists' understanding of teaching and learning (Counsell, 2011; Harris *et al*., 2014; Counsell *et al*., 2016), research within history education also draws attention to limitations that persist in students' disciplinary thinking (Shemilt, 1980; Reisman, 2012; Stoel *et al*., 2015, 2017).[3] If those working in history education who *already* subscribe to curricular models that seek to develop knowledge of both disciplinary practices and products report that students' disciplinary thinking remains limited, we might well ask what more needs to be done – or what needs to be done differently – in order for all students to become more capable of disciplinary thinking? For some, factual knowledge is being positioned as a corrective for enactment problems attributed to an overemphasis of disciplinary practice said to have become too divorced from considerations of disciplinary product (Counsell, 2017a, 2017b).

Powerful knowledge is proposed as the most empowering curricular scenario given its disciplinary basis. However, rather than falling into the trap of under- or over-socialising knowledge, it is the relationship between the *what* and *how* of education that appears sidelined in the

concept of powerful knowledge as originally theorised. Given the ways in which their ideas have been misused to advocate a curriculum based on disciplinary product, Young and Muller have become increasingly cognisant of the curricular effect of separating the question of *what* to teach from the question of *how* students' become knowledgeable (Young, 2018; Muller and Young, 2019). The point in this chapter is that even if both the *what* and the *how* of education are recognised as important, interdependent even, a better understanding of their relationship is essential to curricular theorisation and to teachers' classroom practice. Before exploring how the nature of conceptual meaning might help, the next section explores the ways in which education's what–how distinctions tend to manifest.

Education's *what–how* distinctions

The *how* of curriculum appears in two senses: as the pedagogical *how*, the means by which knowledge is learned; and as the disciplinary *how*, the practices learners can be inducted into requiring them to use historical knowledge in the activity of making sense of the past and in understanding the world historically. The first *how* distinguishes what is to be learned from how it is to be learned. The second distinction takes various forms but for the purposes of bringing this kind of knowledge-type distinction into view I will describe it throughout this chapter in simplified terms as the difference between facts and reasoning or disciplinary products and practices. Despite this convenience, it is still helpful to note how history education takes on a specific version of this what–how knowledge-type distinction.

History educationalists frequently distinguish knowing things about the past (substantive knowledge) from the knowledge entailed in situating what we know within a framework of ideas which allows us to investigate, interpret and make sense of the past (second-order or disciplinary practice knowledge). Well-respected research in history education reveals differences between more novice to more expert historical understanding (Wineburg, 2001; Lee, 2005, 2011, 2014). Interestingly, rather than simply the quantity of facts known about the historical topic, researchers found that more expert to more novice understandings were distinguished by the sophistication of the reasoning framework within which factual knowledge or information was situated and understood (Wineburg, 2001; Lee, 2005, 2011, 2014). The distinction between facts and reasoning, product and practice, has enabled teachers

to talk about variation in student performance which is sometimes sourced back to shortfalls in the factual knowledge base *with which* the student reasons (substantive or factual knowledge) or to shortfalls in the framework *within which* the student reasons (second-order or disciplinary knowledge). Knowledge-type distinctions are also used to say that one part of a lesson sequence is focusing on students developing the factual knowledge they need to undertake another part of the lesson sequence in which the focus will be on developing some aspect of historical reasoning.

Thinking of knowledge as involving an interplay between knowledge distinctions such as a discipline's products and its practices, as advocated by educationalists such as Counsell (2018), may help if the difference between teaching for a discipline's product is mistaken for teaching for its product *and* practices. The difficulty that history educators have long faced is challenging impoverished understanding of knowledge, translated simply as disciplines' products, as if *what* we know could exist independently of any kind of practice. In this context, therefore, the introduction of practices in addition to products responds to a problem that Young and Muller are also keen to tackle (Young *et al*., 2014).

Nevertheless, current distinctions in knowledge-types: product and practice; fact and reasoning; or, as they commonly appear in history education, substantive and disciplinary or second-order knowledge, are strained and can cause problems. There is a long-standing frustration recognised within the history education literature regarding the way knowledge-type classifications can be mistaken for dichotomies (Counsell, 2000; Cain and Chapman, 2014). A common response is to claim that factual knowledge and reasoning are both essential, each mutually dependent upon the other (Chapman, 2016; Counsell, 2017a, 2017b). The idea of mutual dependence may seem helpful. Many teachers recognise how knowing facts is clearly vital to reasoning but that knowledgeability entails reasoning learners being able to work out *which* facts would be helpful to remember and *how* these facts matter in this case. Yet teachers can feel torn. They need to develop students' factual knowledge *and* the understandings necessary to engage in disciplinary-like practices; they need to use teacher exposition *and* opportunities for pupil puzzling – but how and when to do what, for whom and why? While I acknowledge that many teachers find it difficult to know how to act upon the idea of the mutually dependent relationship between products and practices, I approach the powerful knowledge challenge of realising *truly* disciplinary knowledge for all by examining how confusion about the nature of such product–practice distinctions can underlie problems of enactment. It is understandable in the context of busy teachers' workloads to see a

key role for thinking of knowledge as the interplay of product–practice knowledge-type distinctions. If, however, this is done without regard for the analytical nature of this product–practice distinction, then misplaced ideas of actual separation within knowledge risks being strengthened rather than tempered by references to the idea of 'mutual dependence' or 'interplay'. The task in the next section is to describe the nature of conceptual knowledge to show how an analytical distinction that has a place in educationalists' commentary *about* knowledge, becomes problematic if it is believed to extend to literal features *within* knowledge itself.

The power of language: What gives words meaning?

Powerful knowledge presupposes a distinction between knowledge and the activity of knowing. It also presupposes a distinction between product–practice knowledge types such as knowing facts and reasoning. But sharp lines risk being drawn too brightly. Using the philosopher Robert Brandom's (1994, 2000) work on 'inferentialism', the following discussion suggests that curricular ends or goals only separate from curricular activity, and disciplinary product only separates from disciplinary practice, if educationalists suspend consideration of what it is for concepts to be meaningful. If educationalists are to benefit from these analytical distinctions, it helps to avoid the pitfalls of forgetting their analytical basis. This matters because teachers' choices and interpretations depend on whether they think the same phenomenon, is being described under two aspects, as in an analytical distinction, or if they imagine two phenomena, are being integrated to create historical understanding.

The line of argument below is to show how what we characterise as factual knowledge or product is itself not devoid of a form of 'reasoning' described as responsiveness to inferential relations. Moreover, the responsiveness to inferential relations or reasoning that makes facts or concepts meaningful, so to speak, does not differ significantly from the reasoning we refer to when we think of disciplinary practice or second-order knowledge. The claim is that the reasoning that gives facts their meaning is the reasoning that relates concepts in wider webs of meaning. The hope is that educationalists may deploy what–how distinctions more appropriately if they see the inaccuracy of imagining that one type of knowledge, which is to be constituted differently from another type of knowledge is being integrated to create historical understanding.

What then is an inferentialist informed account of conceptual meaning? You know who I am referring to when I say Donald Trump, and you know what I mean when I say I had bacon and eggs for breakfast this morning. The words I use are about something and you know what they are about. Meaning is shared between us in the interaction of my uttering and you interpreting my utterance. But that is a marvellous thing. How is it that the concepts I use, the shapes I draw, or the sounds I utter, can be about something else? How do they come to stand in for something beyond them, and what is it that they are standing in for? The question is not, am I right to call this a cat, or am I mistaken, and it is really a dog. Rather, whether mistaken or not, *how is it that* my utterances and conceptual thoughts can latch onto that which is beyond them, and how is it even possible that you can know or derive what I seek to accomplish by them?

A brief exchange between me and my seven-year-old niece as we neared the end of the summer holidays illustrates my interest in how concepts become meaningful, that is, how it is that they can do what they do. As we walked along a neighbourhood street, my niece pointed to an unknown woman getting out of a car and said, 'She's a teacher.' Puzzled, I asked her why she thought that woman was a teacher and she said, 'Because she is wearing that teacher thing around her neck.' She was referring to a lanyard. Curious, I pointed to a nearby dog and asked, 'If that dog were wearing that sort of thing around its neck would that make him a teacher?' Not bothering to hide her contempt, my niece stood firm, 'Of course not, it's a dog not a teacher.' and, seemingly unshaken in her belief that lanyards distinguish teachers, but only among humans, that was the end of the brief exchange.

In that moment we catch a glimpse of the young learner ruling in and out a myriad of conditions and consequences. Before imagining an overly rationalistic account of such thinking, notice how she is at once both immersed in and oblivious to the 'if … then' reasoning of working out those things that are compatible and incompatible, possible and impossible. This is reasoning, yes, but a form of reasoning more akin to an implicit, reason-imbued responsiveness to implicit inferential relations, not reasoning as we might typically think of it as a conscious puzzling or even consternation over how to work something out. My niece's concepts are becoming meaningful as she becomes ever-more responsive to those things that one is entitled to think and say and those one is not. This implicit inferential responsiveness is a necessary activity in her meaning-making and concept formation. Reasoning, as she uses the word 'teacher' is not a process she undertakes *after* she has learned to

name events, objects, or states of affairs. Rather, it is this sort of reasoning activity that makes the otherwise meaningless word 'teacher', meaningful.

Derry (2017: 408) used the example of a child learning the word 'milk' to capture the simplicity of the idea that a representation is made possible by, and therefore is only as meaningful as, the learner's response to the world that gives rise to it:

> When a young child first learns a word, that word arises in a particular context and form of activity, not in a vacuum. It is already situated in a rich set of practices which gave it meaning. To put it another way, when young children utter the word 'milk' when demanding a bottle, they have already begun to form a concept of milk arising out of their contact with it within the practices of drinking and holding a receptacle. They have already begun to be sensitive to connections between the concept milk and other concepts. As a result, when the word milk is uttered, it is a response not merely to the milk that it stands for but also to a range of other concepts. The *representation* in the utterance 'milk' is preceded by a variety of *inferential* connections to other entities. The connection between the representation and what it represents is already rooted in a web of reasons.

When we say our words are not just meaningless squeaks and squiggles but that we have the ability to make them refer to that which is beyond their sound and shape, we mean that we use them to host shared responsivity to the world, implicit and inferential responses that are imbued with reason and that we come to agree upon.

In the example above, 'teacher' meant something quite different to my niece than it meant to me, something not necessarily made explicit in the initial utterance but nevertheless, present, constituting the utterance's meaning. Likewise, in the history example discussed below, the concept 'useful' is deployed; however, the meaning constituting the concept varies considerably across student statements. The statements are hypothetical but, drawing upon my teaching experience, they are typical of responses to a common question. In this example, the question, 'how useful is source A to an historian studying why so many Americans stopped supporting the Vietnam War?' is accompanied by the following source:

> Source A. Ho Chi Minh (leader of North Vietnam) speaking in 1967:
> The US government has committed war crimes … Half a million US troops have resorted to inhuman weapons … Napalm, toxic

> chemicals and gases have been used to massacre our people, destroy our crops and raze our villages to the ground … US aircrafts have dropped thousands of bombs destroying towns, villages, hospitals, schools. (From an unpublished worksheet created by a history student teacher.)

The following hypothetical examples provide a common range of student responses (S) each followed by history-based teacher analysis of the understandings entailed in the responses (T):

1. (S) Source A is not useful because the Americans are doing horrible things.
   (T) 'Useful' is not a synonym for positive or good, it does not characterise the subject matter of the source (acts of violence) but whether the source can be used to provide information about something the historian is interested in.
2. (S) Source A is not useful because it does not say anything about falling American support for the war.
   (T) 'Usefulness' cannot be read directly off the face value information in the source, it needs to be inferred from the source in relation to the question. The student wants to know about changing attitudes, there are no changing attitudes provided in the source, therefore the student is concluding that the source is not useful.
3. (S) Source A is useful because it shows the effects of the American actions on the Vietnamese people.
   (T) 'Useful' is not a synonym for true, factual or accurate, it does not characterise whether the source contains accurate information or not. The student is not relating 'useful' to revealing changing America attitudes, they are mistakenly relating it to things that happened in the war.
4. (S) Source A is useful because it shows why some Americans would have opposed such brutality against Vietnamese civilians.
   (T) 'Usefulness' may not be derived from a literal reading of the explicit text but may need to be inferred from what is said. The student has recognised a plausible connection between the information in the source and the question. However, they assume that Americans knew about the actions in the source. The assumption happens to be true in this case, but the student could be correct for the wrong reasons – the

assumption of media coverage then, given student experience of media coverage now.

5. (S) Source A could be useful to a historian trying to understand why so many Americans stopped supporting the Vietnam War because, if the American public were aware of these tactics, it could help explain why some of them might have opposed the war.

   (T) 'Usefulness' may not simply be inferred from the source because other considerations may influence whether and how much the potentially useful aspects identified from the source are pertinent. This is the most appropriate demonstration of responsiveness to the implicit inferential relations in light of historically informed considerations. (Hypothetical Year 9 student responses to Vietnam question)

Students understand what is said in the source and student statements above. Yet their words entail vastly different meanings because the meaning of the representation 'useful' is not simply inherent in the representation but is constituted by the students' responsiveness to implicit inferential relations taken to exist between phenomena in the world. I was able to ask my niece why she thought the woman was a teacher and my niece was able to share or make explicit the teacher-lanyard inferential relations to which she was responding. The relations that the students are responding to need to be extrapolated. For example, as in the first response above, a few students in their early teens often infer that 'useful' things can only relate to 'good' or positive things. To illustrate, when the schoolbag is useful for carrying books and being able to carry books is taken as a good thing, it is a short, implicit step to imagine that 'useful' refers to 'good things' not 'bad things'. The child is responding to the inferential relations which run from 'the source is about bad things' to 'the source cannot be useful'. Just as my niece understands the concept of 'teacher', so this learner understands the concept of 'useful' but they are responding to implicit inferential relations that are not appropriate to understanding the concept of 'useful' in the context of the question asked. Until that is, the student is introduced to the conditions under which 'useful' can be responded to in the sense needed to understand 'good for' *revealing* something we wish to know about, irrespective of whether the source relates to something 'bad' like an atrocity or something 'good' like a cessation of violence. It is helpful for the teacher to think of students' responsiveness to 'useful–good' inferential relations as *inappropriate* for the case in hand, yet, nevertheless, as arising for some 'reason' which the teacher can consider.

Just as my niece's implicit inference from lanyard to teacher is not fully appropriate, the concept of 'usefulness' in the statements above is clearly being constituted by a range of responsiveness which varies in appropriateness. The philosopher Robert Brandom (1994, 2000) suggested that rather than think of concepts as being meaningful by virtue of simply labelling words to individual things in the world, it is precisely this socially normative, inferentially articulated practice, in response to the world, that enables our students' words to come to have reference in the first place. By this account, representing *is* reasoning, rather than reasoning occurring only after a reasoning-devoid representing process has occurred.

Reconsidering the first *how* distinction presupposed in powerful knowledge – What is to be taught and the activity of coming to know

By an inferentialist account, explicit utterances work by being offered and taken as meaningful, that is, as adequately and accurately stocked with responsiveness to inferential relations in that moment of meaning-making. Crucially, the reasoning constituting representations varies from student to student as in the examples above. It is not that my seven-year-old niece does not know what a teacher is. I have no reason to doubt that her excitement at the prospect of seeing her teacher once term begins is knowledgeful. It is that my niece's explicit utterance is not *as* abundantly stocked with appropriate responsiveness to implicit inferential relations as it needs to be in this instance. She needs many more inferentially articulated encounters with lanyards and teachers and other occupations for her representation of *teacher* to grow and for other unhelpful preconceptions to be revealed. Similarly, it is not that the students who would utter the statements above do not know what the word 'useful' means. It is that the students are responsive to implicit relations which they take to pertain but that vary in appropriateness for the task at hand.

The important question of what should be taught, addressed by the concept of powerful knowledge, cannot be answered without answering the question of what it is to know because what is to be learnt cannot be adequately captured in representations alone because representations entail the mental 'activity' that constitutes those representations. Put differently, the concept of powerful knowledge cannot address *what* is to be taught without addressing what it is to know because teachers are not teaching a mere representation of knowledge, as if meaning were

inherent in the representation itself, they are teaching students to know this knowledge. The inferentialist-informed point in response to a misplaced distinction which imagines an actual separation between what is to be taught and how it will be learned is this – if my niece's concept *teacher* is on the curriculum, then it is *her* inferentially articulated interaction with the world when the concept *teacher* is called into play that is on the curriculum. If the concept of a source's usefulness for answering an historical question is on the curriculum, then it is the students' responsiveness to questions about the usefulness of sources that is on the curriculum. This is not necessarily at odds with a curricular theorisation that sets out curricular ambition. It is at odds with a curricular theorisation that sets out curricular ambition in such a way that educationalists can drift further away from the understanding needed to realise a curriculum with a powerful knowledge ambition. Misunderstanding can happen when educationalists equate the mere representation of knowledge with the mental 'activity' involved in knowing as if they are the same thing. The understanding needed to answer the question of what should be taught, and the understanding needed to realise a powerful knowledge curriculum, depends upon understanding representations *as* representations of responsiveness to implicit inferential relations nested within a rich web of relations which are taken by the student to be pertinent to the case at hand.

Reconsidering the second *how* distinction presupposed in powerful knowledge: Product–practice knowledge types

The limitations of the second *how* distinction between comprehending factual knowledge and reasoning can also be brought into view through considering what it is for concepts to be meaningful. Inferentialism suggests that through a reasoning infused responsiveness to the world, we come to see that to call this animal a cat commits us to thinking it purrs, has claws and is a carnivore but is also incompatible with it being called a dog or being able to fly. When we ask a child what the cat is doing and they respond, 'sitting on the mat', 'stalking the bird', 'running from the dog', we conclude, rightly, that they can use the concept, meaning they can reason with the concept 'cat'. The learner's explicit claims, their concept use, provides a window into their responsiveness to implicit inferential relations between phenomena. The crucial insight from the inferentialist-informed account of meaning is that we could also conclude

that this responsiveness is not simply what learners can do with the word 'cat', how they can use it. Rather, this use of the concept to make claims involves the very practice of responsiveness to implicit inferential relations that constitutes the concept 'cat' in the first place. According to an inferentialist account of meaning, we do not give meaning to our representations through some other activity than that activity by which we relate concepts to one another when we explain, evaluate, compare, chunk, characterise and so on. Put conversely, it is problematic to imagine that our reasoning with concepts or our relating of facts one to another, is an altogether different activity from our understanding of those concepts or facts.

The product–practice knowledge-type distinction is not redundant, only potentially dangerous if educationalists begin thinking that parts of the learning in the lesson involves a type of conceptual knowledge in which no form of reasoning is in play, while another part of the learning requires an actually distinct knowledge that involves learner reasoning. If teachers begin from this assumption about the product-practice distinction, little wonder they struggle to 'blend' what is said to be 'equally vital' and 'mutually dependent' knowledge-types. Our reasoning, understood here to mean responsiveness to implicit inferential relations, is never absent when our representations are present because this form of reasoning constitutes our representation. No need to go searching out a knowledge-type that exists somewhere other than in the historians' claims about the past and how people handle the past. According to the *conceptual-how*, it is the appropriateness of the reasoning, or responsiveness to implicit inferential relations, not its presence or absence of responsiveness that is in question since, as exemplified above, sometimes 'teacher' can mean teacher by virtue of lanyard wearing and 'useful' can mean useful by virtue of not being a 'bad thing'. Clearly the implicit inferential relations involved in appreciating the usefulness of a source appears more challenging than appreciating that people other than teachers wear lanyards, but the difference between understanding more and less challenging concepts seems to be one of degree – some concepts appear to entail responsiveness to relations which are more or less nuanced or complex. This is not the same as imagining that some conceptual knowledge involves reasoning and some does not.

The conceptual-how insight is that teachers ought to be cautious when deploying knowledge-type distinctions. For example, a history teacher might say, 'The Romans conquered Britain,' or 'The Romans had good weapons.' These are established facts. Typically, these claims would be distinguished from the disciplinary practice or second-order

knowledge involved in an explicit claim of relationship between facts, such as, 'The Romans conquered Britain *because* they had good weapons.' Notice, however, that 'Romans' only makes sense as a term of comparison – a group of people different from the Greeks but similar to each other. 'Weapons' only makes sense as tools with functions that rely on relations of opposition and causal purpose – to inflict harm. Here, the relations history educationalists tend to consider pertinent to disciplinary practice or second-order knowledge constitute the concepts that tend to be considered as related to substantive or first-order knowledge. An utterance may not explicitly refer to what we have come to call second-order knowledge or disciplinary practice, but these relations constitute such claims. For example, if I were to say, 'The Romans conquered Britain,' and 'The Romans had bad weapons,' you might become aware of an implicit causal relationship between these two apparently first-order statements through the experience of surprise. No causal concept is explicitly deployed but no doubt, if you were appropriately responsive to the relations involved in the concepts 'conquering' and 'bad weapons' you would be wondering how the Romans managed to conquer Britain if they had bad weapons. The example illustrates how asking what implicit inferential relations are in play in the knowledge and which are being responded to by students, affords a tool for thinking about teaching.

To summarise the relevance of the conceptual-how to the concept of powerful knowledge, first, there is a sense in which the activity of the lesson is not simply a matter of pedagogy but is the mental 'activity' that constitutes representations. If the 'activity' constituting those representations is sidelined, the knowledge to be learnt risks simply becoming a representation of knowledge. Second, there is also a sense in which the relationship between knowing concepts or facts on the one hand and reasoning on the other is not simply a relationship of mutual dependence between two actually distinct knowledge-types. The key claim here is that the knowledge we take to be the reasoning that students can do with their concepts, involves the same form of responsiveness that constituted the concepts in the first place.

My argument is not that knowledge-type distinctions are redundant, for I believe, rightly understood, they have a place. Nor am I saying that developing more sophisticated reasoning is simply a matter of learning more facts. This last point is absolutely crucial. I am suggesting that understanding the nature of conceptual meaning changes the task teachers think they are engaged in when teaching and the intellectual resources at their disposal. A key point is that the student's responsiveness to implicit inferential relations constituting representations is

available in *every* moment of the lesson and developing conceptual knowledge involves appropriate opportunities for students to respond to the implicit inferential relations between phenomena in the world pertinent to the conceptual knowledge to be learnt. Teachers can consider when, how and why to ask students to make their responsiveness explicit for the purposes of guiding students to become responsive to more appropriate relations between phenomena in the world. In the final section I discuss how considering the conceptual-how can help teachers and students enact a powerful knowledge curriculum.

How does the nature of conceptual content help teachers to think about the curriculum?

We have no need to problematise how our words represent anything at all for them to represent. However, we need to explore the conceptual-how for teaching and curriculum development. 'Cat' just means cat for the concept user, but for the teacher, the question is by what initial and ongoing activity, that is, by what responsiveness to what inferential relations, does 'cat' mean cat, today in this context and tomorrow in that context, and how appropriate is that meaning. The teacher labours under this concern because their job is to bring about more appropriate student responsiveness to the representation 'cat' and to the instances in the world in which the representation 'cat' is and is not appropriate. What–how distinctions as commonly construed may ill-equip teachers to think deeply about their choices and interpretations.

Teachers can think about their teaching decisions in a way that recognises how the 'activity' of conceptual meaning-making does not separate from the question of *what* knowledge they hope to teach. They can think holistically by understanding they are leveraging students' responsiveness through the *combination* of content, paired to activity, for specified purposes, for these students with a view to this outcome, sequenced in this order.

There follows a hypothetical classroom example illustrating the *content–activity–purpose combination* thinking that can provide the proxies and levers by which teachers can influence student knowledge. Choosing the content for a 10-minute segment in a Year 8 lesson, imagine a history teacher has selected an engraving from the National Portrait Gallery depicting Charles I's execution in front of crowds of spectators outside Whitehall. Imagine the teacher asks students to work in pairs for three minutes, to look at the picture and identify three things which

they notice at first glance, for example, the building, the crowds, and so on, and three things that someone might miss if they only glanced at this image, for example, the number of parents with children, the number of people that are upset.

Consider various possibilities: the teacher may have paired this content to this activity as a stimulus or hook. As the class embarks on the new topic of the first and second Stuart Civil Wars, the teacher hopes to peak students' interest and encourage curiosity. By not supplying information about this episode before engendering a pupil demand for information, the teacher is using the lesson segment to create what the American philosopher John Dewey (1910) referred to as a 'felt difficulty'.

A second possibility is that the teacher may have noticed the casual, throw-away manner with which the class disregard sources too quickly. By asking students explicitly to attend to the image details, the teacher wants to encourage students to linger over what they see. In this case, the segment has been designed to teach or test students' ability to look closely at each part of the picture and notice what they might otherwise miss.

Alternatively, it is equally possible that the teacher has chosen this content-activity pairing because they want to help students to understand the very public nature of Charles' execution and the diverse response to it. In a society which attempts to impose age restrictions designed to shield its young from the portrayals of graphic violence, never mind their occurrence, this teacher may wish the class to encounter the foreign culture of their predecessors.

Imagine how the direction of teacher–pupil discussion and the quality of the pupil learning is influenced not simply by the teacher's content and activity choice but also by whether the teacher has made their selection because:

- they want to be mindful of students' affective relationship to their study;
- they want to encourage a more disciplined approach to source handling; or
- they want to convey factual details about the period.

Is the curriculum in this 10-minute segment the content-activity pairing for a purpose for *these* students towards a broader outcome, or is the curriculum some fraction of this combination? Change the content, the activity, or the purpose in this segment, and you have changed the curriculum. It is the embodied cognitive activity of knowing how curious

it is to kill one's king this way, how nuanced the artist's depiction is, or how our seventeenth-century predecessors responded to this execution that gives meaning to the words deployed in the possible learning intentions. Through content-activity pairings for a purpose, teachers craft the conditions of responsiveness and then tune in intently for student meaning revealed in their explicit utterances. These considerations, so pertinent to the concept and realisation of powerful knowledge, are not available in curriculum theorisation, policy or practice which holds, promotes, or does not challenge reference to knowledge as though it were inherent within representations, that is, which risks reducing knowledge to the representation of knowledge by ignoring the *conceptual-how*.

Conclusion

This chapter offers tools to help teachers. First, an inferentialist-informed account of meaning to think about the nature of conceptual knowledge because teachers cannot afford to mistake the representation of knowledge for knowledge. Through concepts and words, we make our meaning known, that is, we give representation to our responsiveness to the world and this capacity to represent our responsiveness opens new possibilities for further engagement in the world. Curriculum thinking that does not consider the conceptual-how is vulnerable to reducing knowledge to the representation of knowledge. Such an approach risks adding little to curriculum theorisation that already prizes disciplinary product and practice but faces the challenge of enacting such a curriculum.

The conceptual-how explains why it is difficult for teachers to operate with a curriculum document that simply enumerates curricular ambitions, even if it enumerates both the disciplinary product and practice. Such a document can only ever offer a representation of the implicit inferential responsiveness that teachers seek. The nature of representation does not make such curricular documents unhelpful; it simply means teachers need to appreciate the limits of such documents through an understanding of how our responsiveness constitutes our representations. It is important to remember that discussion explicitly exploring the conceptual-how is vulnerable to the same misunderstanding that plagues existing discussion of curricular ambitions – it can only ever yield a representation of responsiveness, a responsiveness which still needs to be appreciated and realised. How then can educationalists

handle the challenge of documenting knowledge when any effort to document it can only ever be a representation of it? By recognising that this is so. It is not easy to notice, never mind consider, the importance of how representations stand for knowledge. We are so accustomed to representations standing for knowledge that we take their functioning for granted and do not think to ask how they do this. In fields other than education, how representations represent may not matter so long as representations do represent, but in education it is precisely the question of how that counts.

Whatever the concepts written into a powerful knowledge-informed curriculum, we fix the meanings of our concepts at the level of our mental activity constituting them, and by an inferentialist account, our explicit utterances ought not to be taken unproblematically as the simple manifestation of an invariable mental state. Mistaking the representation of knowledge for knowledge itself seems more likely while educationalists see no problem with speaking only to curricular ambition and not to knowledge formation, or speaking only to knowledge-type distinctions and not to their origins. Understanding how these matters entail each other is integral to the meaning and realisation of anything we might call powerful knowledge. Questions about the value of the knowledge being taught and the effectiveness of the methods of teaching are vital because it is the development rather than simply the occurrence of student responsiveness that matters in education, but these are not just complementary matters. The conceptual-how reveals the limitations of the 'complementary' characterisation of what–how distinctions. Curriculum-pedagogy and product–practice distinctions will become increasingly useful when they rest on understanding the nature of representation as constituted by responsiveness to implicit inferential relations.

Notes

1 The dual aspect curriculum focusing on both disciplinary product *and* practice has a longstanding tradition in subjects like history (Shemilt, 1980; Lee, 1991, 2011, 2014).

2 By Counsel's lights, 'knowledge-rich' has come to mean securing the knowledge of disciplinary product while denoting one's curriculum as 'disciplinary' includes learners understanding the practice by which the product is made and re-made (Counsel, 2018).

3 Some of the research cited is from beyond the UK; however, it could be corroborated in the British context with Examiners' Reports, the practitioner journal *Teaching History*, or teachers' own anecdotal experiences. Also, the extent of pupil learning may be variously attributed to factors including the limits of learners' cognition or effort; the constraints of broader social structures and practices; and teachers' lack of subject specialism or adherence to detrimental pedagogical approaches.

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4

Powerful knowledge building and conceptual change research: Learning from research on 'historical accounts' in England and Cyprus

Arthur Chapman and Maria Georgiou

Introduction

Dichotomies are everywhere, perhaps, as Primo Levi argued, because the human mind tends to simplify, to organise the world in stereotypes, to interpret the distant in terms of the familiar and to reach for 'a schema' (Levi, 1988: 22–3, 128–9). In thinking about education, perdurable and/or recently salient dichotomies include:

- progressivism/traditionalism;
- discovery learning/direct instruction; and
- knowledge/skills.

Like stereotypes, and other devices for navigating a complex world rapidly, dichotomies have their uses, not least in providing 'clarity' and 'a sharp cut' (Levi, 1988: 23); however, as Hegel (1991) argued, philosophy is an analogue business that paints 'grey in grey', and reality often resembles Levi's (1988: 22–51) 'grey zone' and resists binarising schemata. In addition, binary schemata can often do more harm than good, as in the case of recent history-curricular debates in England, in which politicians and policy makers have routinely framed curriculum reform in terms of a chimerical and superannuated '"skills versus knowledge" debate' (Gibb, 2012) that bears scant relation to contemporary theory or practice (Cain and Chapman, 2014).

Thinking in threes is, perhaps, a better starting point than thinking in binaries. In addition to arguing that the 'new history/great tradition' binary, that plays such a prominent role in recent debates, is untenable and over-schematised (Lee, 2014: 171), Peter Lee has shown that the 'new history' is an implausibly monolithic construct that contains at least three distinct elements – a focus on 'substantive knowledge', a focus on 'skills' and a focus on 'second-order concepts'.[1] Lee (2014: 173) demonstrated that at least three distinct rationales for school history were possible on the basis of different selections and combinations from these elements:

- Skills make history valuable for social goals in education/Historical content is merely a vehicle for skills.
- Learning history is learning a way of seeing the past which involves understanding the nature and status of historical knowledge.
- Learning history is just learning substantive knowledge.

Similarly, Young and Muller (2016: 75) modelled powerful disciplinary knowledge using three terms – 'concepts, content and skills' – rather than a simple binary and develop a three-term model of understandings of the curriculum: Futures 1, 2 and 3. These valorise, respectively, bodies of subject knowledge (Future 1), generic skills (Future 2) and a disciplinary model of knowledge consisting of discipline-specific articulations of concepts, content and skills (Future 3) (Young and Muller, 2016: 64–79).

This chapter aims to align traditions of history education research focused on conceptual change with Young and Muller's Future 3 and to show that developing powerful historical learning and historical literacy necessarily entails and depends upon a focus on the pre/misconceptions and concepts that learners bring to their lessons. These are often the 'everyday' ideas, or 'common sense', that we need to move them on from, if we are to take learners 'beyond their experience' and help them develop new ways of modelling, experiencing and acting on the world (Young, 2014: 74). Accordingly, this chapter will argue that notwithstanding the merits of the opposition of 'social realism' and 'social constructivism' in Young and Muller (2016), there is no incompatibility between building powerful knowing in history and at least one variety of educational constructivism.

Making sense: Constructing disciplinary knowledge

Constructivism often plays a key role in contemporary curriculum debates which are often polarised around it (Tobias and Duffy, 2009).[2]

Table 4.1 Some varieties of constructivism (Source: Author, 2021)

Variety	Explanation
Ontological constructivism	Entities 'in the world' are entities of discourse – there is no 'outside the text'.
Epistemic constructivism	Knowledge is made not found – it reflects the thinking of its makers about objects that they have constructed.
Disciplinary constructivism	Disciplines are historical artefacts only – they are contingent products of past socio-cognitive constructs, practices and institutions.

As Hacking (1999) argued, however, the notion of 'construction' has become so ubiquitous that it is often difficult to know exactly what it means or what opponents of constructivism in fact oppose. Outside education, we can distinguish a number of senses of constructivism, all of which might be opposed by realist or objectivist positions and some or all of which might be at stake in any particular debate about existents, our knowledge of them and the disciplines through which that knowledge is constructed (Table 4.1).[3]

Within education, we can differentiate further when considering propositions about learning, how it occurs and how it can be fostered (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Some varieties of educational constructivism (Source: Author, 2021)

Variety	Explanation
Child-centred constructivism	Because learning builds on what is already known, teaching must begin from what children already know – from their familiar everyday life-world – working out from this by analogy.
Activist/ experiential constructivism	Learners learn through experience and schooling must, therefore, consist of activities that pupils engage in during class rather than of simply listening to teacher telling/teacher talk.
Conceptual constructivism	Learners learn by integrating new inputs into existing schemata and mental models (assimilation) or by revising and reconstructing existing schemata and mental models to take account of new inputs (accommodation).

Where one term has so many senses, a wide variety of positions become possible as do numerous permutations and combinations. One might advocate some or all of the varieties of constructivism in Table 4.1 and some or all of the varieties presented in Table 4.2. Alternatively, one might maintain realist, rather than constructivist, stances on the issues relating to the nature of reality, knowledge and knowledge disciplines presented in Table 4.1, rejecting these varieties of constructivism, while also maintaining some of the educational constructivist stances outlined in Table 4.2 on how pupils can acquire knowledge about the world generated by subject disciplines. The constructivist propositions about how knowledge is acquired in learning (Table 4.2) are both logically and practically independent of propositions about reality, about how knowledge of reality is made and about the disciplines that make that knowledge (Table 4.1), since constructivist propositions about learning are concerned not with these things in themselves but solely with how children may be brought to acquire knowledge and understanding of them through educational processes.

Like all the stances outlined in Table 4.1, many of the claims about learning summarised in Table 4.2 are, of course, questionable. For example, Eagan (2002) argued vigorously against the vision of the contents of early education that follows from what we have called 'child-centred constructivism', claiming, first, that young children are predisposed to learn in a 'mythic' mode, focused on entities forever beyond their direct experience in everyday life-worlds, and, second, that we obstruct and needlessly narrow their learning by focusing on the local and familiar. Richard E. Mayer (2009: 186–9), to cite another example, persuasively argued against the assumptions about 'activity' contained in what we have called 'activist/experiential constructivism', by distinguishing between high and low behavioural activity and high and low cognitive activity, and by noting that active learning is defined by learners engaging in 'appropriate cognitive processing' which may be present when a learner is simply listening to their teacher. There are good reasons, then, for rejecting the first two types of educational constructivism outlined in Table 4.2.

The remainder of this chapter will explore the third variety of constructivism contained in Table 4.2 – what we have called 'conceptual constructivism'. Drawing on traditions of conceptual change research (DiSessa, 2014), and on a commitment to the importance of cultivating 'disciplinary' (Gardner, 2000) and 'powerful' (Young *et al.*, 2014) knowledge and understanding, we will argue that a commitment to conceptual educational constructivism is key to the project of developing

powerful knowing and 'historical literacy' (Lee, 2011) in schools. We will argue, also, that there is no contradiction between maintaining a realist stance on disciplines and other issues discussed in Table 4.1 and a constructivist stance on this aspect of learning.

Concepts of history: History education research and conceptual change

> Students come to the classroom with preconceptions about how the world works. (Donovan and Bransford, 2005: 1)

Conceptual change research is premised on the assumptions, first, that children are not *tabula rasa* but bring tacit ideas about how the world works to even their earliest encounters with the world (Mandler, 2004), and, second, that these ideas are consequential for the cognitive outcomes of these encounters (Donovan *et al.*, 1999) and can be described as preconceptions and, often, as misconceptions. Progressing in knowledge and understanding of a learning domain, on this understanding, is a matter of acquiring new information about this domain but also, and crucially, a matter of conceptual change and revision in the cognitive architectures that organise and structure representations of knowledge domains such that weak and limiting ideas (often based on common sense) are replaced by powerful disciplinary concepts (Gardner, 2000; Laurillard, 2012; DiSessa, 2014).

Although some argue that subject domains are differentiated as bodies of information only (Hirsch, 1966: vii), it is commonplace to understand domain learning in terms of domain-specific bodies of information and domain-specific concepts (Donovan and Bransford, 2005). This is modelled in history education as consisting of both first-order concepts relating to the past, such as the concept 'peasant', and second-order concepts relating to how we make sense of our knowledge of the past, such as the concept 'evidence' (Lee, 2005; van Drie and van Boxtel, 2008; Seixas and Morton, 2013).[4]

Progression in knowledge and understanding of history presupposes progress in both the first and the second-order dimensions of domain knowledge and understanding. However, the second-order dimension is critical in that it enables sense to be made of what is learned. This is demonstrated by the difference between historical chronicles and annals, on the one hand, and historical accounts, explanations and arguments, on the other. Although annals/chronicles might, perhaps, be written

drawing almost exclusively on first-order understanding – as in the sequence 'X happened' then 'Y happened' then 'Z happened'[5] – the account, explanation and argument genres crucial to historical knowing are vitally dependent on understandings of second-order concepts such as:

- causality that allow 'then' to be replaced with 'as a result of' or 'because'; and
- significance, that allow judgements to be made about the relative importance of elements in a series (Coffin, 2006).

The second-order is critical also in a further sense: 'If [students'] initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp … new concepts and information, or they may learn them for purposes of a test but revert to their preconceptions outside the classroom' (Donovan and Bransford, 2005: 1).

So, for example, no matter how much first-order knowledge and understanding children acquire about a period or event, they will not have progressed in any meaningful sense in their ability to explain it if they continue to think of historical causation as operating in a single-stranded linear chain, like the colliding billiard balls invoked in explanations of mechanical causality. This is because explaining historical events adequately entails modelling multi-stranded and webbed causal connections operating, simultaneously, over differing temporal scales (long/medium/short term) and in different ways in differing dimensions of historical life (social, economic, cultural, military, and so on) (Seixas and Morton, 2013).

There is extensive international research on conceptual development in history (for example, Limón, 2002; van Drie and van Boxtel, 2008; VanSledright, 2011; Seixas and Morton, 2013; Carretero and Lee, 2014). Greater attention has been paid in this research to second-order concepts – the key focus of Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches (CHATA) (Lee, 2005) – than to first-order concept development (Carretero and Voss, 1994). However, in many areas of historical thinking – particularly in the case of concepts such as 'evidence' and 'causal explanation' – we can be reasonably confident that we understand many of the challenges that learning history presents for pupils. Two English studies, the Schools Council History Project Evaluation Study (Shemilt, 1980) and the Economic and Social Research Council project CHATA (Lee, 2005) have both been seminal in shaping this research and in setting agendas (Lee and Shemilt, 2003, 2004, 2009, 2011; Blow, 2011; Blow *et al.*, 2012).

The case of 'accounts': Research findings in England and Cyprus

CHATA findings on accounts

Although 'accounts' – or 'interpretations' – formed a key focus in CHATA (Lee, 1998; Lee and Shemilt, 2004) and despite significant international work on children's thinking about this aspect of historical learning in a number of countries, including England (Chapman, 2009), Taiwan (Hsiao, 2008) and Singapore (Afandi, 2012), the concept is relatively under-researched, compared with concepts like 'cause' (Chapman, 2017), and it is also not as canonical as other history education concepts, such as 'change' (Counsell, 2017). 'Accounts' is not one of the 'big six historical thinking concepts' (Seixas and Morton, 2013), for example, although Seixas (2016) argued that it should have much greater prominence than it does and that a lack of clarity on the distinction between 'evidence' and 'accounts' is a key weakness in North American history education research traditions.

Accounts are representations of events in the past, in written and in other forms, produced subsequent to the events/people/states of affairs that they describe. Children encounter accounts of the past frequently in everyday life – in popular culture, in public architecture, in the news media, in family stories, in community traditions and so on (Lowenthal, 1985). They also encounter them, of course, in their history education (in textbooks, in the narratives that the curriculum presents, and in storied rituals and practices that aim to situate the present and future in past 'traditions') and in their encounters with the products of academic history, in so far as they come across this genre of historical representation (Carretero, 2011).

It is important, therefore, for history educators to understand *how* children make sense of the historical accounts that they meet and this is so for at least two reasons. First, because all history is communicated through accounts (they are, as it were, the medium of history and of history education). Second, because the accounts that students encounter are frequently conflicting – as has been repeatedly shown, for example, by research highlighting contrasts between the 'official' narratives students meet in school and the community narratives (and counter-narratives) that they may encounter outside school (Wertsch, 2002; Barton and McCully, 2005; Epstein, 2008). Contrary to what we might expect, international research on accounts has suggested that students in different cultures may share common preconceptions.

The research undertaken by project CHATA (completed in 1994 with a small longitudinal extension to 1996) asked a sample of more than 300 students aged 7–14-years-old to identify and explain differences between pairs of accounts. CHATA research on accounts – like CHATA research on other concepts – resulted in the positing of a broad progression model for accounts in which the ideas that respondents appeared to have were organised hierarchically – the more powerful ideas appearing at the top. However, the model was not intended as an assessment tool allowing a 'ladder of progress' to be developed – it simply described the patterns observed to be typical of the respondents' studied:

> A progression model can show us how most students of a given age are likely to be thinking, given teaching as it is and the ideas current in our society. It does not tell us what students must necessarily do. The changes in students' ideas displayed by a model are like the paths made by sheep as they move across a mountainside. The sheep move through the terrain in more or less regular ways, but a sheepdog can change their route. (Lee and Shemilt, 2003: 16)

Broad patterns emerged in the kinds of ideas that children exhibited at different ages in the CHATA data. Over time, 'a broad shift' was apparent:

> in students' views of historians. From seeing historians as more or less passive story tellers, handing on ready-made stories or compiling and collating information, they move to thinking of historians as actively producing their stories, whether by distorting them for their own ends or legitimately selecting in response to a choice of theme. (Lee, 1998: 31)

Table 4.3 summarises the patterns of progression that were observed.

One of the data sets from which the levels shown in Table 4.3 were derived concerned the end of the Roman Empire. Students were asked to explain why more than one date might be given for the end of the empire and how one might adjudicate between rival dates (Lee, 2001; Lee and Shemilt, 2004). The following response illustrates the kind of approach typical of Level 2 thinking: 'It happened so long ago no-one really knows when [the Roman Empire] ended … because no-one really knows when it ended it could be any time' (Lee and Shemilt, 2004: 29). This second response, however, seems to regard variation as unconcerning

Table 4.3 Progression in ideas about historical accounts (based on Lee and Shemilt, 2004: 30)

Level	Description
1	*Accounts are just (given) stories.* Accounts are just 'there' (not made). Stories are different ways of saying the same thing.
2	*Accounts fail to be copies of a past we cannot witness.* We cannot witness the past or know what is right. It is just a matter of opinion. We can never know which account might be right.
3	*Accounts are accurate copies of the past, except for mistakes or gaps.* Accounts are determined by the record and there should only be one. Where there are differences this is a matter of opinion filling gaps in the record.
4	*Accounts may be distorted for ulterior motives.* Ideally, accounts should be in agreement but often they are distorted and twisted by authors to express their biases and opinions.
5	*Accounts are organised from a personal viewpoint.* Historians do not copy the past. They make decisions about what they wish to talk about in the light of their interests (for example) and this is legitimate.
6	*Accounts must answer questions and fit criteria.* You can never have a complete account – accounts differ depending on the question asked and judgments will differ depending on the criteria they use.

and entirely explicable in terms of subjective decisions that an historian might take and, thus, exemplifies the kind of thinking that might be found at Level 5:

> Because it all depends on your opinion and whether you are thinking about the Empire physically ending or mentally ending … The Empire ended physically when it was all no longer governed by the same person, mentally, when it was no longer thought about and spiritually when there was no longer a shadow of it in people's lives, we still use Latin derivatives now so the Empire's influences still haven't ended now. (Lee and Shemilt, 2004: 29)

As can be seen, ideas at the lowest level in the model are pre-epistemic. Children at Level 1 do not grapple with a problem but merely treat differences in accounts as a given. At Level 2, there is little to be said – the past is gone and cannot be known, although we are free to opine as we wish about it. Levels 3–6 express more epistemic ideas. Students operating with Level 3 and 4 ideas think of accounts as copies of the past – ideally there should only be one and it should mirror what happened – but gaps (Level 3) and deliberate distortion (Level 4) prevent this being the case. Level 5 and 6 make a major shift – seeing histories as something other than copies. At Level 5 they vary for subjective reasons (people just decide to explore different things) and this is not considered as 'twisting' or as illegitimate. At Level 6 we have a recognition that it is inherent in the nature of history as a discipline (rather than merely a matter of subjectivity) for variations to occur: histories answer questions applying different criteria and operating with different concepts and scales and this is simply how things are in an interpretive and enquiry-based enterprise like history, in which many different questions can be asked and many different analytic optics applied.

The point of modelling pupils' ideas in this way is not to guide them through the levels – as if a progression model were a route map – but rather, to help teachers think about the qualities of the ideas that their students have and are using, and the kind of tasks they might set to help move them on.

Research on 16–19-year-old English students' understandings of accounts

Chapman (2001, 2009) reported case studies that sought to use CHATA-style research strategies to explore the kinds of ideas that older, 16–19-year-old, students had about historical accounts. Students were presented with paired accounts that contrasted in their claims about the same events or episodes in the past and students were asked, among other things, to explain why these differences in account might have arisen. In the first study, students were presented with a paired set of accounts exploring Britain's record during the Holocaust (Chapman, 2001) and in the second study (Chapman, 2009), a group of 24 students were asked to complete three different paired-account tasks over the course of an academic year and half were interviewed at the end of the year.

The 2009 study resulted in a typology of explanatory strategies that different students tended to prefer, each of which embodies assumptions about the how the discipline of history works (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Types of explanation for variation in interpretation (based on Chapman, 2009: 96)

Explanatory type	Definition
1. Authorial explanation	Explanation in terms of authors' backgrounds or background beliefs
2. Archival explanation	Explanation in terms of the variable or limited nature of the archive available to historians
3. Impositionist explanation	Explanation in terms of variations in how historians imposed their preconceptions on the record of the past through their interpretations
4. Hermeneutic explanation	Explanation in terms of variations in how historians construed or constructed the meaning of the record of past
5. Inquisitorial explanation	Explanation in terms of variations in the questions that historians asked about the past

In this model, as in Lee and Shemilt (2004), we can see progression in the understanding of the active roles that historians can play in interpreting the past. In the first two levels, things outside the historians account for variations in what they write (the historians are shaped by their backgrounds and this explains variation, or differences in the archives caused the difference in the accounts). At Levels 3 through to 5, historians are active – at Level 3 nefariously (imposing biases and agendas) and at Levels 4 and 5 legitimately, construing meaning differently when reading sources (Level 4) and making different meanings because they are asking different questions (Level 5).

The following observation, by a student explaining variation in two accounts of 'Britain and the Holocaust', exemplifies 'authorial explanation': the accounts differ because their authors have different experiences/life histories (Chapman, 2001: 52–3).

> That two accounts such as these could exist must be something to do with the way in which the authors of these two accounts have directly experienced or have learned of the war/Holocaust. The two authors could come from different countries. (Student 1)

In the following extract – from Chapman (2009: 104) and from a task based on texts about the 'Ranters'– we can see a combination of ideas.[6]

> Both Account One and Two are written by two different historians, who it is possible to suggest, would have differing opinions. Noticeably, they are also written at different times … Account One was written in 1975 and Account Two in 1987. Perhaps, in this time difference there was room for differing opinions to come to light that perhaps would have influenced … the author of Account Two, or not been accessible to the author of Account One …
>
> Therefore, both historians would have perhaps had a range of different and contradicting evidence and research to draw on, especially seeing as the two sources were published at varying times and the opinion of the historian, perhaps due to their political ideas, would have influenced how they interpreted this research. (Student 2)

Like Student 1, Student 2 invokes facts about the historians or the times in which they lived (which differed) and uses these to explain the sense that they make of the record (for example, 'differing opinions … influence … the author'). They also represent the historians as active to a degree – their political ideas influencing 'how they interpreted this research'. Unlike Student 1, then, we can see some historian's activity here, but it is minimal and perhaps simply a matter of 'imposition'.

The following explanation – again from the 'Ranter' data set (Chapman, 2009: 105) – shares features with Student 2's explanation for account variation.

> It is possible for two accounts to differ so wildly over the same issue, but for it to happen there need to be special circumstances. This would probably revolve around the evidence. With a topic that is relatively limited, and … out of the public eye, evidence would probably be limited. When this evidence is too vague, or from a discredited author or even too controversial, it can provoke different reactions.
>
> Here we have a case of a discredited author – Abiezer Coppe, who is quoted as a major source in Hill, the author using him to prove two points in the short passage. Davis, however, discredits Coppe … Whereas Mr Hill believes Coppe's work, Mr Davis obviously does not, hence the obvious difference in their accounts. (Student 3)

They begin presenting the historians as passive – shaped by the archive (it is the limitations or the archive that are active – they 'provoke different

reactions') – rather as Student 2 had in respect of opinions at the time. They then move on, perhaps, towards some genuinely methodological insights that may take us into territory where we can start to explore history as a rational practice: the accounts differ because of variable decisions that *the authors have made* about whether or not to treat Abiezer Coppe as a credible source of information about the past. We are moving into the 4th level in Table 4.4, perhaps and into 'hermeneutic' explanation.

By contrast with Student 3 who makes no reference to 'impositionist' ideas, and to Student 2, who made some reference to historians imposing their ideas on the record, Student 4 put imposition at the centre of many of their explanations and it figured centrally in their response to the 'Ranters' task (Chapman, 2009: 109):

> I imagine these 2 accounts to be different primarily due to the fact that the historians have different purposes. Account 1 *WANTS* the 'Ranters' to be true in order to use them as material for his book … Similarly, account 2 *WANTS* the 'Ranters' to be fictional in order for them to be used as proof of 'Myths' in his/her book. Both need the story of the Ranters to fit their purpose, and have interpreted it to do so.

On this account, historians do not so much have cognitive interests as personal and/or perhaps material ones (to produce books, and perhaps we are expected to conclude, to profit from doing so). They are active – they have 'purposes' – and history writing is simply an instrument operation to serve those purposes with no intrinsic principles of its own.

The following two examples – from the same student's response to the 'Holocaust' and 'Ranters' 2009 data sets (Chapman, 2009: 117) – show a much clearer example of a 'hermeneutic' approach than was present in Student 3. In this case, *the decisions that historians make* are much more clearly seen as shaping *the sense that they make* of sources.

> The facts are just interpreted in different ways … just because … there were some anti-Semitic sections … does not mean that there could not have been pro-Jewish feeling too. The discussion of the censoring of news broadcasting during the war does not rule out pro-Jewish feeling in Britain … the anti-Semitic element could have been limited to just a few. (Student 5)

> It is possible for there to be two such different accounts of the same issue because different people interpret evidence in different ways.

Account one has accepted the sources at face value, believing exactly what they say about the Ranters. Account two, however, seems to have tried to look deeper into where the evidence comes from, the authors, their backgrounds and the number of sources, which has allowed him to come to his conclusion.

It seems to me that such a different view can arise on one issue because there are few sources and so little evidence of the Ranters existence.

The accounts were also written at different times, between 1975 and 1987 new evidence could or could not have changed the way the situation looked and could be interpreted. (Student 5)

The following final two examples (Chapman, 2009: 121) illustrate the final level in Table 4.4, namely the 'inquisitorial' approach. This may perhaps be understood as adopting a Collingwoodian stance to historical interpretation and as recognising that making sense of the past involves asking and answering questions, triggering a 'logic of question and answer' in which questions shape and delimit what historians say (Collingwood, 1939).

Although the two accounts are not written at particularly different times … the titles of the two books … are perhaps a key to their differing accounts.

Account One is *The Making of The English Working Class*. This would coincide with the fact that Account One focuses largely on the fault of the middle class … In contrast, Account Two comes from *Aristocracy and People*, which would perhaps be more focused on the upper middle classes or aristocracy's role in the event rather than the plight of the working class.

Therefore, I believe that the fact that the two accounts are approaching the 'Peterloo' event from the viewpoints of two differing classes allows for the two differing accounts of the same issue. (Student 6)

Although the two accounts seem to differ in their perception of Britain's role … in the 1930s period, both accounts are written in 1999 and therefore presumably would benefit from the same kind of primary and secondary evidence and research. However, Account One is an article from the *Modern History Review* and therefore perhaps would have less room for constant debate surrounding this issue and would perhaps need to make … broader and sweeping

> statements regarding the treatment of Jews during the Holocaust. Whereas Account Two is an extract from a book debating specifically Britain's role in the Holocaust and therefore would perhaps be more focused [on] … the actual role of Britain in the Holocaust rather than any other country's role. (Student 6)

Both of these responses very clearly demonstrate awareness of the role that questions play in shaping answers. Differences in historians' appraisals of the Peterloo Massacre are explained in terms of the foci of the two books under examination, which are held to take a different perspective and thus to report different insights. This is a sophisticated insight but perhaps not as sophisticated as the one that follows, which sees that questions whose foci differ may have differences in scope and lead those who ask them to come to frame very different judgements: whereas one book's focus leads it to evaluate the actions of one country only, the other book's focus leads it towards broad comparative judgements on the actions of that country and others.

In some senses, Chapman's categories reflect more sophisticated thinking than the categories developed by Lee and Shemilt (2004) and, of course, one might expect this with 'Advanced level' (16–19-year-olds) rather than 7–14-year-olds in primary and lower secondary school. There are clear overlaps, however, and much commonality in the ideas mapped on both. A key difference between the 'impositionist' responses and the 'hermeneutic' and 'inquisitorial' responses is that the former still operate nearer to Level 4 on the Lee and Shemilt model than to Levels 5 and 6 (Table 4.3). The more explicitly theorised 'hermeneutic' and the 'inquisitorial' explanations (Students 5 and 6, respectively), however, very clearly operate with what Lee and Shemilt would call Level 6 ideas.

Cypriot research on 17–18-year-old students' understandings of accounts

Georgiou's doctoral research (Georgiou, 2020), focused on secondary students' understandings of 'accounts' in Cyprus and explored this issue using pencil and paper tasks, based around texts which gave contrasting accounts on the same topic, and focus group interviews in which issues arising in the pencil and paper tasks are further explored. We focus on one aspect of the data here relating to the non-Cypriot content and to the question of why differing accounts of the same issue can arise. Pairs of responses from two of the schools where research was conducted are

selected for analysis below. These cases have been chosen to reflect the range of responses in the data sets.

Students 7 and 8 were both in the same school. Student 7's written answer explained why there were differing accounts of World War I as follows:

> The two historical accounts have enough common elements, they both refer to the fact that all the countries are more or less responsible for the war because none was willing to compromise, also in both accounts it says that no country didn't want the war, and that the war started with Austria and Serbia; however, they differ in the most crucial point [which is] that the main responsible for the war is Germany.

Student 7 models the disagreement between the accounts as relating to attributions of 'blame' but they fail to clearly answer the question, presenting a summary of the points of disagreement rather than an explanation of the root of that disagreement. When interviewed, they began to offer an explanation for the existence of differing accounts, suggesting, first that the accounts differed because their authors may have different interests in the present which may cause them to represent the past differently:

> Maybe … one historical account was written by people with different interests from the one side, and the other [account] was written by people from the other side – the opposite side, with different interests. (Student 7, focus group comment)

There is no suggestion, in Student 7's comments so far, that history involves enquiry or an open-ended process whose outcome might not be predicted in advance. History writing is a matter of judging and apportioning blame and it involves taking sides that align with your interests. Student 7 did, however, go on to suggest that:

> They might have been written at a different time, written after certain facts came to the surface ... And new facts are available and more sources have been written.

The environment in which side-taking and judging takes place changes over time, then, as more facts 'surface' and become 'available'. It is not

clear what, other than time, might be driving this surfacing process, however, and it lacks a clear agent.

Student 8 explained differences in the two accounts by arguing:

> Both [accounts] describe how we got to World War I; however, I would say that the first is more objective since it presents all the sides, while the second refers only to the responsibility of Germany, in a more subjective way I would say.

Again, this answer is as much a description as an explanation of difference; however, it is clear that the difference is attributed to differences in the position of authors' approaches to the task along two scales: objectivity/subjectivity and comprehensiveness/selectiveness. When interviewed, Student 8 still accounted for difference in terms of authorial subjectivity, adding an additional element of lived experience to explain the prevalence of subjectivity:

> Maybe some people have lived these facts so they see them from a subjective point of view … because when you live something and you experience it you are not completely objective, and other [people] might have written years later on, so they had taken the sources and [they] are more objective and more, more not involved.

Later in the focus group, Student 8 responded to Student 7's explanation for variation in terms of different interests as follows:

> I will agree with what Student 7 said before. It is also [the factor of having] different interests, maybe at some point when someone goes to write they want to serve political or economic interests and for this reason to go and twist [things], to write differently a historical event – one reason. Another reason is this … he might have read some other sources … Or he might have heard stories which describe a specific fact on the one, on the one side, and not know all the background, so they see it from a different point of view.

Student 8, then, explains variation almost entirely in normative terms (degrees of objectivity/subjectivity and comprehensiveness/selectivity) and explains the stances that authors take on these axes in terms of degrees of personal involvement in the past or more or less deliberate distortion to serve the interests of authors. There is no clear reference to cognitive issues – to enquiry, to the interpretation of source materials or

to anything indicating a developed sense of historical evidence here. Finally, and perhaps echoing Student 7, reference is made to differences in the completeness of authors' information ('stories' they may or may not have happened to have 'heard'). In the focus group, Student 8 offered one final observation:

> Like now that they … something with the British … that there is an archive which goes every year, it gives out information but it goes way back. So, by the time we get to the year that includes some specific facts, then we might find information that we didn't know at the moment.

Again, although this last comment appears to refer to archives and, perhaps, to the notion that documents are declassified over time, increasing the amount of evidence available to historians, there is, nevertheless, little indication here that historians enquire, interrogate materials or draw conclusions from them. Some historians just happen to benefit, it would seem, from an increase in information.

Overall, then, neither Student 7 nor Student 8 seem to have a developed sense that history is a cognitive and probative enterprise in which historical knowledge is constructed through the use of questions, sources and inferences from sources. Many of the ideas present in their responses are consistent with authorial, archival or impositionist explanations (Table 4.3) and history is understood here in terms of subjectivity or the imposition of interests and biases. Student 8 makes more reference to source materials than Student 7 although there is little indication that either student thinks of historical sources in evidential rather than in informatic ways, as resources to be interrogated and interpreted.

Students 9 and 10 were in a different school. Student 9 only completed the written task, and Student 10 completed the written task and took part in a focus group.

Student 9 responded to the written tasks as follows:

- Historical accounts might have had few sources or sources from each country.
- Many times what is written are things that do not apply, and they are considered trustworthy sources.
- Each country transcribes things as she sees them.
- Things are written to accuse one country and the other to seem innocent for their own interests.

First, Student 9 explained variation in terms of differences in source materials available – 'Historical accounts might have had few sources or sources from each country'. One account might have fewer sources than another or sources relating to one country only: it is difficult to construe history as sources can be variable, limited and/or one-sided. Student 9's second observation is ambiguous – they may be suggesting that irrelevant or erroneous sources are sometimes used as if they were reliable sources and that this leads to variations in accounts or they may be suggesting that historians are driven by conscious or unconscious bias leading them to make biased selections from sources ('Many times what is written are things that do not apply, and they are considered trustworthy sources'). Their third reason for disagreement is phrased in revealing ways ('Each country transcribes things as she sees them'). On the one hand, it looks like an explanation of conscious or unconscious perspective (countries see things from their different perspectives). It is countries – not historians – who are active here, however, and they are active in 'transcribing', a term that suggests that the text of history already exists 'out there' in reality and that history simply reprises this information (albeit in various partial forms). Student 9's final move continues to understand history as written by nations, not historians, but now national subjectivism (understanding things as each country 'sees them') morphs into explicit partisan action that aims to serve national self-interest by adapting history to fit instrumental purposes ('Things are written to accuse one country and the other to seem innocent for their own interests'). There are many continuities between Student 9's ideas and the explanations for variation in accounts offered by Student 7 and Student 8 – they clearly understand history as involving the more-or-less conscious imposition of preconceived meanings on the past. However, whereas reference to historical sources came late in Student 7's and Student 8's explanations for variation, sources figure in the first two of the four observations that Student 9 makes. Nevertheless, there is little indication in the language that Student 9 uses that they have moved beyond an informatic understanding of historical sources – there is nothing here to indicate enquiry, interrogation and inference and history is nearer to power struggles in politics and international relations than to a probative process of disciplined enquiry in Student 9's responses.

By contrast with the three Cypriot cases discussed so far, Student 10's written answer talked explicitly about interpretation:

> The influences that exist in each person that investigates the historical facts, that is, background, environment, etc., will certainly

> affect the way they will connect the knowledge he learns. Also, maybe his research focuses on specific periods or elements so that they don't allow a wide knowledge of the facts, so the research and the conclusion are not 100% correct.

They model the authors of histories as active and put them in control of a number of verbs that clearly indicate an understanding of history as enquiry – they 'investigate', 'connect … knowledge' and make decisions about the focus of their 'research'). Perhaps we can see a clear hermeneutic move in Student 10's emphasis on a central issue of historical writing: *connecting* information. However, and despite this clear emphasis on cognitive activity, they also clearly model the writers of history as passive – as acted upon and influenced by their personal 'background, environment, etc.' which 'will certainly affect' how they conduct research and interpretation. In addition, they also explain account variation in terms of inadequacies in the historians' knowledge – historians may have a narrow focus or perspective that prevents them from representing their topic fully and adequately ('maybe his research focuses on specific periods or elements so that they don't allow a wide knowledge of the facts, so the research and the conclusion are not 100% correct').

In their interview answer, Student 10 explained account variation in the following terms:

> I think more it has to do with how, the one who will approach a specific historical event, how he will approach it from which side – let's say he might focus more on the causes, or to, let's say to some countries. According to his environment let's say, where he was influenced from, where there are better, where let's say he can learn more things – let's say in one country he might learn more information than the other and so to them more holistically from the one side, but from the other he might not get the information he needs, and in the end to have different things from each [other].

Here, again, Student 10 recognises that writing history is an active process of enquiry that involves a number of decisions (about which 'specific historical event' to 'approach' and about which, 'focus' to take – 'on … causes, or … countries'). However, as in their written answer, these perceptions are combined with a non-cognitive 'impositionist' and a non-cognitive contingent model of how historians work – historians' writings are shaped, first, by their backgrounds (their 'environment' and

'where' they were 'influenced from') and, second, by the fact that archives might just happen to be better supplied in one context than in another ('where there are better, where … he can learn more things … in one country he might learn more information than [in] the other and … from the other [side] he might not get the information he needs'). For this student, then, we can say that history is perceived as an active process and historians are understood hermeneutically as interpreters. However, they are also understood as shaped by process they do not control – background influences on them and contingent facts about the context in which they conduct their research. Student 10's answers are of particular interest because they were typical of a number of students' answers, which simultaneously made sophisticated moves, but which were also held back by less powerful and less sophisticated ideas that inhibited their developing understanding of history.

Accounts research: Conclusions

There are a lot of commonalities in the English and Cypriot data, suggesting shared understandings and misunderstandings of the nature of history despite differences in language, culture and context. It is common to find impositionist ideas in both, for example in Students 2 and 4 and in Students 7–9, and an underlying assumption, in at least some of these cases, that there might be one common account of the past were it not for distortions introduced by biases, by interests or by aspects of the backgrounds of the authors of historical texts. Similarly, developed ideas about how historians actively create historical knowledge are relatively rare in both data sets – largely absent in Students 1 and 4 (England) and almost entirely absent in Students 7–9. Where these ideas are present, in the Cyprus data (Student 10) the ideas lack the sophistication found in the English data (Students 3 and, particularly, 5 and 6). Student 10's responses pull in two directions at once – we can see evidence of ideas about history as active interpretation and interrogation of the record of the past in their comments, but also evidence of a less powerful model of what history is, in which historians are spoken through by forces relating to their backgrounds and contexts (ideas apparent in comments by Student 2 and others). Although the chapter leaves us with questions to address, including why there are differences in the relative sophistication in Cypriot and in English students' thinking, it very clearly points to the fact that pupils in both contexts come to their lessons with misconceptions and preconceptions about the discipline of history.[7]

Powerful knowledge building and conceptual change research

'Powerful knowledge' is powerful, on Young's account, when and because it enables students to go beyond the limits of their everyday experiences and concepts and develop knowledge of subject disciplines 'as the most reliable tools we have for enabling students to acquire knowledge and make sense of the world' (Young *et al*., 2014: 67–9).

We can see evidence of many everyday commonsensical ideas in many of the student texts analysed above, for example, the commonsensical but flawed idea that there are 'two sides' to every story, controversially deployed in August 2017 by the president of the United States when dealing with controversy over racist incitement in Charlottesville (Merica, 2017). We can also get a sense – in the lack of any clear conception of historical evidence in many of the student responses – of the distance that separates everyday commonsensical ideas about knowledge construction and the 'counter-intuitive' and 'unnatural' nature of disciplined historical knowing (Goldstein, 1976; Lee and Shemilt, 2004; Wineburg, 2007).

Bracketing tensions between social constructivism and the social realism integral to Young's powerful knowledge paradigm and the ideas outlined in Table 4.1, this chapter has argued for a convergence of aims between the development of children's grasp of powerful knowledge and 'conceptual constructivism' (the third sense of 'educational constructivism' explored in Table 4.2), linked to conceptual change paradigms and the identification of preconceptions and misconceptions. There is not room in this chapter to explore interventions building on conceptual change insights (Chapman and Goldsmith, 2015; Chapman, 2016). The chapter's ambition was narrower in scope and will have been achieved if we have succeeded in:

- showing that there is nothing commonsensical about developing subject-specific conceptual aspects of powerful knowledge;
- pointing to the complex tacit and explicit preconceptions and misconceptions that students are likely to hold about historical knowing; and
- showing that these preconceptions and misconceptions can hinder powerful knowledge development in history classrooms, unless they are carefully diagnosed and systematically addressed by teachers expert in disciplinary thinking and cognisant of the challenges that mastering it can pose for novices.

Notes

1 Cain and Chapman (2014: 2–7) made a similar argument, depending heavily on Lee.
2 The cover of Tobias and Duffy (2009) presents two opposed podia entitled, respectively, 'constructivist' and 'explicit instruction' – a graphic that occludes the multiple continua between these two polarities.
3 The tables that follow were inspired by the typological precision of Harré and Krausz's *Varieties of Relativism* (1996). The varieties of constructivism and of educational constructivism outlined in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 are ideal types posited to enable analytical clarity.
4 The first-/second-order distinction is Lee (2005). Van Drie and van Boxtel (2008) described second-order concepts as 'meta-concepts' and Seixas and Morton (2013) referred to them as 'historical thinking concepts'. In all three cases, the underlying idea remains constant – learning history involves mastering a large body of information but also, crucially, learning how to process and make sense of this information by learning how to construct and evaluate knowledge claims (evidential reasoning), how to construct historical explanations (causal, empathetic and intentional explanation), how to evaluate historical significance, and so on.
5 We say 'perhaps' here because the 'then' in an annal or chronicle depends on low-level chronological understanding, showing that even the simplest form of historical knowledge very probably depends upon second-order structuring as a condition of possibility.
6 The 'Ranters' were a group of religious radicals who flourished during the English Civil War and Commonwealth in the middle of the seventeenth century.
7 We have yet to consider what might explain divergences between the two student samples. It seems probable, however, that their respective ages (the English students are a year older in many cases) and differences in curricular and pedagogic traditions in the two contexts play a role.

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5
Disciplinary knowledge denied?

Richard Harris

Introduction

Many chapters in this book are premised on the merits of young people being introduced to history as a form of disciplinary knowledge. This chapter, however, takes a different perspective and looks first at the extent to which young people have access to history education and second at whether this education actually reflects a disciplinary approach to the subject. To do this, the chapter draws on two different studies. One set of data, from a longitudinal series of large-scale surveys (conducted on behalf of the Historical Association (HA) in the UK), focuses on the decisions that schools and the history departments within them make about how to construct and deliver their curriculum.[1] The other set of data, which consists of schemes of work and interviews with 10 heads of history departments in the south of England, looks more closely at the type of historical knowledge students actually encounter in the curriculum in the first two or three years of their secondary schooling.[2]

Schools and curriculum pressures

Structural issues within the education system (particularly issues relating to performativity and methods of arms-length governance) have a major influence on what schools do, as do the challenges presented by social inequalities, financial resourcing and curriculum structures (see, for example, Young, 2018). These all have the potential to help or hinder access to a history education. Although Young (2014: 8) argued that

examining the curriculum and the type of knowledge that is appropriate is 'the pre-eminent issue for all of us in education', such deliberation can easily get sidelined as other considerations and pressures appear to attract more attention from many policymakers, senior school leaders and teachers.

In a period of performativity, when a school's outcomes are subject to extensive external scrutiny, it is not surprising that many schools appear to be caught between meeting the accountability standards by which they are judged and enacting their educational ideals; or that some should tend to prioritise narrow, measurable academic outcomes rather than the overall educational experience of young people (Braun *et al.*, 2010; Solomon and Lewin, 2016). Nowadays, the pervasive nature of accountability measures can present a conundrum for many schools as they balance what is best for the reputation of the school as judged by academic outcomes (Adams, 2017) and what might be considered best for individual students. These tensions play out at a practical level in many English secondary schools, as a variety of curricular decisions have to be made: about how much curriculum time to give to different subjects; about who teaches these subjects and to which year groups; whether students get two or three years of teaching devoted to examination courses (with a direct impact on how much time is given to earlier stages of secondary education); and whether all students have access to a subject beyond the lower years of secondary schooling. All of these considerations can directly and indirectly affect the access a student has to an historical education, yet comparatively little is known about how schools 'do' curriculum, especially at the subject level; what decisions are taken; and what impact the wider policy context has on the extent and nature of students' experience of different subjects. The first set of data is used to explore the decisions schools make.

History teachers and the curriculum

Once schools have decided what degree of access young people have to a history education, the next issue is what sort of approach is taken to that education. Here we can usefully draw on the notion of three 'futures' (Young and Muller, 2010) to distinguish different approaches. An emphasis on 'Future 1' would see a strong focus on acquiring substantive knowledge about the past, where such knowledge is seen as being largely uncontested and unproblematic. 'Future 2' would see an emphasis on 'generic' skills and forms of thinking. A 'Future 3' model

would adopt a more explicit disciplinary approach, looking beyond the presentation of substantive knowledge to consider *both* the 'second-order' concepts that serve to structure the way in which the subject is understood (concepts such as causation or change and continuity), *and* the processes by which claims to knowledge are made (for example, Lee, 2011). The latter emphasis on how claims are made in history, and their tentative and evolving nature, is often seen as the most obvious manifestation of history as 'powerful knowledge'. Young and Muller (2010: 21) argued, for example, that disciplines must 'possess legitimate, shared and stably reliable means for generating truth' for knowledge to be 'powerful'. More recently, Muller and Young (2019) have also acknowledged that engagement with second-order concepts, such as change and continuity, also aligns with notions of powerful knowledge. The ability to make connections across time to explain events and to compare and contrast developments, allows people to develop new insights, and it is 'the quality of the argumentation and "judgment-making" [that] characterises what History is all about' (Muller and Young, 2019: 207).

As a result of the way in which the history curriculum has developed over the past 50 years in England, it is often assumed that a disciplinary approach is widespread. In particular, the Schools Council History Project, developed in the 1970s (and later known as the Schools History Project or SHP), advocated both an emphasis on students' understanding of the process of change and continuity in human affairs (in order to make sense of their own place in time) and engagement in the process of historical enquiry – working directly with sources and seeing how the past is constructed. Such an approach was embedded in the GCSE examination specifications and assessments, which were introduced in 1986, and in various iterations of the National Curriculum for history in England since 1991.

How the subject is approached is clearly within the remit of the teacher to decide. As Mitchell and Lambert (2015) argued, teachers are 'curriculum makers', as they get to interpret and enact the curriculum, which students experience. Teachers therefore shape what parts of the curriculum students encounter, the depth in which different aspects are studied, the type of knowledge that is developed, all of which has an impact on how students see and understand the world in which they live. However, little is actually known about what teachers actually choose to teach and the extent to which they do adopt a disciplinary approach to history teaching, and it is this issue that is explored in the second set of data.

Schools and curriculum design

Data on what actually happens in the school curriculum is generally sparse. One important source that can provide some insight, is the annual survey that the HA has been conducting in England since 2010 to try to gauge the health of the subject. The survey is sent to all secondary school history departments in England (3,000 schools approximately), and the response rate varies from around 10–20 per cent per year (which seems to depend on whether significant changes are in the offing). The survey itself is completed online and typically contains between 50 and 60 items for response. For the purposes of this chapter, data are drawn from surveys conducted between 2010 and 2018, although most data reported here tends to come from the more recent surveys.

Questions seek background information on the schools (for example, school type, age range of pupils, size of school), descriptive data on curriculum arrangements (for example, length of key stages, amount of time allocated to the subject, options systems, GCSE and A-level take-up), and opinions about developments.[3] Most questions offer a series of closed responses, but participants do have the opportunity to provide qualitative comments to allow elaboration on the thinking behind particular decisions in schools. Some questions are asked year on year, allowing trends and patterns in some areas to be identified, while others are specific to particular years (which explains why some tables will present data from different years). A number of key findings related to how schools offer history in the curriculum are presented below.

Structural issues

Curriculum models

One way in which a school can either open up or restrict access to a subject is through the organisation of the curriculum. Under the New Labour government (in power between 1997 and 2010), schools were given the freedom to experiment with different ways of presenting the curriculum, which allowed integrated approaches such as the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce's (RSA) 'Opening Minds' curriculum, to appear. This particular curriculum was based on five competences: Citizenship; Learning; Managing information; Relating to people; Managing situations. This type of approach fits Future 2 model (Young and Muller, 2010), which is typified

by an emphasis on 'generic' skills and ways of thinking. The surveys show that such curriculum models were present in a small number of schools when the HA first began collecting data and that over time, following the formation of the UK Coalition government in 2010 and the more recent Conservative administrations, there has been a focus on what might be termed a more traditional curriculum model, with history having its own discrete identity. While the position of history thus appeared somewhat vulnerable in 2010, when only 76.5 per cent of survey respondents reported teaching it as a discrete subject within Key Stage 3,[4] it appeared much more secure in 2016 when 90.1 per cent of respondents reported teaching it in this way. In this sense it looks as if schools are now enabling students' access to a subject-based curriculum.

Time allocated to history

Within the curriculum, schools can still control the amount of time allocated to subjects. History is a compulsory part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum but schools can choose whether this phase is covered in two or three years. Reducing the Key Stage 3 curriculum to two years means that schools are able to spend an extra year on teaching examination courses.

Length of Key Stage 3

Since 2014, the survey data provides a clear indication that more schools are shortening the length of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. This was designed to allow schools to spend longer (that is, three years instead of two) in preparing students for high stakes national examinations (although more recently this has been discouraged by Ofsted, which is an independent inspection body for state-maintained schools). This trend was most notable in state-maintained comprehensive and academy schools, with nearly half of these recently reporting a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum model (see Table 5.1). It should be noted that in England there have been significant changes in the types of schools that students can attend. Comprehensive schools were the most common, catering for all students, were non-selective, and were funded and maintained by local authorities. In recent years many of these schools have chosen to, or been forced to, become academy schools. These receive funding directly from central government and are not maintained by local authorities. Academy schools have more freedoms than comprehensive schools, for example there is no obligation for them to follow the National Curriculum. Many academies now operate as groups (or federations)

Table 5.1 The length of Key Stage 3 as reported by schools 2014–18 (Source: Author, 2021)

Type of school	Year	Three-year Key Stage 3		Two-year Key Stage 3	
		Number	%	Number	%
Comprehensives, academies and free	**2018**	**110**	**56.1**	**86**	**43.9**
	2017	113	55.9	89	44.1
	2016	159	68.5	73	31.5
	2015	180	75.9	57	24.1
	2014	174	75.6	56	24.3
Grammar	**2018**	**4**	**40.0**	**6**	**60.0**
	2017	12	66.7	4	33.3
	2016	19	86.3	3	13.6
	2015	9	56.3	7	43.8
	2014	5	62.5	3	37.5
Independent	**2018**	**29**	**82.9**	**6**	**17.1**
	2017	35	85.4	6	14.6
	2016	40	93.0	3	7.0
	2015	49	89.1	6	10.9
	2014	34	89.5	4	10.5
All schools	**2018**	**152**	**59.8**	**102**	**40.2**
	2017	162	60.7	6	39.3
	2016	219	73.5	79	26.5
	2015	238	77.3	70	22.7
	2014	213	77.2	63	22.8

Note: Bold denotes the most recently reported values.

of schools or are part of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) run by a variety of organisations. Free schools are also relatively new and are effectively schools set up by local communities or groups. They are funded by the government but are free to run themselves as they wish. Independent schools, which are private schools and charge fees for students to attend, are also free to run themselves as they wish. Grammar schools exist in some parts of England (many were closed in the 1970s as comprehensive schools were widely introduced) and select students on academic ‘ability’.

The concern here is that reducing the Key Stage 3 curriculum to two years effectively reduces the teaching time by a third for students,

especially as this is the first phase of education in which all students might be expected to have access to specialist history teaching, since primary teachers are generalists not subject specialists.

Curriculum time allocation

One way in which a school may mitigate the loss of a year's teaching by having a reduced Key Stage 3 is to increase the amount of time allocated to particular subjects and this does appear to be the case in many schools, as illustrated in Table 5.2. Although it seems that those schools which provide a two-year Key Stage 3 are more generous with the actual time allocation for history during those two years, it is still likely that the overall amount of time that a student will spend studying history will be less than if a school adopted a three-year Key Stage 3. For example, those with a two-year Key Stage 3 are more likely than those with a three-year Key Stage 3 to teach history for 90+ minutes a week. If we assume that schools with a two-year Key Stage 3 allocate 90 minutes a week to the subject and that there are 38 weeks in a school year, students would, in total, receive 6,840 minutes (114 hours) of teaching. This is exactly the same amount of teaching that a student following a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum would receive if they were taught history for *only* 60 minutes a week. Since almost three-quarters of comprehensive and academy schools that offer a three-year Key Stage 3 report that they teach *more than* 60 minutes a week of history, it is clear that students attending a school with a two-year Key Stage 3 are likely to get less teaching time for history.

Another way to look at time allocation is to see whether schools are adjusting how much space within the curriculum is devoted to particular subject areas, that is whether they have decided to increase, decrease or maintain the time allocation. As can be seen in Table 5.3, data from earlier surveys show that although most schools chose not to change the time allocation, around a fifth of schools reduced the time allocated to history. Although this trend looks to have declined across the period of the survey, the more recent data suggests a renewed move towards cutting time for history (possibly in response to a renewed emphasis on English and maths results in school accountability measures).[5] It could be argued that overall the situation regarding time allocation is largely stable, but there are significant numbers of history departments experiencing a reduction in time allocation and it is not clear whether this has ever been reversed, as the schools reporting an increase in time allocation tend to be few each year.

Table 5.2 Reported actual time allocation for teaching history 2015–18 for Year 7 (students aged 11–12) (Source: Author, 2021)

		Three-year Key Stage 3											
Type of school	**Year**	**1–30 mins**		**31–45 mins**		**46–60 mins**		**61–75 mins**		**76–90 mins**		**90+ mins**	
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Comprehensives and academies	**2018**	**0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0.0**	**21**	**19.8**	**21**	**19.8**	**38**	**35.8**	**26**	**24.5**
	2017	0	0.0	3	2.8	21	19.3	16	14.7	41	37.6	28	25.7
	2016	1	0.7	4	2.6	34	22.1	19	12.3	45	29.2	51	33.1
	2015	0	0.0	2	1.2	50	29.8	17	10.1	49	23.2	50	29.8
Grammar	**2018**	**1**	**20.0**	**0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0.0**	**3**	**60.0**	**1**	**20.0**
	2017	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	33.3	1	8.3	4	33.3	3	25.0
	2016	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	20.0	5	25.0	3	15.0	8	40.0
	2015	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	50.0	0	0.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Independent	**2018**	**0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0.0**	**7**	**25.9**	**5**	**18.5**	**9**	**33.3**	**6**	**22.2**
	2017	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	30.3	8	24.2	10	30.3	5	15.2
	2016	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	31.0	11	26.2	10	23.8	8	19.0
	2015	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	27.3	12	36.4	8	24.2	4	12.1
All schools	**2018**	**1**	**0.7**	**0**	**0.0**	**28**	**20.3**	**26**	**18.8**	**50**	**36.2**	**33**	**23.9**
	2017	0	0.0	3	1.9	35	22.4	26	16.7	56	35.9	36	23.1
	2016	1	0.5	4	1.9	51	23.6	35	16.2	58	26.9	67	31.0
	2015	0	0.0	2	1.0	61	29.8	29	14.1	59	28.8	54	26.3

		Two-year Key Stage 3											
Comprehensives and academies	**2018**	**1**	**1.2**	**1**	**1.2**	**17**	**20.0**	**10**	**11.8**	**15**	**17.6**	**41**	**48.2**
	2017	1	1.3	0	0.0	14	17.7	14	17.7	18	22.8	32	40.5
	2016	0	0.0	1	1.4	13	18.8	9	13.0	11	15.9	35	50.7
	2015	1	1.9	1	1.9	15	28.8	2	3.8	15	28.8	19	36.5
Grammar	**2018**	**0**	**0.0**	**1**	**16.7**	**0**	**0.0**	**1**	**16.7**	**2**	**33.3**	**2**	**33.3**
	2017	0	0.0	1	16.7	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	33.3	1	16.7
	2016	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	50.0	2	50.0
	2015	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	100.0
Independent	**2018**	**0**	**0.0**	**0**	**0.0**	**1**	**25.0**	**1**	**25.0**	**1**	**25.0**	**1**	**25.0**
	2017	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	25.0	3	75	0	0.0
	2016	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	1	50.0
	2015	1	33.3	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0
All schools	**2018**	**1**	**1.1**	**2**	**2.1**	**18**	**18.9**	**12**	**12.6**	**18**	**18.9**	**44**	**46.3**
	2017	1	1.1	1	1.1	18	19.6	16	17.4	23	25.0	33	35.9
	2016	0	0.0	1	1.3	13	17.3	9	12.0	14	18.7	38	50.7
	2015	2	3.4	1	1.7	16	27.1	2	3.4	16	27.1	22	37.3

Note: Bold denotes the most recently reported values.

Table 5.3 Number of schools reporting changes to curriculum time allocation for history (Source: Author, 2021)

Year of survey	Curriculum time allocation			Total
	Decreased	Remained the same	Increased	
2018	36	182	25	243
2017	44	177	25	246
2016	35	154	28	217
2015	8	65	8	81
2014	13	180	14	207
2013	43	277	34	354
2012	13	197	12	222
2011	68	265	20	353
2010	119	359	25	503

Who teaches it?

Another potential means of hindering access to a disciplinary approach to history teaching is by allocating the teaching to non-specialists, who may lack the disciplinary understanding of the subject. Obviously, such a comparison assumes that those trained to teach history do employ a disciplinary approach. This may not always be the case, but open-ended responses in the survey relating to the 2013 history curriculum proposals did indicate that the vast majority of respondents rejected what was perceived as a 'traditional' content-heavy curriculum model (Harris and Burn, 2016).

The survey data indicates that, in many schools, non-specialists are deployed to teach history, particularly in the Key Stage 3 years. It would seem that the pressure to do well at GCSE means that schools concentrate their strongest, specialist teachers in the examination classes. As seen in Figure 5.1 there is a great deal of similarity in the pattern of non-specialist teaching across the years 2015–18. But it is clear that comprehensive and academy schools are more likely to use non-specialist teachers in Key Stage 3.

This is a concern, as it is probable that these non-specialists, who have neither a degree background in history, nor experience of a history-specific training programme, are less likely to appreciate the disciplinary nature of the subject; as Wineburg (2001) showed, there are distinct differences between the 'common sense' approach that most people

adopt to make sense of the past and the 'unnatural' form of thinking that history actually requires.

Options systems

At the end of Key Stage 3 students can stop studying history altogether, as it becomes an optional examination subject. However, the methods that the government uses to measure school examination success (which includes particular consideration of a selected range of English

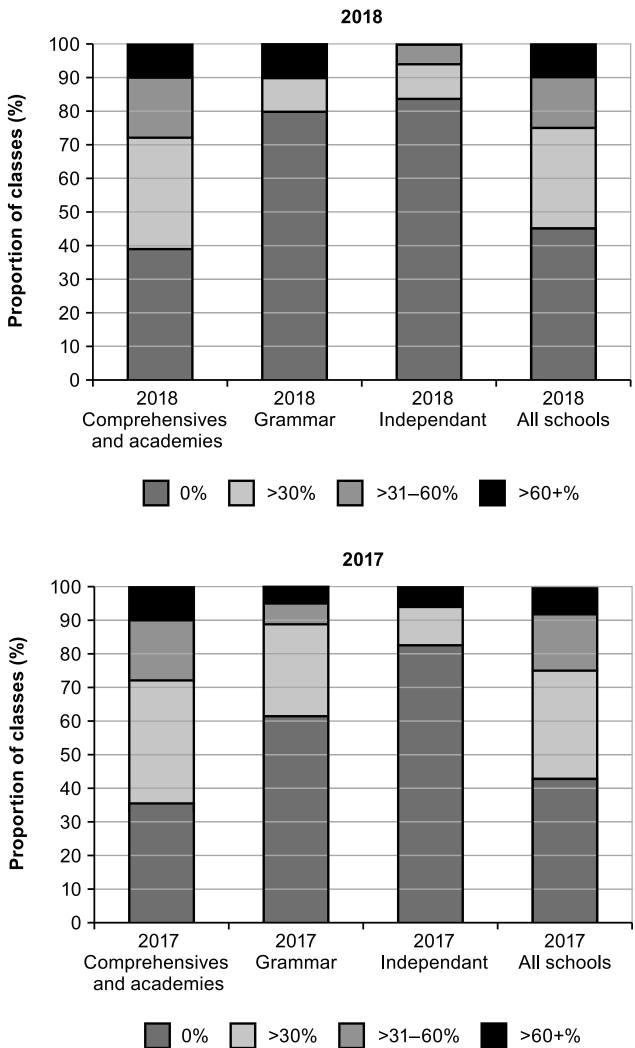

Figure 5.1 *(Continues on next page)*

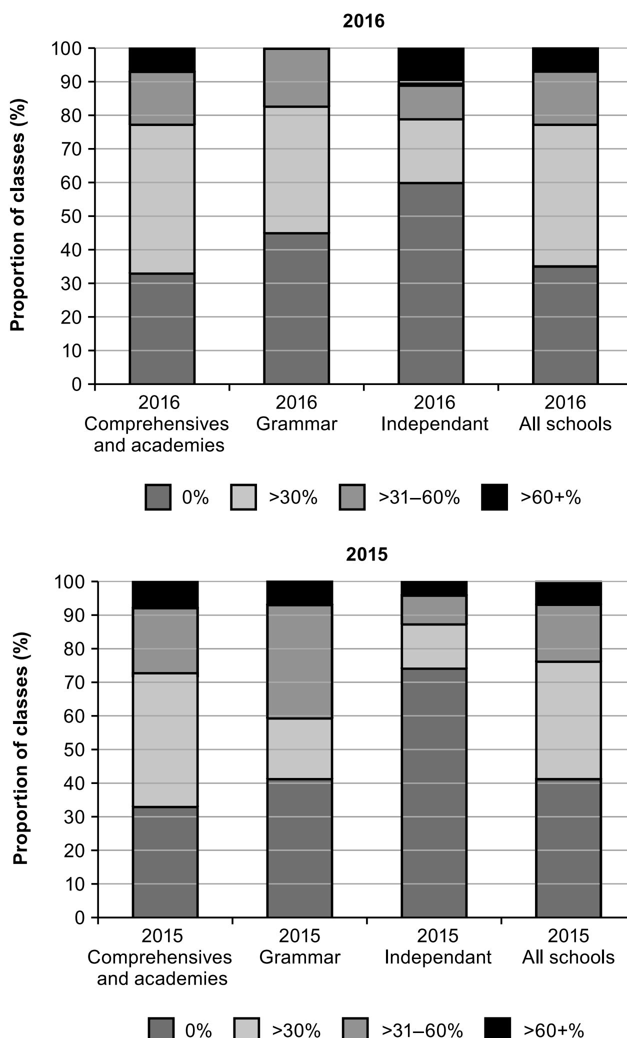

Figure 5.1 The proportion of Year 7 classes taught by non-specialist history teachers (Source: Historical Association, 2019)

Baccalaureate or 'EBacc subjects')[6] means there is pressure on schools to ensure that students study either history and/or geography. Over the past four years many schools seem to be moving away from complete free choice of subjects and increasing the degree of compulsion (see Table 5.4). Overall, around 40 per cent of students opt for history. At one level this looks like positive news, as it represents an increase from around 30 per cent in the final years of the New Labour government,

Table 5.4 The extent to which students have freedom of choice at GCSE (Source: Historical Association, 2019)

Year	A requirement that *all* students must take						A requirement that *some* students must take						A completely free choice about history		Total*
	History		History *or* geography		History *and/or* geography		History		History *or* geography		History *and/or* geography				
2018	5	2.0%	5	2.0%	92	37.1%	5	2.0%	2	1.2%	32	12.5%	107	42.7%	248
2017	5	1.9%	26	10.0%	85	32.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.4%	33	12.6%	111	42.5%	261
2016	3	1.0%	16	5.6%	84	29.2%	3	1.0%	5	1.7%	34	11.8%	141	49.0%	288
2015	8	2.1%	10	2.7%	83	22.3%	3	0.8%	5	1.3%	50	13.4%	214	57.4%	373
2014	0	0.0%	7	2.6%	44	16.5%	7	2.6%	8	3.0%	46	17.3%	154	57.9%	266

Notes: There are two columns per category, the first column denotes the number of schools and the second column the percentage of schools.

* Total number of schools who took part in the survey.

Table 5.5 Combined 2010–14 data (in percentage) showing history take-up by type of school (based on Harris et al., 2020: 235)

Pupils studying history GCSE in Year 10	Type of school				
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Pre-2010 academy	Post-2010 academy	Independent
0–15	8.36	1.45	8.96	2.81	1.74
16–30	20.43	8.70	22.39	9.38	6.40
31–45	33.70	18.84	29.85	33.13	19.19
46–60	26.18	34.78	20.90	36.25	25.58
61–100	11.33	36.23	17.91	18.44	47.09

and thus means that more students are accessing a history education beyond Key Stage 3. However, these figures alone obscure concerns about *which* students have this opportunity.

The type of schools that students attend has an impact on their access to history at GCSE. Independent and grammar schools persistently enter higher numbers for history GCSE (see Table 5.5). Although there are many comprehensive and academy schools with a high proportion of students taking history at GCSE, these are usually in more affluent areas. There is a statistically significant correlation between the IDACI[7] score for an area in which a school is located and the proportion of students entered for GCSE history (see Figure 5.2). This suggests that schools may potentially be making decisions about which students do and do not have access to an extensive history education based upon their socio-economic status and their perceived likelihood of obtaining a good examination result. Figure 5.2 displays the mean IDACI score

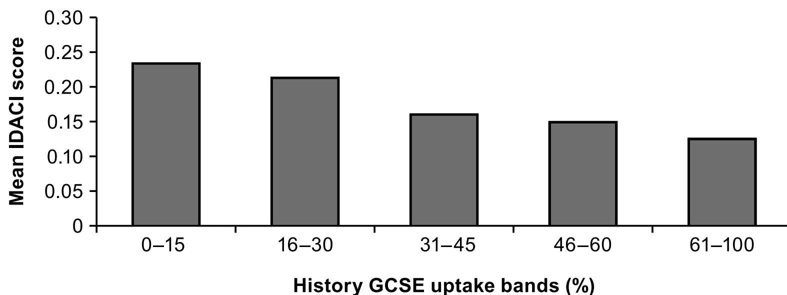

Figure 5.2 Correlation between GCSE uptake and IDACI score (Source: Author, 2021)

for each uptake band, for survey responses from 2010 to 2014. It is clear there is a significant negative correlation between IDACI score and uptake ($r = -0.221$, $p = <0.001$). For example, schools with 0–15 per cent history GCSE uptake have a mean IDACI score of 0.24 (meaning 24 per cent of their students come from low-income families) compared with a mean IDACI score of 0.13 for schools with the highest uptake of 60–100 per cent.

Who is encouraged to do GCSE?

Further analysis of the data shows that students with low prior attainment are much less likely to have access to GCSE history (see Table 5.6).[8] For example, the Department for Education (DfE) performance table data for 2014 shows that only 103 schools entered more than a quarter of their pupils with low prior attainment into the EBacc subjects (which would include history), whereas for pupils with middle prior attainment and high prior attainment, the figures are 1,904 and 2,943 schools, respectively (DfE, n.d.). The figures in Table 5.6 show that the introduction of the EBacc has seen a sizable growth in the numbers of students with middle and high prior attainment entered for this suite of subjects, while those with low prior attainment are unlikely to study the full range of EBacc subjects. Clearly these figures relate to a range of subjects and so it is theoretically possible that large numbers of lower attaining students

Table 5.6 Percentage of students being entered for EBacc subjects by prior attainment (Source: Author, 2021)

Year	Prior attainment	Percentage of schools that enter more than	
		25% for the EBacc	50% for the EBacc
2014	Low	3.1	0.6
	Middle	60.1	19.0
	High	93.4	76.6
2013	Low	4.3	0.7
	Middle	52.0	16.1
	High	89.5	69.4
2012	Low	0.8	0.1
	Middle	23.2	6.5
	High	68.1	34.4

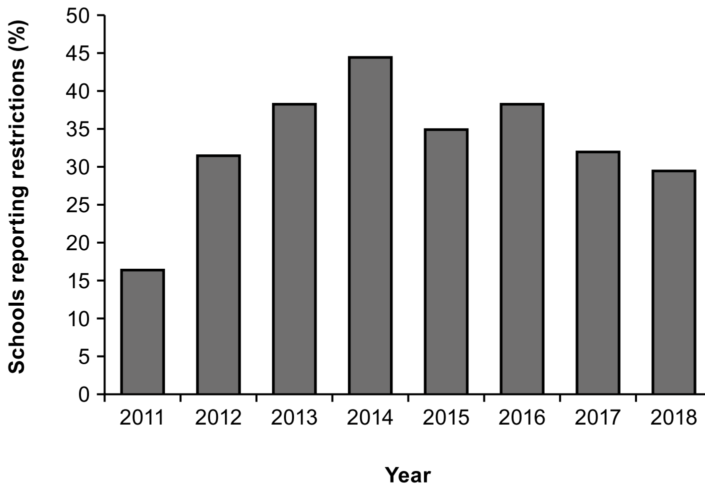

Figure 5.3 Schools reporting restrictions on students able to study history at GCSE (Source: Author, 2021)

are actually entered for history, but not for the full range of subjects required for recognition in the EBacc. The likelihood of that being the case is challenged by other data from the HA surveys which suggests that, in recent years, around a third of schools have been restricting student access to history, based largely on students' expected levels of attainment or perceived academic weaknesses (see Figure 5.3). While the statistical data alone does not reveal whether schools are making such decisions based on what is deemed 'good' for the student or for the school (in terms of its overall accountability measures, such as examination success), the qualitative responses make it clear that some history teachers clearly regret the restrictions.

It appears that there are structural issues that restrict access to history in a significant number of schools. Both the type of school a student attends and the socio-economic status of an area have a significant impact on access to a history education. Beyond that, other decisions and actions taken by schools further restrict access to the subject. These include the time allocated to the subject within the curriculum (in terms of length of Key Stage 3, actual time allocation and whether the overall time allocation has been reduced), whether specialist staff are able to teach the subject, and restrictions imposed by schools on whether students are able to study history at GCSE. Although the majority of students do have access to study history, the data suggest increasingly there are obstacles that, either directly or indirectly, serve to restrict who

can study history, and that students from poorer areas and with low prior attainment or a range of educational needs are more likely to be denied access to the subject.

Teachers and the history curriculum

The findings relating to what history teachers actually choose to teach are based on schemes of work and interviews with the teachers who taught them.[9] The study was conducted in 2015–16 and involved 10 schools from the south of England. The schemes varied in level of detail, but generally included the substantive content to be taught and the aims of particular lessons, while many also provided suggested activities and resources. These gave a good indication as to the nature of what was intended. The schemes of work were analysed primarily to identify whether they reflected a disciplinary approach to teaching history. Where there was a clear focus (in the question/topic heading in the scheme of work and/or learning objectives) on second-order concepts such as causation and/or procedural ideas, such as the use of sources as evidence, this was interpreted as a disciplinary approach (although, as will be explained later, there was a distinct difference in the ways in which schools focused on these two aspects of disciplinary thinking). Other examples where the focus was on the content to be taught, either substantive knowledge or substantive concepts (for example, empire), were seen as non-disciplinary and lacking powerful knowledge. However, an examination of the content selected by teachers also raised questions about what content might be considered 'valuable' or 'meaningful' to students.

The emphasis on disciplinary knowledge

Earlier studies (for example, Harris and Haydn, 2006) show that many pupils enjoy their history lessons and that teachers are central to students' level of engagement with the subject. But there are fewer studies that look at how teachers conceptualise the nature of history and what students actually study and the type of knowledge that is promoted. As noted earlier, there seems to be an assumption that disciplinary approaches to history teaching in England are the norm; however, as McCrum (2013) has shown, not all history teachers' approaches align with a disciplinary understanding of the subject.

There were differences in how much of a disciplinary focus was evident in the schemes of work. This can be seen in Table 5.7 which shows the ways in which Apple School and Lemon School approached teaching the topic of medieval Britain. Lemon School's scheme of work identifies topics and key features and events, with few clear references to second-order concepts of processes of knowledge or processes of knowledge construction. In this instance, the focus appears to be on developing students' substantive knowledge of the past as the main priority. This was also reflected in Gemma's (Lemon School) interview where she spoke more about what substantive content she wanted students to learn. In contrast, Alison (Apple School) felt that developing students' ability to 'handle evidence' and 'managing different points of view' were vitally important. This emphasis can also be seen in the way in which enquiry questions and objectives are phrased to include second-order concepts and processes in Apple School's scheme of work, which indicates a clearer disciplinary approach to teaching history. Although there were indications that Gemma was aware of disciplinary aspects of history education, her approach could be construed as 'discipline-lite', compared with a more discipline-'heavy' approach from Alison.

Overall, analysis of the schemes of work indicates that five of the schools had a clear disciplinary approach to the teaching of history, with lessons focused on second-order concepts or processes (as shown through the phrasing of enquiry questions, learning objectives and/or examples of activities). Three schools appeared to have a stronger focus on developing students' substantive knowledge, as their schemes of work mainly identified historical topics and key events or features. Two of the other schools seemed to have a more mixed approach. In one of these cases, Orange School, the department taught large-scale thematic sweeps through time (that is, political change in the UK through time, followed by religious changes and so forth). This was designed to provide the students with a clear understanding of the second-order concept of change and continuity, but there was also a strong emphasis on developing the students' substantive knowledge of those changes.

However, what emerged as an interesting distinction among those teachers with a disciplinary approach was the degree of emphasis that was evident regarding second-order concepts and processes. Second-order concepts, such as cause and consequence, and change and continuity, essentially require students to analyse and explain events and phenomena, which means that students need to work with a body of knowledge and use that to construct an explanatory historical account (for example, Kitson *et al.*, 2011). Working with sources and examining

Table 5.7 Comparison of two schools' approaches to medieval English history (Source: Harris and Reynolds, 2018: 146)

Apple School			Lemon School		
Enquiry question/topic focus	**Concept/process**	**Key features**	**Enquiry question/topic focus**	**Concept/process**	**Key features**
Who should be king in 1066?		Knowledge of individuals	Contenders to the throne		Knowledge of individuals
The Riccall mystery: Whose head is it?	Source work		Battle of Stamford Bridge		Key events
What happened at the Battle of Hastings?		Key events	Battle of Hastings		Key events
Why did William win the Battle of Hastings?	Causation and evidence		Why did William win the Battle of Hastings?	Causation	
Why did it matter that William won the Battle of Hastings?	Consequences, change and continuity	Key features	The Bayeux Tapestry		Knowledge
How did Becket die?	Source work		Change and continuity in Norman England	Change and continuity	
Who was to blame for the death of Becket?	Causation		How did William control England?		Key features
Did King John deserve the Magna Carta?	Source work	Key events	The Domesday Book		Knowledge

(Continued Table 5.7)

(Continued Table 5.7)

Apple School			**Lemon School**		
Enquiry question/topic focus	**Concept/process**	**Key features**	**Enquiry question/topic focus**	**Concept/process**	**Key features**
Why did people go on crusade?	Causation		Was Richard I that great? Was Saladin greater?		Knowledge of individuals
Why was the Black Death so terrifying in 1348?	Source work		Islamic medicine		Key features
What were the Wars of the Roses and why did they happen?	Causation	Key events	Magna Carta		Key events
Why were medieval people obedient to the Church?	Causation	Key features	Medieval towns		Key features
			Medieval villages		Key features
			Causes of the Black Death	Causation	
			Cures for the Black Death		Key features
			Consequences of the Black Death		Key features
			Witchcraft and medicine		Key features
			The Peasants' Revolt		Key events

historical interpretations, however, tends to create a stronger focus on how knowledge of the past is constructed. While 'second-order' concepts tend to be concerned with the kinds of questions that historians ask about the past, procedural concepts are associated particularly with the use of sources as evidence and the processes by which our knowledge of the past is constructed; yet both are essential elements in understanding history as a discipline. It is therefore interesting to note how schools emphasise these aspects quite differently. For example, in Plum School's unit of work on Anglo-Saxons (see Table 5.8), there is a strong emphasis on using sources to understand how knowledge of the past is constructed.

Table 5.8 Comparison of different disciplinary emphases in Plum School (Source: Author, 2021)

Enquiry question/topic focus	Concept/ process	Key features
Unit of work on Anglo-Saxon Britain		
The big story of movement and settlement	Chronology, change and continuity, causation	
How can Sutton Hoo help us learn about the Saxons?	Source work	
How can we use artefacts to investigate Saxon Southampton?	Source work	
Should St Mary's stadium have been built?	Source work	
How did England change 500 BC–410 AD?	Change and continuity	
Unit of work on medieval Britain		
Who should be king in 1066?		Knowledge of individuals
How did events unravel in 1066?		Key events
Why did men risk their lives in 1066?	Causation	
How did the Battle of Hastings happen?	Causation	Key events
Why did a Frenchman become king of England?	Causation	

(Continued Table 5.8)

(Continued Table 5.8)

Enquiry question/topic focus	Concept/ process	Key features
How did Harold die?	Source work	
Who told the truth about Hastings?	Source work	
How significant was Hastings?	Significance	
Why is the king being whipped?	Causation	
How do historians investigate murder?	Source work	
What was a medieval king supposed to do?		Features of monarchy
Why were the barons angry at John?	Causation	
How have interpretations of John changed over time?	Interpretations	
How has the power of the monarchy changed from 1066 to 1649?	Change and continuity	
How can we find out what medieval villages really looked like?	Source work	
How can we show change and continuity in the Middle Ages?	Change and continuity	
How different was life in Baghdad?	Similarity and difference	

Questions such as 'How can we use artefacts to investigate Saxon Southampton?' have a clear evidential focus, designed to get students thinking about how we know what we do. However, this emphasis on understanding how knowledge of the past is constructed is atypical. Plum School's unit on medieval Britain (see Table 5.8) has a heavier emphasis on second-order concepts such as causation. This type of approach was far more common across the schools which were identified as having a strong disciplinary approach to teaching history.

Overall, analysis of the enquiry questions and learning objectives and associated tasks reveals a strong bias towards causation, and a lesser emphasis on change and continuity. Enquiries about historical interpretation, which has been valued for showing the fluid nature of historical knowledge as new claims are advanced and previous arguments challenged, and which would therefore be a key element in any understanding of the powerful knowledge (Young, 2013) inherent

in a disciplinary approach to history teaching, featured infrequently in the schemes of work.

It was possible to identify distinct second-order and procedural foci in the Year 7 schemes of work on medieval Britain across seven of the schools. In total there were 57 lessons with a focus on causation, 21 focusing on change and continuity, 6 on similarity and difference, 43 on source work (although these were concentrated in 4 departments), 10 on historical interpretations, 18 on historical significance (although 11 of these lessons were in 1 department), and 69 on developing substantive concepts/knowledge. It might be argued that less emphasis on the more procedural forms of thinking could reflect the age of the students and their intellectual maturity. To check this hypothesis, a similar analysis was conducted on the schemes of work that covered the twentieth-century world (which is typically the last unit taught in Key Stage 3, but might be taught to Year 8 or Year 9 depending on whether the school has a two- or three-year Key Stage 3). In this instance it was possible to work with schemes of work from five schools and this time there were 53 lessons that had an emphasis on cause and consequence, 17 on change and continuity, 8 on similarity and difference, 26 on working with sources (although almost half were in 1 department), 5 on interpretations, 4 on significance and 38 on developing substantive concepts/knowledge. Calculating the ratio of lessons focused on second-order concepts, historical processes and substantive knowledge indicates a degree of similarity between the lessons in the medieval Britain schemes of work and the twentieth century.

The emphasis on 'valuable' or 'meaningful' knowledge

An additional issue that emerged from analysis of these schemes of work, beyond consideration of the ways in which they engaged with disciplinary knowledge, was the extent to which content was deliberately selected because of its inherent 'value' to young people. In most cases the choice of content was largely based on teachers' familiarity with the topics and the availability of resources, however, two schemes of work stood out. Tanya's curriculum at Plum School had an even-handed approach to teaching history as a discipline, with a balance of lessons focused on second-order concepts and how history is constructed. In terms of content, Tanya's selection included a number of thematic issues, which were revisited. Movement and settlement of peoples appeared, for example, at several points in the schemes of work. There was also a

strong element of local history, which meant themes were explored from local, national and occasionally international perspectives. There was a mix of depth and overview in the way that different topics were taught. Tanya's curriculum was clearly based on a disciplinary understanding of the past (both concepts and processes), while the content was selected to explore history on different scales (both geographically and temporally), and to make the content more meaningful and valuable to students through revisiting themes (which were seen as relevant issues, such as migration) and local history.

Jane at Orange School felt that students need to have a coherent overview of the past, which would act as a framework, providing a context into which new knowledge could be added, to make sense of the world today. For example, she explained that students aged 11–12 studied religious changes, such as the Reformation, 'not because necessarily they can connect with that, but just because they just don't understand religion and I think that's concerning in a world which is still dominated by religion'.

There was also an element of ensuring students had particular 'cultural capital', so she felt that students had to have an overview of the past in order to understand key turning points in British history. This led her to structuring her scheme of work around large thematic overviews taught each half term. Thus, students would gain a political overview of British history from medieval to modern times, followed by an economic overview and so forth. This would also allow students to see how various changes intersected, for example during periods of major religious change there was a corresponding degree of technological change. The disciplinary thinking behind this planning was conceptual, in that it was intended to develop a strong sense of change and continuity, with a view to being able to provide an explanation of how the world changed, rather than emphasising history as a process. Although Jane's scheme of work had a particularly narrow disciplinary focus, the emphasis on providing a thematic overview of the past did give a clear sense of the power that clear structural frameworks can provide in building knowledge of the past, allowing students to fit new ideas and information together with what they have already learned. It allowed students to make associations and connections between different aspects of the past, and it seemed to offer coherence to the curriculum in relation to content selection. In these two cases there was a deliberate attempt to teach both substantive content and conceptual knowledge because they worked together to build a historical frame of reference, but the impetus in each case originated from a different disciplinary approach

to history: Tanya's fully encompassed history as a discipline while Jane really wanted to establish a sense of change and continuity through time.

Overall, what emerges from this analysis is a strong sense that a disciplinary approach to teaching history cannot be assumed. About half of the schools involved in this part of the study did adopt a disciplinary approach to the subject, but this was skewed towards an emphasis on second-order concepts, rather than on examining how the past is constructed and therefore open to dispute. In addition, the analysis raises questions about the selection of content and the value of building a frame of reference constructed around significant themes, with acknowledgement of the different geographical and temporal scales across which the subject can be understood.

Discussion

Generally, there seem to be three issues that emerge from the data presented here. One relates to how schools act as gatekeeper to the curriculum and therefore control the exposure that students have to subjects such as history. The second relates to the type of knowledge to which students gain access when they are taught and whether this is of a disciplinary nature. The third issue is to do with the selection of substantive knowledge and what role this plays in providing students with 'valuable' knowledge, alongside the 'powerful' knowledge of the discipline.

Access to the history curriculum

The findings from these two studies show that students are not necessarily able to access the powerful knowledge or disciplinary approach to history teaching. Schools make a number of decisions that serve to constrain access to the history curriculum: decisions related to the amount of curriculum time given to the subject, who gets to study history at examination level, and who teaches the subject. Clearly there will be constraints on any decisions that schools make about their curriculum, so it is not simply a case, for example, of arguing for more time (although this would be helpful!) as such issues are not easily resolved. Being aware of these issues and arguing that students should be entitled to a history education may help. But perhaps the bigger concern is that there is not an equitable access to a history education across the country. Indeed, there is a large disparity, dictated mainly by the type of

school a student attends and the socio-economic status of an area. The data do not explain why this is the case, but they do reveal a clear association. Any attempt here to explain the connection can only be a matter of conjecture, but it may be to do with the perceived nature of the subject, its level of conceptual challenge, the literacy demands inherent within it, or with the perceived (lack of) value associated with the subject.

One of the questions which arises from such reflections is why there is an inequitable access to history in the curriculum in the first place. In part this stems from the fact that history is not a core subject and is not compulsory to the age of 16. But this is a common situation for many subjects. We need to look beyond the requirement to choose and examine what is understood or assumed (by education policymakers, teachers, young people and their parents) about the value of knowing and understanding the past. If history were commonly perceived as valuable and relevant in people's everyday lives, then the case for providing more equitable access to the subject would be more powerful and compelling.

Disciplinary history in schools

At the moment, much of the debate about the value of history focuses on the need for a disciplinary approach to the subject, as this allows people to see that the past is a construct, and therefore is provisional and open to change (and potential abuse) (for example, Seixas, 2007; Lee, 2011). Knowing how claims to knowledge are constructed allows young people to evaluate claims made within and beyond the classroom. As Wineburg (2001) has argued, thinking historically is not natural and requires a disciplinary mindset to be nurtured. In this sense history would be seen as a form of powerful knowledge as defined by Muller and Young (2019).

However, the data from the departmental schemes of work show that, although most of the teachers in the study tend to adopt a disciplinary approach to the subject, this is mainly focused on a conceptual rather than a procedural approach. This appears to be an important distinction and presents what could be termed a 'discipline-lite' approach as opposed to a truly disciplinary approach to the subject. A 'disciplinary-lite' approach includes an emphasis on second-order concepts, exploring patterns of change, advancing causal explanations, debating the extent of similarity and difference and making claims about the historical significance of particular events. Although these are all essential to the discipline, tackling such activities without an

understanding of the processes by which the substantive knowledge used to reach such judgements has been produced represents an inadequate understanding of the discipline. Students need to be made be aware of the process or procedures which underpin any historical explanation, and which lead to competing interpretations of the past; an emphasis on how claims about the past are made and how their validity can be evaluated offers a stronger disciplinary approach. This aspect is what makes learning history truly powerful. Students need to understand that the past is a construct, and so should appreciate the process by which our understanding of the past is put together. In itself, this distinction between a 'discipline-lite' and a secure disciplinary approach to teaching history raises important questions about what history teachers do. An undue focus on developing second-order concepts while neglecting questions about the status of the knowledge that underpins the explanations or arguments advanced may be hindering students' understanding of history as a discipline and thereby restricting students' access to powerful knowledge.

Beyond powerful knowledge – the place of 'valuable' knowledge

However, the findings from this study also suggest that the debate might need to go further and consider what makes knowledge, not just 'powerful', but 'valuable' and 'meaningful'. Moore (2013: 348), an advocate of the social realist school of thought about the importance of powerful knowledge in the curriculum, argued that 'the Realist principles … do not specify the *content* of a curriculum, but rather the *kind* of knowledge it should include'. Yet as Yates and Miller (2016: 309) argued, 'content selection is a distinctive *curriculum* issue, not simply one that can be derived authoritatively from the disciplines themselves.' This raises a particular issue in history education, which is reflected in the approaches devised by Tanya and Jane. Tanya's approach is clearly underpinned by disciplinary thinking, while Jane's is discipline-lite, yet they both offer students carefully considered substantive content designed to provide students with something that could be considered meaningful and valuable. In contrast most of the other teachers in the study seem to have based their choice of curriculum content on logistical and practical reasons. Clearly, students need to learn substantive content, but departments that lack a clear rationale for the choice of that content, based on its value to young people, leaves history teaching open to the accusation either that the subject is comprised of a random selection of substantive knowledge, designated as 'core'; or – if no such 'core' has been

identified – that substantive knowledge does not actually matter (in that it is subservient to a set of generic 'skills'). The former position has been critiqued for representing merely 'knowledge of the powerful' (Young, 2013) and potentially presenting an uncritical story of the past. The latter has been attacked for developing generic information processing skills that lack any disciplinary power (Young and Muller, 2010). It would seem, therefore, that there ought to be further consideration of what content should specifically be taught and how to approach this demanding task, because substantive content matters.

Counsell (2017) made the point that substantive historical knowledge is not hierarchical, as it is in other subject areas where certain elements need to be mastered before others can be tackled; instead substantive historical knowledge is cumulative. As such, substantive knowledge becomes more useful and valuable the more you know, as associations and connections can be made to provide new or developing insights, and would, in turn, better support some elements of students' conceptual thinking. An understanding of certain second-order concepts, such as causation, would, for example, be aided by students being able to draw upon detailed knowledge relevant to an event, as well as prior knowledge that allows them to contrast and compare different contexts. However, this should not be a random assemblage of facts. And perhaps herein lays the next challenge. Content could be structured around developing students' knowledge and understanding of substantive concepts, such as empire, which could be enhanced through a series of planned encounters, drawing on different temporal and geographical contexts (Fordham, 2016). Or content selection could focus on the value of developing particular historical frameworks of knowledge, based around key themes (for example, Howson and Shemilt, 2017).

To an extent this debate reflects the differing approaches of Tanya and Jane. Tanya appears to have constructed a curriculum based around disciplinary values and carefully selected content which takes into account themes as well as differing scales of history (local, national and global). Jane has carefully considered her content selection, which is securely structured around themes, but which emphasises a 'discipline-lite' approach. Although both offer students valuable substantive knowledge, Jane's lack of emphasis on the process of history means students are unlikely to see history as a construct where competing versions of the past may exist, and these students may lack the ability to arbitrate between these rival versions. The danger is that students not exposed to the full disciplinary nature of history may see the past as a single story if presented with a single narrative, or may recognise that

there are alternative versions of the past, but conclude that it does not matter which, if any, are valid, because they lack the wherewithal to subject these to disciplinary scrutiny. This issue is important, because, as Taylor and Guyver (2012) and Nakou and Barca (2010) showed, governments around the world frequently look to use school history to foster a sense of national identity and/or social cohesion, through the imposition of a particular historical narrative. In such situations it is perfectly possible for history to be abused to promote views of the past, which are at best simplistic, and at worst deliberately distorting: for example, using perceived past injustices as a rationale for persecution of specific groups. An emphasis on understanding history as a discipline has the potential to offer a fuller understanding of the past and therefore how we understand and act in the present.

To sum up, there seem to be a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure that young people are given the benefit of powerful knowledge that can be gained from a study of history. At a fundamental level there needs to be debate about access to the history curriculum. If history is seen as crucial to a young person's understanding of the world in which they live and the way in which claims about the past are made and used (or abused), then students need equitable access to this curriculum. Their chances of obtaining such an education should not depend on the type of school they attend, where they live or who they are. Yet the data suggest this is what currently happens.

However, having granted them access to this history curriculum, attention should focus on the nature and value of the knowledge young people receive. As the analysis of the schemes of work reveals, many history departments offer a disciplinary-lite approach to the study of history, more focused on the second-order concepts (such as causation and change and continuity), rather than the processes and procedures of history that potentially offer stronger powerful knowledge. At the same time history teachers should give greater consideration to the selection of substantive historical content that ensures that this powerful knowledge is seen as valuable.

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Notes

1 These surveys have been published on the HA website and can be found at Historical Association (2020). The surveys have also been used in the writing of other published articles: Harris and Burn (2011) and Harris *et al*. (2020).
2 This data has been used in writing another article: Harris and Reynolds (2018).
3 General Certificate of Secondary Education (or GCSEs) are national examinations usually taken at age 16. Students study a number of subjects (some of which are compulsory). Advanced level (or A levels) are national examinations normally taken at age 18. Students tend to study a small number, typically three. There are no compulsory subjects at this level.
4 Key Stage 3 (sometimes abbreviated to KS3) is the first phase of secondary school education that usually spans Years 7–9 (that is, students aged 11–14).
5 The way the government reports school examination outcomes means that English and mathematics are given extra emphasis. One measure is to report the percentage of students obtaining five or more good examination results *including* English and mathematics (when GCSEs were graded from A* to G, a C was considered a 'good' result). The government has also introduced new measures, known as Progress 8 and Attainment 8, which reports students' progress and actual attainment across eight subject areas – in this measure English and mathematics are given double weighting in calculating a schools' results.
6 The English Baccalaureate, introduced by the government in 2010, is a combination of subjects that includes English, maths, a science, a foreign language, and history or geography. It is not a formal award, but various performance measures published annually report on schools' entries and outcomes in relation to the EBacc range of subjects.
7 IDACI stands for Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index and is an indication of the level of poverty in an area defined by postcode. It provides an overall deprivation score and ranks areas by level of deprivation.
8 An explanation of how the government calculates prior attainment can be found at Department for Education (DfE, 2020).
9 Schemes of work are typically medium-term plans, which many departments in English schools use, to provide an outline of material to be covered, suggested ideas as to how to teach topics and key assessment points. There is no national guidance on the nature and content of schemes of work, so these can vary considerably from school to school in their level of detail.

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6

The power of knowledge: The impact on history teachers of sustained subject-rich professional development

Katharine Burn

This chapter explores the implications for history teachers' continued professional development that are implicit in calls to broaden all young people's access to genuinely 'powerful knowledge'. Based on interviews with participants from two different sustained, subject-rich professional development programmes, it explores how history teachers are empowered by opportunities for direct engagement with the disciplinary community from which their subject derives, and how they make use of their new-found knowledge.

The relationship between academic and school history

Acceptance of the argument – advanced by Michael Young (2017) on the basis of social realism – that the power of the knowledge taught in school derives from the authority of the disciplinary community within which it has been created and validated raises important questions about the kind of relationship that should exist between academic practitioners and classroom teachers. After appealing to the disciplines as the ultimate source of authority in determining what counts as powerful knowledge, Young follows Basil Bernstein (1999) in accepting the fundamental distinction between their role and that of school subjects. While the former are committed to the *production* of new knowledge, the latter are

concerned with its *transmission*. What this distinction does not clearly address, however, is the question of how those charged with responsibility for school subjects – in this case history – can remain sufficiently engaged with what is happening within the discipline to ensure that the knowledge and understanding that they are seeking to develop in young people is effectively connected to the ongoing scholarly endeavour. History is the product of an unending dialogue between the present and the past (Collingwood, 1946), so it inevitably changes, both as new questions are asked and as existing evidence is interrogated in new ways.

The implications of this unending dialogue for the relationship between school classrooms and the academy have been carefully explored by the Canadian history educator, Peter Seixas (1993). Although he, too, recognises essential differences between the work of these two different 'communities of inquiry', Seixas highlights the critical role of the history teacher in providing a bridge between the two. While his argument is rooted in a social constructivist perspective that Young has rejected, the concerns that Seixas raises about what happens when history teachers are not effectively connected to the academic community have important implications for the achievement of Young's ambition.

Seixas (1993: 310) highlighted two potential risks when historical knowledge, recognised within the academic community to be a 'provisional, dynamic, ongoing conversation' is taken into the classroom. The first is that an acknowledgment of its provisional nature and encouragement for pupils to join the debate will result in 'the warranting of belief by a community of the incompetent'. The second – at the other extreme – is that the 'products of historians' work will be transformed into authoritative "facts" to be transmitted' to pupils. In seeking to navigate a route between 'the Scylla of dead knowledge and the Charybdis of relativistic ignorance', Seixas (1993: 314) insisted that teachers necessarily do more than transmit knowledge: they 'construct the experience and knowledge of others [that is, the historians] into a form that is meaningful' to their pupils. In that process of construction – which sometimes involves carefully selecting, excerpting and even editing sources – teachers are engaging in similar tasks to those of historians, ultimately guided by the same disciplinary conventions, but undertaken for a very different audience. To carry out these tasks effectively, history teachers need to be well connected to the community of historians. Those who are too distant are likely to offer their students inert information about the past rather than engage them in tackling historical problems, while those who have opportunities for closer interaction will be able to see (and share with

their pupils) the ways in which historians' questions and interpretations are responding to current concerns.

Structured support for history teachers in England, seeking to forge such connections is, however, very limited. While the Historical Association has sought to facilitate links, for example, by including a general programme of seminars presented by historians, in parallel with the primary and secondary strands of its annual conference, most teachers report that they have few opportunities to attend subject-specific professional development – even when they have been required to develop entirely new schemes of work. Successive waves of curriculum reform in England (beginning with the introduction of a new National Curriculum from 2014, followed by new A-level and GCSE[1] requirements for examinations taken for the first time in 2017 and 2018, respectively) mean that for the past few years history teachers have been repeatedly wrestling with the need to develop their own historical knowledge. Indeed, 88 per cent of history teachers who responded to the Historical Association's annual survey in 2017 reported that they had needed to work on developing their subject knowledge. Yet most of them had to do so alone and in their own time (Burn and Harris, 2017). Sixty per cent reported concerns about the lack of opportunity to attend any form of subject-specific continuing professional development (CPD), a finding endorsed by regular international comparisons, which reveal that teachers in England are less likely to engage in subject-specific CPD than their international peers (Cordingley *et al*., 2018). While changes in curriculum have been identified as the key driver of demand for such CPD, the opportunities offered often take the form of an exam-board briefing, attended perhaps by the head of department. In schools that are seen to be struggling in terms of pupil outcomes, senior leaders seem to be less likely to prioritise subject-specific CPD over more generic school improvement approaches.

The limited scope for most history teachers to engage in sustained subject-rich CPD – despite the government's publication of a new standard for professional development (DfE, 2016) that appears to endorse just such an approach – means that there have been few opportunities to explore what happens when history teachers are given the chance to do so. When two such programmes were launched early in 2016, both of which also included the scope for history teachers to interact directly with academic historians, they represented a rare chance to examine the kind of power that such engagement with ongoing historical scholarship might offer to the teachers themselves.

The nature of the professional development programmes

Despite their rarity, the format of these programmes was not entirely new. It was based in large part on two previous projects undertaken by The National Archives with different academic partners. The first, an international collaboration with the University of Virginia in 2011, focused on the history of the transatlantic slave trade. It built on a long-standing tradition in the USA of providing study visits for teachers to historic sites, combining a residential visit with the opportunity to work with original archive sources. It also established the principle that the teachers who participated should use the knowledge and experience gained to create teaching resources for other practitioners (The National Archives, 2011). While the course leaders exercised an important editorial role, ensuring that the materials (lesson plans, teaching notes and associated resources) met quality assurance standards before they were published, the production of resources by teachers themselves – rather than by academics or archivists – was an important objective for two reasons. The first was that it provided an immediate stimulus for the transformation of new historical knowledge (both substantive and procedural) into pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) at a point when the teachers could still ask questions and seek advice from the historical experts. The second was that teachers' authorship gave credence to the materials, reassuring potential users about their feasibility and practical value, and thereby increasing the likelihood that the new historical research would be picked up by practitioners.

A similar approach was adopted in The National Archives' second 'Teacher Scholar' programme, offered in 2013, in collaboration with the University of Sussex. Funding for the programme, which came from the Economic and Social Research Council as part of a large project on the 'Living Standards of Working Households in Britain, 1904–1960', reflected a new emphasis in the research community on demonstrating the subsequent 'impact' of the work or the 'knowledge exchange' that it promoted. Rather than simply focus on the value to historians of the data sets that were developed (based on a series of government household expenditure surveys), the funding bid included a commitment to make the new data sets accessible for schools and to demonstrate how they could be used by pupils to investigate Edwardian, inter-war and post-war living standards. Again, the teachers who took part, working with historians engaged in the original research, used their knowledge of the historical debates and the archive materials to create lesson plans and

associated resources (The National Archives, 2013) for classes ranging from Key Stage 3[2] to A level (that is, for students from the ages of 11–18).

These previous Teacher Scholar programmes provided a basic template and inspiration for one of the programmes included in this study: 'England's Immigrants 1330–1550'. The National Archives was, once more, one of the main partners, working in collaboration with academics involved in creating an online database to permit powerful new analyses of existing data. The project, led by the University of York, had received 'follow-on' funding, in addition to its original grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), for a new programme to introduce teachers to the database it has created, containing the names of some 65,000 immigrants, resident in England at particular points between 1330 and 1550, and to the new insights that it was beginning to generate (England's Immigrants 1330–1550, n.d.). A new feature of this programme was the inclusion in the project team of a history teacher educator, provided by the Historical Association, alongside the academic historians and representatives of The National Archives.

This deliberate combination of academic historians with an experienced history teacher educator, working together to design and teach the programme and offer guidance to the teachers as they developed materials for other practitioners, was also adopted for the other programme that features in this chapter: a 'Teacher Fellowship' programme, offered by the Historical Association, also focused on teaching the later Middle Ages. This focus was suggested by the charitable body, Agincourt 600, which had been set up with a government grant specifically to commemorate the anniversary of the battle by advancing educational and cultural objectives. The programme was led by a history teacher educator who also had many years' experience teaching undergraduate courses in medieval history. He devised the course in collaboration with a number of academic historians (including a member of the Agincourt 600 Committee) who made particularly important contributions to the first residential weekend.

The Agincourt 600 programme actually started first, in January 2016, while England's Immigrants began a month later. Since the Historical Association was closely involved in both, there was considerable cross-fertilisation of ideas. Both programmes drew on the experience of The National Archives' previous Teacher Scholar programmes, incorporating elements that had been validated by reviews of CPD known to have had an impact on pupil outcomes (Cordingley, 2013; Higgins *et al.*, 2015). These included: the use of specialist expertise; peer support, engendering a shared sense of purpose; and an extended programme

sustained over time. Although there were some important differences, the following six features were common to both programmes.

1. They were led by academic historians and history teacher educators working collaboratively.
2. They included an intensive residential weekend early in the course in which the main focus was on recent historical scholarship and/or the use of original sources that underpinned that research.
3. They were supported by an online discussion forum, along with a shared programme of structured reading and more specific individual suggestions to support the teachers as they began to develop their resources.
4. They included a second intensive study day or weekend, bringing the participants back together after their work online that included opportunities for them to work together on the development of resources and teaching ideas.
5. The participants were expected to produce some kind of resource for other practitioners that reflected their own learning and would allow others to benefit from the knowledge and skills that they had developed.
6. The materials produced were reviewed by the project leaders who provided editorial feedback (with reference to both the materials' historical accuracy and their value to other teachers) and guidance in navigating copyright issues associated with publication (for example, permissions to include particular extracts or visual images).

One of the differences between the schemes is the fact that there were more constraints imposed on the materials arising from the England's Immigrants programme, which had to take the form of lesson plans and associated resources. Since the programme was related to a very specific research grant, the lessons had to include use by pupils of the newly created, searchable database. Participants in the Agincourt 600 Teacher Fellowship programme could choose to create different kinds of resources – which might include guides for teachers (explaining the nature of medieval chronicles and guidance in their use, for example) – rather than being confined to lesson plans. Other constraints imposed by the AHRC grant meant that the production of the resources related to England's Immigrants was tied to a tight deadline (as was the case with recruitment to the project); whereas the course leader for Agincourt 600 was able to negotiate an extended review period within which the

teachers could choose to refine their materials, in light of their own teaching experience, before they were published or shared with others. Another important difference was the scope for the Agincourt 600 teachers to work as part of a small team rather than taking sole responsibility for a resource package.

Research design: Investigating the power of the programmes

The Historical Association was formally tasked with evaluating the England's Immigrants Teacher Scholar programme (not least to inform a report on the project's impact for the AHRC) and also chose to undertake a very similar evaluation of its own Agincourt 600 Teacher Fellowship. The full range of data collected across the two projects included the materials eventually produced for publication by the teachers who took part and a semi-structured telephone interview with each project leader and course participant. The interviews were conducted in the late summer or autumn of 2016, after everyone had completed at least the first draft of their materials. Because the timescale for completion was extended for the Agincourt 600 Fellowship, some of the teachers went on to refine their original drafts, and some were also adapted for inclusion in a special Historical Association publication, devoted to *Exploring and Teaching Medieval History in School* (Dawson, 2018).

The published materials obviously provide direct evidence of teachers' responses to what they had learned, with statistics about the number of times they were downloaded giving some indication, at least, of the interest that they subsequently generated among other practitioners. Analysis of their content in terms of the new learning that they represent is, however, complicated: first by the fact that all the teachers had very different levels of subject knowledge and levels of teaching experiences (in general and in relation to the Middle Ages) before they embarked on the programme. Moreover, the nature of the resources produced varied significantly across the two projects, differing in terms of: the type of resource; the target age of the pupils for whom they were intended; the extent of choice that teachers had about their focus; and the time available for their production. For these reasons, the materials themselves have not been included as primary data in the analysis presented in this chapter, which derives essentially from the interviews conducted with the participating teachers. Nonetheless, those participants who had produced resources regularly referred to them in

illustrating their accounts of their learning and they were therefore used to contextualise and make sense of the teachers' claims.

The research was subject to ethical approval through the Central University Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford. All the teachers who had taken part in both programmes (21 in total) were invited, by email, to take part in a follow-up interview to explore their experiences of the programme. Around one-third of the teachers did not respond to the request, but all those who did (13) gave their consent to take part in a semi-structured telephone interview, lasting between 30 minutes and an hour, reflecting on their experiences of the programme in relation to their original expectations, the kinds of learning (if any) that they believed had resulted from it, and its impact on their own and their colleagues' practice. The number of interviewees from each programme is shown in Table 6.1. Of the seven teachers who participated in the England's Immigrants programme, six agreed to participate in the research. Four of them had produced lesson plans and resources published by The National Archives (n.d.), each package identified as being for a different age range from Key Stage 2 through to A level (that is, for pupils aged from 10 to 18). The Agincourt 600 programme was undertaken by 14 teachers, of whom seven agreed to take part in the interview. Six of these teachers were among the nine who eventually published resources (individually or as a small group) that were shared

Table 6.1 The interview sample in relation to the number of participants in each of the professional development programmes (Source: Author, 2021)

	England's Immigrants	**Agincourt 600**	**Total**
Participants who produced resources that were published	4	9	13
Number interviewed	*4*	*6*	*10*
Participants who did not produce resources that were published	3	5	8
Number interviewed	*2*	*1*	*3*
Total number of participants	**7**	**14**	**21**
Total number interviewed	***6***	***7***	***13***
*Interviewees who identified as 'specialists'**	*4*	*5*	*9*

* 'Specialists' had studied the relevant topics in some depth as part of their degree or had previously taught them at A level.

on the Historical Association's website (Historical Association, 2019). Most of these resources were intended for A-level teachers, but two sets were designed for Key Stage 3 and one for GCSE (that is, for students aged 11–14 and 13–15, respectively). As Table 6.1 also reveals, around two-thirds of those who took part in the interviews had some level of specialist knowledge in the period(s) with which their programmes were concerned, in that they had previously studied it at some depth within their undergraduate degree or had been teaching it at A level for a number of years. This proportion tends to over-represent the 'specialists', since both programmes overall had a more even balance between specialist and non-specialists. In considering teachers' prior knowledge, it is also important to note that while some A-level options had obviously included a specific focus on the 100 Years War, there had never been an examination syllabus that highlighted migration (in either the medieval or the early modern period) until it was introduced as the focus of a particular thematic study within the new GCSE specifications, being taught for the first time in 2016.

While the interview questions also explored different aspects of the programme design, identifying features that the participants regarded as particular strengths as well as those that they thought could have been improved, the particular focus of this chapter is on the benefits that they claimed to have derived from their participation in it. Important constraints were acknowledged on the extent to which the teachers felt that they could fully exploit what they had learned in their practice, but these are not reported here. The chapter thus draws on the interview data to answer three specific research questions:

1. What kinds of knowledge do the participants claim to have acquired through participation in an extended subject-rich CPD programme?
2. What claims do the participants make about how that knowledge changes them or what it enables them to do?
3. What effects does engagement in the programme seem to have had upon the participants' sense of professional agency?

While the first two questions had been identified as of potential interest before the research began, the third was suggested by the themes that began to emerge through the interactive process by which the teachers' claims were identified and coded. Shulman's (1986) original description of the components of what he referred to as 'pedagogical content knowledge' provided an initial framework for categorisation of the kinds of knowledge to which the teachers referred, but a more inductive process

was used to explore the subsequent claims that teachers made about how their new knowledge began to change them and what exactly it enabled them to do. The theme of agency was first suggested not only by the actions that the teachers had begun to pursue since undertaking the programme and the renewed sense of confidence that they reported in their own abilities, but also by the roles that they ascribed to themselves. While the practical constraints that they acknowledged were very real, all the interviewees identified ways in which they had been transformed or at least become better equipped to tackle them.

Findings: The growth and the power of teachers' knowledge

The kinds of knowledge that teachers claimed to have developed

Obviously it had been intended that all the teachers participating in the programmes would develop new substantive knowledge about the past. Evidence of this outcome could be found in all the teachers' responses, whether they had previously described themselves as 'specialists' or not. Across both programmes, the nature of this knowledge can be encapsulated by four adjectives, used on various occasions: not only was it 'intensive', 'detailed' and 'nuanced', it was also 'extensive'. The programmes dealt at times with highly specific topics – such as the details of the Armagnac–Burgundian civil war or the nature of resident aliens' engagement in the London guilds – and insights into individual and everyday experiences were highly prized. The teachers welcomed what they called 'human' and 'humanising' stories – the slang terms in common use, or the way in which names on the muster rolls could be seen to have been 'crossed, just like a teacher marking the register'. While the database at the heart of the England's Immigrants programme inevitably revealed both the diversity of individuals' experience in specific localities and their cumulative impact across a range of industries, the prevailing impression created by the layers of detail that the Agincourt participants were offered was of the sophistication and complexity of medieval society, creating a new sense of respect for those who had populated it. The historians' input also served to locate the details and developments that they described within a broader, international context, making sense for teachers of the geography of England's economic and political relationships with different parts of the European

continent. As one of the teachers (who had previously taught a relevant A-level syllabus) commented in relation to what she had learned:

> Certainly, the amount of specific knowledge would be too much to mention, but I'd not actually connected-up what was going on in wider society and also, economically, right across Europe with what was going on in England … It added so much more texture and breadth to my understanding and therefore makes it so much easier to teach. The best way I can describe it is that it makes it more three-dimensional, because of the way [the historians contributing to the programme] come at it from a complete variety of sources … and looking at different peoples, different countries, considering it socially and economically, considering the impact on England from abroad, from north and south. (Teacher B, Agincourt 600)

While the direct access to historians was undoubtedly valued as a short cut in terms of knowledge building – offering the teachers valuable frameworks to which they could connect new knowledge and specific, well-focused advice on the most useful further reading – it also offered something more, described by one teacher as an insight 'straight into the mind of the academic'. Several teachers felt they had been granted direct access to the ways in which historians were thinking and arguing about what mattered and what it meant. This access was, unsurprisingly, regarded as invaluable in terms of teaching about different interpretations of the past, but the insights into historians' current research actually seemed to be of most use in terms of the teachers' learning about the original sources from which the historians constructed and evaluated claims about these periods.

Although the specialists might have been expected to be more familiar with medieval sources than the other teachers, virtually all the participants commented (many of them with surprise and considerable excitement) about their learning in relation to sources. This learning related to many different issues relevant to the period, including: the specific types of source on which the historians drew; details of the kinds of circumstances in which such sources were produced (correcting misconceptions, in many cases, about medieval chroniclers); and the processes by which searchable databases, like that devoted to England's immigrants, were now being constructed, thereby transforming the research process for historians and expanding the range of questions that could be answered. The importance of this knowledge about sources

was reflected in the fact that three of the published resources from the Agincourt 600 programme (about which the teachers had an entirely free choice) were focused on sources: either the compilation of annotated collections of relevant materials for other teachers; or guidance written for teachers, detailing what they should know and understand about particular sources from this period in order to support students' developing understanding and appropriate use of them. A great many of the claims that the participants made about subsequent changes to their practice as teachers (discussed below) derived from what they had learned about medieval sources and the ways in which the historians were working with them.

The range of types of knowledge that the teachers claimed to have acquired about history itself can thus be seen to have encompassed both substantive and syntactic knowledge, to use the distinction drawn by Shulman (1986) with reference to Schwab (1978). In recognising both elements as essential within 'subject matter content knowledge', Shulman made the same appeal as Young's (2007) social realist conception of powerful knowledge would later make to the 'rules' of the academic community 'for determining what is legitimate to say in a disciplinary domain and what "breaks" the rules' (Shulman, 1986: 9). While the participants clearly appreciated their new knowledge of the substance of the past, they similarly valued both the coherent frameworks within which it had been organised for them and the chance to examine exactly how it had been constructed.

As some of the descriptions of the teachers' new knowledge have already begun to suggest, their developing subject matter content knowledge was intimately intertwined with what Shulman originally identified as 'pedagogical content knowledge' or subject knowledge for teaching: the 'form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects most germane to its teachability' (Shulman, 1986: 9). Among those aspects, Shulman lists the following:

- the most useful forms of representation – analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations and demonstrations – ways of representing and formulating that subject that make it comprehensible to others;
- an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult;
- the conceptions and preconceptions (often misconceptions) that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them; and
- knowledge of strategies most likely to be fruitful in reorganising the understanding of learners.

The precise nature of pedagogical content knowledge and whether it can really be seen as distinct from subject knowledge has been keenly debated, particularly from a constructivist perspective that also emphasises the creative process inherent in all knowing, rather than the passive reception of an inert body of material (Cochran *et al.*, 1993). Such challenges to Shulman's rather rigid conceptualisation seem entirely justified in light of the way in which the participants constantly moved between learning and teaching in reflecting on their experiences. Nonetheless, the idea of a kind of knowledge or ways of knowing that lie(s) at the intersection between the structures of the subject and the perspectives of the learner resonated with many of the claims expressed by the participants. The crossing of this intersection and the interplay between the perspective of teaching and learning is richly illustrated by the following extract in which one of the teachers explains how the resource that he has created – effectively a picture gallery intended to 'immerse pupils into late medieval thinking' by engaging them with the visual culture of the period – will need to be located within a carefully planned scheme of work:

> The gallery has to be part of a sequence of lessons. Modern students have a visual language which they already have in their brains somewhere. It's not perfect, because they always struggle at first with images that aren't literal. And perhaps that's where medieval stuff has an advantage, because medieval art is never literal. It's always mythological, it's always a bit odd. But I didn't appreciate how much background knowledge you need … I think it's about how we can build up confidence in the course gradually, rather than – over two years. And I've sort of realised, from my own experience, just literally how much you have to know and what you will need to do in order to soften it, and I'm thinking 'Can we approach it in such a way that helps it build up slowly and gradually?' It certainly gives you a sense of yourself as a learner rather than a teacher, which is crucial. (Teacher A, Agincourt 600)

As this quotation illustrates, a major source of insight into pupils' probable misconceptions and difficulties, that also underpinned the participants' ideas about how to structure their teaching, derived from their own experience as learners within the programme. Exciting as it had been to hear from the historians, many of the teachers had also found their own immersion into the late medieval period somewhat

overwhelming. This had reminded even some of the specialists of the fears and anxieties that can easily overwhelm pupils, especially when seeking to make sense not merely of an unfamiliar period but of a large cast of characters – a widely perceived demand presented by the Wars of the Roses. Recognising the skill with which the teacher educators had orchestrated the series of academic presentations, several of the participants emphasised what they had learned about the need for careful attention to structure and sequence, layering new insights and gradually building up the complex picture that had so impressed them. As learners themselves, they also noted the power of site visits and the opportunity to handle original sources, recognising how these particular stimuli had both intrigued and galvanised them. Many of those working with the new database were thrilled by the opportunity to pose their own questions – an opportunity that they wanted to replicate in the lesson sequences that they created.

The claims that teachers made about the power of new knowledge

The fact that what the teachers had developed was fundamentally knowledge *for teaching* was also evident from the ways in which they linked claims about their own learning (usually without any prompting) to claims about how that learning was changing their teaching. In many cases, a vital element in this account was the way in which the development of this new knowledge had also changed their attitudes and dispositions – and ultimately, as discussed below, the way in which they thought about themselves. Becoming more knowledgeable, according to the participants, increased their 'interest', 'pleasure' and 'enjoyment' in what they were doing as teachers. It was also said to have 'fired [their] imagination and creativity' – as illustrated by the idea of creating a medieval art gallery. Other teachers also highlighted the wider range of activities and resources with which they had begun to experiment, both adapting existing materials and developing their own (in addition to those that they were producing as part of the Scholar or Fellowship programme). They also suggested that they felt more able to find points of connection between their students' present reality and the past, which not only allowed them to develop more appropriate analogies and parallels to unlock or enrich pupils' understanding, but also to provide more convincing explanations about the purpose of studying the past. The sense of conviction that this inspired in one teacher was so significant

that he gave it the credit for a recent increase in pupil recruitment to his school's medieval history A level.

Two specific developments in the teachers' approaches to their practice tended to dominate their reflections. The first focused specifically on their teaching about the use of sources, while the second related more broadly to their capacity to plan effectively. It is perhaps unsurprising, given the emphasis that they placed on their learning about sources and the range of specific examples that they shared in illustrating this learning, that the participants should also have reported a wide variety of ways in which this knowledge was changing their teaching about the use of historical sources. Planning and sequencing decisions were obviously implicated, including the issue of whether to focus pupils' attention first on the content or on the provenance of a particular source. Several teachers discussed their insights into the question of what knowledge pupils would need before they could look productively at the sources, questioning the value of introducing them in some lessons simply as a 'hook' or stimulus, rather than deliberately introducing them at a point when the pupils could use them more effectively. Teachers' awareness of the value of actually visiting archives to handle sources has already been noted, but many other teaching strategies were also identified, similarly related to the way in which the historians and other programme leaders had taught them. As one of the teachers, explained, working with an expert from The National Archives had focused their attention on the question of:

> whether we 'cover' history or whether we 'uncover' history – a neat turn of phrase; focusing on what is left behind, and *why* that is the stuff that is left behind; looking at it through the other side of the telescope, if you like, the other side of the lens. So, how do we know what we know? Really thinking about the sources. [The teacher educator] pushed us to consider why we are using a particular source. Is it going to tell the pupils something they've already been taught, and it's going to confirm it, so they can get a tick in the box? Or does the source have a different sort of value? Is there a fresh perspective in thinking about why we have this source and how historians have used the source? So it's not just to confirm the content they might have been taught by the teacher at the front. We went them really to apply their mind in a different way about history, and why we think what we think. (Teacher 4, England's Immigrants)

Other specific insights into ways of using sources included:

- recognition that it might be appropriate at times to adapt the language of a particular source;
- providing an image of what the source actually looked like – and not merely an extract from the text – to help pupils appreciate its physical form and the culture in which it had been produced; and
- using more varied *types* of source while also focusing in greater depth on a few well-chosen artefacts.

The changes relating to participants' planning applied to their thinking on a range of timescales. They referred to their capacity to develop an 'effective curriculum structure' and 'appropriate lesson sequences' within it, as well as to their ability to devise more appropriate or better focused objectives for individual lessons. Their sense of the big questions and themes with which historians were dealing meant not only that the teachers felt able to plan 'more quickly' and 'more organically', but also that they were more confident in the quality of their decisions; they were able to judge the relative importance of competing priorities and thus to determine their goals and the 'key steps' by which to achieve them. In some cases, they were pointed towards new kinds of goals; in others they felt affirmed in taking decisions that required more commitment:

> It has reaffirmed for me the need to look more at the social aspects of history and at all different types of people. We have a tendency just to study the elite, the high levels of society and the politics. And that's perhaps especially true when you're teaching periods that you don't know as much about. I have always thought it was valuable to take a wider view of society, but that can get lost when you're caught up in teaching, especially at Key Stage 3. It was good to have that reaffirmed. (Teacher 5, England's Immigrants)

Greater clarity about what they wanted to achieve – or perhaps a more realistic appraisal of the relationship between the available sources and historians' claims – also prompted some of the teachers to 'increase the demands that they were making of their pupils', particularly in terms of their ability to 'handle the uncertainty of historical knowledge'.

The impact of new knowledge on teachers' professional agency

This willingness to ask more of their pupils, combined with a confidence that they could structure the curriculum in ways that would make these

increased demands manageable, demonstrates the sense of 'empowerment' that came with the teachers' new knowledge. This knowledge served not merely to raise the bar in terms of their objectives for pupils' learning and to provide strategies by which to achieve them; it also changed the ways in which the teachers thought about themselves and their capacity to effect change, now and in the future.

The teachers' sense of agency was reflected in the terms that they chose to refer to themselves, particularly in commenting on how the programme had made them feel. Indeed, the very existence of the programme was interpreted as an important marker of status. Many of the teachers commented on the sense of being valued and respected that was powerfully communicated simply by the provision, without charge, of a residential study visit, led by experts in different fields (historians, archivists and teacher educators). Although the funding did not extend to paying for supply cover – which meant that the face-to-face elements of the programme had to take place at weekends, with the online learning squeezed in alongside full-time teaching commitments and resource production undertaken during the holidays – the fact that their development as *history* teachers was being taken seriously and at least partly funded was seen by many as an exceptionally rare validation of their 'professional' identity. The opportunity to produce resources that would be formally reviewed and edited for publication was also generally (although not universally) interpreted as another indication of respect for their status and professional expertise. Coming together for the intensive study days, sharing their responses to the further reading and podcasts online, and collaborating (at least in the early stages) on resource design meant that the participants also came to see themselves as part of a 'community' – or professional 'network' – committed to the same objectives. Feeling part of that community – a feeling that, they noted, was strengthened by the length of the project, giving it a 'transformative' effect – had given them 'confidence' and a 'new sense of purpose'.

It is important to note that recognition of their professional status was directly linked in the teachers' minds to the opportunity that they were being given for further study. The invitation to participate in a programme of learning was interpreted not as implying that their existing knowledge was inadequate but as a mark of respect for their professional need to continue learning through engagement with the academic community. With the exception of one teacher (who challenged the assumption inherent in the editorial process that she might have more to learn specifically about writing *for publication*) all the participants were excited to adopt the role of learner – which felt like both a basic right and

yet, under the pressures of a full-time teaching commitment, a rare luxury. The teachers also felt that they were now equipped to *go on* learning after the programme had ended, with appropriate frameworks within which they could pursue further reading. A number of them pointed to other research initiatives that they had undertaken as a result of the impetus from these particular programmes: contacting other academics, for example, or connecting up with local and national museums.

Just as the notion of being a 'learner' was readily accommodated within that of being a 'professional' (and indeed was seen as fundamental to it), so too it could coexist with the idea of being seen as an 'expert'. Although the programmes had stipulated that they were open both to specialists and to non-specialists, all those who were interviewed, regardless of their prior knowledge of the period(s) in question, noted the respect that they felt was accorded to their existing knowledge and expertise. While this expertise was undoubtedly assumed to derive from their experience and understanding of school teaching (and was expected to give them particular insights into the design of teaching resources), it was also thought to extend to their capacity to engage in the debates and make sense of the details and nuances that the historians were sharing with them. Occasionally the participants went so far as to claim the identity of 'historian' for themselves, but even those who did not take that step certainly felt sufficiently confident to challenge particular claims or interpretations put forward in the textbooks that they had been using.

A final element that emerged in relation to the themes of identity and agency, revealed more obviously in the teachers' actions and stated intentions than in explicit references to their role, was that of 'leadership'. Just as they now felt equipped to offer guidance to their pupils, giving them reading suggestions and specific ideas about how to go beyond their textbooks, so too the participants referred to ways in which they were giving advice and direction to their colleagues and encouraging them to make contact with local academic historians. The process of writing materials for publication had helped them to think about how to structure and support other teachers' learning and proved to be very significant in convincing some of the teachers that they could do more to support, guide and inspire others. Several went on to adopt a more proactive and ambitious stance within their own context. Some felt inspired to lead resistance against what they regarded as unhelpful initiatives – such as a 'generic focus on thinking skills' at the expense of disciplinary thinking, rooted in the practices of the subject community – while others took the decision to put history at the heart of school initiatives that had previously been led by other subjects.

The power of knowledge for teachers: Conclusions and implications

The main intention behind this research was to explore how teachers could be supported in their endeavours to give young people access to genuinely powerful historical knowledge. Acknowledging Seixas (1993) that teachers need a sustained link with the academic community if they are to do more than merely impart knowledge as an inert product, it set out to explore the impact of two particular CPD programmes. Both were specifically intended to strengthen the relationship between the classroom and the academy through an in-depth focus on particular topics currently in the spotlight as the result of new (digital) research techniques or the arrival of a significant anniversary. They also incorporated other important features, well validated by research, such as an extended timescale and a sustained level of peer support. Both programmes, according to the participants at least, had a very positive impact on their subject knowledge (substantive and syntactic) and on their 'pedagogical knowledge content'. More importantly, perhaps, they also seem to have had a profound influence on the teachers' sense of professional identity and agency, suggesting that the power of knowledge derived from close links with the academic community may lie as much in its impact on teachers as on pupils.

The findings reported here obviously need to be treated with caution, not least because they are solely focused on the positive outcomes as reported by the teachers, with no discussion of the constraints that were also noted (albeit much less frequently) on their capacity to make full use of all that they had learned. It is also important to acknowledge the many factors that combine over time to shape teachers' professional identities. Previous biographical, personal, professional, policy and workplace influences will all have played a part in shaping these teachers' responses to the particular experiences and opportunities they encountered within the programmes. Agency, in particular, as Jenkins (2004) has noted, tends to be a relatively stable aspect of personal identity, more resistant than others to change in response to external factors.

Nonetheless, given all that we also know about the potential of policy changes, particularly those associated with a strong monitoring and auditing culture, to reduce rather than increase teachers' willingness to take risks or trial new ideas and to lower their capacity for resilience (Day, 2017), it is striking to observe the highly positive and proactive ways in which these participants were responding to the challenges

represented by wide-ranging and multiple reforms to curriculum and assessment structures. In the face of these reforms, all explicitly focused on the 'standards' agenda, the fact that these teachers were reporting increases both in their confidence as professionals and in the extent to which they saw themselves as agents, able to actively mediate their students' learning rather than merely complying with the demand for change, is a remarkable indicator of the power that they derived from renewing the connection between current scholarship and their classroom practice.

In light of these positive findings, the Historical Association has continued to collaborate with a range of academic and heritage partners to provide further Teacher Fellowships that are also being subjected to careful evaluation. A similar kind of model has also been applied in the Travel, Transculturality and Identity in England (TIDE) project run by the University of Liverpool in conjunction with the Runnymede Trust. This programme focused on the teaching of British migration, belonging and empire in secondary schools (McIntosh *et al.*, 2019). One important issue that it will be possible to explore with further data from a range of programmes is the nature and significance of the role played by the history teacher educators working alongside the academic historians. Although this was not a specific focus of this chapter, the findings reported here hint at the crucial importance of this role. Participants in the Agincourt 600 programme noted the care that had been invested by the teacher educator in structuring and sequencing the series of academic presentations to build the teachers' knowledge systematically, modelling the kind of planning that they recognised they would need to undertake for their own students. Those engaged in the England's Immigrants programme noted that it was the history educator who moved them beyond the fascination of working with the archive sources to consider exactly what they were using sources for in their own classroom. Such comments suggest that the teacher educator may have an essential part to play in supporting (or even ensuring) the constant movement in participants' thinking between learning and teaching that underpins the development of pedagogical content knowledge.

Another important focus for further research is whether particular kinds of learning – most obviously the teachers' insight into the distinctive nature of certain sources and the ways in which historians interrogate them – are essentially confined to the specific period common to both these programmes, the Middle Ages, or whether close engagement with historians of other periods gives rise to similar context-specific

revelations. It is possible that the richness of the learning that occurred in relation to the nature of sources, how they are used by historians and might most productively be used by students, is dependent on distinctive features of the medieval period, such as its distance from the present or the fact that comparatively few teachers have engaged with it as a specialist subject within their own undergraduate degrees. This possibility is now being tested with reference to Teacher Fellowships dealing both with more recent and more commonly studied periods, such as the Age of Revolutions and the Cold War. Early findings suggest that teachers (at both primary and secondary levels) have been surprised and excited by what they have learned, not only about the diversity of the sources being used and the research techniques that historians employ, but also about the kinds of questions they are now asking (Burn, 2019).

While these findings are obviously most relevant to the question of experienced teachers' *continued* professional learning, they also raise questions with important implications for *initial* teacher education. It is perhaps too easy to assume that newly qualified history graduates will have knowledge of recent research developments, at least in relation to the periods that they have studied within their degree programme, when the extent of their knowledge of historians' research methods may, in fact, be quite limited, especially if they have not undertaken a dissertation involving original research. At the very least, such knowledge should not be taken for granted. Where it is lacking, it may be relatively easy for teacher educators working within university-based programmes to liaise with colleagues within their history departments to provide appropriate opportunities for students undertaking a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) to engage directly with researchers and their archive sources (see, for example, Crouch, 2019). The fact that the issue may be much more difficult to address within school-based initial teacher education routes suggests that much more attention may need to be paid to beginning teachers' own access to powerful knowledge if they are to be expected to offer it effectively to their students.

Notes

1 The General Certificate of Secondary Education (or GCSE) is an externally set and assessed examination that students in England usually sit at the age of 16.

2 Key Stage 3 is the first phase of secondary school education that usually spans Years 7–9 (that is, students aged 11–14).

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7

Two concepts of power: Knowledge (re)production in English history education discourse

Joe Smith and Darius Jackson

Introduction

English history teachers have long prided themselves on the centrality of disciplinary knowledge to their pedagogy and practice (Counsell, 2011; Smith, 2019). From at least the 1970s, the view that children should learn not just accounts of the past, but the processes through which these accounts are constructed, has been something of a guiding philosophy in curriculum planning. However, in a recent paper (Smith and Jackson, 2017), we suggested that this professional unanimity was fracturing somewhat and that two distinct positions – radical social realism (RSR) and traditional social realism (TSR) – had emerged. While both positions clung to the importance of disciplinary knowledge to teachers' planning, TSRs were increasingly coming to the view that disciplinary knowledge should not be a curricular end in itself, but rather an important outcome which emerged from rigorous attention to more concrete forms of knowledge.

Where our 2017 paper had restricted itself to discussion of historical knowledge and its acquisition by children, this chapter goes further in suggesting that these epistemic arguments are intimately related to questions of power and the purpose of schooling. This chapter extends our two types of social realism, but, in doing so, recognises that this is a typology under formation. Consequently, we present what we see as ideal types around which ideas are seeming to coalesce. In doing so, we are not seeking to characterise the educational philosophy of particular

thinkers on history education, but rather sketching the limits of the nebulae which may one day form recognisable points in the sky. While our argument is tentative, we remain hopeful that the terms and concepts that we propose will be useful to others in helping to understand the shifting ground in English history education.

Our chapter begins with a discussion of social realism and its relationship to the history curriculum before considering the ways in which this served to unite the English history teaching profession in the years between the first English National Curriculum in 1991 and the most recent in 2013. The chapter then identifies some of the fracture lines along which this consensus broke and discusses these in political, pedagogic and epistemic terms. At each point we will not only identify what distinguishes the TSR and RSR positions from each other, but also what distinguishes each from the more familiar concepts of 'traditional' and 'progressive' education. Our chapter concludes with some reflection on the utility of these terms and possible future directions for history education in England.

Social realism in overview

Social realism emerged in the early 2000s as a theoretical response to new approaches in curriculum making championed by supranational bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005). To social realists, these new curricula were too eager to emphasise transferable 'skills' at the expense of knowledge and too ready to erode boundaries between school subjects (Young, 2008). In essence, social realism postulated that although subject disciplines were socially constructed, they reflected real domains of knowledge which existed independent of our social understanding of them. To social realists, disciplines evolved according to conventions and habits which were socially determined but these conventions were realist in orientation – they aspired to know the world 'out there' better. In a 2010 paper, Young and Muller considered the impact of these insights for the school curriculum and suggested three possible futures for schooling, which were later given a book-length treatment (Young *et al*., 2014).

Future 1 is described as 'inherited from the nineteenth century' (Young *et al*., 2014: 58). It is a curriculum in which subject disciplines were sacrosanct, the pedagogy behaviourist, and success defined in terms of university entrance. In opposition to this, Future 2 covers various 'alternative' or 'progressive' models of education which challenge the

domination of disciplines and are, in various ways, learner-centred. These curricula, the authors argue, 'celebrate the experience of the pupils, whatever that may be rather than the idea that the purpose of schools is to introduce them to knowledge beyond their experience' (Young *et al*., 2014: 62). While Future 1 assumes that knowledge is set, it is given to us through tradition and that it is beyond question, Future 2 makes the exact opposite error, it concludes that since all knowledge is socially constructed, it is impossible to choose between competing accounts on rational grounds. Future 3 is offered as a resolution to this invidious choice wherein knowledge is constructed in specialist disciplinary teams. This knowledge is fallible but 'subjects … [are] the most reliable tools we have for enabling students to acquire knowledge and make sense of the world' (Young *et al*., 2014: 67).

Social realism and history

The attraction of a Future 3 curriculum to history educators was obvious. History, almost by definition, deals in uncertainties, inferences and probabilities. The idealised historian is avowedly modernist – she puts forward her best account but accepts the contingency of this account and awaits rebuttal with Popperian eagerness. In turn, this ideal has informed what school children are taught – that it is in the nature of historical accounts to disagree, that the conclusions we reach are a product of the questions we ask and the evidence we use. This social realist (Future 3) conception of knowledge has formed the basis of history curriculum planning in England since the work of the Schools' Council History Project in the 1970s (Schools History Project, 1976; Rogers, 1979). Despite periodic accusations that such lessons represent a relativist free-for-all (Deuchar, 1989; McGovern, 2007), history teachers became adept at exploring with their pupils the limits of interpretation and the nature of 'better' and 'worse' accounts.

Furthermore, this strong theoretical basis to curriculum planning proved exceptionally useful to teachers. When the first National Curriculum was written in the early 1990s, history teachers resisted a list of prescribed knowledge using arguments about the nature of the discipline. Phillips (1998; 77) quoted the independent Chair of the History Curriculum Working Group (HWG) at the time:

> I had my eyes opened by the HWG. I had lived with history and had been taught the subject in a very old-fashioned way. Then when

> I heard the arguments put forward by HWG members it came as something of a culture shock. I became impressed with many of the arguments which I never knew existed.

Much later, in 2013, when the UK Conservative government attempted to introduce a curriculum which discarded these ideas, history teachers united in opposition (Smith, 2017, 2019). Again, this opposition was marked by sophisticated depoliticised defences of the subject in epistemic terms. The arguments proved persuasive and the curriculum was withdrawn.

Although decades in the making, the consensus among history teachers began to fracture in the years after 2013. These divergent ideas can be seen most clearly in the pages of *Teaching History*, the professional journal of history teachers in England and Wales. During the 2013 curriculum contestation, the journal had been the vanguard of opposition to core-knowledge curricula (Smith, 2017), and throughout its history, editorials and articles in the journal had advanced the long-standing view that children co-constructed meanings from history. By 2018, the editorial tone of the journal had changed significantly: 'a focus on the provisional nature of knowledge, and the need for pupils to understand its construction through evidence, argument, and interpretation, swiftly became establishment orthodoxy' (Counsell *et al*., 2018: 2).

The long-standing consensus had now been re-framed as an 'orthodoxy' imposed by a putative 'establishment'. This is a curious characterisation of the preceding decades of history curriculum making. First, the 'orthodoxy' being questioned here was never imposed from outside, it was the product of decades of internal debates within the history-teaching community. Second, it is by no means clear who 'the establishment' in this narrative are. The term surely cannot refer to government and policymakers who had been so effectively rebuffed in previous curriculum contestations. In any case, this editorial casts doubt on one of the foundational principles of modern history-curriculum design: that the most interesting kinds of knowledge in history are provisional and, indeed, that it is this very falsifiability which elevates them above the certitude of more spurious accounts of the past.

While almost all history teachers in England continue to subscribe to the Future 3 conception of the subject, it is clear in this editorial (Counsell *et al*., 2018) that some history teachers are now concerned that the pendulum has swung too far in favour of child-centredness. These writers (whom we have termed traditional social realists or TSRs) argue for a return to a rigorous focus on children writing better history

and seek to combine Young's Future 3 with aspects of the Future 1-oriented core knowledge arguments of E. D. Hirsch (Murray, 2017). Against this position are the group we term 'radical social realists' (RSRs) who argue that the dangers posed by the narrow conception of knowledge and false certitude of Future 1, outweigh the dangers posed by the child-centredness of Future 2. For RSRs, the role of the individual in making sense of the past is necessarily central and non-negotiable: curricula do not exist without someone to teach and someone to learn. In effect, this dispute is one of the lesser of two evils: for TSRs the potential for children to construct idiosyncratic epistemic frames in a curriculum which seeks to relate knowledge to the everyday, is a greater danger than the risks of devaluing or denigrating children's lived experience. RSRs take the opposite view: that not taking due account of children's everyday knowledge positions them as deficient and risks alienation from the knowledge we seek (alongside TSRs) to develop.

The differences and commonalities between the two positions can be shown diagrammatically (Figure 7.1).

It is apparent from Figure 7.1 that a core commitment to disciplinary knowledge and the liberating effects of an historical education continue

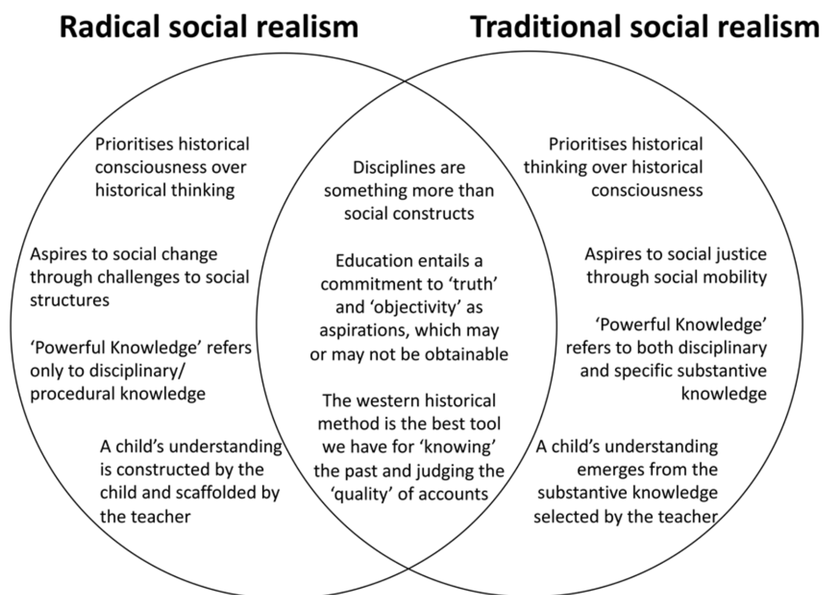

Figure 7.1 Differences and similarities between traditional and radical social realism (Source: Author, 2021)

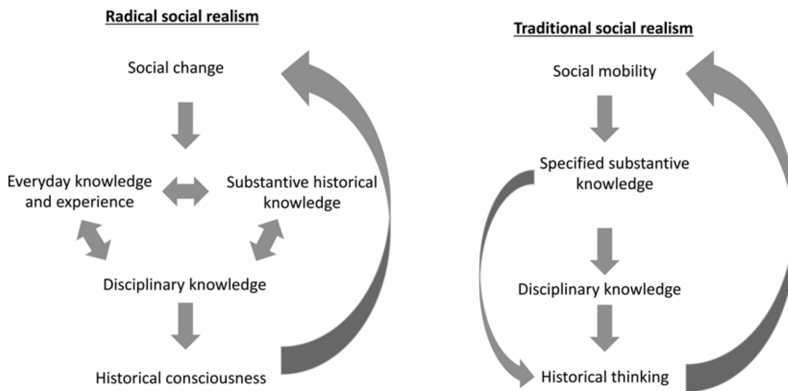

Figure 7.2 Idealised diagrams of the relationship between knowledge and the purposes of education in the traditional and radical social realist approaches (Source: Author, 2021)

to unite the two positions. However, it is similarly apparent that important differences exist. These can be considered under three subheadings:

- Political differences – The purpose of the curriculum;
- Pedagogical differences – The child and the curriculum; and
- Epistemic differences – Knowledge and the curriculum.

Although it is necessary to disaggregate these differences for the purposes of discussion, it is important to remember that each of these positions – TSR and RSR – form a total system with respect to education. The diagrams in Figure 7.2 attempt to illustrate these systems but fall foul of all the limitations associated with capturing dynamic processes in static form.

Political differences – The purpose of the curriculum

The top and bottom lines of each diagram in Figure 7.2 show us the purposes of the curriculum in each conception: the top line gives the overall purpose of education, while the bottom line gives the purpose of history specifically within that. Thus, on the one hand we have a radical social realist position which aspires to social change through an emphasis on developing children's historical consciousness, while in the traditional social realist position the aspiration is that children who can think historically might succeed within society as currently constituted.

The TSR position is more limited and therefore easier to explain. A common criticism of existing forms of curriculum is that their 'lack' of hard knowledge disadvantages children in state education relative to their counterparts in private education who benefit from curricula more focused on traditional forms of knowledge. The danger with existing progressive forms of national curricula, it is argued, is that children are denied access to the kinds of knowledge which allow them to participate in society's conversation. As a result, inequality becomes entrenched as the elite (with access to elite knowledge gained in elite schools) continue to dominate society's conversation while the majority are excluded. In support of this argument, traditionalists and TSRs cite dominance of the privately educated in politics, the media and the judiciary (Wheelahan, 2010). The logic of this argument is simplistic, but compelling: since the upper echelons of society are dominated by the graduates of elite schools, more schools should seek to emulate the curricula of these schools. In this conception, the purpose of schooling is social mobility, and the mechanism for social mobility is rigorous thinking within existing disciplines – in our case historical thinking. If children can be made better at history (and other subjects) then success in national examinations will follow, allowing greater access to the elite. It is increasingly apparent that the TSR position is becoming the accepted interpretation of Young's work, in the popular consciousness at least. In an article for *The Guardian* newspaper, for example, his ideas are boiled down to the sentence 'social justice demands that children from low-income backgrounds have as much access to knowledge as their advantaged peers' (Wilby, 2018).

It is worth pausing here to emphasise how this position differs from thoroughgoing educational traditionalism of the Future 1 variety. For traditionalists, power, wealth and societal influence are simply a function of one's knowledge. In 2010, the UK Education Secretary made this case in a speech to the Conservative Party Conference, saying, 'the accumulation of cultural capital – the acquisition of knowledge – is the key to social mobility' (Gove, 2013). In other words, to traditionalists 'the more you know, the more successful you will be'. In contrast, the TSR position prizes disciplinary expertise above the mere accumulation of cultural capital. Consequently, TSRs can be critical of lists of inert inherited knowledge, while still asserting that rigorous subjection of oneself to disciplinary norms and specific items of knowledge will engender social mobility.

How, then, do these positions differ from the radical social realist position? First, the purpose of education is manifestly different. For RSRs, the existing societal arrangements are not a rationally ordered

hierarchy which one can simply 'move' upwards through. For RSRs – drawing on a critical pedagogy tradition – education must aspire to social change. Children today are entitled to feel fatalistic about the world they live in – theirs are lives lived against a backdrop of bad news: the normalisation of racism within political discourse, the bleaching of coral reefs and the environmentally enforced displacement of millions of people. History educators must ask what it can offer to children in this society. The promise that they will 'get better at history' (the limits of traditional social realist aspiration) is not enough. Even academic success – once a guarantee of security in adult life – now means little as stable employment and the dream of home ownership petrify as quaint fossils of twentieth-century optimism.

RSR aspires to more than this. At its heart is a view that history has been marked by societal change and that these changes are, in part, effected by human beings. In this tradition, there is something absurd about teaching children about the decline of feudalism, the Reformation and the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics while simultaneously implying that our society as currently organised is underpinned by some ineffable permanence. The radical social realist view holds that disciplinary knowledge is powerful and that these disciplines do broaden how people see the world, but it refuses to take the logical leap that it is this knowledge, in itself, which necessarily gives the powerful their power. In fact, despite their knowledge-rich educations, figures in positions of power delight in making pronouncements and reaching decisions which are utterly divorced from rigorous and informed disciplinary thinking. There is, RSRs suggest, something disingenuous about suggesting that children need only play by the rules and submit themselves to disciplines in order to achieve power in society, when those who actually hold power in society seem unable (or unwilling) to do so themselves.

A radical social realist position refuses to place children in deficit because they possess different knowledge to the elite. This is no defence of a hollowed-out 'skills-based' or 'competency-based' Future 2 curriculum, but it is a Freirean view that children must 'read the world' before they can 'read the word'. This is not an education focused on what Young calls 'everyday knowledge', but it is an education which connects everyday knowledge to 'powerful knowledge'. In doing so, it positions powerful disciplinary knowledge as something useful and knowable through the everyday, rather than something obscure and esoteric.

Knowledge is powerful if it confers on children the confidence to effect change. The TSR position sees change at an individual level through personal advancement and an improved standard of living.

This social mobility, it is hoped, will result in more working-class people in positions of influence and so bring about social justice in the longer term (Wheelahan, 2010). In conflating social mobility with social justice, there is always the risk of reifying existing societal arrangements. That is to say, the TSR argument suggests that there is nothing systemically which reinforces and reproduces inequality, rather it is simply a matter that the elite is made up of the 'wrong' people. While RSRs would agree that a diversification of the elite in terms of race, class and gender would be welcome, this still supposes that society is organised in the most rational way that it could be.

This faith in the fundamental rationality of societal arrangements stems, in part, from teachers' and academics' personal success within this system. Teachers are, by definition, people who succeeded at (and enjoyed) school. Since they are also people who enjoy a position of some comfort in society, it is not hard to see how faith in academic disciplines and academic success as a driver of social justice takes root. Friere (1985: 18) explained this positionality thus:

> Many teachers unfortunately have been destroyed by the dominant ideology of a society and they tend to impose that way of seeing the world and behaving on kids. They usually view it as 'saving' kids, as a missionary would. This tendency stems from a superiority complex.

Friere's analysis is not perfect – TSRs do not see teachers as rescuing pupils, rather they believe that knowledge can save pupils. To TSRs a knowledge-rich curriculum is intrinsically inspirational, opening minds and opening doors and spurring children to succeed. RSRs are more cautious: knowledge-rich approaches might inspire some children, but risk alienating and isolating many others. These arguments are reminiscent of the dispute between Adler (1982) and Noddings (1983) over the former's recommendation of a Paideia curriculum. For his part, Adler quotes Dewey in arguing that 'the best education for the best is the best education for all' before adding his own addendum that 'the shape of the best education for the best is not unknown to us'. For Adler, this best education is a traditional knowledge-rich curriculum organised in disciplines. In opposition, Noddings (1983: 84–5) argued that this curriculum would serve only to entrench inequality:

> In my own secondary schooling, I participated in a program very like the one that Adler outlines. I loved it. I was completely

> captivated by Caesar's Gallic Wars, geometry, trigonometric identities, and even Cicero's essay on old age. It was not until years later that I learned about the utter misery most of my classmates endured in the 'same' environment … No special effort or even genius teaching would have brought most of my classmates into fair competition with me. Whatever they did, however they improved, I would have done more of it and at a higher level. It was not that I was 'better' than they, I was interested in the sort of material the school wanted me to learn.

As the dispute between Noddings and Adler shows, we have been here before: knowledge might inspire, but it also alienates. In terms of history, Shemilt (1980) from the same period reveals exactly the sort of disenchantment that Noddings fears. When a boy was asked by Shemilt (1980: 22) whether his life was part of history, he replied: 'No, not in Castleford, maybe if I lived down south.'

Traditionalists and TSRs alike are fond of framing their arguments in the context of social mobility. An important part of 'getting on' in society is knowing as much (or possibly knowing the same) as the people who hold power. RSRs find such a simplistic interpretation of knowledge deeply troubling. Power might not, as more radical post-structuralists argue, confer the ability to create what is true and what is not, but it unequivocally does confer the power to determine which things we talk about and which we do not. For RSRs powerful knowledge is the ability to see the ways in which the bounds of legitimate discourse and the facts that 'everyone knows' are constructed by those in power. Once this noble aspiration is abandoned, RSRs suggest, history is robbed of its most precious gift.

Pedagogical differences – The child and the curriculum

As we have seen, the TSR view positions children as individuals learning and mobilising knowledge to their own benefit in order to 'succeed' in school and, by extension, society more generally. In contrast, the RSR view is more open to diverse forms of knowledge and in exploring and utilising the funds of knowledge which children bring to the classroom. In many ways, this debate parallels the distinction that Seixas (2017) made between 'historical thinking' which he says is valorised in the 'British tradition' of history teaching and the concept of 'historical consciousness' seen in continental conceptions of the subject.

In Britain, Seixas argues, history education research has tended to focus on the empirical question of progression in children's historical understanding. The central question for British researchers has been – 'How can children be helped to get better at history?' This tradition has generated important insights such as the progression models devised by Shemilt (1983) and those offered by Lee and Ashby (2000). As important as this research is, it leaves unanswered (or rather unasked) the more philosophical question of why children ought to learn history at all. This is not to imply that these researchers are uninterested in the question of purpose (see Lee, 1992, 2011), just that such questions are not the focus of the research tradition. Instead, the importance of history is taken for granted: the historical discipline becomes something 'out there' to be learned and internalised by the child. This limited focus on 'getting better at history' guides the TSR position: since disciplines are intrinsically powerful, one only needs to ask how children might use them better.

In contrast, the question of purpose is at the centre of the Germanophone tradition of historical consciousness and, in turn, RSR. Derived from the work of Jörn Rüsen, historical consciousness places the knower at the centre of historical understanding rather than the Western historical method. Such a view does not denude the importance of the historical method as our best tool for knowing about the past, but it does remind us that historical knowledge is not created by the historical method itself, but by humans using this method. In terms of schooling, the implications of this are profound. An historical education becomes something more than an education in disciplinary methods and foundational concepts, it becomes an education in thinking about what these mean in the present. Duquette (2015, cited in Seixas, 2017: 63) has described historical consciousness as 'the understanding of the present, thanks to the interpretation of the past which allows us to consider the future'. In centring the knower, the child simultaneously learns about the past and comes to see himself as an historical actor in his own right. Both TSRs and RSRs see the historical method as an essential tool in the child coming to know about the world, but to RSRs, schooling must aspire to more than examination success, university entry or a good job. Jason Todd (2014: 157) puts it thus, 'Simply conveying how history works is not enough. Any attempt at emancipatory task design must also involve learners in the construction of knowledge.'

To RSRs, this focus on the present – and on the child in the present – is crucial. Whether we like it or not, humans do not store historical knowledge in a mental silo, they use its insights and 'lessons' to inform how they conceive the world. The traditional social realist view abdicates

responsibility to consider how children deploy historical knowledge and holds that, if they can understand the past 'better' then they might understand the present 'better' too. In contrast, the RSR view demands a focus on how children use the past. By centring the child as the user of the academic historical method this position obliterates the sharp distinction which some social realists elevate between 'powerful' and 'everyday' knowledge. For example, quantitative research in the Netherlands explored how children mobilised historical knowledge in understanding contemporary issues and concluded that children are more likely to see history as useful or relevant to them if teachers attend to the links between historical phenomena and contemporary analogues (Van Straaten *et al*., 2019).

From a TSR perspective, however, this idea of relevance which Dutch researchers seek to develop is, itself, problematic. Rejecting the view that history need necessarily connect to the everyday, they argue instead for history as a bounded discipline. Fordham (2018, paras 1 and 2, original emphases) has been particularly clear on this point and it is worth quoting him at length:

> We know that children are not empty vessels or blank slates, but what then are the implications of this for teaching? The most common response, and with some justification, is that teachers should attempt to relate the new knowledge being taught to what children already know. In some circles, this is framed as 'drawing on a child's experience'. It is a position frequently associated with the idea of *relevance*: we make things meaningful to children when we make them *relevant*, and *relevance* means relating to a child's *experience*.
>
> The mistake here is to think that new things that are learnt have to be linked to *everyday* experience, as opposed to *what children already know*. The assumption that new knowledge *within* the domain should be linked to something learnt *beyond* the domain results in questions like 'Was Henry VII a gangster?' This question is nearly meaningless in historical terms, and indeed could easily result in anachronistic misconceptions. Yet it is a question type that is quite common – and indeed seen in some published resources – precisely because it takes something which is supposedly distant and abstract (e.g. a king who lived half a millennium ago) with something that children can 'relate to' (e.g. gangsters).

However, from an RSR view, it is not at all clear why these two approaches are presented as an 'either/or' rather than a 'both/and'. There are, we

would suggest, meaningful parallels to be drawn between phenomenon and concepts in the past and those in the present. To some extent this relates to the question of what the 'proper' level of substantive concept teachers should use when they are designing learning experiences. In the TSR view, the concept under formation here is medieval kingship and insights from early medieval kingship are useful in illuminating late medieval kingship. This, however, seems curiously narrow – why cannot the same lesson be used to develop children's understanding of power: the ways in which violence buttresses power, the notion of 'legitimate' violence and the ways in which soft power is projected through dress and ceremony? None of this precludes children developing a more nuanced notion of medieval kingship, but it does, at least, suggest to children that learning history might have value beyond its own self-referential domain-specific knowledge.

In fairness, Fordham (2018) did permit knowledge to transcend the boundaries of school subjects, but only insofar as it connects to other school subjects:

> This is not to say of course that new knowledge should not be taught in the context of what has been learnt in other domains. Teaching the Reformation is a great deal easier if children have already learnt something about Christian theology in their lessons on religion.

To Fordham, school knowledge must connect only to other school knowledge and not to knowledge of the everyday; thus, the border between powerful and everyday knowledge is stark and impermeable. His is a curiously desiccated view of knowledge in which all that needs to be known is contained within school subjects. RSRs reject this view and see schools as social sites in which meaning is socially constructed. Schools are populated by children and children are drawn from communities. It is, we would suggest, somewhat perverse to suggest that concepts such as aristocracy can mean the same thing to a child from a deprived council estate as they do to a baronet at Eton.

There is a further point to be made here about the way in which the teacher views him or herself in relation to the children. One of the authors is reminded of his own experience teaching the very lesson comparing Henry VII with a gangster that Fordham describes. The lesson began with a brainstorm about what the class knew about gangsters; however, it quickly became apparent that the class's view of gangsters was very different from my own. For me, gangsters wore tuxedos and drove Mercedes; for my class, gangsters wore tracksuits and rode bicycles.

The class was drawing on everyday knowledge, but not in the way I had wanted. Sensing my lesson going awry, I 'corrected' their view of a gangster with a video clip of Marlon Brando making an unrefusable offer.

Now the TSRs response to this turn of events is predictable – I had confused the class by making inappropriate links to everyday knowledge which took them further from a proper understanding of medieval kingship. However, this lesson can be seen differently from a critical education perspective. All of the points I had hoped to make – that gangsters (and kings) rule by fear and favour, through violence, comradeship and patronage – could still be made, but in the process I might have learned something about the ways in which those mechanisms operate in the modern world. I had planned the lesson believing my stereotype of a gangster to be the correct one, this led me to disregard children's views when I had much to learn from them. The key thing here, as Friere (1985: 15) highlighted, is the need for teachers to be humble in their relationships with children:

> Humility is an important virtue for a teacher … Humility accepts the need we have to learn and relearn again and again, the humility to know with those whom we help to know … The teacher has to be free to say to the students 'you convinced me'.

On reflection, it was this humility that my practice lacked and is, perhaps, lacking in the disposition of many teachers. If humility is an important professional disposition, then we must also have humility about knowledge – something which is more difficult from a TSR position. In terms of pedagogy, Todd (2014: 166) has proposed addressing this through a 'hermeneutic conceptualisation of task design' which 'emphasises the place of context but also openness … thus allowing potential for students and teachers to be surprised'.

It is worth spending some time looking at the way in which language is used by social realists when discussing child-centred education, or what is termed Future 2. Here some of the disagreement between RSRs and TSRs could be attributable to infelicities in language. Consider, for example, the social realist criticism that Future 2 education: 'celebrate[s] the experience of the pupils, whatever that may be, rather than the idea that the purpose of schools is to introduce them to knowledge beyond their experience' (Young *et al*., 2014: 62). Here the significance of the sentence depends on two possible meanings of 'celebrate', as either 'acknowledge or mark' (to celebrate an anniversary) or as 'praise' (to celebrate a dramatic performance). This distinction is important to our understanding of what a child-centred curriculum

is trying to achieve. In one usage the sentence means that teachers should take account of pupils' varied life experiences, that we should recognise the stories that children bring to the class. In the other usage, the implication is that children should be rewarded or praised for any contribution that they make to class irrespective of whether it furthers their own or others' understanding of the world. The latter usage furthers a familiar traditionalist trope that education is bedevilled by an 'all must have prizes' culture, while the former simply asks that children be heard and respected as fellow human beings.

The radical social realist position is therefore unapologetically child-centred. However, centring the learning on the child does not de-centre the historical method, rather it emphasises the essential relationship between knowledge and knower. The question centres on the extent to which something 'out there' – the historical method – can be 'taught' to children:

> You cannot overcome a student's naivety by decree. We must start at the point where the students are … in order for students to go beyond their naivety, it is necessary for them to grasp that naivety in their own hands and then they will try to make the important leap, but they will make it with you. (Friere, 1985: 16)

The TSR view is that a rigorous focus on the discipline – and substantive knowledge – will automatically improve children's historical thinking and, consequently, make them more reflective and informed about the present. In contrast, the RSR view is that all knowledge – even methodological knowledge – is refracted through the knowledge and experience of the knower.

The differences between the historical thinking espoused by TSRs and the historical consciousness sought by RSRs have real implications for the lived experience of the child in the classroom. Since the pedagogical question asked by TSRs is limited to 'How can children learn to do history better?', problems of pedagogy are reducible to questions of effectiveness or efficiency. For this reason, the recent insights of cognitive scientists in education have been of tremendous importance to TSRs (Fordham, 2017). Traditional social realist pedagogy derives from the primacy of what Willingham (2009) calls 'inflexible knowledge' or 'true postulates'. Exposure to multiple examples of these postulates gives rise to what Willingham calls the 'deep structure' or the concept. Since certain events in the past are seen as having greater explanatory power in this regard, exposure to these events becomes a curricular entitlement

which supersedes discussion of pedagogy and children's understanding. For this reason, large academy chains which ascribe to knowledge-rich curricular are quick to impose their notions of the 'best' curriculum on all their 'partner' schools, irrespective of the differences between school context and intake.

Pedagogically, the implication is that, since children are not actively involved in the construction of their own understanding, they can simply be told information. In recent years, this approach has been termed 'direct instruction' and is referenced under the Twitter hashtag #JustTellThem. It is worth mentioning that Willingham is, himself, sceptical about this approach taking former UK Education Secretary Michael Gove to task for suggesting that Willingham was a proponent of 'memorisation':

> I'd have preferred 'knowledge' to 'memorisation' because the latter makes it sound as though one must sit down and wilfully commit information to memory. This is a poor way to learn new information – it's much more desirable that the to-be-learned material is embedded in some interesting activity. (Willingham, 2012)

RSRs take a different view of pedagogy: that the road to powerful knowledge must always begin with the everyday. The argument here is that theoretical concepts which allow powerful thinking are not equally available to students of all backgrounds, and so students must necessarily follow different paths to attain it. While historians might have a shared understanding of how one interrogates and uses evidence, the way in which children are guided to this understanding differs between contexts and, indeed, between individual children. While in the TSR view, the universality of the knowledge means disregarding context, in the RSR view the specificity of the context influences the selection, appropriateness and sequencing of knowledge. RSRs emphatically do not believe in denying access to elite knowledge to children, but they do believe in doing important preparatory work with children on why this knowledge might be important to them. As Wrigley (2018: 15; drawing from Vygotsky, 1987) wrote, 'there is a pedagogical/psychological need to move backwards and forwards between experience and abstraction'.

Epistemic differences – Knowledge and the curriculum

To go further we need to define what is meant by 'knowledge' in history. There are, we suggest, three forms of knowledge. The first is the

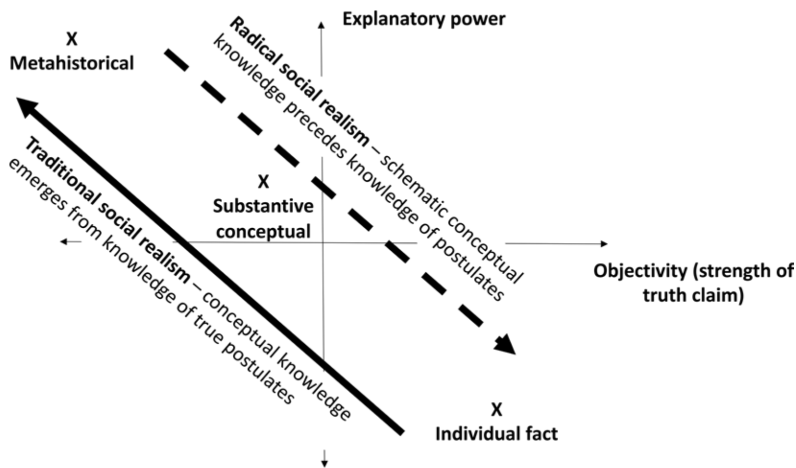

Figure 7.3 Types of knowledge and assumptions about their acquisition (Source: Author, 2021)

metahistorical – the understanding of how the discipline of history works and how historical knowledge is constructed. The second is the substantive-conceptual – an understanding of concepts such as migration, power and other concepts that are central to thinking like an historian (or social scientist). The third is at the level of individual facts or truth claims. In the diagram in Figure 7.3, the role of each of these types of knowledge in historical learning is outlined.

The relationship between these types of knowledge is conceived differently by TSRs and RSRs. To TSRs, children construct a metahistorical understanding of the past from encounters with specific substantive knowledge of the past. For RSRs, in contrast, children possess powerful schemas through which they interpret specific substantive knowledge. The crucial point of disagreement here is the extent to which human beings learn about the world inductively. The inductive position holds that humans form ideas about the world through encounters with true statements about it. Humans, it argues, form generalisable rules about the world (what might be called schemas) from experiencing individual instances or examples. In Hume's classic illustration of this position, written in 1739, if I have only ever encountered white swans, I will come to the view that swans must be white (Hume, 1985). In terms of history education, such a view places enormous weight on historical facts as true statements about the past. In a simplistic and extreme version of this position, knowing more 'true' facts about the past means that our

historical schemas also become more 'true'. Individual facts may have limited explanatory power, but cumulatively, lots of facts mean better explanations.

An alternative view supposes that humans perceive the world through ontological lenses which precede their lived experience of it. That is to say, all humans do not encounter the world in the same way. Instead, our view of the world is shaped by forces – cultural norms, ideologies and historical narratives – which create powerful schema and explanatory frameworks into which we fit our experiences. It is often said, for example, that no child is born racist. This is no doubt true, but many of children are racist before they know – conceptually – what racism is. Many of these frameworks, we now know, are invisible even to ourselves as unconscious or implicit biases.

An important function of education is, of course, to challenge these frames. Social realism holds that there is a 'real' world, but that our knowledge of it is necessarily gained through socially constructed lenses. On this much TSRs and RSRs agree, but there is disagreement about how to shift these assumptions. For TSRs, the solution is simply more knowledge. The work of Fordham has been influential in traditional social realist thinking about historical knowledge. In a 2015 blog entitled 'Is "understanding" a thing?' Fordham (2015) proposed that the notion of *understanding something better* was indistinguishable from the notion of *knowing more about it*. For Fordham, understanding is simply a product of the accumulation of examples, and the more examples one acquires, the better one's understanding.

To analyse this further, we must separate knowledge of the strictly factual type ('Wellington commanded an army at Waterloo') from knowledge of the explanatory type ('the French lost at Waterloo because…'). To TSRs, the latter is a necessary and inevitable consequence of the former – explanations arise from facts. However, such an assumption can be questioned. Human beings are known to form explanations before any access to facts. Such explanations will, to be sure, be tainted by teleology (we know Napoleon lost), prejudice (Britain always wins wars) or inference from repeated observations (wars of conquest inevitably fail). The TSRs' view is that greater access to facts – and access to facts alone – will refine these explanations and shift the explanation to the more historical. That if children know *that* poor weather affected Napoleon's plans or know *that* Prussian forces played a decisive role, then not only will their explanation of Napoleon's defeat be improved, so too will their ability to form metahistorical explanations.

In contrast, RSRs are sceptical that knowledge and explanation are linked in such a simplistic way. The idea that 'knowing more' leads unproblematically to understanding better seems to be based on an accountancy view of knowledge – that good knowledge will drive out bad. Such an argument would hold water if all historians agreed on their explanations and accounts of the past – they do not. It is, of course, possible to acquire many examples and still possess a partial or distorted picture. The accumulation of more and more one-sided examples merely creates more certainty that one's world view is correct. As an alternative to this, RSRs concentrate on the epistemic frames that children hold and ask how these are constructed and how they might be challenged *at the level of the epistemological*. In keeping with much experimental work from the Netherlands (van Drie and van Boxtel, 2008; Stoel *et al*., 2015), RSRs argue that second-order knowledge (for example, the ability to construct explanations) must be the focus of history education.

Since Piaget, educationalists have become accustomed to thinking of learning in terms of 'assimilation' (fitting lived experience into existing schema) and 'accommodation' (adapting schema to account for new experiences). However, accommodation is effortful; it requires renegotiating everything that we thought that we knew. We might hope that experience affect schema – that a black swan would cause us to question our assumption that all swans are white – but some of our 'knowledge' of the world is guarded more preciously than our knowledge of waterfowl. As Limón (2002: 276–7) wrote, 'students' understanding of historical content is often filtered by their history meta-concepts and epistemological beliefs about history and its learning.' For this reason, RSRs believe that children's knowledge needs to be conceived at the level of the metacognitive.

TSRs are not uninterested in children's metahistorical development and many continue to assert the importance of procedural (second-order) concepts within this. However, there is little doubt that some TSRs are becoming sceptical about whether these should be used to frame curriculum design and to plan for progression. Counsell (2017: 89) has been outspoken in this respect and argued that although teachers need to pay attention to disciplinary concepts such as significance this 'all too often collapses into formula'. Instead she argued that children best understand metahistorical concepts such as significance through thorough knowledge chronological reference points. With this in mind, Counsell (2017: 88) argued that curriculum planners should 'make certain items non-negotiable for memorisation' and bemoans that 'in England, at least, systematic attention to recall is rare in … non-examination classes'.

Counsell's arguments are based heavily on the work of two psychologists: Hirsch and Willingham. From Hirsch she takes the view that we hold 'prototypes' of substantive concepts (such as king or empire) in our heads which are an essential precursor to comprehension, while from Willingham, she takes the view that 'the more the pertinent material is secure in memory, the more mental space is freed up for thinking' (Counsell, 2017: 86). Based on this, Counsell (2017: 94) argued: 'In light of the role of prototypes in mitigating limits of short-term memory (Hirsch, 1988; Willingham, 2009), my classroom experience of where lower attainers struggle makes me doubt the adequacy or primacy of a second-order solution.'

Both Counsell and Fordham illustrate the importance of prototypes to their thinking by inviting their readers to examine a piece of writing by a historian, in Counsell's (2017: 82) case an extract from Schama's *A History of Britain, Volume 1* (2000: 66–8) and in Fordham's (2016: 42) case from Hobsbawm's 1962 classic *The Age of Revolutions* (1962: 13). Both writers – following Hirsch – contend that we comprehend the passages better because we have prototypical understandings of the middle class (in Fordham's case) and 'custom', 'loyalty' and 'lords' (in Counsell's). In one sense, this is incontrovertible; knowing what words mean allows language to flow, not least by saving the time and interruption involved in looking up words in a dictionary. However, it is possible to agree with this while also questioning the narrow empiricism of the assumption that our understanding of words is formed solely based on prototypes that we have encountered. It is, of course, true that inductive reasoning based on experience – or 'true postulates' – informs our knowledge of the world, but so too do a priori assumptions, epistemological heuristics and language structures themselves. Cain and Chapman (2014) use research by Wineburg (2001) to distinguish reading historically from reading informatically. While background information can help children comprehend the text on a correspondence level, something else is involved when 'expert' historians read a text which is independent of their knowledge of the period. Cain and Chapman – and Wineburg – argue that people 'read' historical texts through epistemic frames which are disciplinary – rather than factual – in nature.

Fordham and Counsell are no naïve realists, but they do hold to something of a simplistic signifier–signified relationship in their account of knowledge acquisition. Take, for example, Fordham's (2016: 44) explanation of how the phrase 'middle class' is intelligible to him:

> I think not of dictionary definitions, but rather of London coffee houses, Viennese concert halls and Parisian tennis courts. I call

> upon a lifetime of textual encounters in imagining the middle class: Lucy Pevensie, Phileas Fogg and Marius Pontmercy … These images furnish the words 'middle class' for me, endowing them with a lingering residue that I call on in subsequent encounters with the term.

There is no doubt that such images do inform an understanding of 'middle class', but the adjective 'middle' surely indicates that we also understand the term relationally: people who are less dependent on labour for sustenance than the working class, but not drawn from the landed nobility. If we were to read an historical account about an unfamiliar context it is surely this relational definition of 'middle class' that we would draw on, rather than the archetypal images of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe that Fordham describes.

Furthermore, there is general agreement between TSRs and RSRs that language choice by historians is, in itself, significant. However, the RSR view maintains more faith in the modernist view that historians (acting in good faith) are trying their best to render reality into words as best they can. RSRs, in contrast, are sceptical about the extent to which this is possible. It is not the case that words mean whatever historians choose for them to mean, but slippage between signifier and signified are inevitable. As an example, what is the meaning of the concept of 'gentry'? We know as readers that it is related to 'nobility' and 'middle class', but under what circumstances is it historically 'correct' to use it? Were members of Russia's decaying nobility in the nineteenth-century nobles or gentlemen? What does it mean when we choose one word over another? To what extent are we conscious of the linguistic implications of our choice? Which leads, of course, to the final criticism of the TSR account of how substantive concepts emerge from knowledge of prototypes – if prototypes create concepts, then which prototypes should be taught? Since, as Fordham (2016) accepts, there is no 'Platonic form' of a revolution – which prototypes are 'best'? While superficially attractive, the desire to 'know more', ignores the question of 'which examples?' and 'whose examples?'. By ignoring these questions, TSRs place inordinate faith in the 'objectivity' and wisdom of the teacher as a gatekeeper of examples, facts and contexts.

These are linguistic challenges to which one response is the fatalism of accepting that faithful uptake is an impossibility. Such a solution feels inherently unsatisfying, but so too is the other extreme proposed by TSRs – that more prototypes lead to a 'better' understanding. Surely a third view is to make the use of language our focus of study. There is little to be

gained from discussing whether or not the term 'genocide' is 'correct' when referring to the Holodomor or Armenian massacres, but there is much more to be gained from learning why the Russian and Turkish governments refuse to do so.

Children in England do, in fact, engage in debates such as these as part of their learning about interpretations of history. TSRs, unlike more thoroughgoing traditionalists, are enthusiastic about this curriculum organiser and the way in which it invites children to think about the ways in which the past is mediated. However, the TSR emphasis on 'knowledge' as formed of 'true postulates' creates something of a contradictory message – on the one hand children learn that terms are contested and put to use by historians, on another they learn that 'more' knowledge can take us closer to a 'better' understanding. Despite Counsell's ongoing support for the place of historical interpretations in the school curriculum (Burn *et al.*, 2020), this sits awkwardly with a faith in a Hirschaen relationship between signifier and prototypes.

It may be, of course, that rigorous attention to prototypes and their memorisation will engender more sophisticated mental models in children, but the fact is we just don't know. As Counsell (2017) and Fordham (2016) reminded us, existing research on these questions is interesting but too small scale to be compelling. Until these questions are investigated empirically (with respect to history in particular, rather than psychological models of 'learning'), it is important to consider the insights of neuroscience alongside the radical social realist critique of it.

Conclusion

This chapter has done much to emphasise differences between the TSR and RSR views and so it is perhaps appropriate to conclude by spending some time looking at how the positions are in agreement. It is important to remember that these positions are both social realist in orientation and both reject much of the so-called 'progressive' and 'traditional' philosophies. They do, however, differ in the extent and nature of their critiques of each.

Both stand in opposition to a narrow form of progressivism which took root during the New Labour era in Britain. This was a form of child-centredness which dispensed with the hard-thinking of disciplines and replaced it with a technical-instrumentalist view of schooling. In emphasising employability, transferrable skills and interdisciplinary thinking approaches, this approach was child-centred only insofar as it

aspired to the cultivation of the self as a potential employee. The TSR critique of progressivism extends beyond this empty progressivism, however, to encompass all forms of child-centredness. To TSRs, re-centring the discipline means de-centring the child. RSRs agree that the discipline should be re-centred but contend that this must share the stage with the child and his/her reading of that discipline.

Both positions also reject the inherited inert knowledge implied by a Future 1 curriculum. They do this principally for epistemic reasons: because knowledge is too diffuse and dynamic to be captured in an approved list. However, the TSR position does borrow from traditionalism the view that some substantive knowledge is inherently more 'powerful' than others. In this view, it is the teacher's responsibility to select this best knowledge with a view to developing the sophistication of children's substantive concepts. Although a long way from a core knowledge curriculum, it still positions the teacher as expert in terms of knowledge selection. However, for RSRs such a position is fatally undermined by the inseparability of questions of knowledge from questions of power. RSRs do not seek to question the veracity of agreed historical facts – as more committed postmodernists might – but they do remind us that question of 'why this fact and not this one?' does not disappear even if we accept both facts are equally true.

As Cain and Chapman (2014) showed, debates around the history curriculum have been plagued by inappropriate polarities and we are loath to contribute another. That said, pedagogical debates in England are rapidly polarising, particularly on social media. As is so often the case, a certain unreflective tribalism marks these positions as contributors talk past one another or mischaracterise their opponents' views. Our intention in writing this chapter was to sketch the outlines of these positions in contradistinction to the Twitterverse's strawman archetypes of 'prog' and 'trad' education. It is our hope that the exposition of these two positions will encourage rather than inhibit further debate.

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8

Powerful knowledge for what? History education and 45-degree discourse

Kenneth Nordgren

Introduction

> What is the important knowledge that pupils should be able to acquire at school? If, as curriculum theorists, we cannot answer this question, it is unclear who can, and it is more likely that it will be left to the pragmatic and ideological decisions of administrators and politicians. (Young, 2013: 103)

What is the important knowledge that pupils should acquire at school, and on what basis should it be considered important? These are challenging questions, as they put the object of learning at the top of the agenda at a time when curricular debates are dominated by discourses on measurable performance and student-centred practices. However, although they are poles apart, these discourses share the same disregard for the process of transforming knowledge into teaching (for example, Yates and Collins, 2010; Priestley and Biesta, 2013; Krahenbuhl, 2016; Ball, 2017). One reason for the growing impact of the concept of 'powerful knowledge' is that it hits a nerve in subject education – learning must be *about* something.

If we take the question 'What knowledge?' as authentic and not just rhetorical, then any answers must address the multifaceted goals of education (Deng, 2020). If they do not, the answers on the policy level will be too general to go beyond the banal, teaching practices will continue as they are, and the idea of powerful knowledge will be reinterpreted either as petrified objectivism (Future 1) or as the

subjective interest of the knowers (Future 2) (see Morgan *et al*., 2019). Even though Young's (2013) project was an intended rather than a currently implemented curriculum (see Muller, 2017), pedagogical recontextualisation (that is, the process by which teachers plan and enact their teaching) is crucial to establishing a dynamic and knowledge-driven curriculum (Future 3).

History as a body of specialised knowledge has developed in disciplinary communities and as a methodological way of reasoning. These disciplinary and methodological conditions are necessary but not sufficient to formulate powerful knowledge. History as an academic subject has neither a self-evident grammar to structure knowledge about the past, nor a necessary set of principles to hierarchise epistemological progression (Yates and Millar, 2016; White, 2018). This weak grammar, I would suggest, does not undermine the possibility of powerful knowledge in history, but it does reinforce the need to reconsider regularly what is worthwhile historical knowledge, which includes the necessity for teachers to process the tensions between the intrinsic structure of the subject and the extrinsic objectives in the curriculum (Nordgren, 2017; Pettigrew, 2017; Puustinen and Khawaja, 2020). As long as teaching is not reduced to a passive mediation of scripts, history teachers will play a crucial role as curriculum makers (Gericke *et al*., 2018).

This chapter examines how powerful knowledge can be useful for teachers in planning curricula in ways that are both consistent with the intrinsic significance of the subject (that is, the logic of the disciplinary grammar) and relevant to the extrinsic motives of education (that is, the common good and/or individual growth) (see Lilliedahl, 2015; Smith and Jackson, 2017). I will focus on extrinsic motives, such as normative goals, real-world problems, and influxes from everyday life, as these will all be familiar to any teacher but are not easily integrated with the disciplinary logic of a school subject. The overarching question at stake here is whether powerful knowledge is a supportive theory in teachers' recontextualisation of important knowledge into teaching. This, in turn, raises questions about the conditions which enable teachers to advance their professionalism and to take part in formulating what powerful knowledge could be.

This chapter is structured around three questions which explore how specialised knowledge and the diverse and political everyday world could be reconciled in the classroom. The first question concerns specialised knowledge and socialisation: 'can history bring powerful knowledge to normative mandates, such as democratic values and intercultural learning?' The second question explores subject borders and

real-world problems: 'how can teachers and students work with specialised historical knowledge to investigate a complex phenomenon, such as the Anthropocene?' The third question brings in the public sphere: 'how can education help students understand how history is used in the present to influence identities, values and choices?'

The problem: How to handle tensions between specialised and everyday knowledge

Young and Muller (2010, 2013, 2016) carved out a social realist position by emphasising – with reference inter alia to Durkheim, Vygotsky and Bernstein – that specialised knowledge is the axis around which school education should be organised. Advanced societies must introduce new generations to theoretical and abstract knowledge, which other institutions, such as families and working communities, cannot do. Specialised knowledge becomes powerful because it goes beyond everyday assumptions to explain the world, and because its concepts, theories and methods provide the tools to think beyond one's own experiences. From this position, Young (2013) made a sharp distinction between: (a) specialised, disciplinary knowledge and non-specialised everyday knowledge; and (b) curriculum (defined as the knowledge pupils are entitled to) and pedagogy (the teacher's work of transmitting this knowledge). In this respect, teaching is foremost a pedagogical process of customising specialised knowledge and making it available to students, while the principles and the selection of what constitutes powerful knowledge are set in a curriculum process that precedes teaching.

Objections raised by the opponents and friendly critics of Young and Muller have to a great extent been centred on these dividing lines (for example, Wahlström, 2010; Catling and Martin, 2011; Wright, 2013; Roberts, 2014; Yates and Millar, 2016). White (2018) rather bluntly rejected the distinction between specialised and everyday knowledge, arguing that most disciplines other than natural sciences and mathematics do not meet the requirements that Young and Muller imposed on specialised knowledge. For example, history is seen as lacking a set of interdependent concepts which can form the basis for a knowledge-driven curriculum. The most basic criticism in White (2018), however, is that subjects and knowledge cannot be the goals of a curriculum because they constitute the means of curriculum development.

At first glance, it is easy to agree with White (2018), as education has both a broader and a narrower purpose than that of an academic

discipline. It is broader, as its intended goal is not only the production or acquisition of knowledge but also the serving of societal, cultural and individual expectations; at the same time, it is also narrower, as while disciplinary knowledge and research have no limits of interest beyond their own paradigms, a school subject needs extrinsic principles of relevance. However, this criticism seems to be more preoccupied with the emphasis on mutual exclusion with which Young and Muller drew their lines rather than with the gap they actually expose (see Hordern, 2019). It is correct that disciplinary knowledge cannot be the sole interest of a school curriculum (Biesta, 2015), but all educational goals are to some extent framed by how public education has institutionalised the gap (historically) between the sacred and the profane, and (in modern times) between specialised knowledge and everyday experiences (Young and Muller, 2013). The point is that there are specialised and qualified ways of addressing and understanding educational goals, and these systematic epistemologies apply in both the humanities and the social sciences as well. White (2018) thus avoided the crucial question of what actually constitutes important knowledge or how to navigate between possible curricular pitfalls, such as performativity, essentialism and relativism. As there are differences in knowledge regimes, and as learning objectives exist prior to students' encounter with teaching and learning, Young and Muller's distinctions are relevant.

Thus, powerful knowledge can help us identify these differences and acknowledge that it is vital to consider them in pedagogical recontextualisation. However, if the demarcation between specialised and everyday knowledge is not clear-cut, then neither is the line between curriculum and pedagogy. For teachers who have to manage the tensions between specialised and non-specialised knowledge and between curriculum and pedagogy in (their classroom) practice, a relational approach is probably more fruitful than a dichotomous one. If the 'powerful knowledge perspective' is to influence teaching as something more than a curriculum principle, it has to be useful for teachers when designing their lessons. This chapter takes these tensions as a point of departure and sets out to test the potential of powerful knowledge as a relational concept.

Theoretical framework: The 45-degree discourse of pedagogical recontextualisation

My suggestion is that powerful knowledge could be useful for placing knowledge at the centre of pedagogical recontextualisation. By the term

'pedagogical recontextualisation' I refer not to intended curricula on a policy level but to the implementation, where teachers reframe different discourses in the practice of planning lessons and teaching (see Bernstein, 1990, 1999; Guile, 2012; Hordern, 2014). This is a messy process, one in which the presence and expectations of learners, goals and methods, time and so on are all necessary and much more immediate than the question of knowledge. Thus, the question of *what knowledge is* risks being reduced from something ever-changing, iterative and provisional to something that is taken for granted. To bring knowledge into the heart of this process is an endeavour that requires a relational approach (see Nordgren, 2017; Bladh *et al*., 2018).

One possible way to talk about this approach is through Bernstein's framework of horizontal and vertical knowledge discourses (Figure 8.1), which is also the basis for Young and Muller's work. Bernstein (1999) described experience-based knowledge as a horizontal discourse and as often oral, local and contextually contingent, shared within culturally demarcated groups and practices. In such contexts, different knowledge claims about reality can exist in parallel, as there is no epistemic basis for hierarchical discrimination between them. In this analysis, science (including history, the social sciences, and so on) is a vertical discourse whose fundamental intent is to enable discrimination between claims and the determination of what constitutes more reliable – or, as some might have it, more truthful – knowledge. The practices of such vertical knowledge systems are textual and generate epistemic communities with universalising ambitions to develop specialised languages and methods for enabling the testing, re-testing and communication of knowledge claims about reality.

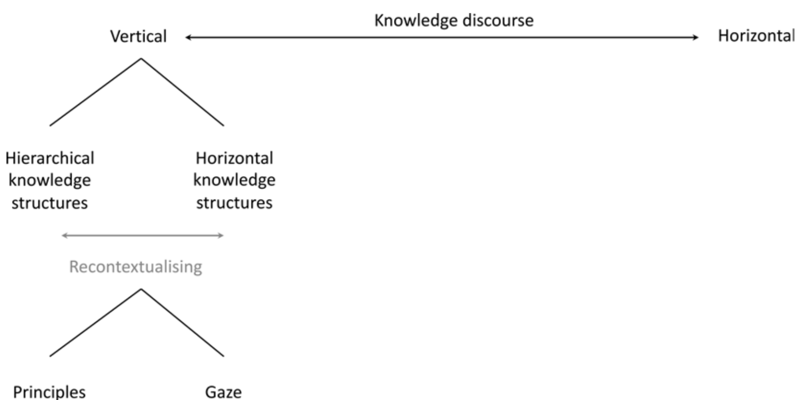

Figure 8.1 Vertical and horizontal discourses (based on Bernstein, 1999)

Horizontal discourses, on the one hand, are essential for dealing with everyday life – at home, at work, in interpersonal interactions and so forth. They are not designed to be transferable across contexts or to critically interrogate what is taken for granted. Vertical discourses, on the other, formulate knowledge claims on the basis of procedural rather than contextual principles. Their forms of knowledge are conceptual and can be counterintuitive, as they develop tools for discovering what lies beyond immediate experience.

Bernstein (1999) made a further distinction within vertical discourses, describing some as hierarchically (science) and others as horizontally (social sciences and humanities) structured. A hierarchical knowledge structure – for example, in the natural sciences – is developed paradigmatically and through integration from lower to higher forms of knowledge. Students learning chemistry must first understand certain fundamental principles before they can advance to developing knowledge and understanding of more complex subjects. In the humanities and social sciences, however, the structure is relatively more horizontal, insofar as scholars can work in parallel from different ontological and epistemological assumptions. History is exempted from such horizontal knowledge structures. For students to master the disciplinary gaze, they must develop a theoretical understanding and a language through which they can view and talk about the world – that is, they must become familiar with the discipline to be capable of recognising what constitutes a legitimate problem *within* the discipline. The historical gaze, as Bertram (2008: 4) described it, encompasses an ability to understand the past in its own context and to approach it with empathy and imagination.

Bernstein's polarisation between vertical and horizontal discourses is helpful, as it illuminates how these discourses are based on different epistemic constructs which serve separate social functions. The relational approach does not set aside this distinction but suggests a pedagogical device to think about their relations. Both Bernstein (1999) and Young and Muller (2013) considered the insertion of horizontal discourses into subject education to be a misdirected attempt to make specialised knowledge more accessible. Such pedagogical strategies carry the risk that students never gain access to specialised knowledge because they become stuck in contextual and limited discourses. However, I would suggest that there are other and more fundamental reasons for intermingling vertical and horizontal discourses – not for the purpose of simplification, correction or representation, but instead to deal with the messiness of normativity, relevance and experiences which are part of the world of school education. Education, as well as the production of

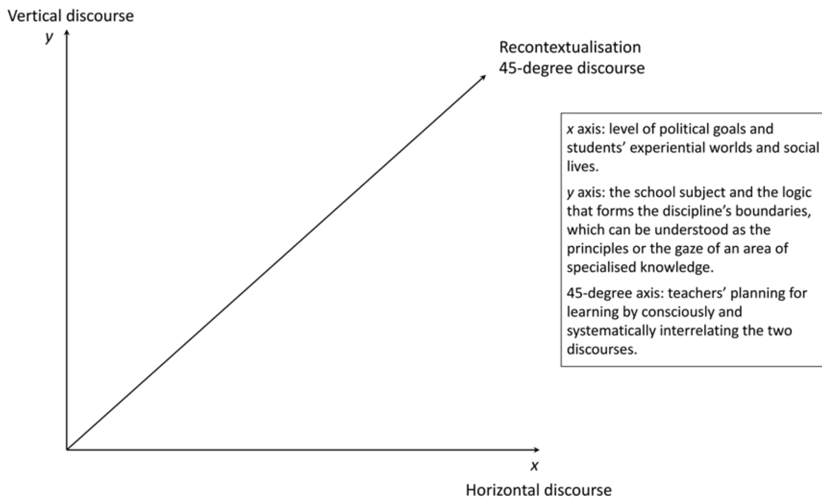

Figure 8.2 The 45-degree discourse of pedagogical recontextualisation (Source: Author, 2021)

specialised knowledge, takes place within historically and culturally framed societies. In order to investigate this interaction more closely, I will refer to Ken Spours (2017) and his concept of 45-degree intellect and use it as a metaphor for how teachers can apply a perspective of specialised knowledge to the problems and changes evoked in everyday life. However, this process is not a one-sided operation and, as such, this discourse in everyday public life can challenge and disrupt structures and traditions in subject teaching (Figure 8.2).

There are many different situations and contexts in which new knowledge is produced and reproduced in the classroom. Bernstein (2000) defined recontextualisation as the process of constituting a new educational order through selectively appropriating, relocating, refocusing and relating disciplinary discourses. What I am proposing is an active process whereby the vertical discourse of history is recontextualised into an order in which dimensions of the disciplinary gaze can be appropriated, but also one in which students can engage in and understand horizontal discourses.

Spours' intention was to amalgamate Bernstein's two discourses into a new hybrid, which is not what I am seeking to do. The 45-degree discourse of pedagogical recontextualisation is simply a metaphor for a systematic recontextualisation of different discourses in subject-based learning (see Spours, 2017). This is not to suggest a middle-ground compromise, nor to imply that the interrelation takes place on equal terms – as already stated, curricula precede opportunities for learning.

What it does suggest, however, is that history as a school subject must refer actively to the contemporary world to make sense. It also proposes that what is extrinsically relevant will affect what becomes intrinsically significant for the inner logic of the subject.

In this context, I find the distinction between significance and relevance made by Van Straaten *et al*. (2016) useful to keep track of when a certain logic is historical and when it is based on horizontal discourse. Thus, significance refers to the knowledge and procedures which are important for understanding an historical phenomenon; in other words, the intrinsic principles of how history is organised as specialised knowledge. Relevance refers to what makes history important in the present, for example for curriculum makers, students or the public, and is thus extrinsic to the discipline.

Henceforth I will use the 45-degree metaphor to relate powerful knowledge to my questions, one by one:

- How do we relate history to normativity in intercultural learning?
- How can we work in an interdisciplinary way to approach the Anthropocene?
- How do we frame everyday use of history as an educational goal?

Normative goals – The example of intercultural learning

> Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate. The broad education will, therefore, transmit to one not only the accumulated knowledge of the race but also the accumulated experience of social living. (Martin Luther King Jr, 1947)

King's comment captures how education is always part of a wider social context and how public education is always integrated into a societal project to foster the next generation. There can be different ideas about what is desirable, for example an intercultural understanding or patriotic pride, but socialisation seems to be an integrated dimension in public education. It seems to be a futile project to oppose all extrinsic motivations for teaching history. However, as Lee (2012: 8) stressed, it is essential to develop a vertical gaze in order to understand the difference 'between "historical pasts" and pasts devised, organized and employed for practical present ends'. A practical turn for powerful knowledge must nevertheless

address the question of how vertical discourse is supposed to contribute to normative and socialising ends which, whether implicit or explicit, are incorporated in any curriculum. Furthermore, in times of post-truth and neo-nationalist populism, how should education use specialised knowledge to confront attacks on democracy and diversity? Does powerful knowledge have anything to say about what constitutes King's 'worthy objectives'?

Seixas (2018) devoted his foreword to *The Wiley International Handbook of History Teaching and Learning* to a warning regarding what he sees as an acceleration of global threats to liberal democracy and to emphasise the importance of history education in addressing these threats. Seixas (2018: xv) advocated a curriculum that is open to multiperspectivity, but he also warned against fragmentation, arguing that teaching must give students room to discover and interpret while also enabling them to learn to respect evidence and the limits of interpretation:

> That is, our central challenge will have to focus on helping students to understand the limits of interpretation, the constraints that bind what we say to the evidence that we have, and the importance of defending interpretations that are supported by the weight of evidence, not as just one among many possible ways of seeing things.

The underlying tensions in Seixas' text are familiar: on the one hand, there is a commitment to multiperspectivity (which is in line with the openness of disciplinary thinking and with democratic pluralism), while on the other the pedagogical logic of coherence and simplification (which also has correlations with selective traditions and virtues focused on discriminating between claims and on evidential validation) is maintained. The ability to weigh historical evidence is key to history as powerful knowledge, but it does not relieve the tension between what is and what ought to be. Biesta (2011) proposed a different emphasis, advocating the 'ignorant citizen' as a democratic ideal. Biesta (2011: 152) partly rejected the idea of democratic socialisation as an activity that consolidates the current regime:

> The democratic citizen is not a predefined identity that can simply be taught and learned, but emerges again and again in new ways from engagement with the experiment of democratic politics. The ignorant citizen is the one who is ignorant of a particular definition of what he or she is supposed to be as a 'good citizen'. The ignorant citizen is the one who, in a sense, refuses this

knowledge and, through this, refuses to be domesticated, refuses to be pinned down in a pre-determined civic identity.

Beyond being utopian, Biesta is, I believe, problematising citizenship education as a project of socialisation. He is advocating an ideal citizen who is political rather than domesticated and promoting education as a room for experimentation rather than socialisation. However, to some extent, Biesta also seems to insist on an antagonism between studying and doing, where democracy is something that must be lived rather than learned. One problem with this view is that it encapsulates experiments in a social context. Without conceptual tools to think the not-yet-thought, we risk locking experiential learning into what we already take for granted.

How, then, should we understand the relationship between subject education and normative goals? Does learning to describe and evaluate evidence about the past from diverse sources generate democratic values as a surplus, as Lee and Seixas might argue? Or, alternatively, could such learning be part of a homogenising discourse and, as Biesta might imply, actually hinder a democratic citizen's education? These difficult questions illustrate the need to tackle seriously the relationship between specialised knowledge and the normative goals of education.

Rüsen (2017) reminded us that the normative elements of historical thinking are not imposed from without, but are inherent to its cognitive processes and practical functions. Carr (1961) described history as an unending dialogue between the interpreter, the facts, and the present and past. If this is the case, then aspects of normativity are an integral aspect of historical learning. Teaching the subject must achieve a balance between sourcing and evidence on the one hand and common frames of reference on the other hand (Seixas, 2000; Barton, 2009). To draw on Banks (2004: 28), 'Unity without diversity results in cultural repression and hegemony. Diversity without unity leads to Balkanization and the fracturing of the nation-state. Diversity and unity should coexist in a delicate balance in a democratic, multicultural nation-state.'

The conceptualisation of powerful knowledge has not been used fully for thinking systematically about these blurred relations. When Young and Muller (2013) addressed the normative side of education, they focused on questions about securing access to powerful knowledge for all. However important, this sociological argument does not give much guidance for lesson planning; a more helpful argument from a social realist perspective was developed by Rata (2017). First, Rata clarified that there is no causal relationship between knowledge and democratic values. Authoritarian movements are certainly habitually anti-intellectual, but

there are also far too many scholars who have acted in service of anti-democratic interests: insights into disciplinary knowledge do not vaccinate against non-democratic values. Instead, she traced connections between public education and fostering a culture of 'partially loyal' citizens, arguing that the capacity to both trust and criticise social institutions requires an ability to decentre from one's own immediate experience and to relate to a broader perspective. Rata's model is thus not based on an idealised domesticated citizen, but rather on the generalisability of rational knowledge and the capacity of conceptual knowledge to communicate what goes beyond the bonds of shared experiences and common values. To practise deliberative democracy as an aspect of education can be an important learning opportunity (Englund, 2000; Barton and Levstik, 2004), although, from Rata's (2017) perspective, such a restricted experience is nevertheless insufficient, as it does not in itself provide the tools necessary to transfer that local practice of deliberation to other contexts.

This line of reasoning is consistent with 45-degree discourse, as it uses vertical discourse to discuss how to address normative questions derived from normative political discourse. Rata (2017) acknowledged that there is no automatic connection between specialised knowledge and democratic values; however, her argument does not proceed to the logical end point – namely, the need for an ongoing mutual influence between vertical and horizontal discourses. The practical question, therefore, is: How can we systematically recontextualise relations between the vertical discourse of specialised knowledge and everyday discourses and lived experiences along the horizontal axis?

Educational goals concerning multiculturalism and countering racism serve as an interesting example in this regard. The reservoir of subject-specific historical knowledge provides conceptual tools to help students generalise their own and others' experiences and thereby support democratic and intercultural socialisation; however, this knowledge is not automatically generated by historical studies and therefore needs to be realised through specific strategies (Savenije *et al.*, 2014). Nordgren and Johansson (2015) systematically examined how history as specialised knowledge can be used to explore diversity in the past and the present, thereby opening up history teaching for intercultural learning. This exploration resulted in a matrix which can be summarised in the following three themes:

1. Explore how migration and cultural encounters are interwoven in the period or event being studied and open up the diversity of voices associated with it. Explore how the students themselves are part of historical cultures.

2. Interpret history as a collection of sources from different cultures and times, examine explanations and concepts used during that period or event, and assess how they relate to meta-narratives in our historical culture.
3. Explore how different cultures have used history to define themselves and how history is used in contemporary public life, and use history to historicise the contemporary multicultural context.

This systematic approach is based on the 'intrinsic' values of history, not on an ideologically approved narrative or revised past. However, the chosen perspectives are responsive to extrinsic goals based on intercultural values, as choices are not neutral. Three principles govern this 45-degree discourse. First, teachers can use the gaze of historical specialisation to process the values and questions which emerge from the horizontal discourse of multicultural society. Second, teachers can use the questions and values from multicultural society to re-evaluate what is significant within the vertical discourse of historical knowledge. Third, teachers need to be open to the fact that such intersections can challenge norms and traditions within both vertical and horizontal discourses. Let us take the case of migration as a profound example of these rather abstract points. By exploring migration as an historical phenomenon, students can gain new insights into contemporary migration, as the historical gaze encompasses the phenomenon as both trans-historical processes that shape human history and as a specific series of events embedded in specific circumstances. This potential is not activated if migration does not have a place in the curriculum. Sometimes, the questions that provide the impetus for teaching must derive from everyday experiences and challenge the curriculum in order to inform decisions about where and when to reformulate what is considered historically significant. Intersecting contemporary questions and norms such as migration can affect not only *how* history is understood but even more so, *what* is understood. In other words, what constitutes powerful knowledge depends on what is being explained, and what is considered worthwhile knowledge sometimes emerges from the gap between vertical and horizontal discourses. Figure 8.3 exemplifies how one can apply the 45-degree discourse when planning intercultural recontextualisation.

To incorporate value-laden questions into the heart of the subject of history does not mean that history is subjugated into an over-socialised pedagogy or political agenda. Rüsen (2017: 228) maintained that historical reasoning raises 'validity claims that are based on distancing from the normative standards that are imposed on it from the

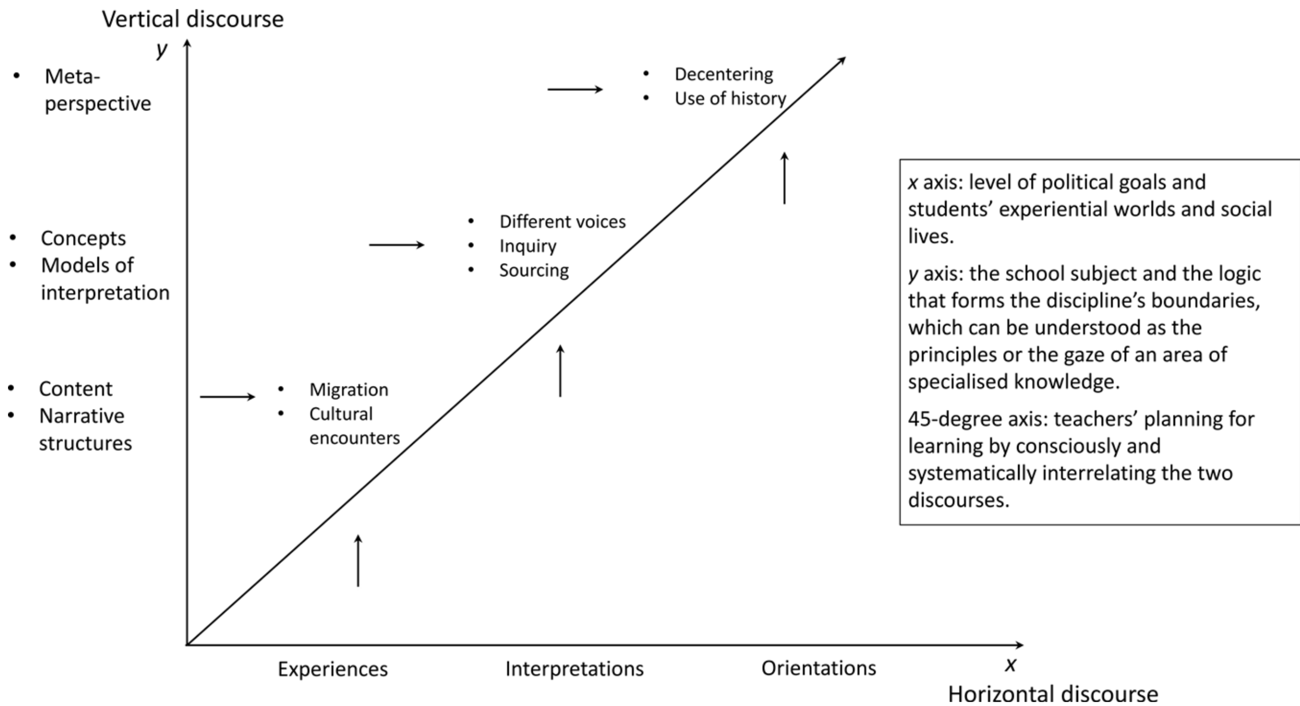

Figure 8.3 The 45-degree discourse of intercultural recontextualisation (Source: Author, 2021)

– often political – context', which suggests a need to move beyond a naïve belief that the transformative tools students need to navigate the world emerge organically from a natural position of procedural knowledge, second-order concepts and meta-knowledge.

The 45-degree discourse suggests that the claims for relevance raised by intercultural learning are processed through the logic of what is historically significant – for instance, migration and cultural encounters as trans-historical phenomena for understanding the whole of human history. However, bringing them in as vital explanatory causes is a long-overdue challenge to the methodological nationalism which is still deeply engrained in the DNA of the core content in history curricula.

This 45-degree approach obviously relies heavily on teachers' abilities and opportunities to undertake recontextualisation. Even where teachers have a vested interest in working with intercultural historical learning, it has proved difficult to utilise the epistemic resources of the subject for this purpose (Johansson, 2019). This may partly be due to a lack of content knowledge as well as of meta-perspectives, thus creating difficulties in altering existing traditions (Harris and Bain, 2010; Johansson, 2012; Nordgren, 2017). This calls for an new epistemic community in which teachers, disciplinary and pedagogically oriented researchers, and producers of teaching materials can collaborate and, in the words of Rowley and Cooper (2009: 4), 'explore ways in which the core values, which are intended to underpin the whole curriculum, can be embedded not just in classroom organisation and ethos but also at the heart of the subjects'.

Interdisciplinary learning – The example of the Anthropocene

> A key component of historical ecology is the dialectical interaction between humans and their environment. The investigation of this relationship includes phenomena such as culture, society, climate, animal and plant populations, forested and agricultural landscapes, and the built environment (e.g. cities, roads, canals). (Jones *et al.*, 2017: 240)

The subject-based curriculum is frequently criticised as an outdated construction that is more or less useless for holistic understanding and for solving real-world problems. Young and Muller (2016) made a strong

case in defence of subjects by arguing that they are not arbitrary but, on the contrary, represent the basic well from which educational resources are drawn. Borders between subjects are not primarily barriers but tools for structuring knowledge and digging deeper into real-world problems. Although these are valid arguments, it is nevertheless necessary to proceed beyond this first line of defence. Subject education does not contradict cross-curricular and interdisciplinary activities, and in order to understand the production of new knowledge it is important to learn to work across borders, as applied research is often multidisciplinary. Furthermore, there are complex phenomena that must be illuminated through interdisciplinary inquiries to be fully understood (for example, Wineburg and Grossman, 2000; Szostak, 2007; Rowley and Cooper, 2009; Moran 2010). Although Young and Muller (2016: 112) confirmed the relevance of exploring 'the inter-relation between boundary maintenance and boundary crossing', we will go further by exploring how powerful knowledge, as a relational approach, not only tolerates but positively supports teachers in accomplishing these crossings.

The processes of teachers' recontextualisation of specialised knowledge sometimes begin along the horizontal axis with a complex real-life problem. The next step is to identify the vertical discourses which are relevant for bridging the knowledge gap in relation to the educational setting. Let us take the example of climate change and the Anthropocene in considering the question: what powerful knowledge must be constituted by in order to explore this problem?

Carbon dioxide is an important greenhouse gas that blankets the Earth and retains its heat; the resulting effect is a precondition for life. At the end of the last Ice Age, atmospheric carbon dioxide measured 270 parts per million (ppm); from the Palaeolithic to the Industrial Age, the measurement hovered around 300 ppm, but since then, in the course of just 250 years, the burning of fossil fuels has increased the measurement to over 400 ppm. This means that the historical process of industrialisation has added to the greenhouse effect in a way that has affected the global climate (Pachauri *et al*., 2014). Even though the use of fossil fuels seems to be tapering off, the acceleration of the greenhouse effect has continued as human consumption and use of energy has continued to grow. There are also additional repercussions, as global warming releases methane in response to the melting of Arctic ice and entire cities built atop permafrost in Siberia are literally sinking through the ice. The impact that human actions have had on nature, animals, the atmosphere and the global climate has been termed the Anthropocene

(Steffen *et al.*, 2011; Robin, 2013; McNeill and Engelke, 2016). Education must respond, as students have the right and the need to know about developments which are already profoundly affecting their present and future conditions of existence. As no single subject holds all the keys, many specialised perspectives must contribute to building the necessary knowledge, not least because certain aspects of the Anthropocene are both historically and socially constructed in addition to being factually extant. The era is a geological concept, but its consequences are biological, political and economic. It seems obvious that environmental changes will eventually change the agenda of what is assumed to be relevant to know. Chakrabarty (2009) argued that the Anthropocene rocks the foundations of history, as the ongoing interaction between nature and culture challenges the disciplinary self-image of history as the story of human affairs (c.f. Collingwood, 1994). Humans' impact on the environment, and how this impact now determines the conditions for all future life on the planet, demands explanation. If subject-focused education fails to respond, it will solidify into dogma that does not provide the tools with which we must confront global challenges.

While researchers are specialists, teachers must be generalists, and where research can plumb the depths, teaching materials must present summary syntheses. A 45-degree discourse of powerful knowledge could be helpful for thinking systematically about how specialised knowledge can be recontextualised in investigations of real-life phenomena, in line with the previous discussion about intercultural historical learning. However, working with real-life problems is a more open-ended undertaking than historical explorations have been traditionally. Sourcing can help us to explore the state of the art and develop a critical gaze on climate change denial, but they do not give answers on how to act. Climate change is a 'wicked problem', as possible measures can be insufficient, counterproductive and create new problems. Perspectives on climate change in the past can, as a complement, offer valuable knowledge for simulating the future effects of various measures (Blundell, 2016; Voros, 2018). If history is to be taught in a way which is responsive to societal change and real-life problems, teachers must be confident in its intrinsic vertical values and prepared to work in a cross-curricular and interdisciplinary fashion when necessary. This again raises questions about how to equip teachers with the resources they need and calls for an epistemic collaboration on a new level in order to provide relevant historical powerful knowledge.

The world of experiences – The example of history in use

> History pertains to the living man in three respects: it pertains to him as a being who acts and strives, as a being who preserves and reveres, as a being who suffers and seeks deliverance. (Nietzsche, 1983: 67)

The final example of a challenge facing powerful knowledge on the level of practical-pedagogical recontextualisation concerns the relation between specialisation and students' everyday experiential worlds. My argument so far has been that a relational approach to powerful knowledge could be helpful to direct, use and adapt specialised knowledge to extrinsic goals, such as value-based learning and interdisciplinary cooperation. The question now is how history can offer powerful knowledge which can help us orient ourselves in everyday life. Rüsen (2017: 22) argued that interpretation is what turns experiences into historical knowledge; however, not all interpreting is orientation, as this 'requires a direct relationship to the human way of life or a quality of life-serving purpose'. In this meaning of orientation, history teaching must be used to find ways of engaging in experiential historical culture outside the domain of disciplinary interpretations of the past.

History has a Janus-like face, with one side directed to ideals of truth and validation while the other faces the chaotic life world of identifications, traditions, memories and myths. The former regards the pursuit of knowledge about the past as a goal in itself, while the latter uses references to the past as a means to communicate. History comprises this duality of opposing discourses while at the same time representing their interdependency, as neither side can totally free itself from the other. History's disciplinary knowledge structures share considerable similarities with horizontal discourses, as their knowledge is segmented and serial and their contents are volatile (Bernstein, 1999). This weak grammar has been extensively noted in educational research. Counsell (2011) maintained that there is a constant duty to monitor the borders of the discipline to protect history from ideological and nationalist forces. Shemilt (2000) warned of an influx from the politicised and symbolised use of the past in popular cultural history while Chapman and Georgiou (Chapter 4, this volume) pointed out the easily perceived closeness of the subject's grammar to an everyday understanding of equivalent concepts and why it is therefore important to address and correct the misunderstandings of students.

Yet, for a subject such as history to be relevant, it cannot only be occupied with keeping its distance from contemporary culture, because history, as Nietzsche (1983) stressed, is also a part of life itself. Let us take the statue of General Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia, as an example. In the summer of 2017, the long-dead general was suddenly once again at the epicentre of hate, violence and death. Earlier, in the spring of the same year, Charlottesville City Council had decided to remove a statue of Lee from a city park. The statue was erected in 1924, about 60 years after Lee's death, at a time still profoundly marked by segregation and racism. Now, 93 years later, 152 years after the end of the Civil War, the city of Charlottesville no longer wished to uphold this landmark. A contingent of far-right activists and white supremacists felt provoked by the decision to remove the statue and travelled to Charlottesville to rally. Protesters, many carrying white supremacist and racist symbols such as the swastika and the Confederate flag, clashed with people who had gathered to counter-protest. One of the protesters drove his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer and wounding 19 others.

Many of the arguments and symbols used in the conflict referred to historical events and persons, and the hateful emotions they spawned were surely rooted in a sense of identity and belonging. However, the controversy was arguably not about misconceptions of historical evidence or sources, but rather about how the present is marred by unresolved traumas and conflicts. In this sense, the battle over the commemoration of General Lee was about the future, as it exposed the basis of the narratives and symbols on which we proceed (see Karlsson, 2011; Nordgren, 2016).

Uses of history in public life are not predominantly about accuracy but about communicating interpretations, needs and desires. Can this have a place in the curriculum, and can history educators face the unreliable historical culture of everyday experiences? While our historical consciousness colours the way we think and respond to the world, the traffic between history as specialised knowledge and everyday uses continues regardless (Nordgren, 2019; Ruin, 2019). It is for this very reason that subject teaching must engage in everyday understanding, but not only for the sake of dispelling myths and correcting misapprehensions. Uses of history in the public sphere follow a logic which has more to do with legitimation and communication than with correctness and verification. However, the more cool-headed Janus facing the world with a methodological gaze can help us observe and understand the different uses of history which derive from the other face of habits, emotions and needs.

Communities of practice and epistemic communities

To begin answering Young's question of 'What is important knowledge?', a relational 45-degree perspective requires not only epistemological consideration but also a reconsideration of the process of pedagogical recontextualising. Powerful knowledge cannot be solely a matter of curricular reforms – without involving teachers and their lesson planning, praxis will not easily shift from traditions rooted in what Young and Muller described as Future 1 or Future 2. It has been suggested that the process of renewing subject teaching is best handled by the teachers themselves (Young *et al.*, 2014; Uhlenwinkel *et al.*, 2016; Young and Muller, 2016). This is of course an important recognition of pedagogical recontextualisation as a highly qualified and creative operation, but it also places a heavy workload and considerable responsibility on teachers.

Teachers' responsibility for implementing an intended curriculum is crucial but not sufficient as a strategy, as teachers are rarely organised in learning communities (Bolam *et al.*, 2005; Piggot-Irvine, 2006; Puustinen and Khawaja, 2020). Whereas disciplines are based on epistemic communities with methods to examine and re-examine their results while research is reviewed by peers and seminars, teachers generally do not have a corresponding structure or access to an organised group of critical peers to process their lesson plans, teaching and assessments (Nordgren *et al.*, 2019). It thus seems unrealistic to expect teachers to be the new curriculum makers. A dynamic subject environment with high ambitions to build on both intrinsic significance and extrinsic relevance requires a different mind-set to that of closed classrooms and teacher training which is supposed to last a career. Collaborative communities of practice can be powerful tools for teachers' professionalism (Bolam *et al.*, 2005), but it takes time to build them and they need long-term support from the school management (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 2011).

The logical answer to the question of 'What is important knowledge?' would be to support strong and functional communities of practice – what Tan and Santos Caleon described as teachers 'who: (1) engage in ongoing collaborative activities to identify and work towards common goals; (2) co-construct, share, and disseminate knowledge; and (3) share and reflect on individual practices' (Tan and Santos Caleon, 2016: 127). Furthermore, these teachers act to create a relevant and interested research-based epistemic community 'capable of creating and warranting knowledge that is believable and trustworthy to others outside of the local group' (Capobianco and Feldman, 2006: 505).

A Future 3 curriculum requires new ways of thinking about teachers' cooperation, as well as cooperation between academia and schools (Guile, 2012). In this case the 45-degree metaphor can symbolise the need to develop a relational infrastructure between researchers and teachers.

Conclusions and discussion

A 45-degree pedagogical discourse has been used here as a metaphor for understanding and working with powerful knowledge as a relational concept. I have discussed the need for history teaching to interrelate vertical knowledge discourses dynamically and systematically with the horizontal discourses of students' life-worlds and the political world of public life. This relational understanding is not based on an idea of two equal knowledge systems. As Bernstein (1999) pointed out, these two knowledge systems do not fit within a shared hierarchy, because they apply to different dimensions. I would agree with Young and Muller that public education has a specific responsibility to give students access to vertical knowledge discourses, as there are no other institutions where this is done, but this is not, as White (2018) suggested, something mysterious which lacks a philosophical justification. However, knowledge for its own sake is not an accessible basis for building a curriculum and such a position will inevitably be transmuted into a neoconservative anti-intellectualism. Schools need a principled idea of what constitutes powerful knowledge, but educationalists must also ask the question: 'powerful for what?'.

In the founding articles on powerful knowledge, Young (2007) and Young and Muller (2013) were quite polemical when mapping out the ontological and epistemological differences between pedagogical discourses. Sharp juxtapositions can help clarify contradictory positions at the policy level of curriculum making, but in practice this strategy is not entirely fruitful, as it risks alienating teachers who appreciate the need for boundary maintenance but who also have to work dynamically and pragmatically. As Guile (2014) stressed, a curriculum cannot be based solely on disciplinary principles. The normative goals which guide a curriculum will influence how the concepts of the subject are ultimately selected and presented. Powerful knowledge draws attention to what should be learned and carries a framework to characterise specialised and everyday knowledge. However, in order to engage in pedagogical recontextualisation, the idea of powerful knowledge must be further developed, at least for subjects such as history, which have a weak grammar.

Perhaps just because history is weakly framed, the tension between vertical and horizontal discourses forms a kind of underlying conflict which flows through the whole historiography of the development of history education research. The long-term traditions of historical thinking and historical consciousness clash with the complexity of history as both culturally embedded (horizontal) knowledge and disciplinary (vertical) knowledge and procedures (Baildon and Afandi, 2018; Clark and Grever, 2018; Clark and Peck, 2018; Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Historical thinking has, through second-order concepts, focused on the progression towards higher-order thinking (Lee *et al*., 2001; Peck and Seixas, 2008), while historical consciousness has conceptualised how humans perceive the world through history, thereby opening up the entire spectrum of complex relations from memory and myths to facts and specialised knowledge (Körber, 2016; Rüsen, 2017). Tensions between concepts such as evidence and general critical thinking (Wineburg *et al*., 2016) and empathy and moral judgements (Barton, 2009) reveal that there is no one simple trajectory towards historical thinking. Another long-lasting theme is the nationalist heritage of history education, which also involves ongoing complex relations between disciplinary boundaries and political expectations, identity, diversity and multicultural societies (Carretero *et al*., 2012; Peterson *et al*., 2016; van Boxtel *et al*., 2016).

Does powerful knowledge deepen or alleviate these tensions? Knowledge is powerful if it can help students better explain and relate to the world. From this perspective, powerful knowledge could offer a theoretical standpoint helpful for pedagogical recontextualisation. For instance, by stressing an active relationship between vertical knowledge discourses and learning goals, whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic to the disciplinary world, as well as horizontal discourses as active in fuelling even disciplinary learning goals with relevance. The relational approach I have sketched presupposes such an idea, but it also suggests the need for an infrastructure of teacher communities of practice and extended epistemic communities. An approach towards teaching and learning which is both theoretically robust and pragmatic, coupled with the infrastructure to support it – is that a possible future?

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9

Ka Mura, Ka Muri [Look to the past to inform the future]: Disciplinary history, cultural responsiveness and Māori perspectives of the past

Mark Sheehan

Whaowhia Te kete mātauranga

[Fill your basket with knowledge.] (Māori proverb)

Introduction

This chapter explores the challenge of aligning Michael Young's notion of 'powerful knowledge' in the subject of history with culturally responsive pedagogies that reflect indigenous Māori perspectives of New Zealand's past. The research question addressed is what constitutes powerful knowledge in a culturally responsive history classroom. In particular it examines how the specific purposes of the subject of history (framed by disciplinary epistemological boundaries of historical thinking) can contribute to wider societal aims and the general goals of culturally responsive education as well as incorporate Māori perspectives of the past. My aim in this chapter is not to specify what the alignment of these areas would look like. Rather I set myself the more modest task of exploring the challenges and opportunities that this question poses with a view to re-imagining the curriculum so that all young people have the opportunity to develop discipline-informed understandings of history that reflect the wider imperatives of culturally responsive teaching and learning.

Culturally responsive pedagogy

Developing the knowledge and attitudes to actively participate in diverse societies is a common feature of contemporary democratic education systems based on the assumption that multicultural/intercultural competence can counter xenophobia, structural racism and prejudice as well as generate mutual respect between different cultures (Nordgren, 2017). While these goals are common in the curricula of progressive, liberal, democratic societies, they are typically expressed as generic abstract competencies and this is a challenge in secondary schools as the curriculum is organised around epistemologically bounded subjects that have a different purpose than the wider societal aims of intercultural teaching and learning (Nordgren, 2017).

In New Zealand multicultural/intercultural initiatives have the additional feature of supporting the cultural values of Māori as required by the Treaty of Waitangi that is the official partnership framework that defines the relationship between Māori and non-indigenous New Zealanders. In 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed by the British government and Māori chiefs and allowed for the European settlement of New Zealand in return for guarantees to Māori over land ownership, retention of culture/language and the full rights of British citizenship. Although there were differences between the Māori and the English versions (especially in regard to the question of ceding sovereignty) the Treaty now serves as both the legal framework for addressing historical grievances and acknowledges Māori as having first-people/first-nation indigenous status.

In the education sector, the Treaty of Waitangi is manifested by the model of culturally responsive pedagogy that aims to improve educational outcomes for Māori students who have generally not achieved well in the mainstream system. It is now embedded in the requirements for teaching practice (Education Council, n.d.; Ministry of Education, n.d.a). Schools are expected to be culturally responsive to student's cultural background and to value their prior knowledge, and it is expected that learning be based on reciprocal learning partnerships (Ministry of Education, n.d.b): 'Where power is shared between self-determining individuals within non-dominating relations of interdependence' (Bishop *et al.*, 2007: 1). However, despite the traumatic experience of colonisation underpinning the challenges that Māori face in contemporary society, culturally responsive pedagogy is not aligned with developing understandings of the difficult features of the process of colonialisation for Māori.

During the nineteenth century the social, cultural and economic infrastructure of Māori society was shattered by war, disease and land alienation. By 1900 the majority of Māori land had been confiscated (or sold), the population had declined to less than half what it had been in 1840 and the socio-economic basis of Māori tribes had been seriously undermined (Walker, 2004; Anderson *et al*., 2014; O'Malley, 2016). While the worst excesses of colonisation have ended, the Māori population has increased and there has been a resurgence of language and cultural practices in recent decades, there are, however, continuing social, economic and political disparities between Māori and non-indigenous New Zealanders. Māori have higher levels of unemployment, higher levels of incarceration in prison, are typically poorer than non-indigenous New Zealanders and have worse health and education outcomes (Ministry of Health, n.d.; Bishop *et al*., 2007: 1–3). In all these cases there is a correlation between the traumatic nature of the colonisation experience and the disparities between Māori and non-indigenous New Zealanders.

The aim of culturally responsive pedagogy is to counter prejudice and generate mutual respect between different cultures. However, without young people understanding that there is a correlation between contemporary disparities between Māori and non-Māori and the process of colonisation, then culturally responsive pedagogy is unlikely to develop mutually respectful understandings between Māori and non-indigenous New Zealanders. Without historical knowledge of the difficult features of New Zealand's past, the culturally responsive curriculum will simply provide a series of vague, superficial, ambiguous guidelines that contribute little to young people being able to make authentic connections between the past and the present or to make sense of contemporary challenges.

Powerful knowledge and teaching and learning history

Establishing what is powerful knowledge in the school curriculum largely depends on whether the primary purpose of the subject is seen to be providing young people with disciplinary informed, evidence-based approaches to the past that develop critical thinking; or if history is seen to make a wider societal contribution to developing young people's understandings of questions to do with identity, diversity, social cohesion and belonging. Ideally there should be an overlap between the two but this does not happen automatically. If this is to be the case, there are certain structures that need to be set in place if the disciplinary protocols

of the subject as well the broader goals of culturally responsive pedagogy can be accommodated.

The disciplinary boundaries of historical thinking are arguably what Young (and other social realists) call powerful knowledge, in that young people are taught to develop the ability to think critically and learn something of the approaches that historians use when they interpret the past (Sheehan, 2018). Young (2014) argued that there are some forms of knowledge that have explanatory power and that all young people should have the opportunity to learn this knowledge in their schooling, regardless of their background and socio-economic status. This is knowledge that leads to greater equality, is open to critique, and provides the learner with the capacity to move beyond what they already know and their everyday experience (Young, 2014). It is also specialised knowledge that is typically generated in the academic disciplines (Young, 2008). To become historically literate, young people need to understand how experts in the field of history produce knowledge. That is how historians contruct arguments, analyse evidence and interpret the past. This is not because disciplinary history leads to an objective truth but because disciplinary knowledge is always open to evidence-based, reasoned critique.

In history, the basic tenets of powerful knowledge as developing critical thinking and framed by the interpretive nature of the discipline would be largely be accepted among historians (Tosh, 2015). Regardless of historians' interests, historical research is largely bounded by a number of shared protocols including a respect for evidence, analysis, argument and the historiographical features of the discipline. However, while Young saw similarities between subject matter and the academic discipline, recontextualising the discipline of history into a school subject is not straightforward. School subjects have a wider purpose than that of an academic discipline. Disciplinary research is primarily interested in the production or acquisition of knowledge (and the dissemination of this) but school subjects also serve societal, cultural and individual expectations and are shaped by pedagogical and assessment imperatives (Nordgren, 2017). Furthermore, (either explicitly or implicitly) history education has a role in creating collective memories (Wertsch, 2002). Many of the unconscious attitudes that young people have about the past – especially in regard to seminal historical events that are aligned with notions of identity – are traceable to elements of 'the educational process' (Roediger and Wertsch, 2008: 14).

In settler societies such as New Zealand, recontextualising the discipline to develop understandings of indigenous perspectives of

the past (and the goals of culturally responsive pedagogy) is further complicated as history has generally been framed by a worldview which places European values as superior to others. Many of the preeminent historians of the twentieth century have asserted the uniqueness and superiority of the European experience (Goody, 2007) and New Zealand historiography has not been immune to these ideas (with most historians adopting the disciplinary attributes of their British and North American counterparts until the 1980s and largely ignoring indigenous perspectives in their work). In recent decades a number of prominent historians (Walker, 2004; Anderson *et al*., 2014; O'Malley, 2016; Salmond, 2017) have incorporated Māori views of history in their research, but the issue of aligning disciplinary approaches with history in a school setting is fraught. Although there are some areas of apparent overlap, there are also differences that may well be irreconcilable.

The Māori way of thinking about history has been described as walking forward into the future while looking back into the past. This historical perspective is reflected in the Māori proverb *Ka Mura, Ka Muri* [look to the past to inform the future], that the past and the present are a single entity and all features of the contemporary Māori world are aligned with past experiences. This view is connected to the Kaupapa Māori research paradigm that has challenged Western models of knowing and knowledge-construction including the disciplinary protocols of history (Henry and Pene, 2001; Walker *et al*., 2006). Kaupapa Māori literally means Māori ways of doing, being and thinking. It is concerned with the authority and autonomy Māori argue they retained when they signed the Treaty of Waitangi. In the Māori version of the Treaty, Māori leaders gave up governorship rather than full sovereignty and were guaranteed full authority over their lands and people (what is called chiefly authority or *Tino Rangatiratanga*).

Kaupapa Māori research seeks to be transformative both politically and culturally (especially in regard to epistemology and ontology). In regard to politics, Kaupapa Māori research draws on the notions of critical theory and there are aspects here that can be aligned with social realism and powerful knowledge. Young has been careful to differentiate between the 'knowledge of the powerful' and powerful knowledge (although they overlap to some extent) but the idea that the interests of particular powerful groups are reflected in the education system and, that these groups operate to subordinate and exploit those who are without power, is not unaligned with Kaupapa Māori researchers' views on the history curriculum. This is especially the case in a New Zealand history education setting, which has seen the marginalisation of Māori

histories and the prioritisation of particular aspects of British/European history (Sheehan, 2011). However, Kaupapa Māori researchers go further than simply wanting there to be Māori histories in the curriculum. They are interested in rethinking the way that Māori operate with non-indigenous society as part of a wider decolonisation project. This includes the revitalisation of language and traditional practices and understandings in ways that are culturally safe and relevant (Henry and Pene, 2001).

In regard to education Kaupapa Māori researchers see the culturally preferred pedagogy as one in which connections are made with students' lives and backgrounds, that place an emphasis on the collective rather than the individual and that reinforce the knowledge students bring to the classroom as the foundation of effective teaching and learning (Bishop, 2012). The extent, however, that this can be aligned with a history curriculum that aims to be for young people to learn how to make evidence-based judgements about the validity of particular historical interpretations and competing claims of historical truth, is unclear.

Alignment

History as a discipline-informed subject has the potential to develop the critical intellectual capacities of students but if it is to contribute to culturally responsive teaching and learning, gaining disciplinary knowledge cannot be seen as an end in itself. While the sorts of disciplinary skills and concepts that young people learn in the subject of history provide insights beyond common sense, a disciplinary approach can reduce history to exercises of analysis without any relation to meaningful relevant historical knowledge for contemporary society (Nordgren, 2017). This is especially the case when disciplinary knowledge is the key resource for high-stakes criteria-based assessments for qualifications (as is the case in New Zealand) in which students are rewarded for adopting a narrow, disciplinary skills approach to the past in assessment tasks that can be easily measured and earn credits (Hipkins *et al.*, 2016). In this context Kaupapa Māori research lays down a challenge for history as a school subject, given the increasingly culturally diverse nature of New Zealand society and wider societal aims to reconcile the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous citizens. To move this question forward we need to explore what are the purposes of history and ask what actual functions we want the history curriculum to perform (Biesta, 2009).

Biesta (2009) argued that education generally performs three related functions: qualification, socialisation and subjectification. With

qualification he sees schools as responsible for providing young people with the knowledge, skills, understandings and dispositions that prepare them for the workforce as well as for functioning in society more generally (for example, political literacy, citizenship and cultural literacy). In regard to socialisation he sees education as transmitting particular norms and values of society and equipping young people with an understanding of particular ways of doing and being that play an important role in the continuation of culture and tradition. Finally, Biesta (2009) argued that education should contribute to the processes of subjectification that allow those being educated to become more autonomous and independent in their thinking.

Disciplinary history (as powerful knowledge) has a core role in developing the transformative potential of culturally responsive pedagogy but all three domains above need to be incorporated in curriculum development. Societal needs and disciplinary boundaries are interrelated (Nordgren, 2017). While school subjects need to provide reliable, disciplinary based knowledge about the world (Young, 2014), a school subject is neither a condensed microcosm of an academic discipline, nor is it a vehicle for societal demands (Nordgren, 2017). Rather it should have elements of both. In a New Zealand setting, substantive knowledge about difficult features of the process of colonisation has the potential to transform culturally responsive teaching and learning, but this transformation is connected to the selection of specialised substantive knowledge. There are aspects of New Zealand's past that are contested and problematic – that are 'difficult histories' – and it is this knowledge that has the potential to be transformative. If we consider the purpose of history in a New Zealand context, it will be specific to this time and this place. It will also be framed by the question: What is the essential knowledge that all young people in New Zealand deserve to have, if they are to be educated to actively participate in society as historically literate, critically informed citizens with a balanced perspective and who can think independently about the challenges they face in the future? In this context, developing critical understandings about the difficult features of New Zealand's colonial past is an essential ingredient of a balanced education as this country renegotiates questions of identity between Māori and non-indigenous New Zealanders.

In this scenario culturally responsive teaching and learning is informed by evidence-based understandings of the past that are shaped by disciplinary perspectives of the past and that broaden the perspective on what is significant. For the history teaching community, this means going beyond simply knowing historical details about New Zealand's

past, but also sees young people emotionally connect this knowledge with indigenous perspectives of place (Harcourt, 2015). It also comes from engaging with substantive knowledge about the process of colonisation in ways that are meaningful and that have the potential to be transformative. For example, if young people enter the classroom with the assumption that compensation for Māori whose land was confiscated after the wars in the nineteenth century is irrelevant to contemporary society, and leave with a recognition that the grievances of the past are the basis of current concerns, and that governments have a responsibility to acknowledge historical grievances, then something transformative has happened. Something that gave them the intellectual tools (and the exposure to different perspectives) to re-evaluate what they thought they knew. This is typically achieved through thinking critically about how they analyse the past, informed by evidence. It is disciplinary in character but aligned with the goals of culturally responsive pedagogy and (at least some of) the aims of Kaupapa Māori research (see above).

Teachers as curriculum makers

Young people in New Zealand are unlikely to develop an understanding of the process of colonisation and Māori perspectives in their schooling (Sheehan, 2011; Sheehan *et al*., 2017) and the evasion of Māori histories in the enacted curriculum sends a message (to both Maori and non-indigenous New Zealanders) that Māori do not have a history that is worth knowing. This has implications for how history can inform culturally responsive teaching and learning. Teachers are charged with the responsibility of engaging young people with controversial aspects of the past, selecting content and assessing students' work, and they operate as pedagogical experts, curriculum makers and curriculum assessors (Sheehan, 2017).

It has been argued that the schooling system is racist for not teaching New Zealand's colonial history but while a degree of bias in regard to Māori histories was evident in the past (Sheehan, 2010; Manning, 2011, 2017) there are many teachers who have had the intellectual confidence and pedagogical abilities to teach students about the difficult features of New Zealand's past (and continue to do so). The New Zealand History Teachers' Association (NZHTA) and the Ministry of Education's Māori history project (Sheehan, 2018) both feature numerous examples of innovative teachers who are 'change agents' in their learning communities. There is also an emerging literature of

history teachers who engage young people with critically informed understandings of controversial questions about the experience of colonisation (Harcourt and Sheehan, 2012; Davison *et al*., 2014; Harcourt, 2015). At a national level the history teaching community has also shown itself to be increasingly committed to prioritising New Zealand history (and Māori perspectives) in teachers' programmes. At the 2018 NZHTA national conference, the executive passed a unanimous resolution to adopt an activist approach to the teaching of New Zealand's colonial history. Graeme Ball (chair of NZHTA), in his submission to the Māori Affairs Select Committee in parliament, highlighted the lack of compulsion to teach history in the curriculum and the low priority New Zealand's past had in many school history programmes. These factors contributed to the announcement by the government in September 2019 that all young people will learn about New Zealand's past by 2022 in a compulsory history curriculum.

It is not only in the history teaching community where there is an increasing focus on teaching more about New Zealand's colonial history. It is a priority in the wider community. In 2015, two secondary school students instigated a petition that called for the wars fought between the Crown and Māori in the nineteenth century to be included in the curriculum. Signed by over 12,000 people, the petition was presented to the Māori Affairs Select Committee at parliament and although it did not result in any changes to the curriculum, it did see the setting up of a national day to annually commemorate the New Zealand Wars (O'Malley and Kidman, 2017). Two former prime ministers (from opposing ends of the political spectrum) have called for schools to teach more New Zealand history and academics have also been proactive in publicly reiterating the importance of young people learning about New Zealand's colonial past (Sheehan and Ball, 2020). That few young people learn about the process of colonisation in their schooling may reflect that some history teachers are reluctant to engage with difficult features of New Zealand's past. However, what is more significant is that teacher's agency to address this question, either individually or on a school basis, is limited. The challenge is structural. Curriculum choices (either nationally or at a school level) do not occur in a vacuum.

History and *The New Zealand Curriculum*

School curricula are not designed in a vacuum. They tend to reflect wider societal concerns. Introduced in the first decade of the twenty-first

century, *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) was a part of a number of educational initiatives to address New Zealand's role in a rapidly changing and competitive global marketplace, the increasingly diverse nature of society as well as the disparity of educational outcomes between learners within the school system. The final decades of the twentieth century had been characterised by an increasing dissatisfaction with the structures of education and calls for the curriculum to be flexible enough to accommodate increasing economic/societal changes and reflect the growing cultural diversity in New Zealand. By the first decade of the twenty-first century the idea of a centralised, balanced curriculum that aimed to cater for the needs of all students was no longer seen as either a desirable or a realistic option. In addition, since the 1990s New Zealand's education policymaking has been framed by market-orientated, neoliberal ideas that have placed a high priority on choice and the economic imperatives of educating young people to develop the skills and abilities to operate successfully in a rapidly changing and competitive global environment. The highly autonomous *New Zealand Curriculum* was a response to these challenges and the nature of the neoliberal curriculum reforms of the last 30 years in education has seen the value of disciplinary knowledge in history downplayed and has limited teacher agency under the guise of teacher choice (Sheehan and Ball, 2020). Teachers do not operate as autonomous entities when it comes to curriculum making. Most teachers view the past through the lens of the Western conceptual framework and not only are they limited by their own history education and social background but they are embedded in particular school communities. The memory messages that are often dominant in such settings can be unsupportive of engaging with the controversial nature of colonisation. Schools are self-managing (and have considerable autonomy over what is taught) and a teacher's curriculum approaches to controversial historical questions will reflect the values, attitudes and collective memories of parents, students and colleagues in their school community (Sheehan, 2017).

A way forward

How could the disciplinary protocols of history – that have the potential to make it powerful knowledge – be aligned with culturally responsive pedagogy? New Zealand's constructivist approach has prioritised learning experiences that are based on students' own experiences and interests in an over-socialised high autonomy history curriculum that

appears to be a Future 2 phase, in which courses are co-constructed by students and teachers (Young and Muller, 2010). A way forward here would be to develop an historical framework of teaching and learning based on what Young (2014) would describe as a Future 3 scenario, where historical thinking concepts and culturally responsive pedagogy are linked through culturally relevant knowledge and concepts. Young (2008) proposed that pedagogy has to be based upon content, concepts and skills, and that specialised knowledge ensures the learner is able to develop their thinking and generate new ideas. In history programmes this could see questions to do with colonisation aligned with activities that give meaning to disciplinary concepts and connected to the aims of culturally responsive teaching and learning. However, the extent to which the knowledge students bring to the classroom can be the foundation of effective teaching and learning (Bishop, 2012) and aligned with disciplinary ways of approaching the past is more challenging. Young (2014) supported the importance of learners having an active role in their learning but suggests it is important that a distinction is made between a student's everyday knowledge and powerful knowledge, in the same way that there is an important distinction between a 'teacher' and a 'facilitator'. Developing reasoned, evidence-based understandings of the past that equip young people to participate in society as critical citizens who can think independently and adjudicate between competing claims of historical authenticity is counter-intuituive and has been described as an 'unnatural act' (Wineburg, 2001). It can seldom be acquired from everyday experiences. Rather it requires systematic, sustained instruction in how the discipline of history operates (Alexander, 1997).

History can provide tools to understand the world but the epistemological reorganisation that is required for culturally responsive teaching and learning to align with the disciplinary framework of history has still some way to go. How this is resolved requires ongoing conversations about integrating differing epistemologies and ontologies in regard to the appropriate history curriculum for New Zealand in the third decade of the twenty-first century, and to an extent this is happening. There is a growing acceptance that Māori language and cultural values are a central feature of twenty-first-century New Zealand society and that government initiatives should reflect this. For example, in May 2017, one of New Zealand's longest rivers (the Whanganui) was given the legal status of a person. This was in recognition of the local Māori tribe's view of the river as being a spiritual ancestor and their commitment to operate as guardians of the Whanganui (as they have done for centuries) and to promote and protect its health and well-being. While the decision

reflects indigenous concepts of connection to land, water and place, it does not reflect how the New Zealand legal framework has operated for over 150 years. Rather it indicates a shift in orientation in how Māori and non-indigenous New Zealanders are increasingly renegotiating the relationship with each other and working towards genuine, respectful reconciliation (Sheehan and Ball, 2020).

This willingness to listen and consider indigenous perspectives of the past is evident in how local educators, historians and Māori experts have integrated local tribal views into teaching and learning history in the area. It also provides an exemplar as to how a predominantly non-indigenous history teaching community can incorporate an indigenous perspective into their teaching programmes. This is evident in the conversations over the last five years between local teachers, tribal experts and historians from the Whanganui who have worked to incorporate a Māori perspective of the past (that align with local tribal views) into teaching programmes (Sheehan and Ball, 2020). Challenges are also opportunities and are likely to be resolved in conversations between classroom teachers, researchers, historians and Māori experts over what indigenous perspectives on the disciplinary framework of history might look like. These are conversations that will require humility and respect on all sides. The opportunity for the history education community is to consider how we can re-imagine our thinking to ensure all students are given access to 'powerful' disciplinary understandings of the past that incorporate the wider imperatives of a culturally responsive teaching and learning as well as indigenous Māori values and perspectives.

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10

The stories we tell ourselves: History teaching, powerful knowledge and the importance of context

Nick Dennis

The stories we tell ourselves, *about ourselves*, are incredibly powerful. They help to provide sure ground in uncertain situations, define boundaries for action, and inaction, while providing a guide for future achievements. Ken Booth (1996: 328), Professor of International Politics at the world's first department of international relations at Aberystwyth University, reviewed the academic discipline during its 75th anniversary and suggested that the foundational myths of the discipline hold great appeal primarily because they are 'recurring, primordial, and appealing to a particular group's ideals, hopes and fears, and widely felt emotions'. Appealing as they are, such narratives tend to 'sustain primitive rather than complex understandings of human predicaments' (Booth, 1996: 328). In the case of international relations, the myths have helped to 'discipline the discipline' (Booth, 1996: 328). The history teaching community in England is also interested in narratives; considerable effort has been expended by history teachers and history teacher educators to unpick the narratives used in lessons, and yet the critical examination *of the field* has tended to be rather muted. This is partly because the key foundational story that we like to tell ourselves relates to the existential threat to history's place on the school curriculum by outsiders. This is supplemented, and reinforced, by a second, recurring story, which suggests the present state of danger has created an environment where history educators and history teachers in England are fairly sophisticated in their curricular theorising.

This view of history teaching in England has been validated in Young (2016: 185), where after reviewing three chapters written by history teachers, he commented that the subject is 'ahead of anything that curriculum theorists are suggesting'. Young then went on to suggest that the work within the English history teaching community is similar to his Future 3 theorisation and his notion of 'powerful knowledge'. The contention of this chapter is that rather than the epitome of sophistication, the curriculum theorisation of history teaching in England is limited, partial and, in some cases, exclusionary. In addition, Young's assertion that his notion of powerful knowledge is made tangible in school history points to a lack of contextual understanding about the discipline of history, its relationship with school history and concrete practices within school history teaching. The chapter also points to a parallel, but ignored, discourse of powerful knowledge that could enrich how school history curriculum theorising in England could adopt a more secure framework for exploring Young's work.

As a subject on the school curriculum in England, history always seems to be marked by the threat of extinction, with the clearest expression of peril embodied in the 'History in danger' article (Price, 1968). The menace of obsolescence, posed partly by the syllabus, pedagogy, and an elitist view of history not being applicable to all students, needed to change so the subject could survive. A broadening of the syllabus beyond British history, a capacity to tap into the imagination of a child, and a concrete way of disseminating effective teaching methods were the proposed remedies. A note at the bottom of Price's article reveals that the Historical Association agreed with Price's thinking and that a new periodical would be set up. *Teaching History*, the journal for history teachers, was published in the year following Price's article, and it has remained a focal point for discussion about history education in England. Its growth and influence on, and outside, the history teaching community has somewhat covered its founding intention: to fight extinction. A recent editorial regarding the current focus of what knowledge should be placed on the curriculum and how it should be planned and sequenced, suggested that this was a battle that had already been won:

> Observing all this from the inside of England's history education communities, it has been hard to know whether to react with a wry smile or with a wearied sense of déjà vu. For the history education community in England, and in other educational jurisdictions, has had its own knowledge debates, mostly very productively, and for a very, very long time. *In particular, the question of 'what knowledge?'*

> *has been alive and hotly debated since the 1970s* with the advent of the Schools History Project and its challenge to the dominance of conventional, high-political, Anglo-centric narratives. (Counsell *et al*., 2018: 2; emphasis added)

The editorial comment is revealing for a number of reasons. First, it indicates a sense of wisdom within the subject community that is deeper, more practical, and superior to the current discourse. Moreover, it also suggests that debates about knowledge have been productive because the subject community has progressed more than other curriculum areas. This is partly predicated on the story we tell about the subject's history. Prior to 1945, students were largely receivers of classroom knowledge (Keating and Sheldon, 2011). Post-1945, this changed and by the 1960s/1970s there was a focus on 'child-centred' history with the Schools History Project a key player in the move to a more enlightened state through its challenge to 'Anglo-centric narratives' (Keating and Sheldon, 2011). Despite the narrative of triumph, doubts remain. In particular, there is a concern about the number of 'good' pass rates at GCSE,[1] the exam taken in England at age 16 and the reduction of lesson time so that more curriculum time is dedicated to English, maths and science, especially at Key Stage 3 (ages 11–14)[2] (Burn *et al*., 2018). The fear for the subject is also present on the Historical Association website, with a commentary on its annual survey highlighted in the byline, 'History Faces Extinction in English Schools' (Historical Association, 2018), which also runs above the article for the 2009 survey report.

The 'history in danger' motif, combined with a recent focus on the role of knowledge within school curricula and aided by the worries that come with a change of government of a different political persuasion, have led many in England to see Michael Young's theorisation of knowledge and the curriculum as a way to reduce the fear of demise. Young (2014: 26) argued that school subjects are a specialised form of knowledge because they are committed to the search for 'truth' via their link with the academic discipline. Consequently, all subjects, including history, have powerful educational possibilities (Young, 2016: 186).

Future 1 forms the first part of Young's theorisation around curriculum and knowledge and he suggests that in this rendering, subject boundaries are fixed and knowledge is a 'given'. Education in this sense is about the cultural transmission of knowledge and it therefore provides a curriculum for *compliance*, which can result in memorisation and rote learning (Young, 2011: 267). For Young, the educational rationale of Future 1 is that knowledge should be respected for its 'own sake' and that

the curriculum should provide intellectual challenge for students and teachers as they engage with work produced by subject specialists from universities. This view of knowledge, and the curriculum, was inherited from the nineteenth century and is to be found in the selective grammar school system and also the independent (fee-paying) school sector where recipients are offered a route to 'leading universities' (Young, 2014: 59). Future 2 came into existence due to the expansion of education in the 1960s and the rigidity of Future 1 as a curriculum to deal with the demands of society where students remained at school but were reluctant to engage with the traditional academic subjects. Future 2 rejected the status of knowledge as a given and that what we know about the world via school subjects is a social construction limited by tradition. Knowledge, rather than being specialised and an end in itself, was generic and would support future employment opportunities. In order for this new vision of the curriculum to work, it should tap into the experiences students had. As stated in Young and Muller (2010: 18), this version of knowledge in Future 2 is 'over-socialised' and has led to curriculum developments like the Royal Society of Arts' 'Opening Minds' programme which gained a foothold in a number of schools in the 2000s where history is no longer taught as a discrete subject (Historical Association, 2018).

Future 3 differs in that it seeks to chart a *via media* between Future 1 and Future 2. Future 3 rejects the notion of knowledge as a given but it finds its grounding in 'the specialist communities of researchers in different fields and those educational specialists who recontextualise disciplines as the basis for school subjects' (Young, 2011: 269). Future 3 recognises that there is an element of construction regarding knowledge, which is fallible and open to change, but the specialist communities, including the academic disciplines that are linked to the school subjects, are empirically engaged and are committed to a search for truth, which exists independently from our descriptions of it. School subjects, therefore, are a way of taking students beyond their own experiences to study the world as an object. As Young (2011: 269) stated, 'It is this access to knowledge which takes students beyond their experience that must be the primary goal of schools.' Future 3 requires disciplinary and subject-based thinking that distinguishes everyday life from school and offers students a way to go beyond their own experience.

The attraction within the history teaching community in England to Future 3 should be clear. The link between the school subject and the academic discipline of history provides an effective argument to keep the subject on the curriculum to foes without (government) and it also

provides a defence against 'enemies within' (schools and in particular leadership teams). Counsell (2016) pitted a head of history, informed by the subject-specific published discourse of other history teachers, against a managerial senior leadership team (SLT) representative whose advocacy of the 'genericism' involved in the non-subject-specific requirements of tracking, assessment and pedagogy undermines the head of history's work. Here, the rich subject-specific discussions available to the teacher, supported by the academic discipline, are marshalled against the impoverished nature of the SLT member's 'grasp of historical knowledge, its relational properties and epistemic structures' (Counsell, 2016: 245). History as a school subject is best equipped to provide an entitlement to knowledge for all so that students can fully take part in the conversation in society.

There is a temporal issue in Young's formulation of the three futures that causes confusion. Young and Muller (2010) suggested that the 'futures' model refers to three *different* possibilities that lay before us. However, they also seem to be a historical materialist construction in that they are also tied to a specific historical period (Young, 2014) and that Future 3 lies before us. If Young's futures thinking follows the latter chronological and historical materialist ordered path, where each future follows on from the other and demarcates a profound shift in how the subject is considered and taught, then the message is clear: we are on the cusp of realising Future 3 as it is the synthesis of the dialectical process in his historical materialist conception. If all three futures are before us, stark choices have to be made. This temporal confusion is unresolved but whatever rendering is used, it is clear that the futures represent distinct and separate visions. This is problematic as the 'typical' day of a head of history described in Box 10.1 suggests.

The three scenarios in Box 10.1 are illustrative of what a head of department or subject leader, in one school, may go through in *a day* covering all three futures in the teaching of the history curriculum. The first scenario presents knowledge, in the form of a curated reading list, as a given. The knowledge presented there is useful for its own sake. The second scenario presents knowledge as instrumental and social; the admissions tutors for the elite institutions are the gatekeepers and it is they, and not the grades, that the student achieves, that decide whether a place is offered. The Head of Department or Subject Leader's role is to make sure that the students 'fit in' and gain enough 'knowledge of the powerful' to show that they deserve the offer of a place. The final scenario draws on the subject community and the discipline to get the students to go beyond their experience of the Disney cartoon clip that many of

Box 10.1 Example of a 'typical' day for the Head of history

The Head of Department or Subject Leader in history decides to send out an email to parents regarding the reading list they have put together for students from Year 7 to Year 13. They hope that it may spark interest and provide opportunities for families to buy birthday gifts. There is a brief explanation of what each book argues, but the focal point is that they provide additional 'stretch and challenge' to the students and enable wider 'cultural literacy' with the justification that literacy, and knowledge of the past, are good things in and of themselves.

As they walk towards their next lesson, the Head of Department or Subject Leader runs through the tutorial plan in their head. They are meeting three of the sixth-form students who are completing the first year of the A-level history course and all three would like to apply to read history at either Oxford or Cambridge. The tutorial will focus on helping them prepare for the History Aptitude Test (HAT), get them working on their draft personal statements and support their interview preparation. A six-month programme has been carefully devised to help the students acquire key knowledge and develop a clear strategy for the HAT and interview. The Head of Department or Subject Leader feels some pressure because the admissions tutors are unknown quantities. Despite the information on the university websites, they want to make sure the students have a breadth of knowledge so they are prepared to not only demonstrate what they know but also their capability to adapt to the curriculum being offered by the institutions. Finally, they also want them to feel comfortable in the alien situation of the interview. The students are working towards A* grades but they know that this is not enough. One student in particular is worried that they may not fit in and do well because no one in their family has gone to university.

In the lesson after lunch, the Head of Department or Subject Leader has a Key Stage 3 lesson with Year 7 about King John and interpretations about his rule and how they have changed over time. Drawing on the received wisdom of the subject community, they have read some of the latest articles in *Teaching History* and have implemented a few ideas regarding interpretations. To make it interesting and challenging, they have also included a few extracts from recent historical scholarship with which they engaged over the summer break. Their reasoning is that they want to introduce them to disputes between historians and also provide challenging language. This will help the students in terms of their own literacy and provide resources and examples for their final activity where they will write letters to one of the historians about the topic and their appraisal of it.

them have watched and to place the cartoon as a particular historical interpretation. Rather than being distinct, staged or separate choices, the three futures outlined by Young *not only coexist* to deliver a 'history' curriculum, but they also appear to be *necessary* in providing a standard of education that is inclusive, challenging and pragmatic. Heads of departments or subject leaders in different schools will face singular challenges but there will also be many similarities, with each decision shaped by circumstance, geographic placing, year groups taught and economic resources. Any of the futures may take the lead at any particular moment, and appreciating this helps to explain why schools, and history departments, may slip into Future 2 thinking while others use Future 1 or Future 3 thinking instead.

Although the distinctiveness of the temporal arrangement of the 'futures' model seems imprecise, especially when considering their apparent necessary coexistence for good history teaching, when we move to a more concrete account, the problems of adopting Young's ideas uncritically multiply. Young and Muller's engagement in the reformation of the South African educational system after Apartheid led to a reconsideration of the view about knowledge being an imposition. The movement from an overtly racist education system to one linked to the goals of a democratic and just society was difficult because it was based on a critique of the previous education which held racism as a key principle. 'Knowledge' in the Apartheid education system was interwoven with domination and served to entrench the Apartheid system (Young, 2014: 54). In this context, creating a new curriculum for South Africa was problematic because: 'a theory that equates the curriculum with the imposition of "knowledge" defined by those in power – "knowledge of the powerful" as I came to refer to it – leaves teachers and curriculum designers with no curriculum at all' (Young, 2014: 56).

What is tantalising about the experience in South Africa for Young is how it could have been very different had he considered the relatively contemporaneous period of English education in some detail. For many of the West Indian migrants who arrived in England as British subjects after World War II, there were high expectations of the English education system. After all, their exposure to an English-style education had been the exclusive schools set up on the islands, and students winning places at Oxford and Cambridge. It was therefore surprising that once they had settled in the 'mother country' the educational experience of their children was one of exclusion, where many were placed in schools for the educationally subnormal (ESN) by teachers and local authorities, and offered a differentiated curriculum which affected academic prospects

and the lives they would lead after they left school (Carby, 1982; Goulbourne, 1988). Even if they remained in mainstream schooling, by the 1960s, students from these families faced barriers to their education in English and maths and their presence seemed to represent an existential threat to British culture (Gilroy, 1987; Andrews, 2013).

Bernard Coard (2005) sought to address these issues that had been causing angst in the British West Indian community. In a society that was still gripped by overt racism, Coard suggested ways to help students be removed from the ESN schools, gain basic knowledge of English and maths and also to appreciate the contributions that black people had made to Britain. The latter was not part of the history curriculum that had been built on the 'Great Tradition' of political and constitutional history taught in schools (Sylvester, 1994) but would instil some sense of pride and resilience against the racism they faced:

> We need to open Black *nursery schools* and *supplementary schools* throughout the areas that we live, in Britain … pride and self-confidence are the best armour against the prejudice and humiliating experiences which they will certainly face in school and society. We should start up supplementary schools in whatever part of London, or Britain, we live, in order to give our children additional help in the subjects they need … through these schools we hope to make up for the inadequacies of the British school system … we must never sit idly by while they make ignoramuses of our children, but must see to it by hook or by crook our children get the best education they are capable of! (Coard, 2005: 54)

The personal experiences of the students, and their families, of racism was one particular reason why Coard suggested they needed to be taught the same knowledge as other white students as they were entitled to it. At the same time, Coard recognised that knowledge, in the form of a differentiated curriculum offered at an ESN school and in the experience of the school history curriculum, was socially constructed and imposed upon them. Recognising that there was an entitlement to knowledge that was being denied to black students through the racism they faced and that there were certain topics excluded in the history curriculum, Coard (2005: 54) suggested another form of curricular thinking that went beyond the existing model:

> Black history and culture, i.e. the history of Black people throughout the Caribbean, the Americas, Africa and Asia, should be made part

> of the curriculum of all schools, for the benefit of the Black and white children … Indeed, its exclusion from most school curricula constitutes nothing short of criminal negligence (or prejudice) in the educational sphere.

The black supplementary school movement, in existence prior to Coard's report, was boosted by the arguments put forth that something other than the conventional school system was needed to deal with the curriculum shortcomings in a society fashioned by racism.

Juxtaposing post-Apartheid South Africa and post-imperial England enables an appreciation of the considerable depth and sophistication of curriculum thinking and the role of knowledge. Moreover, the setting of England challenges the temporal arrangement in Young's theoretical 'futures' model. The futures as possible choices or the futures as a chronological order do not work within this context because what Coard's research reveals is that the students and their families wanted simultaneity. They wanted to absorb the Future 1 version of knowledge as they saw this as helping them become 'educated'. At the same time, they also wanted to be free from the ESN schools that seemed to be formed by Future 2 thinking. Finally, they displayed powerful knowledge, Future 3 thinking, in challenging existing educational and social formations. Rather than being chronologically ordered or even three competing versions of the same future, the social and political implications of 'race' and racism in England reveal a desire to incorporate and possess all three futures as a mechanism for freedom.

Government action on the issue was soon forthcoming. Coard's work, along with the growing concerns that children of Afro-Caribbean heritage were failing to acquire the basic education needed to enter the job market prompted action from the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration. It suggested, with some urgency, that the Labour government should 'institute a high level and independent inquiry into the causes of the underachievement of children of West Indian origin in maintained schools and the remedial action required'. The resulting inquiry, set up in 1979, produced an interim report named after its chair. The Rampton Report (1981: 19) made it clear that 'knowledge' was an important part of a 'good education' for all and that encouraging individual development with a focus on knowledge and transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next was an obvious aim. Moreover, in delivering the curriculum, teachers were asked to acquire knowledge about the backgrounds of the students and their cultures in

order to enhance the learning and education of the students from a minority background (Rampton, 1981: 29). In fact, the curriculum and the values transmitted by the school should 'seek to remove the ignorance upon which much racial prejudice and discrimination is based' (Rampton, 1981: 34), which is particularly important when history textbooks that were still in use provided a particular view on the world, such as Hal Fisher's *A History of Europe* quoted in the report:

> To the conquest of nature through knowledge the contributions made by Asiatics have been negligible and by Africans (Egyptians excluded) non-existent. The printing press and the telescope, the steam engine, the internal combustion engine and the aeroplane, the telegraph and telephone, wireless broadcasting and the cinematograph, the gramophone and television, together with all the leading discoveries in physiology, the circulation of the blood, the laws of respiration and the like, are the result of researches carried out by white men of European stock. (Fisher, 1935, cited in Rampton, 1981: 34)

What the Rampton Report suggested was that teachers, schools and subject specialists in history should adjust their curriculum planning to take on board the lived experience of the young people they taught. This was especially important considering the way that their personal experience and their access to 'truth' collided in school:

> The suggestion that teachers are in any way racist understandably arouses very strong reactions from the profession and is often simply rejected out of hand as entirely unjustified and malicious. Since a profession of nearly half a million people must to a great extent reflect the attitudes of society at large there must inevitably be some teachers who hold explicitly racist views. Such teachers are very much in the minority. We have, however, found some evidence of what we have described as unintentional racism in the behaviour and attitudes of other teachers whom it would be misleading to describe as racist in the commonly accepted sense. They firmly believe that any prejudices they may have can do no harm since they are not translated into any openly discriminatory behaviour. Nevertheless, if their attitudes are influenced in any way by prejudices against ethnic minority groups, this can and does, we believe, have a detrimental effect on all children whom they encounter. (Rampton, 1981: 12)

This was an unpalatable finding by the inquiry and Anthony Rampton was removed as chair. The final report, named after the new chair, Michael Swann (1985: 770), sought to focus more on curriculum construction at exam board level. Many of these issues in both reports were echoed decades later in the Runnymede Trust's report, *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* (2000), chaired by Lord Bhiku Parekh. With its focus on reducing racism and enhancing societal cohesion, the report suggested that there was not sufficient specified knowledge provided by successive governments and organisations to support the development of young people to address racism, including political literacy (Runnymede Trust, 2000: 149).

What impact this may have had on Young's theorisation, we can only speculate about, but the response in the history teaching community to these reports and the challenges was mixed. There was recognition that the number of reports around 'multi-cultural' and 'multi-ethnic' education were important and in a 1982 issue of *Teaching History*, two articles were published outlining the need to consider the issues raised by the Rampton Report. However, there was caution, as the editorial warned that:

> many teachers act as if they are unaware that the social and ethnic composition of Britain in the early 1980s is vastly different from that over 30 years ago. Many history syllabuses are little changed in real content, even if they are different in style and method. All too often the picture presented in school history is of a mono-cultural Britain. (Booth and Purkis, 1982: 2)

Work continued in a number of schools but commenting after the Swann Report was published in 1985, the editorial was downbeat about the actions that had taken place since the Rampton Report: 'surely the time has come to face these issues squarely and to advance a rationale for history which is much to do with values and attitudes as it is with concepts and skills' (Booth and Purkis, 1985: 2). The introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 and subsequent revisions appeared to remove any enthusiasm, will and capacity to drive forward the issues identified by both the reports and the work of local minority communities, as there seemed to be more concern that the new curriculum was an imposition from above (Kitson *et al.*, 2011: 21). Further discussions around the curriculum in 1994, 1999 and 2000, after 'citizenship' was introduced as a compulsory, and rival subject, seemed to occupy minds alongside

getting to grips with key processes and concepts. When the Parekh Report was published in October 2000, there was no mention of it, or any possible implications for history teaching, in the journal *Teaching History* in the year that followed.

Sophisticated discussions on curriculum, knowledge, disciplinarity and social justice existed in local communities and in the minds of writers outside of the history teaching community (Gilroy, 1987, 1993; Troyna, 1987; Yekwai, 1988; Malik, 1996) but they rarely figure in the story we tell ourselves about history teaching, and are often dismissed as 'myth' by opponents who view such work as lacking validity in comparison to existing narratives of history (Mohamud and Whitburn, 2016: 5). Allied to the desire for all three futures as the means of emancipation, futures thinking is a distracting theoretical narrative as it seems, in its current form, to offer only generic solutions to a very specific historical and social problem.

There is one final simple story that needs to be unpicked. Disciplines are, for Young and Muller (2016), the mechanisms by which 'truth' is apprehended and in the case of history education, the academic discipline itself is viewed as relatively benign despite the recognition that power plays a part in their construction. This is not surprising. After all, it provides the intellectual and cultural justification for the inclusion of the subject on the school curriculum. However, if we move beyond a simple disciplinary frame as rendered in the story the history teaching community tells itself, and place the discipline, and the school subject, within a wider historical context, this relatively contained relationship becomes increasingly problematic. History in the academy, and in the schoolroom, was deeply implicated in shaping the thinking of the English about 'race' and empire (Yeandle, 2015). However, we seem, as Hall (1978: 143–4) suggested, to find it difficult to recognise this history as no one 'nowadays can bring themselves to refer to Britain's imperial and colonial past, even as a contributory factor to the present situation. The slate has been wiped clean. Racism is not endemic to the British social formation.' This collective 'historical amnesia, a decisive mental repression' (Hall, 1978: 145) creates a view that what exists in the epistemic community is already 'good' because it searches for objectivity and conceptual advancement. For Rudolph *et al.* (2018) this does not stand up to even the most gentle probing because disciplinary knowledge, 'the concepts and theories of sociology, philosophy, and so on – have been formed through colonial exploitation and racialised erasure' (Rudolph *et al.*, 2018: 2). Furthermore, the challenge made by movements

like 'why is my curriculum white?' arises from a question about the content of university curricula and the people teaching them: 'That our university curricula are predominantly white is not an outcome of independent criteria for "better" knowledge (to which the powerful knowledge framework seeks to defer), but a consequence of colonialism and racial domination in the epistemic communities of the academy' (Rudolph *et al.*, 2018: 5).

Ignoring the colonial formation of this knowledge is detrimental to any enterprise that seeks to build uncritically on disciplinary knowledge. In the adoption of the 'futures' model this has not been addressed and nor has it been addressed in the recent published work adapting Young's ideas to history teaching. The Royal Historical Society (2018) report, *Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History: A report and resource for change* recognises the discipline's history and its current forms of exclusion through stereotyping researchers from minority backgrounds to offering limited topics at undergraduate level. It also argues that the:

> taught curriculum for secondary school pupils and university undergraduate and postgraduate students likewise fails to fully incorporate the new, diverse histories produced by UK and international researchers. These problems have distinct origins and trajectories. But they are also intertwined. Individually and cumulatively, they detract from the quality of teaching, learning and research in History in the UK. (RHS, 2018: 7)

Although initial responses to the report have been positive within the history subject community, the report points to something deeper than the history teacher community is likely to admit openly, for fear of diminishing the subject's position within the school curriculum. As a result of the 'history in danger' narrative being so strong, it is unlikely to be examined in depth, showing the inconsistency at the heart of school history; knowledge is powerful, but some knowledge is too powerful or too truthful to be widely recognised (Bhopal, 2018; Doharty, 2018). This is not to suggest that no attempts have been made to address this issue, but it is usually confined to the training of teachers, their particular disciplinary knowledge and how it shapes the historical knowledge presented to students in the classroom (Wilson and Wineburg, 1998; Harris and Clarke, 2011; Kitson *et al.*, 2011). The avoidance of the colonial formation of disciplinary knowledge has created a partial encounter with the British Empire in the classroom, where the focus rests

on imperial beginnings, but barely considers the ending of empire and the decolonisation process (Haydn, 2014), essential knowledge to help students understand contemporary society.

Addressing the absence of marginalised histories within this disciplinary frame has not been smooth. The Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA), formed in 1991, attempted on numerous occasions to address this absence through meetings with officials from different governments and members of the history teaching community. The results were not just unproductive, they 'were almost a total waste of time' (Sherwood, 2007). The current English GCSE course on migration that was introduced in 2016, covering aspects that had been absent such as migration over the last thousand years, was not spontaneously created by the subject community; it was because BASA put forward an alternative curriculum in relation to the redrafted curriculum and a member of the exam board team read it and invited BASA to write a draft specification. As a result, the actual course was born beyond the published and public discourse of the history teaching community precisely because there was resistance to the current curriculums in universities and at school level. The story we tell ourselves in history education about our sophistication regarding what knowledge is taught and the importance it has, neglects to recognise the struggle to include that knowledge on the curriculum, often with resistance from the discipline and the school subject which subscribes to the 'truth'. This is indeed surprising, particularly because school history is taught in schools that often have more diverse communities within them than places of higher learning (Willinsky, 1998: 17).

If the formulation of specialised and disciplinary knowledge in history is partly formed by the connection to colonialism and racial thinking, then it also calls into question the notion of not examining this heritage. As Gilroy (2004: 3) argued, the purpose of making the connections to an imperial past is not to make it a weapon, but a tool for understanding; it should become useful knowledge in shaping what an expansive curriculum might be. One element of this reconsideration would be to re-examine the notion of everyday knowledge. Young (2014: 74) argued that powerful knowledge is distinct from the 'common-sense' knowledge we acquire through everyday experience and this makes sense if you consider that the 'personal is not political' and that the experience of racism that a person might face in their everyday life is replicated, legitimised and given a veneer of respectability by ignoring the epistemic roots of the discipline and the school subject. There is also an issue in that the everyday experience of history is constructed by those working

in the discipline via historical TV programmes, visits to museums and the media generally (Trouillot, 1995: 20). These views may be changed by the history classroom and advanced study, but the curriculum is partly shaped by experience outside of school; one only needs to think about the popularity of the 'Hitler and Henrys' curriculum and the number of TV shows, festivals, documentaries, films and exhibits on the same issues.

Stories are essential for history teaching. Yet a simple story, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) argued, is partial, incomplete and robs people of dignity. The single story that we have told ourselves in the history teaching community is partial, incomplete and robs the dignity of the West Indians who fought for the education of their sons and daughters and denies their sophisticated curriculum theorising in resisting racism in the curriculum, society and in the institutions that should have safeguarded them. The simple story has led us to adopt a useful, but also partial, analytic provided by Young, without really thinking through what it means within an education system that has not truly reconciled its history, and its present, with 'race' and racism from an epistemic and curricular point of view. It is this simplified narrative that has led to what Young (2016: 193) recognised as 'a form of sloganeering' regarding the use of his analytic and the powerful knowledge idea.

The simple story has become enmeshed and amplified with state power via pronouncements from the Department for Education and the official regulator, Ofsted (2018a, 2018b), inspecting schools on the quality of 'the curriculum' and the knowledge that are present. Rather than fall in line with a binary way of thinking used in inspections and debates between entrenched bloggers and social media commentators who seek rewards by aligning themselves with the current government agenda, the suggestion is that we should broaden and make more complex the single story. In his examination of the construction of narratives, Trouillot (1995: 26) argues that silences or absences enter the process of historical production at four crucial moments:

- the moment of fact creation (the making of sources);
- the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives);
- the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and
- the moment of retrospective significance.

The simplifications and misconceptions involved in the stories we tell ourselves about history teaching in England are certainly powerful, but if we really do seek to ally ourselves to the discipline of history, then we should review how the 'facts' of our story are created, where the archival

material comes from, how we construct the narrative in our professional discourse and texts and how we assign significance to events. This is not a simple form of revisionism, but part of the disciplinary training we profess to cleave to, where knowledge of the past is revisable and open to challenge with evidence and interpretations. Reviewing, or rewriting our past, and looking to a subject-specific future that is grounded in our particular historical, social, economic and political circumstances, is likely to be more convincing if we are able to admit that our narratives of the past have been partial and incomplete. History teaching can be empowering, but it can also be exclusionary. This should be the starting point for thinking about how we can move beyond the simple, clean, romantic narrative the history teaching community uses to describe its journey to the present. If we are truly interested in humanising the future for students in schools, we need to bring back that element in how we view and represent our own past. Maybe then, we will be able to achieve the powerful knowledge sought through the work of Young.

Notes

1 The General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) is an externally set and assessed examination that students in England usually sit at the age of 16.

2 Key Stage 3 is the first phase of secondary school education in England that usually spans Years 7–9 (that is, students aged 11–14).

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11

Powerful knowledge or the powers of knowledge: A dialogue with history educators

Michael Young

Introduction

In bringing together the contributions to the 2017 British Educational Research Association (BERA) symposium on history education and powerful knowledge for this book, the editor, Arthur Chapman, asked me to extend the comments I made at the symposium into a concluding chapter. When I thought about what might be appropriate, two issues struck me. The first was how diverse the chapters were in topic and approach and that this was an undoubted strength of the book. Second, this diversity did not make it easy to do justice to each contribution and at the same time give some coherence to a concluding chapter. As an alternative I suggested that Arthur asked the contributors to pose questions to me about the concept of 'powerful knowledge' that arose from their research and teaching. This chapter is the result. Hopefully, history education researchers, those researching the teaching of other school subjects and sociologists of education with an interest in the curriculum who read this book will take forward some of the issues it raises and might want to continue the dialogue.

Before engaging with the specific questions addressed to me as a sociologist that were raised by the other contributors, I want to consider the relationship between an academic discipline (in this case, sociology of education) and the work of those involved in preparing teachers of a specialist academic subject for secondary schools. The BERA symposium on which the book is based was a rare case of collaboration across the

divide that has characterised educational studies as a university-based field of study and research. I am referring to the divide between what used to be called the foundation disciplines of education and what in England and many Anglophone countries is referred to as 'subject methods' and in the rest of Europe is known as specialist didactics.[1] The foundation disciplines are usually taken to be sociology, history, philosophy and psychology of education. In considering this divide and the boundaries on which it has been based historically, I will draw on my experience as a member of staff of the UCL Institute of Education and comment on the extent to which there are signs of the divide becoming less significant, especially in the case of history, and the possibilities that this offers. My specialist field, the sociology of the curriculum, is little more than 40 years old, and only very recently have some of us recognised that it will remain a narrow field and of little impact on practice unless we collaborate with those researching the different specialist subjects of the school curriculum.[2]

It is worth asking, in general and in the particular case of history as a school subject, on what grounds can sociology, philosophy and history claim to be the 'foundation' of research. Might not history and other specialist subjects develop their own theories that arise from reflection on the practice of teaching their particular subject? This is the assumption that much research on subject teaching has relied on. However, implicitly and often explicitly, curriculum theory does rely on what might be called 'foundational assumptions' – the philosophy of Paul Hirst (2010) and that of John Dewey (1915) in the case of the English and American traditions. Sociology and history have served more as the basis of critique rather than the foundation of alternative theories of subject teaching. My own view and, I take it, the largely shared view of the contributors to this book is slightly different. First, reflection on and criticism of subject teaching is itself a theoretical activity removed from the activity of teaching. Furthermore, it is dependent on combining a focus on the everyday practice of subject teachers and the concepts developed by disciplines concerned with the aspects of professional practice that are not specific to particular subjects. The concept of powerful knowledge developed initially within the sociology of education is one such concept, but, as the chapters in this book illustrate, the relationship between the two can be more of a two-way process and less of one as the 'foundation' of the other. I shall argue that research that is specifically focused on the teaching of history can and should contribute to the broader field of the sociology of the curriculum. What follows from this view is that research on a topic like history teaching needs an institutional structure in the

university that brings these two fields together rather than arrangements that – as in the past and, still to some extent – discourage this relationship.

I will return to this issue later in this chapter. The comment I will make here is that once a topic such as 'teaching a subject' is institutionalised for the purposes of teaching and research, it becomes shaped by the wider divisions in the education system and society. One such division is that between theory and practice and more broadly mental and manual labour and the hierarchical assumptions associated with them. Teaching, and not specifically history teaching, has been understood as a practice which could be learned 'on the job' as if it was a craft – the only difference being that unlike other crafts, it recruited graduates, at least for selective schools following an academic curriculum. This implied that teachers required no 'theoretical' understanding of their practice – unlike professions like law and medicine.[3] Johan Muller and I have made the counter-argument that like any profession, teaching is a practice that is distinct from crafts in depending on knowledge that is not implicit in practice (Young and Muller, 2014). Here I note that this book can be seen as an example of an attempt to break down and reformulate the theory/practice division and its institutional basis, at least in the case of history teaching. It must be judged therefore by assessing the extent to which it is successful in this aim. From the point of view of a sociologist who is not a specialist in history education, I want to make the case that it is a contribution to the sociology of the curriculum that up to now has been characterised by considerable theoretical development but rather less concern with empirical enquiries into the teaching of specific subjects.

In drawing on a concept (powerful knowledge) from one of the 'foundation disciplines' (the sociology of education) these studies by history teacher educators serve a number of purposes:

- They provide a valuable empirical example of the contribution and limitations of the concept in the case of a particular subject.
- They open up new questions of concern to those researching and teaching future teachers as well to history teachers themselves.
- They provide a unique comment on the claim that a discipline such as sociology can be foundational for enquiries into the activity of teaching a specific subject – in this case, history.

One of the issues that concerned me in suggesting to the editor a dialogic type of structure for this chapter was to avoid focusing solely on the *application* of a concept from sociology to the teaching of history as a practical activity. I also wanted to consider the lessons for sociologists of

education and their efforts to develop a theory of subject teaching – and the particular example of the concept of powerful knowledge – that can be learned from the example of history teaching.[4] In other words, I do not want to assume the relationship between sociology of education and history teaching is necessarily hierarchical or that the other authors in this book are merely 'applying' the former to the practical activity of teaching future history teachers. I will suggest that the quite specific findings of history education researchers shed light on the more general task of understanding how the knowledge developed by specialists becomes part of the consciousness of students, not only in the field of history. Whatever the limitations are of the widely used concept of transmission to refer to the role of schools and their teachers, how specialist knowledge in any field becomes part of the consciousness of students remains one of the most central questions for educational research.

The assumption of a hierarchy between foundation discipline researchers, as producers of 'theory', and school subject specialists such as history teachers, as those who apply this theory to the practice of teaching, was accepted, largely uncritically when I joined the Institute of Education (IOE) in the late 1960s.[5] If there had been an enquiry at the time, it is probable that it would have reported that few teacher educators relied on this 'theory' in any detail and even fewer discipline specialists expected their theories to be applied. The more likely resource for teacher educators would have been their prior experience of being a school teacher. This prior experience was a significant criterion for appointing staff – even those joining foundation discipline departments who had a very limited role in how students transformed their disciplinary knowledge into subject knowledge.[6] This hierarchy was expressed not only in the departmental structure of the Institute, but in less explicit ways such as in pathways to promotion. At the time, there were no professors, few higher degree students, and, with exceptions such as the English Department, very little research in the subject method departments, and discipline specialists saw themselves contributing to their parent discipline, at least in the case of sociologists of education, as much if not more than to the practical role of teachers. Perhaps of even more significance, there was little professional interaction between members of staff in the two types of department. I remember my initial surprise when I first joined the IOE as Lecturer in Sociology of Education, that, despite my five years of teaching chemistry in schools and two years as Head of a secondary school science department, I had no contact of any kind with the staff in the science education departments who trained future science teachers. The division between theory and practice

was clear for staff in both types of departments and I, as a somewhat atypical case of someone with degrees in a school subject (science) and a foundation discipline (sociology), soon learned to overcome my surprise.

Apart from isolated experiments such as the 'experimental course', the theory/practice division between discipline and subject method departments was not seriously challenged until the 1970s and 80s, with the notable exception of James Britton and his colleagues in the Department of English.[7] Britton became nationally and internationally recognised, not only by those involved in the teaching of English but more broadly as an educational theorist who was known for his interpretations of Vygotsky and Langer (Britton, 1973). Since when his work became widely recognised across educational studies here and abroad. Innovative work theorising the subject curriculum was also taking place in the history methods team at the IOE. This work was associated with the leadership of W. H. Burston – whose *Principles of History Teaching* was first published in 1963. A number of important history methods publications were produced in the IOE History Department including Burston and Green (1962)'s *Handbook for History Teachers*. Burston encouraged dialogue between history education and the philosophy of history – notably in the work of philosophers of history such as W. H. Walsh, who contributed to Burston and Thompson (1967)'s edited collection *Studies in the Nature and Teaching of History*. Burston also encouraged research into cognitive aspects of learning history – work taken forward by Thompson and his master's students.[8] Subsequent research in the IOE history methods team combined both these areas of focus and resulted in publications focusing on the aims and nature of history education and in work on children's thinking in history, and the philosophy of history education (Dickinson and Lee, 1978; Dickinson *et al*., 1984). This work culminated in the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-funded project CHATA (Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches), led to the foundation, in 1995, of the *International Review of History Education*, still edited within the history team, and to work for the American National Academy of Sciences How Students Learn project (much of the history publication – for example, Lee, 2005 – was authored by members of the IOE team).[9] By the 1990s, the work of the history team – and notably of Peter Lee – was internationally influential and is central to accounts of the development of the field of history education research internationally (Wineburg, 2001; Lévesque and Clark, 2018).

The impact of the IOE's departmental hierarchy was slightly different in the cases of the work in English and history. Despite the work

of both becoming widely respected internationally, neither Britton nor Lee was promoted to Professor at the institute.[10] The significant difference in their careers was that while Britton's work became known far beyond his specialist field of English teaching, Lee and his colleagues' research was little acknowledged in the IOE beyond those specialising in the teaching of history, despite its theoretical relevance being far from restricted to history.

It was not until several decades after Lee and his colleagues began their research, that some of us in the sociology of education, influenced by Bernstein's later papers on the curriculum (Bernstein, 1996, 1999, 2000), became aware of the importance of this work and became interested in what turned out to be the fundamental difference between school and everyday knowledge. Furthermore, it was not until after Lee retired that we became aware that these issues, which we assumed were the product of original thinking in our discipline, had for some years been central, not only to the work of Lee and his colleagues, but to the history education research community.

It was not until I read Christine Counsell (2011) in *The Curriculum Journal* that I recognised that there was nothing new about a concept like powerful knowledge for many history education researchers, even though they had not used the specific term. What was distinctive about the research on history teaching that was led by Lee was that it raised the question of 'knowledge' not as general theoretical issue, but as a problem facing teachers every day of their professional lives. The implications of his work were that teachers needed to understand what acquiring subject knowledge meant as a pedagogic and professional issue as well as a theoretical issue if their students were to become what he referred to as 'historically literate' (Lee, 2011). It was 'becoming literate' in the broadest sense that history education researchers such as Counsell, building on the earlier work of Lee and his colleagues, demonstrated was a possibility for *all* students. This was what David Lambert and I were trying to express by the idea of 'powerful knowledge for all' (Young, 2014).

The lesson that it is important to draw from the example of history, and that is brought out clearly in the chapters of this book, is that progress in the sociology of the curriculum depends as much on the subject-specific insights of research on individual subjects, as it does on any sociological theory of subject knowledge as 'powerful'. Lee's argument can be put in another way and directed to teachers of all subjects: becoming 'literate' in a subject involves students *acquiring the powers of the knowledge* of that subject. It may also mean that both teachers and their students will be less likely to see this as calling for just memorisation.

To return to my account of the academic structure of the IOE when I joined the staff, (and to some extent that of most other university education faculties), it was this that prevented, or at least, did not encourage the ideas developed by Lee and his colleagues to become part of the wider educational debates about the curriculum. It was a personal shock to me as a colleague of Peter's for over 30 years, when I realised that I had never seen the relevance of his work to my own. Undoubtedly, the idea of powerful knowledge which is discussed in this book has influenced research in geography (for example, Lambert, 2017) and history (for example, Counsell *et al.*, 2016) as school subjects. Increasingly, it has captured the imagination of other subject specialists and has begun to extend the appropriateness of academic subjects beyond their historical links with pupils identified as 'academic', most of whom are found in grammar and elite fee-paying schools. Teachers of other academic subjects and researchers based in university faculties have been able to draw on the ideas of history educators and cross the boundaries between different subjects that had restricted the wider impact of the work of Lee and his colleagues. This broadening of the role and remit of history education research is more explicit in some chapters of this book than others – in particular, it is worth mentioning Catherine McCrory's Chapter 3 in this book, which draws on the philosophy of mind (Brandom, 2000) and not on the sociology of knowledge. However, it raises some questions about the concept of powerful knowledge itself. It is also worth mentioning the international research group on subject teaching at the IOE (the Subject Specialism Research Group, or SSRG) that was led originally by, David Lambert, Arthur Chapman and Nicky Platt (SSRG, n.d.).

School subject specialists, sociologists and philosophers are beginning to read each other's work, and productive possibilities for collaboration and comparison are emerging. A question that continues to puzzle me, which has implications for all subjects, is why is it that geography educators (for example, Lambert, 2014) tend to focus more on curriculum content and the question 'what is geographical knowledge?', whereas historians tend to focus on pedagogy.[11] McCrory's chapter in this volume hints at an answer. Another question is why sociological ideas about knowledge seem to appeal to humanities teachers more than those who teach mathematics, the natural sciences and foreign languages. This is despite the assumption that all knowledge, as a human product, is necessarily social in origin. Social in this context means produced by groups of researchers and scholars who share methods and questions.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore more than briefly the wider implications of the lessons we can draw from the example of history education research. Since the early work of Britton and Lee and their colleagues from the 1970s onwards, the clear hierarchies between method and foundation studies that I have outlined have become blurred significantly. Research projects and professors are both spread far more widely at the IOE, and departments are based as much on administrative as on disciplinary criteria (Furlong and Lawn, 2010). This has had potentially positive outcomes such as this book, which has been an opportunity to report on how researchers in history education have drawn on sociological ideas and shown the potential of sociology for exploring pedagogic issues of concern to history teachers. However, other examples of discipline–method collaboration remain rare, and this raises the broader question of how knowledge in the social sciences and humanities progresses.[12] One way is through the influence of original thinkers such as Bernstein, Bourdieu and much earlier, Durkheim. The problem those of us working in sociology of education face is that it is not clear who the successors to Bernstein in education will be, or what the current problems are that compare with the changes in the wider society that inspired their work. In Bernstein's case it was the persistence of social class inequalities after World War II, despite the expansion of mass secondary education. Collaborative research between different disciplines and fields depends not only on the capacity of researchers to resist the pressures for short-term goals, but on their ability to combine conceptual rigour of their own traditions with the risks of working with traditions with which they are unfamiliar.

It is with these issues in mind and their possible implications for the future of research involving history educators and sociologists that I come to the questions about powerful knowledge that were raised by other contributors to this book.

The questions

Q.1 Can you summarise the meaning of powerful knowledge?

Powerful knowledge was introduced by sociologists of education in two contexts almost simultaneously. One was in an article by Leesa Wheelahan (2007) in which she developed the concept from a critique of the

competence-based curriculum in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) which denies students access to the knowledge that takes them beyond their experience. For her powerful knowledge is represented by academic disciplines. At a similar time, I gave a talk at the IOE which referred to powerful knowledge with a slightly different and broader meaning. I contrasted it with the idea of 'knowledge of the powerful' as a pair of concepts which pointed in different directions for research on the curriculum in the sociology of education. I argued that 'knowledge of the powerful' had been the dominant view of the curriculum in sociology of education and could be traced back to my book *Knowledge and Control* (Young, 1971). It focused on how the curriculum represented the interests of those who had the power to make decisions. In contrast I proposed that sociology of education should focus on powerful knowledge – in other words, the structure of knowledge in the curriculum. Powerful knowledge was quickly separated from 'knowledge of the powerful' and became a curriculum principle (Young, 2014). This had the effect of avoiding the extent to which any curriculum is not only an *organisation of knowledge* but an *organisation of resources* – human and material (Young, 2020). I will return later to the consequence of this neglect of the resource base of curricula. At this point I will summarise the main features of powerful knowledge as a curriculum principle:

- There is 'better knowledge' in different fields that is referred to as powerful knowledge.
- All students, not just those identified as having 'academic ability' have the right to acquire this knowledge during their schooling. [This makes clear that powerful knowledge is better seen as a vision of a potential curriculum for all students that all schools should have as their goal. It is not a principle for immediate application. This has not always been clear to schools and has caused some problems when they attempt to introduce what is often termed a 'knowledge-led' curriculum. I develop this point in relation to later questions.]
- This 'better' or 'powerful' knowledge is specialised and takes the form of academic subjects in which knowledge is sequenced and selected in a school's curriculum.
- It is a curriculum based on – and aims to be consistent with – the disciplines where new knowledge is produced in the universities.
- The concept of powerful knowledge implies a curriculum based on two types of boundaries:

- those between subjects within the curriculum; and
- those between subject-based knowledge of the curriculum and the everyday knowledge that all children acquire through the experience of growing up before they come to school and during their school years. [For teachers this everyday knowledge of pupils is not to be dismissed; it is a resource they rely on – and that their pupils rely on – in engaging with subject knowledge. However, it is not part of a curriculum that represents the professional aims of a school.]

- These boundaries are often seen as alienating and limiting learning. In contrast, the concept of powerful knowledge treats them as potentially important structures which enable students to build their identities as learners and become 'acquirers of knowledge'.
- Unlike the knowledge that students acquire spontaneously as they grow up, powerful knowledge has to be acquired voluntarily by students at school.
- Acquiring powerful knowledge relies on the specialist knowledge of teachers and not only on the experience of pupils.
- To varying degrees, which largely reflect differences in the social background of their parents, the differences between everyday and subject knowledge represent a rupture between school and family life for pupils. This rupturing between school and non-school knowledge has a number of consequences:

  - it poses the pedagogic and professional problems all teachers face; and
  - it explains why, historically, some pupils become labelled as 'less able' or having low ability; however, rather than directing these pupils to courses where this rupture is less, powerful knowledge as a curriculum principle calls on schools as far as they can to explore ways of enabling these pupils to acquire subject knowledge even if this requires a longer programme and giving pupils more individual attention.

Q.2 What problems was the concept of powerful knowledge developed to solve?

Powerful knowledge was originally introduced to argue that a subject-based curriculum was the right of all pupils. In our book *Knowledge*

and the Future School (Young and Lambert, 2014), David Lambert and I treated it as a curriculum principle that separated the educational value of academic subjects for all students from their association with selective and fee-paying schools. It has been used in a somewhat similar way by government and curriculum leaders in schools to criticise how academic subjects were denied to a substantial section of pupils on the grounds that such pupils would benefit more from a non-academic curriculum. It was this apparent similarity with government policy that laid the concept open to radical critics from the left (Ball, 2017). Our mistake was not to emphasise, as indicated in my previous answer, that any curriculum has both a conceptual basis (in academic subjects) and a resource basis (in the availability of the necessary human resources of well-qualified subject teachers and the appropriate material resources such as equipment and specialised accommodation). A powerful knowledge-based curriculum is also a high resource curriculum, and often, the necessary resources are not found in state-maintained schools. It is also the case that many state-maintained schools do not have the necessary support from parents on which a powerful knowledge-based curriculum depends.

Q.3 How pleased are you with the work that the concept powerful knowledge has done? Has it helped to move conversations in the direction that you hoped? Do you have reservations about some of the ways in which the concept has been used or been understood?

I think, on reflection, despite its association with social justice and the idea of 'knowledge for all', that there were fundamental weaknesses in the concept of powerful knowledge that we should have been more aware of when it moved from being an analytical focus for sociology of education to being a curriculum concept. I touched on these weaknesses in the previous answer. I elaborate them further here.

These weaknesses laid it open to criticisms by many in education and for some the idea of powerful knowledge has been seen (however unintentionally) as supporting the elitist and conservative policies of successive governments. These weaknesses are of two kinds – the first is that it implied a concept of curriculum that focuses solely on its conceptual basis in academic subjects and neglects that a curriculum and its subjects are also forms of social organisation formed by teachers

with subject specialisms and associated with researchers in the different disciplines in universities. This means that a curriculum based on powerful knowledge is not just a body of knowledge content but a particular distribution of resources – human and material. Many state-maintained schools adopting a 'knowledge-rich' curriculum lack the resources – for instance the specialist staff and facilities – to make such a curriculum a reality for all pupils. It is important that in future we make explicit that any curriculum involves both a conceptual basis and a resource basis. A curriculum based on powerful knowledge, or a knowledge-rich curriculum, is also a resource-rich curriculum of the kind rarely found outside the fee-paying and selective schooling sectors. A poorly resourced school attempting to introduce a knowledge-rich curriculum is going to face insuperable problems, even if it improves its performance ranking.

The second weakness of the concept is the assumption that the curriculum of a school can be defined by how it stipulates knowledge. The stipulation of knowledge contents is a necessary component of a curriculum – for individual schools and nationally. However, it neglects the extent and way that a curriculum is more than the stipulation of knowledge – it is knowledge that can become part of the 'consciousness of pupils'. In other words, a curriculum represents a body of knowledge with purposes that are beyond its content. Although a curriculum is distinct analytically from the pedagogic relations teachers develop with their students, it cannot be separated from them without becoming an inert body of knowledge that, at best, students will only memorise and regurgitate. For a curriculum to neglect its purpose of transforming the consciousness of students is to allow the acquisition of knowledge to be little more than memorisation.

Q.4 Is there a future for powerful knowledge in English state schools and, if yes, what are the preconditions for it to be realised?

Access to 'powerful knowledge for all' is best understood as a goal and in principle a vision for every school in a democracy and therefore it can inform the professional aims of all teachers. However, it represents a vision and a set of aims not a principle that can be immediately applied in existing circumstances. Improvements in the progress of students in accessing knowledge are inevitably incremental and students will suffer if this is not recognised.

In most capitalist countries like England, knowledge is unequally distributed in society. It follows that achieving the long-term aim of all students having access to powerful knowledge will be a political struggle outside the school to expand and redistribute the resources devoted to education – especially those devoted to the education of teachers – as well as an internal struggle to improve learning and access to knowledge. Beyond what teachers can do in their professional role, with the resources available to them, remains the political struggle for a more equal society which they may or may not be committed to or involved in. These two struggles are not separate.

Q.5 Does the concept of powerful knowledge differ from notions of cultural literacy of the kind developed by thinkers like E. D. Hirsch? If yes, in what ways?

Yes. E. D. Hirsch was Professor of Literature at the University of Virginia in the USA and concerned about the ignorance of his undergraduate students of what he saw as the common knowledge that all young people should be familiar with in a democracy. This was why his first book on education, *Cultural Literacy* (Hirsch, 1988), was subtitled '*What every American needs to know*'. This slogan became part of the programme of a growing number of charter schools in the USA and was picked up by right-wing Think Tank, Civitas in England as 'what your child needs to know' (Core Knowledge UK, 2014). It was not based on any analysis of the curriculum, but drew on Hirsch's experience, and pointed to the failure of the American public school system. Hirsch is a Democrat, on the Left in American terms. I don't imagine he ever thought he was offering a simple version of a knowledge-led curriculum that would be adopted as policy advice for a right-wing Conservative government. If his aim was to extend the understanding of a wider section of the school population, then his popularity and the association between his books and educational ideas implicit in the concept of powerful knowledge has been unhelpful, except at the level of critique. American students do not lack 'common knowledge'; they have acquired it or not, in growing up. What they lack is the subject-based knowledge that can give meaning to the 'common knowledge' that Hirsch thinks is important. His prescriptions, if understood literally, inevitably lead not to common knowledge, but to memorisation and not understanding.

Q.6 Does knowledge have differing degrees of power in different subjects, would you say? Does powerful knowledge mean different things in history and in chemistry, for example?

I find the concept of 'powers of knowledge' useful. It draws on the work of Bernstein who distinguished two forms of knowledge on which an academic curriculum is based – he refers to them as *knowledge structures*, vertical and horizontal (sometimes he uses the term segmented) (Bernstein, 1999). He presents them as a dichotomy. However, I think it is more useful to think of them as ideal types of knowledge on a continuum. Bernstein's continuum refers to the ways in which knowledge progresses or how new knowledge is formed. At the vertical end of the continuum is knowledge in the natural sciences where knowledge progresses as a result of research by becoming more abstract and leading to broader generalisations. A good example in physics is Einstein's theory of general relativity. It is a generalisation of Newton's laws of motion and gravity and applies to all we know about the universe and its stars and planets of which we are a part. In contrast, Newton's laws, although he was not aware of it, make accurate predictions about motion on or near the surface of the Earth but not in the wider context of the universe. In contrast the horizontal end of the continuum describes knowledge in the arts and humanities which changes but does not progress to more general or abstract forms. For example, Debussy is not more abstract than Bach, or Picasso more abstract than Michelangelo, nor are they the basis for more or less generalisation; they construct music and painting from different sets of assumptions, but unlike in physics, one cannot be derived from the other as a special case. However, what the two types of knowledge structure have in common is that they are distinct from everyday knowledge that students bring to school. Whereas everyday knowledge is based on experience and acquired in the course of growing up, or in the case of adults, living, the arts and humanities are based to a considerable extent on engaging with the codification of earlier specialists. For example, since the days of alchemy and early chemists like Lavoisier and Priestley, chemistry as a university discipline has become increasingly codified and its concepts made more precise and developed though experiment and observation, and where possible, are expressed mathematically. History and literature are also codified as disciplines and school subjects. However, their concepts are

invariably less precise and subject to widespread debate within the discipline and in the school subject. Both arts and sciences maintain the boundaries within which debate takes place through specialist journals and debates. However, whereas the concepts of chemistry have become almost completely separated from everyday language and thinking, the concepts of literature and history are far less insulated from everyday concepts.

The social sciences can also be represented on the vertical/horizontal continuum. They are characterised by sharp internal debates as to whether they should, like much economics, psychology and linguistics, model themselves on vertical knowledge structures and attempt to mathematicise their concepts and methods. A good example is the contrast between much mathematical economics and the poverty research of the recent Nobel Prize winners.[13] These differences I would argue stem from the nature of the phenomena they are concerned with rather than their methods and this is also true of the different powers that access to them offers.

A focus on the 'powers of knowledge' shifts the curriculum debate from comparing different forms of knowledge to analysing the 'powers' that different school subjects give access to. For example, literature and history have the capability to strengthen the capacity of students to empathise with others and imagine new possibilities. In studying the past and different forms of literature, they have the 'power' to inspire the imagination in a way that the sciences rarely do.

Q.7 You and Johan Muller acknowledged that there are different forms of power associated with different forms of specialised knowledge (Young and Muller, 2014). What might be the particular form of power associated with history?

This is not really a question for a sociologist to answer! That said, I am impressed with Peter Lee's concept of historical consciousness (or as he preferred to refer to it, 'historical literacy') and the importance of distinguishing this from a student's personal and often unreflective sense of the past – a kind of everyday history shaped by individual biography (Lee, 2011). Whereas the former is located, at least in part in the community of historians and their debates and research and its findings, the latter is largely limited to a person's experience or that of the community or social class of which she/he is a member. We live always in history, but it is easy to forget. An historical consciousness enables us to see similarities and

differences between the present and the past, and for all, especially those in positions of power to learn from past mistakes.

Q.8 A number of schools are claiming they are teaching a knowledge-rich curriculum – what do you understand by this term and how far does it matter what substantive content teachers select, if they are approaching teaching history as a discipline?

My answer relates to one of my earlier responses. A knowledge-rich curriculum usually implies that content is stipulated in terms of knowledge content and this is content derived from (the sociological term is recontextualised) its parent discipline. In the case of history this has been usefully summarised by Counsell (2018) as referring to *substantive* and *disciplinary* knowledge. As an outsider to and non-expert about history I would say three things about the selection of content:

- Any substantive claims must be supported by what evidence is available and accessible.
- Content selection in a subject is not something that sociological research can or should prescribe. The link between knowledge selection and a sociological approach to knowledge is fruitfully discussed by Yates in a number of publications (see, for example, Yates *et al*., 2018).
- In history, students have to learn that findings can be reliable but not certain. They also have to learn to take responsibility for their arguments even when their knowledge is not certain.

Q.9 You have stated that powerful knowledge can refer to knowledge of substantive concepts, for example chemistry's concepts, like periodicity and valency, and those of sociology, like solidarity and social class. However, what is history's contribution in this respect given that so many of its concepts are not unique to history and instead are common to other social or human sciences?

For a subject or discipline to have concepts that are not unique to it is not something peculiar to history. Even the natural sciences have non-unique concepts like molecular, and atomic which are not restricted to chemistry and equilibrium and momentum which are not restricted

to physics – to give two examples. The difference is the permeability of many concepts between everyday and disciplinary usage that is much more widespread in history and the social sciences. Many substantive concepts cut across history and everyday usage. The 'power' of historical concepts lies not, as in the sciences, in their ability to replace everyday concepts, but in their use to challenge conventional views of the past and present and contribute to a student becoming what Lee referred to as 'historically literate' (Lee, 2011). Without the opportunity to acquire historical concepts, a student's intellectual capacity can be impoverished; they may be unable to make the best decisions for shaping their future because futures are always extrapolations from the present and the present always has an embedded past.

Q.10 Does the power of historical knowledge lie in substantive historical concepts, for example such concepts as 'demesne' or 'shogun', on the one hand, or 'Industrial Revolution' and 'Renaissance' on the other? Is it that history gives rise to generalised insights into the human predicament, for example into the fact that social and cultural practices are changeable and that none are permanent? Alternatively, is the power of history more procedural than substantive – and a matter of providing concepts that can empower us to make sense of time, change, and so on?

I have only time and space for a preliminary answer here and inevitably it is personal as much as sociological. My view is that all disciplines – and hence any subject such as history that draws on disciplinary research – have a power because they represent the nearest to the truth that we have reached in that field. This does not mean that the truth and even the terms for reaching it are not a source of debate. The 'truth' of history, for example, separates it from the truth of journalism in a number of its characteristics:

- its evidence and its claims to objectivity;
- its concepts which illuminate and are illuminated by the cases it describes;
- the authority in which any particular historical account is located in the historians' community of enquirers; and
- its recognition that truth is always a 'truth of probabilities' which can be undermined by new evidence or arguments.

Again, as an outsider to history, I would imagine that historical accounts depend on being able to find and access resources that journalists would not have the time or knowledge to draw on.

Q.11 While the concept of powerful knowledge might serve as a guide to curriculum construction in hierarchical subjects such as a science, how can it guide curricular choices in a subject such as history? An understanding of historical method can be seen as conferring power (in that it equips learners to ask and answer their own historical questions) but how can the power of knowledge of particular topics (that is, the substantive content) be judged except in relation to the purposes that such knowledge is intended to serve? Often claims are made about the value of teaching one topic because of its relationship to others to be taught later – thus creating a kind of hierarchy – but that merely defers the need to answer the question. Might claims that they are teaching powerful knowledge or knowledge-rich curricula be allowing teachers to ignore more important questions about those purposes?

I think this question over-emphasises the claims and importance of the concept powerful knowledge. The interesting thing is that more than any other subject a significant group of history educators were working with the precepts of the idea that history could be powerful knowledge long before the concept itself was introduced by sociologists of education. This struck me clearly in listening to the interview with Lee and Ashby conducted as part of the research into the history of history teaching conducted by The History in Education Project (Lee and Ashby, 2009). It is as if powerful knowledge was picked up and engaged with by historians because it offered the justification for their approach and a curriculum for all students based on academic subjects. It acknowledged an approach to the curriculum that in a way was appropriate to history which history educators such as Lee and Ashby had already developed and adopted. My comment is that, despite the breakthrough by history educators, their ideas might have benefited other subjects in ways appropriate to them. However, this was not felt to be a priority – at least for Lee and Ashby – or maybe they felt it was beyond their field of expertise. Like researchers in other subjects, those in history education have perhaps been over-insular vis-à-vis other subjects. In concentrating on history, they have perhaps treated its evidence and problems as only

their problems. History educators have much to teach other subject specialists, not the least, social scientists!

It is true that certain schools claim that they are teaching powerful knowledge. However, this may easily limit their ability to reflect on how they are doing this and what knowledge they are selecting. This reflects: (a) their misunderstanding of the concept; and (b) our failure, as sociologists of education, to be specific enough about our definition of the concept and its role. I discussed this briefly in an earlier response. Here I will add one further point. Sociology of education claims expertise in the structure of the curriculum, the relations between subjects, and between them and a student's everyday knowledge. However, it has no expertise in the content of history, chemistry or music – they themselves rely on the knowledge of specialist teachers and researchers in each subject.

Q.12 Although powerful knowledge is not intended to solve the problems of implementing a curriculum, the issue is central to subject educators. Disciplinary, specialised knowledge, as we know, is dynamic, changeable, and has systems of testing and criticism. The school's task is more about reproducing than producing knowledge and can lack this epistemic infrastructure. In the absence of a functional epistemic community, powerful knowledge might tend to degenerate into taken-for-granted 'stuff' and a knowledge-driven curriculum might be reinterpreted as simply a matter of content delivery. Does powerful knowledge need to become as much about mentalities and ways of organising the work the schools do as about the quality of knowledge discourses?

A very brief response – perhaps history educators can best avoid the worries this question expresses by giving more attention to the wider context in which history teachers work. This context is changing dramatically in ways we understand little – history educators are justifiably an impressive community – does this lay them open to complacency or provide a bulwark against it?

I think this question highlights a problem which echoes my concern about the current reforms of the Ofsted Inspection Framework (2019). Ofsted are looking for evidence of a school improving the 'cultural capital' of pupils. Cultural capital, a concept first introduced

by Bourdieu, was not about the curriculum – but about the whole process by which social inequalities are reproduced and maintained, including the curriculum. Ofsted do not acknowledge that the curriculum on its own is a very small part of this process. That seems to be what the question is saying – too big a focus on what the curriculum can do misses the point – one ends up blaming the teachers for what is beyond them. The danger of mis-using the underlying idea behind powerful knowledge, and its promotion by Nick Gibb, as Schools Minister,[14] is that it pulls the curriculum out of its context rather than locates it in its context (Young, 2019).

Q.13 Powerful knowledge is often associated with challenging socio-economic inequality by equalising access to powerful ways of understanding the world. What about other forms of inequality, however? What role might race and gender play in the formulation of what powerful knowledge is?

This develops from my response to the last question. The statement is overclaiming for the curriculum and for powerful knowledge. The focus on social class in history and sociology is justified because the social class dimensions of inequality are most significant in a capitalist society but do not operate separately from race and gender. Often what are claimed to be race issues turn out to be, as much or more, social class issues. I imagine a historian would have much to say about this in relation to slavery.

There is a paper attacking my work from a post-colonial perspective – the authors argue that I focus on the 'shine' (of specialised disciplinary knowledge) and not the 'shadow' (colonialism and slavery) (Rudolph *et al*., 2018). My reservation about these criticisms is that although they raise important political issues, from the perspective of education they have done little more than shift the argument back from powerful knowledge to 'knowledge of the powerful'. However, at least in relation to social class, this is where we started in sociology of education in the 1970s. Like those analyses, they shift the focus to issues external to the curriculum but say little about the curriculum's implications. There is a long tradition of sociology of education that focuses on power and not explicitly on the curriculum. We have to find a way of combining the two analyses, I agree.

Q.14 Many indigenous peoples who have experienced the trauma of colonisation are suspicious of Western knowledge frameworks and some see powerful knowledge as yet another form of deficit theorising. What does powerful knowledge have to contribute to indigenous understandings of the past that are often closely connected to land and place and sceptical of linear and universal notions of time?

The suspicion of Western knowledge frameworks by indigenous movements is understandable. However, to suggest that they necessarily imply the idea of children being in deficit is to misconstrue the problem. No child is born with deficits unless they are brain-damaged and in that case the issue is not specific to indigenous children and is an issue for how they are treated and in some cases an issue for medical research. All babies are born with capacities as well as deficits; however, notwithstanding these capacities they can do little beyond expressing the desire for food. However, their capacities as human beings born into families, cultures and communities enable them to develop into adult citizens. We do not know to what extent this development, if at all, is inherited or how this inheritance is distributed. The issue of their development is not specific to children from indigenous communities. In a developed society like the UK, children are born into families and communities in a society in which opportunities for development are unevenly distributed. The culture of some families and communities is far more congruent with the opportunities offered by schools with their emphasis on context-independent knowledge. The unevenness of this disjunction is one facet of an unequal society. The weak congruence between the cultures of home and school is not specific to indigenous communities.

The purpose of schooling is not to impose one culture on children but to be the opportunity for them to access knowledge – physics or history, for example – that is reaching for the universal. In other words, it is knowledge shared by humanity – unambiguously in the sciences and more ambiguously in the humanities. This access is unevenly distributed, whether or not a child is born into an indigenous community. Powerful knowledge if you live in South Africa, where there are 11 indigenous languages, is inescapably tied to the English language which is likely to be the language of instruction beyond primary school. However, indigenous cultures are a resource for their communities in two senses.

One is to enable children as they grow up to learn to value their own culture and history in its struggle with colonialism which will be quite specific to each community. The second is as a resource for engaging with the dominant culture and taking them beyond it to become not only citizens of their country but citizens of the world with all its opportunities and divisions. Teachers need to understand the history of these communities if they are to engage with their children and enable them to make choices. For example, do they want to remain in the community of their birth or build new types of community that integrate them with modernity? Without the cultural resources of schooling, which is first and foremost an institution of modernity and universality, they will be trapped with no choices.

Conclusions

A major aim of this book has been to demonstrate how researchers in history teaching have drawn on recent ideas in the sociology of education, and in particular the concept of powerful knowledge, and in doing so have contributed not only to their professional speciality but to the broader field of sociology of curriculum. In this conclusion I want to draw on the example of research on history as a school subject, returning to the broader theme that I touched on earlier – the relationship between sociology of education as a 'foundation discipline' and research on the teaching of school subjects.

I made two arguments. One was that, on the evidence of the other chapters of this book, teacher educators, at least in history, were developing an approach to subject knowledge that was close to the idea developed by sociologists of education, but in the case of a specific subject. My second argument was that such findings provided a necessary complement to the work of sociologists of the curriculum that lacked the specialist knowledge of specific school subjects.

This suggested to me that the examples might not be specific to history but provide a model for all subjects of the school curriculum, something which, with its lack of knowledge of specific school subjects, sociology of the curriculum had not achieved. However, the examples of research on history as a school subject also raise a much deeper question, both for educational research and for the organisation of educational studies in the university, and for the preparation of teachers as future members of a profession.

To put it more sharply, the question that it raises is about the nature of teaching as a profession. Are teachers a profession with a practice that is shaped by their knowledge, not only of their subject but of the process of its transmission? Or to paraphrase former Secretary of State, Michael Gove (2010, are they more like graduate apprentices – acquiring skills from the master craftsmen and women of their trade? It is not in any way to belittle crafts, to say that the selection, organisation and transmission of knowledge together with motivating and encouraging students to become members of the community of subject specialists is of a quite different order to that of acquiring the skills demanded by a someone who works on metal or wood. If teaching is a profession, it must be associated with a body of knowledge, specific to each subject and associated with a set of shared values and norms. The professional knowledge of a teacher involves a range of skills, although these are never just practical or technical answers to 'how?' questions. They also involve judgements about 'why?' for which there are no 'right' answers, and which involve an interrogation of what knowledge a student teacher has acquired in becoming a graduate in his/her subject. This is beyond the powerful knowledge of his/her subject discussed earlier in this concluding chapter. It includes knowledge of what is appropriate for students at different stages to acquire and knowledge that a student teacher did no come across in her/his undergraduate studies – for example, knowledge about how different children learn and the differences between school and everyday knowledge. These are the elements of a teacher's professional knowledge that are not acquired as an undergraduate or necessarily acquired from more experienced teachers during her/his school practice. At same time such 'future knowledge' may be vital in engaging with a child of the next generation and so vital for the future teacher.

It is the tacit denial of this knowledge, or the assumption that somehow it is acquired 'in practice', that has been the justification of school-based programmes of teacher education and postgraduate programmes that split 'foundation' theory from practical teaching or phase the former out.

The implications of these conclusions are profound for the future of teacher education in this country and can only be hinted at here. However, the Finnish model of a four-year Master's degree in subject specialist teaching suggests that it is not as radical or as impractical as some may think, or is implied by the extent to which it involves reversing recent developments in this country away from university–school collaboration (Sahlberg, 2015). The more internal (for universities) implication of such

an alternative is that it implies the phasing out of the foundation/methods distinction which still prevails to varying degrees in the education faculties of most English universities. However, I am confident that it would be a step to enhancing the status of school teaching as a profession as well as offering a more coherent role for the foundation disciplines. Finally, it would offer a strong basis for education as a professional discipline located for research and teaching in universities and imply a more systematic link between the education disciplines and their parent disciplines and one of the professions of which they are necessarily a part.

Notes

1 The didactics tradition in Europe has a different history to the 'subject methods' tradition in Anglophone countries (Hudson and Schneuwly, 2007). It incorporates what in the latter countries has been the tradition of 'foundation disciplines' (Whitty and Furlong, 2017). It has always explored a philosophical psychology as the basis for an integrated 'educational theory'.
2 It is probably more accurate to date the beginnings of the sociology of the curriculum with Bernstein's concluding address to the Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association held in Durham in 1970. His address 'On the classification and framing of educational knowledge' was first published in the book I edited (Bernstein, 1971).
3 One is reminded of the politician Michael Gove's claim that teaching is a 'craft' for graduates that, unlike professions, can be learned 'on the job' (Gove, 2010).
4 See, for example, my chapter on academic subjects in Young and Lambert (2014).
5 Since December 2014, IOE has been part of University College London and is now known as the UCL IOE.
6 My own appointment was somewhat of an anomaly; my professional experience was as a chemistry teacher, but I had gained academic qualifications in sociology. I remember the difficulties that I had at interview in stating how I could advise students preparing to be social studies teachers.
7 On the 'experimental course', staff from 'foundation' and several 'subject method' departments formed a team and students did not follow what was then the standard programme of separate 'subject method' and 'education' courses.
8 This account draws heavily on Lee's account of these developments in Lee (2014: 172–4).
9 Project CHATA ran between 1991 and 1996 and focused on 7–14-year-old students' metahistorical or second-order ideas (for example about evidence, cause and accounts). See Lee (1997) for an account of the project. A follow-on ESRC project, Usable Historical Pasts, focused on large-scale knowledge and understanding of history is reported in Foster *et al*. (2008).
10 Britton became Professor but in order to do so, he had to leave the Institute and was appointed as the first Professor of Education at Goldsmiths College. In the 1970s chairs were appointed in geography and science, but the Institute remained dominated by the foundation disciplines, especially sociology and philosophy of education.
11 The point was suggested to me in conversation with Joe Muller (University of Cape Town, South Africa, 2018, personal communication).
12 David Lambert and my book *Knowledge and the Future School* (Young and Lambert, 2014**)** is another example – in this case the connection is with geography.
13 Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer won the 2019 Nobel Prize for Economics 'for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty' (Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, 2019)
14 Nick Gibb, MP, was Schools Minister under David Cameron's Conservative-led Coalition government between 2010 and 2012 and 2014–15 and again under Theresa May's and Boris Johnson's Conservative governments since 2015.

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The 'knowledge turn' in curriculum studies has drawn attention to the central role that knowledge of the disciplines plays in education, and to the need for new thinking about how we understand knowledge and knowledge-building.

Knowing History in Schools explores these issues in the context of teaching and learning history through a dialogue between the eminent sociologist of curriculum Michael Young, and leading figures in history education research and practice from a range of traditions and contexts. With a focus on Young's 'powerful knowledge' theorisation of the curriculum, and on his more recent articulations of the 'powers' of knowledge, this dialogue explores the many complexities posed for history education by the challenge of building children's historical knowledge and understanding. The book builds towards a clarification of how we can best conceptualise knowledge-building in history education. Crucially, it aims to help history education students, history teachers, teacher educators and history curriculum designers navigate the challenges that knowledge-building processes pose for learning history in schools.

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