Enriching History Teaching and Learning

Challenges, Possibilities, Practice

Proceedings of the Linköping Conference on History Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

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Building Knowledge, Building Connections

DAVID LUDVIGSSON & ALAN BOOTH

The Linköping conference and the scholarship of teaching and learning

THE LINKÖPING CONFERENCE on History Teaching and Learning in Higher Education took place at the campus of Linköping University on 20–21 May 2014. It brought together history educators in Sweden with international participants to share findings from their pedagogic and classroom-based research and to think through recent developments in the broad area of history teaching and learning in higher education.

The planning for the conference was guided by core principles in the scholarship of teaching and learning in history: a focus on learning and how it can be understood and enhanced; an emphasis on practical classroom situations and strategies; a rigorous approach to the evidence grounded in the accepted scholarly standards of discipline enquiry; and a commitment to the public sharing of findings within the community of historians and educators. In short, the intention was to embody a collective commitment to constructive dialogue about teaching and learning grounded in evidence and argument and with a practical emphasis.

In the last two decades, history educators in higher education have increasingly embraced the concept of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and the practical tools for inquiry that have grown up around it to examine and investigate what happens in the history classroom and how student learning can be reliably enhanced (Booth, 2012). History SoTL, as a term and a practice, has

gained a notably strong currency in North America where the following areas of investigation have received particular attention:

- How to foster 'historical thinking' and the difference between experts' approaches to the subject and those of students;
- How to teach problematic issues such as the Freshman history survey course;
- How to foster 'learning by doing' – strategies for student active engagement whether in the classroom or the local community and by traditional methods or using new technologies.

But there has also been significant inquiry by history educators in a number of countries, including the UK, Australia and the European mainland, on issues of practical concern to teachers in higher education such as critical reading and thinking, active learning, transferable skills development and employability. A bibliographic guide to the literature of History SoTL is available at: http://www.indiana.edu/~histsotl/blog/?page_id=7. Since the 1990s historians in higher education have also attempted to build a discipline-based community of practice around teaching and learning at a national and international level. Major initiatives include an annual international conference convened in the UK since 1998 and an international society (History SoTL) founded in 2006 and led from Indiana University. In Scandinavia there has been a History SoTL conference in Uppsala, Sweden, in 2010 (Ludvigsson, 2012) and subsequent themed sessions held at the meetings of Swedish and Nordic historians.

The scholarship of teaching and learning, its advocates suggest, provides significant benefits to teachers in higher education. It can aid reflection on teaching; guide inquiry into classroom situations; help teachers to get a firmer grip on a troubling classroom problem; and act as a framework for collaboration, connecting work done in one institution or country with that in another. And more broadly, it enriches student learning, provides for an evidence-based bottom-up approach to teaching and learning, and contains the potential to

transform the academy into an effective learning organization. Even its supporters, however, question how much traction it has to date gained in the disciplines, and there is awareness among historians involved that more needs to be done to establish it firmly in the mainstream of discipline activity and scholarship (see Brawley, Timmins and Kelly, 2009). There are certainly obstacles still to overcome. These include academic reward structures; entrenched discipline notions of scholarship and research; the socialisation and training of early-career historians; and limited outlets for discipline-specific publication.

Nonetheless, in the last two decades history educators have made great strides forward. They have built firmer knowledge and understanding about the ways students learn in the subject and the sorts of strategies and history curricula that lead to effective learning. They have learned a great deal about how historians can go about investigating their work as teachers in ways commensurate with disciplinary expectations of scholarly activity; and they have increasingly recognised the importance of building discipline-based networks to support the advancement of teaching. Despite this progress, many important issues in history teaching and learning require further investigation and elaboration, amongst them new technologies and their implications for history teaching (in mass systems of higher education); the perennial (and growing) challenges of student transition to and within university history; the goals of history education beyond 'critical thinking' and 'employability'; the development of pedagogies that truly foster the creative capabilities needed for 21st century 'innovation societies'; the neglected emotional dimensions of teaching and learning history; and the ongoing professional development of historians as teachers. Generally speaking, there is a need for substantial empirical studies. There is still much to be done, and this makes History SoTL a field of endeavour full of possibility and potential for discovery.

The conference programme and outcomes

The Linköping programme consisted of eleven discussion papers and a roundtable discussion of the value of the notion of signature pedagogy in history teaching in higher education. The present volume collects together eight of the papers delivered. They address a range of issues of relevance to all history educators in higher education. These include the supervision of student dissertations and the possibilities and pitfalls of current practices in continuous assessment and (Ekecrantz, Parliden & Olsson; Hammarlund); the value of enabling students to become co-producers in the learning process (Twells); and the challenges of fostering the critical reading of monographs and textbooks (Neumann; Sokolov). There are also discussions of wider policy matters through insight into the formation and development of the European Tuning qualification framework process and investigation of how historians learn to become teachers of their subject and the implications of this for the provision of 'training in teaching' (Nováky; Booth).

Whilst the delivery of these papers provided the formal framework of the conference other more indirect but equally important outcomes deserve mention.

First, the conference bridged a number of boundaries or, put differently, brought closer together several often separated spheres. It involved contributions to discussion (whether as presenters or participants) from history educators working in a number of contexts: academic historians, schools history teachers, educational development professionals in higher education, teacher trainers, and educational researchers. It was a fundamentally collaborative event, all the more important as discussion across these (often unhelpful) boundaries remains too infrequent yet is vital to a fundamental shared goal of improving student learning in our subject.

Second, it brought together history educators from a range of countries, including Sweden, Britain, Australia, Germany, Russia and Cyprus. The resulting cross-fertilisation of ideas generated new perspectives on teaching for many of us, challenging our whole notions of 'pedagogy' and 'didactics' and emphasising the differing traditions that inform and inflect current practice in the broad world

of university-level history. It reminded us forcefully of the importance of context and traditions (both institutional and national) in history teaching and learning, and so the variations and contrasts in our community of historians but also the commonalities. Some things (like national higher education imperatives and the organisation and delivery of teaching) were clearly different, but others (the broad pedagogic challenges of student transition to university history; the rising tide of bureaucracy around teaching) seemed fundamentally (and often frustratingly) similar. And whilst all those present were deeply committed to values such as the fostering of critical thinking and helping students to develop as active citizens, how this was (and could be) translated into practice differed according to state and institutional contexts.

Third, there was productive discussion about history's 'signature pedagogy' whether in the formal roundtable allocated to this topic or in corridor and break-time conversations. This has been a sensitive issue in the SoTL world, and the discussions reflected the debate and uncertainties around it. However airing views did bring into focus some important issues about what are historians' pedagogic and professional values. Several participants reminded us that pedagogy is not just a matter of methods but of deeper norms and structures within the discipline. Others argued that what makes history education unique is the use of evidence and argumentation; whilst some maintained that there is no single 'signature pedagogy' for history but several, including one for the survey, one for the dissertation etc. (cf. Calder, 2006; Westhoff, 2012). The question was also raised of whether trying to find something or some things truly distinctive or unique to history really matters in educational terms or is rather a sign of a need to preserve place in competitive contemporary higher education systems. One interesting line of argument was that we should perhaps see the notion of signature pedagogy in terms of history's social practice (of teaching) – that what makes history pedagogy distinctive is the ways that (often generic) learning principles are shaped and reshaped in our social practice as educators and historians. In short, the discussion raised more questions than answers but it nonetheless stimulated active

debate and provided interesting lines of argument and pointers for future discussion.

Finally, the conference illustrated in action the many ways in which history educators can approach the investigation of teaching and learning in the subject using the wide array of concepts, tools and literature available in the humanities and social sciences. Whilst qualitative approaches to data dominated, as one would expect, a diverse range of literature and perspective was brought to bear. This variety is in our view a strength of recent writing on history teaching and learning, though it does raise questions, still largely unanswered, about the (proper) place of theory and whether some methods are more appropriate (and deserve to be more valued) than others in the investigation of classroom practice and student learning in history.

In sum, the Linköping conference provided a productive platform for building knowledge and connections towards the continuing task of advancing history learning and teaching. It offered a constructive collegial space for history educators committed to enhancing history pedagogy to come together to share findings, ideas and experiences and discuss possible future collaborations. The opportunity to do this is still rarer than it should be, given the considerable strides made by the scholarship of history teaching and learning in higher education in the last two and a half decades and the importance increasingly accorded to teaching in the rhetoric of the higher education policy-makers, institutions and the discipline. We hope the constructive experience and outcomes of this conference will therefore not only contribute to a growing body of knowledge but also encourage other colleagues to build their own connections and share findings and practice in their own ways. For the more we talk as a (global) community of history educators and the more informed that conversation is, the greater the chance of teaching effectively, producing successful learners and graduates and demonstrating to others the value of our subject as an educational medium.

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Teaching-research Nexus or Mock Research?

Student factors, supervision and the undergraduate thesis in history

STEFAN EKECRANTZ, JENNY PARLIDEN & ULF OLSSON

I N THIS ARTICLE preliminary results from an ongoing study of 88 undergraduate theses in history from five Swedish universities are presented. By matching thesis quality with individual student grades from upper secondary school two inter-related issues are discussed: how student prior knowledge relates to thesis quality in different groups, and how this can be understood in relation to a suggested phenomenon of direct influence on thesis quality independent of student learning.

Narrative competence or competent narrative?[1]

The undergraduate thesis in history and similar disciplines is often seen as something of a pedagogical ideal (Ekecrantz, 2006; Härnqvist, 1999). The thesis is viewed as the most work intensive module in Swedish undergraduate history and is associated with high assessment standards. The finished product is usually original empirical research presented in a 30–50 page thesis written by a single author. As in professional historiography, alternative methodologies and theoretical perspectives from other disciplines are increasingly common but a vast majority still builds on written primary sources. Prior to the undergraduate thesis the students have finished a second semester thesis in a five week module. This work is of a more limited

scope but is in essence a very similar task meant to prepare the students for their subsequent undergraduate thesis.

Founded on concepts like inquiry-based learning and the teaching-research nexus, the thesis is seen both as a superior way to develop student learning and as a highly valid assessment method (Healey, 2005; Kinkead, 2003; Jenkins et al., 2003). Traditionally the relationship between a student's actual competencies and the finished thesis is often assumed to correspond perfectly. This may not be articulated, but is often implied and embedded in practice. It goes without saying that students sometimes underperform for various reasons and may in fact be more competent than their theses might lead us to believe. The very opposite is also possible, as when supervisors and various support structures may help improve the quality of a text directly, without influencing the author's independent research abilities to the same degree. When this is the case, a finished thesis may in fact be better than the student's ability to create such a text, which can lead to potential problems within higher education and beyond. The reasons for such direct influence on theses, we argue, lay in the professional research model traditionally used, where research results and the text are the main intended outcomes. This differs from core principles in genuine research-based learning, where the primary outcome would be student learning. This discrepancy, we argue, may have far reaching consequences for students as well as for quality and research.

Factors influencing thesis quality

In reality there is a vast array of factors influencing thesis quality, including student self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, personality traits, inter-personal relationships, institutional and cultural aspects just to name a few drawn from general research on academic success (Diseth, 2011; Giota, 2010; Poropat, 2009). For the purposes of this study a limited structural perspective is used. These structural factors are divided into: Prior knowledge and abilities (A), student learning during undergraduate studies (B), aspects of supervision that support learning (C), aspects of supervision that only influence thesis quality

(D) and other factors (E) that may influence the thesis without subsequent learning.

PRESAGE **HIGHER EDUCATION PROCESS** **HIGHER EDUCATION PRODUCT**
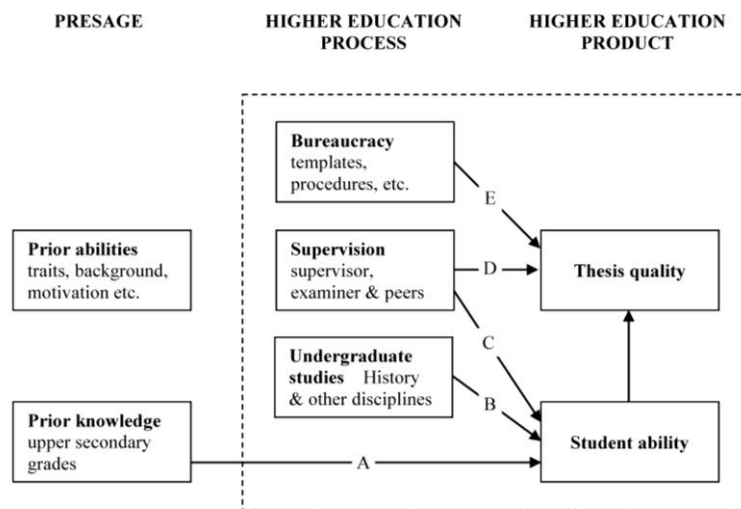
FIGURE 1: *External factors and thesis quality, an adapted 3P-model*

The model above is an adaption of the widely used Presage-Process-Product 3P-model of teaching and learning (Biggs, 1979; 1989; Ramsden, 1992; Prosser et al., 1994). The gist of most variations of that model is a partly chronological perspective where students and teachers enter into – and become part of – a learning environment, resulting in some kind of learning outcome. Trigwell & Prosser (1997) give an overview of how the model has come to be used within a wide range of theoretical frameworks, including cognitivist, individual and social constructivist as well as non-dualistic constitutionalist perspectives – all with their varying conceptions of the nature of such relationships. The original model is in itself highly simplistic, which can explain why so many have found use for it. One such use has been to create clarity in scientific debates, where it is sometimes necessary to contrast teaching and learning activities (process) to learning outcomes (product) to avoid misunderstand-dings. Other

times it is necessary to highlight student factors and teaching context (presage) when the existing discourse assumes a tabula rasa perspective on students, i.e. disregard the importance of prior experiences.

In a similar way this adapted model is first and foremost meant to work as a contrast to more simplistic, single factor explanations regarding thesis quality. Presumptions of single factor explanations can be suspected when poor thesis quality is explained by student factors only, or when reforms to improve thesis quality is aimed exclusively at one factor such as quantity of supervision or other. A clear example of a single factor explanation is the Swedish national quality audit system 2011–2014, where external assessment of theses was used as the main indicator of educational quality in all disciplines leading to Bachelor or Master degrees (Swedish National Agency for Higher Education, 2011). The rationale behind this output-system was the idea that the educational quality of e.g. history departments and their degrees corresponded more or less perfectly with the quality of their students' theses.[2] In Figure 1 above this would be akin to an unobstructed link between undergraduate education and thesis quality, perfectly mediated through individual students' abilities. A more complex but still limited input-intervention-output system had been suggested by Härnqvist (1999) who in a pilot study included both upper secondary school grades and thesis quality as means to assess higher education quality. In that system a department with students with poor prior grades (input) who produced mid-range quality theses (output) would be seen as having better educational quality (intervention) than if the same theses had been written by students with better grades.[3]

Prior knowledge (A)
In a systematic review of various pitfalls in using theses as simple measurement of educational quality, Hamilton and colleagues (2010) expand on the relationship between prior knowledge and abilities:

> [P]rograms using theses or dissertations to document outcomes must realize that verbal ability among students might not significantly be improved by educational programing, but could well be a pre-existing

asset students bring with them to educational programs. [...] Writing a high-quality thesis or dissertation and adequately defending it orally are both tasks that require sophisticated verbal ability. However, Nie and Golde (2008) provide evidence suggesting that verbal ability, rather than being improved by education, is an attribute that enables students to succeed in schools and universities. Thus, while education and verbal ability have a strong positive relationship, the direction of causality may be counterintuitive. (Hamilton et al., 2010: 570-571)

An individual's upper secondary grades are no more certain to be perfect representations of such 'pre-existing assets' than the undergraduate thesis is of his or her abilities to produce such a thesis several years later. Yet existing research tells us grades are valid predictors of academic success on a group level (Cliffordson, 2008; Martin et al., 2001; Morgaman et al., 2002; Tumen et al., 2008; Urban et al., 1999). Furthermore, the undergraduate thesis is widely believed to be a key indicator of important academic competencies and prior grades can thus be expected to correlate with thesis quality to some degree (Härnqvist, 1999). Another possible indicator of prior knowledge would be the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test (SweSAT), albeit research by Cliffordson and others show that this correlates less with academic success than upper secondary grades do (Cliffordson & Askling, 2006; Henriksson & Wolming, 1998; Lyrén, 2008).

Undergraduate studies (B)
That both undergraduate education in general and thesis supervision may influence student ability to conduct independent historical research can be seen as self-evident, although more knowledge about these highly complex and contextualized processes is needed. The overall degree can be expected to support such learning via two basic strategies: through general, research-led higher education and through research oriented modules and interventions specifically aimed at supporting the upcoming thesis work (Brew, 2003; Jenkins et al., 2003). Examples of the latter could be courses in academic writing, research methodology, philosophy of science and similar. Traditionally in Sweden, the undergraduate thesis in history has been

the most significant threshold for students to overcome to complete their degree. For some time there has been an increased focus on the 'production' of degrees as part of Swedish adaptions to the Bologna process, pressuring history departments to step up their efforts to prepare students for their theses. In recent years the aforementioned quality audit system has added to this pressure.

Supervision and student learning (C)
Another main strategy to support thesis work is of course supervision. In recent years there has been an increasing amount of research published on supervision of undergraduate and graduate theses. Many theoretical concepts and models developed in research on doctoral supervision have been used to develop corresponding research on supervision on lower levels. This research can be divided into three main strands: interpersonal relationships and supervisor models (cf. de Kleijn et al., 2012; Dysthe, 2002; Grant, 2003; Greenbank & Penketh, 2009; Ylijoki, 2001), supervisors' and students' perceptions (cf. Anderson et al., 2006; Todd, 2006) and research on so called 'best practice' in various settings (cf. Dysthe et al., 2006). This research in many instances address thesis quality or student learning, or the relationship between the developing thesis and the student, but substantially less research address potential discrepancies between the finished product and the student.

Supervision of 'text' regardless of learning (D)
In various stages of the writing process, the supervisor is expected to suggest changes and improvements of the text. In the latter stages one might tell the students how to rephrase the research problem to better fit the actual results, add a series of spot-on references and suggest changes in the overall disposition. Earlier on the supervisor might have identified a series of themes in the material that funda-mentally alter the presentation from mere description to a proper analysis. Archival problems may be circumvented by the creative use of alternative sources suggested by the supervisor, and so on. Ideally, discussing and making such changes is a learning experience. Other times the student may make changes more or less mechanically,

without genuine understanding. When this is the case, the supervisor can be said to have influenced thesis quality more so than student ability. In a similar vein, Hamilton and colleagues have argued against a simplistic, single factor explanation in such cases and that 'the resulting theses or dissertations can reflect more about the capability of the supervisor than of the student' (Hamilton et al., 2010: 569). The same can be said about changes suggested by the examiner and peers, for example when the author may learn that the text needs to be altered in some very specific ways to get a passing grade.

Bureaucracy (E)
Another type of direct input is here labeled 'Bureaucracy'. Timeframes and variations in ways to organize the assessment and revision processes may affect thesis quality directly. In some history departments the work is to be completed within ten weeks of full time study with no extensions. In others the undergraduate thesis may be scheduled as a part time module during a whole semester with the opportunity to finish the thesis the following semester, prolonging the process up to a year. Sometimes a final thesis presentation is the absolute end point, while in other institutions the student gets substantial room to revise the thesis in light of criticism put forth during the final presentation. The latter might significantly affect the quality of the texts archived for external audits, making for a direct 'bureaucratic' input on thesis quality.

In addition, various types of support material, exemplars, templates, checklists et cetera are often developed over time to address problems with retention and specific, recurring shortcomings in student work. Again, this material will ideally help students learn but sometimes it does not. Then the overall effect might be an environment where some students are able to complete their work partly in a paint-by-numbers type process.

88 history majors and their undergraduate theses

Following in Härnqvist's footsteps…

In Härnqvist's (1999) original study theses in history and economics were assessed by external examiners engaged specifically for that particular research project.[4] The two disciplines were chosen to represent large, traditional disciplines in humanities and social sciences respectively. In history a randomized sample of 35 undergraduate theses from five different institutions were analyzed. Each thesis was rated on a scale from one to five along six quality dimensions: prior research; definition of problem; theory, methodology; procedure and conclusions; and language and formalities. Thereafter, the overall quality of each thesis was rated holistically on the same scale.

By using an existing database all upper secondary grades in Sweden from students born in 1972–1979 were available. This data was cross referenced with students registered on second and third semester undergraduate history in 1995–1997. Hereby a prior grade average for each institution that was part of the study was obtained. The grade averages correlated strongly with thesis quality averages. One outlier was a history department with students with good grades but with relatively poor theses. Among the other departments, upper secondary grade averages were strong predictors of subsequent thesis quality, supporting the hypothesis of a relationship between prior knowledge and higher education outcomes (Härnqvist, 1999: 97).

The initial motivation for the present study was to attempt to replicate and refine Härnqvist's results using the qualitative data collected in the quality audit system, where a randomized sample from all undergraduate theses in history with passing grades in 2012 had been assessed by external examiners in a similar fashion. By identifying individual authors in retrospect and matching each student with prior grades through a national database the aim was to create a dataset that was both larger and qualitatively superior to the one Härnqvist had to work with – with individual grades and individual theses being matched, as opposed to grade averages per institution. By using this new data, the goal was to better quantify

the explanatory power of prior grades in relation to thesis quality. This, in turn, could make for a more informed view of the potential room for influence by the overall degree and from supervision. All transcripts from the randomized, double blind external assessment exercise in 2013 were obtained from the governing body, along with the original anonymized theses. Thereafter the five institutions with the most theses were contacted and asked to submit the identity of each author previously selected for the exercise. Subsequently each author was cross referenced with a national grades database, making for a dataset with a total of 88 history theses and individual upper secondary grades, creating data including external assessment of thesis quality, original thesis grade and prior grades.

The external assessment had been done in relation to the intended learning outcomes specified in the degree specifications in the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance. Each Bachelor thesis was assessed in relation to four quality dimensions consisting of a total of eleven sub-dimensions. The four dimensions were selected from a wider range of outcomes in the Bachelor degree specifications:

1. Knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including knowledge of the disciplinary foundation of the field, knowledge of applicable methodologies in the field, specialized study in some aspect of the field as well as awareness of current research issues.

2. Ability to search for, gather, evaluate and critically interpret the relevant information for a formulated problem and also discuss phenomena, issues and situations critically.

3. Ability to identify, formulate and solve problems autonomously and to complete tasks within predetermined time frames.

4. Ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues.

No holistic judgment was made of each thesis in the original audit but each dimension and sub-dimension were graded on a 1–3 scale allowing for a quantified total assessment of thesis quality post facto in three levels of similar size. Furthermore, several school and grading

reforms had taken place during the time period in which the different students had attended upper secondary school, creating a highly complex picture. By translating all passing grades in seven core subjects, a unified grade average could be constructed for each individual student.[5]

Conflicting results

Surprisingly, prior grades and thesis quality did not match up as expected and did not mirror Härnqvist's previous results. Only weak correlations between prior grades and thesis quality could be found in the combined population of students, a result also at odds with general research on academic success.[6] As a combined category, the students with the best grades produced the best theses, but poor prior grades did not correlate with theses of poor quality as had been expected.[7] Various reasons could be assumed causing these differing results.

The methodologies used in the two studies were similar but not identical. There had been changes in the grading system due to school reforms, resulting in grade inflation (Skolverket, 2012). In the fifteen years between the two studies there had also been some changes in Swedish undergraduate history that might at least account for some of these differences, such as an increased focus on degrees and completion within ten weeks of study. How these differences might relate to the conflicting results is unclear but none can be disregarded completely.

At closer inspection a major difference could be found in the two populations. It turned out that as many as 20 out of the 35 theses in Härnqvist's study were originally graded as 'Pass with distinction' (57%), making for a sample with unusually strong theses. How this came to be is unknown, but in the randomized sample used in the present study only 21 out of 88 theses were originally graded as 'Pass with distinction' (24%), a number much closer to actual grading practices at this level. In trying to understand these results we first replicated Härnqvist's sample by a random selection of 20 'Pass with distinction' and 15 'Pass' theses. In doing so a significant correlation between prior grades and thesis quality could be shown. Looking at

all 'Pass with distinction' in isolation this phenomenon was enhanced even further.

Consequently, that part of the present study does corroborate Härnqvist's results – if the latter is redefined as in fact having been a study of mostly high quality theses. In sum, as a group, the theses with 'Pass with distinction' had better thesis quality and better prior grades than the others, but in the variations within that category quality and prior grades correlated significantly, while this was not the case among the others. This raises several important questions. Could the lack of a strong link between prior grades and thesis quality among theses with merely passing grades be indicative of:

- Stronger students receiving less attention from the system, allowing for more relative influence from student background?
- The system as a whole focuses on thesis quality rather than student ability?
- Better theses correspond with students' true competencies?
- Mid-range theses correspond poorly with students' true competencies due to different interventions directed at the texts rather than student learning?

At this point it is important to underscore that this discussion only relates to potential processes on a group level. Among the history students with relatively poor grades entering higher education there are numerous individuals in this study who did very well at university level and produced theses of high quality – and vice versa. The list of possible reasons for this is long, some of the most obvious ones being that people develop differently, learn differently and that prior grades often say little about an individual's future abilities, ambitions and interests years ahead.

That being said, the lack of correlation between prior grades and thesis quality in the group that recieved a passing grade without distinction on their theses deserves further attention. An optimistic explanation could be that more resources might have been channeled to weaker students, e.g. through redistribution of supervisors' time and engagement, leading to improved learning and thus nullifying

the expected impact of student presage in this particular group. This would not have to be the result of explicit policy, but may simply be the result of supervisors wanting all their students to succeed. A more pessimistic and possibly more plausible explanation would be that in some cases the theses are better than the authors' abilities to produce them. Or, in other words, the highly valid assessment method of assessing student learning in these modules mainly through their theses might be lacking in reliability for this group. This would be consistent with the hypothesis that the 'system' is focused on producing theses rather than student learning, and that when a student is struggling tradition may lead faculty and bureaucracy to help improve the text directly without necessarily improving student ability to the same degree. And, developments in the Swedish higher education landscape in the last couple of years – and likely years ahead – create even stronger economic and other incitements to do so.

Discussion and implications for practice

The results of this study do not at all undermine the picture of the undergraduate thesis as one of the most profound learning experiences during the entire undergraduate degree in history. Decades after completion the former student can be expected to be able to describe it and share insights from the work, which is a standard few other parts of the curriculum can live up to. It is an authentic assessment method in itself and it fulfills many established principles for successful undergraduate education, such as active learning, iterative feedback, time on task, and high expectations to name a few (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Equally clear is the fact that traditional thesis supervision is an effective teaching method that often supports this learning. What we do suggest is that sometimes there are problems that might remain obscured when student learning and the quality of the finished text is assumed to be synonymous. And, that this might have consequences for research, development and supervision.

A most common supervision process is to let the student submit proposals and drafts followed by feedback and suggestions for revisions and continued work. This tradition allows for a range of different supervising models (cf. Dysthe, 2002; Dysthe et al., 2006). Some supervisors prefer to use a more discussion based format before student work, while others prefer to work exclusively with submitted texts and build their supervision as more summative feedback on texts. When either model is successful iterative discussions about texts function as formative feedback, allowing the supervisor to gauge the student's present level of understanding and make adaptions in light of this information. Other times supervision does not work out as intended. Feedback on drafts is typically aimed at influencing learning *through* the text, sometimes blurring the line between student and text in the eyes of the supervisor. In many ways this would be similar to the way doctoral students submit thesis chapters for review over a period of four years or more. The question is if that research ideal really is possible to scale down to a ten week format at undergraduate level, and what might be lost in the process?

A developing text written by a novice researcher under time constraints while learning-by-doing will most likely be a poor representation of the student's current understanding, which in turn demands quite a lot of the historian turned supervisor. Much would be gained if valid and reliable assessment methods independent of the thesis could be developed. In teaching, such instruments could be used as designated formative assessment methods, allowing for more effective supervision and learning. In research and development, such instruments could be used as an independent point of reference more closely related to the theses on an individual level than prior grades as has been done in this study.

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[1] So called 'narrative competence' can be seen as the synthesis of historical mindedness – the understanding of history expected of professional historians (Rüsen, 1987; Wertsch, 1998). In this article it is argued that student competency needs to be distinguished from their texts, i.e. their narratives.

[2] The 2011–2014 system was highly contested and is being revised at the time this article is written. An expected development is that institutions rather

than departments will be audited through a selection of disciplines. Furthermore, external assessment of undergraduate and graduate theses will most likely be part of that process, but will be given less relative weight compared to other data. Thus, it is plausible that history departments will continue to experience external pressure to focus on the quality of finished written 'products' on all levels.

[3] Härnqvist's work was a main inspiration for the system that was eventually developed but due to political and practical concerns within the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research a strict outcome-based system was opted for – in effect disregarding all other factors with regards to thesis quality.

[4] One major difference from the official system 2011–2014 was that Härnqvist meant to ultimately develop methods to assess whole institutions, rather than separate disciplines and departments.

[5] There was also some variation in systems used when the theses were originally graded at the five different institutions in 2012, and the more detailed ECTS-scale was translated into 'Pass with distinction' for A-B and 'Pass' for C-E.

[6] Spearman's rho = 0.236, ($p < 0.05$), n=85. Three students did not have records in the national grades database. One student did not have a thesis grade recorded.

[7] 'Pass': rho = 0.430, ($p > 0.50$), n = 64. 'Pass with distinction': rho = 0.514, ($p < 0.05$), n=20.

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Continuous Assessment of Historical Knowledge and Competence

Challenges, Pitfalls, and Possibilities

KG HAMMARLUND

Introduction

I T IS NOT UNCOMMON for history lecturers to find that assignments handed in for marking reflect students' imagination of what the task is about, rather than the teacher's hopes and expectations of what they have learnt. The gap between students' and teachers' perceptions of what it is to know history can be described as the gap between viewing history as a body of knowledge and as a form of knowledge (Shemilt, 1983). Although a body of knowledge – information, data, or 'facts' – is an indispensable prerequisite for developing historical knowledge, the latter – comprising the ability to handle information of the past and of understanding how pieces of information can relate to each other – is what transforms information into knowledge. Andreas Körber (2007) has suggested that historical knowledge can be seen as dependent on the competence to formulate historically relevant questions, to (re-)construct and de-construct historical narratives, and to make use of such narratives when orienting oneself in the present and for the future – signs of which are often lacking in essays and written assignments handed in by students.

The challenge of bridging the gap – or 'decoding the students' – has been discussed at length by Arlene Díaz, David Pace, and their colleagues at Indiana University (Díaz et al., 2008). That students lack a more developed understanding of what constitutes historical knowledge can probably partly be explained by their experience of school history – a factor which, alas, cannot be altered. What the

university lecturer can do, however, is to consider the form and content of lectures and seminars and choose reading materials (textbooks, articles, source material) that elucidate the ambiguity, the temporality, and thus the provisionality of our narratives of the past. And, of course, to construct assignment tasks that ask not for dates and names but offer the opportunity to demonstrate a more profound understanding of history.

Assessing whether and to what degree students possess a certain body of knowledge is a relatively straightforward business. Assessing whether they also possess a *form* of knowledge is not quite as simple. Bruce VanSledright (2013) points out that tests commonly given in US schools produce a narrow and biased gauge of students' historical knowledge, since those tests fail to capture the ability to 'do history' or what VanSledright calls 'strategic knowledge'. In Swedish schools the picture is very much the same, as shown by David Rosenlund (2011). Although the National Curriculum includes learning outcomes that deal with the thinking processes involved in historical understanding, those learning outcomes are rarely addressed in assignment tasks given in secondary schools. Instead, a disproportionately large part of the tasks focus on the reproduction of facts. However, Fredrik Alvén (2011) and Lars Andersson Hult (2012) have convincingly argued that it is possible to construct assignment tasks that give secondary school students the opportunity to display a more profound understanding of history, not least how our interpretations of the past affect our understanding of the present.

In the following I will discuss the potential of continuous assessment in higher education as compared with traditional assessment models, drawing on experiences presented in recent literature as well as experiences from introducing continuous assessment at Halmstad University. I finally point out the challenges that may arise from presenting students with unfamiliar assessment forms and the possible need for a 'decoding process' following the model developed by the History Learning Project at Indiana University.

History in Swedish higher education – learning outcomes and assessment

How, then, does Swedish higher education tackle the challenge? Over the last fifteen years, undergraduate history courses (or, at least, course syllabi) have undergone fundamental changes, with a marked shift from substantive towards procedural knowledge and 'historical thinking' already in first year modules.

At Uppsala University, the syllabus stresses the ability to reason constructively about historical issues and the role of history in society is thus among the learning outcomes (Uppsala University 2014). At Lund University, students are expected to 'formulate historically interesting questions' (Lund University 2014), while at Linköping University they should be able to 'create explanatory narratives built on a critical analysis of relevant facts' (Linköping University 2014). At Halmstad University, students are expected to gain an 'understanding of historical contexts and how contexts may be defined differently depending on the perspective chosen' (Halmstad University 2014).

Within academic history, knowledge is clearly understood as consisting of more than the acquisition of a wide range of information. The ability to use this information is of crucial importance. How, then, is this aspect of historical knowledge – 'strategic' or 'procedural' knowledge – assessed?

The dominant end-of-module assessment in Sweden, well-known to students who have passed through the system during the last four decades or so, has been in the form of a written exam, to be completed in 3–4 hours with no books or notes allowed during the exam. It is often made up of 10–12 shorter questions, worth 2 or 3 points each, and 4–5 longer 'essay questions', worth 10 points each.

A typical short question could be 'When and how did Sweden lose Finland?', and the expected answer something like '1809, having lost the war against Russia', giving the year (1809, 1 point), what happened (lost the war, 1 point) and the actor involved (Russia, 1 point). An essay question would, on the face of it, look as if it asked for a much more complex understanding of historical change and/or continuity, e.g. 'Give a detailed summary of political change in England 1640–1688'. However, if we take into account the conditions

under which the students work out their answer: limited time (maybe half an hour if all questions are to be addressed) and no access to notes or literature, it is clear that the answer given will not display the student's ability to search, find and assess information from various sources, or to compare and evaluate contrasting or conflicting narratives. Instead, we may expect an answer that faithfully and exhaustively reproduces the narrative given in the textbook and has been dutifully memorised by the student.

Even if this type of exam question still exists, it no longer dominates as it did twenty-five years ago. Today, students engage in a variety of assignment tasks that allow them to use books, notes, and relevant source documents, and are more often aimed towards procedural or strategic knowledge. End-of-module assessment still dominates, however, which also means that a number of problems related to the single, high-stake assessment form remain. Students often study to the test, and with end-of-module assessment the given touchstone for relevance and significance will be 'will it come up in the exam?' Students may skip lectures and seminars deemed irrelevant for this assignment task (cf. Ludvigsson, 2012: 69). And even if the assessment may contain formative qualities ('for the future it would be great if you could...'), its summative character will dominate. A possible way of circumventing those problems is offered by continuous assessment.

Reported experiences of continuous assessment

There are a number of articles and reports on experiences and outcomes of models for continuous assessment. Most of them, however, build on experiences from trying out continuous assessment in one course during one semester. Longitudinal studies or studies involving more than one department or institution are rare, and the conclusions that can be drawn are therefore, at best, preliminary and tentative. The number of common and recurring traits across the various studies nevertheless suggests that continuous assessment actually improves student learning. Although it cannot be ascertained that they learn more than from a course with traditional assessment

methods, it does seem as if they develop a deeper understanding of their own learning. It is thus the learning experience, rather than the learning in itself, the learning 'as such', that is affected and stimulated by continuous development.

Jennifer Frost, Genevieve de Pont, and Ian Brailsford (2012) introduced continuous assessment in a course on the history of African-American freedom struggles given at the University of Auckland in 2008. Here the continuous assessment took the form of shorter assignments, one per week, linked to the weekly tutorials. Some assignments were completed during the (group) tutorials, while others required that students brought shorter texts to the tutorial where they received instant feedback from their tutor and from fellow students.

From the viewpoint of lecturers and tutors, the model had one obvious drawback: it increased their overall workload, and time allocated for grading was exceeded by 20 percent. The big advantage, however, was that the instructors could follow the process of student learning; the how, when, and why of advancement. The continuous assessment helped the students to develop a familiarity and facility not only with the subject matter dealt with but also (and maybe more important) the conceptual framework of the course. The model also improved student attendance at tutorials. In most courses at the University of Auckland, students are neither required to attend, nor rewarded for attending tutorials with the result that attendance can drop down to 25 percent. In this course, however, 81 percent of the students attended at least 80 percent of the tutorials. Also, during the tutorials students were less inhibited and spoke more freely. Since they had been encouraged to reflect as part of their preparation they could easily form reasoned opinions, whereas in courses where they encountered such questions in the tutorial itself they had to do their thinking and orient themselves during tutorial time. Discussions, and student learning through them, thus benefited from the assessment model.

Student views were positive. In the evaluation at the end of the course almost one third of the students singled out continuous assessment as the most helpful factor. A typical remark was 'The

tutorial assignments really forced me to keep reading in-depth, to keep reflecting, so I feel more prepared'. A small group – less than 5 percent – was critical of the assignments, finding them repetitive and stressful. Continuous assessment was experienced as being under continual assessment.

A similar model was tried out in a BSc module on Business Taxation at a British University (Trotter, 2006). Continuous assessment was built upon 'tutorial files', i.e. a carefully prepared set of texts that students were expected to work with, analyse/comment, and finally to hand in a report at the tutorial. Again, continuous assessment tended to enhance student activity throughout the course. As one student stated in a follow-up interview: 'It changed your behaviour 'cause instead of leaving stuff to the last minute and not doing any work through the semester I was working constantly'.

However, the students also admitted that they probably would not have spent so much time on the tasks if their work had not contributed to their final grade. Trotter's conclusion is that this made the students more inclined to consider their tutor's comments: Students who had done well tried to keep up the standard of their work, and those who had performed less well than anticipated strived to improve their result.

Similarly overwhelmingly positive experiences of continuous assessment have been reported by, among others, Sven Isaksson (2008), Jorge Pérez-Martínez et al. (2009), and Naomi Holmes (2014).

It should be noted that in all these cases the assignments that were continually assessed had limited weight in relation to the final grade. Lurking at the end of the course was a larger assignment, often some kind of final essay, perceived by the students as a high-stake task. While there are indications that the continuously assessed tasks actually help the students to perform well in the final assignment, one cannot disregard the risk that students tend to view the smaller tasks as less important. If the links between the two types of tasks are obscure, so that the students cannot see how the feedback received will help them to tackle the final assignment, the value of continuous assessment remains limited.

At Indiana University, historian Andrew M. Koke took the innovative step of replacing every high-stake, end of the course assignment with a large number of low-stake assignment tasks, given continuously during the course (Koke, 2011a, b). His main objective was to steer clear of what he saw as a drawback of high-stake assignments: they give very little room for students to experiment or try out new and unfamiliar lines of reasoning, since stumbling may jeopardise the student's final grade. An assessment model built on high-stake assignments is, in Koke's words, a model that 'punishes failure'.

Koke used a broad variety of assignments – one-minute sentences, quizzes, oral presentations, research, and tests – 45 (!) in total. This meant that students had to produce something for every class, two-three times a week. On the other hand, failing one assignment (or a few) was not disastrous – there were plenty of opportunities to hand in assessments that could offset a few failures. Students who failed an assignment were also offered a second opportunity to submit it.

From the students' point of view the model was well received. 73 percent preferred many small assignments over a few larger. 'It helps me to not forget what I have learnt', was one telling comment. '3–6 assignments would put more pressure on you because you have to get everything right' was another. 93 percent of the students said that the rewrite policy (second effort) was a good one.

Did the model also improve learning? Koke found that the students learnt at least the same. However, their experience, as expressed in the evaluation process, was that they had learnt more than they had expected. They also found themselves having improved competencies beyond a narrowly defined field of historical knowledge. A significant number of students stated that the model had helped them improve both their writing skills and their reading comprehension. Students were able to develop an incipient meta-understanding of their own learning. They also became less anxious to search for the kind of answers they believed that the teacher expected, allowing them to elaborate on what they themselves had found interesting and/or important.

As in the Auckland case, the flip side was that the workload increased significantly. Koke had to handle, comment, and grade close to 900 assignments. Even if some of the tasks were small and could be commented upon briefly, grading was an ever-present task that had to be done during each and every week of the course.

As a tentative summary, the aforementioned reports indicate that students appreciate continuous assessment since it helps them to keep focus throughout the course and not postpone reading until the last week, that it allows them to deal with course material in a more reflective way, and, finally, that it helps them to shift focus from what they believe is the expected learning outcome towards the learning process itself, thus developing a meta-understanding of their own learning. From a teacher viewpoint, these gains are, of course, most valuable. However, documented experience reminds us that the gains in terms of student learning must be weighed against the increasing workload.

There are other important benefits, not mentioned in the reports referred to above. If properly designed, the assignment task will make it apparent that the assessment is not just about giving an account of what has been learnt previously but part of the learning process. And since continuous assessment consists of a large number of varied tasks they can each focus on a different aspect of knowledge and competence: one assignment may focus on criteria of significance, another on judging and evaluating claims and conclusions. All aspects of knowing and understanding history need not be crammed into one single final task.

Continuous assessment at Halmstad University: Examples and experiences

At Halmstad University, my colleagues and I have over the last two years modified the assessment of history courses, gradually moving from a traditional final test/essay model towards continuous assessment. The ambition is to set weekly assignment tasks that address 'proper' competency of historical thinking, thus creating opportunities for students to train and display their capability in

handling analysis, interrogation, interpretation, and argumentation. Normally the tasks given at the beginning of a module are smaller and 'easier' than the one given at the end, for which the students might be allowed more time (two weeks) for completion. As in Andrew Koke's model, unsatisfactory efforts can be rewritten. Also, even if failure might affect the final grade, a single failure might well be offset by other tasks that are carried out more successfully.

A particularly successful task, given to first-year students, deals with demographic change during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Using local census records from their own home parishes for the period 1750–1850, students are asked to compare birth/mortality rates, household size, age distribution and means of support (e.g. the number and proportion of landowners, tenant farmers, and sharecroppers). Students then compare their findings – similarities and differences over time – to the established view of changes in demography, family patterns, socio-economic strata etc.

Possibly the most rewarding experience has been to note the eagerness with which students have unearthed information on their own local history. Immigrant students are no exception from this pattern. They can, for obvious reasons, not work with census records from Iraq or Bosnia – they have to choose the Swedish parish they regard as their home, where they spent most of their youth and formative years and where their parents live. They are just as enthusiastic as their native Swedish course mates, sometimes even more, to gain a fuller view and a deeper understanding of their local history.

Part of the intended outcome of this task is of course to make students more confident in analysing unfamiliar source material. Another is the conviction that the relation between generalised (and thus more or less 'abstract') concepts is easier to grasp if this relationship, or parts of it, becomes apparent on a micro level. In this case, students hopefully gain a deeper understanding of the generalised statement that a growing agrarian proletariat is one factor that must be taken into account when explaining the industrial revolution when they can see how population, land ownership and living conditions changes in a specific parish. As a bonus, this

localisation of context not only in time but also in space apparently triggers their curiosity and makes them feel that the task was worthwhile; the more so since they have a personal relation to the area in question.

In another assignment students are asked to read a selection of primary sources – letters, reports and articles – stemming from Paris and the month of July 1789. Among the sources is an extract from a report from Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, US Secretary of Foreign Affairs, a letter from a M. de Sevelinge, banker to the Marquess de Lostanges (illegitimate cousin of king Louis XVI), and a few issues of *The London Gazette*. Besides being an exercise in careful reading and interpretation of primary sources (taking into account who wrote and who received the narratives), the assignment is also designed as an attempt to make the students think about significance. No course in modern history, whether in secondary school or university, leaves out the French revolution – its significance is beyond doubt. But was the significance of the events obvious for those who, although they had experienced (or heard of) the storming of the Bastille, hardly could foresee the abolishment of the French monarchy, the revolutionary wars, the reign of terror and the rise of Napoleon?

Many students have been surprised, even astonished, to find that there were people – informed and educated people – living in Paris who apparently did not find the situation (including events such as the storming of the Bastille and the lynching of its governor) particularly alarming or significant, but instead expected that 'business as usual' soon would resume. Students have commented on the heuristic experience of realising that the French revolution, as seen from the streets of Paris in 1789, was not the well-rounded, coherent, and unequivocal narrative offered by their old school textbooks. Rather, it was a kaleidoscopic array of conflicting and contradictory stories, some of them depicting the events as almost trivial. However, not all students are comfortable having their view of the textbook as the source of 'what really happened' questioned. Although seldom explicitly stated, it was clear that they preferred indisputable facts over tentative discussions on how different viewpoints may result in different perceptions.

A third example, still under development, is an inverted version of Peter Lee's and Denis Shemilt's synoptic frameworks (Lee & Howson, 2009; Shemilt, 2009). Instead of starting with a broadly sketched outline or framework that gradually becomes intelligible by being filled with details, the starting point is a 'synoptic skeleton', an individual life trajectory as depicted in an obituary. The obituary in question describes the life of a man who was born out of wedlock in 1913 and was raised as foster-child in a stone mason's family. As a young man he found his way to the temperance movement, the trade unions, and the Social Democratic Party. His professional career went from the stone mason's yard to the news desks of various newspapers and journals affiliated to the labour movement and eventually to the position of Assistant Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. This life trajectory, used as a recurrent *Leitmotif* for a module on twentieth-century history, may show how 'big pictures' are intertwined with 'little stories' and facilitate an understanding, as Alison Kitson has put it, 'that the past did actually happen and that the people in it were real' (Kitson, 2004: 2).

Formative or summative: a remaining challenge

The experiences of myself and my colleagues at Halmstad University during 2013 and 2014 are similar to those of others discussed above. Attendance at lectures has improved, almost all students work conscientiously and finish their tasks on time, and quite a few students suggest that the model helps them to focus and also that they enjoy doing 'real history', not just reading textbooks over and over again preparing for a final test. There is, however, room for improvement. An issue that remains to be resolved is how to strike a balance between formative assessment (feedback) and summative assessment (marking). Hitherto, students have received feedback on each assignment but no marks. At the end of the module, students receive their grade, which rests on all the assignments weighed together. Although strengths and weaknesses have been pointed out in the weekly feedback, students have no straightforward guidelines

to tell them if their work is 'good enough' or 'hits the mark'. Some students are perfectly happy with this. Others complain – most likely out of insecurity.

There are no easy solutions to this problem. Partly it stems from the fact that historical knowledge is a multifaceted entity, and this complexity is reflected in the learning outcomes for the course. It is nigh impossible to lay down grading criteria so clear-cut and detailed that you can tick them off when reading a text where a student discusses Thomas Jefferson's views on what happened in Paris in July 1789, using a letter that Jefferson wrote at that very time. The undesired consequence is that what lies behind the grade, (even if the grade is, in a broad sense, supported by existing grading criteria) remains obscure. It can be argued that tasks constructed to be more 'authentic' than a multiple choice test lead to a higher degree of validity in assessment, since they allow the examiner to evaluate the student's ability for historical thinking, but the flip side is that this also leads to less reliability, or at least to a lower degree of transparency and predictability. If the summative assessment lacks transparency, students will find it difficult to see how formative feedback and summative grade relate to each other, and it can be expected that the feedback will have limited effect on their learning (for a further discussion on the problem of supportive assessment of complex tasks, see Jönsson, 2012: 29-39).

Since continuous assessment tends to muddle the distinction between the formative and the summative, this is an issue that requires careful consideration. Doubt has been expressed whether formative and summative assessment – feedback and grading – can co-exist in an assessment model. Although not touched upon in the articles cited above, the literature on assessment does suggest that this is not an easy relationship. Rosario Hernández (2012) discusses this in an article presenting the results from a study of assessment models at language departments at eight universities in the Republic of Ireland. He cites a number of scholars who argue that the summative element will always be perceived as the most important, so that the students notice their grade but forget about the formative feedback or regard it as nothing but a justification for the received mark. In search of a

more balanced approach Hernández cites Maddalena Taras (2006, 2008) who suggests that the summative/formative dichotomy is questionable and that formative assessment in reality consists of a summative assessment plus feedback. She prefers the concept 'learning-oriented assessment' where the focus shifts towards the appropriateness of the assignment tasks so that tasks are created that focus on the students' learning, encouraging and supporting them to autonomously monitor their own learning. Both the task in itself and the feedback are important if this is to be achieved.

What needs to be addressed in order to take full advantage of the benefits of continuous assessment is a number of 'decoding challenges', a concept described by Joan Middendorf, David Pace, and their colleagues (Middendorf & Pace, 2004; Díaz et al., 2008; Middendorf et al., 2014). Even if almost all students complete all assignments and a very small number fail, it is clear that while a fairly large group finds the tasks inspiring and does very well, some students find it difficult to go beyond a literal comprehension of the task, meaning that they conscientiously produce exactly what is asked for, neither more nor less. They have, undoubtedly, understood the task and their assignments go far beyond a mechanical copying of 'facts', but it is questionable whether they have also seen the point of it. One of the benefits of continuous assessment – developing of a meta-understanding of one's own learning – is then lost.

Gauging students' experiences through Supplemental Instruction

For the upcoming academic year (2015/16), at Halmstad University we will therefore introduce 'Supplemental Instruction' (SI) as a supportive environment for history students (for a short description of SI, see http://sac.indiana.edu/programsservices/supplementalinstruction). In its most common form, SI consists of weekly voluntary meetings where students can ask questions and discuss issues under the leadership of a fellow student who has previously completed the same course.

Since students can be expected to discuss more freely, feeling less anxious about disclosing their shortcomings or difficulties when no teacher is present, the student leaders will probably gain a lot of information that can throw some light upon what it is that students find difficult. If the SI meetings are supplemented with regular and frequent meetings between the student leaders and the course leader, this information may help to identify 'bottlenecks' and, as the next logical step, to develop and improve both the content and structure of the coursework.

If students are given weekly assignment tasks and SI meetings are held weekly, it is fairly safe to predict that discussions during SI meetings will circle around the assignment. Thanks to a formalised structure for feedback from students to the course leader, filtered and condensed by the SI leaders, this model will therefore also be helpful in evaluating the assessment model. This will, in turn, give the course leader a clearer picture of both strengths and weaknesses with the task given. It is hoped that this can lead to being able to reap the full benefit of the strengths inherent in continuous assessment.

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'More than gaining a mark': Students as partners and co-producers in public history and community engagement

ALISON TWELLS

PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC and community-based history projects offers many benefits for undergraduate history students. These range from experience of the workplace and the honing of 'transferable skills', through the development of confidence and a stronger sense of identity, to a sharper and more sophisticated understanding of the characteristics of both public and academic history. Most fundamentally, as McCulloch has argued, involvement in the co-production of historical research can counteract the more negative aspects of the 'consumer model' of higher education (McCullogh, 2009). This article explores pedago-gical issues concerning the place of public and community history within the undergraduate history curriculum. It draws upon my experience of teaching community and public history modules for the past decade at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in the UK. The first part of the article outlines the range of opportunities offered by public history/employability modules as identified by students. Part Two discusses the integration into modules of a community history website and digital archive, developed in collaboration with public historians in the South Yorkshire region. It explores the capacity of such a website to enable student involvement as partners and co-producers (Healey, Flint and Harrington, 2014), drawing on their passions, enthusiasms and expertise to shape (and reshape) the module each academic year. It is my argument that public and community-based history projects move beyond the narrow focus of the employability agenda on 'work-related learning' and 'transferable

skills' and are conducive to a rich engagement with history, both as an academic discipline and in wider practice (Knupfer, 2013).

The value of public history

I have designed and delivered a range of community history and public history modules at Sheffield Hallam University. These have combined a taught component – lectures, seminars and workshops on aspects of public history and community heritage – with an external project. Community History, a twelve-week Level 6 (3rd Year) module which first ran in 2002–2003, involved students being 'attached' to community-based history projects in Sheffield and the wider South Yorkshire region. Their brief – which was negotiated between all parties – was to produce an output 'of use' to that project.[1] Students could choose to work individually or as part of a pair or small group, as long as their contribution could be identified (and assessed) as a discreet component of the project. Typically, they undertook small pieces of research or oral history interviews.[2] This module was developed with the support of HEA (Higher Education Academy) History Subject Centre Teaching Development Grants, which enabled me to research the exponential growth of community history projects in the region in the years surrounding the Millennium.[3] This development was due in large part to the emergence of two funding streams: the Heritage Lottery Fund and European bodies which were financing regeneration initiatives, in which community-based history was identified as a useful 'capacity building' tool.[4] A second grant enabled me to work out a relationship between such projects and my students.

While I was initially inspired to develop Community History through a straightforward desire to make connections between the university and the wider public, it soon became clear that this form of 'work-related learning' presented considerable potential in terms of the development of specific skills and a general 'capability set' valued by employers (Hinchliffe and Jolly, 2011). With the arrival of the 'e4e' (education for employability) agenda, the community history model became central to the 'employability' strategy of the History group at

SHU. Thus, Community History was imported to Level 5 (2nd year), where it was developed in the shape of a year-long module which combines experience of working on an external project with a careers management component involving external speakers from public history fields and taught sessions on presentations, CV writing, personal statements, career action planning etc. Finally, in 2013–2014, I used the same model to develop Northern Soul: regional identities in the North of England, 1800–2000. Here, the public history component is a central part of a twelve-week level 6 module which focuses on the history of the north of England and enables critical exploration of the significance of community heritage to social and economic regeneration in the region.

All of these modules are part of a history programme at SHU which focuses on British, European and global history in the making of the modern world since the late eighteenth century. Apart from Applied History and the final-year dissertation, all modules run for one semester (12 weeks). There is also a core of research skills modules, running through all three years of the degree programme. Students are assessed by a varied diet, which is the equivalent of 2000-word essays and a 2-hour, 2-question exam at Levels 4 and 5 and 3000-word essays and a 3-hour 3-question exam at Level 6, but which also includes analyses of primary sources, presentations, posters etc. The community history modules are generally assessed by reports, presentations and a portfolio of project work.

In extensive end-of-module surveys conducted over the past few years, students have identified a range of benefits involved in undertaking public history projects. As might be expected, they frequently emphasise the value of such modules in terms of employability. This involves the development of skills and (for some) an opening up of whole new fields of career possibilities. Students often do not know that the skills they gain as part of their history degrees are valued by employers in a range of fields. In the words of one student:

> Historical research requires you to absorb a large volume of material and then think critically about the information presented. Through completing the project on the community history module it made me

realise that these skills are valuable assets to have in the work place (3rd year student).

Many students assume they will become secondary school history teachers because they have been told that teaching is what history graduates do. Lectures by external speakers in history-related careers (archival work, museums, journalism, for example) and careers management sessions run by the careers service which emphasise the relevance of the historian's skills to work in the Civil Service, local government, marketing and more, all serve to broaden students' conceptions of possible future careers.

Perhaps a more surprising but nonetheless pleasing outcome of the surveys concerns the emphasis placed by students on the role of public history modules in giving them a greater appreciation of what it means to work as a historian. As the following quotations suggest, students have frequently reported feeling that they are better historians at the end of their public history projects:

> This module has allowed me to experience some of the processes used in order to be an effective historian trying to source information for yourself. It has put into practice many of the skills that I have used when researching essays, but has furthered these with me having to consider their usefulness and trying to create a more complete picture, rather than trying to answer a rather closed question (3rd year student).

> Producing some work which will be used for a historical purpose has made me feel that I am now a true historian. Instead of researching for an essay, I have worked on a project which will help other people's research. This has made me a more effective historian (3rd year student).

This can be understood in terms discussed by Lendol Calder in his critique of the excessive focus placed by history lecturers on covering great swathes of history – the content – at the expense of process. Calder argues that a focus on 'uncoverage' – spending more time on fewer topics, exploring primary and secondary sources, asking questions about the creation of historical arguments – allows us to expose those critical elements of our practice that are traditionally hidden away: the process of inquiry, the difficulties and dead-ends,

the issues of interpretation and the instability of historical narrative (Calder, 2006). Public history projects offer another way of approaching the issue of 'uncoverage', enabling students to see principles of historical research in ways sometimes obscured by standard content-led modules.

Scholarship on 'crossing' between educational worlds can throw further light on the capacity of movement between academic and public history to enable students to develop a clearer conception of the practices of both disciplinary fields and so create new identities as historians.[5] Explorations of public history as a different genre from academic history can enable reflection upon the academic method, clarifying the processes by which history is created. Thus, as is suggested by the following quotations, the value of the public history project can be seen not just in terms of placements and employability, but in enabling reflection on the discipline of history itself:

> I think that the whole module has provided insight into the way that history works, not just in terms of standard essay writing but in regard to how you shape a piece of history that will do more than gain a mark. (3rd year student).

> This has shown to me that the skills that I have been developing can be applied to real settings ... it makes them feel more worthwhile. (2nd year student).

> The module has given me a better understanding of the purpose of history. In traditional modules we're taught the necessary skills but never given a sense of why it's important historians do certain things. (3rd year student).

The focus here is on history with a purpose; a project that does more than contribute to a final grade. Indeed, one outcome I did not anticipate was that students would value aspects of their community history projects more than their academic work and would use the former to critique the absence of 'real-world impact' in the latter. This has required careful management; doubting the value of academic history is not the best place to be in the final year of a

degree programme! Thus, I now place great emphasis in both modules on the idea of history being conducted in different genres and the relevance for them all of the skills of the academic historian.

A number of comments address very directly the value that students place on the significance of history in the contemporary world:

> It's made history seem more real to me, not just things written in a book. (3rd year student).

> My overall feeling about this work was that it was beneficial to me in terms of good marks and experience but more importantly I felt I was contributing to something else, something bigger than my degree. It was an experience and opportunity to contribute to something, which felt good. Traditional essays and exams don't allow us to create something unique which has a purpose. This module did and therefore the work, to me, feels like an invaluable experience. (2nd year student).

> I found through this module that community history is more than just a study of local history. It is a method of bringing together and celebrating a community which academic history does not do. Through this experience I think academic history can be static and its purpose is not always obvious. (2nd year student).

The desire to 'celebrate' a community might ring alarm bells for some academic historians. On the one hand, it recalls long-standing academic criticism of 'local history' that focuses on uncritical story-telling and an absence of contextualisation within the national or global picture (Beckett, 2007: 192–93, 196–97). Indeed, Jo Guldi and David Armitage have recently identified as problematic the absence of the *long durée* in much historical research (Guldi & Armitage, 2014). In addition, as was raised by colleagues at the international teaching and learning conference in Linköping in May 2014, it is possible that such a focus on the local community could be productive of a narrow regionalism which, in some national contexts, could be dangerous. As so many of our students at SHU are from South Yorkshire and neighbouring regions, this is a potential problem. However, placing local history projects within a framework

which highlights questions of the relationship between local, national and global histories can enable an exploration of 'emotional bottlenecks' fuelled by media messages about the distinction between Britain and the world, thus enabling the development of a critical citizenship in which students better understand the power of local and regional attachments (Middendorf et al., 2014).

As Peter Knupfer has argued, such work is predicated on a different set of priorities from those of academic history. Rather than focusing on filling a gap in the scholarship, community-based history asks how history serves the public and how historians communicate with a range of audiences (Knupfer, 2013: 1164). Moreover, recent work on the meaning and value of museums and heritage sites has emphasised the capacity of public history to foster an 'emotional link' with the past. As Lucy Taksa has argued in her work on Eveleigh Railway Works near Sydney, Australia and the STEAM Museum in Swindon, UK, when focused on social history, heritage can provide 'meaning, purpose and value' (Taksa, 2003: 394). As Laurajane Smith has also claimed, this sense of 'intangible heritage' can be especially poignant in the context of museums in post-industrial communities which encourage visitors to reflect on their past work identities and rich community life (Smith, 2006).[6] As suggested above, students engaged in public history projects often report feeling a similar emotional link which, they state, can be absent from mainstream modules.[7] Words such as 'pleasure', 'passion' and 'pride' feature heavily in their feedback:

> I was particularly motivated by the fact that the module allowed us, as historians, to be responsible for a project that had an influence on the wider community. The constant reminder of this as the final outcome of the module sustained my motivation and I then produced a project as my final piece of coursework which I was extremely proud of. (3rd year student).

> This module required a lot more attentiveness and commitment than more traditional ones because we had to keep on top of the project and constantly make it into something new in order to find all of the information that we required. This gave us much more involvement

with the material rather than just being given a basic reading list because we were having to consider all different angles [...] This has made me feel extremely proud of this project because I feel between the three of us we have successfully met and exceeded the criteria. (3rd year student).

The transcription was long and arduous and extremely time consuming, but once done there was a sense of achievement which has been unique amongst my modules this semester. I think this project has definitely been the highlight of my module choices... Despite the work load being high, and without sounding melodramatic, I think [we] will have gained more than just points and grades from this module. Although it has been hard, it has also been a lot of fun and I would definitely consider helping on another community research project in the future. (3rd year student).

This raises interesting questions about the potential of public history to harness emotional engagement and, indeed, the place of emotion and the self in the learning process (see Booth and Booth, 2011). It suggests that moving beyond a narrow focus on employability 'skills' towards more fundamental issues concerning confidence, self-efficacy and belonging through partnership work may have particular significance for first-generation university students from the local area (Thomas, 2002).

Interestingly, as suggested in some of the quotations above, a number of students explicitly related feelings of pleasure and satisfaction to their sense of ownership and control:

In the other modules I completed at university I always felt the lecturer was in control and any trouble I may be having was easy to resolve with the lecturer. I have been committed to each module I have completed at university, but I was more committed to Community History because it was my own independent project which I was responsible for... I felt free to make the decisions throughout the project and enjoyed the more independent approach to study. I was also more relaxed within the group and enjoyed class discussions more as I did not feel intimidated by anyone and that all the people in the class felt a passion for creating history rather than writing about other historians' opinions. (3rd year student).

Because it takes a different approach it is at first daunting because it is so different from how we are usually taught and assessed. However, I think because we take control of the project it feels like we have been involved in creating the project. In turn this helps us evaluate what we could have done differently after and to be responsible for how well it goes. I think the teaching at the beginning of the module is good because it prepares us for the module but the choice we get of projects and the way we conduct much of the research was enjoyable and exciting. (3rd year student).

As Alan Booth has argued, while achieving a balance between structure and freedom, independence and interdependence can be challenging, a degree of choice and participation is essential for the development of a positive context for learning (Booth, 2003: 67–86). In the words of one student who has since gone on to study for a PhD which focuses on oral history, working on a community history project 'allowed me to find my own voice on public history matters' (3rd Year student).

Students as partners

Of course, involvement in public and community history projects does not automatically mean partnership and co-production. In the first instance, the range of available projects in any given year is dependent to a large extent upon existing relationships with projects; those with whom we have had a good relationship in the past, or new ones I have approached or who have made contact. Thus, there is a tension between wanting the students to have choice and ownership of their studies while needing to keep the module manageable. This

FIGURE 2: *A community history website: South Yorkshire Through Time*

year has seen the launch of a community history website, South Yorkshire Through Time (www.southyorkshirethroughtime.org.uk), which is a collaboration between myself and public historians in the region. The purposes of the website are manifold. For SHU, it provides a context for public engagement and editorial and other project management opportunities for history students. This is one way of dealing with the issue of choice: students can undertake a project of their choosing, but it is within the confines of the website and is therefore more manageable for me as module tutor. Furthermore, students can choose their own level of engagement. They can contribute to a pre-defined project, for example, or they can join an editorial team and engage in decision-making about the focus and future direction of the website.

Recent research into student learning has reinforced the argument that students who are co-producers in projects are more likely to experience a sense of involvement with their studies. They are more likely to be active and deep learners who place emphasis on the process as well as the final product, and to report enjoyment of feeling part of a community rather than feeling isolated as an individual learner (McCulloch, 2009: 177). As Healey et al. have

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argued, co-production offers a range of benefits, including a sense of empowerment, an enthusiasm for enhancement activities, a greater confidence and a stronger sense of identity. They write that:

> partnership represents a sophisticated and effective approach to student engagement because it offers the potential for a more authentic engagement with the nature of learning itself and the possibility for genuinely transformative learning experiences for all involved.

Co-production can develop a sense of shared enterprise and ultimately, a 'partnership learning community' (Healey, Flint and Harrington, 2014: 19–20, 8) which has the potential for enhancing students' understanding of citizenship in the world beyond the university.

The issue remains, however, of how to move from a position of students as participants in community-based history projects to students as partners in the co-production of public history. The question of how to embed the website within my two public history modules, Applied History (Level 5) and Northern Soul (Level 6), was the focus of a Higher Education Academy-funded project in 2013–2014. I gathered student responses by adapting my original end-of-module questionnaire to include questions on the co-production of research. My main interest was in what it would *feel like* for students to be partners in the continued development of the website: What would they be doing? How would it be different from their usual academic work? The questionnaires were then followed up with focus group discussions.

Students taking my final year module, Northern Soul, were enthusiastic about the website. They were very interested in the employability dimension of the module, as suggested by the following comments:

> It is a good way to get experience and to showcase your skills when you are going for jobs.

> I feel like I am happy to have all the help I can get when it comes to my employability!

They liked having South Yorkshire Through Time as a focus and found this preferable to the requirement to produce a free-standing public history project, which they saw as interesting but potentially rather vague:

> It gives the project a bit more purpose.

> It feels a bit more focused. Otherwise I am producing it essentially for myself. Then I can use it in interviews etc.

They particularly liked the idea of South Yorkshire Through Time operating as the fall-back option:

> I like the idea of setting up South Yorkshire Through Time as the default option, but students can still be free to choose projects that focus on public history outside of South Yorkshire.

While project work received the thumbs up, however, Level 6 students emphatically did not want more choice. Instead, they wanted me, as module leader, to specify a range of possible projects from which they could choose. The reasons for this concerned the timing of the module in the second semester of their final year. They were feeling the pressure, not least of dissertation work. They did not want another substantial piece of work where every aspect of it was their responsibility, nor where group work was compulsory. Thus, contrary to my expectations, Level 6 Northern Soul students were keen to participate in South Yorkshire Through Time but did not want to be full partners in the project.

Like the Level 6 students, Level 5 Applied History students valued the employability dimension:

> It sets you apart from other people if you've been involved in another project.

> It shows that you have got involved and can produce individual work.

> This is actually something you can talk about in a real-world context.

They also liked the purposefulness of the project:

> Your history research is actually being used. You're not just doing it for the sake of it, and it makes you want to work more because it has purpose and is more real than anything you have done.

They liked the idea of a list of suggested topics, with the proviso that students could shape a proposal on a different topic if they so wished. But they were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about partnership. Students suggested the possibility of forming an editorial team and taking responsibility for planning activities for the coming year. The idea of running a day conference on a topical theme – World War One and commemoration, for example – held great appeal.

> I want to go into marketing probably so it'd be nice to have more input in that, but at the same time do the history side of it. If we are talking about something which is good for the CV, then I'd be able to say I was there at the meeting where this was designed...

Others suggested using social media such as Twitter and Instagram to publicise the website and specific events. They also liked the idea of writing for the website and working with community history groups:

> We can do design, or writing, or management or all of them and history can link all of those.

The flexibility of the website in terms of generating bespoke projects which meet students' own interests was therefore very appealing to Level 5 students.

Conclusion

It is important to heed feedback that demonstrates that not all students wish to be partners in community-based history projects; that at certain times in their academic careers, this requirement could produce more stresses and pressures. However, students nonetheless see involvement in public and community-based history projects as extremely beneficial. Benefits range from the straightforward development of employability 'skills' and the experience of work-

related learning, to more fundamental issues of identity, confidence and engagement with the discipline. I am struck particularly by the repetition in student feedback of the phrase 'more than'. Involvement in community history projects enables the development of a more complex understanding of history, 'more than what we did in the first and second years'. At the same time, such projects are 'more than just a study of local history', but show the significance of history to communities. Ultimately, involvement in community history projects can involve an emotional and intellectual engagement that provides 'more than just points and grades'. This research suggests that public and community-based history can offer a valuable way of moving towards a more holistic conception of history education.

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[1] I emphasise 'attachment' rather than 'placement' because the latter is suggestive of regular attendance at an external place of work and supervision by an external partner. As different projects provide different levels of input, it is important to manage students' (and projects') expectations. All remain under my supervision.

[2] See for example, Helen Dobson (2007), 'Women of Kiveton Park', http://www.kivetonwaleshistory.co.uk/heritage/women-of-kiveton-park

[3] As Mike Winstanley's essay suggests, community history projects were not available in the mid-1990s. For his innovative work placement modules at the University of Lancaster, see Winstanley (1996).

[4] For community-history and regeneration in South Yorkshire, see article by Kim Marwood on South Yorkshire Through Time, www.southyorkshirethroughtime.org.uk, forthcoming.

[5] The concept of 'figured worlds', introduced by Holland et al. (1998), is adapted in a useful way by Urrieta Jr. (2007) and Cecil Robinson (2007).

[6] This has been confirmed by work at SHU on well-being (Alison Twells, Penny Furness, Sadiq Bhanbhro, Christopher Dayson and Maxine Gregory, 'Community-based history and well-being', forthcoming).

[7] For some similar points about emotional engagement and the value of history in the context of student field trips, see Ludvigsson (2012). See also discussion of the value of engagement with history in emotional as well as intellectual terms in Booth and Booth (2011).

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How Does a Historian Read a Scholarly Text and How do Students Learn to do the Same?

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CRITICAL THINKING IS a core skill for all students of history, and to become successful practitioners students need to learn to read in ways commensurate with the scholarly standards of the discipline. Whilst learning to read scholarly texts constitutes an essential part of this process, there are questions about how far conventional methods of teaching this meet the needs of the majority of students and how the practice of reading can best be supported. This at least is the case with history education in German universities. However, due to the fundamental changes the German educational system has experienced for more than a decade now, programs have begun to be initiated that ask university lecturers and advisors to reflect and develop methods of teaching from a discipline perspective with a very practical twist. At Bielefeld University a program called 'richtig einsteigen' (get started well) focuses on supporting students in the first two to three semesters of their Bachelor study program to master the transition to university, a challenge that has occupied history and humanities educators in many countries in recent years (cf. Skinner, 2014; Atherton, 2006; Booth, 2001). One part of the program aims to give students the opportunity to acquire and develop the domain-specific literacy of reading and writing in the discipline(s) they choose to study. Since reading a monographic scholarly study and analyzing it critically is one of the first written examinations history students at Bielefeld University have to take, the work of the 'richtig einsteigen' staff in the department of history has focused on supporting students to master this challenge. This article describes demonstrations by two historians of how they approach a monographic study unfamiliar to

them and how students practice in workshops what they have observed. I will start with some remarks about the framework of what is presented and to conceptualizations of reading and teaching reading common in the discipline of history.

Changes and developments in the German educational system

Today high school students in nearly all of the German federal states take a centrally organized examination in order to receive their 'Abitur', the major entrance qualification for higher education (Hochschulzugangsberechtigung). In recent years pre-Abitur-schooling has been shortened from 13 to 12 years in the Gymnasien (schools preparing for Abitur) and far more students of a cohort gain this qualification than some decades ago. In this context the group of students entering higher education has been growing and become more heterogenous (Autorengruppe Bildungsbericht, 2014: 91, 93, 119, 125, 133). At the same time the situation of universities has changed considerably. The necessity to procure research funding has grown and competition among institutions has intensified. Simultaneously higher education has changed due to the Bologna Process. Until the middle of the first decade of this century German universities used to offer mainly 'Magister' and 'Diplom' degree programs. Since then they have adapted to a BA/MA study system. The advantages and drawbacks of these new programs are still being discussed, as is the question if and how many of the students entering universities today are sufficiently prepared and competent to study ('studierfähig') and if schools or universities have a responsibility to help them develop these competences (Asdonk, Kuhnen & Bornkessel, 2013; Köller, 2013). The financial situation of the universities is also a pressing issue, and this makes the nature of the student-teacher relationship a source of tension. In this situation the federal government in cooperation with the federal states has designed a contract aimed at improving and assuring the quality of teaching in higher education (Qualitätspakt Lehre). Since 2012 Bielefeld University has taken part in the 'richtig einsteigen' (get

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started well) program in the attempt to give beginner students better orientation and support them in developing discipline-specific literacy.

Reading in the basic courses of medieval/early modern and modern history at the University of Bielefeld

To read scholarly texts on history is a basic activity of all professional historians. It is an indispensable part of historical research and the basis for participating in scholarly discourse. To read scholarly texts on history is something students are asked to do routinely in the course of their studies, be it in order to prepare discussion in class or to write research papers and essays.

At Bielefeld University, the year-long basic courses in medieval/early modern and modern history are the main place in the undergraduate study programs for history majors and minors where students are expected to learn to read scholarly texts on history. These courses are conducted by two lecturers and center around a topic (e.g. 'politics and religion', 'eating and drinking', 'history of work – work in history'). It is not easy to fine-tune these courses over time, since teachers are encouraged to establish new courses from year to year and the co-teaching teams often do not remain the same. The courses aim to introduce students to the history of these epochs and the basic methods and means of historians. The module description of these introductory courses allocates to the first semester the task of enabling students to learn – among other things – to read scholarly literature on history. The critical analysis of a monographic study constitutes the written examination demanded at the end of the first semester of the course. Students are expected to demonstrate that they are able to identify a monograph's central statements and the argumentation, to analyze which primary sources have been used to which end, to see how the author describes the state of research and how she/he positions her/his work in it.

A tutorial led by senior BA or MA students gives students the chance to explore materials, learn the more formal parts of scholarly work and practice work strategies. In regard to reading, tutors

commonly provide tips such as the use of methods like the SQ3R (Robinson, 1962) or advice on how to develop systems of taking notes.

Teachers often express dissatisfaction with the amount, intensity and result of the reading their students do. They find only some students are well enough prepared for class to discuss the texts and to use what they have read for further tasks, and some do not attend regularly since attendance in class is no longer obligatory at universities in Northrhine Westphalia, the state in which Bielefeld University is situated. Students seem to find the required readings too long and too difficult and fail to see the relevance of reading (all of) them. Probably some are overwhelmed with the amount of text and topics they are confronted with, and do not know how to cope with reading articles or chapters that are much longer than they were asked to read in school. It also seems that some students do not find the discussion of scholarly texts in class useful for their learning. Concerning the critical analysis of the monograph, many teachers say that even though quite a few students succeed in summarizing the content, often enough student papers show no differentiation between relevant and irrelevant information or statements, fail to identify central statements and the line of argument, and show little understanding of what kind of text a historiographical monograph is. Commonly the evaluation of the monograph focuses mainly on its style and its readability, not on scholarly aspects (Lehrendenbefragung WS 2012/13).

As staff involved in the history department's 'richtig einsteigen' program, a colleague and I were asked to take over parts of the tutorials. We decided in the winter of 2012/13 to offer workshops that prepare students in the basic courses for the analysis of the monograph they have to write as an exam. These workshops formed an integral part of the course in that they consumed time within the existing tutorial. Later we also started to coach the tutors. What I want to describe here is how we prepare for the workshop in class in cooperation with the teachers, and some elements of the workshop itself.

Scholarly views on reading historical texts

The development of critical reading is a fundamental skill for all humanities students, as Saranne Weller (2010) has pointed out. The starting point of our own work with history students were publications by Sam Wineburg (Wineburg, 2003) and David Pace (Pace, 2004) which inspired us to develop the procedures presented here. Wolfgang Schnotz's text (Schnotz, 1996) providing an overview of the conceptualization of reading from a cognitive psychology and linguistics perspective helped us to reflect on the results of our experiment. Here reading is understood as the process of mentally (re)constructing a text and at the same time constructing an understanding of that text. There are several theoretical models of how this (re)construction is achieved which I cannot present here in any detail. In most of them it is assumed that cognitive schemes or mental models influence the process of construction. What is already known influences what is perceived and how it is processed. Schemes and models that exist in a reader's mind frame the interpretation of what is read. What is read is compared and aligned with what the reader already knows. It is inevitable that a person interprets what she/he reads in terms of how she/he interprets and understands the world respectively certain aspects of it already (Schnotz, 1996: 972-982).

It is obvious that professional historians possess different background knowledge than students. But it is noteworthy that even if they have less background knowledge concerning the actual topic, professional historians do a better job reading than the best high school students. Sam Wineburg gained this insight from his research on students and historians reading historical documents. Historians have a far better notion of historical documents being 'social interactions set down on paper that can be understood only by reconstructing the social context in which they occurred. The comprehension of text reaches beyond words and phrases to embrace intention, motive, purpose and plan – the same set of concepts we use to decipher human actions.' (Wineburg, 2003: 66-67) So the ways in which historians interact with documents differ greatly from those of students; the experts working out intention, persuasion,

polemic, intended audience's reactions and more, while students unaware of this, look mainly for information.

My experiment similarly suggests that professional historians do not just have a better notion of historical documents but also a far better understanding of scholarly texts on history than students. Even when they hardly know anything about the topic and are unfamiliar with the period covered, their experience gives them models or schemes that influence how they read, what they select from what they read, and how they make sense of it. In particular their knowledge of genres and their understanding that scholarly historiographical texts report on historical research and try to convince the academic readership of the plausibility of their central statements is an advantage compared to the inexperienced student. So professional historians, as readers aiming at recognizing the quality and findings of a historiographical text, will look for the topic, central claim or statement, research question, main terms used, main group of sources used, some arguments to support the central statements and often also what standpoint is argued against (cf. Pace, 2004: 14-15). And regardless of the content, they will identify much more easily than students pointers and signposts indicating these elements central to most published scholarly work in the discipline.

Recent publications emphasize the importance of prior knowledge, worldview and learning experience for the way in which students construct meaning from texts on history. Porat (2004) observes that readers incorporate new information into their pre-existing 'cultural comprehension' of a topic, even if the information itself contradicts their previous interpretation. By restricting the meaning of new information, readers may stick to their pre-narratives of the subject and the world. VanSledright and Afflerbach (2000) show that reading revisionist texts may lead students to question and reconstruct their older interpretation, but this is by no means a given; simply reading new texts is no guarantee of shifting often strongly-held beliefs and assumptions. Middendorf et al. (2014) further emphasize that not only pre-existing worldviews but also procedural preconceptions concerning 'the nature and function of history' hinder students from learning to think like historians.

Decoding the Disciplines

As the preceding paragraphs have illustrated, it is important to help students to understand the mental moves historians make in their work (cf. Wineburg et al., 2013). The 'decoding the disciplines' methodology is used by Middendorf and Pace to underline the importance of appreciating that studying an academic discipline requires teaching that is aware of the specific ways of thinking and acting in that field. The question 'How does an expert do these things?' becomes a pivot for teaching. It relates directly to insights Wineburg has gained from his research on how professional historians read in comparison with high school students and compared to scholars from other disciplines (Wineburg, 2001; 2003). It proceeds from the assumption that experts often take their way of doing things to be so self-evident that they fail to show and explain it to the students sufficiently. Moreover, experts are sometimes hardly conscious of operations and routines that are so familiar to them that they have become habitual.

The Decoding process starts out by identifying major bottlenecks to learning, then finding out what exactly experts would do to master tasks in question, show students how they do it and model tasks that allow them to experience the procedure historians undertake. Students need opportunities to practice these operations and receive feedback. Teachers have to think how they motivate students to stay active in the process of practicing, find out how they can tell if their students have mastered the operations and should share with others what they found out (Middendorf & Pace, 2004: 1-7; Pace, 2012). In the Indiana University History Learning Project these suppositions have led lecturers to identify seven major bottlenecks in the students' understanding and practice of historical work and to work collaboratively on a curriculum that supports students in developing essential historical skills. (Diaz et al., 2007; ibid., 2008).

German professors demonstrate to students how they begin to read a book

In Bielefeld we took the idea of showing students how an expert does these things literally and asked teachers of basic courses to demonstrate in class how they approach the reading and analysis of a monographic study that is unfamiliar to them and the topic of which lies outside of their field of specialization.

During the first ten minutes of a regular seminar session the class's teacher waits outside. In this time students are asked to reflect and jot down some notes about how they normally proceed when they read a scholarly text. They are then presented with a set of five monographs, from which they choose one for the demonstration. The topics of these monographs lie outside the teacher's field of specialization. Then the teacher is asked in. The task is to demonstrate to the class the first fifteen minutes she/he spends with this book, verbalizing what she/he is doing, what she/he looks for and notices, having in mind the need to analyze the book critically, as the students will have to in their end-of-term papers. The filming of these demonstrations impresses on the students that they must follow some important steps in reading a book and it allowed us to produce a video clip highlighting common features of such demonstrations. It shows Prof. Christian Büschges and Dr. Vito Gironda approaching and inspecting a monograph (http://youtu.be/gYYC72R55XE). After the demonstration students share their observations and reflect on what they have seen. Finally they give written feedback on the session.

What were the characteristics of these demonstrations? How did the historians asked approach the book they were given? The demonstrations had much in common: They looked at the title, subtitle, at the book cover, already noting key terms and any clues pointing towards the author's methodological approach. They checked the preface, mainly to see if they were dealing with a dissertational thesis or a habilitation (second book necessary for qualifying for professorship at German universities), and also looking for the social and institutional context in which the author wrote the book. They looked at the table of contents in some length depending on how

detailed it was, noticing what was covered. They started to survey the introduction, explaining that they were looking for certain things: What is going to happen in this book? What is to be shown? What's new about this book? What new insight does it give? They asked for 'method': How are things going to be undertaken? What are the central terms used, saying things like: 'I note these things, put them to my memory, will see how the author understands and explains these terms.' In the video Vito Gironda says at one point: 'Up to page 17 I haven't found anything I am interested in.' Shortly after he says: 'Ah, here it comes. The author claims to want to show [...]. Now I'm curious to know how he wants to show this and I expect him to explain exactly [...].' When told that he had only two minutes left Christian Büschges turned from the introduction to the conclusion of the book, saying: 'I will see if I find some crisp/luscious propositions.' He then surveyed the last pages and concluded that he was 'not turned on very much' by what he has seen.

After the demonstrations the students were asked what things they found significant and to what extent their own way of reading a scholarly text differed from what they saw. Among the remarks made were: 'I was impressed that Mr. Büschges turned from the introduction directly to the conclusion. I would never have dared that. That would be a no-go reading a novel.' Another remarked: 'Up to now I never really paid attention to the introduction of a text. I believe that this will help me to read academic publications more efficiently.' In the written answers to the question 'Do you feel reassured in your way of reading?' many comments pointed out differences between the students' reading strategies and those of the teacher. A typical observation was: 'Due to the little experience I have, my way to do it resembles "reading" while Vito rather looks for information he is interested in.'

Student responses to a question about what they wanted to adopt to improve their own way of reading included many saying they wanted to prepare better before starting to read, ask more questions of the text, read more selectively, read introduction and end in order to get a general idea and to know where the book is headed. Not all students mentioned or wrote about transformative insights they

gained. Some simply felt reassured because they already searched for a general idea by studying title, book cover, table of contents and such like or recognized that their existing approach to reading only needed to become a little more systematic. Nevertheless at least half of the participating students (about 60 took part in the demonstrations) wrote that their reading strategies differed from those of the experts. They had become more aware through having the opportunity to reflect on how they read and gain ideas about how to approach texts differently.

Workshops on reading historiographical monographs

How can reading strategies that professional historians practice be transferred into tasks that allow students to improve their own reading? Workshops in Bielefeld in which students start to work on their 'critical analysis of a historiographical monograph' allowed us to experiment with this. These are some of the elements used:

First students reflect on how experts approach scholarly books. Experts investigate title and back cover, year of publication, connect what they read with their previous knowledge, become curious, ask questions, get an 'overview' / a general idea of the book, investigate the book for certain aspects or details, want to discover how the monograph is 'made' respectively how it 'works' (main question, used sources, historiographical approach etc.), what the central hypotheses/ statements are and what arguments the author supplies to support the central hypotheses.

From this students are encouraged to do the same step by step. They are asked to investigate the title: 'What is the topic? What do you already know about the topic? Can you decide which period of time and which geographical region is covered? What do you already know about this time? And this region? What could be interesting about this topic in this time and space?' Two students work together investigating the titles of their books.

They are asked to read the book cover: What does it reveal concerning central statements, research question, methodological approach, used sources, etc.? Two students tell each other what they

have found out, what they have understood, what they find remarkable or interesting.

Study the introduction: 'What are the major parts? What is dealt with in which part and chapter? Do you get an idea of how the parts are connected? What is the common thread that runs through the whole work? Do you get an idea what the author is aiming at?' Two students explain their findings to each other.

The students discuss what can be expected from the introduction of a scholarly monograph. They receive a handout that says:

> What information do authors often give in the introduction of a study?
> - About the 'Thema' (topic) and 'Untersuchungsgegenstand' (subject matter), 'Themeneingrenzung' (how the subject matter is narrowed down),
> - 'Fragestellung' (central questions), 'Zielsetzung' (objectives) and hypotheses
> - 'Forschungsstand' (current state of research), that means it is reported, which studies about the topic already exist and which positions historians have taken so far, what the difference is between their own study and those that have already been undertaken.
> - What sources do they want to analyze in order to check their hypotheses?
> - Which methodological approach do they use?
> - How do they announce the way they will structure their monograph and indicate the steps in which their argument will unfold?
> - How do they argue for the relevance of their topic and shed light on their 'Erkenntnisinteresse' (cognitive interest)?

Where and how can these elements be identified in an introduction? Students are shown first sentences of some paragraphs from the introduction of a monograph. This is an example of one set of sentences from Rebekka Habermas (2000), *Männer und Frauen des Bürgertums. Eine Familiengeschichte 1750–1850*:

> 'Kocka's statement that […] hasn't lost any of its plausibility.'
> 'The question […] has still not been answered by research. […]'

'It's a mistake not just made by researchers of the bourgoisie to ignore the discrepancy between […] and […], instead of making it the starting point of analysis. […]'

Question: What does the author describe and discuss in these three paragraphs?

Students survey the introduction of the monograph they have chosen, reading the subheadings, reading the first two sentences of paragraphs. If they find passages that fulfill the functions mentioned in the handout they indicate this through marginal notes. They choose a passage the function of which they could identify, ask an appropriate question, e.g. 'What is said about the current state of research?', read the passage looking for answers and take notes which can be transferred into text later on.

In order to prevent students from relying too heavily on reading only bits and pieces of a text, we explain that these steps will help make them aware of the function of paragraphing. The technique of reading the first two sentences of a paragraph should not replace the reading of major parts of a text and should lead to reading with a question in mind.

In order to help students to get an overall view or a bird's eye view of a study they receive the following figure, an empty one as well as one filled in with the results of the analysis of an article they have discussed in class before, so they have an example of what results using the diagram might produce. We encourage students to place the results of their analysis into the empty diagram or to create a poster that contains the same elements. We explain that these are elements the professional historian will look for if he or she is going to analyze a book critically.

How do students view this process of teaching critical reading? Only a few students complained that they already knew all this. Most, however, found it helpful to undertake the small steps required and to discuss their thinking with others. In their written feedback many participants pointed out that they gained a clearer idea of how to approach the task of critically analyzing the monograph, what to expect from the genre, what to look for and how

A historiographical text seen analytically:

Topic:

Sources / groups of sources:

Theory referred to:

Method:

Starting point

Objectives:

Main question:

Subject matter:

Regional and temporal limits:

Former research positions:
1)
2)
3)

Claim / central statement:

Argument 1:

Evidence for argument 1

Argument 2:

Evidence for argument 2

Argument 3:

Evidence for argument 3

Dr. Friederike Neumann,
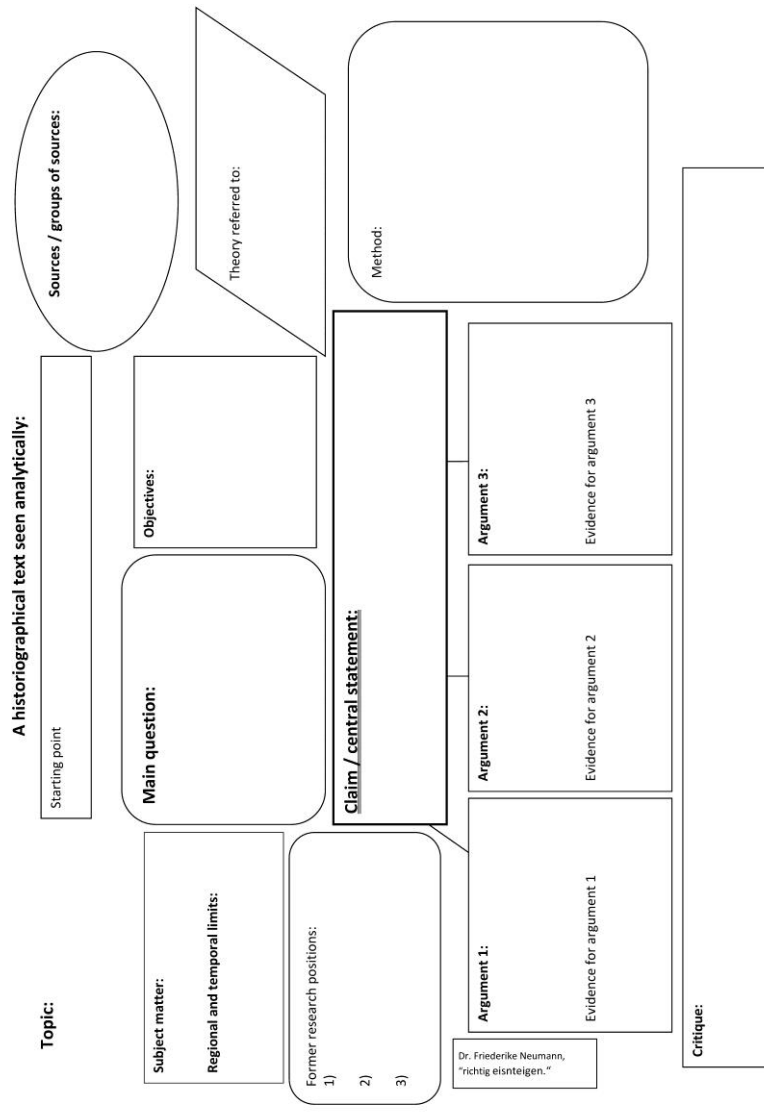"richtig eisnteigen."

Critique:

FIGURE 3: *A historiographical text seen analytically*

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they could approach the task systematically. In each workshop some students mentioned that they found the figure helpful in enabling them to examine a text from a bird's eye view.

Even if the better part of the feedback students provided after the workshop is positive, however, we do not know enough about the effect demonstration and workshop have on the papers students hand in. We have not undertaken a systematical assessment of how these strategies helped students to master the task – something that forms part of the decoding the disciplines cycle. But there are some pointers. Vito Gironda, one of the teachers filmed, said that students who did not attend the workshop did not succeed in writing effective papers. One student who did not participate in the workshop let us know twice that she 'regretted bitterly' not having attended it, appreciating another workshop she attended.

Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from the teaching experiments described above? The practical demonstration of how an expert starts to read a book was positively received by the students and their written feedback showed that many felt they had gained considerable insights from it. The workshop in which the students imitated what the expert does step by step and discussed their experience was also appreciated by most students. They seemed to become more clearly aware that a professional way of reading scholarly texts on history is not just a 'reading', but an investigation in which the professional reader uses a certain set of questions and a systematic way of proceeding to inspect a text. We still have to undertake a systematic inquiry into how well students who followed demonstrations and attended the workshops did in their written analysis of a scholarly monograph. It is likely that other obstacles to fulfilling the task remain. The seven steps of the decoding the disciplines approach can, however, provide a useful guiding framework to develop ways to support students to get through these bottlenecks to learning and studying. Concerning the issue of transition we have to learn more about what students entering our institution have done in school,

what kind of texts they have read, and how they worked with them. Furthermore we should find out which 'procedural preconceptions' (Middendorf et al., 2014) German students have of history as a discipline and what they expect a scholarly text on history to be, in order better to understand the difficulties they have with the reading tasks. However, to have experts demonstrate how and to what end they work with different genres and to model tasks that allow students to learn to do the same, clearly offers a promising practical way for history lecturers to make a potentially transformative intervention in their students' learning at a critical point in their undergraduate life.

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The Development of Students' Critical Thinking through Teaching the Evolution of School History Textbooks

A case study

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I N MODERN RUSSIAN historiography the traditional methodology of objectivism dominates. Most historians take the view that 'historical truth' exists and so that history has accurate and direct lessons to provide to contemporary society. This view is translated into the school history education and generally supported by teachers. In Russia schoolteachers regard the textbook as the most important and reliable resource they have at their disposal for teaching history. And most consider making pupils remember what is written in the textbook to be their pre-eminent task. The American author James Loewen calls a similar tendency in the USA the 'tyranny of textbooks' (Loewen, 2000: 214). In Russia politically influential agencies, including the Duma, demand that in all Russian schools only one state-approved textbook should be used as a guarantee that the 'correct' ideological agenda will be implemented. And for political conservatives the only acceptable textbook is that which contains a patriotic narrative. This position is clearly in opposition to a conception of history didactics that regards the textbook not as a compendium of truth but as a place of memory. As the British experts in school textbooks Foster and Crawford put it, 'when an individual tells a story about their past they tend not to tell it in the way it happened, but in the way they choose to remember it – nations do exactly the same'. They suggest that the intellectual and

emotional relationships between a nation's present, future and past ensure that the powerful historical narratives in many textbooks are based upon a mixture of myth, remembrance and official knowledge (Foster and Crawford, 2006: 6). It is a conception grounded in constructivist approaches to textbook analysis. In my view the 'tyranny of the textbook' also arises partly from the lack of attention often paid to 'the textbook' in the training of teachers. Ideally, every teacher should take into consideration the constructed nature of textbooks: that any textbook is a cultural artifact which tells as much (if not more) about the present as the past. In the process of decoding its narrative(s), students can come to appreciate that it contains a 'truth' based on the ideas, and often stereotypes and bias, of a particular time and society, or at least social and power groups within it (Apple, 1982; Horsey et al., 2006; Lerner et al., 1995; Schlisser and Soysal, 2005; Berghahn and Schlisser, 1987; Foster and Crawford, 2006). This strong tradition of research on British and American school textbooks, their evolution and place in the educational process has been particularly helpful in illuminating these issues and in designing my own teaching course (see also Chancellor, 1970; Elson, 1964; Loewen, 1996; Marsden, 2001; Moreau, 2004; Nietz, 1961).

Regarded as one of important professional skills of the teacher, a pedagogically socio-cultural analysis of textbooks is directed to the development of students' critical thinking. Critical thinking is a slippery concept. On the one hand practitioners understand in a general way more or less what it means, on the other it is not very clear how exactly it should be defined. Since the 1960s critical thinking has become a leading concept in the field of education, especially in history teaching. But the term is prone to different interpretations. One can agree with Cutler (2006: 71) who poses the following questions: 'It is not uncommon for historians to say that they want to teach their students to be 'critical thinkers'. I have heard more than a few make this claim, but what does it mean? Exactly what do critical thinkers do? Is critical thinking in history different from critical thinking in other disciplines? The fundamental basis of critical thinking, it seems to me, lies in the ability of the individual

for reasoning, formulating and evaluating arguments of both their own and those coming from another person. Thus Missimer (1990: 31) stresses alternatives in thinking: 'critical thinking is consideration of alternative arguments in light of their evidence'. Though authors on critical thinking have never ignored the linguistic aspect of the problem, in the most recent research it has become more central. As Dauer (1989: 5) puts it, 'language is a primary instrument for thought and communication, and we are liable to mislead or miss something if we do not pay careful attention to the use of language'. This reminds us that critical analysis of textbooks involves close analysis of the language used by authors to construct narratives. In his influential book *Metahistory*, Hayden White proposed to study the works of historians in the same way as fiction. Such theorists as White or Roland Barthes contended that narrative is not a 'neutral' form into which content is stuffed, but is ideologically freighted. Narrative, they claimed, serves to impose coherence, continuity and closure on the messiness of life and of historian's sources; the historian then smoothes over the gaps and absences to create an 'effect of the real' (Clark, 2004: 86). The same approach may be applied to textbooks. Such analysis is essentially discursive; it is an attempt to find out what is 'on the top of a tongue', as the Polish historian and methodologist Topolski (1998: 12) suggests.

The course

What follows examines my experience in teaching an optional course 'The Evolution of the History School textbook in England and the USA' which covers the period from the second half of nineteenth century to the present day. In it I emphasize that the textbook is a socio-cultural phenomenon written in a certain context and often containing stereotypes and prejudices of its time. The cross-cultural approach, I suggest, helps in finding and overcoming stereotypes, educates for tolerance of different opinions, and allows students to participate in a dialogue of cultures. In 2009 I, with others, conducted experimental work with 5th year students of the faculty of history of Ushinskiy Pedagogical University in Yaroslavl in order to find out

how this course helps to develop their critical thinking and their competence in critical textbook analysis. The course included an introductory seminar, lectures and discussions on selected English and American textbooks, and student presentations. In seminars students became acquainted with the terminology and methods of textbook analysis and were invited to work intensively with one paragraph called 'The Caucasus War: Imam Shamil' in the chapter 'The Russian Empire in the Reign of Nicholas I' from the textbook *History of Russia* by Sakharov and Bokhanov (2003). The importance of taking into consideration linguistic tools was particularly emphasized.

The following list of questions was proposed to the students:

1. How are the causes of the war of Russia in Caucasus explained in the text?

2. How are the peoples of Caucasus accounted? In what words are the features of their nature, their way of life, their mentality described?

3. What do the authors say about the Caucasus war? What do they say about the ways and methods that both sides used to fight? How are the difficulties with which the Russian army met in the war, explained in the text?

4. Who are called "the enemies of Russia"? Why are they mentioned as enemies?

5. Do you find any similarities or analogies with the present?

6. Why is so much space given in the text to Shamil? What lessons should his biography (in the way in which it is presented) teach? What is, in your opinion, the symbolic meaning of his figure? In what words is it expressed?

7. How are the Russians, the royal family, Russia as a country described in the text?

8. What may be said about the using of the historical sources in this paragraph?

9. What are the visual materials given in the text? Are they presented as historical sources or simply to illustrate the authors' narrative? What impression do they create?

10. What are the political and moral lessons that are intended to be learned by Russian schoolchildren from this text?

A brief practical introduction was provided to constructivist theories, discursive analysis, ideas on decomposing the text, notions such as 'patriotic narrative', 'national narrative', and 'imperial narrative'. Though the task was unfamiliar and difficult for the students, most were enthusiastic in engaging with it. Most of the classes in the course were conducted as lectures with elements of discussion. The students were also familiarized with the educational contexts and English and American textbooks. Special attention was given to the so called cultural wars on textbooks, the debates on the content of school history education, and the new type of textbook that appeared in some European countries after the 1970s. In the last seminar the students presented their own final work based on skills they were intended to develop during classes.

How were we to evaluate the critical thinking developed in the class? Being skeptical about quantitative methods I looked for alternative modes of evaluation. Three main strategies were selected. In order to derive feedback on the teaching the students were given a simple task after each lecture. They were asked to write a very short paper ('surprise paper') stating in three to five points what had surprised them when listening to the lectures. I regard surprise as important stimulus to developing critical thinking about textbooks, and historical interpretations in general. It also facilitates more flexible teaching. The most important means of gauging the effectiveness of the course for critical thinking were the students' final (position) papers. In these the students made their own analysis of a self-selected paragraph in the modern Russian history school textbook. These were to show to what extent the students had managed to see the limits of the textbooks' narrative and how critical they were in their analysis of the text. Two students (who presented

the best final works) were selected for individual interviews held six months after the course when they had completed their studies.

The student experience

The analysis of the 'surprise papers' demonstrated that students were unsettled when they had to deal with something unknown or unusual to them. Their surprise provided a useful starting point for comparing the native and foreign textbooks. The students found that the system they knew and the textbooks to which they were accustomed were not the only ones possible and perhaps not the best. For some it was a surprise to understand that in teaching history schoolteachers are not simply getting their pupils to learn about past events but also through textbooks implanting certain moral, political and other ideas into the consciousness of the pupils. As one of the students put it, maybe in naive way, 'It is shocking to see the influence of textbooks on pupils' minds and how much it is possible to manipulate them, and they themselves will not understand it'. Some were surprised about the much smaller place that national history plays in other countries than in their own and students did not expect to find that before the second half of the nineteenth century the state did not interfere in education as much as it does today. One commented: 'To my mind the state in England should have taken the initiative in the field of school education much earlier'. Many students were surprised by the fact that in England teachers chose the textbooks according to their own understanding of events. Much surprise was expressed about the fact that English textbooks, especially earlier ones, could be very critical of the English monarchs. This arises from the fact that modern Russian textbooks in general avoid any negative characteristics of rulers. Most of the students could not imagine that in England there were no national standards before 1988. They were surprised to know that in the 1990s in the USA the debates over the standards of history education reached the level of cultural wars. The students were also surprised to learn about the features that distinguish modern Western textbooks from Russian: the tendency to avoid the author's narrative (in

England); a variety of visual sources; accent on skills; work with the documents, etc. One student, having in mind the English textbook being studied, wrote: 'I would really like to participate in a role play on the Peace of Versailles'.

In some cases students' amazement arose from modern discourses and bias. For instance it is possible to find the influence of 'religious', 'anti-American' and 'anti-Caucasian' discourses. When it was briefly mentioned by the teacher that in the American textbooks in the nineteenth century the white race had been called Caucasian, four students expressed their surprise. It may be explained by a negative stereotyping view of the Caucasian people shared by many Russians (in rude slang these peoples are called 'blacks'). The discussion on American textbooks revealed 'anti-American' stereotypes, at least in some works, for example those by Harold Rugg a left-wing American educationalist and author of school textbooks in the 1920–30s. Most of the students understood why these textbooks had been finally called 'anti-American' and one student commented: 'he was a very brave person, because he told the truth in spite of being strongly criticized. I think that our textbooks should be written in the same way'. In the situation in Russian society where religion is regarded even in official discourse as a main factor of morality and spiritual revival, it is easy to understand comments like these: 'it is surprising to learn about the skeptical attitude towards the use of religion in teaching history'; and 'it is surprising to hear about religion as a means of forming the moral consciousness of the lower classes of society'. Though the analysis of the student papers did not provide evidence of the development of a really critical mindset, it did demonstrate clearer understanding of the central ideas of the course. If this looks like a truism or at most a small victory, there is an importance in the simple statement made by one of the students: 'When working with the text it is necessary to pay attention to small details'.

Most students chose paragraphs to review from the textbook by Sakharov and Bokhanov, mentioned above. Two of the sixteen papers demonstrated no critical analysis at all, merely repeating what was written in the book in a very simplistic way. Fourteen students

realized that they should find links between the ideas of the textbook and the context in which it was produced. In three papers a very low level of such understanding and critical thinking was demonstrated, their authors for example not able to characterize the texts in the context of their time of construction but instead looking for direct correspondence between the time described in the paragraph and our own time. These students sometimes took into consideration not the broader forces at work but only concrete events that had happened in one year or another (including in one case the 'Olympic games in Torino in 2006 when the Russian team won the fourth place'). The analogies these students made showed a low level of historical consciousness. For instance one saw a direct connection between the policy of Catherine II and Putin: 'President V.V. Putin, like Catherine II, conducts reforms which Russia needs a lot; these reforms are necessary for the development of the civil society in our country, effective economy and the successful development of the society'. The student even provided a table to illustrate these links. Another made the parallel between Pugachev's rebellion and 'establishing order' in Chechnya.

The low level of critical thinking in some papers is demonstrated by the uncritical acceptance of a propagandistic rhetorical paradigm of the 'evil 90s' followed by Putin's salutary rule when Russia, as one student put it, 'got up from its knees'. Or, as another suggested: at the beginning of the twenty-first century 'Russia should have solved the problems of strengthening economic and political stability, and the national and social problems that accumulated in 1990s'. The period of 1990s is seen as a 'time of crisis' and one of the students goes so far as to compare the 1990s with the 'oprichnina' of Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century. At that time peasants left their villages looking for the defense from powerful boyars (nobles) and rich monasteries. 'Practically the same process had happened in Russia in 1990s', the student wrote. 'The textbook is written and published in 2003; it was the time of restoring the country, economically and geopolitically, of the strengthening of the vertical of power and a period of reforms'. Another student wrote: 'The beginning of the twenty-first century for Russia is a period of the

strengthening of the apparatus of the state, Presidency, international position of the country, enforcement of the struggle against the terrorist threats, the growth of the economic well-being of the population'. Only in one paper was the increasing pressure on the press and the limitation on the freedom of speech in today's Russia mentioned. Many students readily reproduced the language and stereotypes of official propaganda. The examples given above show that many students in the group are inclined to take the 'official' position about what happens in Russia for granted. In some papers evidence of ageism and nationalistic bias was also be found. Thus, one student wrote about the illustrations of the non-Russian (Siberian) peoples in the seventeenth century: chukcha and buryatka on the picture are 'already in old-age, or close to it. It would be better to give the pictures of the younger people or children smiling, or adults doing something useful'. It reflects, in my view, a demagoguery characteristic of contemporary official discourse on youth.

However, the majority of students' final papers, at least nine, show the development of a more critical attitude towards textbooks. Two others contain remarks showing movement towards critical thinking. At least eight students concluded that patriotic (in some cases, in their words, even nationalistic) narrative can be identified in their textbook. According to one of the students, the political system of Russia at the end of the nineteenth century is described in the textbook as 'a strong powerful empire overcoming all difficulties in a worthy manner'. Such an approach was especially mentioned by the students in connection with the foreign policy of Aleksander III: 'Russia took back the status of great power equal to the other powers; such epithets are used about Russia: great, strong, the biggest'. Analyzing the position of Russia before and during the Crimean War the textbook, in the words of one of the students, shows Russia as a peaceful country and great power that could successfully resist the attacks of its enemies. It is emphasized in this paper that 'the causes of the defeat of Russia in that war remain unclear. Moreover, it is not written in the paragraph that Russia was defeated, but it is stated that she finished the war in unfavorable condition'. In their analysis of the policy of Catherine II one student's attention was attracted by the

title of the paragraph 'Powerful Steps of Empire in Foreign Policy'. It was interpreted by the student as the authors' attempt to justify the Russian activities in Poland by saying that, contrary to her allies, the Russian Empire took only ancient Russian lands: 'The pupils would be led to the conclusion that at that time the Russian policy was not aggressive, Russia only took back the native land, and did it by peaceable methods'.

Some students observed that the authors stressed the difference between Russian and Russia, on the one hand, and non-Russians and other countries on the other hand, and this was always in favor of the former. One of the papers mentions that in the description of the invasion of the Volga region and Siberia Russia is depicted like a 'progressive state' realizing its civilizing mission and giving knowledge to the peoples 'who were acquainted only with the tribal system'. In the eighteenth century with the help of Russians the peoples of Siberia 'learned how to do agricultural works, how to build good wooden houses with stoves. Thus, the civilizing mission of Russians in relation to other ethnos is stressed'. The students noticed that in recounting the Russian history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the textbook depicted European states as 'enemies' of Russia, or at least unfriendly countries. Among them England is mentioned most, followed by Turkey and France. One student paid close attention to phrases like this: at the time of the Polish rebellion of 1863 'European countries were drunken in their anti-Russian rhetoric'; 'they suffered a maniacal fear of the mythical threat from Russia'. The Polish people are described as a proud but unthankful and cruel nation. In the account of the rebellion of 1830–31 the textbook authors contrast the Russian and Polish people: the former are described only positively, the latter negatively, and the students recognized this. One of the student papers concludes that the whole history of the nineteenth century 'is shown as a fight of a "remarkable" Russian absolutism (samodershavie) against the internal and external enemies. Those who supported tsarism, are presented positively; those who were not happy with samoderzhavie, nearly without exception, are depicted like the enemies of their motherland (Decembrists, zapadniki, narodniki)'. In connection with the dom-

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inant patriotic textbook discourse it is worth mentioning that some papers demonstrate the attention of the students to the language of the narrative and to the selection of illustrations. For instance there are remarks concerning the terms in which the process of 'taking' new lands and the civilizing mission of Russia is described. The textbook authors prefer not to use the verb 'conquer' but see the process as 'moving', 'widening', 'generating innovations'. On the contrary, 'chuckchi attacked the invaders'. This student clearly realizes that the aggressive role was attributed by the textbook authors to the local peoples.

Many student papers were critical of the ways in which Russian tsars and other historical figures are depicted in the Sacharov/ Bokhanov textbook. The students clearly identified the overt idealization of most of the tsars of Romanov dynasty: not only Peter I, who became an icon even earlier than Soviet times, but also his predecessors like Michail and Alexei, and successors like Nicholas I, and especially Aleksander III. For instance, one student notes, 'the first Romanov is depicted as a clever and quiet ruler, careful but consistent in his decisions, an ideal father of the family with high moral principles who took care of his people'. Much attention is given to Nicholas I whose words and actions are considered in the textbook in the most positive way. One student writes that he could not find any different views of historians on Nicholas, and notes that the authors wrote about his 'wisdom', and even compared, at least indirectly, him to his brother Aleksander I in order 'to prove that democratic reforms were not for Russia, because they always led, even in France, to revolution and "chaos"'. This paper remarks that the authors simply ignore many 'negative features of the character of Nicholas: indifference to the people, arrogance, intolerance to free thought, the wish to have a full subordination from the others'. Attention is also paid to the fact that the textbook authors value Nicholas's circle highly, and particularly Benkendorf and Uvarov. With irony she puts the words 'able political figures' in inverted commas.

Aleksander III, like Nicholas I, is an object for admiration in the textbook, and the students recognized this. He is portrayed as a

person and political leader of many capabilities. He is a soldier (a 'brave, but careful commander'), an excellent head of the family, a ruler merciful to his subjects who did a great deal for culture (the Historical Museum) and transport (the Siberian railroad). All his actions are great and grand. One student gave an illustrative quote from the textbook: 'the system of samoderzhavie worked with all power under him, and it demanded from him a lot of time, spiritual and physical efforts'. Aleksander III did his best to strengthen the state and to fight against terrorism, because it was 'really a shame for the country of Russia'. The struggle against the internal enemies is a mission of all the people of the country. The student makes the following comment:

> The authors of the textbook try to convince the pupils that he took only right decisions. He is just the kind of leader Russia needs today. And even more: we have such a leader already and it is necessary to support all his beginnings to strengthen the position of Russia as quickly as it is possible… The image of an effective leader is formed on the pages of the book, and only a strong leader who doesn't tolerate revolutions, rebellions and criticism of his official political course is able to develop modern Russia.

The students paid attention to the position of Pobedonostzev under Aleksander III, and especially in the context of Russian Orthodox Church. One student writes: 'The words of the textbook have links with what happens in the sphere of religion today: From the 1880s the church began to play an active role as a second Ministry of People's Education'. This student finds the characterization of Pobedonoszev one-sided, and makes even more interesting observations on the Russian economy and the condition of the working class. In the student's view, the aim of the textbook is to convince pupils that the life of the workers was not as hard as we used to think. This student asks: 'If the government created positive results and the labor code was one of the fairest in the world and cities had a good self-government and all the estates were in prosperity, why then did the revolution of 1905 happen?' The student's conclusion is as follows: the authors of the textbook 'followed the modern tendency

to smooth problems over'. This student clearly feels that today there is a tendency to keep silent about problems faced by workers and issues of their rights. It is clear that many students were becoming more able to see the partiality of approach in the textbook and its interpretation of history.

In addition, some students noticed a lack of gender balance in the textbook. One example relates to Catherine II: 'whose name', one points out, 'is mentioned more seldom than the names of the military commanders – the real heroes in this paragraph'. Another example is of Aleksander III and his ministers and favorites, in relation to whom one student writes: 'Men are shown as makers of history; they are shown as wise, fair, far-looking, sincere patriots'. But in general such observations about the gender aspect of the textbook narrative receive less attention in the students' essays than might be expected. The explanation lies in the male-centered view still dominant today: men are the actors in history.

In the selective interviews the students recalled the skills they gained from the course: to express their own opinion; to prove own positions; to analyze information; to filter information; to think critically; to be critical about what is said on TV, press, news etc; to think why the news is presented in the way it is; to judge argumentation. Asked about the professional skills they developed as future historians and history teachers, the students gave the following answers: not to rely on only one textbook in teaching but to provide pupils with different texts (this especially important in senior classes); to analyze textbooks critically; to ask questions; to work with sources; to pay attention to details in texts; to find the main points and key words; to compare texts; to use practical tasks for their pupils. They were not so sure about 'third generation' skills because of lack of practical experience, but they agreed that a teacher trained in critical thinking about textbooks would influence their pupils to work in this way. As one remarked: 'It goes from you to us, and from us to schoolchildren'. And another added that the teacher who under-stands the importance of critical thinking, 'would support and shape the individual attitude of the pupils to their studies'. The following recommendations for teachers were formulated by the students: the

need to spend more time working with contemporary school history textbooks; to devote more time to practical analysis of foreign textbooks and not only to discuss but to engage in practical tasks derived from English and American textbooks that can help develop critical thinking and at the same time improve English language skills.

Conclusions

The analysis of the students' final papers and the project in general leads to the following conclusions: *Firstly*, though the student work was not as effective in demonstrating critical thinking as I expected at the outset of the project, it proved a positive challenge for many students. It provided a good beginning for them to start thinking about the limitations of their textbooks as patriotic narratives and their socio-cultural influences. Meeting with the unknown in a field they supposed to be very familiar to them created the following paradigm of learning: from surprise to doubt; from doubt to critical thinking. *Secondly*, there is a correlation between the critical thinking demonstrated and the students' learning achievements in general. Both the level of critical thinking in their papers and their marks were higher as a result. *Thirdly*, I enriched my own teaching experience. In 2010 and 2014 when I taught the same course I introduced some changes. I gave more time to the 'theoretical' aspects and to discussion about the methods of textbook analysis, and paid more attention to practical work with the textbooks themselves. And last but not least: my experience in teaching the course on textbooks confirms the observations made during the school practices of the students and in the work with the teachers of history. Improvement in teachers' abilities to reflect critically about teaching materials such as textbooks is highly necessary. Only in this way will we develop both in teachers and pupils a 'feeling' for history, aspiration for creative teaching and learning, and the will to find personal meaning in their history studies. This may help students of the subject at all levels to consider history not as a boring subject but to study it with enthusiasm and personal meaning.

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The Same History for All? Tuning History

GYÖRGY NOVÁKY

T HIS STORY BEGINS in 1999 with the Bologna Declaration issued by the European Ministers of Education. The declaration proposed the creation of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) with free student mobility using national qualifications in one country as recognized entry requirements for further study in another. The principal aims were stated thus:

> Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees. Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years. The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification. The second cycle should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree as in many European countries. (Bologna Declaration, 1999)

The content of the Bologna Declaration and its implications and effects, commonly termed the Bologna process has been adapted and implemented, at least to some degree, in most countries within the EHEA. Less well-known, however, is the fact that much of the basic work to make the Bologna process implementable was conducted by the project 'Tuning Educational Structures in Europe'.

The Tuning project was financed by the EU and started in 2000 under the dual leadership of the Universities of Groningen in the Netherlands and Deusto in Bilbao, Spain. Initially universities from twelve countries in five subject areas, including history, were represented in the project. The participating institutions were chosen by their respective national governments. More countries and more subject areas were added later in the course of the process. Over the

following years the national representatives for the different Subject Area Groups (SAG) met regularly in locations across Europe for lively discussions about teaching, learning, comparability and convergence in their respective disciplines. Between meetings academics in each country were consulted about the issues raised in these SAGs. The History SAG, for instance, utilized the Erasmus Thematic Network for History (CLioH) in order to reach as many academics as possible (ClioH Ourstory, 2014). Although all decisions were made by the small SAGs they were based on input from hundreds of academics. The most important outcomes of the SAG's work have been the definition of the overall learning outcomes for the different subjects and the provision of a method to attach appropriate learning and teaching approaches to them. The results can be found on the Tuning website www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/.

The success of the Tuning process meant that it was soon adopted by other regions: Latin America, the US, Canada, Russia, Africa, Central Asia, and recently China, Japan and India. The now worldwide process enables us to compare the results of these different Tunings and arguably to formulate both wider and more precise definitions of the subject areas. In what follows I am using for comparison the outcomes of Tuning Europe and Tuning Latin America, together with some aspects of Tuning Central Asia and Tuning US.

A 'Tuner's' perspective

The question 'The same history for all?' was posed by one sceptical member of the history SAG at the beginning of the Tuning Project. The question was valid, or rather would have been, if the ambition had been to harmonize higher education, or, even worse, to make academics conform to a political agenda fabricated by some anonymous EU bureaucrat. We needed to be assured that Tuning did not constitute an attack on academic freedom. But, as it turned out, these apprehensions were mostly unfounded. The decision to create an EHEA was political but the work to facilitate it was left to us academics ourselves. In addition, the work was not done by

officers in Universities' Central Administrations, but by us, the teachers: this in itself was reassuring.

The main working programme for Tuning can be formulated as follows. In order to achieve convergence in higher education across the subject area, we were to map the different countries' educational structures, find a 'common language' and agree upon commonly accepted professional and learning outcomes. The results expected were transparency of the different educational structures and systems; comparability of degrees; and transferability of degrees and learning outcomes between educational systems. During the work, in order to reach the aims mentioned above, Tuning was expected to develop a methodology for analysing common elements and areas of specificity and diversity and find a way to tune them; to deliver best practices and good example; and to develop a model curriculum structure. In practice, whilst the mapping proved to be relatively easy, finding a common language and reference points in teaching and learning history was more difficult. For reasons of space, I will leave aside some important aspects of Tuning such as the European Credit and Accumulation Transfer System (ECTS), the exploration of approaches to learning, and teaching and assessment and their alignment with the required competences. However, it is worth stating that the initial Tuning process has now developed to include an elaborate method to construct, assess and ensure the quality of educational programs. It has become a highly useful tool for academic teachers (for history, see Cliohworld Guide II, 2011).

In this article I focus on the work to find common denominators and reference points in teaching and learning history. To begin with a common vocabulary had to be constructed in order to enable productive discussions. This work proved to be surprisingly intricate. History is, as a rule, based on national traditions with origins in various historiographical outlooks and is taught in a great number of languages in a multitude of ways in diverging educational structures. This created an initial communication problem in the SAG. For instance: diachronic divisions were different,[1] the importance and content of historical methods and theories varied, the terminology for historical aspects and phenomena was often national, and

understanding of various teaching and learning methods was dissimilar. There were, for example, many ways to translate the concept of a 'seminar'. In the end we did, however, reach consensus on a working baseline vocabulary for our efforts.

The next step was to define the 'core' of history as a discipline. Again there were difficult issues to confront. National and thematic interests led to, sometimes fierce, discussions about what should be included. The situation was not initially encouraging, especially when the group consisted of academics all with extensive education in critical thinking and used to putting their opinions forward. What we could in the beginning agree upon was therefore only a very general definition of what history as a subject 'is': broadly, to study the past by critically analysing appropriate source materials with applicable methods. However, the Tuning project supplied us with a methodology that did strongly emphasize the student perspective. The point was not what we as academic teachers were providing, but what the students received. Behind this was the realization that after completing his/her education the student possesses a variety of qualifications (knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes) that are formed in the learning process. Tuning aimed at finding a way to describe all these attributes by categorising them in different types of overall learning results: learning outcomes, subject specific competencies, and generic competencies.[2]

A history student is much more knowledgeable and competent than we educators tend to think. Besides the obvious, knowledge of history and the historians' craft, the student has actually accrued much more during his/her years conducting academic studies. Some of these competencies are general, like the ability to meet dead-lines, to organize one's work, ability to communicate in one or more languages, evaluate and maintain the quality of work produced, work in team, etc. Some are subject-specific, provided by learning specifi-cally history: for instance, the abilities to find and analyse relationships between current events and processes and the past; to analyse critically historical facts, phenomena and processes; and, to present the results in a scientifically acceptable form. The history SAG's view was also that recognising these different levels in a

student's academic development would help to demonstrate the social value of studying subjects like humanities that have traditionally been considered 'useless' from a strict utilitarian point of view. The realization that there is a difference between the learning outcomes that teachers decide and the competencies that the student develops and can apply and use, for instance, in a future work place, provided a solid starting point for constructing the history core.

The core of history: a competencies approach

Learning outcomes are defined as 'statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning' (Gonzáles & Wagenaar, 2005: 383). Diverse educational systems and historiographical outlooks result in different learning outcomes as a result of the need to cover national history and national historiographies. An Italian student has to know classical Latin in order to be able to study Roman history properly, while a Swedish student might need to understand the runic alphabet to understand Nordic medieval times. However, as long as learning outcomes are clearly and transparently linked to subject specific (and generic) competencies, the knowledge base can reflect national variation without changing the common agreement of history's core. The same competencies can be formed with different learning outcomes.

The Tuning Project defines competencies in terms of 'a dynamic representation of demonstrated knowledge, understanding/ insight /comprehension, (subject specific and generic) intellectual, practical and interpersonal skills and (ethical) values' (Wagenaar, 2004: 294; cf. Beneitone & Bartolomé, 2014). The competencies cover a wide range of abilities formed during the process of learning, some of which are general and can be formed in virtually any program within higher education. This definition of competencies has not been without criticism, and the choice of terminology has certainly generated some misunderstandings (Wagenaar, 2014; Sánchez & Ruiz, 2008). Particularly confusing is the fact that the concept could be understood as the traditional Competence-Based Approach to Education

and Training (CBET) (Kerka, 1998). Not surprisingly, theoretical and pedagogical discussion about the definitions and use of competencies has continued both inside and outside the Tuning Community (Wagenaar, 2014: 295 f.). The generic competencies, although also formed in history education, are a part of the overall academic education, and while interesting as such, do not form an essential part of the training to be a historian. For this reason, as we are here considering history specifically, I focus upon those 'subject-specific competencies' that a student develops through studying history as a subject.

The list of subject specific competencies was elaborated through long discussions with colleagues in the history SAG. The situation was further complicated for historians as history is often taught in many other subject areas as a part of the program of study (Gonzáles & Wagenaar, 2003: 151–155). I therefore restrict myself here to discussing programs where the students receive a history degree, and it is worth pointing out that the following lists must not be seen as absolute rulebooks of what an education in history or what history as a subject is. Rather the function of the lists is twofold: to show what professional historians recognise as central subject specific competencies and to function as a guideline for educators when constructing program curricula.

In the table below the Tuning 'canon' is displayed both for Tuning EU and Tuning Latin America (cf. Beneitone & Bartolomé, 2014). The competencies are placed in random order and not categorized according to their relative importance.

TABLE 1. *Subject Competencies: Tuning EU and Tuning Latin America*

Tuning EU Subject Specific Skills and Competences	Tuning Latin America Specific competences in the Area of History
1. A critical awareness of the relationship between current events and processes and the past.	1. Awareness of the social function of the historian.
2. Awareness of the differences in historiographical outlooks in various periods and contexts.	2. Awareness that historical debate and research are constantly under construction

3. Awareness of and respect for points of view deriving from other national or cultural backgrounds.

4. Awareness of the on-going nature of historical research and debate.

5. Knowledge of the general diachronic framework of the past.

6. Awareness of the issues and themes of present day historiographical debate.

7. Detailed knowledge of one or more specific periods of the human past.

8. Ability to communicate orally in one's own language using the terminology and techniques accepted in the historiographical profession.

9. Ability to communicate orally in foreign languages using the terminology and techniques accepted in the historiographical profession.

10. Ability to read historiographical texts or original documents in one's own language; to summarize or transcribe and catalogue information as appropriate.

11. Ability to read historiographical texts or original documents in other languages; to summarize or transcribe and catalogue information as appropriate

12. Ability to write in one's own language using correctly the various types of historiographical writing

13. Ability to write in other languages using correctly the various types of historiographical writing.

3. Ability to use the specific techniques necessary to study documents from given periods, such as paleography and epigraphy.

4. Knowledge of national history.

5. Ability to design, organize and develop projects of historical research

6. Critical knowledge of the relationship between current and past events and processes.

7. Ability to use information and communication technology to compile historical data or facts related to history (for example, statistical and cartographical methods, databases etc.).

8. Ability to read historiographical texts and documents in other languages

9. Knowledge of the methods and problems posed by the different branches of historical research: economic, social, political, gender studies, etc.

10. Knowledge of local and regional history.

11. Ability to take part in interdisciplinary research work.

12. Ability to know about, contribute to and participate in sociocultural activities in the community.

13. Ability to use tools for information storage such as bibliographic catalogues, archival inventories and electronic references.

14. Knowledge of and ability to use information retrieval tools, such as bibliographical repertoires, archival inventories, e-references.

15. Knowledge of and ability to use the specific tools necessary to study documents of particular periods (e.g. paleography, epigraphy).

16. Ability to use computer and internet resources and techniques elaborating historical or related data (using statistical, cartographic methods, or creating databases, etc.)

17. Knowledge of ancient languages

18. Knowledge of local history.

19. Knowledge of one's own national history.

20. Knowledge of European history in a comparative perspective

21. Knowledge of the history of European integration.

22. Knowledge of world history.

23. Awareness of and ability to use tools of other human sciences (e.g., literary criticism, and history of language, art history, archaeology, anthropology, law, sociology, philosophy etc.).

24. Awareness of methods and issues of different branches of historical research (economic, social, political, gender related, etc.).

14. Awareness of and respect for points of view derived from diverse cultural, national and other records.

15. Critical knowledge of the general diachronic framework of the past.

16. Knowledge of indigenous languages, where relevant.

17. Knowledge of and ability to use the theories, methods and techniques of other social sciences and humanities.

18. Critical knowledge of differing historiographical perspectives in different periods and contexts, including those currently under debate.

19. Knowledge of universal or world history.

20. Ability to communicate and present an argument in both oral and written form in one's own language, in accordance with the standard terminology and techniques of the profession.

21. Ability to apply the techniques and methods of the teaching of history.

22. Ability to transcribe, summarize and classify information as appropriate.

23. Ability to identify and make appropriate use of sources of information - bibliographies, documentation, oral testimonials, etc. - for the purposes of historical research.

24. Ability to define topics for research which can contribute to historiographical knowledge and debate.

25. Ability to define research topics suitable to contribute to historiographical knowledge and debate.
26. Ability to identify and utilize appropriately sources of information (bibliography, documents, oral testimony etc.) for research project.
27. Ability to organize complex historical information in coherent form.

28. Ability to give narrative form to research results according to the canons of the discipline.
29. Ability to comment, annotate or edit texts and documents correctly according to the critical canons of the discipline.
30. Knowledge of didactics of history

25. Knowledge of the history of America.

26. Ability to organize complex historical information in a coherent way.

27. Ability to comment upon, annotate and correctly edit texts and documents in accordance with the critical standards of the discipline.

SOURCES: *ClioHnet 2005: 27; Rodriguez, 2006: 8-30.*

The European list contains three competencies more than the Latin American. But on the whole there is a convergence between how academic historians in Europe and in Latin America define the subject. Altogether, twenty-three competencies are the same or very similar. There are two interesting types of competencies that Latin America has added into the list but are lacking in the European one. The first category deals with the ethics or the moral responsibilities of the historian (SSC LA 1 and 12). Even if the need for an ethical dimension was clearly stated in the European SAGs work, in the final formulation of subject specific competencies the social role of the historian was overlooked. The second category deals with students' research abilities: the Latin Americans expect the students to take an active role in research (SSC LA 5, and 11). The European competencies that have not found their way into the Latin American list are in a sense very European (SSC EU 9, 17 and 21). In addition Tuning Europe seems to have been keen on fostering students' abilities to do presentations in other languages and to write in a variety of forms (SSC EU 13 and 28), competencies lacking in the Latin American list.

One of the reasons for these small discrepancies is probably that while Tuning Europe did the basic work in the beginning when definitions and terms still were ambiguous, Latin America could use this work to enhance and refine it. This provides a good example of the iterative nature of the Tuning process.

In general it can be noted that among scholars in these two regions there is a good agreement of what is regarded as history and what students should be able to do. This is reinforced when results from additional regions are added into the analysis. Table 2 shows the competencies that academics in four regions have considered the most important. This does not mean that other competencies are less important; the table simply gives an indication of how academics ranked the subject specific competencies relative to each other. One could call these competencies 'the core of the core'. While Latin America and Central Asia did use the European list as a starting point, Tuning US redefined and rewrote the competencies in order better to adjust them to institutional and structural conditions in the US, however the working order was the same (Tuning USA, 2012).

TABLE 2. *The most important subject specific competencies in history according to academics in four Tuning processes*

Central Asia	Europe	Latin America	US
A critical understanding of the relationship between current events and processes and the past	A critical awareness of the relationship between current events and the past	Critical knowledge of the relationship between current and past events and processes	Practice historical thinking as central to engaged citizenship
Knowledge of national history, as part of world history	Knowledge of one's own national history	Knowledge of national history	Practice historical empathy
Ability to understand the	Awareness of the issues and themes	Understanding of the fact that	Generate significant, open-

challenges issues of national historiography	in current historiographical debates	historical debate and research is permanently developing	ended questions about the past and devise research strategies to answer them
Ability to acquire new knowledge, using modern information and communication technologies	Ability to identify and utilize appropriate sources of information	Ability to identify and utilize appropriate sources of information for historical research	Understand the complex nature of the historical record
		Ability to coherently organize historical information	Craft historical narrative and argument
Development of skills and abilities for research activity	Ability to communicate orally and in writing using correct terminology	Ability to communicate and argue orally and in written form, in the native language of the relevant country, in accordance with usual terminology and techniques of the profession	Engage in historical inquiry, research, and analysis

SOURCES: *The project Towards a Central Asian Higher Education Area is currently working (October 2014); these competencies should only be seen as an indicator of the final ones. Tuning History EU SAG never published the most important subject specific competencies. These results are from my private notes and working papers and should be cited with caution. Beneitone et al., 2007: 196; Beneitone & Bartolomé, 2014; American Historical Association, 2014.*

A comparison of the most important competencies in these four Tuning regions reveal convergence but also interesting differences,

with the US competencies diverging most from the three others. The common core of the core seems to consist of 'critical awareness or knowledge of the relationship between current events and the past (processes); knowledge of national history and historiography; and ability to find and use sources'. Here we are back to the overall general definition of history that the European SAG started out with. There are, however, some interesting differences. Research activity is underlined in Tuning Central Asia (development of skills and abilities for research activities) and in Tuning US (engage in historical inquiry, research and analyses). Central Asia also pinpoints the necessity to use IT for information gathering, yet, as shown in Table 3, academics in other regions considered this competence as one of the least important. The difference in the value attributed to IT mirrors the ten-year time gap between the consultations and a new survey in Europe and Latin America would without doubt place this competence among the most important. The vast amount of sources and articles now available on-line as well as the growing methodological discussions about using IT in teaching and research, has made this competence indispensable (e.g. Noiret, 2009). The great importance of IT in history in central Asia could also reflect Central Asian national, institutional and structural preconditions. In these relatively new states access to printed materials is still complicated: libraries need to restock, and much of the international research and sources are only accessible on-line. A further interesting difference is the US accent on historians' ethical/moral commitments. Two of the six competencies have an ethical content. The European History SAG entirely lacked such a dimension, and although Latin America did have competencies with this content they are not among the most important. In general the US list emphasizes the historian's skills and attitudes rather than concrete historical knowledge. In the other Tuning regions the competencies answer the question: 'What should a student know, be able to do and relate to?' In the US the list accentuates the importance of ethics and attitudes linked to the historians' craft.

In a recent article Pablo Beneitone and Edurne Bartolomé have studied similarities and differences in generic competencies in four

regions. In their analysis they emphasise that cultural contexts and educational traditions must be taken into account in order to understand the dissimilarities. They also note that identical competencies can express different things in different regions (Beneitone & Bartolomé, 2014). This is also the case in regard to subject specific competencies in history. The differences in Table 2 above demonstrate clearly that although a common understanding of 'the core of the core' in history is widespread, each region has its own views and perspectives. A summary of the subject specific competencies suggests, for instance, the following conclusions. In Europe and Latin America the emphasis is upon 'to know, identify, use and present; in Central Asia, 'to know, identify, use and research', and in Tuning US 'to understand, create, research, and present with a social consciousness'.

What then were the competencies that history academics found least important (that ranked lowest in the list of competencies)? Here we can compare Tuning Europe to Tuning Latin America. The comparison reveals some obvious similarities: languages and auxiliary sciences of history are not considered important. One of the functions of the ranking was to unveil competencies that were potentially important but that tended to be discarded. The combination of high esteem for knowledge of national history and low esteem for languages shows clearly how inward-looking history as a subject can be. The low ranking of ancient languages is perhaps understandable as the study of antiquity does receive increasingly less attention in Europe. Perhaps more surprising is that the Latin America list contains native languages. Together with the low ranking of the 'ability to recognize, contribute and participate in socio-cultural community activities' and 'knowledge of local and regional history', this presents a problematic picture of historians not really being interested in the life and past of common people. Also worrying is the low ranking given to IT. Ten years ago IT was the talk of the town for the enlightened, but historians as educators seem on the whole to prefer to continue to walk in the dark, or rather the past. In this case, as in those mentioned above, the list offers a wakeup call.

TABLE 3. *Least important subject specific competencies according to academics in Europe and Latin America*

Tuning EU **Subject Specific Skills and Competences**	Tuning Latin America **Specific competences in the Area of History**
13. Ability to write in other languages using correctly the various types of historical writing	8. Ability to read historiographical texts and documents in other languages
15. Ability to use specific techniques for the study of documents from particular periods (calligraphy, epigraphy etc.)	10. Knowledge of local and regional history
17. Knowledge of Ancient Languages 9. Ability to communicate in foreign languages using terminology and the profession	3. Ability to use the specific techniques necessary to study documents from given periods, such as paleography and epigraphy.
16. Ability to use computer and internet resources and techniques elaborating historical or related data (using statistical, cartographic methods, or creating databases, etc.)	4. Ability to use information and communication technology to compile historical data or facts related to history (for example, statistical and cartographical methods, databases etc.).
	12. Ability to recognize, contribute and participate in socio-cultural community activities.
	6. Knowledge of native languages, if necessary

SOURCES: *The project Towards a Central Asian Higher Education Area is currently working (October 2014); these competencies should only be seen as an indicator of the final ones. Tuning History EU SAG never published the most important subject specific competencies. These results are from my private notes and working papers and should be cited with caution.*

Student and graduate views on history

In this essay only the view of academics on history education has been presented. The Tuning project has been very clear that the process must be led by universities in general and teachers in particular. However, in a fast-changing social and policy environment it was important to consult other actors – employers, graduates and students. Employers were consulted in accordance with the Bologna declaration's ambition to improve graduate employability. However, most interesting for the subject area were graduate and student perspectives on the competencies. What did the students consulted expect from studying history and what had the graduates found most useful in their education? Below I focus on the outcomes produced by Tuning Latin America, as their findings are published (Beneitone et al., 2007: 196 f.). In my experience these results mirror the European picture.

All three categories, academics, graduates and students, considered the competencies numbered 2, 4 and 23 most important, (see 'Tuning Latin America' in Table 1 above). While the academics considered the 'coherent organisation of information' (26) and 'oral and written communication' (20) very important, these competen-cies do not appear in the students' and graduates' list of most important learning outcomes. Correspondingly the 'ability to design, organise and develop historical research projects' (5) is on both the student and graduates lists but not on that of the academics. The students are the only group that has 'awareness of the social function of the historian' (1) in their 'most important' list. It seems that research abilities are highly desirable qualities for both students and graduates. This fact is particularly interesting since the graduates already had some years of work experience when they answered the questionnaire. The students, on the other hand, also seem keen to engage with the issue of what it is to be a historian.

The academics' and graduates' list of least important subject specific competencies are identical. 'Auxiliary sciences' (3), 'foreign and native languages' (8, 16), 'local history' (10), 'IT' (7) and 'socio-cultural activities' (12) are at the bottom of the list. Four out of six of these competencies appear also on the students' list (3, 7, 12, 16).

However, instead of 'local history' and 'other languages', the students give low ratings to 'interdisciplinary research work' (11) and 'didactics' (21). The presence of the last competence is surprising as many history students become secondary school teachers. The answers in general, however, show that the socialisation process in history education is relatively successful. The graduates' view on history coincides with the academics to a greater extent than the students. However, the need to strengthen students' research capabilities is clear, as is the need to early in the education discuss a historian's social role.

The consultations have been, and can be, used in a variety of ways: to discover how much academics' views of the subject overlap with those of students and graduates; to unearth competencies that are overlooked or have low esteem among the stake holders; and to compare differences and similarities in the different groups' perceptions and expectations of history as a subject. The survey method can also be used to unveil aspects of history education that have been overlooked or downplayed and provide impetus for adjustments and changes. The consultations can therefore profitably be used both to (re)define the subject and to adjust it as necessary.

Conclusions

In this short article I have shown how a subject area can be defined and the essence of the subject identified in such a way that it is valid for several national or regional educational systems, at the same time taking into account regional and national differences. I have demonstrated that there is convergence about how the core of history is understood in different regions and consensus about what kind of knowledge, skills and competencies a student can and should accumulate while studying the subject. On the other hand every region has contributed new aspects and insights related to how the subject is perceived institutionally, socially and culturally; and so have the different stake holders consulted.

The fact that Tuning has been adapted more or less on a global level has meant that the process has been fine-tuned in an ongoing

fashion, with new additions and ideas that all can profit from. The list of competencies, generic or subject specific, is not set in stone. Competencies can be added and subtracted depending on the aim of the education, national or regional preferences, and changes over time in the perception of the subject area, and so on. This demonstrates the adaptability of the method in various national and regional settings, and also mirrors the respect for diversity that has been the principal guideline of Tuning from the outset. However, transparency is also obtained by clearly stating competencies and relating them to learning outcomes and teaching methods. With transparency comes comparability and transferability; the method teaches us the language of *respublica literaria*.

The initial question can now be answered: No, there is not a 'history for all'. Various actors see the subject history differently, and diverging institutional, social and cultural settings influence how the subject is perceived. However, the core of history as a subject is largely the same in the Tuning regions and, above all, historians have much in common. It will be particularly interesting to see how the Chinese, Indian and Japanese Tuning processes add to and change our views on the subject and the craft.

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[1] Clioh made an interesting exercise compiling into a table all different national diachronic divisions. Unfortunately, the Periodization Map is not available on-line anymore.

[2] I'm here using my own term "overall learning results" as the sum of learning outcomes and the two different types of competencies. The terms *Learning Outcomes* and *Competencies* have created much confusion during the Tuning work in many parts of the world. For a glossary of Tuning terms, see Gonzáles & Wagenaar, 2008.

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How Historians Develop as Teachers

ALAN BOOTH

OW DO WE LEARN to be history teachers in higher education? And how do we get better at it? These are questions that professional historians have not much investigated. There are many reasons for this lack of attention. Some are located in historians' primary professional interest in examining the lives and actions of historical actors or the dynamics of change over time rather than exploring their own professional lives (see Roper and Wickham, 2002). Some are rooted in the secondary role traditionally afforded to teaching in the professional life of the discipline, and the research choices (and career rewards) that stem from this. As Gerda Lerner reflects in her book *Why History Matters* (1997: 127), 'most of us, for much of our professional lives, are teachers; yet this activity is the one we seem least to appreciate in ourselves'. After all, isn't the PhD the pass certificate to a career as a university teacher (our certification of specialist expertise)? And isn't teaching expertise something that just arises from experience – like steam from a kettle, as Edward Thompson once put it in his critique of established notions of class formation in *The Making of the English Working Class*? In short, the process of developing as a teacher has not seemed sufficiently noteworthy to be much remarked upon within the profession or regarded as an issue worthy of serious inquiry.

Most work on teacher identity and professional development among historians has therefore been conducted by educationalists: educational development specialists, higher education researchers, schools history researchers, sometimes in collaboration with professsional historians. There have been insightful contributions by, amongst others, Quinlan (1999); Quinlan and Akerlind (2000); McLean and Barker (2004); Walker (2009); Nye et al. (2011); and,

further back, Kogan (1989). However, in researching issues of professional identity and development historians have generally constituted only a handful of interviewees, often among a range of discipline practitioners. What follows is based upon the narratives of a more substantive number of professional historians, most located in the UK but some working in North American and Australian higher education. I hope that historians situated in non-Anglophone systems of higher education will nonetheless find points of correspondence in their experience of learning to teach as well as contrasts.

Data and methodology

The principal data derive from two sources. First, a UK-wide online questionnaire distributed to historians working full-time in history departments which provided the material for an illustrative study of historians' beliefs on teaching and the values and practices that they try to adhere to or emulate in promoting history teaching 'at its best' (Booth, 2014). The online survey elicited 205 responses from historians working in a wide variety of UK institutions of higher education (72 in all) and at various stages of their career. Many were experienced and committed teachers: two-thirds possessed over ten years teaching experience and there was a wide variety of levels of seniority within the profession with a rough gender balance among respondents. Together the sample represented around eight per cent of all those working in UK history departments as full-time, permanent faculty at the time of the survey.

The second source of information is a series of short filmed interviews about teaching with over 50 historians, mainly from the UK, US and Australia. Some clips from these informal, semi-structured conversations can be viewed on the website www.historiansonteaching.tv. These capture professional historians with a particular interest in teaching talking about what has most helped them to develop as teachers of the subject and the qualities of teachers who have particularly influenced them. Their responses to a question about the advice they would like to pass on to a historian beginning their career as a teacher, proved particularly helpful in

suggesting some general principles about the sort of pedagogic professional development that might be successful in terms of engaging and motivating historians to learn to become more effective educators.

This article, in short, examines how several hundred academic historians represent their learning journeys as teachers. It uses qualitative methods to explore the data, grounded in the thematic clustering of survey responses and interpretive analysis of interviews. The study is illustrative and indicative rather than claiming a representativeness that I would suggest is anyway inherently problematic. It is important to note that the experience of developing as teachers comprises only one aspect of broader membership of what Wenger (1998) calls a 'community of practice' with its particular, albeit shifting, legitimising norms and practices that together shape professional identity and what in this context it means to be a professional historian. Bender, Katz and Palmer (2004: 159) suggest a general framework to assist discussion of historians' collective identity as professionals. They identify three broad areas of commitment and practice: history as a discipline; history as a profession; and history as a career. In terms of teaching, and developing as a teacher, we might frame the experience in similar terms:

1. *Teaching history as a discipline*: its role in engaging students actively in the discipline's discourses and procedures – in the process of thinking historically.

2. *Teaching history as a subject in higher education*: its role in promoting higher learning and its place in a system of higher education.

3. *Teaching history as an academic career*: the role of teaching in the professional career as a historian and as part of a professional community in higher education.

Whilst teaching lives are not lived in such compartmentalised ways, these indicate the broad territory of 'who we are' as teachers and the parameters for the process of developing as a history teacher in higher education.

What follows focuses on how the historians in our sample describe how they learned to become teachers and particularly the factors they believe to have had the most influence on their (continuing) development. The data suggest four major areas of identity formation in this regard: learning from experience as a student and as a teacher; learning from students; learning from colleagues; and learning from training and scholarship. These are addressed in turn.

Learning from experience as a student and teacher

When they talk about what has shaped their teaching selves, a major formative influence is experience as a student and particularly examples of memorable teachers. Nye et al. (2011) in recent work in Australian higher education note the particular influence of post-graduate supervisors on the professional development of historians. However in our survey there was just as much mention of school and undergraduate teachers. These teachers are considered significant for a variety of reasons: as accomplished storytellers; as experts; for challenging student conceptions; because they made students care about history; because they treated students with respect and made them feel they mattered. There are a wide range of experiences that reflect the diversity regarded within the discipline community as a hallmark of good pedagogic practice.

Fundamentally, however, these teachers are represented as inspiring through finding ways to bring history alive to students: they have an enthusiasm for their subject and students that is engaging and, at best, infectious. Here are three examples from many similar comments:

> I was inspired by the passion shown by the people who taught me at university; their sense that history mattered.

> I keep coming back to the same word – enthusiasm. The one thing they [named university teachers] had above all else was enthusiasm for their subject. It was quite literally infectious.

> There have been a lot of teachers who have inspired me. I think first and foremost it was an enthusiasm – a real interest in the subject. I've learned that the best way to convince students of the value of the subject matter that you're using and working with is to convey that sort of enthusiasm. And if you're enthusiastic, they will be too. I can also think of teachers who've inspired me for the wrong reasons in that they were completely underwhelmed at the prospect of having to teach loads of undergraduate students and therefore I think my own enthusiasm for that subject matter waned.

As this final comment illustrates, poor teaching can also influence learning to be a teacher. Whilst only a handful of the historians in the survey suggested that their own teachers had played no part at all in their development as lecturers, some were quick to note the influence of poor teachers on how they approached teaching. As one remarks:

> The memory of my own undergraduate experience was crucial in shaping my approach as a teacher in that I probably went on to avoid the teaching styles that didn't do much for me and to emulate those that did.

Experience as a student is complemented by accounts of 'life experience' (often whilst a student) more generally. Approximately one in ten of the historians in the survey sample make reference to the influence of previous employment, including teaching in other institutions and observing practice there, and part-time work in jobs outside the academic world, for example time-management and interpersonal skills they learnt in the commercial world. Some historians also point to the particular influence family – partners (often those working as school teachers) or parents – have had on how they have approached their work as teachers in higher education. A few further refer to leisure activities, pointing to performance and teamwork skills learned through participation in amateur theatre or sport of various kinds.

By far the most prominently mentioned influence on learning to be a teacher, however, is the practice of being in the history classroom. This 'learning on the job' occurs, it is suggested, through

facing and mastering everyday classroom challenges; becoming more familiar with subject knowledge and key historical concepts; trying out new things and reflecting on what happens; and gradually realising the complexity of teaching and that developing as a teacher is an ongoing process and the challenges do not diminish the more one knows but rather shift as understanding deepens. In this experiential learning, students and colleagues play a vital part.

Learning from students

Students figure prominently as an influence on how historians learn and improve as teachers. The learning arises from feedback from a number of sources. The most-often mentioned of these are listed below:

- close observation in class – of student reactions; misconceptions; difficulties students are facing;
- out-of-class advising – on student project work; in personal tutoring;
- student preferences/choices of topics e.g. for social/cultural history;
- end of module evaluation questionnaires – even though few enjoy the inevitable criticisms;
- informal surveys in lectures or at the end of a lecture, or mid-semester, about what has been learned;
- student assignments like essays, exams and presentations;
- former students. One interviewee recalls how a former student approached him in a pub to tell him he'd done a good job and the sense of affirmation that came from this.

Through whatever avenue it arrives, student feedback is regarded as vital in fostering 'self-efficacy': a well-founded sense of confidence and competence that is required to want to go on developing (Bandura, 1997). As one historian sums up: 'students' belief in me as a teacher has been particularly important in my own development'. Equally important is learning from colleagues.

Learning from colleagues

The historians who participated in the UK survey were keen to emphasise that colleagues had been a much-valued source of advice and encouragement. This was also the case in several of the interviews with North American historians, but amongst these (and especially those involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning in history) there was greater ambivalence, with more references to the continuing privacy of the classroom as an obstacle to substantive collegial conversation.

The influence of colleagues arises from a number of routes, formal and informal. The following are those most frequently mentioned in the UK survey:

- Formal peer-review of teaching schemes ubiquitous in the UK since the late 1990s;
- Mentoring schemes for early-career lecturers;
- Informal mentoring by experienced colleagues, including class observations;
- Departmental teaching seminars in which colleagues share experiments and innovations;
- Everyday conversations about teaching issues – in corridors between classes; over lunch; when team-teaching etc.;
- Community conversations beyond the department – at institutional events and at history conferences and workshops where experiences and ideas are exchanged

All of these have provided reinforcement, generated new ideas and, for early career lecturers, reduced the sense of isolation often felt in new surroundings. Here are three illustrative comments on the importance of colleagues: the first two from the survey data; the final reflection from the interviews:

> I was fortunate early in my career to meet a number of critical mentors. They opened my eyes to developing my own interactive style while taking on elements of what they were good at, such as storytelling, use of documents and simulations.

I find peer review a source of reassurance, even more than of ideas. I get confirmation I'm doing the right sorts of things and I see colleagues struggling with similar problems and realise there is no easy solution.

A lot of it [developing as a teacher] is about talking with colleagues. I think that's something that can be very easy to underestimate. So the idea of saying "Ok, this is what I'm doing but is that working?" Or you know something's not working, what are the alternatives out there? And I think the idea that we're all trying to work through that: no matter how experienced a member of staff is, we're all trying to evolve and change and improve and experiment with new things; that again is quite liberating. You can be someone who's been teaching for ten or twenty years and they're still sitting there thinking, "Well that didn't work, let's try something else". And that's fine; the fact there's a sense of permission there to try and experiment. I think that's a very positive thing, and it's only really by talking to colleagues that you get that sense of those kinds of possibilities.

For some history lecturers this type of collegial conversation also arises from courses on teaching or from discipline-based communities of practice focused upon the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Learning from training and scholarship

The influence of these factors is far less frequently mentioned when the historians in our survey talk about learning and improving as a history teacher in higher education. But for some of the most committed teachers they have been very influential.

The most common use of the word 'scholarship' in terms of teaching relates to how an individual's own subject research has impacted on their development as teachers. Reflections on this tell of how researching has generated a much firmer sense of competence and self-efficacy in a number of ways. Those fore-grounded embrace greater confidence in course design and in front of a class through the deeper subject knowledge research brings with it; enabling better advice to students on reading matter and strategies and on the range

of primary sources available; modelling the practice of being a historian and of historical thinking; and a sense of credibility and qualification to teach at an advanced level. And some lecturers reflect on how teaching has fed into their subject research by refining their thinking, making them clarify their ideas for an audience, and suggesting new lines of enquiry or, occasionally, new fields for research.

For a smaller number, what they sometimes refer to as, 'reading about teaching' has been influential: making them reflect more deeply on their own practice; prompting them to question traditional models of history teaching and assessment; providing them with new ideas for classroom assignments; fostering more complex conceptions of teaching and learning including familiarity with pedagogic theories and student-centred approaches; and encouraging them to experiment with more confidence. For these, the pedagogic literature has heightened their awareness of themselves as teachers and made them appreciate that teaching involves serious, ongoing thinking and rethinking. One experienced historian writes as follows in response to a survey question on advice for those starting out on their careers as teachers in higher education:

> When I started I imagined that it was a skill that I would master after a number of years, or a professional competence that I could straight-forwardly develop. Instead teaching remains a work-in-progress and some questions about teaching and learning become trickier, not more straightforward.

When they talk about the influence of this form of scholarship (the scholarship of teaching and learning), these historians often also mention institutional or national teaching initiatives they have participated in, and particularly project work that required them to read in the literature on teaching and learning – a literature at best infrequently visited by most historians. In almost all cases their primary point of reference in terms of reading is subject-based. As one remarks succinctly, 'nothing else hits the spot'.

With regard to training programmes, especially those now routinely provided by universities in the UK for new and early-career

teachers, there is considerably more ambivalence. Those historians broadly supportive of such programmes – of what one calls 'training in teaching' – talk about the positive influence of advice on common activities like lecturing and seminars; introduction to diverse and alternative methods of delivery and assessment; awareness of more student-centred approaches; and gaining a basic introduction to theories of learning. More, however, are critical of institutional training courses; some markedly so. They cite particularly their often generic or abstract nature and over-emphasis upon technical delivery aspects of teaching or upon standards issues. This critical commentary has been long-running, since at least the wider emergence of 'staff development' programmes in teaching in the UK in the 1980s (see Cannon, 1989), and shows no signs of abating. But in pointing to the challenges of providing professional pedagogic development it leads directly into what our data suggests might be done to enhance this learning.

Implications for practice

What sort of professional pedagogic development activity is most likely to gain the respect of professional historians; engage and motivate them? What approaches best help to foster the will to learn, and keep on learning? These questions require a response (or better still an integrated set of responses) at all levels of our educational system (department, faculty, institution, discipline community, higher education policy). However, the data presented here has a number of implications for the provision of professional pedagogic development that might capitalise upon the desire among history lecturers to become teachers who inspire students to love their subject as they themselves do and make a difference to their learning and lives.

The most important of these is the need to situate pedagogy firmly in a disciplinary context. There is debate among education-alists about the generic or subject-specific nature of learning (see Jones, 2009). However our data underlines that historians are most likely to be receptive to schemes of professional development (and

literature) that view pedagogy as integral to who they are as historians: that takes into account beliefs about subject matter, the structure of the discipline, and its distinctive ways of knowing and procedures. Such activity must engage with and embody what Shulman (1986: 9) calls the subject's pedagogical content knowledge: 'knowing one's content or subject matter, like American history, and knowing how best to organize and represent that subject matter so others could understand it.' This involves awareness of the following: what makes some topics easy, others difficult; key concepts, whether in relation to causation or significance, or subject matter concepts like the Renaissance or the Enlightenment; historians' ways of using evidence and argumentation and understanding subject modes of critical thinking and skills. Put simply, it demands an appreciation of the particular qualities of historical thinking and a history education more broadly.

The second implication follows directly from this. Pedagogic initiatives are received most positively when they arise from and are delivered within the history community. This is not to say that historians cannot appreciate what is to be learned from practitioners in non-cognate fields such as the sciences and mathematics and that these can facilitate reflection on their own, often taken-for-granted, educational beliefs and methods. In general, however, they are most likely to respond as educators to initiatives they set up themselves (and so confirm an important sense of agency and academic autonomy) or are provided by those with a historical training. In a discipline with a strong sense of kinship, collegial dialogue is especially important: sharing ideas and experiences with colleagues about what has worked for them and what went wrong and how they got round the problems; how others have taught topics like early modern Europe or seen it taught and so on. It is notable that several respondents to our survey reflected how much they had learned from working with colleagues in team-teaching or in collaborative projects investigating a particular issue for them or their department. This suggests a third implication.

Professional development activity for historians is likely to be most immediately engaging when it is firmly grounded in practical

matters. Whilst history as a subject (especially the dominant field of cultural history), is today increasingly theorised, in terms of developing as a teacher there is a marked preference for theory to be firmly situated in discussion of everyday classroom situations and problematic issues – grounded in the concerns ('the realities', one says) of everyday teaching of the subject. Conducting activities in a language with which historians are familiar (in the everyday corridor discourse of teaching) is important. Put differently, it is important not to overburden learning conversations with what are all-too-readily regarded (and so dismissed) as 'alien' educational discourses. Educational 'jargon' (a much-used and telling word) is unlikely to engage unless historians can relate it readily to what they do. One means of helping historians to connect with this 'other' discourse is suggested by Knupfer (2009). He argues for greater networking between professional historians and teachers of history in schools, the latter of whom have undertaken more systematic training in educational theory and method and how it applies to the history classroom, albeit in schools. More contact and collaboration between history academics in university history departments and education departments, especially in our leading universities, would also be beneficial; there is still too little conversation about teaching between academic colleagues who in practice have a great deal in common in terms of dealing with the challenges of teaching history.

So learning to be a teacher must, like all learning, connect to what teachers already know (or think they know). However, practical tips for the classroom, whilst useful, are by themselves not sufficient. Rather, learning must be carefully progressed and supported in ways that begin with immediate subject and classroom challenges but move on from this more comfortable context into the unknown. Here the unknown may be, for example, models of curriculum design or assessment or pedagogic theory, and also unexamined fundamental beliefs and values in all three of the areas of commitment mentioned in the introduction to this essay: teaching history as a discipline; teaching history as a subject in higher education; teaching history as a career. The issue of underlying values is complex but, put simply, historians' beliefs about the discipline, about what

higher learning through history means to them, and their professional values as academic practitioners all need to be brought into the account and discussed. This collegial discussion should include common (and often under-explored) professional notions of 'scholarship', 'community', 'autonomy', 'agency', 'authenticity' and 'love of the subject'; terms frequently mentioned in our data. It must involve scrutiny (and self-scrutiny) in relation to the whole notion of what it means to be a historian, academic and university teacher, and what developing as a teacher means. And the widely expressed 'love of the subject' – the attachment that historians have to their subject and the difference they feel, as well as think, it can make to student learning and lives – provides a further dimension to the discussion. It signals the emotional nature of the commitment to teaching that is fundamental to the will to learn to be an effective teacher and to go on learning about it.

The survey and interviews consistently underscore that how we learn to be history educators is an affective process as well as a cognitive one. If each student's learning journey involves a roller-coaster of emotions, so learning to teach is also a highly emotional affair. This is rarely discussed and remains neglected in the burgeoning literature of the scholarship of history teaching and learning, though the importance of the affect in teaching and learning historical thinking is beginning to be recognised (see Middendorf et al., 2014). The affective constitutes a submerged language of development but one that lies only just below the surface of much of what we do: our reactions to a good and bad class; to student evaluations; to our whole task as teachers of our subject. This dimension of a teacher's life emerges particularly strongly in our historians' responses concerning the advice they would like to pass on to those starting out on a teaching career. These pieces of advice are often emotive: about the need for enthusiasm; respect for students; love of the subject; positivity in the face of current conditions in higher education. And, one urges: 'Remember this. Most other history teachers feel as insecure about their teaching as you do. Try not to let it dominate you.' The affective domain in learning to teach needs to be acknowledged just as much as the intellectual challenges,

and ways found of bringing it more openly and effectively to the conversation.

Conclusion

Teaching, our survey consistently demonstrates, constitutes an important part of historians' sense of professional identity. There is no authoritative model of how best to develop as a teacher, any more than there is a single 'correct' way to teach the subject. How we each learn is inflected by a range of factors that include previous experience; institutional working environment; national context; personal political and social beliefs and values; and discipline-based patterns of socialisation. And this learning is ongoing and depends upon what each individual understands at any one time in their academic life by teaching (and by developing). These understandings change in the course of any career, sometimes dramatically. Teaching in the first year of the career is not the same as teaching after five years experience; nor is it the same as teaching in the mid-career years or towards the end of a teaching life, though unlike Quinlan's (2000) study of historians in one US state university we found no obvious generational differences in conceptions of what it meant to teach history or develop as a history teacher. Indeed, one piece of advice seems to be held dear by many. As one historian puts it: 'remember to keep on learning'; or another: 'Be ready to learn and develop every time you teach a class'. And a third comments, 'It's a job where you never stop learning. You'll find as your confidence grows your teaching will improve and you can then try more experimental material and methods to engage students.'

This article provides only a broad snapshot of how a range of historians learn to be teachers and get better at it, and more fine-grained research is needed to present a fuller picture of the richness of this dynamic, ongoing experience. However, what the stories of the historians represented in the data strongly indicate is that the opportunities most likely to motivate and engage them are those that begin with disciplinary understanding: that recognise their conceptions of what it means to teach history as a distinctive discipline, as a

subject in higher education and as a career. This does not rule out input from other disciplines but it does make the point that extra-disciplinary materials must be adapted carefully in subject-related ways. What is also underlined by our data is the need to engage with learning to be a history educator as an emotional as well as an intellectual experience. Here the first step is to initiate more informed, and more open, collegial conversations about how we learn to teach our subject and what we love about it and teaching it to students.

When I began to teach, as a postgraduate student in the 1970s, there was no pedagogic training required and very little serious public discussion of teaching in the discipline. It was customary to consider good teaching a function of being an expert in the subject; that excellent teachers were born not made; and that what happened in the classroom was a private affair. Today, these assumptions have largely disappeared. Teaching is in many systems of contemporary higher education regarded as something you can (and are expected to) learn to do well, and there is considerably more opportunity and willingness to talk and learn more about it. There remain significant challenges to overcome, many at a systemic level, but as one senior historian who committed passionately to teaching throughout his career pointed out in interview: 'For all the obstacles there still are to developing teaching and teachers, it's important to remember that we've come a long way'. It seems a suitably positive final message: a reminder not only about yardsticks and perspective but also possibilities. And it prompts us as historians to use our training to historicise the history curriculum in all its aspects as a means more effectively to understand, talk about and shape our identities as teachers and as a community of educators.

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