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# **Community and Contestation:**

## **A critical discourse analysis of history teacher responses to the February 2013 draft National Curriculum for History**

A dissertation submitted in part-fulfilment of the Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) at Keele University in October 2015.

By: Joseph Smith

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## SUBMISSION OF THESIS FOR A RESEARCH DEGREE

### Part I. DECLARATION by the candidate for a research degree. To be bound in the thesis

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## **Abstract**

*This thesis seeks to explore history teacher engagement in debates surrounding the 2013 draft National Curriculum for History and locates these in the wider context of English history teacher identity. The 2013 draft curriculum, which was announced in February, was withdrawn in August 2013 following complaints of political bias (see Smith, 2014). This “curriculum war” might be interpreted – as others have been (e.g. Crawford, 1998; Taylor & Guyver, 2011) - as an attempt by both the left and right to frame a curriculum which furthered their political metanarrative, but this research shows that such views are oversimplifications.*

*Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight history teachers in the north-west of England who actively opposed the draft curriculum and their responses were analysed using van Dijk’s (2009) sociocognitive approach to critical discourse analysis. These responses uncover a complex nexus of motivations in which political opposition is only a small strand. Instead, the strongest motivation was a deep loyalty to the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of their subject (Bernstein, 1999).*

*In opposition to the narrow nationalist conception of school history, the interviews indicated strongly the existence of a social realist (Young, 2008) counter-hegemonic discourse which informs and underpins a vibrant history teaching community. This shared discourse argues that historical knowledge is constructed and contested, and that it should be taught as such (Lee, 1991). In this paradigm, the draft curriculum was opposed not because it advanced a rightist narrative, but because the concept of a single narrative was itself considered inherently unhistorical. The epistemological unity of the history teaching community contributes to a project-identity of resistance (Castells, 1997) which is further bolstered by the research activities of the Schools History Project and the Historical Association.*

*A Gramscian (1971) analysis is used throughout, but history teachers are not found to be, in the main, Marxists. Gramsci’s work instead provides the framework for understanding the nature of the history-teaching community and the mechanics of its resistance.*

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“You can play when your story is finished.” To which I replied in my most sympathetic voice, “I won’t finish for a long time, not until after Christmas.” Tom was unfazed by this and cheeped,

“Yes, you will play with me after Christmas when it is snowy.”

Well it’s after Christmas now. And it’s finished. All we need now is the snow.

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# Chapter 1 - Introduction and Project Rationale

This thesis is an exploration of history teacher engagement in the debates surrounding the Key Stage Three (11-14) English history curriculum which took place in the spring and summer of 2013. During this period, the curriculum was published in draft format in February 2013 (DfE, 2013a) and, after a consultation, as a significantly revised finalised programme of study in August (DfE, 2013c).

The two documents differed markedly; while the draft met with widespread criticism from history teachers and researchers within history education, the final document by contrast met with general approval. This change in policy direction is of considerable interest as it suggests that arguments put forward by history educators during the consultation period were listened to and that their concerns were addressed. These wholesale changes are all the more intriguing when one appreciates that only two subjects (Design and Technology being the other) saw anything like revision on this scale.

This is not to say that criticism from history teachers was the sole reason for the changes, but that their involvement was a necessary, if not a sufficient cause of the revision, and as such is worthy of study. This research explores the arguments and actions of eight history teachers and situates their responses in the wider context of history teacher identity.

This introduction is divided into three sections:

1. **Establishing Context** – An analytical narrative of the debate which took place in the spring and summer of 2013.
2. **Situating the researcher** – An analysis of the position of the researcher in relation to the research
3. **Justifying of the research** – An exposition of the relevance and significance of the research.

1. Establishing Context

On February 7<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Coalition government announced draft proposals for the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013a). Although this was a far-reaching review which redesigned the curricula for all school subjects it was, perhaps inevitably, the history

curriculum which attracted most controversy. Criticism began on the day the curriculum was released with Sir Richard Evans lambasting the ‘Little England folly at the heart of history’ in an article for the *Financial Times* (Evans, 2013a). Evans made two telling points: firstly that the curriculum was ‘inward-looking’ concentrating too heavily on the history of Britain to the exclusion of world history. Secondly, and more significantly, he wrote “worst of all, the document gives no sense at all of the fact that history is an academic discipline, like physics or chemistry” and that “The modern discipline of history, accurately reflected in the existing national curriculum, is being chucked out to make way for a mindless regression to the myths of the Edwardian era.”

These two criticisms – one practical, one epistemological – were repeated in the subsequent days by a range of history educationalists. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, Chris Husbands, the Director of the Institute of Education, declared his opposition (Husbands, 2013). This was followed three days later by criticism from The Historical Association (Historical Association, 2013a) and, two days after that, a comment piece in *The Guardian* described the curriculum as a ‘Ladybird Curriculum’ recalling the quaint children’s history books of the 1960s and 1970s (Sheldon, 2013).

Inevitably, these criticisms were met swiftly by a defence of the new curriculum. On 15<sup>th</sup> February, the day before it published Sheldon’s piece, *The Guardian* had published an article by historian Niall Ferguson in support of the curriculum (Ferguson, 2013). Ferguson met Evans’ attacks head-on, lamenting ‘the parlous state of historical knowledge among young Britons’ and defending a core knowledge approach to addressing this. Ferguson also challenged Evans’ argument that school students needed to be taught some degree of historical methodology. Leaning heavily on the views of a single history teacher (Hunter, 2013)<sup>1</sup>, Ferguson suggested that it was precisely the drive to teach historical methodology to children which had caused this endemic ignorance:

“it’s not just the defective content of the old national curriculum that is the problem. It’s the way history has been taught in British schools ever since the advent of the schools’ history

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<sup>1</sup> “Matthew Hunter” was a pseudonym adopted by Robert Peal who is cited elsewhere in this thesis.

project in the 1970s and the rejection of historical knowledge in favour of "source analysis" and "child-centered" learning".

Ferguson was also among the fifteen academic historians who wrote a letter to *The Times* newspaper (Abulafia, et al., 2013a) defending the curriculum; three signatories were later to publish a pamphlet providing a fuller explanation of their position (Abulafia, et al., 2013b).

Such strident positions should not surprise us - since the introduction of the first National Curriculum for England and Wales in 1991, the history curriculum has been contested and debated in the public sphere to a much greater extent than any other subject (Crawford, 1995; Phillips, 1998a; 1998b; Guyver 2013). But what might surprise us, is the extent to which these arguments have changed so little since the introduction of the first National Curriculum in 1991. These are issues which are explored at length in the literature review, but must be at least outlined here to better contextualise the debates taking place and for this specific research project.

In England, opinions about history teaching fall into two broad and antagonistic camps. These opinions concern discussions about the nature and purpose of school history and are considerably richer than the tired dichotomy of 'skills' and 'content' which is so lazily reproduced in public discourse. Similarly, there is a tendency in the popular press to politicise the debate over school history along simplistic lines – where 'the left' favours history from below and celebrates the achievements of marginalised groups; and 'the right' emphasises a narrative of national accomplishments and the deeds of great men. Such dichotomies are a distraction from the fundamentally epistemological debate which is really taking place.

Critics of the draft curriculum are working within the "new history" paradigm. This way of thinking can trace its origins to the Schools Council for History report in 1976 (Schools' History Project, 1976) and argues that history is a discipline in which new knowledge is constructed through a unique process of enquiry – the historical method. These ideas have received their fullest exposition in the work of Peter Lee (1991, 1992, 1994) who has argued that the aim of an historical education must be to allow children to think historically about the past, that is, according to the principles of the historical

method. It is the central argument of this thesis that this shared social realist (Young, 2008a) vision of history as an epistemological endeavour forms the bonds which allow history teachers to exercise such control over curriculum change.

In short, the history education community's conception of its own discipline is so epistemologically robust, and so well-articulated, it is difficult for non-expert curriculum planners to challenge. Thus those challenges which are mounted are either informed by common sense appeals to tradition (in the case of politicians) or by ignorance and underestimation of what secondary school age pupils are capable of (in the case of academic historians).

Those trained historians who supported the draft curriculum did not dispute that history is constructed, but instead questioned whether school students are equipped to engage in this process of construction (Abulafia, et al., 2013b). Furthermore, they argue that in the process of construction, misconceptions can go unchallenged and historical understanding becomes fragmented and episodic (Hunter, 2013). Consequently, a strong narrative framework is proposed which, it is argued, will allow students to think in a more informed way about the past when the time comes to introduce them to the historical method (Abulafia, et al., 2013b). Another feature of this argument is an emphasis on British history, which is based on the common sense notion that one should "know the street-plan of one's own neighbourhood before learning the street-plan of Kuala Lumpur or Vilnius" (Abulafia, et al., 2013b, p. 2).

These positions are well rehearsed and are revisited each time the curriculum is redrawn, but it is fair to say that the 'new history' approach has dominated curriculum design since its inception in 1991. Supporters of narrative history have become well-used to bemoaning successive curriculum redrafts ever since Thatcher had declared herself "appalled" at the initial plans for the curriculum in 1989 (Thatcher, 1993, p. 596). Nevertheless, the "New History" approach remained unchallenged between 1991 and 2013; the draft curriculum represented by contrast the first serious attempt by traditionalists/ narrativists to wrest back control of the curriculum.

If the sudden lurch towards narrative history was a cause for surprise, no less a surprise was the speed with which these plans unravelled. While the Secretary of

State for Education, Michael Gove, could provide an effective rear-guard against those he could caricature as 'educational progressives' (famously deriding them as a Marxist blob (Gove, 2013a)), it proved considerably more difficult to mount a defence against critics whose support he had assumed he could rely on. A letter in *The Observer* newspaper signed by the President of the Royal Historical Society and senior members of the British Academy demonstrated that even pillars of the British establishment were querying the curriculum. More damaging was the public intervention by historian Simon Schama at the Hay Literary festival. Schama described the document as 'a ridiculous shopping list' and "*1066 and All That*' without the jokes' (Schama quoted in Furness, 2013). This contribution was made all the more surprising since Michael Gove had, at the 2010 Conservative Conference, announced that Schama would be working as a consultant on the new curriculum (Vasagar & Sparrow, 2010).

Further damage was done to the new curriculum's reputation when another consultant to the curriculum – and Gove appointee - Steve Mastin, implied there had been political interference in the document, 'Between January and the publication of this document – which no one involved in the consultation had seen – someone has typed it up and I have no idea who that is,' (quoted in Boffey, 2013). Mastin was both a history teacher and a Conservative party member and his version of events is corroborated by a 'leaked' version of the curriculum in *The Daily Mail* on 29 December 2012 which differed markedly from the curriculum released in February 2013 (Petre, 2012).

At the same time as public conflict over the curriculum was mounting, the Department for Education was running a consultation on the proposed changes which closed on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2013. The report on this consultation, which was published in July, stated that "History received the largest number of responses of all the national curriculum subjects" (DfE, 2013b, p. 7) and that "Of those responding in relation to one subject only (1,556), respondents to design and technology (340) and history (455) made up 51% of the responses" (p. 10). Even before the report was published, leaks from the Department for Education indicated that a U-turn was imminent. An article in *The Guardian* in June 2013 quoted an unnamed DfE source as saying, "there's been a major rewrite since the thing came out in February. I do not know if that is because

they ran into a lot more flak than they were expecting, but they have been listening to people's objections" (Mansell, 2013). In the same article another source said "I think the DfE was genuinely taken aback by the response they've had on this. They've had to move."

The draft curriculum did receive qualified support from some traditionalist school teachers such as the *Prince's Teaching Institute* whose June 2013 Conference Report said that the draft curriculum's "aims are admirable and whose emphasis on knowledge as 'necessary bricks to the mortar of skills' is welcome". However, the prescriptiveness of the curriculum was implicitly criticised with the carefully coded phrase: "the precise choice of content would be better retained by teachers than decided by transitory politicians and their advisors" (Prince's Teaching Institute, 2013, p. 3). However, their explanation for the unwelcome aspects of the reform were, perhaps, more charitable than some others, saying that teachers "should be given more freedom to teach the topics they want. If the intention of the policymakers is the empowerment of teachers, the message is not always getting through" (p. 6).

Perhaps rather surprisingly, given Gove's earlier defiant attitude, in July 2013 the government's response to the consultation seemed to accept many of the criticisms that had been levelled at it. The final framework document (DfE, 2013b) was well received by the same voices who had criticised the draft. The Historical Association which had said earlier of the draft, 'More than twenty years of thoughtful and sophisticated approaches to curriculum development have been thrown away in this document' (Historical Association, 2013a) now said that it was a curriculum which gave 'greater scope for choice and respect for teachers' expertise' (Historical Association, 2013c)

Whether it was solely the scale of opposition which prompted the DfE to retreat is open to question, but opposition was a necessary – if not sufficient – cause of the U-turn. Indeed, the comparable case of the putative removal of popular American novellas from GCSE English Literature show that public outrage *per se*, is not enough to bring about policy change (Sellgren, 2013). Other factors hinted at in the consultation document (DfE, 2013b) were the arrant unworkability of a strictly chronological

curriculum in small mixed-age primary classes and the exclusively British focus – even those who argued for an emphasis on British history, did not intend to promote total ignorance of world history. Rather puckishly, Haydn (Haydn, 2012) has even suggested that Michael Gove never intended to implement the draft curriculum, but simply employed it as Machiavellian ruse to appease the right-wing and to expose new historians as closet leftists. Gove could then, of course, benefit further by appearing to listen to criticism and modify the curriculum. Haydn has never publicly developed this theory and, although credible, it is perhaps best to leave discussion of such ‘conspiracy’ theories at the outline stage and focus instead on verifiable facts. Whatever one’s view on reasons for the DfE’s U-turn, opposition must have played a role, the only serious discussion is about the extent of this role. Some clue to this significance can, perhaps, be gleaned from the fact that the two most complained about subjects during the consultation period – Design and Technology and History – saw the most significant changes when the final curricula were released in September. However, one should avoid confusing correlation and causation and this could simply be a coincidence.

Coincidence or not, the fact remains that history attracted more contributions to the DfE consultation than any other single subject (29% of all responses) – and it is the purpose of this research to look at the reasons for this high level of engagement. A rather lazy explanation for the scale of this backlash is that opposition to the history curriculum was greater because its draft was the worst. Although appealing, this argument ignores two salient points. Firstly, the history curriculum might well be the “worst”, but what does it mean to say that a curriculum is “bad”? In order to criticise a curriculum, one must have a well-defined conception of a “good” curriculum from which it deviates. Criticisms of the draft differed between respondents, but the act of criticism itself, necessitates some reflection and introspection on the nature of the subject one teaches. Secondly, the curriculum document records the views only of those who took time to respond to the consultation, not those who simply indulged in private grumbling and ineffectual muttering. That so many history teachers were prepared to invest their time in opposing the draft demonstrates an implicit faith that this engagement and opposition can be effective. Put simply, history teachers did not simply complain about



the draft document, but instead took it upon themselves to *challenge* it and to *change* it.

It is equally this shared agency that is the focus for this research. When faced with disadvantageous change imposed by the powerful, one normally sees a pattern of submission or mediation. There is much literature on teachers subverting and mediating policy change (*inter alia* (Apple, 1993) (Lacey, 1977) (Vulliamy & Webb, 1993)), but there are few examples of curriculum change being successfully challenged head-on in the manner described above.

I want to suggest that two characteristics of the history teaching community which enabled the draft curriculum to be, in Churchill's famous phrase, "strangled in its cradle"; these are the community's organisation and the engagement of its individual members. Of the two factors organisation is the more easily externally observable and quantifiable. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this organisation was the Historical Association's own consultation process which ran between February and April 2013. Within weeks of the drafts announcement, the association had hosted five public meetings at locations across England which collated the *viva voce* views of 545 history teachers. It also hosted an online forum on its website which collected 100 written qualitative responses and launched a poll which attracted 1600 respondents. By any measure, this is an organised community (Historical Association, 2013b).

But if efficiency of organisation is easy to observe and straightforward to measure, it is comparably difficult to achieve the same with regards to participants' motivation. A study of the submissions to the Historical Association's survey might tell us what teachers objected to, but it would not tell us why they objected; why they chose resistance over compliance, subversion or mediation. If the empirical evidence suggests that history teachers are motivated to engage in debates about the future of their subject, why are they so? How did history teachers develop the professional self-confidence to challenge power on its own terms?

These kinds of questions can only be answered through discussions with the participants in person. This research proposes to do just that.

## 2. Situating the Researcher

In common with all practitioner-led research, the focus for this thesis has emerged from my personal and professional experiences and, consequently, an understanding of these is essential in fully comprehending the aims and structure of the research project. As a history teacher, I do not claim to be a disinterested observer of events, but instead I am an insider who cares deeply about the future of both school history as a discipline, and the professional integrity of history classroom practitioners. Furthermore, in my professional experience, I have found history teachers to be more politically engaged than teachers in general. Although this could be simply my perception, qualified support for this view can be found in the work of Evans (1989) and Knight (1996b). Historians, it seems, are more innately distrustful of power and more willing than most to challenge that power. It is unclear whether the discipline of history radicalises its students or whether radicals are attracted to the discipline of history, but the correlation seems anecdotally true, nevertheless. Consequently, I hope I will be forgiven for a short autobiographical diversion which better contextualises my positionality.

I have, for as long as I can remember, viewed the world in fundamentally Marxist terms. My childhood was marked by a high level of political literacy; my parents, both born in 1950, had been students during the political upheavals of 1968 and had both been deeply affected by this. My musical and cultural tastes were shaped by my mother and so I was a fan of Joan Baez and Bob Dylan while still at primary school; twice a year we would visit my Great Uncle who was a CPGB member. This upbringing is significant only in that, as a primary school aged child, it was impossible to tell how unusual it was.

It was not until I was seventeen that I realised that my politically-aware upbringing had been so atypical. As a sixth-form student, I organised a school delegation to attend a demonstration against the newly introduced tuition fees of £1000. To my friends and me, the iniquitousness of the policy was obvious. I advertised a coach trip in a school assembly and afterwards I was challenged aggressively by a fellow student who said,

“You’re just pathetic, no one’s parents are arsed about having to pay a grand for university.” This incident provided the first serious challenge to my political belief system. Before this epiphany, I had treated it as axiomatic that all people supported the welfare state *in toto*. I was genuinely shocked that people could greet the unpicking of the idea of universal education with such equanimity.

Inevitably, at university in Cambridge, my exposure to rightist political viewpoints was increased. In the context of the neo-Liberal orthodoxy which marked the Labour governments in my early twenties, the language of class and inequality effectively disappeared from the public discourse and I felt increasingly isolated in my political beliefs, which had changed little despite a degree course in political theory.

On beginning my career in teaching, I continued my political engagement by becoming the school’s NUT representative. In the context of the workplace reforms of the mid-2000s, this was a position which brought me into regular conflict with the school’s management. I could see a fundamental redefinition of teacher professionalism (Thompson, 2006) (Beck, 2008) taking place and, like the tuition fees incident years earlier, I was disbelieving of how many of my colleagues either welcomed these reforms, or remained unaware of them. I was, however, also fascinated by colleagues who opposed the reforms but eschewed outright opposition, in favour of subversion and mediation or what Lacey (1977) calls “strategic compliance.” These people argued that professional relationships and informal agreements with colleagues would shield them from the worst excesses of this new “audit society” (Power, 1997).

As I advanced in my career, it became increasingly apparent that mediation was the dominant method employed by teachers for managing unwelcome policy changes. Nevertheless, I continued to feel that this approach was inadequate and a betrayal of younger colleagues who were yet to establish these informal networks and of those colleagues yet to enter the profession. In other words, I believed this approach to be fundamentally *selfish*. It is for this reason that I am so interested in instances of open conflict between the teaching profession and their perceived opponents. My research interest is in the moment when teachers choose to fight rather than mediate as I believe this reveals something about the nature of hegemony. Hegemony’s strength

is that it is unnoticed and invisible – it works by stealth, by slowly reshaping the *Weltanschauung* of those people under its sway. I am fascinated by the moment at which hegemony overreaches itself and a how class-conscious group chooses resistance over tactical mediation. The 2013 conflict over the history curriculum is, I believe, one such moment.

Consequently, a confluence of interests led me to researching history teacher self-concept in the context of the 2013 curriculum debates. As a Marxist, it reveals something to me about the limits of power and how collective action can repel power. As an historian, it interests me greatly, that the arguments advanced to protect the subject are largely historiographical - that is to say, history teachers seem to possess a deep understanding of the way their subject works and have a clear vision of its place in the curriculum. Finally, as a teacher, the research points to ways in which the profession as a whole might use a clear notion of professional identity to influence policy decisions.

### 3. Justifying the Research

Perhaps the best reason for undertaking this research is simply that it is a ‘good news story’ of teacher empowerment. Teachers have been buffeted by a public discourse which Ball (1994) famously described as a “discourse of derision.” This relentless criticism has undermined autonomy and allowed self-doubt to undermine teacher professionalism. This research is an exception - a case study of successful professional engagement in policy discussion, an example of self-confident professionals asserting a right to be heard.

The relevance of this research must be seen in the context of a wider collapse of morale among teachers in England. A survey undertaken by Comres (ComRes, 2013) for one teaching union reported that 47% of teachers in England had seriously considered leaving the profession in the last 12 months. Allied to this was evidence of a rapid deterioration in teacher morale with two fifths of teachers (41%) saying their job satisfaction has decreased over the same period. The role of government policy in contributing to this worsening picture cannot be discounted.

Since the early 2000s, secondary education policy has likewise been dominated by the language of “school improvement” guided by neo-liberal managerial thinking. As Larry Cuban has commented, schools are not businesses and never can be, but yet,

“The application of business-crafted solutions to public schools (better managers, getting the incentives right, choice, market competition, accountability) has become so thoroughly embedded in policymakers’ thinking about improving schools... that these policies are... seen as ‘common sense’” (2004, p. 13).

The impact of this common sense discourse in England’s schools and on its teachers has been enormous. A cross-party consensus on school improvement has emerged which has changes to school governance and reform of teachers’ working conditions at its heart. These changes - which began under the New Labour government (1997-2010) and subsequently continued under a Conservative-led Coalition after 2010 – have fatally undermined social identity and professional self-confidence among teachers. These changes - which extended performance related pay and opened the door to unqualified teachers - have made it difficult for teachers to take collective action. This process has accelerated greatly since the 2010 Education Act. Organisations which used to allow and encourage co-operation such as Local Education Authorities and Trade Unions have had their influence systematically undermined using the endless mantra of “autonomy” for schools. In reality, autonomy means competition; competition between schools and between the staff within those schools. These processes have been extended by the proliferation of Free Schools and large academy chains which pursue neo-Liberal management styles emphasising competitiveness and celebrating individual, but not collective, achievement among teachers. So rapid and wholesale have been the changes, that teachers have struggled to adapt to them, much less challenge them. As Giroux has written,

“where teachers do enter the debate, they are the object of educational reforms that reduce them to the status of high-level technicians carrying out dictates and objectives decided by experts far removed from the everyday realities of classroom life. The message appears to be that teachers do not count when it comes to critically examining the nature and process of educational reform.” (1988, p. 121)

The result of this exclusion is being seen in the collapse of teacher morale described earlier. If teaching in England is to maintain its professional status, strategies of

engaged resistance must be explored. However, resistance which can be characterised as simple resistance to change or protection of privilege will never succeed, instead teachers must be able to articulate educationally valid reasons for their resistance.

This thesis argues that the key to successful resistance is the articulation of a coherent counter-narrative and that the history education community offers one such narrative. However, I would argue further that the nature of this counter-narrative *qua* discourse has been somewhat under-researched. As history-education has matured as a field of enquiry, its research foci have become more specialised and specific; this process, though inevitable, has perhaps militated against big-picture thinking about the discourse itself.

This is not to say that no overarching rationale for history education has not been offered - clearly the existence of procedural-based curricula in England and elsewhere belie that - but these curricula are *manifestations* of the discourse, they do not represent an analysis of the anatomy of that discourse. It is argued here that the strength of the shared history-education discourse is its epistemological coherence, which it derives from a social-realist conception of knowledge (Young, 2008a). This social realist discourse has not been consciously constructed by its participants; rather researchers who have been engaged in refining and developing individual points of theory and pedagogy have simultaneously – and unwittingly – been engaged in a process of discourse formation. The research-community of history education is greater than the sum of its parts, since it is the coherence of the social-realist view of the subject which unites teachers, not the individual pieces of research which it comprises. Thus history education has emerged as a distinctive field - neither history nor education, which conforms to Bernstein's definition of a 'strong' vertical discourse (1999)

This thesis argues that the field of history education needs to be considered holistically in terms of its coherence and social utility. Its function as a social glue is explored

through the contributions of the teachers interviewed, which show that the history teaching community has a powerful role to play in identity formation. But the thesis also seeks to explain precisely why that discourse has such power both within the community and without. Hitherto, the power of the history education discourse has either been taken for granted by history teachers, or else treated as an illegitimate ideological tyranny. This thesis argues instead that the discourse is 'strong' in a Bernsteinian sense – it is the social realist coherence of the discourse which enables it to be such a valuable unifying force during periods of curricular contestation. This thesis proposes that effective resistance to unwanted curriculum change by subject communities is possible, but that a social realist conception of one's subject is an essential precondition of that. While this process of discourse formation has been somewhat accidental and haphazard in the case of history teachers, perhaps other interested groups can follow more consciously along the path that history teachers have beaten.

# Chapter 2 - Literature Review

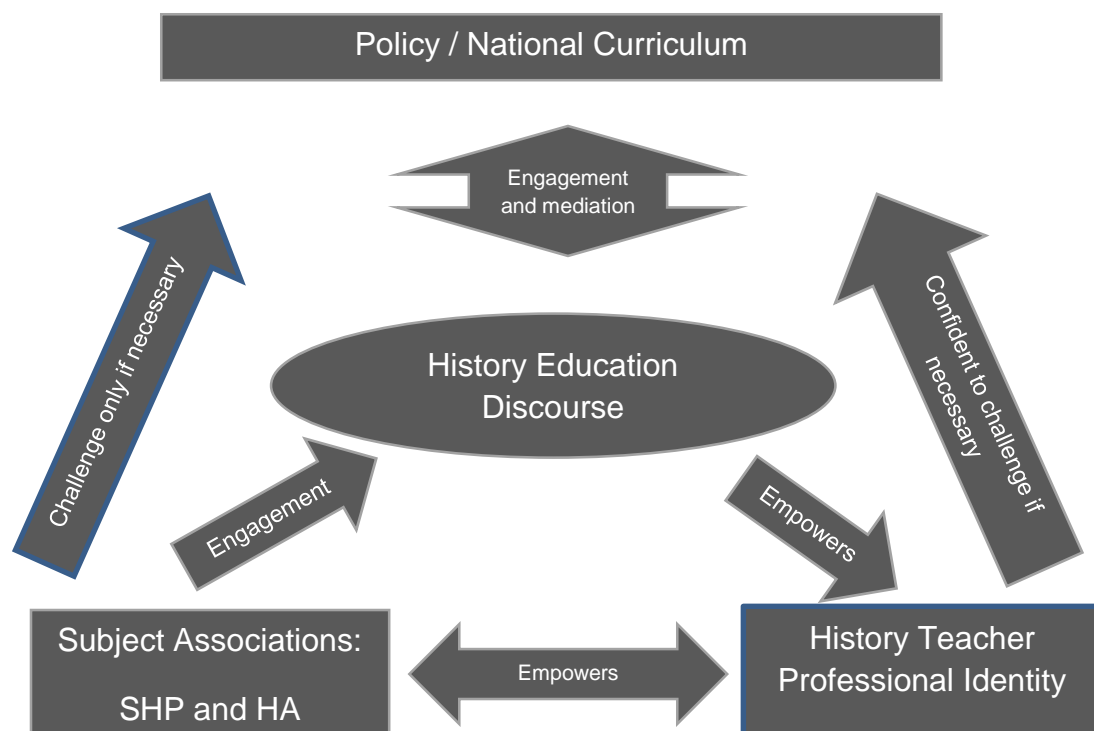


## 1. Literature Review Structure

This thesis sits at the intersection of two important debates in educational research – those of curriculum theory and teacher identity. Such a wide scope can make for an unwieldy review of the literature, but since such a wide scope is unavoidable, a tight structure is essential.

It is argued that history teachers' awareness of curriculum theory creates a form of enacted identity in which they feel empowered to engage in the discourse of the school curriculum and consequently to challenge policy decisions. This is, perhaps, best shown with a relational diagram. In the diagram below (Figure 1), we can see that policy is mediated through discourse. In some iterations of the National Curriculum (1995, 2000, 2007) this process of mediation produces a curriculum which is mutually agreeable. However, when this process of mediation breaks down (as it did in 1991 and 2013), it can be seen that the discourse itself provides the framework for a more direct challenge to curriculum planners to be mounted by the interested parties (subject associations and history teachers).

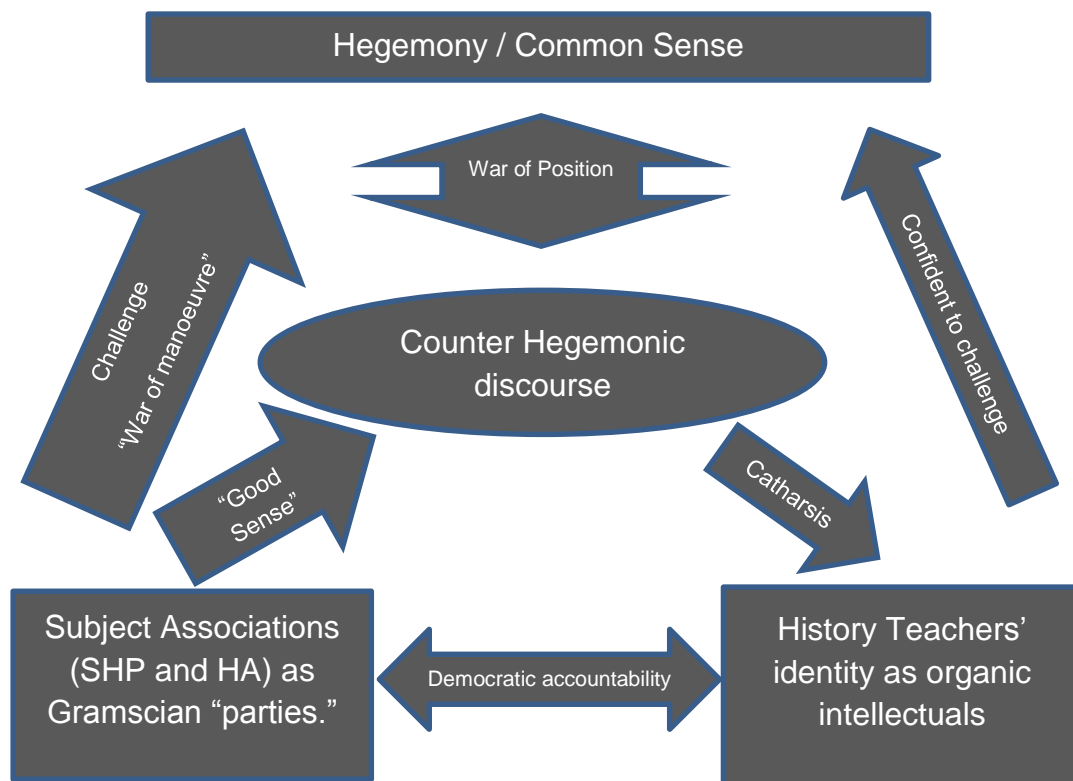
**FIGURE 1**



The centrality of discourse is obvious from the diagram above. It is discourse which simultaneously shapes policy and also engenders the confidence to resist policy when necessary. This combination of processes (power, resistance and discourse) immediately calls to mind the work of Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci, 1971). Once a Gramscian theoretical underpinning is adopted (as it will be here) we are able to modify the earlier relational diagram to use Gramscian terminology (Figure 2).

While, the principal focus of the thesis is history teacher identity and resistance (i.e. the bottom-right portion of the diagram), the diagram also shows why these actions can only be understood in the context of a Gramscian analysis of the debate as a whole. Necessarily, therefore, this literature review must encompass a discussion of curriculum theory as well as history-teacher identity.

**FIGURE 2**



This literature review will thus begin by exploring and defining some of the key concepts in Gramscian thought used in the diagram above and, as well, by making some initial reference to their utility in understanding the history teaching discourse and the role of teacher identity within it. It will then take an overview of debates on the utility and purpose of school history, before exploring these debates in greater depth. It will be shown that, since 1970, hegemonic and counter-hegemonic conceptions of school history have been locked in a dialectical evolutionary relationship. It will conclude by exploring the ways in which these conflicts have shaped a strong project-identity (Castells, 1997) for history teachers which casts them as activist professionals (Sachs, 2003). This overall trajectory is explored in the following sub-sections.

- Theoretical Underpinning - Thinking with Gramsci
- Overview – Debates on the purpose of school history
- History Education in England before 1968: An ‘Inherited Consensus’
- History Education in England 1968-71: A Consensus under strain
- History Education in England 1971-88: New History, New Discourse
- History Education in England since 1988: New History and New Conservatism
- Teacher Identity in an age of New Conservatism
- History Teacher Identity in an age of New Conservatism

## 2. Theoretical Underpinning - Thinking with Gramsci

Once neglected, the writings of Antonio Gramsci have now been given the highest honour accorded to critical theorists: that of being repeatedly misunderstood. The most obvious and egregious of these misunderstandings concern the portrayal of Gramsci’s ‘*On Education*’ (1971, pp. 26-43). This work has been criticised by some scholars for its apparent espousal of conservative educational values (Entwistle, 1979) and was even used in a speech defending educational traditionalism by former Education Secretary, Michael Gove (Gove, 2013). However, although Gramsci’s work is unequivocally a rejection of the progressivist curriculum of the Gentile educational reforms, he was similarly critical of the “mechanical Jesuitical school” of teaching (p. 32). Gramsci’s priority in education reform (as in all of his work) was how best to form

'organic intellectuals' which might lead the working class. Modern educationalists might shrink from his traditionalist prescriptions for the classroom, but these are contextually determined recommendations for a timeless political project. Conversely, conservative commentators who wish to count Gramsci among their intellectual supporters make the opposite error – of considering Gramsci's pedagogy detached from its revolutionary aims. This brief example of the debate over Gramsci's educational theories shows the importance of considering Gramsci's thought as a holistic system, rather than in a piecemeal manner.

In any understanding of Gramsci's theory, hegemony properly understood must take centre stage. Gramsci's conceptualisation of hegemony redefined the relationship between base and superstructure in a much more fundamental way than many commentators had previously appreciated. Before explaining hegemony and its importance to understanding school history curricula and teacher resistance, it is important to address some misconceptions. Firstly, Gramsci's conception of hegemony must not be confused with the more widely-understood definition of the term; in short, hegemony is not domination. Hegemony is not a conspiracy conceived by a cabal of capitalists, nor is it just another word for force or coercion. Secondly, hegemony is not another word for the ideological discourse of the elite. This concept, which Bourdieu calls *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1977) is an important facet of hegemony but it is far from a satisfactory substitute. Instead, hegemony refers to the totality of human relations in a given society which, when taken together, support the interests of the exploiter class. In Raymond Williams' words,

“hegemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but .... Which saturates society to such an extent [that it] even constitutes the limits of commonsense for most people under its sway” (Williams, 1973, p. 8).

Hegemony, then, “saturates” society – it is not domination from above, but present in every thought or act which supports capitalistic exploitation, even those which are apparently consensual. Furthermore, hegemony is even present in relationships between members of the exploited class – by imbuing society with a self-sustaining language of what Gramsci calls “common sense”, it become almost impossible for

people in the hegemonic system (even those it exploits) to think outside it. But as Gramsci writes, this “does not mean that there are no truths in common sense. It means rather that “common sense is an ambiguous, contradictory and multiform concept” (1971, p. 423). Michael Apple has contemporised this argument by arguing that the Left too often views common sense from a position of intellectual arrogance,

“The first thing to ask about an ideology is not what is false about it, but what is true. What are its connections to lived experience? Ideologies, properly conceived, do not dupe people. To be effective, they must connect to real problems, real experiences”. (2000, p. 20)

This is far more sophisticated than a Luckasian idea of false consciousness because individuals in the society are not indoctrinated or cowed into accepting capitalism, rather capitalism has reached a point where its reach is so total that it would seem lunatic to challenge it.

Thus hegemony creates a discourse of common sense through which it is able to sustain itself without recourse to coercion. Gramsci further postulated that the balance between coercion and hegemonic control in a given society is related to the extent to which capitalism is established in that country (1971, p. 238). In *fin de siecle* Russia, nascent capitalism depended on censorship, the secret police and Cossack units to hold onto power. In contrast, modern capitalist systems can effectively reduce their dependence on these ideological state apparatuses by outsourcing their domination to the reliably hegemonic institutions of civil society, such as schools and the media.

Public debates about the history curriculum are an interesting example of this. There exists a common sense view in the public discourse that there is a certain core of essential historical knowledge, and that children are increasingly ignorant of this knowledge. From this starting point, it is possible to construct a “moral panic” (Cohen, 1972) about children’s ignorance, and a tendentious corollary of its impact on ethnic and social cohesion. It does not matter that there was never any ‘golden age of historical knowledge’ – indeed, Wineberg (2001, p. vii) has shown that such ignorance panics can be found as early as 1917 – what matters is that these panics ‘feel true’; they are, in short, common-sensical. Once a panic has taken hold, a traditional

conservative position is presented as an equally common-sensical solution to this apparent decay.

Panics such as this are indicative of a powerful reactionary hegemony: they are not created by the state, but seem to emerge organically in civil society - in the media or public opinion. These panics appeal particularly to middle-class voters who cherish their privileged social status and wish to see a 'cultural literacy' curriculum which reinforces their privilege. Apple (2001) and Ball (2003) have suggested that these conservative attitudes have become more widespread as neo-Liberalism has eroded the earning power of the traditional petty bourgeoisie. In other words, the middle classes support an exclusionary conception of knowledge which protects the life chances of their own children by limiting the social mobility of others. In this way, the middle-class can be co-opted to support reactionary curricula. Clark (2009) has shown that such "knowledge panics" exist in Canada and Australia and so – as Gramsci predicts - appear to be a feature of public discourse in all mature democracies.

Despite such discourses and the pervasive effects of hegemony, Conservative governments in the UK have singled out the History curriculum as an area of civil society in need of the kind of coercive control that Gramsci suggests should be unnecessary in high-capitalist societies. It is tempting to explain this by referring simply to history's utility as a vehicle for communicating a narrow rightist conception of nationhood, but this would be an oversimplification. It is argued here instead that Conservative governments have felt the need to exercise greater control over the history curriculum because history teachers have proven so adept at mediating and subverting existing curricula. Thus, it is the ability of the history teaching community to articulate an alternative vision of school history and its readiness to resist curriculum control that makes it a special target for right-wing curriculum planners.

These arguments, too, are to be found in Gramsci's analyses of capitalism and resistance. Like all Marxists, Gramsci follows Marx's view in his *Theses on Feurbach* – that the point of philosophy is not just to describe the world, but to change it (Marx, 1845). But Gramsci's commitment to "praxis" led to a reimagining of the preconditions for successful proletarian revolution. Capitalism, Gramsci argued, could not be relied

upon to collapse after economic crises as Marx had expected. The cyclical depressions of the 1890s, 1930s and 2000s demonstrate that Capitalism as a super-structural concept has an intrinsic capacity to reinvent itself after even ‘catastrophic incursions’ (Gramsci, 1971, p. 235). Each time capitalism is shaken, it reinvents the terms of its hegemony and is reborn in a slightly altered, and stronger, form. This is a major re-evaluation of the relationship between base and superstructure: for Gramsci, although the economic base is primary, it is not stationary – it has a reciprocal evolutionary relationship with the super-structural domain. Since both capitalism and hegemony have changed and evolved, Gramsci argued that Capitalism’s opponents needed to be similarly flexible to remain effective (Bucki-Glucksman, 1982). These ideas gave rise to Gramsci’s idea of revolution as process as opposed to revolution as act<sup>2</sup>. While Gramsci accepted that a final militaristic assault on Capitalism would be needed to remove the vestiges of its coercive state structures (Gramsci’s war of manoeuvre), any such assault would be destined to fail unless the opposition had fought a carefully orchestrated War of Position beforehand. In Gramsci’s words, “to fix one’s minds on the military model is the mark of a fool: politics... must have priority... only politics creates the possibility for manoeuvre and movement” (p. 232). History teachers, it is argued here, have long engaged in a Gramscian war of position which is informed by a clear counter-hegemonic discourse. Even in the public discourse, Gramsci’s military metaphor is mirrored in the commonplace phrase, “history war” (Linenthal & Englehardt, 1996) used to describe highly politicized debates about the content of school history.

Since the 1970s, the History teaching community in England has had a guiding philosophy of what ‘good’ history teaching is. This vision contrasts with the narrow instrumentalist conception of the right, but, crucially, is adaptive rather than fixed. Gramsci is clear that counter-hegemony cannot succeed purely by opposing hegemony – it must learn from hegemony by incorporating and appropriating those aspects of common sense which contain good sense. An analysis of debates within the history teaching community shows it to be reflective, self-critical and even prepared

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<sup>2</sup> See particularly ‘Notes on Italian History’ for this.

to concede “defeat” where the evidence for concession is strong enough. Thus school history is engaged in a Darwinian arms-race against the forces of reaction and is able to evolve and adapt to meet changing circumstances and so stay relevant. A properly formed counter-hegemony, Gramsci argues, is radical simply because it sounds so reasonable, but where a reactionary hegemony rests on institutions, a progressive hegemony rests on ideology. It should, in Gramsci’s words, enable students to challenge “magical” or “folkloristic” interpretations of how the world came to be as it is and to see societal arrangements as constructed rather than organic (Gramsci, 1971, p. 34). The lesson for school history here is clear; that counter-hegemony should seek to challenge politicized myth-making and simplistic notions of nationhood

Gramsci was clear that counter-hegemony would be formed by organic intellectuals and this, too, rings true in our analysis of school history. For Gramsci, the term intellectual referred to people whose role was to assist in the functioning of the capitalist order but who, unlike the bourgeoisie, did not benefit from its inherent exploitation<sup>3</sup>. Here Gramsci was solving a problem of sociological distinction that had existed since Marx – how does one classify those people (such as technicians, school-teachers and civil servants) who were demonstrably neither proletarian nor bourgeois, but whose role was essential in the smooth running of an advanced society? Michael Apple has written that, “Teachers have a contradictory class location...it is wise to think of them as located simultaneously in two classes. Thus they share both the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and the working classes (Apple, 1986, p. 32). To Gramsci, this is the very definition of an intellectual - one who has sufficient autonomy in his work to determine the extent to which capitalism is reproduced. In other words, an intellectual (teachers) can decide whether to be a force for conservatism or a force for progressivism. Although Gramsci argues that intellectuals are needed in order to form a counter-hegemony, these intellectuals are not a Leninist vanguard. Rather, Gramsci argues that intellectuals should emerge “organically” from among the ranks of the proletariat after a process of class-consciousness known as “catharsis.” For Gramsci, catharsis passes through three stages wherein the individual moves from

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<sup>3</sup> Gramsci also famously wrote that “all men are intellectuals, but not all have in society the function of intellectuals” (Gramsci 1971, p5). This definition, which has informed critical pedagogy since Friere, is relevant to our study but risks obscuring the narrower, more technical, definition of the word that I want to focus on.



instinctual awareness of his economic exploitation which is accompanied by an instinctual solidarity with his co-workers to an appreciation of the systemic totality of hegemony and an awareness of how the exploitation of the proletariat as a whole is achieved. Gramsci calls this evolution of catharsis, “the passage from the purely economic (or egoistical-passional) to the ethical-political moment” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 366). Such a process of catharsis is observable in history teachers as they move beyond intuitive distrust of rightist curricula to a position where they feel a professional solidarity with their fellow professionals and are able to articulate more sophisticated critiques of the rightist agenda.

Significantly, Gramsci argued that each stage of catharsis had a corresponding level of political organisation. Thus, instinctual consciousness formed by the day-to-day experience of exploitation was best represented in the factory council where the experience of the participants are so overwhelmingly similar that solidarity occurs organically, but the later phases of catharsis see individuals joining an organising party which united all proletarians. History teachers in England have effectively formed two such “parties” in the School’s History Project and the Historical Association. The key to the SHP’s success is its democratic centralist structure founded on the dynamism of organic intellectuals who emerge from the classroom. Unlike Lenin who imagined the revolutionary vanguard as a class apart, Gramsci argued that the party should not aim to produce “cadres who can lead the masses” but rather it should aim “to remain in contact through all the changes in the objective situation” (Gramsci, “The Lyon Theses” cited in Ransome, 1992: p216.) Thus Gramsci’s notion of a constantly evolving hegemony is reflected in a party which is similarly flexible to changing circumstances. The party must be a vibrant organisation which constantly renews itself; the alternative is ossification and ultimately obsolescence. The activities of the Schools History Project and The Historical Association in the history curriculum discourse will be viewed through this lens.

In Marc Ferro’s words, “the history which is taught to children... will also be able to tell us something about the identity of a given society and its status across time” (Ferro,

1984, p. xi). From a Marxist perspective, it is abundantly clear that the history curriculum is a unique opportunity for the ruling class to shore up the power elite by transmitting nationalism and by normalising inequality. These values – communicated through the English history curriculum with varying degrees of explicitness at different times - are the hegemonic *doxa* of the ruling class. The curriculum can therefore be seen, in Lukacs’s words, as an attempt to “infect the proletariat with the life-forms of capitalism” (Lukacs, 1968, p. 264).

The neo-Marxist position adopted in this thesis may seem out-of-place in a field (discourse analysis) dominated by post-structuralist approaches. However, there is considerable common ground between post-structuralism and the work of Gramsci. Indeed, Foucault’s suggestion that “we should admit that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful)” (1977, p. 27) would seem a neat description of the all-pervasive effects of hegemony. Such is the similarity between the two approaches that some writers such as (Carlson, 2005) and (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) have downplayed Gramsci’s Marxism and rebranded him as a proto-post-structuralist. But this is a mistake; for the Marxist researcher there is an ethical deficit at the heart of post-structuralist thought: power is conceived in a vacuum, removed from the circumstances of economic exploitation in which it operates or what Wickham (1983) has termed ‘non-essentialist power’.

This non-essentialist power has a place in this research for it will be shown that participants in the history education discourse are subjectified in several ways from several different directions, but they are also the possessors of power who, in turn, subjectify others. For this reason use will be made of the Foucauldian concepts of othering and disciplining discourses. But it is easy to overemphasise the relative importance of horizontal power and ignore the importance of a subject’s relationship to the means of production. In simple terms, teachers may oppress other teachers and while this oppression must be exposed and challenged, it is regressive to see this oppression as in any way equivalent to that exercised by Gramscian hegemony.

Furthermore, the Foucauldian method for understanding power - an “ascending analysis, starting from its infinitesimal mechanisms” (Foucault, 1980) - is the opposite of what is required in this particular study. Instead, the starting point is the explosive public controversy which seized history teaching in the summer of 2013. From there the analysis proceeds from the general to the specific through a series of progressively finer lenses<sup>4</sup>. This approach has the advantage of prioritising the lived experience of curriculum change, rather than allowing the study to become bogged-down with the minutiae of language games.

A further point on the unsuitability of a Foucauldian approach may be made regarding Foucault’s own historiographical practice. Foucault’s explicitly historical works, such as *Discipline and Punish*, *A History of Madness* and *The History of Sexuality* have been widely criticised by historians for the way in which Foucault uses historical examples selectively to support an overarching sociological hypothesis (*inter alios*. (Midelfort, 1980) and (Huppert, 1974)). The *Annales Historian*, Braudel dismissed him simply as a “non-historian” (cited in (Megill, 1987, p. 127).

Foucault’s uneven historical scholarship has been defended in two principal ways. Allan Megill has tried to cast Foucault as an ‘antidisciplinarian’ who draws from established academic disciplines “only in the hope of undermining them” (Megill, 1987, pp. 133-134). Megill has argued that Foucault’s historical writing was rejected simply because “He did not seem one of their own. He was simply not an accredited member of the guild”. This criticism seems to question the disciplinary uniqueness of history – the implication is that history has no epistemological reality, but which exists solely in the protectionist attitudes of self-interested career historians. The second defence is that since Foucault does not claim to be an historian<sup>5</sup>, he is entitled to use the past for his own ends. As Mitchell Dean (1994) has pointed out, the sociologist is permitted to use “historical resources to reflect upon the contingency, singularity, interconnections,

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<sup>4</sup> This approach, based on van Dijk’s approach to CDA, is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> Indeed Foucault was careful to distance himself from the historical method, announcing famously, “I am not an historian; nobody is perfect” (cited in (Megill, 1987, p. 117).

and potentialities of the diverse trajectories of those elements which compose present societal arrangements and experiences” (p. 21).

Thus, History is instrumentalised by Foucault (and unapologetically so) as a repository of examples for illustrating a wider sociological thesis concerning the nature of power. Unsurprisingly, this approach has drawn more support from sociologists than from historians.

Although one of the stated aims of school history is to allow children to learn ‘how people’s lives have shaped this nation’ (DfE, 2013c, p. 204); unlike the historical sociologists, the thoroughgoing historian would recoil at the description of the past as “historical resource”.

Both of these ‘defences’ of Foucault are rooted in a troubling semi-relativism about the existence of history as a discipline. It is my view - underpinned by recent social realist scholarship and developed in greater detail elsewhere in this thesis - that the historical method is epistemologically robust and that the shared grammar of the method helps to bind historians as a community of enquiry. Although this thesis is more sociological than historical in approach, an adherence to the validity of the historical method is essential to its reading. Thus, a Foucauldian approach which called this into question would have been a wholly inappropriate analytical framework to adopt.

Above all, for all the similarities between Gramsci and Foucault there is one critical difference which cannot be ignored: Gramsci’s is a philosophy of *praxis* – it aims to change the world, Foucault seeks only to explain it. Gramsci offers not just an explanation of the repressive potential of the history curriculum, but also a keen analysis of how and why history teachers in England and Wales have proved so effective at resisting this repression. Hegemony has been resisted through the emergence of organic transformative intellectuals who articulate a sophisticated counter-hegemony. This counter-hegemony is informed by Gramscian good-sense and – although it emerges from the ranks of the intellectuals – it also nourishes and sustains this intellectual opposition by giving a shared discourse of resistance. More recent approaches to discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) (Bamberg & Andrews,

2004) argue that complete dominance of the discourse “closure” is never fully possible. There is always space and opportunity for marginal discourses to achieve a more mainstream position. This thesis argues that these processes are at work in debates surrounding history classrooms and focuses particularly on how individual teachers opposed the February 2013 Draft Curriculum, but, more importantly, why they felt able to do so.

### 3. Overview – Debates on the Purpose of a History Education

If, as in Alfred Whitehead’s famous aphorism, all philosophy is footnotes to Plato, then all discussion of the purpose of history might be seen as footnotes to Nietzsche. In *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life* (1874), Nietzsche offers us three motivations for studying the past (each of which he subsequently dismisses). The first is “monumental” history, the use of history to hearten oneself in weaker moments with “the knowledge that [a] great thing existed and was therefore possible, and so may be possible again” (p. 3.2). The second is “antiquarian” which is “necessary to the man of conservative and reverent nature who looks back to the origins of his existence with love and trust”. For the antiquarian, the past reveals his identity as though, “the history of the town becomes the history of himself” (p. 4.3). Finally, “critical history” is history written by “he whose heart is oppressed by an instant need [for]...the history that judges and condemns” (p. 4.2). Characteristically, Nietzsche’s objections to these three schools are moral: he feels that a preoccupation with the past limits the capacity or the will to act. However, without subscribing to a Nietzschean world view, it is still possible to make relevant contemporary historiographical comments on each.

To the modern practising historian, Nietzsche rightly dismisses these perspectives on the ‘purpose of history’, but for the wrong reasons. Modern historians argue that the rigour of the modern historical method has taken them beyond such considerations as to the ‘purpose’ of history. While insoluble epistemological and ontological questions about the practice of history remain, historians tend to ignore the question of what, if anything, history is for. History is not a moral endeavour, but a disciplinary method in

pursuit of truth – one does not ask for the ‘purpose of science’ and nor should one ask for the ‘purpose’ of history. While the individual historian may have a purpose in mind when he writes, it is a fallacy to extrapolate this to the discipline as a whole – indeed historians’ purposes are so diffuse that any attempt to divine a general purpose collapse into contradictions. Sir Richard Evans attempted to clarify this common misapprehension by stressing the difference between “historical theories” (such as feminist, Marxist etc. which are mutable and individual) and “historical method” which is shared and changes only glacially. For Evans, “Historical *method* is based on rules of verification laid down by Ranke and elaborated in numerous ways since his time” (1999, p. 127) (italics in original).

Although such language does not satisfy the most hardened post-modernists (Jenkins, 1997), the concept of an historical method which unites otherwise disparate historians sits at the core of the academic discipline. It is now generally accepted among history teachers that this method should sit at the core of school history also. Although school history lessons can accommodate diverse *aims* (which may include remembrance, sense-of-self, knowledge of the local area) none of these should be construed as the overarching *purpose* of the subject. In the words of history educator Peter Lee, “real historical knowledge involves knowing what constitutes ‘good grounds’ for claims to knowledge in history” (1991, p. 44). For Lee, “History is not a practical subject: it has no skills or lessons that can be directly applied” (1991, p. 42) and consequently,

“history is not useful as a means to an end, but valuable as something which expands our whole picture of the world and of what ends might be possible... and ... to have this value it must be genuine history, not the practical past in disguise” (1991, p. 43).

History educators are not necessarily averse to the existence of ‘practical pasts’, but these must be kept apart from an understanding of the discipline and its place in the curriculum. History educators are clear on the role of history in the curriculum– its method expands pupils’ horizons. This role is, in itself, sufficiently transformational and so no further ‘purpose’ is necessary. In Lee’s famous phrase, “the reason for

teaching history is not that it changes society, but it changes *pupils*; it changes what they see in the world and how they see it” (1991, p. 43 Emphasis in original).

However, this clarity of thinking is muddled somewhat when thoughts turn to the study of history in schools, where the ‘purposes’ dismissed by both Nietzsche and Evans re-emerge. This discursive shift is not entirely explained by the presence of “non-expert” voices in discussion of education policy. While it does seem that everyone (regardless of expertise) claims a right to speak on curriculum matters, it is interesting to note that respected historians who would claim common voice with Evans’s defence of academic history, see fit to criticise his defence of *school* history as a methodological discipline (Abulafia, et al., 2013b).

There are, perhaps, two reasons for this for this seeming need to establish a purpose to school history that academic history does not need. The first is not specific to history: that we seem culturally unable to escape from the conception of education as instruction. As adults, the argument runs, educators should have more knowledge than children and therefore children can be schooled in that knowledge. Since it would be disconcerting to both children and teacher to admit that historical knowledge is contingent and subject to sudden and violent reappraisal, it is far more comforting to conceive of history as a body of uncontested knowledge to be transmitted (even if this requires considerable cognitive dissonance on the part of historians). Secondly, there is the special case of history as a cultural touchstone - in Bernard Bailyn’s phrase, history “is the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across generations” (1960, p. 14). In this sense, we are all prey to Nietzsche’s conception of the antiquarian and the monumentalist. We feel that our history is somehow ‘in us’ and that the achievements of previous generations are also somehow, and to some extent, ours. In this argument, it would be a betrayal of our ancestors not to ensure that future generations heard their stories.

It might be thought that these conceptions of history as knowledge and history as cultural heritage underlie the ‘traditionalist’ approach to school history, but ‘traditionalism’ is a pluralist position which has many disparate defenders. What unites these defenders, however, is the faith that school history is *for something*. The three

most commonly cited reasons for school history are: history as cultural capital; history as education for citizenship and, rather disingenuously, 'history for its own sake'.

History as cultural capital is, perhaps, the laziest of these three justifications and is close to Nietzschean 'monumentalism'. The argument is simply that there are aspects of the past which are intrinsically valuable and therefore ought to be known – a view which achieves its clearest manifestation in the title of E.D. Hirsch's work, "*Cultural Literacy: what every American needs to know*" (Hirsch, 1987). Hirsch is so convinced of the existence of a corpus of essential knowledge that his book includes a helpful 63 page (p.152-215) list of it. The criteria for selection are, though, unsatisfactory. Hirsch writes that items were omitted if they were deemed, 'known by both literate and illiterate persons, too rare or too transitory' (p.146). Quite apart from the fact that these are subjective qualitative judgements rather than criteria as properly understood, they are applied inconsistently. What is 'Billy Graham' if not a transitory product of Reaganite neo-Conservative fervour? Furthermore, Hirsch's work makes a fairly weak argument about why this knowledge needs to be known – that it acts as a key to accessing other knowledge. Cain and Chapman (2014) have argued that Hirsch's own experiments in this respect are methodologically suspect by applying the work of Wineberg (2001) to show that historical understanding is not necessarily contingent on a corpus of core knowledge.

Reflecting the extension of neo-liberal economics in years since 1988, Michael Gove offers a slightly modified argument for history as cultural capital. For Gove, cultural capital is converted into actual capital: "the accumulation of cultural capital – the acquisition of knowledge – is the key to social mobility" (Gove, 2010b). In Gove's view, children who are deprived of a traditionalist study of the canon are disadvantageously placed in the labour market. This is a curious notion of democracy in which it is incumbent upon the many to ape the culture of the few, rather than democratising knowledge to better reflect the culture of the many. In Apple's words,

"A common culture can never be an extension to everyone of what a minority mean and believe. ...[a]nd crucially, it requires not...the incorporation within textbooks of lists.... that make us all "culturally literate." [Instead, i]t requires a democratic process in which all



people - not simply those who see themselves as the intellectual guardians of the “Western tradition”—can be involved in the deliberation of what is important” (2000, pp. 59-60).

Proponents of history as cultural literacy are often also heard to defend the study of ‘History for its own sake’. The phrase itself has both progressive and reactionary interpretations: in a progressive sense, it is used by Peter Lee to refer to the intrinsic study of history in disciplinary terms. However, perhaps this interpretation is better described as history for the sake of the historian / pupil. In the words of John Slater, “who is the ‘it’ on whose behalf history is learnt? Someone other than the learner or the historian? Clio perhaps? Alas, she does not exist” (1992b, p. 47). The most articulate counter to this made by Paddy Walsh (1992) who uses the word ‘piety’ to describe “brotherly and sisterly love directed to the human beings and the human worlds that are dead and gone” (p. 36). But since ‘the dead and gone’ are not likely to requite one’s love for them, this argument again collapses into history for the sake of the historian.

More often, the phrase ‘history for its own sake’ is designed to elevate the subject to the status of an elite leisurely pursuit. In this sense, ‘history for its own sake’ is a form of Nietzsche’s antiquarianism. Too often, as Slater has argued, the phrase is used as an excuse for taking an uncritical approach to the past – for if we are studying history for its own sake, we should not dishonour it by interrogating it too closely. For Slater this sense of ‘history for its own sake’ is “striving to divert students of history away from uncomfortable critical skills which question assumptions rather than transmit values” (Slater, 1992b, p. 47). Since these values are ‘transmitted’ they are inevitable conservative – transmission implies passing custody of values through generations without modifying them. Transmission makes no space for evolution, updating or revision of these ‘values’ even if they no longer reflect the society they claim to represent. Such thinking lies at the heart of arguments for history as education for citizenship.

History as education for citizenship has both strong and weak forms, but both are reminiscent of Nietzsche’s description of the ‘antiquarian’ historian for whom “the

history of the town becomes the history of himself". The argument runs that history education has an important role allowing the child to reach civic maturity by exploring the historical origins of present society. In its weakest formulation history should cultivate "those personal qualities... which fit them to be citizens of a liberal-democratic society" (White, 1992, p. 19). But even this statement is problematic, liberal democracy is not an end-state of history – it is merely our current system of governance. If we are to support the history curriculum's need to educate students for liberal democracy, by what right (other than ethnocentric arrogance) do we criticise curricula in countries which fit children to be citizens of less desirable political systems? Moreover, any conception of history education which is based on fitting children to a social system is not just regressive, it is also parochial – what sense in an English child studying the history of China when that child is exceedingly unlikely to need to take his place in Chinese society?

If education for citizenship in its weakest forms is problematic, in its strongest forms (when parochialism veers into patriotism) it is positively dangerous. No more proof of this is needed than to observe the alacrity with which totalitarian regimes set about rewriting the history that is taught in school (Pine, 2010). A similar process is observable in "new" countries which use the schools as a way to create a national identity which emphasizes the uniqueness of the national narrative and differences from its ancestor state (Slater, 1995). Martin Ballard also commented on the process in the decolonising Africa of the 1960s where politicians were forced to create an inorganic national identity within the ahistoric borders determined a century earlier by Europe's imperial powers (Ballard, 1970, p. 5).

Tony Bennett (1995) has extended this idea about the hegemonic utility of school history and argued that, "more than history is at stake in how the past is represented. The shape of the thinkable future depends on how the past is portrayed and on how its relations to the present is depicted" (p. 162). In Gramscian terms, history creates the common sense discourse for viewing the present and constrains the imagination about how it could be different. Popkewitz (2001) has described the history curriculum

as a “disciplining technology that directs how the individual is to act.... And see the world” Although the language of “discipline” used here is Foucauldian, it again supports the Gramscian view of common sense discourse as a key plank of hegemony. Furthermore the extent of this disciplining can be seen in popular resistance to non-hegemonic approaches to history. Approaches such as those of the SHP are criticised for “rewriting history” if they differ from the established hegemonic narrative. Tonkin (1990, p. 25) has called this the “myth of realism,” in which dominant white narratives of history are assumed to be “real” accounts; consequently, accounts that differ from – or challenge - these are not only erroneous, but dangerously ideological. This kind of thinking was crystallized in the title of Fukuyama’s hubristic *The End of History* (1992) which argued that history and reason had demonstrated the objective rectitude of western liberalism, and, correspondingly, the inadequacy of alternatives.

This need for a monolithic past takes on new significance in a multicultural society where right-wing commentators argue that a strong national narrative in school history contributes to a shared identity. This is an ideological view which is unsupported by evidence: the only serious research in this area (Foster, et al., 2008) suggests that it does nothing to aid social cohesion or build a sense of nationhood. Moreover, there is plenty of evidence that a narrow nationalist approach to history can have the opposite effect of alienating minority groups by normalizing a language of “my and our” history where the speaker actually means “white” history (Traille, 2007) (Gaze, 2005). It has been argued by Stuart Hall (1997) that conservative fondness for a strong national narrative owes more to a process of deliberate othering and exclusion (in other words willful hegemonic oppression), than a genuine desire for cohesion.

The value of a strong national narrative to hegemony means that in many countries, history in schools is controlled through the use of a standardized textbook (Foster & Crawford, 2006). This practice is less common in established democracies where non-interference in the free flow of ideas is, in theory at least, a major plank of political liberty. A Gramscian theoretical approach allows us to realize that late capitalist hegemony does not need such a nakedly propagandistic approach to ensure the

teaching of a hegemonic account of the past. The first attempt at a post-structuralist reading of school history curricula was Ferro's *The Use and Abuse of History* (1984) which aimed at identifying the perlocutionary message of the apparently objective text. Despite its fame, Ferro's book is feted more for its novelty than its sophistication. However, Ferro's achievement was to argue that even in democracies where the education system was comparatively free of government control, school history was framed by unchallenged hegemonic national mythologies. This critical approach to dominant narratives in democracies is now well-established in academic scholarship (Taylor & Guyver, 2011).

This can be seen with reference to the British system - it is clear that there was no serious political will to influence the content of the school history curriculum before the creation of the National Curriculum (Gordon & Lawton, 1978). The reasons for this are open to debate; Cannadine *et al* (2011) have suggested that non-intervention in the history curriculum was a deliberate act of policy. In the years following the Second World War, there seemed to exist a view that a school-curriculum liberated from government control was an indicator of a healthy democracy and source of pride. In the immediate aftermath of the war against fascism, we can see why such a view might have prevailed. In support of this view, Cannadine *et al.* give the example of a debate in parliament where an amendment to the 1944 Butler Act mandating study of the Empire was dismissed by Education Minister, Lord Addison, "we here are not constructed a school syllabus. We are constructing an Education Act" (p. 137).

Rob Phillips has explained political non-interference in the curriculum differently: that the curriculum in schools was reliably hegemonic until the 1970s and so there was no need for government involvement. Phillips points out that during the 1950s three-quarters of grammar schools were following a broadly chronological, English-orientated curriculum which emphasised the modern history of empire at examination level. This consensus had emerged organically without government interference - in the words of Rob Phillips, "It was not as though central government felt obliged to

promote, through the history classroom, a sense of citizenship rooted in English Protestantism. Essentially, history teachers did it for them” (Phillips, 1998, p. 14).

#### 4. History Education in England before 1968: An ‘Inherited Consensus’

This English Protestant curriculum is a key feature of the popular imagination of history teaching in the pre-comprehensive age. Michael Gove conjured this image vividly when he told *The Times* in 2010,

‘I’m an unashamed traditionalist when it comes to the curriculum. Most parents would rather their children had a traditional education, with children sitting in rows, learning the kings and queens of England’ (Gove, 2010a).

This image is, however, something of a myth – historians of history teaching now contend that teaching practices in the pre-comprehensive era were significantly more varied than is often assumed. Perhaps the first work on historical pedagogy to emerge in the twentieth century was M. W. Keatinge’s *Studies in the Teaching of History* (1910) which urged that the subject be used for rigorous intellectual training in the methods of the modern scientific historian. But there were limits to Keatinge’s aspirations; analogizing the history classroom to the school science laboratory he cautioned, “the boy is no more placed in the position of the historian who weighs and estimates raw materials than the boy in the laboratory who is being put through a course of practical work is... being placed in the position of a scientific discoverer” (pp. 38-39). The 1931 Hadow Report wrote later that history (and indeed the curriculum more generally) should be taught “in terms of activity and experience, rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored” (Board of Education, 1931, pp. 93, cited in Cannadine et al. p 72).

It is clear that in this pre-war period, history teachers were beginning to think of their subject as a discipline rather than body of knowledge, but that these epistemological questions had limited pedagogical impact. Many teachers, such as Happold, issued a “plea for the substitution of historical training for the mere teaching of history in schools” (Happold, 1928, p. xv) but were unclear about how this could be achieved in

practice. Steele (1980) has further argued convincingly that history teaching was held back in this period, not through want of pedagogical innovation, but because history as an academic discipline was, itself, still a work in progress. Indeed, questions of historical ontology did not become a mainstay of the subject until well into the 1960s.

There existed, then, no explicit statement of the curricular place of school history and the only real treatment of the topic was the Ministry of Education's *Teaching History* (1952) which contained no serious discussion of the discipline and instead confined itself to vague statements such as "the oral lesson has an essential place" or endorsements of new technology such as video projectors (pp. 41-51 (cited in Cannadine et al, 2011 p.120)). Interviews with grammar school students from the 1950s show how difficult it is to generalize about history teaching in the period. While some respondents recollect rote-learning of dates reinforced with physical chastisement, others talk fondly of empathy exercises and writing newspaper reports for homework (Cannadine, et al., 2011, pp. 128-130).

If the evidence proves that pedagogical practices in the pre-comprehensive age were occasionally more creative than is often assumed, it also proves that popular assumptions about the content of the curriculum are rather more accurate. The content of the curriculum had changed little in the years since the war and remained overwhelmingly focused on the constitutional history of England (not the UK.) By the 1960s there existed, in John Slater's famous phrase, an "inherited consensus, based largely on hidden assumptions" (1989, p. 1).

## 5. History Education in England 1968-71: A Consensus under strain

It was in the late 1960s, that some less-informed commentators posit a great schism in history education which Elizabeth Foster characterises as,

"...a fundamental split between those who see content as the key to selection for what goes into the history curriculum, and those who see methodology, historiography, skills and concepts as the fulcrum for selection; provided skills are correctly identified and effectively taught, the content does not matter." (Foster, 1989, p. 216)

While Foster, herself, cannot be accused of being uninformed, she can be accused of overstating her case for rhetorical effect. Indeed, the context in which Foster was writing (the so-called 'history wars' surrounding the creation of England's first National Curriculum) perhaps explains the need to cast the debate in such Manichean terms. But no serious commentator on the history curriculum today would dare use the language of 'skills vs content', a binary finally buried by Christine Counsell's dismissal of it as a "distracting dichotomy" (Counsell, 2000). But for all the research in the field of history education, Foster's "fundamental split" remains an attractive lens for viewing the history curriculum because it speaks to a deeper, almost spiritual, division between traditional and progressive approaches to education. If the right-wing narrative is to be believed, history as a school subject was in rude health in the 1970s before it was hijacked by leftists and pedagogical progressives, but this analysis ignores the decline in school history which was evident before then. Furthermore, the pejorative "progressive" betrays a basic misunderstanding of the evolution of school history during the 1960s and 1970s.

The first attacks on the inherited consensus in the late 1960s were pedagogical rather than methodological in nature. Martin Booth's *"History Betrayed"* (1969) described a subject in need of refurbishment. Basing his findings on lesson observations and pupil attitudinal surveys, Booth described school history as a "dreary desert where as far as the eye could see children sat in rows writing endless notes" (p. 66). A year earlier, Mary Price had published *"History in Danger"* (1968) which perceptively articulated a growing feeling of unease among the history teaching community. Referring to the influential Plowden Report's preference for skills-based curricula and an interdisciplinary approach, Price began by criticising the growing trend towards teaching of mixed-humanities or cross-curricula world studies and argued, "These are days when every subject must justify itself" (p. 344).

It is, perhaps, somewhat ironic that one of the seminal texts in the new history movement so hated by traditionalists was written, not as a product of progressive education thinking, but as a defence against it. In the right-wing narrative of history teaching, New History is seen as a manifestation of dangerous progressivism which

undermines standards and dilutes the integrity of traditional subjects (Peal, 2014). Close reading of the New History texts from this period shows this to be inaccurate – Price was every bit as worried about the preservation of history as a discrete discipline as her right-wing critics. Where she differed, however, was in the realisation that if “Plowdenism” posed a threat to the discipline, so too did stasis.

Citing a 1966 School’s Council survey in which pupils leaving school at 15 judged it to be the most “useless and boring” of the subjects that they studied (p. 343), Price argued that the subject must reform or face extinction from the school curriculum. She contended that school history faced problems with content, pedagogy and academic elitism,

“The danger stems partly from the syllabus, partly from the methods of teaching, partly perhaps from a deplorable, if unspoken, belief that only able children can profitably study history.” (p. 344)

Price used her devastating analysis as a call to arms for the history teaching profession. Complaining that the Schools Council was “only marginally interested in the subject” she argued that “it would appear that the only escape from danger lies in massive self-help” (p. 346). Price was, in this respect, slightly premature: in the same year that Price was writing, Lawrence Stenhouse published the findings of the Humanities Curriculum Project which agreed with Price that mixed humanities teaching “runs some risk of degenerating into incoherence precisely because it has relinquished the support of traditional subject structures” (Stenhouse, 1968).

Although Price’s criticisms of the School’s Council were premature her argument that classroom history teachers would need to be at the vanguard of pedagogical and curricula change was well developed,

“Innovation can only really begin in the class-room and from the individual teacher. It does not begin in Colleges of Education or University departments though there it be perfected, polished, documented and to a certain extent spread.” (p. 346)

Elsewhere, Price prefigures the creation of a bottom-up organization of organic intellectuals of the kind that would later be imagined by critical educationalists such as Michael Apple and Henry Giroux;

“A real forum for the exchange of experiment and thought in the teaching of history is urgently needed.... In a number of places,... local associations of history teachers are



spontaneously springing up.....[which] raise[s] the question of whether something on a larger scale may not be necessary... to assume responsibilities which could become too onerous and too expensive for local groups, and to prevent duplication. To disseminate information as widely and as swiftly as possible would be a first charge upon such a body” (pp. 346-7)

Perhaps most radically, and most prophetically, Price suggests that this would be a democratic organization which closely mirrors Gramsci’s description of the vision of the ‘political’ party.

“If such an Association should ever come into being it should from the start set its face against an over-centralized organization dispensing wisdom and know-how to its members. Branch activity must be fostered, if only because of the need for local history to flourish, and the largest possible numbers of teachers brought into the discussion” (p. 347).

If Price’s and Booth’s work were a necessary moment of flagellant introspection for history teaching, they were also an important call to arms. In the same year as Booth published his work, The Historical Association launched “*Teaching History*” as a journal for history teachers to share aspects of good practice.

The 1970s saw the debate on school history move beyond the pedagogical and organisational questions posed by Price and Booth towards a redefinition of the subject. An important and sometimes overlooked text in this process was a volume edited by Martin Ballard (1970) entitled, ‘*New Movements in the study and Teaching of History*. A response to the infamous Black Papers (Cox & Dyson, 1969) Ballard’s argued for “history teaching... [to] break out of the narrow nationalistic strait-jacket in which it has lived for so long” (Ballard, 1970, p. 5). He suggested three ways that this could be achieved: by “widening horizons” to cover world history, through “new emphases” on recent historiographical trends such as social and local history and through “teacher’s opportunities” in the classroom.

As an edited volume, Ballard brought together diverse contributors from the redoubtable traditionalist Geoffrey Elton who felt, “the great majority [of children] should be excited by stories... to try them with the history of economics, or constitution, or ideas – is mistaken” (p. 221); to the more ambitious Peter Bamford who argued that

pupils, should “appreciate something of the nature of history and of the historian’s craft” and that “this can successfully be done even with the less able children” (p. 205). Despite this plurality, the book was novel in the ways in which it brought together questions about selection of content and questions about teaching of the historical method; questions about *what* history, but also *how* history.

Following Ballard, three seminal texts emerged which would come to underpin the shared discourse of history teachers: (Coltham & Fines, 1971); (Schools' History Project, 1976) and (Rogers, 1979). It is the central contention of this thesis that ideas adumbrated in these texts continue to form a counter-hegemonic discourse which binds English History teachers together. Like all strong counter narratives, they have evolved since their inception, but their central contention – that history is a social realist discipline (Young, 2008a) – has remained unaltered. The power of this discourse is that it is rooted in epistemological rather than ideological notions of the nature and utility of history as a discipline.

In Gramscian terms, these texts should be seen as the first salvos in a war of position against hegemony which provoked an inevitable backlash. But, just as Gramsci predicted of all strong narratives, it has shown itself to be flexible and adaptive to such an extent that it still provides the defining frames in which history teachers interpret their identity. The resilience of this discourse, it will be shown, allowed the history education community to win out in the “history wars” over the curriculum in 1991 and 2013 – passages that might be described as analogous to Gramsci’s war of manoeuvre.

## 6. History Education in England 1971-88: New History, New Discourse

1971 saw the publication of one of the foundational texts in the New Sociology of Education: *Knowledge and Control* (Young, 1971). Where traditional sociology had looked at patterns in educational attainment, New Sociology suggested that the basis of knowledge itself was a legitimate object of scrutiny. In Young’s words,

“certain fundamental features of the educators’ worlds which are taken for granted such as what counts as educational knowledge, and how it is made available, become objects of enquiry.” (1971, p. 2)

But for all their apparent novelty, these questions had already been asked and answered in the history teaching community. Prompted by Price’s and Booth’s descriptions of pupil disaffection - and building on the work of Hilda Taba (Taba, 1962) - history had already begun its move away from a curriculum model which emphasised power-knowledge towards a model based on procedural knowledge. The key text in this process was *“Educational Objectives for the Study of History”* (Coltham & Fines, 1971) which defined an educational objective as “what a learner can **do** as a result of what he has learned” (pp. 3, emphasis in original). By breaking with “hard knowledge” as the main educational objective, the text was addressing Young’s question of “what counts as educational knowledge?” by redefining what was meant by knowledge. At no point did Coltham and Fines give any examples of the kind of historical content that might be included in a history curriculum but, instead, identified three outcomes: “insight,” “knowledge about values” and “reasoned judgement”.

The long-term significance of Coltham and Fines’ work was confirmed by a conference in 2010, the proceedings of which were published in the *International Journal of History Learning, Teaching and Research* (9.1). The conference concluded that their work was the first to argue that school history should be defined in procedural as well as substantive terms. That is to say, knowledge of history was knowledge of the processes of history not a quantifiable measure of how much a student can recall about a given period. In deliberately eschewing a list of content, their pamphlet left open the question of which periods or events in history should be taught to children. It was not that events were unimportant (events are, after all, the substance of history) but no single event could claim *a priori* to be more worthy of study than another. They were proposing, therefore, an epistemological defence of school history which they articulated, thus

““Every branch of knowledge (or discipline) is defined by the nature of the knowledge with which it deals, the particular procedures used to collect that knowledge and the kind of products resulting from those procedures” (Coltham & Fines, 1971, pp. 9-10).

Although it was never stated, the practical implications of this shift in approach were huge. Traditionalist approaches to school history were predicated on an undisputed canon of cultural shibboleths which, it was argued, are above politics, class or nation and so constitute a rational basis for study. However, once an epistemological or procedural approach to the subject is adopted, it quickly becomes apparent that no objective criteria exist for studying one book rather than another, or one historical period rather than another. Consequently, we are left with the conclusion that certain knowledge is powerful simply because it is the knowledge possessed *by* the powerful – the canon, therefore, is no more than the Foucauldian power knowledge (Foucault, 1977) of a given society.

This shift also had radical effects in terms of assessment and educational achievement. In *Knowledge and Control*, Young had argued that examinations based on elite knowledge were exclusionary:

“[if we ask] what are the processes by which rates of educational success and failure come to be produced. We are then led to ask questions about the context and definition of success and how they are legitimised.” (Young, 1971b, p. 25)

The shift that Coltham and Fines were advocating redefined knowledge and, consequently, the assessment of that knowledge. By defining success as what a learner can do, they broadened access to success; no longer would members of culturally-dominant groups have an in-built advantage.

The work of Coltham and Fines was buttressed by the Schools Council History Project which set pilot examinations in the New History. In 1976, the School’s Council published the document which would come to define the project of reinventing school history - “*A New Look at History*” (1976). This work started from the “crowding out” of history by new subjects that Price had described and followed Price in seeing this as an opportunity rather than a threat,

“At a time when new areas of study clamour for inclusion in the already over-crowded secondary school curriculum, the old subjects, such as history, must inevitably justify their

continued existence... There is a need for adequate expression of a philosophy for the teaching of history which will not only convince adult sceptics, whether inside or outside the staff room, but also give history teachers a reason for their belief that history is a valuable component in the school curriculum" (Schools' History Project, 1976, p. 5).

The key word in this extract is "philosophy"; school history would not just change its attitudes and practices, but also the core beliefs which underpinned those practices. The extract also makes clear the utility of such a philosophy – as a bulwark of professional identity for the history teaching community in their conversations with sceptics. It is the central contention of this thesis that this unifying philosophy would provide an invaluable counter-hegemonic discourse in the curriculum wars of the early nineties and in the struggles for the 2013 curriculum.

It is important however to be clear about what the SCHP were proposing. Despite the accusations of pedagogical traditionalists, it is inaccurate to describe New History as a 'progressive' discourse in the commonly understood sense of the term. Stenhouse makes an important pedagogical distinction on this point:

"the teaching strategy will be enquiry-based.... Distinctions may be drawn between instruction-based, discovery-based and enquiry-based teaching" (1968, p. 30).

For Stenhouse – as it would be for generations of history teachers after him – enquiry-led learning was a way to sail between the Scylla of instructional didacticism and the Charybdis of unstructured discovery learning. In fact, this approach is endorsed in Gramsci's own writing on education:

"The creative school does not mean the school of inventors and discoverers....it indicates that learning takes place especially through a spontaneous and autonomous effort of the pupil, with the teacher exercising the function of a friendly guide." (Gramsci, 1971, p. 33)

A more theoretical understanding of this distinction can be seen in *A New Look at History* which attacked the Piagetian constructivism which had been the orthodoxy in 1960s progressive education. Although work existed which seemed to confirm Piaget's supposition that abstract historical thinking was inaccessible to pre-adolescents (Peel, 1971) (Hallam, 1970) the SCHP countered that this was because historical thinking was not explicitly scaffolded in schools. Using Bruner - and anticipating the rediscovery of Vygotskian constructivism - the authors argued that "if teachers were to adopt a methodology which reinforced pupil acquisition of ideas

about history by introducing pupils to the same ideas at different ages, say at 8, 11, 13 and 14, then the ability of pupils to do 'real' history may well mature earlier" (p. 6). This reassessment of the pedagogical assumptions went alongside an epistemological reassessment of history as a discipline. The Schools Council agreed with Coltham and Fines, but was more explicit - pronouncing that "history is not a body of knowledge structured on chronology" (p. 24). Instead, the authors suggested several concepts - Evidence, Change, Causation, Anachronism, Empathy and Judgement (pp. 39-42) which, albeit with varying nomenclature, formed the bases of the National Curriculum from its inception until the aborted February 2013 draft. This reimagining of school history was not confined to Britain, but was discernible in Australia too (Osborne & Mandle, 1982). Interestingly its influence was less keenly felt in those part of the English-speaking work (USA, South Africa) where the use of standardised textbooks continues.

Taking an historical perspective, Aldrich (1984) has argued that "New History" contained little that was actually new and identifies significant continuities between this New History and the pedagogy espoused by Happold and Keatinge half a century earlier. Aldrich goes further by accusing the advocates of New History of a "fundamentally unhistorical approach" which has "sought to denigrate and destroy earlier foundations and build anew" (p. 217). Aldrich's criticism is worth quoting in full for it echoes attitudes held by many history teachers today,

"This destruction has been justified by such statements as 'Grammar school history teaching aimed principally to equip pupils with a body of factual knowledge', or 'This traditional is worn out, and must be replaced by one which bases its claims not upon a received corpus of emasculated academic knowledge, but upon the needs of children who will be adults in the twenty-first century.' History teachers and teaching of the past having been summarily condemned and dismissed, school history is to be recreated" (p. 217).

The quotations from history teachers which Aldrich cites date from 1978 and 1980 and yet their echoes can be heard in many of the responses given in the interviews for this research. Therefore, New History bulwarks history teacher professional identity in both a positive and a negative sense; positively by providing a curricular vision, but

negatively by providing a unifying myth of its opponents – the myth of pedagogical traditionalism.

Aldrich's comment reflected a wider sense that New History in this period was more concerned with undermining tradition rather than creating anything new. An important work in this respect was *'The Idea of an Historical Education'* (Partington, 1980). Partington's criticisms of the SCHP were to become extremely intemperate in later years, but his early work is more insightful than has sometimes been appreciated. Partington's central complaint in 1980 was extremely powerful - that New History "did not consider some of the work on the nature of historical understanding as well as the advice of American Psychology. 'With-it-ness' demanded however, Bruner, Bloom and Taba rather than Collingwood" (1980, p. 26). These are fair criticisms and it will be seen that they were later incorporated into New History thinking about the nature of school history. Indeed Partington's views in 1980 were startlingly close to those advanced by New History theorist Peter Lee (1991) ten years later.

"To be educated historically is to develop certain characteristic ways of thinking about certain kinds of human experience. The process of historical thinking would not be worth the winning unless the experiences to be encountered were potentially, at least, of intrinsic value and in itself advanced our self-knowledge and our knowledge of other persons" (Partington, 1980, p. 32).

If New History was, in this period, sometimes guilty of overstating its case, then it reflects the force required in asserting a right to be heard. New History's place as a legitimate approach to the subject was guaranteed by a Roger's handbook for classroom practice - *"A New History: Theory into Practice"* (Rogers, 1979). In basing the subject around concepts which could be 'scaffolded' by the teacher and developed by the child, the SCHP was implying that school history was a discipline in its own right. In Gunning's words,

"There is an academic discipline called 'history.' There is also a school subject called 'history'. There is no self-evident reason why they have to do the same thing" (Gunning, 1978, p. 14).

Once the existence of school history as a discipline was asserted, there would necessarily be a corresponding battle for the ownership of that discipline. In

Foucauldian terms, the SCHP had established a discourse of history education over which it would be unwilling to relinquish control.

## 7. History Education in England since 1988: New History and New Conservatism

These debates in history education were occurring at the same time as growing anxiety among the right-wing about the school curriculum in general. Challenges to the education *status quo* which had been minority opinions when they were expressed in *The Black Papers* (Cox & Dyson, 1969) were given the stamp of respectability after James Callaghan's 1976 Ruskin College Speech calling for a "Great Debate". The ascendancy of the New Right in the UK and the USA led to an instrumentalist-traditionalist turn in education policy (Knight, 1990) (Jones, 2003). Initial tensions within the New Right over the ideological desirability of state control of curriculum gave way to an orthodoxy more in favour of a traditionalist and knowledge-based National Curriculum (Crawford, 1995). Along with this orthodoxy came curriculum campaign groups such as the Campaign for Real Education and the History Curriculum Association which used what Ball (1990) called a "discourse of derision" to undermine their opponents. As Rob Phillips (1998) has shown, in the arguments over the introduction of the National Curriculum, the SHP became a convenient 'straw man' for the right. Some commentators argued that the curriculum was politically subversive, including Partington who described it as "Neo-Marxist" (Partington, 1986, p. 70), while others questioned its focus ("history should not be concerned with the modern world (Kedourie, 1988, pp. 8 (cited in Phillips, 1998)) and still others carried out polemical attacks on progressive methodology ("the new history holds that... the actual content of history is almost valueless" (Deuchar, 1989, pp. 2 (cited in Phillips, 1998))).

A comparison of Deuchar's and Partington's criticisms is instructive – both see New History as ideological, but where Partington (Partington, 1986) sees Marxism, Deuchar sees post-modernist relativism. Clearly these two positions are incompatible and cannot both be true, and this reveals the difficulty that the new right was having with pigeon-holing New History and show a lack of awareness that New History rested on



epistemological foundations, rather than ideological (Partington) or ontological (Deuchar) ones. It is unfortunate that Partington, in particular, felt the need to veer into populist polemic in the period as his earlier work (Partington, 1980) had shown great insight. The shift in Partington's tone reflects the changing political climate – before Thatcher's election in 1979 neo-Conservative views were a fringe movement, by 1986 there was increased self-confidence and increased revolutionary fervour among the New Right.

It is, therefore, inadvisable to subject these attacks to too much intellectual scrutiny – for they were made principally to stoke a moral panic and so were intentionally populist in tone. Stuart Hall was the first to notice the ways in which Thatcherism had used populist rhetoric to “enlist popular consent among significant sections of the dominated class” (Hall, 1988, p. 40) achieved by the way that it “colonized the mass tabloid press” (p. 47). In keeping with the rightist populism of Thatcherism, debates about school history were underpinned by “common sense” and, as Dale argues, were part of a discourse directed against educational experts as vested interests (Dale, 1989). The power of the right's arguments was that traditional approaches to the past were ingrained in the memory of a public who had themselves been taught in that way at school, and so could be presented as ‘real history’ in contradistinction to the new approaches (Tonkin, 1990). A common sense appeal could easily be made: “How could history change in the space of a generation?” To a public unfamiliar with the processes by which historical accounts are constructed, this seemed an unanswerable and clinching argument. To Crawford, the significance of these attacks lay “not in their rationality, currency or accuracy” but in the “ideological and hegemonic work [they were] designed to perform” (1995, p. 442). However, given the vitriol that was directed at the SHP, it seems its actual influence by that time was very small. Looking back on ten years of the SCHP, Williams (a sympathiser with the SHP) was able to conclude “the project's major failing has been its inability to achieve basic changes in classroom pedagogy” (Williams, 1986, p. 12).

It would, ironically, be a National Curriculum created at the behest of this Conservative government that would cement New History's place in the mainstream. The History

Working Group met in 1989 to draw up the curriculum, as these debates raged in the background. From the history teachers' perspective, Elizabeth Foster (1989) published an important article which argued that there was a growing consensus between English teachers about the purpose and nature of a good history education. Foster was clear that this unity was underpinned by vision outlined in *A New Look at History* (Schools' History Project, 1976) and *Educational Objectives in the Study of History* (Coltham & Fines, 1971). In Foster's own words, the profession had moved from a position of "defence" in 1984 to "a more established and robust position" by 1989 thanks largely to "the work in the last two decades, particularly by researchers, into the nature of historical enquiry [and] of children's thinking in history" (Foster, 1989, pp. 213-214.) It is important to note that Foster argues that the unifying discourse is educational rather than political in its tone – the defence of history against the New Right would not meet it on its own politicised terms, but would instead base its arguments on sound educational foundations.

Foster's description of a unified history teaching profession in the UK contrasts markedly with Evans' (1989) view (published in the same year) of a disparate and divided history teaching profession in the USA. About the US, Evans could write,

"based on the data from teachers studied, conceptions of history, its purposes and meaning, seem to vary... Though teacher conceptions of history are not completely distinct, most teachers studied tend to fall into one of five broad categories or typologies: storyteller, scientific historian, relativist/reformer, cosmic philosopher or eclectic. These typologies... combine an approach to pedagogy and an epistemology" (p. 251)

Although such typologies are evident in the UK (and will be applied in this thesis), the dominant discourse of the teaching profession is Evans' scientific historian who sees history as a collection of methodological tools rather than as a set of accounts. Evans notes that his "scientific historians" had the most formal training in history as a discipline (an average of 78 semester hours) (p. 224) and implies that this extra period of instruction increases epistemological awareness and impacts on their pedagogical approach. If Evans' analysis is correct, it is possible that the relative unity of English history teachers in the UK as "scientific historians" is related to our higher education system in which students specialise in History earlier and so are more likely to have

engaged with questions of historical ontology than many of their American colleagues who hold interdisciplinary arts degrees. In her study of US history teachers' educational backgrounds, Diane Ravitch (2000) argued that both the status and rigour of history was held back in the US by a widespread ignorance of the nature of the historical discipline among non-specialist teachers in history classrooms. Against this, Van Sledright (1997) has argued that there is not necessary a link between a teacher's own historical training and his pedagogical approach. His work studied the practice of a History teacher who held a PhD in history and so well understood historical ontology, but was more inclined than other teachers to present textbook accounts as uncontested informational content to be mastered.

Evans also notes that teachers of a "scientific-historian" persuasion were more likely to hold left-wing or liberal political views, but that these political views were not evident in their pedagogical approaches which were focused around objective enquiry. Without knowing it, Evans seems to be providing a neat description of discourse of New History that had become so dominant in the UK. Evans is clear that although a rigorous approach to historical methodology may lead one to hold left-wing political views, the discourse is not inherently politically motivated. Evans is clear: the scientific historian's opposition to the New Right's narrow nationalistic approach is not so much its political intent, but the ontological arrogance that such a "national story" approach implies. When opponents such as Partington describe new historians as "neo-Marxist," they fundamentally misjudge what motivates them. New historians are not, on the whole, Evans' "reformer/ relativists" who believe "our world has many problems and that we share an obligation to seek improvement (p. 228), but instead scientific historians who see the past as contested and accounts as constructs. As Rothenburg (1991) has shown, the traditional curriculum is/was a distortion of reality seen through the "eyes of privileged, white European males." If the injection of other narratives to a rounded historical education is perceived as a threat in some quarters, this tells us more about those who feel threatened than it does about Marxist educationalists.

The importance of pedagogy and educational philosophy is too often forgotten in debates which emphasise politics, ideology and intentionality. In Raphael Samuel's neat phrase, "debate will not be settled by ministerial memo but what happened in the classroom" (Samuel, 1990b). Accusations that new history is Marxist or ideological confuse two meanings of the word radical. The pedagogy of the new historians is not radical in the commonly understood Freirian sense of the word, but only in the sense that it argues that accounts are conceived, mediated and open to challenge. The idea that there exists no single narrative might be radical in an educational sense, but it is not inherently radical in a political sense.

This distinction is critical – it will be shown that in 1990 by misjudging their opponents, traditionalists handed control of the discourse to New History, just as they would do again in 2013. By choosing to make the debate about good history, rather than politics, the History Working Group for the New National Curriculum was able to avoid the politically charged debates of the period and make an *educational* defence of its proposals. Rob Phillips' *History Teaching, Nationhood and the State* (1998) provides a superb scholarly study of the debate and interventions that took place following the release of this report. He argues that the New Right had shown great skill in seizing the initiative of the discourse in the years before the curriculum was announced in three ways. Firstly, by wresting control of the discourse away from professionals and placing it in the public sphere. Secondly, by stressing a recurrent theme of 'crisis' and, thirdly, by creating "an artificial polarisation of the 'skills vs content' and 'traditional vs new' debates (p. 46). Seen through a Gramscian lens, it is obvious that this control of the discourse was vital as it allowed for a common sense defence of tradition and historical rigour against a mythologised enemy. But given its apparent control over the terms of the debate, it is perhaps surprising that the eventual proposals of the History Working Group (HWG) were so disappointing to the New Right (Crawford, 1995) (Phillips, 1998) (Slater, 1992).

The Final Report of the History Working Group (HWG) in January 1990 was heavily influenced by Tim Lomas whose *Teaching and Assessing Historical Understanding* (Lomas, 1990) was published later the same year. This work updated the first

tentative steps taken two decades earlier by Coltham and Fines and outlined five areas of historical understanding: time, causation, evidence, significance and similarity and difference. Although the first National Curriculum had a core of British history, assessment of pupil attainment was built around Lomas' conceptual framework with three Attainment Targets – AT1 which included “cause and consequence and change and continuity,” AT2: “interpretations of history” and AT3: “sources of evidence”.

This curriculum was unacceptable those on the New Right who had hoped that a National Curriculum framed under a Conservative government would be sympathetic to their instrumentalist-traditionalist ends. Their argument against the new curriculum was that - although it specified a core of British History in its programmes of study – knowledge of this history would not be explicitly assessed. Instead the National Curriculum's assessment framework followed Lomas (an HWG member) in assessing what children could *do* with their historical knowledge, rather than simply measuring what they could recall. There are, of course, sound political arguments that can be made against state-control of the content of the history curriculum and, although these abounded in the public discourse, it is significant that these arguments were never used by the HWG. Instead the HWG emphasised the “absurdity” of levelling a child's historical knowledge in isolation from historical understanding. What were the right proposing, that there be a list of facts and that pupils be graded according to how many they recall? Quite apart from the inevitable discussions of what should be on “the list,” this would turn history into a parlour game rather than an academic discipline. What of children with an encyclopaedic knowledge of places and periods which just happened not to be on the list? In asking these questions, The HWG was here deliberately eschewing the political arguments of Evans' relativist/reformers teachers and, instead, showing a keen understanding of Gramsci's War of Position in articulating an alternative common sense opposition - the impossibility of assessing knowledge in isolation.

Phillips is clear that these common sense arguments proved decisive and won over members of the HWG who had been hostile to the SHP (including the group's

chairman Colonel Michael Saunders-Watson) and civil servants in the DES. In a revealing interview with Rob Phillips, Saunders-Watson said,

“I had my eyes opened by the HWG. I had lived with history and had been taught the subject in a very old-fashioned way. Then when I heard the arguments put forward by HWG members it came as something of a culture shock. I became impressed with many of the arguments which I had never knew existed” (Phillips, 1998, p. 77).

We cannot know for certain, but it is likely that Saunders-Watson – a man who Phillips describes as a “landed castle owner” (p. 55) - would have been less impressed by the more nakedly political arguments made at the time by, for example, Raphael Samuel (Samuel, 1990). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the HWG’s arguments were, in a sense, too subtle for some outside observers who ought to have been more sympathetic to its conclusions. HWG member, Robert Guyver (2012), singles out Stephen Ball for particular criticism; focusing only on the core content of the curriculum, Ball argues that the curriculum was nothing more than, “the poetics of power played out as a soap opera of kings and queens” (1994, pp. 39 cited in Guyver 2012, p169). As Guyver notes, this interpretation was based on a fundamental misreading of the curriculum, for the criticality of the curriculum lay in its overarching epistemological suppositions (defined in the Attainment Targets) not in the substance of the programmes of study. In other words, Ball was falling into the trap of arguing that historical knowledge could be, in itself, reactionary or progressive, rather than considering that reaction or progressiveness inheres in the presentation of events and the methodology used to investigate them, not in the events themselves.

Criticisms of New History which describe it as ‘progressive approach’ are therefore badly aimed. New History rejected much of the Plowden-era child-centred pedagogy and is based, not on a pedagogical rejection of former approaches to teaching the subject, but on an epistemological one. New History starts from the epistemological uncontroversial position that historians create accounts of the past and that these accounts inevitably differ. This is not a post-modernist position – not all accounts are equally valuable – but children must be given the tools to pick between these accounts and to formulate their responses to them. The traditionalist emphasis on strong narrative, which does not do this, is simply not history.

The fullest exposition of these ideas is to be found in the work of Peter Lee (1991, 1992). In carving out a unique curricular place for history, Lee was scathing about those who would see history as a bank of culturally useful narratives:

“the ability to recall accounts without any understanding of the problems involved in constructing them, or the criteria involved in evaluating them has nothing historical about it” (1991, pp. 48-49).

New History is not, therefore, progressive or child-centred but it does have a very clear sense of its own identity born from introspection and discussion. If we ask what makes history unique, it must be its methodology and not its content. In Peter Lee’s words, “Without understanding what makes an account historical, there is nothing to distinguish such an ability from the ability to recite sagas, legends, myths or poems” (1991, p. 45). The traditionalist defence that historical accounts differ from these fictitious accounts because they are true cannot be used to justify history’s place in the curriculum because it does not withstand any ontological scrutiny.

This importance of a disciplinary or epistemological approach to framing knowledge receives a sociological analysis in the social realist view of education. This movement began with an important paper by Moore and Muller (1999) which challenged the views of Michael Young and other New Sociologists (see above) that legitimate knowledge was solely determined by power relations. Although New Sociologists sought, above all, to reinsert into the curriculum the voices of non-dominant sub-groups, a dangerous consequence of viewing all knowledge as politically-determined was that it challenged not just the content of the curriculum, but the subject structures themselves (Muller, 2000). In doing so, progressivism collapsed into post-modernism: if all truth is filtered through power, then the methodological and epistemological means for divining truth, must also be structurally determined.

This was a powerful challenge which later led the father of New Sociology, Michael Young, to revise his own ideas about the nature of curricula knowledge (Moore & Young, 2001) (Young, 2008a) (Young, 2008b). Young (2008a) argues that existing (principally post-modernist) critiques of neo-Conservative and technical-

instrumentalist discourses fail because they have no theory of knowledge, instead arguing that knowledge is nothing more than 'some people's knowledge' (p. 24). This is an unsatisfactory basis for removing knowledge from the curriculum. Just because a given piece of knowledge is valued by the powerful, this does not make it intrinsically oppressive. But at the same time, if we are to teach – as neo-Conservatives would have it - “the best that has been thought and known” (Arnold, 1960) we need better criteria for selection than mere tradition.

However the alternative - over-enthusiastic iconoclasm - can also have unforeseen consequences. In arguing that all knowledge is structurally-determined, there is a danger of progressives inadvertently making common cause with technical-instrumentalists. If critics of canonical knowledge can claim no core of knowledge, then why should knowledge not be determined by its immediate economic utility? As Weelahan (2010) has argued, in seeking to challenge hegemonic traditional knowledge, progressives must be careful not to hand control of knowledge over to a contemporary neo-liberal business elite. Young calls this the “educational dilemma” (2008a, p. 28).

Young's solution is a “knowledge-based model of the curriculum that.... Interrogate[s] the knowledge structures and contents of the curriculum in a way that acknowledges their social and historical origins and their capacity to transcend them” (2008a, p. 29). A possible solution (which is mirrored in the critical realism of the next chapter) is to accept that knowledge is “shaped” by societal arrangements, but is in no sense reducible” to them (p. 30). This involves a keen understanding of the epistemological basis on which each branch of knowledge makes its truth claims. In Young's words, ‘it is only when the cognitive interests involved in the production of knowledge and the pedagogic interests involved in its transmission are given the importance they warrant that a social theory of knowledge can avoid... facile reductionism” (p. 32).

Young's solution is to argue that legitimate claims to objectivity are located, in part, in subject networks which establish the epistemological ground rules of a particular field of enquiry. Borrowing Ward's idea of ‘codes of association’ (1996), Young argues that these codes determine legitimate knowledge, not through power or tradition, but by



commonly agreed cognitive processes (what might less confusingly be called methodologies). These codes are by definition intangible but are “enshrined in institutions such as university subject departments... specialist academic organisations... and school subject associations” (p. 32).

Just as Coltham and Fines had pre-empted the problems “discovered” by the New Sociologists of Education in the 1970s; in defining Social Realism, Michael Young is doing nothing more than give a name to the arguments advanced in the history education community by Peter Lee (1991) some seventeen years earlier. Lee’s insistence that, “the ability to recall accounts without any understanding of the problems involved in constructing them... has nothing historical about it” (1991, pp. 48-49) would seem to prefigure Young’s idea of knowledge as determined by the commonly agreed cognitive processes in history’s code of association. Moreover, Lee’s minimalist view of the “purpose” of school history is also reflected in the work of Young. Lee famously wrote that, “the purpose for teaching history is not that it changes society, but that it changes pupils, it changes what they see in the world and how they see it” (p. 43). This bears striking similarities to Young’s distinction between “everyday knowledge” which can be learned through experience and theoretical knowledge which is transformational because it, “enables those who acquire it to move beyond their experience and gain some understanding of the social and natural worlds of which they are a part” (Young, 2008a, p. 164). It also, incidentally, is close to the views espoused by Geoffrey Partington in 1980.

Where Young does offer important insights, however, is in his distinction between “knowledge of the powerful” and “powerful knowledge” (2008b). The first term accepts the constructivist argument that unequal access to wealth, education and political influence leads to a canon of knowledge which is deemed to be elite knowledge simply because it is the knowledge possessed by the elite. However, not all of this knowledge should be discarded because of its elitist origins – this would be nothing more than inverse snobbery or simple contrariness. Instead, Young argues, we need a way of identifying important knowledge, irrespective of whether it might be considered elite knowledge. Young’s concept of “powerful knowledge” gives us this framework-

“Powerful knowledge refers to what knowledge can do or what power it gives those who have access to it. Powerful knowledge provides more reliable explanations and new ways of thinking about the world” (2008b, p. 14).

This approach stops us from thinking that a given piece of knowledge is inherently reactionary or progressive; rather it suggests that thought should be given to the *utility* of a given piece of knowledge. Thus, few social realists would disagree with E.D. Hirsch that the Wall St Crash is historically significant, but there would certainly be a robust discussion about what this significance entails. Thus, New History does not aim to deny access to powerful canonical knowledge to pupils, however it does deny the right of anyone to use power to assert what exactly this knowledge is. This approach is summarised by Foster, “This is not to say that content does not matter, rather that we should seek agreement on the *criteria* for the *selection* of the content” (Foster, 1989, pp. 217, emphasis in original).

The history teaching community defends its counter-hegemonic approach to history in epistemological rather than ideological terms. By eschewing nakedly political arguments, history teachers have been able to redefine the terms of the debate in what must be seen as an effective Gramscian war of position - the apparent conflict between proponents of a “knowledge-based” curriculum and a “skills-based” one has been buried by New History. Instead, history teachers have sought to appropriate and rebrand what is meant by knowledge. It argues for history as an organic and unique body of knowledge, but contends that this knowledge is both substantive (to know that) and procedural (to know how) (Lévesque, 2008) or in the parlance of English history teachers, first order concepts (such as president, democracy, revolution) and second order concepts (such as evidence, causation) (Lee & Shemilt, 2003). This skilful redrawing of the parameters of the debate shows how the history teaching community has a keen understanding of the semiotic function of language in buttressing a new right common sense *doxa* and has moved to mitigate this.

These debates are not confined to England (though there is little doubt that they are most fully developed there.) The power of a social realist conception of school history can be seen in the impact of the work of Peter Seixas on curricula in his native Canada.

Seixas' popular book *'Six Big Historical Thinking Concepts'* (Seixas & Morton, 2013) is explicitly cited as the influence on the social studies curriculum of British Columbia (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2013) and has clearly influenced that of Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013). Seixas' concepts (which, with the addition of 'ethical judgment' are broadly analogous to the objectives outlined by Coltham and Fines (Coltham & Fines, 1971)) have not only helped history to defend its unique identity in a social studies curriculum, but have also mitigated some of the controversies (Clark, 2009) (Seixas, 2007) over which aspects of Canada's history should be taught.

From within the history teaching community, Chris McGovern has led the charge against the dominant new history pedagogy. As a former history teacher himself, McGovern claims to be better placed to tackle New History than those, "like David Starkey and the Prince of Wales", whose "instincts tell them that something is wrong, but [who] know too little to engage in the debate with 'experts'" (McGovern, 2007, p. 78) Now the director for the Campaign for Real Education, he founded the 'History Curriculum Association' in the early 1990s and was an outspoken critic of both the introduction of GCSEs and the first National Curriculum. McGovern was critical of the direction of travel in the history teaching community and in a contribution to a book attacking the 2008 National Curriculum McGovern wrote that curriculum was 'close to the apotheosis' of new history (2007, p. 69). There are two familiar planks to McGovern's arguments: firstly, the apparent dilution of knowledge, where knowledge is defined as a cultural touchstones. Secondly, a critique of multi-perspectivity which is described as 'a host of politically-correct perspectives' (p.71).

The first of these accusations is evidenced with reference to a BBC Survey of children's historical knowledge ahead of the launch of a new television series. Unsurprisingly given the purpose of the study, the results are not encouraging. But, perhaps manifesting disregard for the analysis of provenance he so detests in the new history pedagogy, McGovern leaps on the findings as though they were incontrovertibly evidence of dumbing down. For example, he uses the survey to contend that 15% of youngsters thought that the battle commemorated by the Orange

Lodge was ‘Helms’ Deep, the fictional battle in Tolkein’s Lord of the Rings” (p. 60). In citing these statistics uncritically, McGovern is being disingenuous since he knows that these questions were multiple choice; consequently, if 15% of youngsters selected ‘Helm’s Deep’ from the list of options, it is reasonable to infer that they did not know the correct answer. It is even reasonable to infer that they thought they were being funny. But it is not reasonable to imply, as McGovern does, that these youngsters have somehow been taught in such a way as to confuse classic fantasy novels with reality.

The charge of ‘politically-correct’ multiperspectivity is underpinned by a belief that “New History is all about value relativism – that all views are equal since all is a matter of opinion”. In this vein, McGovern presents multiperspectivity as a politically-correct ruse to distort the self-evident rights and wrongs of the past. McGovern is far from convincing on this point arguing at one point that, “although the National Curriculum does not use the word ‘perspective’, there are, in effect, 24 of them.” This number is arrived at by a bizarre iterative algorithm which, for example, counts the beliefs of men, women, and children as three separate ‘lenses’ rather than simply as evidence of inevitable societal complexity.

Despite McGovern’s attempts to couch his argument in educational terms, there is no doubt that a political agenda underlies it. McGovern describes New History as “highly manipulative” because pupils are constructing their own narratives based on “evidence presented to pupils by textbooks and teachers [which] has to be carefully selected” (p62). This is clearly an implicit accusation of leftist political indoctrination, but one which does not explain why the longer pre-packaged Whiggish narrative accounts favoured by McGovern are any less prone to authorial selectivity. That McGovern’s views on history are informed more by hegemonic nationalism is confirmed towards the end of his essay when he writes, “If this leads towards pride in our national identity, so be it. What a welcome ‘failing’ in these fragmented times that would be” (p. 80).

The difficulty that McGovern has in characterising the New History approach shows that its social realist discourse defies the traditional categorisations of left and right. This assists it in formulating a progressive discourse which is adaptable enough to

avoid the “common-sense” criticisms which are levelled at it. Opponents of New History are locked in an outdated paradigm of traditionalism vs progressivism which does not adequately address the SHP’s arguments. As a result, the right attacks a mythologised and inaccurate conception of the SHP’s arguments which consequently fail to hit their target. Arguments against New History attack the outdated straw-men of left-wing ideology and constructivist pedagogy. But New History is rooted instead in a conception of the discipline which explicitly rejects unstructured child-centred learning and has no ideological bias. In contrast to this sophisticated defence of school history, the right’s arguments are predictable and predicated on a misreading of their opponents.

Having established the nature and origins of the social realist discourse in English History Education, our attention must now turn to the ways in which this discourse is enacted in the lived experience of history teachers. But before we do that, it is important to exposit the political context in which history teachers work by exploring teacher identity more generally.

#### 8. Teacher Identity in an age of New Conservatism

Just as the discourse of history teaching invites a historical “long view” so too does the history of teacher professional autonomy. Lawn and Ozga (1986) argue that before 1944, teachers had a role akin to state functionaries, but that after the so-called Butler Act, their role as partners in the development of education policy was acknowledged. This period of relative teacher autonomy has been in retreat, they contend, since the rise of the New Right in the late 1970s. Autonomy has been replaced, not with direct state control – as in an earlier age – but with the indirect control of managerial models of professionalism.

Lawn and Ozga’s work is but one important contribution to the debate surrounding the reduction of teacher autonomy in the neo-Liberal age. This process has variously been described as the proletarianisation of teachers (after (Bravermahn, 1974) or “deprofessionalisation in the guise of reprofessionalisation” (Beck, 2008). The bulk of

this literature has aimed principally at describing or explaining this process (*inter alios* (Helsby, 1999) (Bottery & Wright, 2000) (Gerwitz, 2002) (Whitty, 2002)) or in some cases at predicting the future implications of the policy (Demaine, 1988). However, (Stronach, et al., 2002) argues that the impact of national policy on the lived experience of teachers has been overstated and that generalisations about professional identity needs to be tempered with a recognition that identities are localised and situated in particular contexts.

The arguments of Stronach, *et al.* seem to be borne out in literature which explores resistance to these processes. As Beck (2008) has shown teacher resistance in the neo-Liberal age is problematic for it is easily recast as self-interest or radical militancy in the face of eminently reasonable “modernisation”. Henry Giroux (1988) has argued further that neo-Liberalism garners much of its appeal from its apparently apolitical positivism. Changes to schooling and the curriculum are justified in terms of apparently incontrovertible and impartial empirical research about “what works” which allows a common sense narrative in favour of “reform” to be espoused (1988, p. 124). The difficulty for opponents of these reforms is that these empirical findings can only be disputed by challenging the positivistic assumptions upon which they rest; an approach which is easily dismissed as “making excuses for failure”. For these reasons, the principal form of resistance has been what we might call ‘active mediation’. Work such as (Osborn, et al., 2000) has emphasised the way in which policy is reshaped and recreated in its implementation. The application of this mediation to the secondary history curriculum can be seen in the work of Pankhania (1994) who demonstrated that although the specified content was ‘traditionalist’, there was no reason why this content needed to be taught in a way that reinforced existing power structures since the curriculum could be “liberated” through judicious choice of examples.

Despite the prevalence of subversion or active mediation as modes of resistance, conflict over the history curriculum is open, violent and public. Perhaps this reflects the soft anti-positivism of the historical method, but it also reflects, as has been argued

earlier, the robustness of the history education discourse. It has long been established (Johnson, 1972) that a strong professional identity is one way of teachers expressing greater control over their occupation, but this process has become more difficult as the neo-Liberal discourse has reached the status of hegemonic common-sense. For this reason, international comparisons can be instructive in illuminating effective modes of resistance. As an Anglophone author, it is sometimes easy to forget that the Anglo-American experience of late capitalism is not typical, resulting in a distorted interpretation of the depth and extent of the economic liberalisation agenda. Particularly relevant to the present study is (Webb, et al., 2004) which argued that the Finnish teaching profession (in this case primary teachers) were able to resist pressures for a standards-focused 'commercialised professionalism' because they possessed more developed notions of "teacher empowerment." This international example would appear to support the thesis that professional empowerment underpinned by a strong countervailing discourse is the most effective way to resist unwanted and potentially damaging change. The final section of this review will thus bring together notions of professionalism and discourse in an analysis of history teacher identity.

## 9. History Teacher Identity in an age of New Conservatism

Identity is the way that people comprehend their personal experience, whom they choose to identify with and how they identify with them. It has been argued that the creation of a strong social realist discourse has created a unified sense of professional identity among English history teachers. The emergence of this identity was first remarked on, cautiously, by Foster when she described English History teachers as "smug, and deservedly so" (1989, p. 224). However, she went on to argue that "the profession needs now to be wary of complacency and of creating new, immutable orthodoxies created to replace others perceived now to be less valid, or less useful" (p. 225). This contention is similar to Castell's distinction between roles which are structured by organisations and "identities [which] are sources of meaning for the actors themselves" (1997, p. 6). This is a very important point for our current discussion: - to what extent are history teachers aware of the social realist

epistemological position which underpins the SHP approach? Could it be that the SHP approach has simply become a dominant narrative that is accepted uncritically by the profession? In other words, does the New History discourse create a genuine identity for history teachers?

Peter Seixas (1993) has done much to define the identity of the modern history teacher. Acknowledging the practical constraints that prevent most history teachers from becoming fully active participants in the construction of historical knowledge, he argued that history teachers inhabited their own “community of enquiry” which forms “a bridge between [two other] communities, extending outwards towards historians in one direction and to students in another” (p. 316). Seixas is unambiguous on the importance of research-informed practice to history teacher identity: “within the limits of time and resources, the more teachers are integrated into the scholarly community, the better the chances that they will understand the nature of historiographic investigation” (p. 321). For Seixas, History teachers must participate in the discourse of academic history lest they are left with “residual history (constructions which were framed for some other present” (1993, p. 320). In arguing this, Seixas was rejecting the then dominant view of teacher identity advanced by Lee Shulman (1986). Where Shulman had seen the teacher as repackaging academic ‘content’ knowledge for his students, Seixas argued that history teachers should construct a community of enquiry in the classroom which mimicked the academic history community and which was founded on the same epistemic principles.

These ideas have been extended by Fordham who writes that, for the pupils, the teacher “embodies the traditions and practices of the discipline” (2012, p. 250). He embodies this role when he assesses the work of pupils, but also when he plans the work they will undertake. For Fordham, this planning requires a mastery of both the material and the historiographic processes by which that material has been created; thus, ‘pedagogical thought is historical thought’ (2012, p. 248).

History teacher identity is not, therefore, a bastardised form of an academic historian’s identity, nor is it a subset of a more general teacher identity, but instead it is an identity in its own right. It is a communitarian identity born from a community of practice (Lave



& Wenger, 1991) and bound by a social realist conception of their subject. This community demands from its members an engagement with the academic history community, but also internal engagement within its own community.

Castell's concept of "project-identity" is useful here. Project identity occurs when social actors, on the basis of whichever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity which redefines their position in society, and by doing so seek the transformation of the overall social structure (Castells, 1997, p. 8). New history would seem a good example of a shared project which has allowed history teachers to redefine their role and, in doing so, the very nature of history education as commonly understood. Wenger (1998, p. 149) identifies five dimensions of identity which are relevant to the present study:

- As negotiated experiences
- As community membership
- As a learning trajectory (that is, where we have been and where we are going.)
- As a nexus of multi memberships (that is, where we reconcile various notions of the self)
- As a relation between the local and the global (that is, where we relate our experiences to wider discourses).

For Wenger, identity assumes a community of practice as "there is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants" (1998, p. 149).

Judyth Sachs (2003, pp. 126-127) has further argued that existing notions of teacher professional identity are inherently regressive because they aim to describe a fixed identity. A fixed identity, Sachs argues, is useful only to a state which requires a framework for externally initiated controls. Sachs is here echoing the work of (Ozga, 1995) and (Bottery & Wright, 2000), however in *The Activist Teaching Profession*, she instead proposes an alternative "transformative professionalism" in which "self-knowledge" and "collective strategy" are crucial (pp. 14-15). Just as managerial

discourses foment an entrepreneurial form of professionalism, democratic discourses can lead to the creation of an activist teacher identity. For Sachs, an important aspect of this new professionalism is a strong defining “self-narrative” which can be understood “both by the individual whose stories they are and by others who may have similar experiences” and “provide a glue for collective professional identity” (p. 132). These converging self-narratives can be seen to form communities of practice (such as subject associations) which allow teachers to engage in a new enacted form of activist teacher identity. Critics of Sachs’ such as James Avis (2005) have argued that she focuses too much on ideology and therefore understates the importance of local factors such as economic structures or personal relationships; but this is, in turn, to ignore the role of democratic associations in creating alternative structures and relationships to the oppressive ones that Avis describes.

The activist teacher identity is enacted in the sense that it created by engagement and action. To Sachs, trust is an essential component since activism necessitates collaborative work towards a shared vision. This trust is no unquestioning deference, as there exists a democratic structure which is further bound by its effectiveness. The HA and SHP are two democratic organisations which enjoy high-levels of trust from their members and consequently are able to deliver results for their members (and therefore increasing levels of trust in a virtuous circle.) The coordinated opposition to the initial draft curriculum demonstrated how history teachers used their democratic organisations to oppose curriculum change. Although opposition to the changes was led by the Historical Association, any organisation is only as strong as its members and the HA’s opposition to the draft showed much higher number of member engagement than equivalent campaigns by other subject associations.

Another feature of the HA and SHP is the way in which they support the identity of history teacher as a researcher, a tradition derived from the work of humanities educator Lawrence Stenhouse. Stenhouse is rightly regarded as one of the fathers of ‘action-research’, that is research in a professional setting which delivers implementable outcomes. However as Goodson (2011) has argued, there is something peculiarly historical about Stenhouse’s work. For Stenhouse, an

awareness of the historical method was itself important as it enabled teacher-researchers to see beyond the historical-social milieu within which they were working and so deliver educationally valid, rather than politically expedient, outcomes. The relevance for our current debate should be obvious, the history teacher community has an identity as teacher-researcher, but not one which is ideologically motivated to either support or challenge the current neo-Liberal paradigm. Like the modern work of the SHP, Stenhouse made propositions which could be politically controversial, but these recommendations always had educational rather than ideological justifications (Norris, 2011).

While Seixas and Fordham are right to stress the importance of a community which engages with historical scholarship, it is also clear that history teaching has developed its own scholarly community. The centrality of research is an important plank in the history education discourse's bid to be taken seriously as a social realist discourse in its own right. Basil Bernstein's (1996) (1999) ideas about vertical and horizontal knowledge structures are an important analytical tool here. While horizontal discourses inform everyday activities, vertical discourses take the form of a "series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts" (1999, p. 159). This unifying discourse - which might also be called the 'grammar' of the community - has characteristics which conform to the description of "highly specialised." To take two such examples (one of which will be developed in Chapter 5) the terms 'chronology' and 'significance' have locally situated meanings in the history education community which would be unintelligible to both the layperson and the academic historian. These ideas are communicated in the history-education community's own journal, *Teaching History*, which serves to create and reinforce the community's discursive identity while also sharing implementable examples of Stenhouseian research-informed practice.

A similar role is taken by the SHP's National Conference which invites contributions from practising history teachers. In this sense the community is both discursive (through *Teaching History*) and social through the SHP conference. This conception

of subject disciplines as social as well as epistemological entities was advanced by Durkheim who coined the phrase 'collective representations' and defined them thus,

“the product of an immense cooperation that extends not only in space, but also through time; to make them, a multitude of different minds have associated, intermixed and combined their ideas and feelings; long generations have accumulated their experience and knowledge” (cited in (Maton & Moore, 2010, p. 10).

Ivor Goodson (1983) (1988) was one of the first researchers to explore the role of subject associations in shaping the curriculum. Focusing on the introduction of A-Levels in England, Goodson argued that the key to subject associations' success in determining the curriculum was stressing their subject's academic credentials rather than pedagogical concerns. Goodson's thesis was that in doing so, subject associations could demonstrate their conservative credentials to politicians and elites which would value the subject for its continuity and stability. Goodson (Goodson & Dowbiggin, 1991) later argued that this scholarly academic self-concept of history teachers had utility beyond just curriculum contestation – it could be used to assert a professional identity to shield teachers from political interference by allowing teaching “to acquire the mystique of specialisation which assures a monopoly of power, resources and prerogatives in a specific sphere of educational practice” (p. 253).

While this argument may have much to commend it, history subject associations (The HA and SHP) seem to be motivated by something more than narrow self-interest. Despite the high status given by Conservative policymakers to academic subjects like history, there continues to be resistance and contestation. In history curriculum debates, each side accuses the other of “dumbing down” – the right who see history's rigour in the huge body of knowledge that must be mastered, the SHP in terms of a hierarchy of conceptual thinking derived from Bloom. This apparent discrepancy might be explained elsewhere in Goodson's work (Goodson, 2003) where he bemoans the elevation of generic practical teaching skills over disciplinary knowledge. In the case of history, it is clear that generic skills have less influence and the importance of disciplinary knowledge to the community is well established.

Peter Knight (1996) has extended Goodson's thinking about the role of subject associations. Knight demonstrated that subject associations had become adept at "realpolitik" in securing their subject's interests in discussions with policymakers. Knight highlights how, for example, in the case of Geography, the Geographical Association went against the wishes of many of their members to improve the subject's status with curriculum planners. Conversely, Knight argued that the status of Home Economics in England declined not – as Goodson would have it – because it was perceived as un-academic but because of what he terms "definitional disputes" (p. 279). These internal disputes about the nature of Home Economics, contrast markedly with the relatively harmonious view of history teachers. Similarly, whereas Knight describes Geography bending to accommodate the wishes of the New Right, History chose instead to contest the New Right. The impact of this on membership engagement was also clear: the Geographical Association attempted to prompt a letter-writing campaign against the outline of the 1991 National Curriculum, but this was ineffectual- again a sharp contrast to the SHP/HA success in 2013.

Peter Knight's work on history teacher attitudes towards the implementation of the 1991 curriculum (Knight, 1996b) demonstrates that history teachers have long had a very strong psychological link between professionalism and autonomy. When asked to define teacher professionalism, Knight noticed that history teachers identified "decision-making" and "autonomy" as factors much more frequently than did teachers of other disciplines and were twice as likely to say that the extension of the National Curriculum had diminished their autonomy and, consequently, their professionalism (p. 55). Following a similar methodology to this study, anonymous questionnaires were followed up with qualitative interviews which further demonstrated the importance of professional independence to history teacher such as, "Government interference has undermined my professionalism" (p. 49) and "Now we seem to be producing [curriculum models] which are teacher proof. Idiot-like, line by line and this is not professional" (p. 50). Knight noticed too that younger teachers who had been trained to teach the National Curriculum were less critical than older colleagues. It will be interesting to see whether this pattern holds true in 2013.

These ideas are also explored in an Australian context by Fiona Hilferty (Hilferty, 2007) in her study of senior members of the History Teachers' Association of New South Wales. Hilferty argues that this organisation (which is broadly analogous to the English SHP) is a politicised organisation which is a contributor to a discourse of professionalism and which engages politically, asserts and develops teacher expertise and consequently claims a "right to contribute to curriculum policy making" (p. 242). In interviewing senior executive members of the organisation, Hilferty found that the arguments being advanced against state-control of the history curriculum were overtly political and ideological and only rarely epistemological. Perhaps this is reflective of the much more contentious Australian context in which treatment of indigenous history is a regular cause of vicious debate.<sup>6</sup>

Hilferty has since broadened her research (Hilferty, 2008) and makes several more valuable contributions to the analytical approach of this thesis. Particularly useful are her concepts of 'contested action' which is the "engagement of [subject] associations in political struggles over contested versions of knowledge, ways of teaching, and forms of authority" and 'cultural identity-in-action' which "connects organisational culture with the ways executives see themselves as teachers and teacher representatives". These concepts, although invaluable, will be modified somewhat because of my chosen methodological approach. Where Hilferty's focus is on identity largely as a self-concept, I aim to explore identity as enacted in discourse. By concentrating on discourse, I see these forms of engagement as enacted in separate discursive arenas – an outward looking discourse which focuses on macro-propositional considerations and an inward-looking community discourse which is seen in shared social representations and context models.

The following chapter extends these methodological considerations in greater theoretical detail and defends their utility and suitability to the present study.

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<sup>6</sup> See *The History Wars* (Macintyre & Clarke, 2003)

# Chapter 3 – Methodological Considerations

The previous chapter established the Gramscian theoretical underpinning of hegemony and counter-hegemony in debates surrounding the history curriculum. It also began to explore the relationship between history teachers and that discourse. This chapter will now expand on the methodological approaches to identifying these processes in the research.

This chapter begins by exploring some of the ontological and epistemological problems associated with a Gramscian/ neo-Marxist position; perhaps the greatest being the supposition of a “reality” which is different from lived experience. It is further accepted that this starting point poses problems of ethics and reflexivity which are also explored. Above all, this chapter argues that a systemic focus on language exposes how hegemony works and how and why resistance occurs. Using van Dijk’s (van Dijk, 2009a) sociocognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis and inspired by Martin and Rose’s call (2003) for a *positive* discourse analysis – this chapter proposes that language shapes reality and it is through language that reality can be reshaped for the better.

The chapter then moves to describe the practicalities of the research explaining and defending the choice of methods and exploring issues of ethics, validity and generalizability. Ultimately, this research is an explanatory rather than a predictive endeavour; it seeks to explain why history teachers felt able to resist governmental interference and why they were so effective in doing so. It is, therefore, a case study of an historical example of open resistance, rather than a manual for future resistance.

## 1. Ontological and Epistemological Underpinning

My Marxist perspective on these events necessitates a critical realist ontological position. Critical realism is an ontological position associated with Roy Bhaskar who sought to reclaim realism from the seemingly insoluble questions posed by the ‘postmodern challenge’. Bhaskar argued for “transcendental realism” in the ontology of science and “critical naturalism” in the specific case of the human sciences. Although Bhaskar did not himself coin the hybrid phrase, “critical realism”, he gave it



his grudging approval, famously stating, “It struck me there were good reasons not to demur at the mongrel [phrase]” (1989, p. 190).

The central question of ontology is the question of what *exists*. In the field of natural science, this question is sometimes skated over and attention switched to epistemology - what can be known about what exists. This ontological carelessness is the basis of the postmodern nominalist critique of the natural sciences. However, as Bhaskar showed, an extreme position which substitutes linguistics for reality cannot explain why the scientific method continues to deliver useful knowledge about the nature of the universe. Scientists might avoid ontological questions, but only the most obdurate postmodernist would diminish the tangible achievements of scientific investigation.

Critical realism aims to address ontological questions while avoiding the problems posed by more extreme nominalist ontologies. The critical realist solution to this dilemma is to take an “event-centred” rather than “thing-centred” approach to reality. That is to say reality is observable, but apparent invariance is misleading since there exists the potential for other realities. In the natural sciences, this comes close to Popper’s falsification premise; physical laws are recast as *tendencies* which remain true until they are disproved. In the social sciences, the implications are inevitably more complex.

The central point for critical realists is that social reality exists, but it is not the only such reality. That is to say, the current formation of reality is observable, but it is not the only potential reality. Critical realists argue for an “intransitive” reality “where things are however they are” (Potter & Lopez, 2001, p. 12), but also a transitive reality which is our fallible “knowledge” of those events. For example, for a nominalist the concept of “poverty” is a subjectivity which can have no transcendent qualities - poverty differs by national context and method of measurement and is therefore nothing more than a powerful signifier in the hands of its user. However, to the critical realist, there exists behind this discussion over nomenclature the objective fact of suffering. While the positivist believes his methodology can uncover the “reality” of suffering, the critical realist is more modest. Perhaps the intransitive reality of poverty is unknowable, but

the critical realist asserts its existence while studying the imperfect transitive reality of its lived experience filtered through human experience.

Epistemologically, critical realism rescues the social sciences from the despairing ignorance threatened by postmodernism. The apparent choice between positivism and interpretativism is highlighted as a fallacy of restricted options, and, in the words of Potter and Lopez,

“The production of knowledge is a social process... However knowledge cannot be reduced to its sociological determinants of production. Truth is relative, to be sure but there is still both truth and error (as well as lies!)” (2001, p. 9).

The principle here is that the constructed nature of knowledge is significant, but it is not a barrier to a scientific explanation of social reality. The reason for this optimism is that critical realists are methodologically *diverse* - they do not see one particular approach as the shortcut to reality (as a positivist might) nor do they see imperfect social accounts as the nearest one can get to reality (as an interpretivist might.) Instead, the epistemological basis of critical realism is that “the method must be appropriate to its objects” (Potter & Lopez, 2001, p. 13). This methodological diversity is essential in understanding how critical realism addresses the problem of prediction. It has been argued that natural science and social science research differ in their predictive capacity – while prediction is a strong indicator of research validity in the natural science, social science researchers are wary about making such generalizable truth claims. Critical realism argues that to explain is not to predict; in actuality, many branches of the natural sciences from palaeontology to cosmology have similar limited predictive capacity.

This defence of methodological pluralism has led to the criticism that the critical realist has not so much solved the problem of epistemological hermeneutics as he has avoided it. In other words, in positing an *a priori* reality and simultaneously valuing erroneous subjective readings of that reality, the critical realist researcher is “having his cake and eating it.” This criticism inaccurately portrays realism and nominalism as Manichean opposites rather than poles on a continuum on which critical realism is just one of an infinite number of positions. Critical realism is not some kind of intellectual

fudge – its founding principle (that reality exists but devilishly difficult to describe) is ontologically robust which, provided these ontological problems are admitted to, makes it an appropriate foundation for research.

## 2. From critical realism to criticality

The critical realist must, however, encounter the paradox of comparing imperfect transitive reality against an intransitive reality which he believes to be fundamentally unknowable. This has led critics to argue that the critical realist simply elevates his own subjectivity to the level of objective truth against which apparently inferior interpretations of reality (the subjects') are compared. Hammersley (1981) is particularly scathing on this point, "The appeal of the concept lies, in other words, in its capacity to disguise political value judgements under a veneer of objectivity" (p. 340).

Critiques such as this only make sense if one aspires to ontological objectivity, but by adopting critical social science methodology, the researcher can explicitly reject objectivity. The argument here is that adopting a disinterested objective stance in a world of oppression and suffering is callousness masquerading as intellectual rigour. To the critical researcher, "objectivity" is not only impossible, but oppressive. This accusation applies equally to positivists (who neglect the role of power structures in shaping reality) and to nominalists (who are content to describe the subjectivities of the oppressed without seeking to challenge them). Instead, an unapologetically subjective position can be adopted which shares the nominalist position that human subjectivity prevents the accurate rendering of the reality that realists seek, but instead argues that the nature and typology of these inaccurate subjectivities tell us much about that reality. Human subjective experiences, although hugely varied, are not random – societal structures engender these subjectivities in predictable ways. As Van Leeuwen (2006) has argued, naming oneself as 'critical' implies specific ethical standards: an intention to make one's values explicit and one's criteria as transparent as possible, without feeling the need to apologise for the critical stance of one's work.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) have neatly summarised these underlying assumptions which I paraphrase here:

- Every society systematically privileges and oppresses certain groups.
- Oppression as experienced by an individual is an interactive combination of many concurrent forms of oppression
- Cultural texts are the most powerful means for expressing and maintaining difference in privilege
- Every human act can be interpreted in relation to the capitalist means of production
- All thought is mediated by historically-constructed power relations.
- Facts can never be isolated from prevailing assumptions about what is valued
- Mainstream (i.e. non-critical) research helps to reproduce oppression.

In short, one cannot recover an objective reality through careful measuring of the world, nor can one simply report individual's "common sense" perception of reality. For a critical social scientist, to report an individual's analysis of their own situation and not to encourage them to challenge their exploitation is to be complicit in their domination.

Gramsci's writing seems to prefigure much of the critical social science tradition. Ontologically, Gramsci posits an objective reality of exploitation (what he calls "good sense") which is obscured by hegemony to create subjective experiences ("common sense") in which the working class are complicit in their own exploitation. In the specific case of this research, it is posited as Gramscian good sense that governments and ruling elites in all societies seek control over the history curriculum in a way that reinforces the inequities of the status quo. It has been argued in the literature review that this is has been demonstrable feature of all societies since history as a discipline was formalised in the late nineteenth century. However, this statement is inevitably more truth claim than fact. I believe that sufficiently strong observable evidence exists for it to allow it to serve as a foundational premise for the research.

Discourse is central to hegemony since it creates the language that will be used to describe the world. Although this concept is most closely associated with post-structuralist philosophy, the idea of a *doxa* is implicit in Gramsci's writings; but while post-structuralists argue that the power of discourse leads inexorably to an ontological rejection of an objective reality, Gramsci sees a challenge – the shaping of a counter-hegemony which can challenge existing prejudices and broaden horizons. Gramsci is able to make this claim because he sees discourse as having a dialectical relationship with the structures which shape it.

This idea that language is used by the powerful to mystify social events and that it could, in turn, be used to demystify them was developed by early proponents of critical linguistics in the landmark book, *“Language and Control”* (Fowler, et al., 1979). This new field of critical linguistics built on the systemic functional linguistics approach pioneered by Halliday (1973). This approach rejected the tendency in linguistics to try to understand language at its formal level – a practice influenced by the tendency in the natural sciences to analyse the components of a system in order to understand that system. Instead, Halliday argued, the system must be the starting point for the ways in which it gives words their semiotic significance – language cannot exist outside the system in which it is used. This approach means that any search for meaning must involve a study of both the words used and the system in which they were chosen. This idea of choice is important too, for the choices that language user make reveal much about their position in – or relationship to – that system. For example, if one considers modern educational discourse as a language system, it is possible to infer much about a speaker's experience of - or influence within - that system from the words he uses.

From Halliday's insights and Fowler's applications, grew the relatively new methodological approach of critical discourse analysis (hereafter referred to as CDA) which will be the dominant analytical approach used in this thesis.

### 3. Critical Discourse Analysis as Method and Methodology

CDA has a short history, but has spawned a plethora of approaches which make the approach difficult to define. As Rogers writes,

“There are no formulas for conducting CDA... What is necessary is attention to critical social theory and linguistic analysis of texts... What is important is that all three components of CDA (critical, discourse and analysis) are embedded within a methodology.” (2004, pp. 7-8)

This plurality is not, though, a weakness of CDA – rather it is its key strength for it avoids the dogmatism of some critical methodologies. CDA researchers might sometimes stretch the term, but they share a minimal definition that CDA is a distinct branch of discourse studies. The reason for this exceptionalism is that CDA is explicitly “problem oriented.” Clearly, labelling an aspect of social interaction a “problem” necessitates the kind of unapologetic political and ethical stance described above. The second defining aspect of CDA is that it does not research individual units of speech (e.g. at word or sentence level), but the ways in which much more substantial contributions to the discourse reinforce or challenge a social phenomenon (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

This second point bears some explanation: critical discourse analysts rarely work with interactional texts such as dialogue, and instead discourse is understood in its largest hegemonic sense of language as the boundaries within which thought is possible. Individual texts, therefore, are principally of significance for what they reveal about the discursive field as a whole. Since power is invisible, we must instead look for its effects manifested in texts, much as particle physicists study not the particle, but its effects. But it is somewhat more complicated than this, since all texts (even those authored by the most powerful) are mediated by the discourse in which they were created, that is by the text themselves communicating in an ongoing discourse in which each affects the other and is affected in turn. This notion of intertextuality was first developed by Julia Kristeva who argued for “the insertion of history into a text and of this text into history” (cited in (Moi, 1996) p. 39). Norman Fairclough (2001) has added that critical discourse analysis includes another layer of complexity - as well as oscillating between discursive texts, CDA necessitates oscillating between the texts and the social structures in which they were produced.

These social structures must be considered together with the *type* of text when a researcher is considering which approach to adopt in CDA. My research looks at the ways in which individuals interpret a public discourse and how they engage with it. In CDA, these ideas are most commonly associated with Teun Van Dijk's (2009a) sociocognitive approach to CDA. Van Dijk argues that *cognition* (the way in which individuals and groups conceive, perceive and imagine the world) is an essential aspect of interpreting discourse because it creates the individual's "*context model*" (2009b). This context model is an individual's dynamic and ever-evolving worldview through which he mediates discourses and social structures. But the context model is not just a passive filter through which discourse and society are mediated; it also shapes the context for the individual's responses to society and to discourse. Thus, van Dijk theorises a triangular relationship between discourse-cognition-society in which each impacts the other, so that studying the individual and his world view reveals much about the nature of the power of the society in which he lives. Further, building on the work of Serge Moscovici, Van Dijk argues that these cognitions can be shared by identifiable social groups – a process known as *social representation*. Moscovici argues that these social representations are vital to group identity in two ways,

"first, to establish an order which will enable individuals to orientate themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history." (1973, p. xiii)

My research looks at a group (history teachers) who have a publicly accepted group identity, however, I contend that history teachers perceive their identity differently from the public and so their social cognition is an important aspect of understanding their contributions to discourse.

To look first at textual analysis, Van Dijk argues that analysis of text should begin from the widest context to the narrowest. Thus, the first stage of analysis focuses on "semantic macrostructures" (what might reasonably be called themes) and how they are formed into macro-propositions in the text. Thus, themes are represented by each discursive actor as assertions which may or may not be supported by evidence. In this

thesis, we may well expect interviewees to assert their distaste for the ideology behind the curriculum, or the pedagogical approaches which underpin the curriculum. However, Van Dijk is clear that these macro-propositions have both commonly accepted meanings and “local” meanings; that is to say, different meanings in the context models that create them. It is likely that history teachers trained in SHP/HA pedagogy mean different things by words such as “chronology” than its common use. Similarly, “local” meanings may include those things that are assumed or presumed and, therefore, unsaid. This “insider” analysis has great value because I am better able to understand the semiotic meaning of texts which may seem uninteresting or neutral to a casual observer. However, this is potentially problematic, since interviewees will know that I am a trained history teacher and so they may be inclined to leave more unsaid than might otherwise be the case – interviews are to be semi-structured with questions shared in advance of the interview to mitigate this. The third and final level of textual analysis concentrates on the micro level of “formal structures”. These aspects of speech (such as propositional structures, use of the passive voice, intonation, rhetorical questions or filler words) are not a key aspect of the speaker’s argument, but do indicate such things as mood, passion and certainty. Van Dijk (2009a, p. 73) sees this three level analysis as the key strength of his approach as it bridges the too strict divide between narratologists’ study of content and grammarians’ study of structure.

The sociocognitive model takes a valuable approach to the question of coherence, suggesting that coherence is not to be measured against the objective facts of the world; instead an account is coherent if the speaker can construct a mental model for it. Van Dijk calls the speaker’s account an “event model” in that it is a subjective representation of the events in the discourse. Event models are the crucial aspect of the way the speaker views reality, but they are not just the way that the discourse is comprehended - they also shape contributions that speakers make to that discourse. However, it is the central tenet of sociocognitive analysis that these event models – while unique to the individual - have a shared social basis particularly where social groups have a strong group identity. Moreover, the stronger the group identity, the greater the similarities between event models within that group. Consequently, when



one looks beyond the group the reasons for conflict and resistance become obvious – opposing groups share opposing social event models and consequently interpret discourse and events differently. This would seem to be an apt description of the conflict over the history curriculum design in England.

Van Dijk argues that these shared event models are underpinned by a shared ideology or *general schema* which both identifies the group and shapes the group's responses to events. The general schema answers questions about the group such as 'Who belongs to us?; what do we do?; why do we do it?; what is our relationship to opposing groups and what are our resources in this project? The last question is particularly interesting because the most important resource in shaping discourse is access to that discourse and the power to shape it. In this the current study, it is through the protective influence of subject associations that individuals feel empowered to share in the history education discourse.

These shared general schema are potentially dangerous, however, as they can, themselves, lead to oppressive practices such as outgroup derogation and ingroup celebration. When analysing interviews, it will be important to identify where shared identity crosses the line into these oppressive modes of thought. CDA, however, is not epistemologically interpretivist – it is not primarily interested in subjective meanings of experiences. Instead, critical researchers focus on power and the uses to which power is put. If we take Weber's (1980, p. 28) familiar formulation that power is "the chance that an individual in a social relationship can achieve his or her will even against the resistance of others" then this thesis is an interesting case study in the limitations of governmental power. Theoretically, the government has the power to impose any curriculum it chooses "even against the resistance of others." Why then, in this case, was that resistance sufficient to prevent the government from exercising its will? This research differs from much CDA as it takes as its focus, not the disempowered or the bewildered by ideology, but those who are able to see beyond ideology and those who are prepared to challenge hegemony. Too often, CDA is content merely to describe the problems of exploitative power relations, but a foundational proposition of all critical research is that the boundaries of the current reality are not fixed. It is argued, instead, that just as discourse shapes the limits of

reality, so a change in the discourse can alter the nature of that reality. In Fairclough and Wodak's words,

[there is] "a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situations, institutions and social structures which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them.... That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge and the social identities of and relationships between people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps sustain and reproduce the status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it" (1997, p. 258)

It is important in the CSS tradition not simply to describe reality or lived experience, but to investigate instances where power structures are resisted and challenged. Consequently, this research is a case study of teachers as activists challenging the dominant oppressive discourse. It is an example of what (Martin & Rose, 2003) have called PDA or *positive* discourse analysis. In short, PDA accepts that hegemonic discourses dominate, but focuses instead on the progressive challenges to that discourse. In hearing the voices of those who challenged the history curriculum (as well as those who did not) we can discover much about the lived experience of hegemony as well as the conditions under which it is resisted. This resistance is not merely of academic interest; as Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue, discursive resistance is transformative – engagement in the discourse alters that very discourse and consequently modifies the conditions in which reality is formulated. Teachers' critical engagement in the discourse can, in short, alter reality for the better.

#### 4. Strategic Approach

This research will use a small number of in-depth comparative case studies to illustrate history teachers' engagement in the discourse surrounding school history between February and July 2013. These case studies will be based on a critical discourse analysis of semi-structured interviews with eight practising history teachers in the north-west of England and will be representative of a range of attitudes and background (see sampling below.) The intention is that each of these case studies will be a rich contextual analysis of the factors which encourage or discourage teachers

from engagement in curriculum debates. In common with van Dijk's approach described above, it will move from thematic (macropropositional) analysis to formal analysis. By cross-comparing the accounts it will be possible to gather shared viewpoints (social models) as well as individual or dissenting viewpoints (individual context models.) In this sense, the studies are simultaneously of: a) an action (the resistance,) b) an individual (the respondent) and c) the context within which that individual acted.

## 5. Research Design

The overarching question for this thesis is:

### **How and why did History Teachers in the North West of England contest the 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History?**

This question can be divided into three sub-questions:

- What were history teachers' perceptions of the 2013 Draft History National curriculum?
- In what ways did history teachers engage with the debates surrounding the 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History?
- Why were some history teachers more motivated to engage in the debate more than others?

#### i. Stages of Research- Objectives and Actions

The research project will consist of two stages.

1. Questionnaire (appendix 2)
2. Semi-Structured interviews (appendix 3)

In the first instance, a questionnaire will be distributed to individuals in the data set under investigation (history teachers in the North West of England.) This questionnaire is focused on gathering an overview of teacher perceptions of the February Draft curriculum and the extent of their engagement in the subsequent debate. To ensure

the maximum response rate, the survey will need to be as brief as possible and use mostly closed questions to facilitate quantitative analysis.

Participants' level of engagement with the discourse can be gleaned from asking, "Which of the following actions did you take...?" and providing a list of ways in which the curriculum might have been opposed. A participant with a high-level of engagement in the debate might have responded to government consultation, completed HA surveys or written to newspapers about the proposed curriculum while another teacher might have been equally critical, but chose not to engage with the debate. A small number of more open questions will be necessary to ascertain participants' attitudes, but these will be framed in a way that allows them to be easily coded. For example, "Give three words that you would use to describe the draft curriculum." Although this presents more coding problems than asking participants to select from a list of possible adjectives, it avoids the problem of steering respondent's views while still allowing "families" of adjectives to be grouped together. It is anticipated that 30-40 such questionnaires will be returned and with such a small sample it would be unwise to draw any quantitative conclusions from this data. Instead, this data will be used to identify typologies of teachers for case study investigation. The survey will offer the respondents the opportunity to remain anonymous, but it will make participants aware that the research has a further stage (the face-to-face interview) and invite them to leave their name and contact details if they wish to volunteer for it.

It is anticipated that typologies will emerge organically from the dataset. Although the sample is too small to draw quantitatively robust empirical conclusions, it will be sufficient to suggest typologies of teachers by such variables as attitude to the curriculum, extent of engagement, age, gender, and years of teaching experience. It is impossible to predict which typologies will emerge, but it is important the respondents selected for interview are representative. These questionnaires have a further purpose in serving to triangulate the research's findings (see validity below).

The participants will give informed consent for short semi-structured interviews which will be digitally recorded. At this stage, I am giving participants the opportunity to articulate their views of the draft document in a deeper way than was possible in the

closed questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate because I want to allow participants the space to explore their own ideas, but I also have a clear direction to the interview. I want to ascertain both the extent to which their criticism is informed and why they chose to engage with the debate to the extent that they did.

## ii. Justification of Methods

It might be assumed that teacher attitudes to curriculum change could best be assessed with a quantitative study. Such a study was indeed undertaken by the Historical Association between February and April 2013 (Historical Association, 2013b). This online poll contained data from some 1600 respondents and drew quantitative conclusions. However, *this* study is not about opinions or attitudes, it is about individual motivations for engagement in a political debate and so a qualitative approach is necessary. Quantitative data such as an extension of the closed questionnaire stage might offer interesting information such as reasons why individuals chose to engage in debate, but the idea of “motivation” implies much more from a research perspective than a simple list of reasons. Reasons account for actions, but they do not explain them. In order to understand why individuals chose to engage in the political discourse, we need an understanding of the rich confluence of factors acting on people such as institutional limitations, access to information and past life history of political engagement; interviews are the only method for achieving this.

When using interviews as a research method, the crucial issue is the extent of structure and guidance that is imposed. Minichiello *et al.* (1990) argue that the prospective researcher should view his interview on a continuum from standardised/structured to unstructured and that that he should defend the position on the continuum he has taken. Clearly, an unstructured approach would be inappropriate as the focus on the research is bound by both time and content. Conversely, an overly structured interview would be fruitless since it would be unlikely to yield more information than the structured written questionnaires that respondents had completed in the initial stage of the research.

I had originally considered using focus group interviews rather than individual interviews in the hope that this might help illuminate the groups' shared socio-cognitive event model as described above. In other words, there was significant unity in the ways in which history teachers responded to the draft with 96% in the Historical Association's (2013b) survey critical of it and it would be fascinating to discover to what extent this unity of criticism reflected a shared event model. This approach is supported by Morgan (1988, p. 12) who points out that the "hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in the group." However, there is always the risk that any unity that was observable, would just be a manifestation of the shared identity of the focus group, rather than a reflection of 2013's professional solidarity. More prosaically, it is clear that a focus group would have posed much greater scheduling and organisational problems than individual interviews. Teachers have little opportunity to leave school during the school day and it would consequently be difficult to find a time that suited all of the respondents. If I had been able to offer school's financial compensation for the teacher's absence, scheduling might have been easier, but I was not in a position to do this.

### iii. Data Collection and Access

At the time that field work was undertaken, I was the Course Leader for the Secondary History PGCE at Edge Hill University in Ormskirk, Lancashire. Through this role, I was a member of a significant network of history teachers throughout the North West of England and beyond. I anticipated, therefore, that there would be few problems in obtaining a sizeable response to the questionnaires and a sufficient number of volunteers for interview. As part of my role, I was required to visit trainee teachers in their placement schools and so I did not anticipate any problems scheduling interviews with those teachers who were to volunteer for interview. Ethical approval to commence fieldwork was sought and granted in December 2013. This fieldwork was in two stages firstly, the distribution and return of questionnaires (between January and March 2014) and secondly the organisation and execution of follow-up interviews (in June and July 2014.) These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in summer 2014.

Subjects were selected for interview during the school Easter break of 2014 and were contacted by email with an information sheet and a consent form. When the consent form was returned, an appointment for interview was arranged for June or July 2014. Secondary school teachers are able to spare time towards the end of the school year as students in Year 11 have left, giving teachers more 'non-contact' time. Respondents were offered the choice between interview at Edge Hill University or in their own school. It was anticipated that most respondents would prefer the convenience of being interviewed in their own schools. When I am interviewing in schools, it was essential that I make clear to schools and their head teachers that I was visiting in my capacity as a doctoral student at Keele University and not as a member of staff at Edge Hill.

#### iv. Sampling

Sampling is a consideration at both stages of the research. At the questionnaire stage, convenience sampling is used – local networks are exploited to find contributors. Inevitably this is a distorted sample for it is geographically limited and extends only to those teachers who are sufficiently engaged in pedagogical questions to assist in the training of teachers. Furthermore, I did not make much effort to pursue those who did not return their questionnaires as this could have damaged the professional partnership between those teachers and Edge Hill University.

Although convenience sampling is problematic in terms of representativeness, it is important to remember that no strong empirical claims will be based on the findings of this stage of the research. The findings of this research is to be used, instead, for purposive sampling when selecting subjects for interview; the main criteria for selection will be strong opinions about the draft curriculum and the level of engagement in the curriculum debates. The candidates selected for interview will be non-random and represent specific characteristics which will have aspects of both paradigmatic and deviant case sampling. I will certainly be interested in those respondents who were most and least critical of the draft (deviant), but I also expect

to identify trends in the initial sample such as an apparent correlation between years of service and level of criticality (paradigmatic).

## 6. Validity and Generalizability

Testing the validity of qualitative research always poses a challenge. Most standard tests of validity such as predictive validity or concurrent validity rely on positivist assumptions, yet my theoretical underpinning treats positivism as an illusory feature of the neo-liberal discourse. Epistemic quandaries such as this can lead some researchers (e.g. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) to reject altogether the concept of validity as applicable to qualitative research and seek an alternative paradigm for judging research quality. Joseph Maxwell (2002) is less fatalistic and proposes a framework based on several different types of validity. It is Maxwell's taxonomic framework of validity that I use here.

The first concerns are those of descriptive and interpretative validity; that is, accurate "reportage" (Runciman, 1983) and appropriate second order understanding. Accurate reportage is solved in large part by the use of audiotaped interviews, but the problem of second order validity is more complex – does the researcher understand the subject's words in the way that he intended them? Accounts of participants' meanings are necessarily constructed by the researcher and so significant discrepancies between the two can emerge. In some respects, the postulate of adequacy (Schuetz, 1953) addresses these concerns (i.e. a researcher's description of a participant's account must be intelligible to the participant himself) but to have any value, qualitative research must leave space for commentary and analysis by the researcher. The research must inevitably excerpt subjects' accounts and in doing so removes them from their context. Bohman (1991) has addressed this dilemma by arguing that there ought not to be a confusion between respecting the perspectives of the actors and the need to write from that perspective. This raises the question of whether my analyses should be shared with participants prior to the submission of the thesis. I have decided against this with the rationale that provided there is no wilful distortion of interviewees'



accounts, my analysis is my own contribution to the discourse of history education and therefore has its own validity.

However, this third order comprehension - the overarching theoretical explanation applied by the researcher – poses its own problems of validity. Theoretical explanations must stand two tests: that the explanatory concepts are valid (construct validity) and that the application of these constructs in the research is valid (internal validity.) These problems represent a feedback loop – each is affected by the other. In qualitative research, conceptualisation and operationalization are fluid processes. A broad notion (e.g. radical) is posited at the outset, but this concept is defined in an ongoing process of conceptualising and reconceptualising according to careful observation of the case studies. If I am to show that constructs such as “radical” have any validity then I must take care to demonstrate how each proposed example both fits and reframes the definition that we are using. These re-framings will need to be explained in detail and justified as there is a danger that research is merely used to bolster the *a priori* assumptions of the researcher. Indeed, the dual role of CDA researchers as both academics and activists has been attacked as incompatible by Widdowson (2004, p. 173) who writes,

“Now the proponents of CDA can be regarded as activists in that they are critical, but as discourse analysts they are academics... That being so, it seems reasonable to be critical of their work, as discourse analysis, where it appears not to conform to the conventions of rationality, logical consistency, empirical substantiation and so on....”

Although this is a somewhat intemperate criticism, it serves to remind that those who do not share the researcher’s political values must be convinced of the validity of the findings on the basis of nothing more than the robustness of the methods used to create them. For this reason, a multi-method approach has been adopted which allows methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978) across the data sets. Two sets of data (questionnaires and interviews) will be generated in the process of the research, but this can be triangulated with third party research (such as the HA survey,) policy documents and contributions to discourse in the public domain. Indeed, it is to be

expected that interview respondents will make reference to the public debate about school history and so the research will need to link back and forth between them.

Case-study research inevitably raises questions of generalizability which must be addressed. Firestone (1993) identifies three forms of case study generalisation: from sample to population; theory connected generalisation and case to case transfer. As discussed earlier, open teacher resistance to curriculum change is rare and the study as a whole has value as an instrumental case-study of teacher resistance – an unusual set of circumstances which is of interest precisely because it is unusual. Therefore, the main form of generalizability is theory-connected. That said, it may be possible to develop more general propositions about the nature and causes of teacher involvement in curriculum debates which allows case-to-case transfer. However, I have deliberately eschewed comparisons between history teaching (about which I am expert) and other subjects about which I know little. Readers of the thesis may draw out possible to identify conditions which make teacher activism in all subjects more likely, but this is not the main intention of the study which has explanatory generalizability, rather than predictive.

## 7. Ethics and Data Protection

### i. Ethics at research stage one – Questionnaires

At the time of the field work, I was employed as the PGCE History Course Leader at Edge Hill University, and it was important to keep this role separate from my role as a Keele student. In my role as a course leader, I visited schools and had the opportunity to distribute questionnaires to history teachers. It was absolutely clear on the information sheet that although I may be visiting the school in a professional capacity, I was acting as a Keele student in distributing questionnaires. Respondents were able to return questionnaires in sealed envelopes via the Edge Hill trainee teachers at their school.

This stage of research generated mostly anonymous data as I anticipated that the majority of candidates who respond to the questionnaire would not wish to be considered for stage two. Candidates who did wish to be considered for interview

were asked to record their name and the name of the school at which they work on the form. This data allowed me to contact the respondent for interview, but limited their sharing of personal details. This information was entered into a spreadsheet which was a password protected document. Original hardcopies were locked in a drawer.

The possibility of harm at this stage was very limited. The information sheet at the front of the questionnaire stressed that there was no need for candidates to complete the questionnaire if they so wish. It will be very important to emphasise that this research is unrelated to my work at Edge Hill as, if this is not explicit, teachers may feel pressured to respond thinking that it is part of the Edge Hill training partnership. It was also clear on the questionnaire that completion of the questionnaire gave consent for the anonymised data to be used and that there is no expectation that they volunteer for stage two. It was made clear that not all the volunteers from stage one would be invited for interview to avoid disappointment.

## ii. Ethics at Stage Two – Semi-Structured Interviews

Candidates for interview were selected and contacted by post at their schools and invited for interview at Edge Hill. This letter included a comprehensive “Information for interview subjects” section which conforms to the BERA framework (appendix 4). This information sheet made clear the purpose of the research and the uses to which any quotations will be put and also made clear the steps taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Permission was needed from the university to use the campus for this purpose as I will be acting as a Keele student, not an employee. Since no expenses could be offered, candidates had the option of being interviewed in their own schools. In this case, I sought the candidate’s permission to speak to the head teacher about visiting the school for this purpose in my capacity as a student. Head teachers were reassured that it will not be possible to identify schools

A “Consent for Interview” form was included in the initial invitation letter (appendix 5). It was clear that completion of this form also gave consent for the interview to be quoted. The form asked candidates to contact me on my Keele student email address to arrange a suitable time and date for interview. Candidates were asked to bring their

completed “consent for interview” form with them for the audiotaped interview. If no consent form is received, then the interview will not proceed. I am avoiding, as far as possible, collecting personal data from candidates, but when it is collected it will be stored in a locked drawer. Audiotaped interviews will be password-protected mp3 files.

At the beginning of the audiotaping, subjects were reminded of their right to withdraw and to pause or terminate the interview at any time. The topics of conversation are not particularly emotionally sensitive and so they were unlikely to cause distress to the interview subjects. However, in the unlikely event that subjects become upset, I will ask them whether they wish to terminate the interview.

All subjects were represented by pseudonyms in the research and it was therefore not possible that either the individual or the school could be identified from the content of the interviews. Subjects were reassured that, since they are speaking in a personal professional capacity, their answers would be kept confidential barring my legal obligations regarding disclosure. The subject of the interviews makes the need for such compulsory disclosure exceedingly unlikely.

## 8. Reflexivity

CDA is meant to be a radical and empowering methodology, in which the words of discursive actors are interpreted in the context of the power structures which oppress them. However, Michael Billig (2003) has argued that since CDA has become more established in academia, it has inevitably lost some of that radical edge. He asks whether even the use of the acronym CDA might not serve to exclude outsiders and elevate or mystify the researcher in the way that traditional non-critical approaches have. He has argued that the ethical basis of CDA means that CDA researchers must be held to a higher standard, “The question is not whether critical discourse analysts use technical nouns more than other social scientists, but whether they should be attempting to use them less” (Billig, 2008, p. 795).

Billig (2008) also argues against the reckless use of nominalisations in critical analyses. There is a familiar problem in social science research of the researcher

reifying concepts, but, again, Billig argues that this is a problem which is more acute if the researcher labels himself critical. The critical realist argues that language obscures reality, but that reality is knowable. In writing in this way, is the researcher describing reality or merely obscuring it further? Billig suggests that the answer to this conundrum is for the researcher to write about processes rather than facts and to use verbs instead of nouns. This is an approach I wholeheartedly agree with. Using nominalising (rather than nominalisation) and representing (rather than representation) encourages the researcher to be explicit about oppression as process rather than oppression as fact. Language which presents oppression as a fact is in danger of fatalistically accepting that oppression, while the language of process leaves it open to contestation and change.

A further approach to the issue of researcher reflexivity that Billig suggests is to raise the profile of the researcher in the research so that researcher voice is obvious and so that the researcher is thereby forced to be reflective about the judgements and analyses he is making. Indeed, Billig closes his argument by saying, "I have probably used the first person singular here more times than I have done in all the rest of my publications put together" (cited in (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 5)). Although this approach was evidently a revelation in Billig's own practice, it has a much longer heritage in critical education research (albeit not CDA specifically).

A final problem relates to researcher motivation in critical research, an idea neatly summarised by Goodman (1998, p. 57), "I struggled to remind myself that I was not on a 'rescue mission' to save society from its ignorance." The language of Marxism is littered with a dangerous level of intellectual arrogance, not least the phrase "false consciousness" or its associate "ideology" which not only assumes an objective reality, but criticises a person's lived experience for erring from that reality. As Hammersely (1981, p. 340) writes,

"The concept of ideology itself becomes a form of distortion unless we can show that our values are in some objective sense superior to those of the people we are studying, and we are not in a position to even begin to do that."

The researcher must tread carefully if he is to avoid belittling the subject's interpretation, even if he feels it is misguided. The undemocratic "Marxist" regimes of the twentieth century show the danger of an enlightened elite taking decisions for a majority who are too stupid to know what was good for them. Tripp recognises these concerns when he writes (1998, p. 37) that there is a certain contradiction in "being critical about everything except being critical". Ultimately, this process of challenging assumptions and interpretations must extend to the researcher too. Exploring interpretations of the world is not a one-way process led by the "researcher as expert" but a dialogue between researcher and subject. This leads to the very real possibility that the researcher could eventually challenge his own subjectivities to the point that he reaches entirely the opposite conclusion to that which he anticipated. The truly reflexive researcher has to be aware that his own subjective view of the world and his own identity are as open to change as those of the people he is researching.

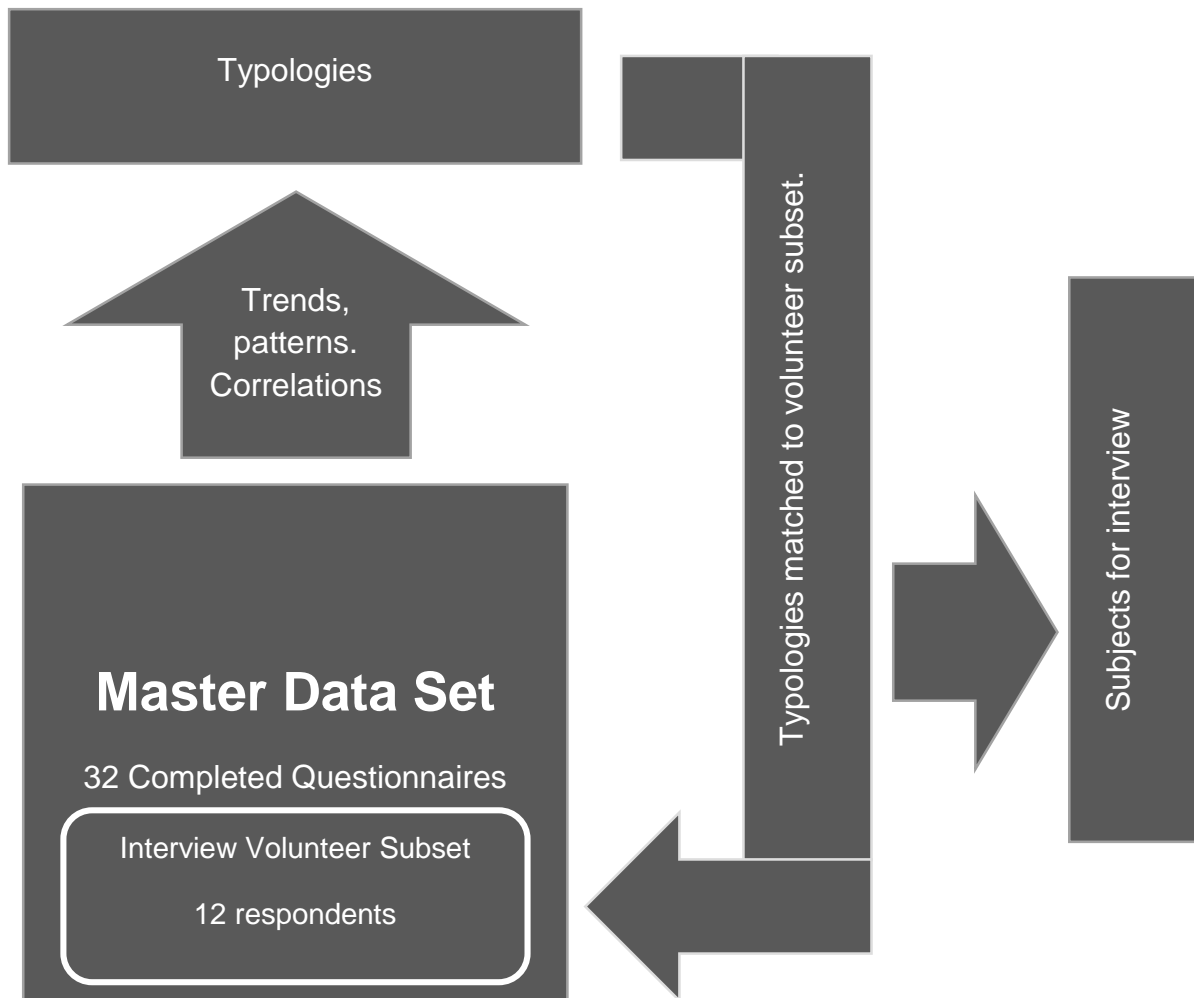
# Chapter 4 - Quantitative Analysis of Initial Survey Results

The previous section established the relevance of qualitative approach to the research question and the value of critical discourse analysis as a methodology. That said, the section also discussed the need to ensure validity and representativeness when pursuing critical social scientific research. For this reason, it was decided that an initial survey of teacher attitudes would be distributed and that these surveys would be used to allow teacher typologies for further study to emerge inductively. It is important, once again, to stress that no strong empirical claims are based on these initial surveys which are undermined by a small sample. In the current research, it is hoped that the disadvantages of the small sample are outweighed by a process of selection for interview (see figure 3) which aims to ensure a cross-section of opinion.

This section looks at the data gathered from the written questionnaires and the subsequent process through which interview subjects were selected. It is presented in two parts. Firstly, there is a brief discussion of the data collection process (summarised in Figure 3) and its effectiveness. Secondly, there is an analysis of significant trends, patterns and correlations emerging inductively from the master data set. Several of these trends are identified and each is used to identify a teacher typology. After a short analysis of the representativeness of the interview volunteer subset, a volunteer is selected from the interview subset to represent each of these typologies. Inevitably, these subjects will be “best-fit” and the extent to which they meet the model of the typology will be explored.



**FIGURE 3**



1. Data collection and response rate

Ethical approval to begin field work was sought in December 2013 and granted by Keele University's Ethical Review Board in January 2014 (see appendix 1). Paper-based questionnaires were distributed in late January 2014 and were sent to history teachers in all schools in the Edge Hill University partnership which had accepted a trainee history teacher. In all 56 questionnaires were distributed and 32 completed questionnaires were returned (appendix 7). This 57% response rate is low, but not

surprising; teachers are extremely busy and the main reason for non-return was forgetfulness or teachers assigning a low level of importance to the research. In one case a teacher sent a message via the trainee that she had chosen not to complete the questionnaire because she felt that the questions were “biased.” In some ways, this is a fair criticism. There is no doubt that the questions had a particular focus – they were intended to identify dissatisfaction with the draft curriculum document and to identify methods of resistance, not to seek attitudes more generally. For this reason, much of the questionnaire presupposed opposition to the draft. For example, question 10 – ‘The following criticisms of the curriculum were made at the time. Indicate whether you agree or disagree’.

Although she did not use the words, it seems that the complainant’s criticism was that she felt that the phrasing of the questions invited response bias. That is to say, the questions were presented in such a way to betray the researcher’s attitudes and to invite respondents to reply in a way that pleases the questioner. This cognitive bias (commonly known as the Hawthorne Effect) is something that researchers seeking objective and empirically robust responses must be aware of. There is no doubt that the questions asked in the questionnaire were loaded – they presupposed respondent dissatisfaction with the draft curriculum. However, it is questionable the extent to which questions can – to use the words of the non-respondent - be “biased.” Although the question above asks whether respondents agree with a given criticism, if they do not then they do not, then they should not tick the box. From my point of view, the questions were not “biased,” but were asked for a particular purpose. The questions were chosen carefully to allow me to most easily identify typologies of resistance for interview, not in an attempt to achieve research objectivity – but to support the critical approach that I have taken. It could reasonably be argued that Likert scales could have been substituted for the agree/disagree binary. This, however, would have introduced a level of complexity to the analysis that was unnecessary for my purposes. Had the surveys aimed solely to analyse history teacher attitudes, then Likert scales and other attitudinal methodologies would have been appropriate, but that was not their function.

Two further defences can be made of my chosen methodology against charges of bias. The first is that where “indicate whether you agree or disagree” questions were asked, there was a corresponding question which was used to triangulate the findings of this. For example, as well as asking which criticisms the respondents agreed to, there was also space for to expand their ideas in their own words. The second defence of my approach was its context – my research was taking place after the large scale large scale HA survey cited earlier established the almost universal dissatisfaction with the draft (96% were critical.) Moreover, the research was conducted after the Department for Education had, itself, withdrawn the draft and admitted to serious concerns about its practicality and suitability. I felt that little would have been gained by a survey which simply repeated the open attitudinal questions of the HA survey with a fraction of its sample size. This would surely just have duplicated the HA’s results, but with much weaker claims to validity.

Since the aim of the questionnaires was to identify subjects for interview, the proportion of respondents who volunteered for these was pleasing. Of the 32 questionnaires that were returned, 12 respondents (38%) volunteered for further interview (appendix 8). The representativeness of this subset is discussed in more detail below, but for now it is enough to say that these volunteers reflected a good range of age, experience and backgrounds.

## 2. Broad Trends and Typologies from the master set

### i. Engagement, Criticism and Resistance scores

Three questions are most important to the current research. These questions give continuous data which can be compared against other more discrete variables to illuminate typologies. These questions look at:

- **Engagement** in the history teaching subject community: Question 6 – Which of these teaching habits apply to you?”
- **Criticism** of the draft: Question 10 – The following criticisms of the curriculum were made at the time. Indicate whether you agree or disagree.
- **Active Resistance** to the draft: Question 14 – Did you take any of the following actions in response to the February draft?

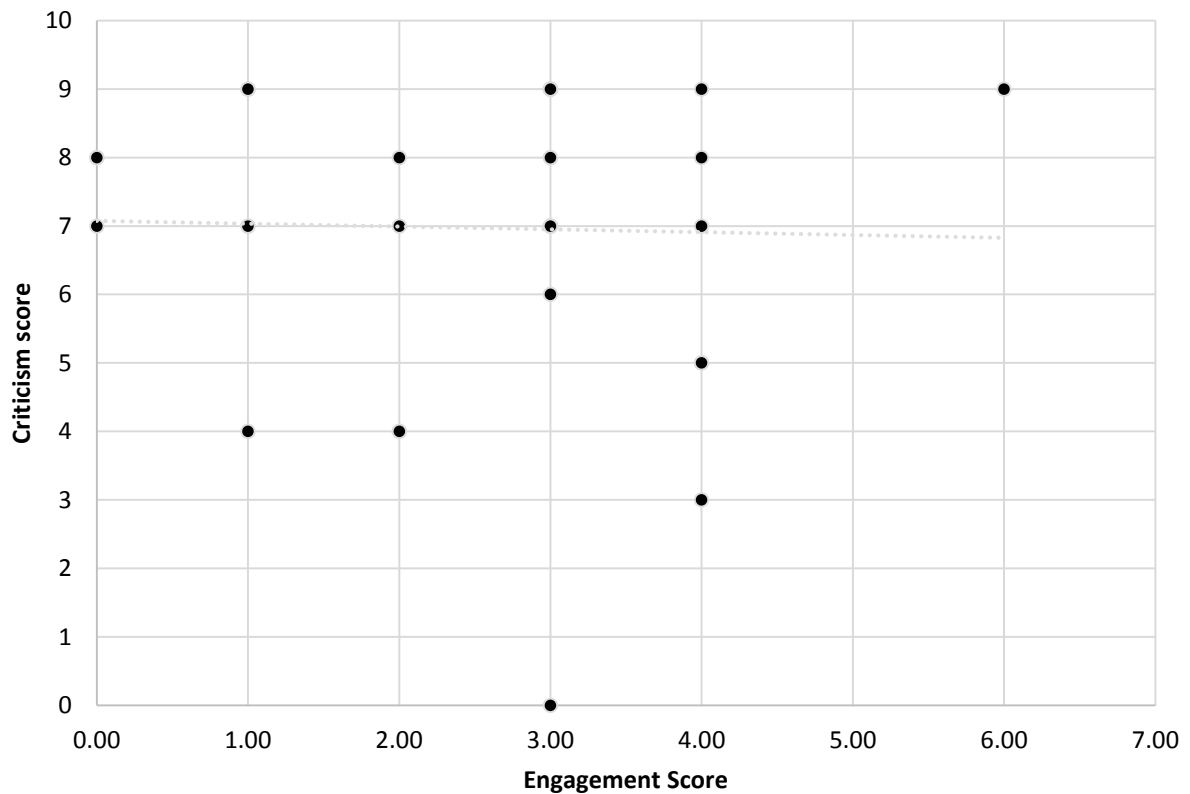
Each of these questions invite “tick all which apply responses” which allows each respondent to be given a score for each of these characteristics. This score allows a judgement to be made about each respondent’s levels of engagement, criticism and resistance. Again, a Likert scale could have been used to allow respondents to self-evaluate these characteristics by asking questions such as “How engaged in the history teaching subject community are you?” But such a scaled question would be unsatisfactory for the present purposes since there is no consistent or shared frame of reference for the response. A respondent who is very engaged, but feels that there is more he could do would report a lower level of engagement than one who was relatively disengaged, but knew little of the opportunities for further engagement. This limitation of Likert scales and other psychometric measurement is well-established (Blaikie, 2003) and a number of studies have demonstrated the inconsistency of response based on the scales used (Kieruj & Moors, 2010). Although the epistemological underpinning of this research rejects researcher objectivity, in this case, it was essential for the generation of typologies that there be a common benchmark against which respondents could be measured.

Six criteria for engagement in the subject community were offered and the mean engagement score for the master data set was 2.56 and just one respondent had an engagement score of 6/6. The most common form of engagement was attendance at subject-based meetings with history colleagues from other schools (26/32). Principally, this can be explained by the low cost and convenience of such engagement, but it also reveals something about the importance of local networks of history teaching as described by Mary Price in *History in Danger* (1969). All history

inevitably involves a local dimension (though oddly this was an aspect of practice omitted from the February Draft) and it is clear that most teachers seek local responses to curriculum development in the first instance. It was clear, too, that levels of engagement fell as costs and distance increased. HA membership (at £49) was held by just 9 respondents and the SHP conference (based in Leeds and costing £260) had been attended by just 5 respondents. It is possible to infer from these responses that engagement becomes less common, the greater the apparent distance (both temporally and psychologically) from the lived context of the school.

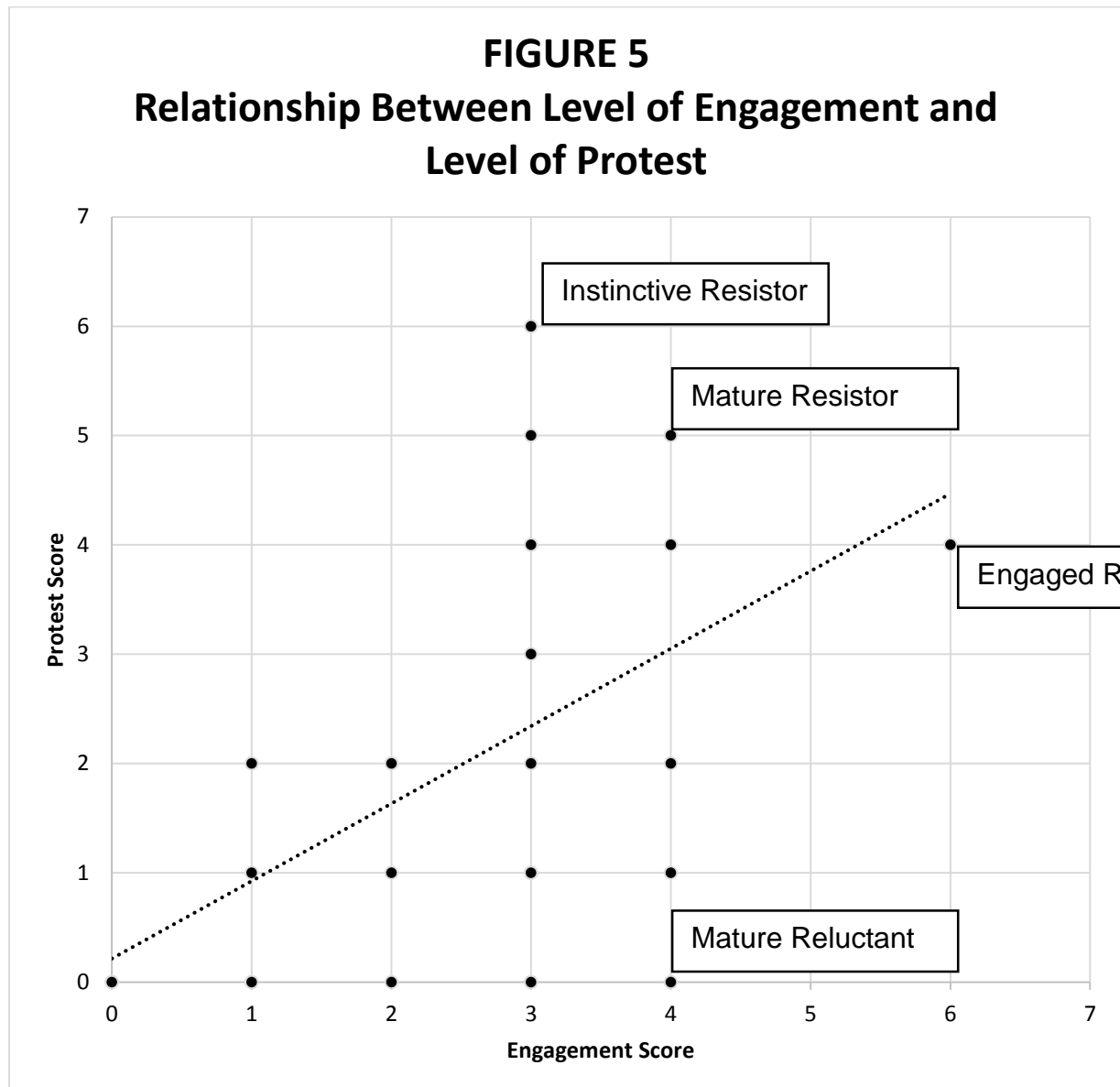
Pertinent trends also emerge when the interdependence of these characteristics is analysed. The generally high criticism score (mean 6.9 / 9) indicates that teachers were generally critical of the draft (a point reinforced by the HA survey.) Furthermore, as Figure 4 shows, no correlation exists between the criticism score and the engagement score which suggests that the subject community did little to “lead” criticism of the draft. Had criticism been inspired by the community then we might reasonably expect there to be a correlation between levels of engagement and levels of criticism. The fact that no such correlation exists suggests that criticism emerged independently of community identity.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Graph showing the absence of a link between engagement in the subject community and level of criticism.**



However, Figure 5 below shows a clear correlation does exist between levels of protest and levels of engagement in the subject community. We should not assume a particularly strong correlation because engagement is neither a necessary nor sufficient cause of protest – one can protest without being engaged – and so the fact that any noticeable trend exists at all is statistically significant. The relationship between engagement and protest has a correlation coefficient of 0.5 which is not strong enough to infer causation, but suggests strongly that protest and engagement are interrelated in a way that criticism and engagement are not. That is to say, although general dissatisfaction with the draft was shared by all teachers regardless

of their levels of engagement, those who are engaged either felt more motivated to make their dissatisfaction known or were more aware of avenues for making their dissatisfaction public than the disengaged.



This graph shows that teachers can be engaged without protesting (below the line of best fit), but that the teachers most likely to protest are the most likely to be engaged. For example, there is no teacher with a protest score above two with an engagement score below three. This would seem to suggest that engagement is a *necessary ingredient* in resistance. We can infer from these two graphs that the subject community plays a significant role in the process of resistance, but not – as we might

assume – in shaping attitudes. These two graphs therefore suggest a democratic structure to the subject community – consensus attitudes to the draft were not externally imposed, they emerged organically in the community. The role of the subject community was to give voice to this consensus – to provide the mechanisms of protest not to drive forward that protest.

These findings are supported by evidence from Question 7 which asked, “Do you think there exists a history teaching community?” This question was used to triangulate the apparent correlations seen above. Where the analysis above aimed to use a shared objective measurement of engagement by counting examples of respondent engagement, I felt it was also important to give respondents the opportunity to self-identify as engaged or disengaged from the subject community. As discussed earlier, there are sometimes contradictions between the results of quantitative classificatory methodologies (How many of these things have you done?) and qualitative methodologies which allow respondents to self-identify.

TABLE 1		
“Yes and I feel part of it”		No or “I do not feel part of it or want to be part of it.”
5.6	Engagement	4.2
6.9	Criticism	7
2.5	Protest	1.7

The significance of these statistics based on self-identification matches those of the qualitative approach – those who feel part of the community were just as critical as those who did not (6.9 v 7), but those who felt part of the community were more willing to protest (2.5 v 1.7). That the findings for self-identification reflect our more “objective” statistical approach reassures us that “engagement score” is a robust objective



measure of engagement. The conclusion to be drawn from both these methods is that the role of the subject community is paramount in mobilising protest (or in increasing the motivation/ willingness to protest) but not in creating the reasons for opposition to curriculum change.

## ii. Typologies by Engagement

These numerical patterns outlined above give rise to our first typology – **the engaged resistor**. This is a typology with a high level protest score and a high level of resistance. But we must also take interest in the anomalies from the above graph. Although a correlation exists between protest and engagement it is demonstrably *not* a causal relationship. It is clear from a glance at the graph that the highest levels of protest were observable in those with an engagement score just slightly above the mean of 2.56. We might therefore choose to call this typology **the instinctive resistor**. It seems that they are sufficiently engaged to be aware of the avenues of protest available to them, but engage less in the subject community than some of their colleagues. These are idealised typologies and it is not possible to interview an ideal: instead we must try to find best-fit examples within the interview volunteer subset.

With respect to these questions of engagement, criticism and protest – the interview volunteer subset is typical of the master set in some ways, but atypical in others. Most obviously, those who volunteer to give their time up for research into history teacher identity are a self-selecting group who value a notion of history teacher professional identity. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that the average engagement score of the interview subset (3.33) was significantly higher than the overall data set (2.56). It is also significant that those who volunteered for interview were far more likely to have attended the SHP conference. Indeed, of the five respondents in the master set who had attended the conference, four volunteered for interview. Respondents from the interviewee data set were no more likely to have complaints about the draft (average 6.9 criticism score Vs 7 criticism score) but were significantly more likely to protest (average 2.03 protest score Vs 2.97)

Looking at Figure 5, we would expect the engaged resistor to sit along the line of best fit and to score highly for resistance. Questionnaire respondent ID 1 is probably the best example of an Engaged Resistor. Her plot on the graph is the apparent anomaly on the extreme right hand side of the graph with an engagement score of 6 and a protest score of 4. The line of best fit enables us to see that she is not, in fact, an anomaly. Although she is not clustered with the other respondents – the relationship between her engagement score and protest score is proportional to the correlation of the group. She is a teacher of two years' experience in an area of considerable deprivation in Manchester and in the under thirty age bracket.

Our best candidate for the title of Instinctive Resistor (ID 14) is superficially similar. She, too, is a teacher in an area of economic deprivation (this time in East Lancashire). She is also under thirty and has also taught for two years, but despite these similarities – she is much less engaged in the history teaching community. Her engagement score of 3 is above the mean for the master data set (2.56) but below that of the interview subset (3.33). Given this relatively low engagement score, it is remarkable that she shared the highest protest score of any respondent - 6. In statistical terms although her engagement was just 0.8 standard deviations above the mean, her protest was 1.4 standard deviations above the mean indicating a fairly typical level of engagement, but a high level of protest.

We can see the difference between the Engaged Resistor and the Instinctive Resistor in the written answers each gave to the open question of why they felt the need to protest. In the case of the Instinctive resistor, we can detect anger,

“Without any action, Gove might have got his stupid proposal through. Very angry and it neglected my sixteenth century specialism. No way in hell I could/ would want to teach it.”

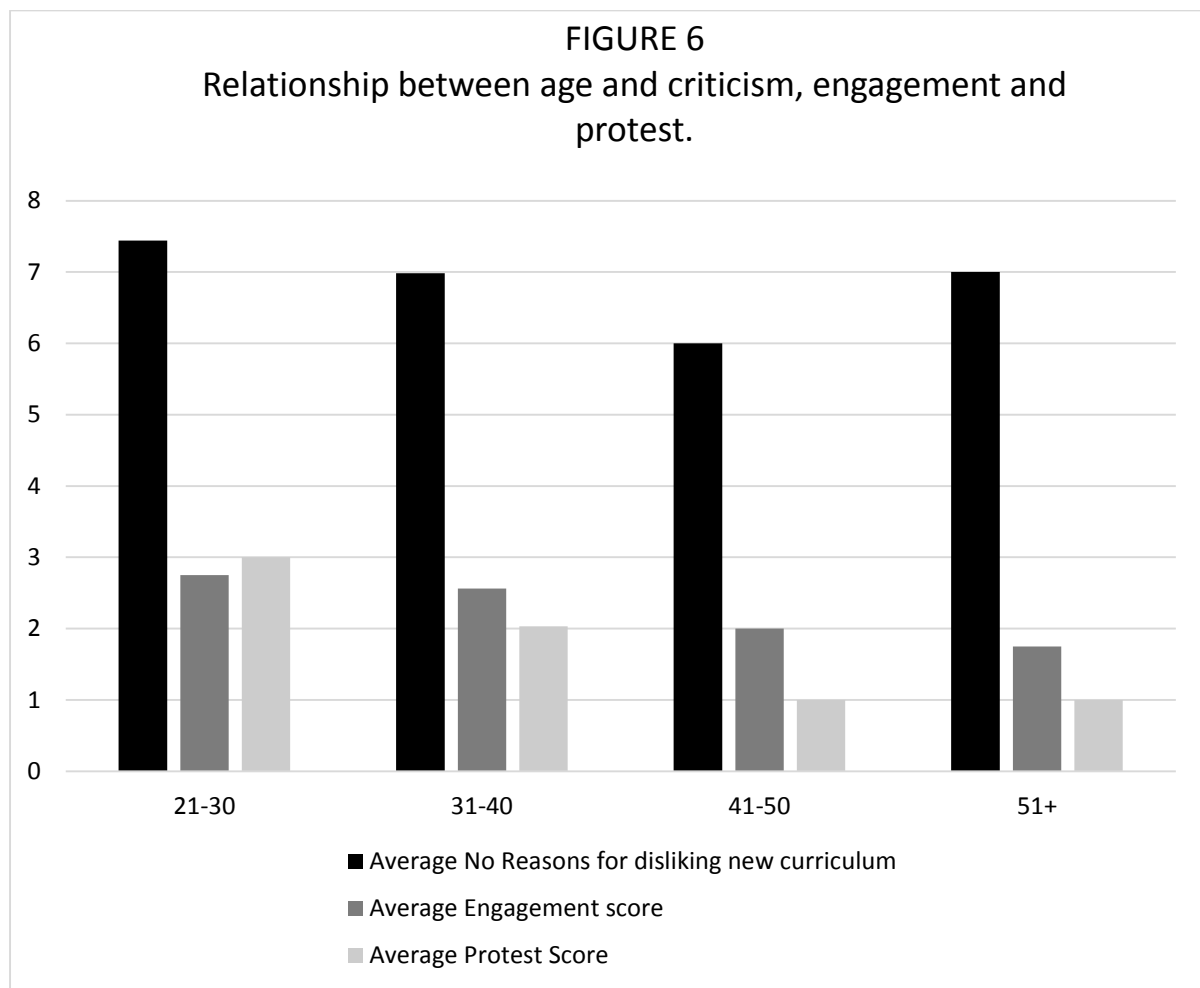
In contrast, the Engaged Resistor provides educational reasons for her opposition: “To explain the negative impact these changes would have on pupils' learning and engagement.”

### iii. Typologies by Age and Experience

Respondents were asked to place themselves in one of four age brackets (effectively twenties, thirties, forties and fifties) and to indicate when they had qualified to teach. The multiple choice options for these were determined by the various iterations of the National Curriculum. It would be possible, therefore, to see which National Curriculum(s), if any, each teacher had worked with and to determine whether their affected their response to the February draft. Respondents to the survey covered the full range of age and experience, but there was a response bias towards younger and more recently qualified teachers. Of the 32 teachers to reply, 21 (two-thirds) were aged 40 or younger and 24 (three-quarters) qualified to teacher after 2000. The reasons for this response bias can only be speculated at this stage - perhaps more recent graduates were more sympathetic to academic research? Regardless, this response bias was exacerbated in the interview volunteer subset. Of the 12 respondents who volunteered for interview, just one was aged over 40 and none of the five respondents who qualified to teach before the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1991 wanted to be interviewed. Again, we can only speculate on the reasons for this response bias; younger teachers are probably less likely to have family commitments or may themselves be more optimistic about the prospect of such research affecting policy.

Light is shone on these questions by looking at the relationship between age and willingness to protest. The graph below (Figure 6) shows that although older teachers give just as many reasons for disliking the draft curriculum, they are far less likely to take action to resist it. This might suggest a lack of faith in the power of resistance, or it might suggest less familiarity with the social media technology (Facebook and Twitter) through which much of the resistance was organised. However, the graph also shows how a declining level of engagement in the history teaching community comes with age. Two explanations for this are possible – firstly a cohort explanation, that older teachers were never as engaged or as likely to resist as the younger teachers with which they are being compared. The second explanation is a time of life explanation: in other words, as teachers age, their career becomes less of a priority as they achieve

promotion and acquire family commitments. It is important to remember that these statistics do not compare like with like – the older teachers are and were different people to their younger colleagues and we should be careful to infer that it is the process of ageing that has reduced their engagement and willingness to protest.



It is precisely these kinds of questions that cannot be answered through quantitative analysis and which show the value of qualitative research in explaining motivation. This data gives rise to our third typology – the **Mature Reluctant**. This term describes teachers in the older age brackets with low engagement and resistance scores. In order to explain how and why teachers resist, it is important to have an understanding of those who choose not to resist. Unfortunately, the response bias described above

means that the interview volunteer subset meant that no teachers in the oldest age bracket wanted to be interviewed and only one from the 41-50 age bracket volunteered. Conveniently, this volunteer (ID 16) is a good fit to the typology. She qualified between 2000 and 2008 and is a teacher in a high-achieving school. Despite a higher than average engagement score of 4, she describes herself as not feeling part of the history teaching community. She also indicated that she had a “mixed” view of the draft and took no action to oppose it, making her one of only two interview volunteers not to protest at all.

In contrast to the mature reluctant, we can posit the **Mature Resistor**. This is an atypical typology and may help to illuminate the ways in which age affects both engagement and resistance. Turning to the interview volunteer subset, our best candidate for this role is ID 15. He is in his late thirties and came to teaching later in life after a career in advertising. He has the same engagement score (4) as the mature reluctant, but has a protest score of 5, the highest of any respondent aged over thirty and significantly higher than the average protest score for his age group (2). In his initial survey, he demonstrated an engagement with the history teaching community as he gave his reasons for protest as “to support the consensus who thought it was wrong and to appeal to Gove to come up with a better solution.”

#### iv. Reasons for Opposition

The final criterion for selection looked at reasons for opposition. The initial survey asked about this in two ways – firstly in a series of closed “yes/no” questions in which respondents said whether they agreed with a given criticism. This data is partially useful and was used to generate the “criticism” score used above. However, as with the question of engagement discussed earlier, it was felt that there needed to be a corresponding open question in order to triangulate the quantitative findings of the criticism score. After asking respondents whether their overall view of the draft was positive, negative or mixed; there was the opportunity to give three developed reasons for their answers.

Looking firstly at the nine criticisms offered in the closed question section, the most common criticism (28/32) was that the curriculum contained “too much content”. This is a somewhat ambiguous criticism which might explain why it was so popular. For example, it could be taken to mean that there was simply too much content to cover in the time allowed, or it may conceal a pedagogical point that there was too much emphasis on content as opposed to skills. Although these terms are now longer viewed as antipathetic in history education research, they retain currency among many classroom teachers. This reveals a key problem with closed questions – we know that respondents agree with a statement, but the respondent may have interpreted the statement differently from the way it was intended by the researcher.

It is possible that a similar issue of ambiguous wording explains the low score for the least common criticism that the curriculum was “too focused on modern history.” The answer to this question depends on whether one looks at the curriculum as a whole (from age 5-14) or whether one looks only at the secondary curriculum. I intended the question to focus solely on the Key Stage Three Curriculum (History from 1750 to the present day), but it is entirely possible that respondents had the whole curriculum (which covers the Stone Age to the Present Day) in mind when they answered.

These ambiguities vindicate the use of a mixed-method approach wherein binary “tick-box” statements were followed by an opportunity for respondents to develop their thoughts. Respondents were asked to briefly develop three comments about the draft curriculum. The open questions yielded only one positive comment, notably that Michael Gove’s approach had raised the profile of history as a school subject. This anomalous response would be enough to warrant an interview, but this person was not one of the volunteer subset.

Not all respondents took the opportunity to expand on their answers and, of those who did, not all gave three developed reasons.

TABLE 2	
	Frequency
No development given to reasons	5
1 reason developed	5
2 reasons developed	8
3 reasons developed	13

As with all open questions, it was necessary to operationalise these comments with a system of codes. An analysis of these responses indicated that the overwhelming majority of criticisms were of five types:

- Political
- Practical
- Pedagogical
- Student engagement
- Narrow range and breadth

In common with the responses to the closed questions, most respondents' criticisms straddled the different categories, but some respondents emphasised one category over the others. It was apparent that these reasons for opposition actually revealed something about the respondent's conception of the purpose of a history education. That is to say, those who made political objections were contending that history had a political function that was not being fulfilled by the draft. Similarly, a common theme was that history was, by its nature, wonderful and fascinating to children – these respondents worried that the draft curriculum would affect student engagement as children were deprived of the opportunity to experience this wonder and fascination.

Thus, for history teachers, conception of their subject framed the terms of their criticism. Furthermore, the five types of criticism which emerged from the coding of the surveys reflected the four typologies of history teachers identified by Ronald Evans in his seminal 1989 article, *Teacher Conceptions of History*, a discussion of which appears earlier in the literature review chapter. Evans proposes that history teachers

could be categorised as one of five typologies: storytellers, relativist/ reformists, scientific historians, cosmic philosophers or an eclectic combination of all four. Table 3 shows how these categories match the types of criticism which emerged from the survey.

<b>Table 3</b>		
<b>Type of criticism</b>		<b>Evans' Typology</b>
Student Engagement	implies...	Storyteller
Pedagogical		Scientific Historian
Political		Relativist/Reformer

v. Typologies by Reasons for Opposition

Potential problems with student engagement were a common concern and were cited by 11 of the 32 respondents, however for one respondent – the **Classroom Engager (ID 10)** - this was clearly his main criticism. His comments focused on the content of the curriculum; for example he complained that the curriculum was "too dry" and "too elitist". More interesting was his complaint that, "the best content has been moved to Key Stage 2". This respondent sees no definitional problem in asserting that one period of the past is "better" than another and, by aggregating his responses, we can see why – the "best content" is simply the most engaging stories. The Classroom Engager opposes curriculum change because it robs him of the opportunity to share stories which interest and engage his students. In this respect, he is close to Evans' description of "storyteller" teachers who, "emphasise fascinating details about people and events" (1989, p. 215). Like the Classroom Engager, Evans' interviews with Storytellers emphasised children's interest and engagement, for example "Susan" told Evans "History is an escape. It's fun... I talk about events and the kids love it because it's a story, and that's what history is" (p. 216).



In Evans' research, the largest group of history teachers was those whom he described as "relativist/ reformers." These teachers "emphasise relation of the past to present problems and suggest that history is a background for understanding current issues" and have a "vision of social justice [and] a reformed society" (p. 224). These ideas were clearly present in many of the responses which made criticisms of a perceived political bias in the draft curriculum. Typical of these was the **Political Resistor (ID 17)** who wrote that the curriculum was "white middle/upper class male dominated," "WASP-based" and "political propaganda." These references to class and race are mirrored in Evans' interview with "Warren" where he argues that history "teaches us about... the great triplets, militarism, racism and economic exploitation" (p. 225).

Evans' typology of the "scientific historian" best encapsulates the discourse of history education advanced in the UK by The Historical Association and the Schools' History Project. These teachers promote "historical explanation and interpretation" and "argue that understanding historical processes and gaining background knowledge for understanding current issues are the key reasons for studying history" (p. 217). These ideas were advanced by many respondents and while I have chosen to describe such criticisms as "pedagogical," these arguments were advanced with varying degrees of sophistication.

A simplistic position was taken by **Skills Resistor (ID 11)** who argued that the curriculum had "far too big a focus on content" and that it also "diminishes skills." The terms "skills" and "content" are generally avoided by academics in history education who prefer the terms "substantive and procedural knowledge" (Levesque, 2008). The reason for this terminological fastidiousness is that history teaching has long had to defend itself against pedagogical traditionalists who see an emphasis on skills and an implied diminution of "knowledge" as a form of "dumbing down". That Skills Resistor continues to use these discarded terms implies unfamiliarity with current terminology in the history education discourse and a lack of awareness of the political baggage that these words carry.

In contrast to Skills Resistor, the **Historical Pedagogist** (ID 32) criticised the draft using views about children's understanding of the past. He pointed out that the draft took no account of "what children can grasp conceptually." Like the Skills Resistor, he argued that the draft was "too content heavy" but made the pedagogical point that this hindered children's ability "to understand in depth". It was clear that he had followed the debate about the curriculum closely and was able to name five historians who had commented on the draft (Starkey, Ferguson, Beevor, Schama and Evans). The Historical Pedagogist's views do have a political dimension, "It seemed to be driven by a Daily Mail headline agenda of "3/4 children have never heard of Winston Churchill/Lord Nelson" or whatever right wing folk hero." But it is interesting that even this politicised contribution to the debate shows a keen awareness of the public discourse on the curriculum. Despite these political observations, it is clear that the Historical Pedagogists criticisms were indeed pedagogical rather than political.

### 3. Intermediate Conclusions

Eight subjects have been selected for interview who represent a wide range of views and backgrounds and who reflect different levels of engagement in the curriculum discourse.

<b>Table 4</b>		
<b>Selection of subjects for interview</b>		
<b>Selection criteria</b>	<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Chosen because..</b>
Community Engagement	Engaged resistor	High level of engagement in the history teaching subject community and a high level of resistance.

Community Engagement	Instinctive Resistor	Low level of engagement in the history teaching subject community but a high level of resistance.
Age / Experience	Mature Reluctant	Follows the clear correlation between age and unwillingness to protest.
Age/ Experience	Mature Resistor	Defies the clear correlation between age and unwillingness to protest.
Reasons for resistance	Classroom Engager	Prioritises student engagement among his reasons for resistance.
Reasons for resistance	Political Resistor	Prioritises political motivations among her reasons for resistance.
Reasons for resistance	Skills Resistor	Prioritises historical pedagogy among his reasons for resistance, but in an apparently unsophisticated way which implies a lack of engagement in the history teaching community.
Reasons for resistance	Historical Pedagogist	Prioritises historical pedagogy among his reasons for resistance, but in a sophisticated way which implies engagement in the history teaching community.

# Chapter 5 - Analysis of Findings

## Analysis of interviews

Interviews with the eight subjects were conducted in May and June 2014. Seven of the eight subjects elected to be interviewed at their own schools while one chose to be interviewed at Edge Hill University, my place of work. Since interviews were semi-structured, there was inevitably some variation in their duration – the longest lasted 58 minutes and the shortest just 36. Given the Gramscian theoretical underpinning and the use of socio-cognitive analysis outlined earlier, questions focused both on respondents' conceptions of community, identity and discourse as much as on the actual actions that they took to oppose the draft curriculum.

In presenting this analysis, and in light of the methodological framework adopted, two approaches seemed logical. The first was to present the findings as a model of Gramscian resistance. This would have involved locating aspects of Gramsci's political theory in the words of the respondents. This approach was rejected as being somewhat artificial; theorists develop schema to describe and explain the lived experience of the world, not as moulds into which the real world must be poured. In the process of transcribing the interviews, it was apparent that this approach would have distorted and compromised the lived experiences revealed in the transcripts. Although Gramsci's work is a powerful explanatory tool, I could not risk its becoming an analytical straightjacket. Instead, presentation follows the step by step approach of Van Dijk's socio-cognitive method of discourse analysis (van Dijk, 2009b). This approach, which was described in greater depth in the methodology chapter, focuses on the stories that people tell and the ways in which they understand the world. By leading with the respondent's own voices, the reader can decide whether the Gramscian analysis that I subsequently apply is a fair interpretation of the subject's conceptualisations and their actions.

### The Socio-cognitive Approach

For Van Dijk, the route to understanding discourse is via an understanding of the *context model* of the discursive actors within it (2009b). The context model is a

dynamic lens through which the actor interprets and mediates discourse. This approach accepts that individuals are imperfect readers of reality, but that this does not mean that they interpret reality randomly or haphazardly. By understanding the context model of the individual, we understand their *actions*; for actions (such as resistance) are products of ratiocinations based on these context models. Like all CDA approaches, it must always be remembered that a reciprocal relationship exists between the discursive actors and the discourse – actors are shaped by discourse, but they shape the discourse in turn. The unique and most salient aspect of Van Dijk's approach is the emphasis he places on shared context models, what he calls "social representations". Wherever a group identity exists, Van Dijk theorises, so too do social representations. It might not seem original to argue that those who are similar see the world similarly, but Van Dijk argues that solidarity and communality of experience creates not just a shared context model, but a unique locally-constituted language for describing that model. In Moscovici's words, "a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history." (1973, p. xiii)

Thus Van Dijk argues that each actor in a group is simultaneously engaged in two discourses: the external discourse with the out-group and an internal discourse within the group. In Gramscian terms, we can posit a hegemony-counter-hegemony relationship here. Each history teacher is involved in two discursive processes – resisting hegemony and formulating a counter narrative. Practically, then, Van Dijk's approach gives a good indication of how our findings should be presented. We must look first of course at the external hegemony-counter-hegemony clash as this is the arena of greatest resistance and contestation, but we must also look below the surface at the internal discourse of the history teacher community and at the processes and debates which give rise to the social representations of history teacher identity. Finally, Van Dijk suggests (2009a, p. 73) that we can learn much about actors' position in the discourse by studying the formal structures of their contributions. For example, an interviewee who speaks with confidence and uses shared social representations fluently, might be seen to have an engaged or even dominant role in the formation of

counter-hegemony, while another who speaks more falteringly and misuses social representations has a less secure role in both the group and the discourse.

This chapter will therefore present findings in three major sections:

1. **Macro-propositional analysis** – This looks at the outward-facing debates over the history curriculum and the contestation of its formation.
  - i. Perceptions of Hegemony in the history curriculum discourse
  - ii. Notions of History Education as Counter-Hegemony
  - iii. Resisting Hegemony: Attitudes to active protest
2. **Social Representations: Locally constituted meanings in the History Teacher Community** – This looks at the way in which language and concepts are used to shape a shared history teacher identity which, in turn, assists participation at the macro-propositional level.
  - i. Defining Community: Discourse and Identity
  - ii. New History Pedagogy as a Unifying Discourse
  - iii. Social Representation in action: Chronology as a concept
  - iv. Identity and Othering: Defining the “out-group”
  - v. Organic Intellectuals: Democracy and Leadership
3. **Micro-Propositional Analysis: Language as an indicator of membership -**  
This looks at how securely participants are located within their shared discourse.

1. Macro-propositional Analysis
  - i. Perceptions of Hegemony in the history curriculum discourse

At root, debates about the history curriculum in a society are simply debates about the purpose of history as a discipline; a fact that was keenly understood by all the interview subjects. All respondents felt that history had an important role to play in shaping young people’s identity and sense of self, but treated this almost as a sacred trust that ought not to be abused. Interestingly, therefore, the criticism of the February draft was

not that it aimed to inform young peoples' identities – for all respondents accepted that this was an inescapable aspect of the discipline – but the monolithic nature of that identity. In other words, the February draft was seen as defining an hegemonic notion of Britishness which respondents rejected. At the time that the interviews were taking place, the so-called Trojan Horse scandal in which schools in Birmingham were accused of promoting anti-democratic Islamist practices dominated the news. Two respondents highlighted the similarity between Michael Gove's television interview of the 8<sup>th</sup> June which argued that schools should "actively promote British values" (Wintour, 2014) and the February draft. In the words of Historical Pedagogist,

I would define kind of right of centre history teaching to be very much about.... national values... are encouraged... so... [it's] big on creating a citizen, creating patriotism, creating national values like, like umm David Cameron and Michael Gove have been banging on about recently after Birmingham and the scandals in the Islamic schools there... I think teaching an island story with a chronological approach I would regard that as... to the right of centre."

Engaged Resistor teaches in a school in inner-city Manchester which according to Ofsted has a "very high" proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and where "students originate from 59 different countries and speak more than 50 languages". She was extremely sceptical of a curriculum which "glorifies Britain" and felt that it would alienate rather than assimilate her students,

"[I asked my children]... 'How do you identify yourself?'... Not one said British, not one. So I need to make history engaging to our students in a sense that yes they are in Britain.... [But] this looks at Britain in isolation, this looks at Britain's role in everything"

These comments reflect the only real research in the field (Foster, et al., 2008) which suggests that strong national narratives do nothing to aid social cohesion and, in fact, increase alienation by offering non-White students little with which they can relate. However, it is arguable that the curriculum aims to build social cohesion, not through a shared national narrative, but shaping migrants into docile bodies. This point has been made by Moore and Young (2001) who note a correlation between the presence of "neo-conservative traditionalism" in the education discourse and ruling-class anxiety caused by immigration or evolving social attitudes. For them, the purpose of



traditionalist curriculum is not just to bolster the cultural capital of a self-reproducing economic elite but also to create a situation of deference to a “discipline” which is defined, not in epistemological terms, but in terms of knowledge. In their own words,

“what is important is the experience of submitting to the discipline of a subject and becoming the kind of person it is supposed to make you... it must be stressed that neo-conservatism is not motivated primarily by 'epistemological' concerns. Rather, it is inspired by the view that the traditional discipline of learning promotes proper respect for authority and protects traditional values” (2001, p. 447)

In this sense, the curriculum was exclusionary not only in terms of content, but also in terms of pedagogy. In the traditionalist view of history, the discipline must be submitted to in a way that encourages deference to the characters under study. We are reminded here of Michael Gove’s paean to “children sitting in rows, learning the kings and queens of England.” (Gove, 2010a).

The rejection of the singular narrative of the February draft focused not just on ethnic mono-culturalism, but on class too. In the words of Classroom Engager,

“I think when you spend a huge amount of time looking at politicians and monarchs and, you know, empire builders, that to me goes back to the old history idea of a tiny, tiny percentage of the population... and it’s like well what about the experience of 96%, 97% of the population?”

It would be tempting to see this as a fundamentally political criticism – the Classroom Engager’s interest in the “97%” recalls the fashionable ‘Occupy’ protest slogan, “We are the 99%” – but his is a historiographical, rather than a political criticism. The Classroom Engager criticises the February curriculum, not because he is an avowed Marxist, but because it represents, in his words, “the old idea of history” without ‘history from below’. By this he means the “*Whig Interpretation of History*” which was first criticised by Herbert Butterfield in 1931, but whose influence remained in university history faculties until the social history boom in the 1960s. Mature Resistor makes these points more eloquently describing the draft as “like something dreamt up from some kind of outdated 1950s grammar schools master”. Later he added,

“...it was just so old-fashioned highbrow history... like Trevelyan and stuff like that, where it was just all... you know, it was like political top end history. And these days now... it's like history's expanded and stretched so much into kind of social issues and social demands.”

In mentioning Trevelyan, the respondent shows awareness of historiography and the evolution of his discipline. Sir Richard Evans (Evans, 2011) made the same point and deliberately referenced Butterfield's work when he described the approach in the new curriculum as the “Tory Interpretation of history”. For Evans, as for Butterfield, the weaknesses of these interpretations are not solely their celebratory patriotism, but their teleology. For the Whigs, history was seen as tending ineluctably towards an English notion of parliamentary democracy, for the Conservatives – as for Fukuyama (1992) – the end of history is Thatcherite neo-Liberalism. Thus, as Foucault argues, knowledge does not merely exclude, it also creates reality. He was emphatic on this point,

“We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it “excludes”, it “represses”, it “censors”... In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (1977, p. 194)

The way in which the curriculum created a teleological reality of Britain's past was noted by several interviewees; for example, Instinctive Resistor described the curriculum as, “Conservative propaganda you know the... rise of Conservatives” while Historical Pedagogist pointed to the final item on the curriculum, “why finish on... Margaret Thatcher? It's almost seeing Margaret Thatcher as a saviour that saves us from economic crisis.”

In mentioning a “1950s grammar school” approach to teaching, Mature Resistor suggests that just as history as an academic discipline has progressed since the dominance of the Whigs, so too has school curriculum design. This point was made at the time of the birth of the first National Curriculum when HMI John Slater criticised the content of existing curricula as the product of an “inherited consensus based largely on hidden assumptions” (Slater, 1989). The development of school history and academic history are co-evolutionary and interdependent since it was the social history

boom in the new universities which produced the graduates and new teachers who pioneered of the SHP approach in the 1970s.

Slater's "hidden assumptions" about what should be taught was at the root of the most common criticism of the draft – that it lacked relevance. The notion of relevance seemed to be an important context model to all eight interviews, but like all context models, it had saturated thinking to such an extent that respondents now struggled to give a succinct definition of it to the interviewer. Perhaps the least helpful definition came from Mature Reluctant who said that "modern children with mobile phones and things like that...wouldn't necessarily be interested in Gladstone." When phrased like this relevance could easily be seen as a euphemism for pandering to children's declining attention spans, but this is not what was meant. An improved, though still flawed, definition came from Historical Pedagogist who said that the curriculum asked students "to study events for events' sake.... And it's totally irrelevant to them". Again, it is perfectly possible to argue – in the spirit of *ars gratia artis* – that the disinterested study of the past for its own sake is a noble and worthwhile endeavour. However, by aggregating the respondents' definitions of relevance we can suggest that a better word is, perhaps, coherence. Respondents were searching for a logic in the curriculum – a set of criteria by which one event was included at the expense of another.

Since there is simply 'too much history', issues of selection are at the heart of any debates about the curriculum. This question greatly exercised history educators in the 1960s with Derek Heater complaining that "because it is impossible to study the whole of world history the overt act of selection is itself an act of distortion" (Heater, 1964, p. 47). However, Heater is mistaken; if the act of selection is overt, rather than covert, the rationale for exclusion and inclusion is revealed. It is, in fact, the explicit justification for selection which – while not guaranteeing objectivity – at least makes one's subjectivities apparent. Far more dangerous than overt selectivity is the supposition that criteria for inclusion and exclusion are self-evident because some events are *a priori* more "significant" or "noteworthy." As E.H. Carr wrote "The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate" (1961, p. 12).

Furthermore it has been argued extensively in history education that the notion of significance is one which should be judged subjectively by the student rather than imposed by the teacher (Wrenn, 2011). The outgoing curriculum (2008) had identified developments in history (such as war, beliefs, power) which history teachers expanded with their pupils using examples of their own choosing. One could argue with the examples that teachers chose (though in reality, there was great similarity between schools) but the examples were expected to develop thematic understanding, they were not stories in and of themselves. Stories do not make a sound basis for a history curriculum even if they do make a sound basis for Henrietta Marshall's *Our Island Story*; apparently, Michael Gove's (Gove, 2010b) and David Cameron's (Hough, 2010) favourite children's book.

We are left, therefore, with the seemingly paradoxical situation that the curriculum is at once criticised for being both a Whiggish narrative teleology but also for lacking in narrative cohesion. It was, perhaps, to avoid this confusion that the word 'relevance' was favoured by respondents over 'coherence'. Respondents chose the word "relevance" because they constantly have to defend their subject against charges of irrelevance from sceptical children. A typical complaint was given by Engaged Resistor,

"one of the main things when a kid starts in my class in September... it's 'Miss, history is boring.' And if I've never taught that kid before I make it my personal mission to disprove that statement, like what's the point of history, it's just about the past, it's happened and that, that's boring. "

The disengaged child is here searching for a purpose to the knowledge he is about to learn – a reason why the knowledge is useful (relevant) to him. Any satisfactory response to this question must be based on overarching curricular coherence. It is not enough to explain piecemeal why each event is relevant – he wants a reason why the subject as a whole is relevant. Clearly, to some students, explanations based on national greatness and identity would resonate, but not with those students who are under-represented in the curriculum – working class and minority ethnic students. Consequently, it is not that the curriculum lacks coherence: the coherence of the curriculum *is* its narrative, but that the narrative has relevance only to some in society.

However, to use a Gramscian term, it is accepted as 'common sense' that these events should be studied.

This notion of "common sense" is not just reflected in Slater's phrase "hidden assumptions", but also in the public discourse. Sir Richard Evans (Evans, 2013b) decried the curriculum as "a pub quiz, not an education" and frustration with this discourse was expressed by Historical Pedagogist who argued that,

"it's the kind of quiz agenda of, of you know you should be able to question any person in the street over the age of... 15 or whatever and they should be able to tell you 10 key facts about British history and if they don't know those key facts then somehow they... haven't been taught properly. Doesn't matter what skills they've developed, doesn't matter the fact that they might make exemplary judgements when it comes to actually arguing an essay or arguing a point, that's not important what's really important is knowing gobbets of factual information."

Interviewees were very resistant to a reductionist view which characterised their subject as a series of events to be learned and expressed disbelief that this could be used, as it was in February, as the basis for a curriculum. In this contribution we can sense irritation with a simplistic conception of knowledge which focuses on what Counsell (2000) calls 'residual knowledge' i.e. knowledge which is retained long term after a topic is studied in depth. Historical Pedagogist's emphasis on "making exemplary judgements" and "arguing an essay" calls to mind Counsell's other form of substantive knowledge – 'fingertip knowledge' –considerably more detailed knowledge which is retained for the short term during the course of an enquiry.

Skills Resistor took a slightly different approach to criticising the draft's reductionist review of historical understanding, "if we link it to Bloom's Taxonomy, simple recollection of dates is a low order skill". Here Skills Resistor is challenging the hegemonic conception of academic rigour by positing an alternative model. For the curriculum, rigour is based on mastery of information, for Skills Resistor it is based on the complexity of the cognitive processes involved in manipulating that information. In this way, Skills Resistor uses the language of the powerful to challenge the powerful. While the Conservative government accuses teachers of dumbing down, Skills Resistor makes the same accusation against the government.

The curriculum is, therefore, seen as betraying intellectual arrogance, there was no attempt to create an overarching curricular coherence – it is nothing more than a list of events which are included because they are self-evidently important. The Foucauldian notion of power-knowledge is of central importance here – knowledge is used to identify the powerful in society and consequently exclude the powerless. The utility of power-knowledge is never questioned for its utility is simply a matter of common sense. Power-knowledge becomes increasingly exclusionary because it is self-referential and self-reinforcing. Take this extract from a 2013 speech on the utility of history by Michael Gove,

“But unless you have a stock of knowledge - about our nation's history.... then many of the works on display in the National Gallery will just be indecipherable cartoons. Unless you have a sense of our nation's political development... then Shakespeare's history plays will just be fighting and shouting.” (Gove, 2013)

In contrast to this assumed canon of best knowledge underpinned by cultural restorationism (Ball, 1990), respondents asked epistemological questions of curriculum content: what knowledge should be taught and for what purpose? The draft curriculum is rejected because these questions have not been asked of it. In social realist terms, the cultural touchstones described by Gove are valued just because they form ‘knowledge of the powerful’. Respondents would not dispose of all such knowledge, but a more convincing reason than this was sought.

## ii. Notions of History Education as Counter-Hegemony

It was clear that Young’s idea of useful Power Knowledge lay behind complaints of the irrelevance. All respondents shared a view that history was empowering and that knowledge was useful to the extent to which it empowered students to take his place in society as an adult citizen. However, this apparent commonality conceals more than it reveals for it begs the question, “What is a good citizen?”

In a hegemonic curriculum design, a good citizen is compliant and deferential – the curriculum is filled with celebratory references to the achievements of the ruling class so that the student feels excluded from his nation’s past and feels he has no role in shaping its future. The product of this curriculum must contribute to the economic

system and understand democratic institutions to the extent that he can participate in them, but not so much that he might challenge them. Like all hegemonic discourses, these ideas saturate ways of thinking about the topic. In a good example of managerial discourses impinging on school history, one respondent argued that the role of a history education was partly showing students “how to write a good application letter, how to get a job... through to learning to sell themselves at interviews”. Similarly, Michael Gove’s wish that students should “fully understand the struggles of the past” so that they can “properly value the liberties of the present” defines liberty purely in terms of equality under the law with no references to how inequality or heredity militates against those liberties. This very narrow definition of negative liberty is highlighted as a swindle by Stuart Hall: “[democratic] concessions fragment the working class into voters, weakening its collective power.... But constructing the idea that the vote means real power” (1984, p. 10).

As discussed above, respondents viewed the new curriculum as hegemonic, but what would they see it replaced with? Interestingly, they too believed in an education for citizenship, but in an education for questioning and enquiring citizens. It is significant that both hegemony and counter-hegemony agree over the terms, but disagree over their definitions. Gramsci is clear that counter-hegemony must use the language of hegemony in order to be effective. This is because hegemony derives its power from the common sense ways in which it describes lived experiences. Michael Apple is clear that progressive narratives must borrow from hegemony: “The first thing to ask about an ideology is not what is false about it, but what is true” (2000, p. 20). In the war of position, it must gather support for its radical agenda precisely by *not* seeming radical. Instinctive Resistor, for example, took hegemonic arguments about identity and citizenship, but applied them to the multicultural community of her East Lancashire school rather than the mono-culture of the draft,

“for my students with being 98% Asian heritage at my school ... we do Islamic empires in year 7, I think that helps them understand more of where they come from and how they fit in, particularly being part of a multicultural society as well.”

The importance of encouraging questioning and skepticism was a persistent theme in all interviews, but Historical Pedagogist puts it in perhaps the most explicitly Gramscian terms,

“ think it’s probably getting students to think... from a... I wouldn’t even say two sided, multi sided perspective.... so that they are fully kind of trained for a world that often is quite intent to try and mislead people, you know I think, I think newspapers, adverts, you know army recruitment whatever I think it’s very, very important for students to, to be equipped with the skills to kind of navigate... in a society that’s often you know, can be quite misleading”

He is, though, clearly no Marxist. It is the “world” that is “intent” to mislead young people rather than an exploitative economic system – he sees deception as an inevitable feature of human society. Although Historical Pedagogist wants to empower students to navigate hegemony and to avoid the perils of ideology, he says nothing about empowering students to challenge or to overthrow existing power arrangements. Nevertheless, even this small section betrays an important Gramscian observation – that in late Capitalism, hegemony is formed by a co-dependent relationship between the state and civil society. He sees the civil society organs of media and advertising as indistinct from the state (in the form of army recruitment).

Engaged Resistor was more conventionally neo-Marxist in her analysis and a critical pedagogist in her teaching. The starting point for her criticism was a rejection of the banking model of education (Freire, 1970) that she perceived in the February draft, “[it] stated really, it was almost a telling, students must learn this, this, this and this. I don’t teach them that way.” However, her approach eschews the determinism of structural Marxism and, like many critical pedagogists, she places extraordinary faith in the power of education to bring about change. For her, an historical education begins by promoting questioning, but ends with resistance

“[politicisation is] *essential* not desirable and the reason for that is otherwise you’d just be... living in almost dictatorship where the government tell you this is what we’re doing and if students aren’t politicised, if *people* aren’t politicised they will never be able to object to something that discriminates against a certain people. Or they will never be able to hold anyone to account, it’s essential, it’s fundamental for being a citizen.” (Emphasis added to reflect recording.)



It is important to notice, as stated earlier, that Engaged Resistor used the language of citizenship, but for her a citizen is not a passive participant in democratic processes, but a change agent. She is clear that “the government” should be treated with suspicion and that “holding it to account” is the duty of the citizenry.

It is clear, therefore, that criticism of the February draft curriculum was motivated by concerns about its underlying political assumptions and its historiographical and pedagogical unsuitability. But it is one thing to criticise a document, it is quite another actively to resist it. While many subject associations were dissatisfied with the draft National Curriculum, history was the subject with the most responses to the DfE’s own consultation. In other words, resistance was a powerful force in the curriculum debates.

### iii. Resisting Hegemony: Attitudes to active protest

Chapter 4 demonstrated that active resistance to the draft varied greatly, but notions of community identity featured strongly in explanation of how opposition coalesced and was directed. The importance of community identity and its corresponding democratic organisations in directing resistance is highlighted with a brief reference to the one interviewee who chose not to resist – Mature Reluctant. The previous chapter showed here disengagement from the history teaching community, but in interview it was apparent that this disengagement was caused by her reluctance to use the Internet. Regarding the HA survey, she expressed frustration that this was online, “if you actually sent me something in the post, I know that’s awful but I’m really, ‘if you actually send me something I’m more likely to fill it in and join in.’”

These themes of community identity and democracy are internal debates between history teachers and so are explored more fully in the next section; this section aims instead to look at attitudes towards resistance. It will look firstly at why teachers felt they ought to resist and how and why some teachers felt more compelled to resist than others. Secondly, it will look at types of resistance and attitudes towards each. Finally, it will explore respondents’ own assessments of the effectiveness of their opposition.

Overwhelmingly, respondents spoke about resistance as a professional obligation. In the words of Historical Pedagogist, “it’s a duty to protect a good thing... and I felt that the curriculum was a threat to that.” Political Resistor said she “did what was necessary,” while Engaged Resistor worked with her department to write a lengthy submission to the consultation and said of this, “there was no question that we wouldn’t do that.” Recalling the language of engaged democratic activism mentioned earlier, Skills Resistor summed up this sense of duty neatly: “we live in a democratic country and we do have a say in that process and I think it’s massively important to actually get involved.” That history teachers so clearly theorise resistance as duty, raises the question of whether it is the protest or the victory that matters more. Uniquely, Instinctive Resistor felt that there would have been resistance *to any change whatsoever* since she sees resistance as intrinsic to her identity as a historian,

“I think it would still have been scrutinised, I think the nature of historians is always to look at something and to criticise straight initially. There wouldn’t have been the backlash that the [draft caused] but I still think it would’ve been criticised.”

This strong compulsion to resist was tempered in all respondent’s minds by the perceived intransigence of the then Secretary of State, Michael Gove. To one respondent – Classroom Engager – Gove’s perceived obstinacy meant that any opposition would be fruitless, consequently he raised concerns with colleagues and wrote on an internet discussion, but did not use any of the more formal channels of protest. Explaining this he said, “I think the thought was ‘we’re stuck with it and we’re basically gonna have to make the best of a bad job’”.

However, he refused to have this approach characterised as defeatism. Instead, he gave an eloquent description of the ways in which curricula can be mediated and subverted in their school-level implementation.

“[it is] slightly defeatist but also slightly defiant because we were thinking, okay how can we hide some of these things, how can we say, okay we’re doing it but we’re sort of shuffling it off to one side.

Classroom Engager is a Head of Department in his late thirties and this is perhaps significant. As a Head of Department, he had the power to shape the curriculum in his

school and as a teacher with 14 years' experience, he is perhaps, more used to managing curriculum change than younger respondents. Certainly, the importance of mediation and subversion was a feature of the accounts given by the other two older teachers – Mature Reluctant said that she would have “tweaked” her school’s curriculum while Mature Resistor intended simply to ignore it, “as an academy... we don’t have to follow the National Curriculum and I certainly didn’t intend to follow *that* National Curriculum”. These views support the work of (Osborn, et al., 2000) that mediation and subversion are the principal form of resistance to curriculum change and that resistance can exist even in the apparent absence of outright opposition.

Outright opposition, therefore, was stronger amongst younger and less experienced teachers. This probably reflects two things: that they are less senior positions in their schools and consequently less able to mediate the curriculum, and that they have had less experience of curriculum change than their older colleagues. This contrast was highlighted by Political Resistor,

“I’m in an academy [and] the first thing my, my head of department did was look at it and go ‘Well we might try and include some of it but if we don’t it’s not end of the world’. So from that point of view clearly he wasn’t gonna get out of his chair and go out campaigning..”

However, the relative inexperience of the more resistant interviewees should not be mistaken for naivety or impetuosity. Among those who did resist, there existed a view that although resistance was an obligation, there was scepticism whether it would be effective. This is not to say that resistance was seen as a doomed quixotic gesture, more a manifestation of Gramsci’s oft-repeated aphorism, “I’m a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will” (Gramsci, 1993). This pessimism can be seen in the way that respondents greeted the release of the substantially revised August curriculum. Historical Pedagogist said simply, “I’m surprised how much they caved to be quite honest!” Engaged Resistor’s comments are more developed, but convey the same sense of amazement that the August document had changed so much,

“when the September [August] curriculum came out, I was really taken aback, I was like, ‘what? Really?’ The two cannot be more different and it wasn’t just like, okay we’ll appease

you, we'll put in a little bit of changes here and there, it's completely revolutionised to the document... I was really shocked, did not expect that at all. Even when I was writing my letter to my MP I did not expect this to be the outcome, even when I was filling out the DfE consultation, did not expect it to be the outcome.”

It is clear from this extract that she has begun to reflect on her own contribution to the debate, but she also reveals another important theme in the interviews – the idea of resistance is a process rather than an act. Each act of resistance is viewed separately and each has its own function in an overarching strategy of resistance. For Historical Pedagogist, for example, the Facebook campaign was just “a way of venting frustration” while the HA consultation had “a much more positive direct impact on the government.”

The way in which respondents described their own resistance was similarly interesting. On the whole, there was considerable modesty about their actions and this modesty led to an unwillingness to explain the retreat in terms of teachers' actions. Political Resistor's resistance was largely restricted to clicktivism (or, less charitably, slacktivism) and she was unwilling to see this as a major contribution to the debate, “I never went out much in the streets.... I mean all of that stuff I did from, from phone or computer.” Engaged Resistor said that she spent 40 minutes working with colleagues on a responded to the DFE's consultation and said that this was “quite easy really, you don't have to actively do something to move [the protest] forward.” Furthermore, she felt it improper to criticise colleagues who complained about the draft but didn't resist, describing them as “apathetic” before adding “but, I would never be like you must do this come on!”

This modesty about actions was reflected in ambivalence about the effectiveness of the actions. There was considerable disagreement about the extent to which the changes made to the curriculum in August were a consequence of the opposition by teachers. This reluctance to infer causation is perhaps to be expected from a cohort of history graduates, wary of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* reasoning, but there was a noticeable consensus that the most effective vehicle for opposition had been the Historical Association. The HA had coordinated a campaign against the draft which included a quantitative survey of 1600 teachers, qualitative written submissions from

100 teachers and face-to-face conversations with over 500. It had used this evidence base to produce a written submission to the government's consultation and had achieved all of this in the eight-week window for consultation allowed by the Department for Education (Historical Association, 2013b). In a Gramscian a sense, the HA can be seen as a political party which coalesces and galvanises the views of its members while simultaneously providing protection and cover for them as individuals. This idea is explored in greater detail in the next section, but it is sufficient here to concentrate on respondent's views of its effectiveness.

Engaged Resistor who had not, herself, replied to the consultation was clear that the HA's intervention had been decisive,

“And when, when you look at why this happened it was because of the HA if I'm gonna be brutally honest. It's because of the relentless protests that took place... they just didn't drop it, they did not drop it.”

Historical Pedagogist agreed, but argued that it was the heterodox make-up of the HA had been its strength,

“The Historical Association isn't just teachers and you can't dismiss the Historical Association as being a bunch of whinging teachers you know because there are lecturers in there, there are, you know, professional historians in the Historical Association so I think it was harder for the government to dismiss them.”

This notion of a “bunch of whinging teachers” conveys a keen understanding of a discourse of derision (Ball, 1990) in which teacher professionalism is attacked in order to justify further attacks by the right. It was a view that was echoed, too, by Skills Resistor who spoke of a “wider landscape of trying to vilify teachers”. The full impact of this derision is developed by Beck (2008) who has shown how it is used to silence teachers. Any attempt to resist in a neo-Liberal age is held up as shared self-interest and teachers' apparent unwillingness to reform is used to justify further attacks in the interests of consumer rights. This exact point was made by Classroom Engager,

“I think, call it paranoia but I think in the teaching profession if we object to something the public perception [is] that we are doing it because we want an easier life.”

The right defends all its reforms in terms of benefits to the children and parents and uses seemingly objective terms such as “standards,” “rigour” and “traditionalism” to justify its actions. As Gramsci argues, common sense narratives are extremely powerful and so wherever possible, counter hegemony should aim to recapture and redefine this terminology. It is significant, therefore, that the HA’s report highlighted seven concerns with the draft, but the first was “dumbing down”. However, the power of the discourse of derision is not just that it is used to discredit teacher contributions to curriculum debates, but that it actually excludes teachers from those debates. Such is the violence of the discourse of derision that teachers feel cowed and silenced; despite their expertise, teachers lose their voices. Classroom Engager used this to explain his reluctance to protest more strongly. He felt, instead, that “celebrity” historians had higher status in curriculum debates than teachers,

“I think if someone like Simon Schama who, rightly or wrongly, is regarded as quite a proper historian, if he’s saying, ‘I don’t think that’s very good’, well actually that’s probably a better way to fight it, or not fight it, than to do it ourselves”

It is a persistent theme that history teachers defend their practice in terms of good historical scholarship and consequently for other interviewees, the contributions of celebrity historians served to validate the views of history teachers. Historical Pedagogist thought of this relationship as a partnership

“I don’t know how many of those [professional historians] were linked to the Historical Association... but they seemed to be ... working together quite well.”

An important issue was mentioned as something of as an aside by Political Resistor who drew attention to the essential paradox at the heart of the Conservative-led coalition’s education policy: notably that it sought greater centralisation and prescription in the National Curriculum while simultaneously ensuring – through its creation of free schools and expansion of academies – that fewer and fewer schools would be bound by it. As a consequence of this decentralisation, Political Resistor felt that Michael Gove might have underestimated the opposition from teachers in academies; assuming instead that – like Classroom Engager – those not bound by the new curriculum would have simply quietly disregarded it. Instead she claimed, “I think they felt that as a whole the community was very weak and in that sense I think they

were wrong.” Political Resistor was clear that professional solidarity exists between history teachers and that this solidarity is based on professional loyalty to history as a discipline,

“I could’ve been a lot more apathetic of course and teaching in an academy of course I could’ve been like, ‘I’m not really bothered’. But I don’t want my subject to become a subject that has students coming through school that aren’t engaged or turned on by what they’re learning about or, you know, seeing wider worth of it.”

An analysis of this idea that history as a discipline forms a powerful unifying discourse between history teachers in England forms the basis of the next section

## 2. Social Representations: Locally constituted meanings in the History Teacher Community

It has been argued that the history teaching community was well placed to oppose curriculum change because of its own powerful internal discourse. These ideas feature in Gramsci’s analysis of revolutionary movements. For Gramsci, revolution was much more than the violent overthrow of capitalism. The final assault on hegemony – the war of manoeuvre – would be doomed if it had not been preceded by a “war of position” which laid its intellectual groundwork. Opposition at moments of conflict – for example, curriculum wars – can only be successful if it has a clear notion of what it is fighting for (counter-hegemony) as well as what it is fighting against. The war of position is, consequently, a continuing process of internal debate, of self-criticism and of renewal. It is the vibrancy of this debate in the history teacher community which made it so well placed in the war of manoeuvre against the February draft.

### i. Defining Community: Discourse and Identity

In the current context, a community is defined as a group bound by a shared identity, underpinned by social representations which are “sources of meaning for the actors themselves” (Castells, 1997, p. 6). Consequently, if any claims are to be made about the existence of a community, it must be evident in the words and ratiocinations of the interviewees, rather than an externally imposed analytical tool.

All interviewees (though not all questionnaire respondents) acknowledged the existence of a history teaching community and there was also considerable commonality about what defined it. It was generally agreed that, initially, one's community extended to one's contemporaries on the PGCE course. Katherine Burn (2015) has explored the importance of these initial communities (and also the potential impact of their loss in the restructuring of English teacher training. However, this was not seen as an isolated community, but the first hub in what would later become a community of overlapping networks. This lengthy extract from Political Resistor was typical in this respect.

"I think it starts from... the PGCE course really for me, [there is] a community there already built through the tutor, through the schools that we went through to and through the kind of community that we had at [university], I think that gave me the foundation to come into a school knowing that not only I was going to a new history department but that I already had a group of 18 other newly qualified history teachers that were willing to share ideas and thoughts so from a, from a very kind of starting point I think that the PGCE was a big part of that. I think the wider history community begins when you attend things like the SHP Conference and not only that there's been other conferences that I've gone to but you see the same faces and same figures. Using things like Twitter has allowed me to umm to further develop links with these particular kind of history teachers or history community umm and equally then being able to contact different historians from other schools."

The way in which she describes the growth of her engagement in the community is revealing. The community begins as an organ for self-preservation to survive the nervous first few weeks in a new job; as an organisation for mutual support rather than a creative endeavour. As she becomes more settled in her job, the community broadens spatially and functionally. The Gramscian idea of catharsis – broadly similar to class-consciousness - is helpful in explaining this process. For Gramsci, catharsis represents a growth in communality and solidarity which emerges from a purging of one's own egoism. Catharsis is achieved when a community's thinking moves from the narrow, immediate and instinctive (what Gramsci calls the egoistic-passional) to a broader understanding of the longer-term aims of the community (the ethico-political). In short, the community ceases to be a way of "getting by" or of ameliorating a difficult



situation and instead becomes a vehicle for permanent and significant transformation in the landscape of history education. In Gramsci's words, at the moment of catharsis "Structure ceases to be an external force which crushes man... and makes him passive and is transformed into a means of freedom, an instrument to create a new ethico-political form and a source of new initiatives (1971, pp. 366-67).

This process of catharsis is also apparent in the development of respondent's reactions to the draft as they moved from instinctive rejection to organised opposition. Initial responses to the curriculum were "ludicrous" (Mature Resistor), "horrific" (Engaged Resistor,) "ravings of a mad man" (Instinctive Resistor) and "horror... there's no way that this is achievable" (Historical Pedagogist). However, it was clear that networks gave a space where these reactions could be given vent to and more considered responses could be formulated. In the first instance, networks were used for sharing news of the curriculum's release, Engaged Resistor said. "I got a series of texts from saying, 'Have you seen the new National Curriculum?'... basically everyone was speaking about it". Soon afterwards, the professional community became a forum for mutual support wherein colleague's shared their views of the draft. Historical Pedagogist is clear on the value of this

"it was quite reassuring [with] things like the Facebook campaign to see that other people felt the same way, you know that we're in the collective boat and that, that there was a lot of opposition to what Michael Gove was proposing to do."

Finally, the community became a vehicle for mobilising resistance. At this stage, members were more measured and the more networked in their contributions. For example, Engaged Resistor attended a departmental meeting of some 40 minutes before completing a collective response to the online DFE consultation.

The history teaching community was viewed as having both a physical and an online presence and the relative importance attached to these reflected the age of the respondent. For younger respondents, the history teaching community was overwhelmingly a virtual one. In this extract Engaged Resistor, just three years into teaching, speaks about "going on" communities – this is not a grammatical error, but

evidence that communities are conceived as websites and discussion fora rather than as physical spaces,

“the community is the HA really, that’s the community; you go on there. There’s another forum [School History Website] where I go on regularly and I just read what history teachers are struggling with... I read them saying, right I’m teaching a lesson on this but I’m stuck with ideas, how would someone else teach this... and online people can go on and comment ,’oh this is what I’ve done, this is what I’ve done,’ ... and that is really, really strong, it’s really powerful.”

For Political Resistor Twitter was an important follow up to physical meetings. Twitter was

“increasingly important... it gives you immediate access to people that, that you would never normally have access to: teachers that teach in London that I wouldn’t communicate with had I not have met them at SHP[conference], followed them on Twitter... it’s how you make your links.

Older respondents were more likely to rely on face-to-face networking. Mature Resistor “chairs a heads of history meeting” and Classroom Engager based much of his response to the draft on meetings of a “local cluster of schools.” This apparent need for physical networking among older teachers perhaps explains the attitude of the only respondent who “did not feel part” of the history teacher community - Mature Reluctant. Like other older respondents, for her, the history teaching community had to be both physical and local, but even this community was somewhat atrophied “I don’t really come into contact with very many other history teachers these days so I don’t know.... what’s out there.” She gave practical reasons for her inability to engage, “Restrictions on going on courses... you know we’ve not had the funding to go... [also] the department is short staffed which means I’ve not been able to go out.” James Avis (2005) has emphasised the significance of these factors in militating against community engagement, but while other teachers are using electronic communications to overcome these barriers – Mature Reluctant was uncomfortable using the internet and so remained isolated.

However, despite the various separately identifiable communities – they are seen as linked by a common approach to pedagogy which traces its origins to *A New Look at*

*History* (Schools' History Project, 1976) and which, in Castells' (1997) phrase, creates a project identity. This common approach creates a shared discourse which allows members to build a new identity which contrasts with public perceptions and which is used to have a transformative effect. Following Sachs (2003), it will be shown that there exists an activist history teacher community which uses a shared project identity as a "glue for collective professional identity" (p. 132).

## ii. New History Pedagogy as a Unifying Discourse

With the exception of Mature Reluctant all respondents had a clear idea of what was meant by the SHP approach to history teaching. Engaged Resistor suggested that the SHP pedagogical approach as "historical enquiry... questioning... looking at a range of different sources and forming some sort of judgement based upon them." The importance of self-directed enquiry and judgement appeared in all responses. Some respondents stressed the range and scope of the SHP approach – that it should contain both local and world history and that it should foster children's understanding of change and development over time. Historical Pedagogist described the SHP as a "turning point in history teaching for the better" and also believed that the public at large appreciated this innovation,

"when you speak to parents at a parents' evening [and] they describe how history used to be very boring, narrative, you know, being told 'this is the version of events' and so on. ...I think things started to change in the 1980s... where students were allowed to make their own mind up by looking at a variety of sources and coming to their own conclusions."

It is possible to see this pedagogical approach as child-centred, but in a very narrow and particular sense. Historical Pedagogist is clear,

"a bad student centred lesson is pretty counterproductive if it hasn't been well organised... it does lead to counterfactual understanding about events.... I think bad student centred lessons is probably what's partly driven the agenda.... towards a more chronological narrative based history."

New History is not interested in self-directed learning - children are not being encouraged to direct the topics which are studied – but in learning which values the

products of children's learning – their judgements. The distinction made by Stenhouse (1968) between 'enquiry-led and discovery led learning' is relevant here. However, Historical Pedagogist detects an evolution in the SHP's approach,

"I think [at first] SHP got it wrong by too much source work. If you look at the early kind of SHP book, *Contrasts and Connections*, there is no narrative or it's like 25 sources on a chapter it's a nightmare. I think they probably perhaps got that balance wrong but I think they've addressed that since."

These examples allow us to see the dialectical process of hegemonic-counterhegemonic discourse formation. An effective counterhegemonic discourse must learn from the common sense appeal of reactionary hegemonic discourses and be prepared to evolve by adapting to the criticisms it faces. *Contrasts and Connections* (Corbishley, et al., 1991) was published in 1991 at the time of the first iteration of the National Curriculum and so it should be seen in the context of curriculum debates of that time (see Phillips (1998)). A major criticism of New History at that time was its apparent over-emphasis on decontextualized "skills" at the expense of a substantive study of the past so that "the actual content of history is almost valueless" (Deuchar, 1989, pp. 2 (cited in Phillips, 1998)). By admitting that early textbooks "got the balance wrong", Historical Pedagogist cedes some ground to the right, but this tactical retreat strengthens the position of the counter-hegemony.

Engaged Resistor also referenced the chameleonic nature of the SHP, arguing that it remained relevant by incorporating aspects of changing government policy. For example, the Conservative-led Coalition government has stressed the traditionalist aim of the importance of the use of Standard English and accuracy of communication. If the SHP were thoroughly child-centred, one might expect it to reject or ignore this aim, instead it is assimilated into its core mission,

"The ethos almost changes... it doesn't completely change but it latches onto what the latest developments are in teaching, so for example in the past two years if you look at the history conference and the programme of study, a lot of it is literacy focussed, whereas that wouldn't be there five year ago because that is the latest thing going on. So while the pupils and teaching history and learning is in an exciting manner is fundamentally at the core of SHP, it does change with the latest developments of teaching as well."

But, Engaged Resistor is clear that the core mission does not change, even in the face of powerful managerial discourses which would seek to redefine a teachers' role.

"I feel that the SHP, for me, and history teachers is, the role is to make us not forget; not forget the why history is so important. Not forget that when we're in school and there's all different sorts of things that take up our time, all this extra administrative duties that we've got, the SHP brings us back to life and makes us realise, 'Yes, this is why we're doing it, this is why history is so important.'"

By adapting to changing circumstances, counter-hegemony manages both to maintain the backing of its supporters and also to become a moving target for its opponents. In this respect, it is hugely significant the School's History Project did not drop the word 'project' from its name when the Schools Council for History Project completed its report in 1976. To the supporters of New History, a project was not a time-bound goal-directed exercise, but an ongoing commitment to self-criticism and self-renewal. Projects, by definition, end – once their goals are met, their *raison d'être* disappeared – but the SHP is quite different. The name gives its supporters a "project identity" (Castells, 1997) by serving as a constant reminder that the project of improving history teaching in schools has not been completed and nor will it ever be completed. In a Gramscian sense, this is hugely significant – the SHP is constantly engaged in a War of Position which ensures it is battle-ready whenever its approach to history teaching is challenged.

A key step in the renewal of the SHP discourse has been the jettisoning of the 'distracting dichotomy' of skills vs knowledge (Counsell, 2000). Not only is the language of substantive and procedural knowledge preferred (Lévesque, 2008), but great emphasis is placed on the complementary relationship between the two. However, although researchers have made this shift, classroom teachers were not familiar with this new terminology and the language of skills continued to dominate in responses. The word "skills" was used most frequently (12 time each) by Skills Resistor and Historical Pedagogist and both saw the draft's overemphasis on knowledge as militating against the more important business of teaching skills. The most dichotomous thinking was conveyed by Historical Pedagogist, who, while not thinking of knowledge and skills as antagonistic, did think of them as separate

domains, “you just would not have any time to develop any skills because you’ve got to have the content in place first and their understanding in place before you can develop the skills”. The apparent lag between shifts in high-level discourse and the discourse enacted by classroom teachers is an important aspect of Gramscian intellectualism and is explored in greater detail in the section “democracy and leadership” below.

An interesting angle is the extent to which this skills vs. knowledge debate was a proxy for a wider political contest. There is no doubt that the Right considers a skills curriculum, child-centred pedagogy and leftist values to be an indivisible package. Michael Gove (Gove, 2013a) has written against ‘The Blob’, a core of educationalists who, pedagogically are, “in thrall to Sixties ideologies” and politically “valu[e] Marxism, rever[e] jargon and fight[...] excellence”. These criticisms were also evident at the time of the first National Curriculum, when Right-Wing commentators decried the SHP approach as “Neo-Marxist” (Partington, 1986, p. 70). It is interesting that these explicitly political criticisms continue in a world where hegemony prides itself on being post-political and post-ideological. This, perhaps, tells us something about the efficacy of the SHP discourse that while explicitly political language is no longer considered necessary in much of the public sphere, it remains in education discourse.

To address this question of the relationship between skills-based curricula and politics, it is important to disentangle several threads. Firstly, there are those kinds of skills-based curricula which are focused very narrowly on employability and preparation for the workplace. This kind of curriculum dominated the thinking of New Labour who emphasised the need for subjects to teach Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTs). Skills Resistor was explicitly supportive of these skills while Mature Resistor, who works in the same school, was similarly supportive of a curriculum which taught “analytical and evaluative skills” and “written skills like English and the rest of humanities”. As Weelahan (2010) has argued, such skills are regressive because learning is instrumentalised and the education system become neo-Taylorist and subsumed to the needs of business. However, this is not the approach pursued by the SHP or its defenders – for the SHP, those skills that can be identified are subject-

specific: they are the procedural core of the discipline of history and include enquiry, use of evidence and reaching judgements.

Opinion among respondents was divided about whether the SHP represented a political position. Historical Pedagogist was clear that it did,

“I would define kind of right of centre history teaching to be very much about less skills more national values... I would say left of centre teaching would be more talking about not great individuals but maybe looking at more social history.... I would say an emphasis on skills more than values”.

But the argument here is political only in terms of the labels that are used. Historical Pedagogy is not a political activist who seeks to use history to further a leftist agenda, his arguments are procedural and pedagogical. However, he does later admit that even if the intentions are not political, the outcomes may well be,

“I think maybe with you know left wing history it's getting people to ask questions... the government perhaps you know it challenges society more, it challenges the status quo more.”

Here Historical Pedagogist is echoing the argument of Kaye (1996) and explains why the SHP has become such a target for the right. History does not need leftist indoctrination to be radical because when it is properly studied according to contemporary historiography it is inherently radical. This disciplinary radicalism was lost on Skills Resistor who could not explain rightist antipathy for the SHP,

“I really can't see what the issues they might have with it... If Gove doesn't like it, it doesn't really make any sense because they [SHP] are doing pure, pure effective history which is you know equipping our pupils for doing history better without any kind of bias of you know.”

At the other end of the spectrum to Skills Resistor was Engaged Resistor who, as we have already established, was explicitly Marxist in her approach. For her the SHP emphasis on enquiry and debate provided a convenient cover for more explicitly political aims.

“But I want to politicise children, I think it's important and there will be many people that disagree with me... there needs to be a difference from indoctrinating children to think in my way because that is not the case at all; I encourage historical thinking, I encourage

political thinking, I encourage independence and autonomy. But I want them to think and that's politicisation; I want them to think and then act.”

The dominance of the SHP discourse in history teaching reveals a paradox that Gramsci never anticipated – that a progressive counter-hegemonic discourse could become dominant in one sphere of cultural life while remaining antagonistic to the hegemonic narratives of society at large. However, this poses a definitional problem - once a discourse has achieved dominance in a particular field, how do we know that it continues to be progressive? Does a discourse not become oppressive once it has achieved the status of hegemony? One need look no further than the Soviet Union for an example of how apparently progressive language can be used as a means of repression and silencing dissent. This is certainly an image that has informed contributions to the debate by right wing organisations such as the Campaign for Real Education who cast traditionalist teachers as brave dissidents against the forces of progressivism (Peal, 2014).

It is clear that, like in all effective discourses, exclusion and alienation are a feature of history teacher project identity. It is clear that this identity does, in part, define itself in oppositional terms and there is evidence of intolerance towards its opponents. However, these important negative effects - which are explored more fully in section iv – do not undermine the discourse's status as counterhegemonic. Gramsci provides a clear test of an effective counterhegemonic discourse – whether it challenges the simplistic folkloristic ideologies of the subaltern classes and provides them with a more critical and coherent conception of the world (Landy, 2002). In this sense, shaped narratives are inherently reactionary because they are simplistic. They may or may not be designed to render the working classes docile, but their simplicity inevitably reduces the need for students to be questioning and critical. In contrast, questioning and contestation are at the heart of the SHP approach – this is neither a pedagogical nor a political principle, but an ontological one. New History requires an acceptance that one can never “know” history – one can only construct it or navigate the constructions of others. Simplistic narratives like that of the February draft are opposed not on political grounds, but because their very simplicity renders them unhistorical. In Peter Lee's words,



“the ability to recall accounts without any understanding of the problems involved in constructing them, or the criteria involved in evaluating them has nothing historical about it” (Lee, 1991, pp. 48-49).

It is clear that the traditionalist/progressive paradigm and its corollary - skills/knowledge - is an inadequate tool for viewing the school history curriculum. Despite this, it continues to be the way in which the debate is viewed by the Right and by the public at large. That school history has avoided the trap of this binary oppositional paradigm is explained largely by the way in which members of the community participate in the discourse. The next section gives an example of this process of discourse formation wherein a familiar term is repackaged and given a new meaning among the discursive participants and used to foment identity.

### iii. Social Representation in action: Chronology as a concept

Many respondents spoke enthusiastically of their commitment to research-informed practice, but this was not merely self-important boasting. There was a strong sense in which history teachers perceived themselves as being experts in their field. That said, there was some inconsistency about the way in which this expertise was described. For Mature Reluctant, expertise was nothing more than the wisdom of experience, but for others engagement with research was an essential part of their identity since it allowed the mantle of expert to be used as a bulwark against de-professionalisation and to protect the subject from attack. This is best seen in the way in which respondents criticised the draft curriculum’s approach to the teaching of chronology.

The concept of chronology seems straightforward – it is merely the ability to place events in time order and the application of appropriate vocabulary such as “century”, “BC” etc. But research (Shemilt, 1983) (Hallden, 1994) (Hodkinson, 2004) has shown that this apparent simplicity is deceptive, for time is abstract and cannot be demonstrated to children concretely. But if chronology is difficult, it is also essential – as Wood (1995) writes, “the past is chaos until it is sequenced”. The goal for history educators is to enable children to construct a mental timeline onto which they can hang

the events that they are studying. This is far from an easy task and the common sense solution seen in the draft – an accurate knowledge of dates and use of timelines– is insufficient, for a range of reasons which may not occur to an adult outside the history teaching profession. For example, children struggle with the simultaneity of events as they imagine history happening in order, like a single story of the past. If the idea that there is not one narrative, but an infinite number of parallel and interconnected narratives is difficult for an adult to comprehend, it is impossible for a young child. Similarly, the language of periodization is confusing to children since “Stone Age,” “Early Modern” and “Restoration” sound like concrete concepts to a child, but are actually labels whose durations and definitions differ between historians. Furthermore, as Braudel and the *Annales* showed, history is not a series of discrete events, but an interplay between short-term events and longer processes – if dates are all one needs, where does one place “growing importance of cotton” on a timeline of the Industrial Revolution?

These are Piagetian considerations. For an adult, these issues appear comparatively unproblematic and it is tempting to infer from this that one’s chronological understanding was similarly un-muddled when one was at school, but it is unlikely. Teachers of children know that Piagetian problems require Brunerian responses and several valuable attempts at this have been advanced in this area especially by Ian Dawson (2004) (2008) and Denis Shemilt (2000). The Ian Dawson approach to teaching chronology has been particularly influential within the history teaching community and just as controversial without. Dawson (2008) recommends teaching the past through “thematic stories” rather than in terms of strict chronology. In other words, rather than studying medieval history in Year 7 and never revisiting it, children might study democracy from 1066-2000 in Year 7, Warfare from 1066-2000 in Year 8 and so on. The advantage, as far as Dawson sees it (and informed by Bruner), is that children are not left with an impoverished understanding of earlier periods, but instead build up a richer view of change and development over time. To traditionalists, this approach epitomises the muddle-headed pedagogy of the SHP approach. Michael Gove himself has contrasted the Dawson approach of a ‘disconnected set of themes and topics’ (2013) with the “discipline of chronology” that means “a connected sense

of narrative” (2009). However, it is apparent that the ‘traditional’ approach was no panacea for chronological understanding: Pamela Mays was able to complain, in 1974, that her students thought of her as a contemporary of Queen Victoria and were prone to reproducing narratives out of order (Mays, 1974, p. 9).

What matters here is not the relative merits of the two approaches – it is doubtful that this can be conclusively established experimentally – but the way in which this debate was perceived by the respondents. Seven of the eight respondents made critical comments about the draft’s proposed chronological approach and of these five respondents contrasted it with the Dawson approach. Although these volunteers are a self-selecting group, that is an impressively high level of engagement with recent pedagogical scholarship.

This scholarship was presented as a badge of professionalism by respondents – particularly by Mature Resistor who was the most research-informed of the group. He was critical of the common sense view of teaching chronology:

“You know, it’s like [when I was] speaking to Alan Hodgkinson in the Liverpool Hope University about it [and] when I read his paper about the previous National Curriculum, which is basically doing the same sort of thing [strict chronology]. There was no actual scientific or no actual research-based reason why it [the draft] was done that way, it was just done... on so-called common sense of, “Well if you teach it in order therefore they’ll learn it in order. Well, yes, if they’re taught it in order in a really short timeframe and a really short intensive time-frame but not over nine years.”

It is interesting that Mature Resistor uses (albeit unwittingly) the Gramscian term “common sense” to describe the dominant narrative outside the history teaching community. He was clear elsewhere that research elevated the internal discourse of the history teaching community to the status of good sense,

“if the ultimate aim was supposed to be this narrative of the British Isles, this so-called story, then that curriculum wasn’t going to achieve it because... it didn’t take into account the way kids work and the way kids think....This is something that has been championed a long time ago in 2008 by people like Ian Dawson and the HA there where they were talking about chronological frameworks and explicit chronological teaching to really teach chronology and so if that was the real goal and that was the real aim then it’s like that

method of doing it wasn't going to achieve it and there's not... research to show that that sort of national curriculum was going to work."

Similar ideas were advanced by those respondents who taught thematic curricula: Political Resistor and Skills Resistor. It is worth noting, though, that these two respondents were only in their second year of teaching and so had only experienced thematic teaching. Nevertheless, their ideas showed deep reflection on the benefits of the strategy. Political Resistor has "a real strong belief that the kids become very prone to being unable to understand change over time effectively". She felt that there were social and political benefits to teaching in this way as she went on to explain:

"[I]n Year 7 we "Who do we think we are?" and we focus on migration into Britain. We start with the invaders and go right the way through to modern day and what [pupils are] able to look at is reasons why people have come, the impact they've had on us and how they've shaped the world that we live in and, more importantly, the idea of ways in which immigrants have been treated in the past and how that's changed over time. So for me those students have a much more well-rounded understanding of immigration to Britain, how Britain has been shaped than they would do if we did it chronologically... [where] you're trying to underpin millions of themes really through everything you teach and then you're looking to go back to individual themes to pick them out as you go and I think that's a much more difficult skill to do than if you take your themes, put it all together and have the students go through the history."

This contribution raises the question of whether the dispute over chronology is, in fact, a proxy for a political discussion of national narrative. There could not be a greater difference between Political Resistor's account of British migration and the draft's. The draft curriculum makes explicit reference to migration at just one point, mandating study of 'the Windrush generation, wider new Commonwealth *immigration*, and the arrival of East African Asians.' Thus the concept *migration* (the movement of people to and from a country) is reduced to immigration (the arrival of people to a country). Unlike Political Resistor's approach, there is no mention of emigration from Britain and there is no attention paid to pre-1948 migration. It is interesting to note that in the Key Stage 2 curriculum, early white immigrants such as Celts, Vikings and Anglo-Saxons are said to have "settled" rather than "migrated". Hence, by the time the curtain raises on Key Stage 3, the notion of a settled native population is established in students'

minds. Britain is a “settled” island into which new non-white populations “arrive”. Representations such as these which exclude ‘white immigration’ such as the Huguenots and Irish are dangerous for the way they conflate migration with race and consequently bolster the extreme nationalist myth of an ethnically-homogeneous population in the years before 1948.

Even those who did not use the Dawson methodology were discomfited by the draft’s strict insistence on chronological teaching. For example, Historical Pedagogist currently teaches a chronological curriculum, but is keenly aware of the Piagetian limitations of this approach: “it’s rare for me to feel that I’ve really given any Year 7 class a real deep understanding of what we do and I just think it’s a development of the brain.” Instinctive Resistor was the only respondent who defended the chronological approach of the draft, and the wording of her response reveals much:

“I can’t believe I’m saying this, I do agree with Gove that they should be taught chronologically I’m not a fan of thematic schemes of work because - it might work in some schools - but in my school children struggle with the concept of chronology, they struggle with where things come over time, they struggle with you know centuries and, and years and dates, they, they struggle with that in itself so I do agree with teaching history in a, you know, in chronological view.”

The power of the history teaching discourse is displayed by the way in which she is apologetic in challenging the dominant SHP narrative. She “cannot believe” she is supporting Gove’s approach and feels the need to qualify her criticism of the SHP approach by saying that “it might work in some schools.” This extract shows how even progressive discourses have an oppressive and exclusionary dimension – a theme which is developed in the next section.

#### iv. Identity and Othering: Defining the “out-group”

As we have already established, the New History narrative - although counter-hegemonic in its intentionality - has achieved a state akin to hegemony in its own sphere of influence. It has been demonstrated that this narrative is enormously powerful in the way in which it binds practitioners together and that this discursive unity is important in achieving the shared goals of the group. However, it is also apparent

that this hegemonic power is not entirely benign – any notion of sameness must be at least partly defined in oppositional terms. The concept of the same, necessitates the concept of the other. For the New History discourse, there are many “others” – not just politicians with rightist visions for the new curriculum.

It is clear that fellow history teachers who place themselves outside the New History discourse are somewhat vulnerable to criticism. The earlier example of Instinctive Resistor’s reticence about challenging the dominant paradigm in the teaching of chronology demonstrates this and Classroom Engager offers another:

“And I might be that, you know, it might be I am the one who’s got it wrong and everyone else got it right but I think um, I think it’s, I think sometimes the history teachers, other history teachers can get bogged down with, with things that aren’t necessarily conducive to the big picture which is, to me is, and it’s very cynical to say it but what is the most effective way to get the students the knowledge they need to pass the exams they need, so they are basically, you keep the heat off, that is basically what it comes down to.” [Sic]

Classroom Engager is here describing himself as trapped between two discourses – one positivist and one anti-positivist, but both oppressive. On the one hand he feels the need to deliver good exam results to appease school management (“keep the heat off”) whilst on the other hand, he finds discussions about history pedagogy to be something of a waste of time. This is an extremely interesting position – for some in the community, New History is the antidote to the politically dominant outcomes-fixated positivist approach to education; it is an act of resistance to eschew discussion of results and grades and instead focus on pedagogy, but Classroom Engager finds this tiresome and a distraction:

“I mean I’ll give you an example, I was in a lunch meeting about six, seven months ago, I was pretty much the only person who want[ed the exam to focus on] the Liberals, not because I think it’s particularly interesting, but because I know I can get good grades from it. And there is right and wrong... either way, isn’t there?...you know: “We should do another [topic] because I think it will interest the students more....” But I think, I have to, I’ve almost gone the cynical, clinical way of, “what will get me the best results?”

When faced with a choice between interest and “good grades” the Classroom Engager (belying the name I have given him) opts for the latter. The reason for his choice is

simple – the discourse of attainment is more immediately dangerous to him. He does not perceive this as a choice (“I think, I have to”). While good exam results determine his job satisfaction, reputation and his pay progression, there are few penalties for stepping outside the New History discourse. That said, semantic analysis shows that he does not find it easy to criticise his fellow history teachers – he stumbles, uses filler words, repeatedly qualifies his decision (“it might be that I’m the one who got it wrong”) and denigrates his own choices as “cynical.” Thus, although the New History discourse is seen as less immediately threatening and challenging it is not without psychological difficulty.

While Classroom Engager and Instinctive Resistor show the effects of this oppressive discourse, other contributions show how this oppression is enacted. One feature is the unquestioned assumption that the New History discourse is unchallenged and unchallengeable. Despite her dissent over the teaching of chronology, Instinctive Resistor was still comfortable using exclusionary language of “the majority” against a “small minority,”

“I think there’s a small minority of people would argue that good history learning is, is purely restricted to knowledge. I think the majority of history teachers would agree that it’s how students learn... and the skills that they pick up. I think there is definitely a sense of unity amongst history teachers...”

This sense that New History speaks for the majority is buttressed by dismissive descriptions of the minority who pursue alternative pedagogical practices. This dismissive approach to traditionalism was a concern to Gramsci who felt that progressives had ‘unhealthily exaggerated’ aspects ‘of the struggle against mechanical Jesuitical schools.... through a desire to distinguish themselves sharply from the latter’ (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 32-33).

Another example of this was seen in the testimony of Historical Pedagogist who used his own experience to contrast the approach taken by his school with the traditionalism of independent schools,

“I am married to a history teacher at a private school and I know about what some private school teachers do there and I think there are schools where a text book will feature very,

very heavily in a lesson which is a narrative. And you know the questions are testing knowledge and understanding but nothing deeper than that.”

More emphatically, history teachers who put themselves outside the dominant discourse are accused of something akin to apostasy with Historical Pedagogist lamenting that “some people have turned away from the SHP project”.

Aldrich (1984) warned of this process thirty years ago when he questioned the zealotry of New History’s advocates who he felt “sought to denigrate and destroy earlier foundations and build anew” (p. 217). Aldrich uses the Burkean language of someone observing a revolution – sympathetic to its aims, but suspicious of its rapidity and destructive fervour.

“This destruction has been justified by such statements as... ‘This traditional is worn out’ .....History teachers and teaching of the past having been summarily condemned and dismissed, school history is to be recreated” (p. 217).

Aldrich’s article is extremely prescient and this section in particular anticipates many of the contemporary arguments about the need for “relevance”. Taking an historical perspective, Aldrich is keenly aware of the potential for revolutionary discourses to become the new oppressive orthodoxy. Although, his sympathies are with New History, Aldrich is conscious of how revolutions so frequently end in recrimination and how easily babies can be thrown out with bathwater.

Aldrich’s criticism reminds us that it would be wrong to give the impression of the history teaching community as a monolithic bloc, since there exist individuals and organisations who have set themselves against the New History consensus. Foremost among these is the *Better History Group*, headed by Sean Lang, which submitted “a radical manifesto for change” to the new Secretary of State shortly after the 2010 General Election (Lang, et al., 2010). Unlike those qualified history teachers who revel in their status as outsiders such as Robert Peal (2014) or Chris McGovern (2007), Sean Lang has achieved considerable status within the History teaching community; he is a fellow of the Historical Association and has even delivered the keynote address at the SHP conference. Lang was influential in



challenging some of the early mistakes of the new history pioneers, particularly the belief students might analyse unseen sources on unfamiliar topics (Lang, 1993).

Lang and the Better History group have continued their campaign against the dominant approach to teaching history in schools, but in contrast to Lang's earlier work, their criticisms now seem to contain more of a nationalist/ traditionalist bent. In common with many traditionalist approaches, the submission argued that 'all children have the right to learn the history of the land where they live and whose future they will build; it is an essential part of the education of the citizen' (2010, p. 6).

Furthermore, it argued that this was not education was not being provided, in part, because "history has weakened its own position by developing a teaching approach that stresses the importance of historical skills over historical knowledge" and that this "current orthodoxy is based on a fundamental misconception about the nature of history" (p. 5).

Two things should strike us about this submission. Firstly, the use of the emotive and unhelpful dichotomy between 'skills and knowledge'. We ought not be surprised then non-expert commentators conceive of these notions antagonistically<sup>7</sup>, but that Lang, a respected member of the history teaching community, should use such language is somewhat surprising. Indeed Lang's press release is later even more explicit on this point, stating simply that, "Skills matter, but knowledge matters more" (Lang, 2010). As an informed and engaged member of the history teaching community, Lang is no doubt aware that current thinking in history education does not bifurcate these concepts so how might we explain their re-emergence here?

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<sup>7</sup> This thinking among non-experts was seen at its most distorted in a recent speech by Michael Gove's successor as Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan.

"For too long our education system prized the development of skills above core knowledge. ... But there's a problem with that view - how can you understand the causes of the reformation without knowing who was on the throne?" (Morgan, 2015)

Quite apart from the fact that it is a strange definition of 'knowledge' which does not value the ability to explain causes; the premise of the rhetorical question is historically flawed. Who was 'the throne' at the time of the Reformation? Charles V? James VI? Elector Frederick? That Morgan considers the answer to be self-evident betrays either inadequate historical knowledge or English parochialism.

It is likely that Lang is conflating two issues (history education scholarship and classroom practice) for simplicity and for rhetorical effect. While the artificial distinction which Lang rejects has no place in recent history-education scholarship, it is no doubt artificially emphasised in many high school history departments; evidence for this can be seen in the contributions offered by Skills Resistor in this thesis.

The second thing that should be noted in Lang's submission is the term 'current orthodoxy' which has particular resonance for those trained in the historical method. For historians, orthodoxies are repressive; the word implies uncritical acceptance of received wisdom which one opposes at great personal risk. In using the language of orthodoxy, the Better History Group were adopting the guise of a persecuted, but ideologically resolute rear-guard in the face of progressive decline – a position which was certain to appeal to a Secretary of State who was later to refer to educationalists as a 'Marxist blob' (Gove, 2013a) and opponents of academies as 'enemies of promise'. Although evidence exists that the New History paradigm is hegemonic within the history teaching community, the 'orthodoxy' is significantly more nuanced and shows considerably more appreciation of 'the nature of history' than Lang's criticism implies.

Teachers of a traditionalist core-knowledge bent were just one out-group, but the sharpest criticism was reserved by respondents for teachers of other subjects. These criticisms ranged from the dismissal of Classics as "irrelevant" by Historical Pedagogist to Instinctive Resistor's questioning of PE teachers' vocations:

"You don't really fall into being a history teacher. It's not like being a PE teacher: you've enjoyed sports for so long but there's only so many routes you can take [where] you can do something with it and you know stay in trackies all day every day."

This criticism, in particular, shows the importance of stereotyping in the process of othering: PE teachers are portrayed as track-suit-wearing sports people who lack the initiative or imagination to find other work and who "fall into" teaching in a desire to preserve a permanent state of youth. We can see that it is important for the in-group to deride other subjects in order to elevate the status of their own.

Ultimately, the denigration of fellow professionals is part of a narrative of exceptionalism – the desire to represent history teaching as a unique and highly-specialised profession. The belittling of other subjects is the negative counterpoint to the positivity of research-informed practice in the process of identity formation. It is likely that – just like medieval guilds – this exclusion and exceptionalism is a response to a perceived threat to their professional identity and integrity. This defensive psychology may have been forged in the early part of the twenty-first century when the status of history in schools came under attack. There were three prongs in this attack – firstly, the introduction of mixed humanities teaching in many schools; secondly, the popularity of “competency-based” curricula in schools, such as RSA’s *Opening Minds* project and finally, the decision by many schools to reduce teaching time in Key Stage Three from 3 to 2 years so that students could begin their GCSE studies earlier and hopefully perform better. These changes were made to meet the espoused priorities of the 1997-2010 Labour government which pushed employability and vocational education somewhat at the expense of more traditional subjects. The effect of these changes in many schools was to blur the distinction between non-core subjects leading to an increase in non-specialist staff in history departments and the appointment of generic “humanities” teachers. Although these “threats” have been removed by the Conservative-led coalition’s emphasis on educational traditionalism, suspicion of other subjects remains; as this extract from Engaged Resistor shows,

“If you look at... geography..., a subject that we get put with; even though we’re nothing like it really we get put with the most out of all the subjects in terms of connection.”

She is aware that history “gets put with geography” but feels the need to reiterate – even to a fellow history teacher – that geography is “nothing like” history. Mature Resistor, a Head of Humanities, was the only respondent to speak about History, Geography and RE as intertwined, but this is rather to be expected, given his position.

However, this exceptionalism is not motivated solely by self-interest and self-preservation, but also by an understanding of what makes history epistemologically unique. There is a sense in which history teachers are guardians of a particular

epistemological tradition which is not appreciated by those trained in other disciplines. Classroom Engager makes this point eloquently,

“But I think looking at interpretations is, is equally important because otherwise, essentially this is just a story that you might as well be doing English literature and rather than, you know, you see English teachers trying to teach the Holocaust through ‘*The Boy in Striped Pyjamas*’, you know, it’s almost like that can be done by anyone, anyone can teach that. But history, a trained history teacher would like, would get more out of this material”

Classroom Engager is troubled by the view that “anyone can teach” history as this betrays a misunderstanding of what it means to teach history. In the New History discourse, the teaching of history is the teaching of an epistemological approach, not the teaching of stories from the past – a distinction not always appreciated by those not trained in history. Classroom Engager is concerned that the English teacher’s confidence in teaching stories confers a misplaced confidence in the ability to teach the past. Peter Lee made this point succinctly, “Without understanding what makes an account historical, there is nothing to distinguish such an ability from the ability to recite sagas, legends, myths or poems” (1991, p. 45). Teaching of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* is now commonplace in English schools and has been criticised by the Programme Director at the Centre for Holocaust Education for the way it blurs the lines between fact and fiction and the way it draws its tragic conclusion from the death of a single German boy, presenting this as more powerful than the death of millions of Jews (Salmons, 2014).

Thus, the history teaching community demonstrates both the positive and negative features of a project identity, but in order to achieve this project, the community must be led. In the next section, it is shown how this leadership is determined in a democratic way and how these ideas about leadership have much in common with Gramsci’s vision of a revolutionary party.

#### v. Organic Intellectuals: Democracy and Leadership

History teacher identity consists of more than a shared vision for the subject, it also includes a tacit commitment to delivering on that vision and, if necessary, fighting for it. In the history teacher community there is an *expectation* of community engagement

which is revealed by the comments of those interviewers who felt disengaged. Mature Reluctant explained her decision not to protest against the curriculum with the following *mea culpa*, “I’d say it’s a bit of laziness and a bit of apathy and a bit of ‘make it a bit more easy [*sic*] for me to do it’. Sorry.” While Classroom Engager spoke about his disengagement in these terms,

“you know, you qualify, you start teaching and you’re, sort of, like head down, just doing your day to day business and sort of like years pass.... I’ve not really got that involved with [the SHP] or made myself aware of much of what they’re doing really. So in all honesty, that’s a plea of ignorance there and say I wouldn’t really know too much about them [the SHP]”

Both of these comments are apologetic in tone; there is an obvious sense that one ought to be more engaged and almost a sense of guilt if one is not. However, this pressure to participate is not oppressive in the ways described in the previous section - it is corollary of the participatory democratic structure of the community. The continuation of the community demands engagement to ensure vibrancy, representativeness, and legitimacy. Since the community does not formally elect its leaders, participation is an emancipatory obligation— one may choose not to engage, but the consequence is a leadership which drifts further from one’s own opinions. Given that the leadership represents the community in periods of curricular contestation, it is vital that it is informed by an actively engaged membership.

These ideas have been advanced in the work of Judyth Sachs who has argued that effective activist communities are marked by a high level of trust between participants (Sachs, 2003). This trust is multi-dimensional – there must be trust in the project, trust in other members and trust in the leadership of the community. Trust in leadership is arguably the most important, but certainly the most difficult to achieve. When a leader is chosen to speak for a group – trust must be reciprocal, the group must have faith that the leader will not corrupt the group’s message and the leader must trust that he can adequately vocalise the group’s demands. For respondents, community leadership was embodied in the organising structures of the SHP and the HA.

Again, Gramsci provides useful insights on the role of these structures in his analysis of the role of the revolutionary political party. For Gramsci, as for Rosa Luxemburg, the demands of the working class were inevitably diffuse and consequently the party has an essential function in organising and directing activism. Gramsci clarified this in a 1921 article in *L'Ordine Nuovo*,

“The masses don't exist politically, if they are not framed in political parties: the mutations of opinion which are verified through the masses under the pressure of the determined economic forces are interpreted by parties (Gramsci, 1921)

In other words, progressive politics is inevitably entropic and the party serves to both refine and clarify the needs of the class it represents. These points were keenly understood by respondents including, surprisingly, Instinctive Resistor whose responses elsewhere seemed somewhat impulsive and unreflective,

“I think to be honest in order to put something collaboratively together they needed an organisation like that [the HA] to almost unite them to join together because otherwise it's, it's down to the history teachers to communicate and liaise with one another.”

Engaged Resistor gave an eloquent account of the interaction between the HA (qua political party) and the mass of its membership,

“if it was just a few people at the top [the HA], disagreeing ...Michael Gove [would say] ‘well I'm not listening to you am I, I'm doing what I'm doing anyway’. But in this case it was the people at the top, accompanied by a huge grass root level of teachers who were like ‘this document, as it stands, cannot be effective’..... Everyone had same goal, everyone believed in the same outcome which was to change the curriculum and because, because everyone was united in that thought process, that's how it was able to happen. The pressure was too much.

However, she was clear that sheer weight of numbers and righteous anger would not have been able to effect change on its own,

“I personally don't believe it could... have happened ... [it] may not have been such a sophisticated response or such a tidy one. They [the HA] tied all the knots for us at the top.”

Respondents saw the activism of the HA as complemented by the SHP, but conceived the two organisations' roles differently. While the HA was seen as a special interest group which raised the profile of the discipline as a whole, the SHP had a much

narrower role in guiding pedagogical innovation. Historical Pedagogist gave the best account of this partnership:

“[the] Historical Association have listened to history teachers and put their case across very strongly but this curriculum looks like the SHP or people who are sympathetic to the SHP have made significant contribution to it.”

The two organisations provide similar descriptions of their roles: The HA describes itself as “the voice for history” with the goal of “support[ing] the study and enjoyment of history” (Association, 2012) while the SHP says that it “campaigns for a school curriculum in which the distinctive contribution of history to the education of children and young people is recognised and developed” (SHP, 2014). However, it is important to note that there is considerable crossover of personnel between the two organisations. To take one example, current Deputy President of the HA, Chris Culpin, was a former Director of the SHP.

If the Historical Association and the SHP have different roles, it is appropriate that they should also have different organisational structures. Both organisations are headed by a committee composed of “trustees” in the case of the HA and “fellows” in the HA, but the mechanism for appointing these committee members differ. The HA possesses a more immediately familiar representative democratic structure wherein members are elected by postal ballot and in which all full members of the Association are entitled to vote and to stand for election. The SHP, meanwhile, is headed by the Director (who is employed by Leeds Trinity University) and the Committee of Fellows. Fellows are appointed for terms of three years, with the option for a three year extension, when a fellow’s chair is vacated, the remaining fellows meet to decide whom to approach as a replacement. Fellows meet only twice a year and are not elected - indeed, they could not be elected - because the SHP has no formal membership structure.

Superficially, the structure of the SHP is less democratic than the HA. There are no members, no elections and the Committee of Fellows is self-reinforcing and self-replicating. The Fellows are accountable only to each other and there are no formal mechanisms for challenging or endorsing their decisions. Similarly, while the HA website provides considerable detail about the election and accountability of trustees

and their terms of reference, no such information is publicly available for the SHP. These differences, however, are better understood not as evidence that the SHP is less democratic than the HA, but that it is less formally constituted. The SHP is not a standing organisation; unlike the HA which has endowments and was founded by Royal Charter, the SHP operates from a single office and has only two employees - the Director and an administrator. When interviewees were asked the apparently straightforward question, "What is the SHP?" most struggled to articulate an answer. Although adhering to the SHP's educational approach, Historical Pedagogist could offer only a stuttering explanation of the organisation,

"Err well it's, it's, it's I believe it's, it's part of Leeds Trinity University. And there's obviously, there's people that, that obviously involved in Leeds Trinity University I presume it's people like Culpin and Ian Dawson, I might be wrong umm, umm I don't know, what do you mean?"  
[sic]

The most satisfying description of the SHP came from Political Resistor who interpreted the question differently from others. Her account begins by outlining the formal structures of the SHP, but it is apparent that she finds such a narrow definition of the organisation constrictive and quickly expands it. She illustrated her description of the SHP with on the annual conference which, while organised by the SHP fellows, is delivered by classroom practitioners who volunteer to run workshops.

"the main figure... [is] Michael Riley. He seems to be one of the most important characters in putting together the conference as well as all the other stuff that SHP do, but I also think then that they've got a collection of people that are there that play an important part in making sure that the conference runs. Not only the SHP fellows, but those people that are willing to put on workshops there; that are willing to show what they've been doing over that past year that they think is worth sharing. I think that holds it together: having somewhere to go. I also think fundamentally that if teachers have committed to delivering this stuff and if teachers want to ensure that we are part of the community, that it's our desire to attend these conferences that makes them so effective because it's okay having the SHP fellows there, it's alright having sessions being run, but you're nowhere then if people don't attend. So I think fundamentally it's something that comes from within the teaching community that makes them want to be part of something bigger and be part of a wider community.

These two responses differ in form and content because they reflect differing models of democratic legitimacy: one is participatory, the other representative. Historical



Pedagogist's account is settled in the representative paradigm which seeks to assert the credibility of the SHP through traditional indicators of legitimacy – the names of elite representatives and its siting in a university. His answer is truncated and becomes confused precisely because the SHP does not lend itself to this kind of analysis. Political Resistor, meanwhile, favours a description of a participatory organisation which, although requiring a longer explanation, is more satisfying. For Political Resistor, accountability, legitimacy and transparency are founded in participation and engaged consent, rather than traditional and established tropes.

Thus history teachers' interests are advanced by two democratic organisations. The Historical Association has the advantage of tradition and reputation – its Royal Charter, its links to universities and its familiar membership structure make it a pillar of establishment respectability and a valuable rallying point in periods of curricular contestation. However, it is that very lack of formality which gives the SHP its strength – it is able to respond quickly to changing circumstances. While the HA derives its legitimacy from tradition, for the SHP legitimacy comes from trust.

Trust is a much less secure foundation for legitimacy than tradition; not only must trust be earned, but it must be continually renewed. In a representative democracy, a mandate for leaders to represent the community is granted by the ballot – a single manifestation of the community's will and if trust in representatives is lost, the community must wait for a constitutionally determined opportunity to rescind that mandate. In a participatory democracy, the mandate to speak for the community is a conditional grant of trust which must be renewed through dialogue with the community itself. The SHP Fellows are not elected to their positions, but that does not make their appointments undemocratic or illegitimate since their status and credibility is determined by the extent to which they embody the Rousseauian General Will of the community they represent. The legitimacy of the leadership of the SHP is derived from the ongoing participation of the community as a whole and its legitimacy is lost, if that community fails to engage. A participatory democracy does not need elections, nor the right of recall, because its existence is always precarious and contingent on

the continued support of those it represents. If the SHP no longer commanded the support of classroom teachers, those classroom teachers would vote with their feet, attendance at conference would diminish and sales of SHP publications would decline. The need for this permanent renewal of legitimacy is summed up by Gramsci when he writes,

“The mode of being a new intellectual can no longer exist in eloquence, which is a... momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life... as a ‘permanent persuader’” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 10).

It was clear from interviewees that the SHP and its leadership enjoy a high level of trust. Interviewees particularly valued the SHP conference which was viewed as an open forum where matters of interest to the community were contested and debated. The openness of the conference was noted by Historical Pedagogist who said, “You can do workshops at the school’s history project [conference] you know that’s available to anybody as long as you’ve got a worthwhile proposal.” While Skills Resistor spoke about the vibrancy of debate within the community, “I don’t think there would be any political agenda [to the SHP]... and I sincerely believe that you know those people who work for the SHP and the HA would definitely hear the other side of the argument.” Engaged Resistor affirmed the leadership of the community was uncontested and spoke with disbelief that their expertise was not acknowledged outside the community,

“I think [there was] almost an arrogance there by the education department to publish something like this without consultation from the experts. ...Nobody can deny that they’re not the experts [*sic*], they are and they weren’t consulted.”

Trust is central to the internal democracy of the community, for democracy demands both unity and plurality. There should be a significant shared consensus, but this is only guaranteed if each participant feels that he is trusted to voice his opinions and trusts that his opinions will be listened to and respected. Lave and Wenger are clear that within communities of practice “members have different interests, make diverse contributions to activity and hold varied viewpoints” (1991, p. 98). That is not to say that a community can endure an endless plurality of opinion, but democracy

necessitates that ideas are challenged and contested and, in a true democracy, there are no heresies.

However, as we have already noted, although there is trust in the community, there is also exclusion and oppression. The community is democratic but – like any community – stratifications and hierarchies emerge within the community which reflect differences in power and self-confidence. It is a key tenet of the sociocognitive approach to CDA that these issues of power and self-confidence are betrayed in the felicity with which social actors use the social models of the discourse. The final section of this chapter explores these micro-propositional structures and what they reveal about membership and identity in the community and its discourse.

### 3. Micro-Propositional Analysis: Language as an indicator of membership

Amongst the eight respondents, there was considerable variance about the extent to which the social representations of the history education discourse were used with confidence; and those who were most confident using this language have had their voices heard a great deal in the preceding sections. I wish to turn now to two voices that have been hitherto somewhat muted: Skills Resistor and Mature Reluctant. Micro-propositional analysis shows that their lack of confidence exists for different reasons. While Skills Resistor's responses imply that he is unsure of his status, but that he wants to belong to the community, Mature Reluctant is disengaged from the community and largely content to be so.

Before considering Skills Resistor's responses, it is helpful to know something about the context in which he was working. At the time of interview, Skills Resistor was in his second year of teaching and was working at a high-achieving school where Mature Resistor was his Head of Department. As has already been established, Mature Resistor was well integrated into the history education community and spoke with confidence about research (including the work of Alf Wilkinson, Alan Hodgkinson and

Ian Dawson). Mature Resistor was also keen to assert his seniority in the community - "I chair a Heads of History meeting, which is [sic] originally based around the East Cheshire eight schools and now it's expanded to incorporate two or three from outside that as well". It is clear, therefore, that Mature Resistor was someone who felt (justifiably) able to speak with great confidence on matters of history education. However, more significant for Skills Resistor was that Mature Resistor had a clear vision of the way in which his own department operated. In Mature Resistor's own words,

"the most important thing of all, that we deliver something that's really dynamic and engaging and interests kids. ....and that's something that's throughout our whole department and in terms of the lessons and the schemes of work we produce. Umm, you know, we're always kind of looking to develop something that means something and that the kids can take away with them."

Mature Resistor was, therefore, an imposing figure in the history education community with ambitious goals for the department he managed. Skills Resistor, on the other hand, was only in his second year of teaching and had been mentored by Mature Resistor during his NQT (probationary) year. It is clear from the following faltering extract that Skill's Resistor understood his position as subordinate to Mature Resistor:

"and I know my kind of contribution is, is through [Mature Resistor] essentially because... he's got more, obviously been, been a teacher for a lot longer he's actually involved... so you know by getting thoughts through to, to [Mature Resistor] and through to [the headteacher] hopefully we can, we can have some impact on how that ends up ultimately".

Much literature exists about the influence of school culture on beginning teachers (Kardos, et al., 2001) and on the role of the induction mentor in shaping the pedagogical outlook of their mentees (Kuzmic, 1994) (Gratch, 1998). These studies stress the socialising and enculturating function of the mentoring relationship and, in the case of Gratch's work, the sometimes divergent understandings of the efficacy of the relationship between the two parties. The power differential in the relationship is critical and is in two forms: formal (that the mentor has supervisory influence over the mentee as a manager) and informal (the mentor is significantly more experienced than the mentee and has deeper roots in the school culture). This asymmetric relationship

can lead to disengagement and dissatisfaction on the part of the beginning teacher (Gratch, 1998), but it can also exert a powerful influence over the kind of teacher that the mentee becomes. Micro-propositional analysis of Skills Resistor's responses suggest strongly that he has been socialised by the experience of working with Mature Resistor and so shares many of his views, but that he is less equipped to speak confidently in defence of them.

This socialisation process is best illustrated when Skills Resistor seeks to describe the vision of the department that he shares with Mature Resistor.

“and ultimately, us specifically, we try and do that in as much of a varied way as we can umm because ultimately you know whether it's active history, whether it's getting pupils to engage with it but different mediums. I suppose that ultimately - if that makes sense - is kind of what we're trying to achieve at [our school]”.

There are several micro-propositional indicators in this contribution which betray a lack of confidence. The first is the incoherence of the extract as a whole and the frequent use of “umm” and “you know” as filler words. Another, is the tentative checking for comprehension (‘if that makes sense’) suggesting that he already suspects it does not. Interestingly, throughout the extract he uses the first-person plural “we”, despite the fact that the question he was answering was seeking clarification about his own practice. The plural form is used partly to highlight collaborative working in the History Department, but it also serves to borrow against the seniority and authority of Mature Resistor. Perhaps he is aware that he is struggling to articulate a defence of his own practice and so hopes to seek safety in numbers.

The most striking micro-propositional feature of the extract above is the repeated use of “ultimately” as a filler word. This was not just a feature of this particular extract, but occurred throughout the interview. In fact, Skills Resistor used the word on 34 occasions in a 37 minute interview often – as the above extract shows – several times in the same sentence. However, it is open to debate whether ‘ultimately’ in this context should properly be called a filler word or a discourse marker. On the one hand, the word seems to be used like a filler, inappropriately and indiscriminately, but ‘ultimately’ is not utterly devoid of meaning in the context of the extract. Michael Swan (2005, p.

xviii)has argued that all real words (as opposed to ah, umm, er etc.) should be considered discourse markers even if they superficially act as filler in the sentence.

In this case, we might speculate how ‘ultimately’ came to be just an important part of Skills Resistor’s repertoire of discourse markers. The word, I would suggest, performs two semiotic functions in Skills Resistor’s speech. The first is to attempt to give authority to what he is saying; the word ‘ultimately’ indicating that this is the final word on the topic. Secondly, the word serves to provide the impression that he is better informed about this topic than he might seem; as though to hint, ‘there is more that I could say about this, but I’m choosing not to’.

Skills Resistor showed similar uncertainty when discussing another topic with which Mature Resistor was well acquainted – the role of research in the history education community. Here, Skills Resistor seemed to understand that references to research were important in claiming a voice in the community, but where Mature Resistor could speak with confidence about their work, Skills Resistor merely named some researchers and referred to their work in the vaguest terms.

“I suppose people like Ian Dawson umm is one who’s kind of in terms of developing- I keep using this phrase- historical thought but in terms of the activities and getting pupils engaged you know he’s, he’s someone I always go to I daresay there’s probably a number of others which I can’t think of now, .... history people like you know err Christine Counsell and Philips all those kind of people”.

At times Skills Resistor showed the same kind of deference for these writers that he had shown for his Head of Department.

[theirs is an] “Important body of work you know they’re constantly ongoing and those people we need to nod and genuflect that these are important people within our history for, within our history community if you like.

The language here is almost worshipful and, again, shows Skills Resistor choosing a subordinate position in the discourse. In this sense, the history education discourse appears to have a Foucauldian disciplining function. It is somewhat ironic that Skills Resistor, who elsewhere speaks against a core knowledge curriculum, is so willing to submit to a discourse of canonical texts within the community that he is a part. For him, mastery of these esoteric text confers membership of the community in much the

same way as Goodson and Dowbiggin argued that (1991) scholarly identity was important in acquiring “the mystique of specialisation which assures a monopoly of power, resources and prerogatives in a specific sphere of educational practice” (p. 253).

If Skills Resistor is keen to acquire the credibility that comes with mastery of the research, then Mature Reluctant chose instead manage the conversation to disguise her ignorance of the discourse. From the outset, analysis of her speech patterns indicates a desire to exercise some control over the interview situation. For example, in answer to my first question, “How would you describe yourself as a history teacher?” she answered “Enthusiastic, loud umm quite opinionated”. This style of response is reminiscent of pop music magazine (...describe yourself in three words...) and the use of single word adjectives signifies that she feels her answer is definitive and that further discussion is unnecessary. It is also significant she took this question as an opportunity to describe her classroom personality, where other interviews took this as an opportunity to expand on their approach to the subject.

Elsewhere, Mature Reluctant took the opposite approach – using her natural garrulousness to build a relationship with her interviewer and to steer the conversation towards topics that suited her and away from those which made her feel like an outsider. For example, when asked to name history educators who had influenced the way that she thought about the past she offered,

“Umm I’m a massive fan of David Starkey although I don’t agree with everything that he says and I think that’s what historians are allowed to do, I think you’re allowed to buy into something. Umm I’m a massive fan of umm Simon Schama as well..... I do like umm, I can’t remember the girl what’s that nice lady on, she was on the telly the other week, I’ve only seen some of her programmes I’ve not read her stuff but oh you’ll know her”.

An attempt to refocus her with follow-up questions revealed a more faltering speech pattern and a sense of discomfort or embarrassment: “Umm the one, yes, yes. I like oh God Ben Walsh, I like his text books, umm some of his text books and I like some of his work”.

Even in the stuttering responses of Mature Reluctant, we can detect the power of the history education discourse in both its positive and exclusionary forms. While a macro-propositional analysis allows us to comprehend the overarching arguments presented in the dialectics of the curriculum contestation, micro-propositional analysis allows us to see the precise mechanisms through which power works. Much of this has, perhaps, made uncomfortable reading as it forces us to confront the reality that even progressive movements (such as the history teaching community) are necessarily constituted, in part, by repressive discourses. However, to focus too intently on the micro-propositional level is to repeat the fallacy of ethical neutrality adopted by post-structuralists. Micro-propositional analysis is important, but the lesson of systematic functional linguistics since Halliday has been to remind us that discourse is much more than the sum of its parts. While we must be careful not to endorse anti-democratic practices, a repressive internal discourse might well be the price that has to be paid for discursive unity in the macro-propositional sphere. This unified discourse, it has been argued, has been the key to effective engagement and resistance in curriculum change.

This need to disentangle the micro-propositional from the macro-propositional is but one example of the complexity of the discourse that has been analysed in this thesis. Several analytical tools have been used to illuminate the processes at work in the debates over the history curriculum and although such a wide-ranging study was necessary, so too is a conclusion which aims to synthesise these diffuse threads.



# Chapter 6 – Conclusion

While the previous chapter aimed to develop a detailed understanding of the reasons for history teacher engagement in curriculum contestation, this chapter considers their significance in a wider context. I humbly suggest that the specific circumstances of this research and the individual case-studies of the respondents, tell us something about school teacher's relationships with their chosen subject. It is further suggested that a greater understanding of this relationship may make future curriculum contestation less vociferous or, failing that, at least less vitriolic.

This chapter is arranged in three sections which broaden the findings from the specific to the general.

1. Summary of Findings – A short overview of the findings of the previous chapter considered in relation to the original research questions. This summary uses limited direct quotation and places findings in the context of existing literature.
2. Evaluation of Methods – An examination of the extent to which the chosen methods were appropriate in answering the research questions and some discussion of how these could have been improved with the benefit of hindsight.
3. Significance of Findings in wider context – How can the specific case study of history teacher involvement in the 2013 History Curriculum wars inform future curriculum planning? How can teachers' loyalty to their chosen disciplines be harnessed rather than provoked?

#### 1. Summary of Findings

The overarching question for this thesis was: **How and why did History Teachers in the North West of England contest the 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History?** This was, in turn, divided into three sub-questions which will be here considered consecutively.

- i. Sub-question 1 - What were history teachers' perceptions of the 2013 Draft History National curriculum?

History teachers felt strongly that the curriculum was inappropriate for teaching in schools, but for a range of reasons. Some reasons were quotidian, for example, difficulty in resourcing the new curriculum. Others were based on factual statements about the narrow scope of a curriculum which covered only British history and, even then, only in the period from 1700 to the present day. It was also clear that each individual teacher criticised the curriculum for his or her own unique nexus of reasons which had much to do with the context in which they worked.

Complaints of political bias did exist, but these were far less significant than one might have expected. There were, for example, concerns about the curriculum concluding almost triumphantly with ‘economic change and crisis, the end of the post-war consensus, and governments up to and including the election of Margaret Thatcher’ which, as two commentators wryly pointed out, implies that there have been no economic crises since 1979. The same two respondents also argued that the curriculum aimed at defining and modelling a particular notion of British identity, another described it simply as, “Conservative propaganda”. However, these accusations of explicit political bias were less common than complaints of unheard voices – the exclusion of black voices, immigrant voices or women’s voices, but such complaints are only ‘political’ if we choose to see them as such. These are actually intellectual criticisms, not political. The omission of these voices is criticised not because oppressed groups have a special right to be heard or that they are deliberately or conspiratorially excluded, but because telling “our island story” without these voices, is not to tell it at all. Thus, these apparent political criticisms reveal the underlying reason for criticism of the draft – that it was seen to represent ‘bad history’.

As trained historians, the teachers in the interview set had a deep loyalty to the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of their subject and also to the ways in which their discipline has evolved. Since at least the 1960s, history in universities has presented the past as contested and constructed, a principle which bled into schools as “New History” and is now the ‘mainstream’ approach. The curriculum was not, therefore, opposed because it was seen as advancing a *rightist*

narrative, but because the very concept of a single narrative is, itself, inherently unhistorical. More than a resentment of political interference, was the resentment of non-expert interference. Non-historians seem not to know what history is, and when Michael Gove was deserted by expert advisers who did understand the discipline (Schama, Mastin etc) the curriculum became an unfunny parody of the idiomatic 'one damn thing after another'.

This strength of feeling also emerged in the respondents shared context model of "relevance". This is a word which attracts considerable opprobrium in the right wing press where it is taken as synonymous with trendiness, populism and dumbing-down. It is clear, however, that the word had a very different meaning when used by history teachers. The notion of relevance was unconnected to whether pupils tasks were demanding or whether teenagers enjoyed it or not; instead it meant a reasonable justification of the subject as a worthwhile intellectual endeavour. This meaning of 'relevance' in the humanities was pinpointed almost fifty years ago by Stenhouse,

"Of course, the curriculum must be interesting and relevant to students, but these are not sufficient reasons for the selection of material. In a humanities curriculum, one selects for students those topics which are of enduring human interest because of their importance to the human situation" (1968, p. 28).

For history teachers, there is an undeniable struggle to engage teenagers in their learning and, consequently, a history curriculum needs to have a clear *raison d'être*. History is not, and cannot be, a series of unconnected events chosen apparently at random; a history curriculum must have more coherence than simply chronological order. If a sceptical child asks, "why are we learning this?" the answer cannot be "because it's the next thing on the list". Children are far too savvy for that. The child will simply follow up with, "why is it on the list then?" These questions are troublesome not because their adolescent inquisitor is troublesome, but because they are existential questions about the nature of history. History teachers wrestle with these issues each day. Previous iterations of the curriculum did, at least, try to answer them. Curriculum planners in 2013 did not even ask them.

The interesting point to note here is that both the curriculum's proponents and its opponents are arguing from a position of intellectual rigour, but their conception of this rigour differs. For traditionalists, rigour lies in mastery of a body of knowledge, and the degree of rigour lies in the size of the body of knowledge and the degree of mastery. As contributors to the first National Curriculum argued, this provides no sound basis for assessing a child's historical thinking (Guyver, 1996) (Phillips, 1998). By contrast, interviewees felt that what their approach to history demanded of children was far more challenging. In the words of Historical Pedagogist, the challenge is found in allowing students "to make their own mind up by looking at a variety of sources and coming to their own conclusions."

In short, respondents felt the curriculum was inappropriate because it did a disservice to children. The curriculum represented a popular view of what history ought to be, rather than the reality of what history is. Respondents' initial reactions were visceral ('ludicrous', 'horrific', 'mad') but these reflected defensive responses when something precious was being threatened. Again, in the words of Historical Pedagogist, "it's a duty to protect a good thing... and I felt that the [draft] curriculum was a threat to that."

ii. **Sub-question 2** - In what ways did history teachers engage with the debates surrounding the 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History?

Methods of engagement were inevitably dominated by electronic communication and social media. These methods have a number of established advantages: they can aggregate a great many opinions quickly, they can spread 'virally' and they are relatively easy for the respondents to complete. All of the respondents (except Mature Reluctant) made some use of electronic media in making their feelings known. The feeling amongst respondents was that the Historical Association's survey was the most effective means of complaint and two reasons were given for this. Firstly, the HA's role in collating, organising and articulating complaints was highlighted. In the words of Engaged Resistor, without the HA there would not "have been such a sophisticated response or such a tidy one... They tied all the knots for us at the top."

But the second reason given for the effectiveness of the HA is more intriguing – it was seen as effective precisely because it was slightly remote from classroom teachers. This remoteness was not an aloofness – respondents felt well represented by the HA – but a tactical distance. Several teachers commented that teachers were held in rather low regard by both the public and policymakers and that this affected their ability to be heard. In the words of Classroom Engager, “I think... if we [teachers] object to something the public perception [is] that we are doing it because we want an easier life”. Historical Pedagogist used similar language before declaring rather triumphantly, “You can’t dismiss the Historical Association as being a bunch of whinging teachers!”

These comments demonstrate that history teachers understand all too well their position in the neo-Liberal education discourse. Teachers are aware that little attention is paid to so-called “producer interests” and so they seek to subvert this discourse; perhaps, by allowing “celebrity historians” to speak for them. This discursive literacy is further highlighted by the way in which different electronic platforms were used for different purposes – there was a keen sense that there should be an internal community discourse which could be honest, emotional and sarcastic and an external discourse which was measured and, if possible, detached from teachers’ voices. This does not show a lack of faith in their own arguments, but rather a realism that audiences determine language. Thus, while the HA was trusted to respond to government consultations, unofficial platforms such as the “Save School History” Facebook group were more about fomenting community ties. In the words of Historical Pedagogist - “I think the Facebook campaign was probably a way of venting frustration... it was quite reassuring... to see that other people felt the same way”. It is clear that respondents appreciated that righteous anger was an ineffective way of bringing about change, but that this anger still had an important socialising function in uniting the community and preparing for battle.

There was much less engagement with the debate using traditional non-electronic media. Only two of the interviewees responded to the government consultation, the same two as wrote to their MP. Reasons for this diminished engagement were

principally practical in nature e.g. “lack of time” or a simple unawareness that the government consultation was taking place. The most common non-electronic form of engagement was raising concerns with the management in the school, which all but one respondent did. But these complaints were more to make the schools’ leadership aware of the impact on resourcing than to challenge the content or intentionality of the curriculum.

iii. **Sub-question 3** – Why were some history teachers more motivated to engage in the debate more than others?

Three overlapping variables were crucial in determining the extent to which teachers contributed to curriculum debates: firstly, a sense of professional responsibility, which was, in turn, heightened by the second variable- engagement in the subject community which is, itself, increasingly dependent on familiarity with social media.

At the heart of this triad is the subject community which exists both physically (at conferences and written publications) and virtually in social media. The community serves to nourish a shared sense of professional identity which confers both rights and obligations. Membership of this community is not formally granted, but once it is claimed, members are expected to stay “on message” and share a commitment to the community’s pedagogical vision. In return, members benefit from a sense of collective security and safety in numbers. Social media is the means by which members are informed of events which affect the group and is also the mechanism through which responses to these events are formulated.

The strength of this community is, paradoxically, the absence of a strong organisational structure. Instead the community is bound by a shared view that historical knowledge is constructed and contested, and that it should be taught as such (Lee, 1991). The community possesses a shared project-identity (Castells, 1997) which is bolstered by the research activities of the Schools History Project and the Historical Association, but not defined by them. This epistemological unity represents

the widespread acceptance of the approach which emerged in the 1970s with the name “New History”. The approach is no longer new, but it also no longer faces serious opposition from within the teaching community. This general acceptance has been brought about by changes in the way history is taught at university level, and consequently the historical training that history teachers receive. In the 1970s, it was possible to see a distinction between older graduates who perceived history as the mastery of a body of ‘hard’ knowledge on the one hand, and recent graduates who saw it as a methodological discipline on the other. With the passing of time, virtually all history teachers are now of the latter type while nostalgia for “traditional” approaches to the subject are the preserve of non-historians.

Like so much in recent years, the growth of electronic social media has changed the way in which members engage with the community and its growth has inevitably led to some members (particularly the older) being left behind. Despite the difference in their engagement levels, the two “mature” respondents spoke of the teaching community in exclusively physical sense. To Mature Reluctant, the lack of physical meetings explained her disengagement and even isolation, “I don’t really come into contact with very many other history teachers these days so I don’t know... what’s out there”. Conversely, Mature Resistor was very engaged in the debates, but also spoke about engagement in face-to-face physical terms – “I chair a Heads of History meeting”. From these two contrasting cases, it is clear that access to social media does not determine the level of community engagement, but it does determine the nature of that engagement.

To a large extent, teachers’ engagement in curriculum debates was proportional to their engagement in the history teaching community. There were two reasons for this – the first was that engagement in the community provided the sense of solidarity which provoked action, the second was that engagement in the community gave coherence to criticisms that respondents made. Consequently, Mature Reluctant who felt isolated from the history teaching community (because she conceived it in solely face-to-face terms) struggled to articulate her position. But there was an interested



'flip-side' to this – Skills Resistor felt a close instinctual affinity to the community, yet his responses in interview were among the least articulate. There was a strong sense that Skills Resistor knew what he should be saying, and knew the words he ought to be using, but that this was more about 'belonging' than any real conviction or understanding.

It should be said that political motivations were present, but that these were never the principal reason for criticising the draft. While it is true that most interviews revealed considerable disdain for the Conservative Party in general and Michael Gove in particular, there were only isolated references to left-wing political ideology. The lingering suspicion among those on the right that teachers in general, and history teachers in particular, are a radical fifth column is accurate, but only if one sets the bar of radicalism very low. Some teachers did speak of a 'world that often is quite intent to try and mislead people' (Historical Pedagogist) and the need to resist: 'if people aren't politicised they will never be able to object to something that discriminates' (Engaged Resistor), but these are soft Marxist positions which might better be characterised as political literacy. It is surely not Marxist to suggest that human affairs are complex and history has a role in helping young people navigate these affairs.

Since the teachers interviewed here were not, in the main, Marxists, the use of a Gramscian analytical framework may be open to question. However, I defend the use of this framework, since it is used to explain the nature of the community and the mechanics of the community's contestation, not participants' ideologies or motivations. The community is Gramscian because it consists of democratically accountable organic intellectuals who have framed a powerful counterhegemonic discourse. This community is grounded in the "good sense" of historical epistemology and is constantly evolving and reinventing itself. This process of discursive renewal allows the community to take the upper hand in the "war of position" with educational traditionalists who rely on "common sense" to advance their arguments. While these common sense arguments have powerful political currency and resonate with public opinion, they are found wanting when the curriculum is openly contested. Thus, just

as Gramsci argued, the final battle – the war of manoeuvre – is won and lost before it is even joined.

## 2. Evaluation of Methods

If the underpinning theoretical framework of the research is not only defensible, but found to have been a successful lens by through which to view recent curriculum struggles, what about the actual methods that were employed? The obvious criticism that can be levelled at research of this nature is its small scale. Clearly, the sample size for the initial research was small, but this owed more to a poor rate of return than to a lack of effort by the researcher – teachers working at some 25 schools in the north-west of England were approached which offered a potential sample of over 80 teachers. It is, of course, disappointing that only 32 replied to give their views. However it is important to remember that a large sample size is not always, in itself, a guarantee of accuracy. In one famous example, the Literary Digest predicted a Republican victory in the 1936 US Presidential Election based on a sample of 2.4 million. The prediction proved to be wildly inaccurate because of the failure to achieve representativeness in the sample (Squire, 1988).

At every stage of the research, I wanted to avoid the familiar criticism that professional doctorates amount to little more than “interviewing one’s friends.” Consequently, I wanted to use a depersonalised method for choosing interviewees – the method I used (outlined in chapter 4) achieved this. However, it is worth mentioning that the actual responses that respondents gave in interview sometimes belied the pseudonyms given in this chapter; for example, Engaged Resistor proved to be more explicitly political than Political Resistor. This posed the question of whether I should revisit Chapter Four and rename the interviewees. I decided against this for two reasons: firstly, it was not the case that respondents consistently defied their eponym, merely that their experiences and responses were more complex than the two word phrase that I had chosen to characterise them. Secondly, I decided that changing their names would dishonestly disrupt the chronological flow of the thesis. I wanted my

interviewees, as far as possible, to have been chosen through a depersonalised objective mechanism – it would not, then, have been acceptable to return and ‘correct’ my earlier judgements.

The use of semi-structured interviews was found to be wholly appropriate in meeting the aims of the research. The interviews ensured the respondents stayed within relevant parameters, but also gave them the freedom to develop points that were particularly relevant to them. This freedom also supported the socio-cognitive approach to CDA that was adopted, since it allowed respondents to talk rather informally about their relationship with the history teaching community and the curriculum. However, I am keenly aware that my interview technique is in need of development – at present, I feel that I can be interrogative of interlocutors – particularly when they are discussing an area that is of particular interest to me.

This is a familiar problem with semi-structured interviews – the extent to which the interviewer is guiding the subject towards his own *a priori* assumptions. I would like to think that I was merely giving subjects the opportunity to expand upon and better articulate their ideas, but there is no doubt that, at times, I did become more involved in the phenomenological process of respondents describing their experiences than I should have done. In one sense, this could easily be explained by my inexperience as an interviewer (my reflections here would certainly support that view) but I also think that it reflects an improvement that could have been made in my methods.

Although it was not originally part of my research design, I can now see a value in discussing transcripts of interviews with interviewees. Although, I hold to the distinction that the speaker retains ownership of his words, and I ownership of the interpretation, there were occasions where it would have been interesting to hear a subject’s take on their own words. This would have been particularly useful when performing micro-propositional analysis of filler words and discourse markers and considering the extent to which these were used consciously or unconsciously.

In hindsight, it also would have been useful to get a sense of respondents’ appreciations of historical ontology and historical epistemology from the written questionnaire. Often interviewees spoke with great eloquence about politically one-

sided narratives and the need for children to construct their own narratives, but they were speaking always in the context of school history. It would have been interesting to explore more deeply, their understanding of the processes through which academic historical accounts are constructed. Working in an American context, Ronald Evans (1989), as has been mentioned, has demonstrated a correlation between hours of historical study at university and approaches to pedagogy. Since all my interviewees held history degrees I assumed that they would possess sophisticated understandings of historical epistemology. However, as (Blow, et al., 2012) have shown, there are lingering concerns about the ways in which applicants to History PGCE courses explain the processes through which historians make sense of the past. To take one example, when asked whether people in the Middle Ages knew whether they were living in the Middle Ages, a prospective history teacher said, “no, not many of them could read”. Such responses serve to remind that a history degree does not necessarily confer a sophisticated understanding of the nature of the discipline, though we would hope that it might. While the responses given in the previous chapter imply that interview subjects were rather better informed than this, in hindsight, it would have been useful to ask some questions which probed these aspects of understanding in isolation. This would better have illuminated the question of whether support for New History correlated in some sense with complexity of historical understanding.

In all, I feel that the methods that I used were robust and valid, and that they delivered meaningful conclusions. If this research were undertaken again, a greater sample size would have been desirable, but I maintain that this is a piece of qualitative research and that the process through which respondents were selected for interview was transparent and robust. I also feel that my interview technique has improved greatly in the course of this research and I have every confidence that respondents were able to communicate their feelings and that – to the extent that it is possible - I have interpreted their ideas honestly.

### 3. Significance of Findings in wider context

This research makes two contributions to the field of educational knowledge. The first is a rigorous in-depth study of history teachers' lives and professional identities. The value of this kind of research in its own right is demonstrated by work such as "*Understanding History Teaching*" (Husbands, et al., 2003) which, like this study, investigated the lived experience of eight history teachers (albeit with a different research focus). This research confirms the view presented in Husbands *et al.* that history teachers are impressively well-informed about their subject and articulate champions of their discipline. Most significantly, both research projects support the view in Husbands *et al.* that history teachers have "the knowledge and skill... to thwart ill-conceived innovation. This knowledge and skill is something to be celebrated" (p. 144).

That this work accords so closely with an earlier study might seem a strange basis for a claim to originality; however, this consistency is remarkable when one considers the shifting political and policy landscape in the decade between the two studies. Husbands *et al.* conducted their research in the context of the neo-Taylorist agenda of the Blair government and their interview subjects saw the rise of competency-based curricula (such as RSA Opening Minds) as the greatest threat to the subject. In contrast, my research takes place in a context in which the threat is not from those who would seek to denigrate or dilute the status of history, but those who would seek to hijack it for political advantage. That teacher resistance is a feature of both periods indicates that resistance is not self-interest or political bias, but the product of a commitment to depoliticised social realist conception of good historical practice.

This conclusion leads to the second contribution that this research makes. Existing research in the social realist school (Weelahan, 2010) (Young, 2008a) has been theoretical in approach and has made only tentative suggestions about curriculum design. The existence of a subject community which identifies with this approach

(albeit not by name) is, I would contend, a significant discovery. That said, it is important to stress that history teachers' social realist self-concept is not a new phenomenon, it is just that the analytical tools for theorising it have not existed until very recently. It is clear, for example, that the history teaching community has conceived of itself in procedural terms since the 1970s. Furthermore, social realist thinking was at the forefront of arguments presented in the early 1990s as recounted by Rob Phillips' (1998). The words of 1991 History Working Group Chairman, Michael Saunders-Watson demonstrate that although social realist *theory* did not exist 25 years ago, social realist *arguments* did:

“I had my eyes opened by the HWG. I had lived with history and had been taught the subject in a very old-fashioned way. Then when I heard the arguments put forward by HWG members it came as something of a culture shock. I became impressed with many of the arguments which I had never knew existed” (Phillips, 1998, p. 77).

It is the very sophistication of these arguments which make them so effective. They are education arguments which defy politicised characterisation, consequently policy-makers (particularly on the right) can misconstrue the motivations of the history subject community and its subject associations. The Historical Association and the Schools' History Project are too easily characterised as centralised organisations motivated primarily by the narrow self-interest of their supporters, rather than academic rigour. The result is that curriculum redesign is too often conducted in an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility in which the government casts itself as a consumer champion against faceless producer interests.

As this research demonstrates, there are countless problems with this perception of the debate. Firstly, it is by no means clear what constitutes the self-interest of the history subject community – it is variously seen as inertia, political radicalism and downright laziness. It is clear from the interviewees that history teachers are well used to these accusations, but do not recognise them in their colleagues. Secondly, this analogising of subject associations to trade unions involves a fatal misunderstanding of their nature and function. Subject communities are not centralised hierarchical institutions like political parties or trade unions, but loosely bound and heterogeneous.

Subject communities may have a strong shared project identity, but diversity is tolerated on the understanding that, when it comes to the practice of history teaching, unanimity is neither possible nor desirable.

The most flagrant canard is the presumption that the history subject community is resistant to change; that the new orthodoxy established in the 1970s has become a static pedagogical tyranny which traditionalist teachers are afraid to challenge (Hunter, 2013). This view ignores the internal debates and innovation that are such a feature of the history teaching community. Indeed, current practice is as remote from 1970s 'new history' as it is from the 'inherited consensus' of the 1950s. This dynamism is explained by the fact that members of the history teaching community are bound not to the structure of the community, nor even to each other, but to the epistemology of their discipline. However, since we are unaccustomed to conferring interests on abstract nouns, those who would protect history are easily reframed as those who would protect history *teachers*.

Conflict emerges in history curriculum debates because such an arrangement is so alien to the neo-liberal discourse. To the avowed neo-liberal, the free market is merely one manifestation of a more general feature of society – the inevitability of competition and the tendency for self-interested actors to come into conflict. Neo-liberal thinking has difficulty accommodating motivations which cannot be attributed to self-interest and so such motivations are inevitably disbelieved. Consequently, to the neo-liberal, curriculum contestation is a 'zero sum' game in which producer interests defend unearned privilege and consumers wrest it from them. But curriculum change need not be seen in this way and, indeed, it is not seen in this way by history teachers. History teachers are not inherently opposed to change – indeed, evolution is an important feature of the internal community discourse – but change must promote the interests of the subject as a discipline.

Curricula – even history curricula – do not have to be forged in the heat of battle, but more peaceful construction requires an acceptance that even those we disagree with are genuine in their motivation. The attribution of base motives to the government on the one hand and to history teachers on the other, fosters a "zero-sum mentality; that

the curriculum is a finite list of historical events and an equilibrium can only be reached through conflict. However, in thinking of curriculum design as a strategy game in which the gains of one side are balanced by the losses of the other, the idea that a curriculum is more than the sum of its parts is lost. As the Chartists are horse-traded for Trafalgar, the more important discussion of why we should study either is sadly disregarded. If the first casualty of war is truth, the first casualty of a curriculum war is coherence.

It is worth remembering that there have been five iterations of the English history curriculum and that three of those passed without conflict (1995, 2000 and 2007) and therefore conflict is not a necessary precondition of effective curriculum design. Furthermore, when we look at the two curricula which were contested (1991 and 2013), the pattern is for contestation to be settled on terms favourable to the aims of the history teaching community. In the case of 2013, the difference between the February draft and the final version which was released in August was remarkable and prompted Engaged Resistor to comment, “I can’t believe how much they caved, to be honest!” But such triumphalism is not constructive – by continuing to think of these curricula as ‘victories’ history teachers perpetuate an antagonistic view of curriculum design. Instead, the negotiated settlement of 1991 should serve a constant reminder of the power of discussion and collaboration in curriculum design.

The applicability of these findings to other subjects is open to debate. It is clear that the strong self-concept has been central to debates over the future of school history, but it is not clear whether other subject possess such a shared unifying discourse. Ivor Goodson (1983, 1988) argues that the “status” of a subject in the eyes of policy-makers is determined by the extent to which spokespeople for the subject can meet policy-makers on their own terrain. Unlike the example of history – where policy maker’s decision making processes are explicitly challenged by historians – Goodson suggests that other subjects are too willing to make their discipline docile to elites by stressing aspects of their discipline which appeal to the rightist discourse. He later argued (2003) that this process has led to a dilution of the disciplinary knowledge of subject teachers in favour of more generic “teaching” skills. Again, the findings of this



study seem to contradict Goodson's thesis. That said, it is important to state that Goodson's work is now rather dated and that the rightist discourse has shifted somewhat from the business-driven employability agenda of the New Labour (Weelahan, 2010) (Woods, et al., 2007) to the traditionalism of the Gove era. Peter Knight (1996) argued that subject associations had become adept at "realpolitik" in policy discussions and are able to make sacrifices and cut deals to achieve the greater proportion of their aims. Again, this analysis does not hold true in the current study in which history teachers were prepared to challenge the foundational premises of the draft curriculum, rather than quibbling over the exact content. Elsewhere Knight (1996b) has demonstrated that history teachers were more likely to value "decision-making" and "autonomy" in their professional lives than were teachers of other subjects.

Taken together, Knight's and Goodson's work seem to suggest that history is something of a special case; however, it was never the intention of this work to be comparative. If a generalisation is possible, it is that subject communities do not seek confrontation for ideological reasons, but because of a deep Bernsteinian attachment to their disciplines. History has been very adept at incorporating these social-realist discussions in its internal community discourse and has even fostered a sense of professional identity based on these Bernsteinian considerations and a Stenhouseian commitment to research-informed practice. This thesis has demonstrated that careful epistemological introspection about the nature of one's own discipline is not philosophical naval-gazing, but the *sine qua non* of successful resistance of unwelcome policy change.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Ethical Approval from Keele University Ethics Board



### RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES

13<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Joe Smith  
104 Honey Hall Road  
Halewood  
L26 1TQ

Dear Joe,

**Re: An analysis of History Teachers' involvement in the debate surrounding the 2014 draft national curriculum for History**

Thank you for submitting your revised application for review. I am pleased to inform you that your application has been approved by the Ethics Review Panel. The following documents have been reviewed and approved by the panel as follows:

Document	Version	Date
Summary of Proposal	1	November 2013
Letter(s) of Invitation (Appendices 1&3)	2	January 2014
Information Sheets (Appendices 1&3)	2	January 2014
Consent Form(s) (Appendix 4)	1	November 2013
Consent Form(s) for use of quotes (Appendix 4)	1	November 2013
Questionnaire – inc consent (Appendix 2)	1	November 2013
Interview Topic Guides (Appendix 5)	1	November 2013

If the fieldwork goes beyond the date stated in your application, you must notify the Ethical Review Panel via the ERP administrator at [uso.erps@keele.ac.uk](mailto:uso.erps@keele.ac.uk) stating ERP2 in the subject line of the e-mail. If there are any other amendments to your study you must submit an 'application to amend study' form to the ERP administrator stating ERP2 in the subject line of the e-mail. This form is available via <http://www.keele.ac.uk/researchsupport/researchethics/>

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me via the ERP administrator on [uso.erps@keele.ac.uk](mailto:uso.erps@keele.ac.uk) stating ERP2 in the subject line of the e-mail.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Bernadette Bartlam**  
Chair – Ethical Review Panel

CC RI Manager  
Supervisor

Research and Enterprise Services, Keele University, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1782 734486 Fax: +44 (0)1782 733740

## RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE SERVICES



### Information Sheet for questionnaire respondents

**Study Title:** An analysis of History Teachers' involvement in the debate surrounding the 2014 Draft National Curriculum for

History

#### **Aims of the Research**

This research is about the ways in which history teachers responded to the first draft of the 2013 History National Curriculum which was released in February. As you will no doubt be aware, this curriculum was substantially altered before it was finalised in August 2013. The aim of the research is to try to understand what practising history teachers thought of the draft and how and with whom they shared these thoughts.

#### **Invitation**

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study "An analysis of History Teachers' involvement in the debate surrounding the 2014 Draft National Curriculum for History." This project is being undertaken by Joseph Smith in a personal capacity as a student on the Keele University Doctorate of Education Programme. Although I am employed at Edge Hill University, I am undertaking this work in a personal capacity as a Keele student and it is unconnected to my work at Edge Hill.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

#### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you are a qualified secondary history teacher working in a school in the North-West of England.

#### **Do I have to take part?**

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. By completing this questionnaire, you are giving your consent for your responses to be used in the research. If you do not wish to take part, then do not complete or return the questionnaire. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

#### **What will happen if I take part?**

There are two stages to this research. This anonymous questionnaire makes up the first phase and, at the end of the questionnaire, you will be given the opportunity to volunteer for face-to-face interviews to discuss your thoughts in greater detail. These interviews will take place either at your school or at Edge Hill University and will last around 30 minutes. If you wish to be considered for the second phase of the study. Not everyone who volunteers for the second phase will be selected for interview and, if you are selected for interview, you will be asked to complete a further consent form.



### **What are the benefits and risks of taking part?**

The research will give you the opportunity to reflect on your professional identity and your views about the nature and purpose of history teaching in schools. As you can see, this questionnaire is anonymous and so it will not be possible to identify you or your school. If you choose to volunteer for interview, the questions will focus on your responses to government policy and so are unlikely to cause distress or upset.

### **How will information about me be used?**

This questionnaire is anonymous and should be returned in a sealed envelope via your Edge Hill trainee history teacher. All responses to the survey will be analysed on a password-protected spreadsheet. If you have chosen not to volunteer for interview then your information is fully anonymous and cannot be linked back to you or your school. If you use this questionnaire to volunteer for interview then your name will appear on the spreadsheet next to the responses in order to select appropriate interview candidates. This spreadsheet will not be shared with anyone and is used primarily to select appropriate candidates for interview. If you are selected for interview, then a further information sheet like this one will be given to you and formal consent will be sought.

### **Who will have access to information about me?**

These questionnaires are anonymous statistical trends will be shared with my doctoral supervisor. At the end of the research, the data will be securely disposed of and will not be shared with any third parties.

### **Who is funding and organising the research?**

This research is self-funded.

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher(s) who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact **Joe Smith on [j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk)**. Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact me you may contact my supervisor, Dr John Howlett, on [j.howlett@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.howlett@keele.ac.uk).

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-

Nicola Leighton  
Research Governance Officer  
Research & Enterprise Services  
Dorothy Hodgkin Building  
Keele University  
ST5 5BG  
E-mail: [n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk](mailto:n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01782 733306  
**Contact for further information**  
*Joe Smith*  
*[j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk)*

# **A survey of North West History Teachers' attitudes towards the February 7<sup>th</sup> Draft National Curriculum for History.**

## **Section 1 – About you**

1. How old are you?

21-30		31-40		41-50		51+	
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2. When did you qualify as a teacher?

Before 1991		1991-2000		2000-2008		Since 2008	
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3. Which of these best describes the type of school in which you work?

Independent		First Wave Academy (pre-2010)	
“New Academy” (Since 2010)		Community School	

4. Was your first degree in History?

Yes	
No (Please specify subject of first degree)	

5. Do you hold a higher degree?

Yes (specify subject and degree type)	
No	

## **Section 2 – About your teaching habits**

6. Which of the following apply to you (Tick all that apply)

Member of the Historical Association (tick if school department has membership.)	
Read Teaching History Magazine	
Attended <b>subject-based</b> INSET in last two years (not including exam feedback)	
Have attended the SHP Conference.	
Have attended <b>subject-based</b> meetings with history colleagues from other schools.	

7. Do you think there exists a history teaching community?

Yes, and I feel part of it	
Yes, but I don't feel part of it or want to be part of it.	
No	

## **Section 3 – Your view of the February 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History.**

8. Which statement best describes your overall view of the draft curriculum.

Positive	
Mixed	
Negative	
I was not aware of the February Draft (Ends the questionnaire)	

9. Give three reasons for your answer above.

1	
2	
3	

10. The following criticisms of the curriculum were made at the time. Indicate whether you agree or disagree. Tick all that apply.

<b>The February Curriculum....</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Would have been difficult to resource.		
Would have been difficult to teach.		
Would have put some students off history		
Would have affected numbers taking History at GCSE.		
Was badly thought-through.		
Was too focused on modern history		
Was too focused on British History		
Was overly prescriptive		
Had too much content		

11. Do you think that the draft curriculum was politically motivated? Develop your answer, if you wish.


**Section 4 – Your response to the February 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History.**

12. Are you aware of the views of any professional historians on the February draft. If so, please write the name (s) below.

14. Did you take any of the following actions in response to the February Draft? Tick all which apply

Raised concerns with school management	
Wrote letter to DfE/ MP	
Responded to Government consultation	
Joined facebook campaign	
Responded to Historical association survey	
Signed petition	
Posted on internet discussion	
Followed twitter campaign	
Other (please develop)	

15. If you ticked any of the above, briefly explain why you thought it was important to respond in this way.


**Section 5 – Contact details for stage two of the study**

- Only complete this section if you wish to volunteer for face-to-face interviews. These interviews will be audio-taped and will last around 30 minutes. They will be arranged at a time that suits you.
- Not everybody who volunteers for interview will be required.
- If you are selected for interview, a further information sheet will be given to you and additional consent will be sought.
- Interviews can take place at your school or at Edge Hill University. I regret that neither cover nor travelling expenses can be reimbursed if you choose to be interviewed at Edge Hill since *this research is undertaken in my personal capacity as a Keele University student, not as an Edge Hill employee.*

Name

School

Preferred interview location.

Contact for Reference- Mr Joe Smith – j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk

### Appendix 3 – Outline of Proposed interview questions

In effect, the interviews are simply an opportunity for subjects to expand on the responses that they gave to the earlier survey. For this reason, the exact nature of the questions may vary slightly from respondent to respondent, but the following list gives the broad areas that might be discussed.

1. How would you describe yourself as a history teacher?
2. Do you think that there is a typical history teacher?
3. Do you think there is such a thing as “a history teaching community?” If so, could you define it?
4. What do you think holds this community together?
5. How did you find out about the content of the February Draft National Curriculum?
6. What did you think of it?
7. What, specifically, did you like or dislike about it?
8. How would the curriculum have been implemented in your school?
9. The following specific criticisms were made of the curriculum. Could you say whether you agree and why?
  - a. Would have been difficult to resource.
  - b. Would have been difficult to teach.
  - c. Would have put some students off history
  - d. Would have affected numbers taking History at GCSE.
  - e. Was badly thought-through.
  - f. Was too focused on modern history
  - g. Was too focused on British History
  - h. Was overly prescriptive
  - i. Had too much content
10. What did you do to make share your feelings about the draft curriculum?
11. Why did you decide to act in this way?
12. How did you become aware of others’ feelings towards the draft?
13. Were you aware of what subject associations such as the HA and SHP thought about the draft?
14. How important do you think their contribution was?
15. Did you follow the debate about the draft in the media?
16. What do you think of the final curriculum?
17. Why do you think it has changed so much from the draft?



## Information Sheet

**Study Title:** An analysis of History Teachers' involvement in the debate surrounding the 2014 Draft National Curriculum for History

### **Aims of the Research**

This research is about the ways in which history teachers responded to the first draft of the 2013 History National Curriculum which was released in February. As you will no doubt be aware, this curriculum was substantially altered before it was finalised in August 2013. The aim of the research is to try to understand what practising history teachers thought of the draft and how and with whom they shared these thoughts.

### **Invitation**

You are being invited to consider taking part in the research study "An analysis of History Teachers' involvement in the debate surrounding the 2014 Draft National Curriculum for History." This project is being undertaken by Joseph Smith in a personal capacity as a student on the Keele University Doctorate of Education Programme. Although I am employed at Edge Hill University, I am undertaking this work in a personal capacity as a Keele student and it is unconnected to my work at Edge Hill.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read this information carefully and discuss it with friends and relatives if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you volunteered to be interviewed when you completed your questionnaire earlier in the year and because I would like to give you the opportunity to expand on the answers that you gave in that questionnaire by speaking to you in person.



### **Do I have to take part?**

You are free to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign two consent forms (attached), one is for you to keep and the other is for our records. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time and without giving reasons.

### **What will happen if I take part and what will I have to do?**

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to develop some of the answers you gave in the initial questionnaire. This will be a fairly informal process and will last around 30 minutes. The interview will be digitally recorded as an audio mp3 file so that I can accurately quote from the interview in my research. If you are not comfortable being recorded then you should not volunteer for interview.

### **What are the benefits and risks taking part?**

The research will give you a valuable and hopefully enjoyable opportunity to reflect on your professional identity and your views about the nature and purpose of history teaching in schools. If you choose to volunteer for interview, the questions will focus on your responses to government policy and so are unlikely to cause distress or upset. You can, of course, terminate or pause the interview at any time or choose to withdraw from the whole process at any point.

### **How will information about me be used and who will see it?**

Your interviews will be used to understand what North-West history teachers thought about the February Draft National Curriculum and how they responded to it. The questionnaire that you have already completed was *anonymous* (meaning that you were not required to provide details of your identity), these interviews will be *confidential* which means that although I know your identity, every effort will be made to prevent others from identifying you. Quotations from your interviews will be used included in the final thesis which will be submitted for marking at Keele University. In the thesis you will be referred to by a pseudonym and your school will not be referred to by name. It will be necessary to give some of your biographical details (age, years you have taught, qualifications etc.) and it will be necessary to give some contextual details about your school (number on roll, ofsted grading etc.) This information is useful for the reader to appreciate the context of your ideas, but it should not be possible for the reader to be able to identify you from this information.

The audio recordings of the interviews will be held as password-protected mp3 files and transcripts will be held as password-protected word documents. The content of the recordings will be shared with my doctoral supervisor, but I will not share details of your identity with him. What you say in the interviews will be kept confidential. I do

however have to work within the confines of current legislation over such matters as privacy and confidentiality, data protection and human rights and so offers of confidentiality may sometimes be overridden by law. I would be happy to explain the kinds of cases where this might arise before you consent for interview.

It is possible that the thesis (or part thereof) may be published in an academic book or journal at a later date. The same steps will be taken to ensure that you cannot be identified. Your transcripts and recordings will be held for a period of five years after the completion of the study in line with Keele University Policy. You are entitled to witness the destruction of your data, should you so request, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Who is funding and organising the research?**

*This research is self-funded.*

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you may wish to speak to the researcher(s) who will do their best to answer your questions. You should contact Joe Smith on [j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk). Alternatively, if you do not wish to contact me, you may contact my supervisor, Dr John Howlett, on [j.howlett@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.howlett@keele.ac.uk).

If you remain unhappy about the research and/or wish to raise a complaint about any aspect of the way that you have been approached or treated during the course of the study please write to Nicola Leighton who is the University's contact for complaints regarding research at the following address:-

Nicola Leighton  
Research Governance Officer  
Research & Enterprise Services  
Dorothy Hodgkin Building  
Keele University  
ST5 5BG  
E-mail: [n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk](mailto:n.leighton@uso.keele.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01782 733306

### **Contact for further information**

*Joe Smith*  
[j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk](mailto:j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk)



## CONSENT FORM

**Title of Project:** “An analysis of History Teachers’ involvement in the debate surrounding the 2014 Draft National Curriculum for History.”

### **Name and contact details of Principal Investigator (email preferred)**

Joseph Smith

C/o Elizabeth Cameron, PG Administrator

Faculty Research Office  
Claus Moser Research Centre  
Keele University  
Keele  
Staffordshire ST5 5BG

01782 734256

j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk

**Please tick box if you  
agree with the statement**

- 1 I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2 I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.
- 3 I agree to take part in this study.
- 4 I understand that data collected about me during this study will be anonymised before it is submitted for publication.

- 5 I agree to the interview being audio recorded
- 6 I agree to allow the dataset collected to be used for future research projects
- 7 I agree to be contacted about possible participation in future research projects.

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	_____	_____
	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature



## CONSENT FORM (for use of quotes)

**Title of Project:** “An analysis of History Teachers’ involvement in the debate surrounding the 2014 Draft National Curriculum for History.”

**Name and contact details of Principal Investigator (email preferred)**

Joseph Smith

C/o Elizabeth Cameron, PG Administrator

Faculty Research Office  
Claus Moser Research Centre  
Keele University  
Keele  
Staffordshire ST5 5BG

01782 734256

j.p.smith@keele.ac.uk

**Please tick box if you agree with the statement**

1 I agree for any quotes to be used

2 I do not agree for any quotes to be used

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## Appendix 6 – Tally of Closed question responses

### **Section 1 – About you**

1. How old are you?

21-30	12	31-40	9	41-50	7	51+	4
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2. When did you qualify as a teacher?

Before 1991	5	1991-2000	8	2000-2008	10	Since 2008	14
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3. Which of these best describes the type of school in which you work?

Independent		First Wave Academy (pre-2010)	1
“New Academy” (Since 2010)	11	Community School	20

4. Was your first degree in History?

Yes	27
No (Please specify subject of first degree)	

5. Do you hold a higher degree?

Yes (specify subject and degree type)	6
No	

## **Section 2 – About your teaching habits**

6. Which of the following apply to you (Tick all that apply)

Member of the Historical Association (tick if school department has membership.)	<b><u>9</u></b>
Read Teaching History Magazine	<b><u>10</u></b>
Attended <b>subject-based</b> INSET in last two years (not including exam feedback)	<b><u>15</u></b>
Have attended the SHP Conference.	<b><u>5</u></b>
Have attended <b>subject-based</b> meetings with history colleagues from other schools.	<b><u>26</u></b>
Mentor?	<b><u>17</u></b>

7. Do you think there exists a history teaching community?

Yes, and I feel part of it	14
Yes, but I don't feel part of it or want to be part of it.	11
No	7

## **Section 3 – Your view of the February 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History.**

8. Which statement best describes your overall view of the draft curriculum.

Positive	0
Mixed	14
Negative	17
I was not aware of the February Draft (Ends the questionnaire)	1

10. The following criticisms of the curriculum were made at the time. Indicate whether you agree or disagree. Tick all that apply.

<b>The February Curriculum....</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Would have been difficult to resource.	24	
Would have been difficult to teach.	23	
Would have put some students off history	27	
Would have affected numbers taking History at GCSE.	25	
Was politically motivated	28	
Was badly thought-through.	26	
Was too focused on modern history	25	
Was too focused on British History	25	
Was overly prescriptive	30	
Had too much content	8	

11. Do you think that the draft curriculum was politically motivated? Develop your answer, if you wish.

22 yes
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**Section 4 – Your response to the February 2013 Draft National Curriculum for History.**

12. The following historian made public announcements on the curriculum. Indicate whether you read/ heard their comments.

13 schama

5 starkey

4 ferguson

1 beevor

1 evans

19 No one

14. Did you take any of the following actions in response to the February Draft? Tick all which apply

Raised concerns with school management	15
Wrote letter to DfE/ MP	2
Responded to Government consultation	5
Joined facebook campaign	4
Responded to Historical association survey	14
Signed petition	10
Posted on internet discussion	9
Followed twitter campaign	6
Other (please develop)	

Appendix 7 – Full data by ID number of Questionnaire Master set

ID	Name	Age Group	Qualified	School Type	Degree Subject	Higher Degree Subject	HA Member	Read TH	SK INSET	SHP Conf	Network	Mentor	Total Engagement	Hst Teach Comm?	View	Resource	Difficult to teach	Off Putting	Affect GCSE	Badly Thought through	Too modern	Too British	Too Prescriptive	Too much content	Total no. Reasons	POLITICAL?	Political Development
1		21-30	>2008	Community	Politics	History	1	1	1	1	1	1	6Y	6Y	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	Y	
2		21-30	>2008	Community	History	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0Y	0Y	Mixed	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	Y	
3		41-50	2000	Community	History	N	0	0	0	0	1	1	2Y	2Y	Mixed	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4		
4		21-30	>2008	New Academy	History	History	1	1	1	1	1	1	4Y	4Y	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	8	Y	I feel it was part of traditional conservatism and does not serve the needs of the whole country
5		41-50	2008	Community	History	N	1	1	1	1	1	1	4Y	4Y	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	Y	Incorrect belief that we do not teach british history
6		51+	<1991	Community	History	n	1						1Y	1Y	Mixed	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	Y	He was being populist and saying what he thinks voters want to hear, but also believes much of what he says as not enough experience and advice from teachers at the chalkface and teach children who cannot write in English prescribing a curriculum designed for
7		51+	<1991	Old Academy	History	n					1	1	2Y	2Y	Mixed	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	7	Y	Yes. The Gvt want to have their agenda - want to turn comprehensive education into private sector style
8		41-50	<1991	Community	History	n	0	0	1	0	1	0	2Y	2Y	Mixed	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	Y	
9		21-30	>2008	Community	History	n	1	0	0	0	1	1	3n	3n	Mixed	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	7	Y	Gove's wish list based on what he liked and had studies. I do think that Gove regards certain events as introduced to shed history in a bad light, to create problems and to marginalise the subject whereas content to come to that conclusion. I want all students to be engaged in learning about the past and not just an elite group
10		31-40	2008	New Academy	History	n	0	0	0	0	1	1	2Y	2Y	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	8	Y	
11		21-30	>2008	New Academy	History	n	1	0	1	0	1	0	3Y	3Y	Negative	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	7	Y	
12		31-40	1991-2000	Community	Psychology and History	SEN	0	1	0	0	1	1	3n	3n	Mixed	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	Y	





Aware of History?	Spoke to SMT	Wrote to MP	Gnt Consultation	Facebook	HA Survey	Signed petition	Internet discussion	Other	Total No. Actions	Other Developed	Why Important	Reason 1	Reason 2	Reason 3	Email
Schama	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4		To explain the negative impact these changes would have on Pupils' learning and engagement	UK Focus	Elitist		
	0	0	0	0	0	0			0			Continuity	Content	Assessment	
Schama, Ferguson Starkey, Ferguson, Schama	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		Important to make SMT aware of my views as the new NC will require large changes in the department	Prescription	UK Focus		
		1			1	1	1	1	4		To at least feel as though my concerns had been raised	Too much change	Boring	Date Range	
starkey and schama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
schama	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2		What's the point? They'll do what they want. I wanted to register my disapproval but do not hold out any hope at all unless they want to change. Teachers are not important enough to listen to.	UK Focus	Prescriptive	Profile (+ve)	
	1								1		Point out the change and work involved and time required	Churn			
	1	0	1	1	1	1	1		6		Huge impact on working life. Lots of extra hours needed that school will not allow for. Training needed in new topics which will not be funded.	Work			
Schama and Starkey	1						1		2		I wanted SLT to be aware of the scale of potential changes and how much of the curriculum we would need to cover as an academy if it was enforced.	Date Range	Dry	Elitist	
	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	5		Not thought through	Not thought through	Content rather than skills		
								1	1	1	I didn't want students to be put off studying history. We have healthy option numbers and great results and I would not have been passionate about teaching a political history curriculum agenda	dull			



	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2		So that changes of the draft would be made	Narrow content Prescriptive	Virtues of the British Empire	Boring content
	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1					
Schama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			Obscure content	No Primary expertise	
										0				Influential figures omitted	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2		Our 'Voices must be heard. If the gnt will not listen then we must find another way.	Pro-Britannia	figures omitted	
	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2		Show support for a more organised campaign	Too much content	KS2 non specialists	
										0					
Schama	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1		To add to the numbers that were concerned which would have had more chance of the gnt ghanghing things	KS2 non specialists	put off kids	no wider world context
Richard Evans															
Anthony Beevor															
Niall Ferguson															
David Starkey															
Simon Schama	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	4	4		It was quicker and convenient.	It was politicised – right wing narrative.	It was extremely content heavy, which prevented any depth.	have a misguided notion that medieval History was "easy" and

## Appendix 8 – Full data by ID number of interview volunteer subset

ID	Name	Age Group	Qualified	School Type	Degree Subject	Higher Degree Subject	HA Member	Read TH	SK INSET	SHP Conf	Network	Mentor	Total Engagement	Hist Teach Comm?	View	Resource	Difficult to teach	Off Putting	Affect GCSE	Badly Thought through	Too modern	Too British	Too Prescriptive	Too much content	Total no. Reasons	POLITICAL?	Political Development
Engaged 1 Resistor	21-30	>2008	Community	Politics	History	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6 Y	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	Y	
4 Not selected	21-30	>2008	New Academy	History	History	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4 Y	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	8 Y		I feel it was part of traditional conservatism and does not serve the needs of the whole country
Skills 11 Resistor	21-30	>2008	New Academy	History	History	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3 Y	Negative	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	7 Y		I firmly believe that it was introduced to shed history in a bad light, to create problems and to marginalise the subject whereas there was an importance previously attached to it under ebacc as more traditional and academic subject
Instinctive 14 Resistor	21-30	>2008	Community	History	History	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3 n	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9 Y		High school history was set up to be all about the rise of the conservative party
Political 17 Resistor	21-30	2000-2008	New Academy	History	History	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	4 Y	Mixed	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	5 Y		Inclusion of key topics for empire and equally inclusion of political history (i.e. Thatcher) Lack of cultural inclusion in line with view of very white middle/upper class male domination
18 Not Selected	21-30	>2008	Community	History	History	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 Y	Mixed	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	8		
Classroom 10 Engager	31-40	2000-2008	New Academy	History	History	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2 Y	Negative	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	8 Y		I think the main motivation was Gove's wish list based on what he liked and had studied. I do think that Gove regards certain events as being politically important e.g. Clive of India
13 Not selected	31-40	1991-2000	New Academy	History	History	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	3 n	Negative	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	8 Y		Based on a narrow conservative (big and small c) view of history
Mature 15 Resistor	31-40	2000-2008	New Academy	History	History	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	4 Y	Negative	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	7 Y		I totally agree with the aims and educational motivations of Mr Gove and the history curriculum. I just fundamentally disagree with the methods and solutions that he came up with. The aims to do appear political but the solutions/methods are completely political



20	Not selected	31-40	1991-2000	Community	History	Education	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	5 y	Gove branded his opponents "Marxists" and "lefties"
32	Historical Pedagogist	31-40	2000-2008	New Academy	American Studies		0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	7 y	Yes. It seemed to be driven by a Daily Mail headline agenda of "34 children have never heard of Winston Churchill/Lord Nelson" or whatever right wing folk hero.	
16	Mature Reluctant	41-50	2000-2008	Community	History		0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3 y		

Aware of Historians?	Spoke to SMT	Wrote to MP	Gnt Consultation	Facebook	HA Survey	Signed petition	Internet discussion	Other	Total No. Actions	Other Developed	Why Important	Reason 1	Reason 2	Reason 3
Schama	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	4		To explain the negative impact these changes would have on Pupils' learning and engagement	UK Focus	Elitist	
Schama, Ferguson	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		Important to make SMT aware of my views as the new NC will require large changes in the department	Prescription	UK Focus	
	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	5		Without any action, Gove might have got his stupid proposals through. Very angry and neglected my 16C specialism. No way in hell I could/ would want to teach it	Not thought through	Content rather than skills	
Schama	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	6		Without any action, Gove might have got his stupid proposals through. Very angry and neglected my 16C specialism. No way in hell I could/ would want to teach it	ill advise	ravings of a lunatic	assumes primary skill
Schama	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	5		If we do not address areas of concern it won't change. The second draft was much more suitable and it was obvious that action resulted in change	WASP	Narrative/ Chronology	Academies need not teach it, so why bother?
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			seems backwards	driven by a clueless politicians	
Schama and Starkey	1						1		2		I wanted SLT to be aware of the scale of potential changes and how much of the curriculum we would need to cover as an academy if it was enforced.	Date Range	Dry	Elitist
	1								1					
Schama called for rebellion	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	5	Discussed in Cheshire Heads of History Network	Support the consensus who thought it was wrong and to appeal to gove to come up with a better solution	Chronology	1950s Grammar school curriculum	no consultation

starkey, Schama, Ferguson	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	I felt that the HA survey might carry some weight	prescriptive and content heavy	not thematic	unappealing content
Richard Evans Anthony Beever Niall Ferguson David Starkey Simon Schama	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	It was quicker and convenient.	It was politicised – right wing narrative.	It was extremely content heavy, which prevented any depth.	Seemed to have a misguided notion that medieval History was "easy" and therefore can be given to Primary school children. No grasp of what primary school children are capable of grasping conceptually.
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		Grading	Abolition of Coursework	Lacked detail

## Appendix 9 – Interview Transcripts

### i. Mature Reluctant

- I:** Okay so can you just confirm umm for the tape that you've read and signed the consent form?  
**R:** Yes I've read and signed.
- I:** Thank you. Right umm so the first question is how would you describe yourself as a history teacher?  
**R:** Enthusiastic, loud umm quite opinionated.
- I:** What and what do you think is the benefit of a history education to children?  
**R:** Because I think it trains where, where we are now and where, where we are as umm a nation, where we are as individuals, how we, we got to be where we are err why we are what we are. You know our origins you know when you look back and people make statements about you know let's not let them come here and I think well we're, we're a mixture of everything aren't we and I think people need to know that, that we are all you know we are all valued for what we are and I think children need to know their origins in order to make that, that you know those choices.
- I:** So is, is history a kind of education for citizenship?  
**R:** I think so yeah.
- I:** Umm in that, if that's the case what is the sense of non-British history, what's the place of non-British history in Great Britain?  
**R:** Umm (sighs) that's an interesting question. Err I think non-Brit, you can, you can compare us to non-British history so, and you can then make maybe some judgements as to why certain societies are the way they are and why we are the way we are which is not to say that we're better but so that we can see where we've come from, can we learn anything from, from anybody else.
- I:** Umm so the, the function of it is that you are umm educating them about what it means to be a modern Briton?  
**R:** A modern Briton and but you can also compare that to other societies and so you can take what you can from your society and what you can from other societies as well.
- I:** Do you think if that's the goal that needs a study of the past can it not be taught as a, a citizenship?  
**R:** It could but I just think that for me I just like the idea that we can see where we've come from, yeah and we can look at other societies today and compare ourselves but I, I like, I also like that sense of history but also that sense that we, we've not always, you know we've evolved as well so and you get that sense of evolving from where we've come from.
- I:** Okay umm do you think there's such a thing as a typical history teacher?  
**R:** God that's a really hard question to answer because umm I don't really come into contact with very many other history teachers these days so I don't know what a typical history teacher is anymore, I don't really know what's out there, what's different I just know what I do and what Kate does and I know what, what the schools that I've been in do. I have to say I've probably not got out there as much as I should do.
- I:** Umm you say as much as you should do, why do you think you haven't?  
**R:** Restrictions on going on courses 'cause that's what, I mean going on courses is good because you do, if you get the right one you're not, not only learned something new but you meet other people and that's how you exchange views err so we've had a restriction on that and we've not been, you know we've not had the funding to go umm, normally my Head of Department would go to meetings with other schools in West Lancs and unfortunately she's not in a health, her health has meant that she's not been able to do that which has meant that the department is short staffed which means I've not been able to go out. So there's, there's a few reasons funding and staffing.
- I:** Practical reasons?  
**R:** Yeah.
- I:** Yeah.  
**R:** Yeah.
- I:** So when I've asked do you think there exists a history teaching community you've put 'yes but I don't feel part of it or want to be part of it', which of those is it?  
**R:** Umm I would say I don't feel part of it.
- I:** Okay.  
**R:** Because of, for what you would say would be practical reasons.
- I:** Umm what, what is it, what is the history teaching community then as you put that?  
**R:** I would like, for instance I would like to sort of get in touch with umm other teachers in West Lancs to see what they teach and how they teach it, umm people of different generations, people younger than me umm like Sarah next door she's in a, in a West Lancs Consortium and they're all coming here today so there's, there's heads of err art from all over, so from Ormskirk up to Tarleton umm and they're all gonna meet and exchange ideas and they're, you know that, that's what I'd like.
- I:** So do you imagine it as umm a local thing this history teacher community?  
**R:** Initially yeah. I think but, I mean I think West Lancs is quite big.
- I:** Mmm.  
**R:** So you, you could get a nice sort of mix but I don't know whether it would be possible to do it beyond.
- I:** Do, do you think there is, a, a wider sense of what it means to be a history teacher in England, do you think there's a, an English history teacher community?  
**R:** No I don't think -
- I:** No.

R: I don't think there is that I'm aware of.

I: **Okay so you, it, it's very much a local thing if there's a community?**

R: I think so yeah.

I: **Yeah. Umm and you say about the, the meetings, the physical meeting important to a concept of a community here?**

R: I think so because you can actually physically bring the things with you then can't you.

I: **Mmm.**

R: You can show people umm what you do, umm you can show people's work, you can show people's books. I think what's really important at the moment is you know feedback to children about you know with their levels where you're at and, and how, how can you achieve the next level and I think change, exchanging those ideas for me when I've been able to; so when we've exchanged ideas about marking and feedback in school it's always been really useful but I think it would be even more useful if I could then look at other departments, other history departments to see how they do it specifically.

I: **Right.**

R: So that would help me and that would help the kids as well.

I: **Yeah umm so the next question is about umm this February draft.**

R: Right.

I: **Umm this, here it is here to refresh your memory.**

R: Yeah.

I: **How did you find out about it?**

R: Well just, well initially you know you, you've got Michael Gove on the telly talking about what he's gonna do to the national curriculum and things like that so you just start to Google it then which I just Google it.

I: **So umm, so how soon, this, this came out in February the 7<sup>th</sup> how soon after February 7<sup>th</sup> did you see it?**

R: I would, I, I was, we didn't see it straight away I probably saw it about, was it about the end of March, about the end of March I think.

I: **And what were your initial reactions to it?**

R: Umm.

I: **You put mixed.**

R: Mixed because umm it wasn't anything that we haven't sort of done before, it was a bit mixed I'm not sure whether, there's a few things on there that, like umm I just think are, are so hard for the, you know like the French Revolution, Napoleonic Wars, the, I'm mixed because there's an awful lot there and I'm mixed as to you know which you know are we still picking and choosing what we can do.

I: **But it, it does say pupils should be taught about -**

R: Yeah.

I: **Which implies that there is no choice.**

R: Yeah. So I just, I just (...) I suppose it's just a personal preference as well that you bring to it of, you know do I think that's relevant umm and just because I think it's relevant, I think there's a lot there that I like umm because it's, it's what I was taught but I'm thinking that's not necessarily what the kids like I'm not sure it's, it's relevant for the kids.

I: **What do you mean by relevance then?**

R: Umm I just think you know Wolf and the Conquest of Canada I love things like that but I'm not, I'm not sure that they're that interested in things like that. Did -

I: **Is it that they're not interested or that we haven't taught it, how can you say that you, you don't think they will be interested -**

R: Yeah I know.

I: **In something like that -**

R: Because Gladstone and Disraeli I'm thinking well I love that, I love that you know when I was in year 9 and year 10 going through stuff like that and I'm thinking oh I don't think they would be so maybe that's a valid point, maybe it's actually 'cause we don't do it, maybe they would be as interested as I was at 14, maybe I'm just thinking about the modern child and thinking and, and, make, making a stereotypical judgement that they wouldn't be so that's a point.

I: **So but, in what sense then you've, you've talked about relevance, the stereotypical modern child, why do you think this, this worked for you and wouldn't work now or?**

R: Just, I just sort of put my, put them into my school and think well I loved that and that's, and I loved it because of I don't know, because I just love those subjects I just loved anything to do with history so I suppose I'm just making a judgement based on modern children with mobile phones and things like that thinking well they wouldn't necessarily be interested in Gladstone and maybe I've made the wrong assumption.

I: **Umm what about the, the fact that it's the start date effectively starting 1750?**

R: Umm -

I: **Because I'm interested in what you said earlier about the, the kind of knowing who you are and where we came from.**

R: Yeah.

I: **Umm there's an argument for saying well that necessitates an emphasis on modern history.**

R: Yeah.

I: **Because arguably knowing about the feudal system does not inform who you are as a British person in 2014.**

R: No it doesn't.

I: **So does this, does this concentrated on modern history does that help in -**

R: Well I think it's really difficult 'cause you know you can't, how far can you go back you can't go back to the, we can't go back to the iron age and the what have you because we just, we haven't got the time to do it and when you, when you cherry pick and things and think well we'll do it but we'll just do it in no depth whatsoever. I do think 1066 is a good place to start.

**I:** **Why?**

**R:** Because, umm because I think well for, for one thing it's the last time we'd been conquered umm you can do a brief overview I think before then. I think you could do a brief overview of between when the Romans go and when, and 1066 I think that's possible umm but I, I just think that it's, for me it's just, maybe it's my defining moment of, of what we are because we will just, we're not, we're not British in the British sense are we, we are, we're not English, we're not, we're a mixture of everyone aren't we and I think that sort of, I think you can start with a depth study in 1066 I think it's a good place to start for a depth study.

**I:** **So, so this start date is less appropriate you think?**

**R:** For me yeah.

**I:** **Umm and umm so broadly how would this have been taught if this had come in in your school, how, do, do you, can you see it working, how would it work?**

**R:** Umm, right we would've done this as Empire, we would've had, we would have had umm, we wouldn't, enlightenment would have sort of been put in there. We, we've never done this before so I think that would have got a little bit overlooked, we would have, I think in this department we would've had what we've always had which is umm a unit on Britain and her empire, umm we'd have followed that by the slave trade, we'd have followed that by the slave trade umm yeah so we'd have done that and that, probably umm wouldn't have done that.

**I:** **But this, this implies that you, you wouldn't have to teach French revolution.**

**R:** Yeah.

**I:** **You would have to teach Cladstone/Disraeli really so what would that have meant?**

**R:** I think for us that would've meant an overview, I think we'd have done, we'd have done that in more depth, that would be done as an overview, that would've been done as an overview.

**I:** **So by that you mean for the tape the enlightenment would've been an overview?**

**R:** Yeah.

**I:** **The, the French Revolution would've been -**

**R:** French Revolution would've been an overview. We would've done this bit, Peterloo and the 6 Acts, we probably would have done that as a general, we probably would've brought more things into that and we probably would've done that as a, you know we do a protest unit, err the struct, umm political pro, protest that would've been, we'd have done a depth study on slave trade umm the, we would've put the great, the reformat and the chartist in with this as a, as a political protest unit, umm we'd have done the reformats together as well. Yeah battle for home rule probably would've been done as an overview as well.

**I:** **What it sounds like you would've done is basically carry on doing what you're doing umm where it agrees with this curriculum and where they've suggested things that you don't currently do you would try and get rid of it as quickly as possible, is that an unfair character?**

**R:** Initially I would say that's fair.

**I:** **Mmm.**

**R:** As you get time to develop them, 'cause we do I think one, one of the things that we're really good at is we do develop our, our units and we do spend more time on things that we think need it and less time on things that we think well they weren't as important so I think initially yeah until, until you actually get to grips with your timing.

**I:** **A huh.**

**R:** Umm and, and actually see how it goes that's for me, you know when I'm doing something different you, you know your first year is well we'll do it and then we'll, we'll tweak it, we always tweak it and always change it.

**I:** **Yeah.**

**R:** And I almost think we make it better.

**I:** **So you, you're not, it wouldn't have meant a wholesale change?**

**R:** No.

**I:** **It would've meant a slow evolutionary change.**

**R:** I think so. I think so.

**I:** **Umm one of the criticisms you said of it there was not enough detail, what detail would you have liked?**

**R:** Umm (...) sort of like, especially for something I've not taught before like the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars details of the main events to cover, you know because I can read it through, I can read, I can read a section on the French Revolution and I can think well what do I think umm we should teach when I've never taught it before, what I thought would've been better for me is just give me a little bit of a pointer for the French Revolution, cover those main events 'cause that's what, what they, what the national curriculum think are the, are the main events whereas rather than me thinking I think they're the most important and sort of get it wrong.

**I:** **'Cause what's, what's interesting about that is that the more normal, more common criticisms I should say rather than normal of, of this curriculum is that it does exactly what you say. So for example where it says the First World War -**

**R:** Yeah.

**I:** **It states exactly what -**

**R:** Yeah, what you're gonna do.

**I:** **What is meant by the First World War.**

**R:** Yeah.

**I:** **Umm so do you -**

**R:** You see I like that because I understand it but for that, the French Revolution and the rights of man I'm thinking 'well I don't know what the key points are in there, I don't know what the key events are, I don't know who the key people are.'

**I:** **Are, are you, are you comfortable with the Secretary of State for Education deciding what the most important bits of history are?**

**R:** No I'm not because I think you can't make, he can't make that decision on his own and you can't make it based on your own education which is what he's doing.

I: **But you're asking him to when you say can I, can you give me more detail by what you mean by the French Revolution.**

R: Yeah.

I: **If he then says "well it needs" -**

R: I don't particularly want his -

I: **Okay so -**

R: I want -

I: **So who do you, who do you want to have written this?**

R: I would like, I would like a historian to have written it.

I: **By historian you mean a, a?**

R: Well maybe a group of historians, a group of historians who have different views and you debate it, you say well we'll put that in because, and you know that's what I would've wanted because one of the things that government is supposed to do is listen to experts aren't they, they're supposed to go to the experts and say "you tell me what you think."

I: **So but you, you think the experts in arena are historians in the sense of academic historians working in the history departments of universities?**

R: I think you, well historians from, from different walks of life I mean I wouldn't necessarily just say that they're complete academics from universities, maybe look, maybe look ask teachers as well what, what they think you know and, and then maybe historians as well who don't teach but then again I wouldn't, you know I wouldn't just have one person dictating it, you might as well just put David Starkey in charge mightn't ya!

I: **Umm well in, in the, in the sense that he's one person and you're saying it needs to be done by committee?**

R: Yeah I think so.

I: **Umm and that that committee should be a mixture of historians and history teachers?**

R: I think so.

I: **And what do you think history teachers would bring to it that experts in history wouldn't?**

R: Umm what, what is (...) oh God what is relevant, I mean some of the things, I mean are they, are they all relevant, I think the history teach, I mean I think a historian might think well you know these are all important 'cause this is, if you want to show us our origins we need to cover all these and we need to start here and we need to go there and I think as a historian I could say yeah I think they're all important but I don't think we should spend too much time on that and we've got time constraints and I think the history teachers would be able to say well listen you, you, you, you've got the history background but I've got, I'm in a classroom, I've got the time and I know how many hours I've got with those kids, I know what's possible in that length of time.

I: **Could -**

R: I've gotta plan this and I've gotta teach it.

I: **Could you not run the risk then of you know you use this word relevant again -**

R: Mmm.

I: **Umm a word that we struggle to define, could you not run the risk that the historian would say you just don't wanna put that in because you're dumbing down? If you, if you use words like relevance and what can work in a classroom how do you defend yourself against you just wanna do the easy stuff?**

R: Oh 'cause I don't do the easy stuff, 'cause there's loads, this is all hard lots of it there's loads of concepts in here that are hard and what you've also gotta get across is yes you've got to have certain levels for certain children but you've also gotta stretch kids, you've gotta do some of the difficult stuff 'cause you've gotta get them thinking, you've got, you've got to get them able to analyse and evaluate and debate and have an opinion so I think there's plenty of stuff in there that's hard, I wouldn't just, I wouldn't just lash the easy stuff.

I: **But you, but you -**

R: Or do the easy stuff.

I: **But you said you, you would go through this and say well that might not be relevant, how would you determine its relevance?**

R: So is that, so is that gonna be my personal opinion then?

I: **I don't know.**

R: I don't have the answer.

I: **Umm I'm just, I'm just thinking kind of theoretically about how you can achieve a curriculum with history teachers and historians paying in?**

R: What you mean when everyone's got their own opinion?

I: **Mmm.**

R: Well that's gonna be very difficult isn't it, I haven't got the answers but I'd like to think that you would get you know that you could get, that these secretary state would have information from, from different types of people.

I: **Is there anything that history teachers could do or say that would make their criteria for including things more rigorous because if, if we just say it's about relevance.**

R: Yeah.

I: **We're gonna get accused of dumbing down, how do we defend what we do in a classroom to an academic historian. David Starkey has criticised history teaching in England.**

R: Yeah.

I: **What do we say back to him, he says it's too easy we, we, it's too much about fun and not enough about learning what happened, how do we defend ourselves against that?**

R: By well, by coming in at you know look at my lesson you know I don't -

I: **He's too busy.**

R: Well then get off your backside and come and see my less, don't tell me my lessons, don't tell me my lessons are easy, don't tell me I pick easy subjects unless you come in and see me, I'm sure maybe some people do but you

- know I'm trying to stretch children in Year 9 so I'm giving them GCSE work, that's not dunning it down that's not easy.
- I: But what, what does, but what does the stretch mean; what does, what does it mean that you're doing something harder?**
- R:** I'm not dunning it down, he said history, history's easy well no it's not. This is what he learned it's not easy stuff is it and we're, we're doing this now it's not easy stuff so I don't think what I do is easy, I don't think what I give the kids is easy, I don't think that I, we don't play games in history you know we've, we've gone back to umm OFSTED who are coming in and who don't want to see all singing, all dancing lessons, they want to see learning going on. They don't want to see me playing games with students 'cause I, and I certainly don't wanna do that, that's not what it's about. I think you can do interesting activities umm that are, that have a place but I'm not doing fun activities throughout a whole lesson, I want some learning to take place and I want them to do it as well.
- I: Okay umm so you, you have kind of mixed feelings towards this, you didn't do anything to contribute to, it was open for consultation -**
- R:** Yeah.
- I: You didn't contribute at consultation.**
- R:** No I didn't, I didn't.
- I: Umm you didn't join internet discussions -**
- R:** I didn't.
- I: You didn't respond to the Historical Association survey, why? It's harder -**
- R:** I'm just gonna say again there's gonna be time constraints you know the number of times that you think right I'll go and do something and then you're side tracked and somebody else grabs you to do something so purely probably just time constraints.
- I: Did, did you intend to do it if you didn't have time constraints or was it just that you weren't sufficiently bothered it wasn't important enough for you to make time to do it?**
- R:** Umm I'd say you've probably got a bit of an inkling of, of being right there. If you were to ask me to go online and do it I'd be going yeah okay and then I'd finding something out to, if you actually sent me something in the post, I know that's awful but I'm really, if you actually send me something I'm more likely to fill it in and join in or if I was, if I was invited to a forum I would be more than, more than likely to go 'cause when Edge hill have done umm forums and things like that, for different things not, not particularly history but educational things and it's, it's 5:00 Edge hill have gone you know, I've sort of gone because my mind's more focussed on it and it's sort of after school and things like that so I'd say it's a bit of laziness and a bit of, bit of apathy and a bit of make it a bit more easy for me to do it. Sorry.
- I: So when, you don't have to apologise, so when this got changed and this is the most recent err version.**
- R:** Yeah.
- I: Do you prefer this?**
- R:** Is this the one, this is the one that I've got here isn't it?
- I: This is the one that we have now.**
- R:** Yes. Umm I liked the bits where there were things that I could sort of still relate to, like the fact that we're going to do continue, con, continuity and change, cause and consequence. I like those key factors that we've had in the national curriculum before and I liked those because I think they fit in to everything that we do so we, I, I like that there was a few things that, I like the idea that we're doing British local and world history umm I was, I was quite scared that Michael Gove was gonna side-line world history and just have us concentrating on British history so I like the way that he's brought in other histories that will link to ours so I like that, umm (...) I mean very much more what we've, what we've been doing there was a couple of things that I was umm, I'm still again I probably highlighted the French revolutionary wars 'cause I don't know much about it and I'm probably like any of the kids a little bit frightened of something that I don't know much about.
- I: But, but these are non-statutory in it.**
- R:** Yeah, yeah that's the other thing that I can't get me head round if, so they're, they're the non-statutory ones so I, so I know I don't have to do these and which -
- I: You've only to do the bullet points.**
- R:** Yeah.
- I: Not the bits in the boxes.**
- R:** Yeah but I meant just, I know I've not, I know I don't have to do it but I was a bit Darwin's and the origin of species I was thinking oh I wouldn't, I would do some of these.
- I: A huh.**
- R:** Again maybe I'm picking and choosing where they fit in with me.
- I: But this invites you to pick and choose.**
- R:** Yeah, yeah. So I like, I like that umm oh sorry that's just my bit. I liked that it was umm am I allowed to say this again, sort of more or less what we, what we have been doing umm.
- I: Is that because what we've been doing's good or because you, it means less change, less work?**
- R:** I don't think it means less change and less work because I think you always have to change whatever you do, even if you're doing the First World War every year I think that you have to change certain things because I get, I'm not gonna do those worksheets, one they're not very good and two there's different ways of teaching it. I think like for instance I just sorted out Year 10's medicine starting in September. I've binned everything that I don't wanna use next year 'cause I think it was okay then but I can do it better umm and I've just redone all the worksheets so I don't think just because you do the same thing every year, I don't think it means you stand still I think you changed things, you adapt things, something doesn't work don't keep it, get rid of it so I don't think that just 'cause you're teaching the same things means that you can just sit back on your laurels and do nothing I think you always have to change the activities that you're doing.
- I: Can I ask you a little bit more about these key concepts?**
- R:** Yeah.



I: **That you said you liked.**

R: Yeah.

I: **Umm why do you like them, why do you like that they've been kept?**

R: Because I, 'cause continuity and change I think fits into all your modules so you're starting off at umm 1066 with your, you know your Battle of Hastings and then you can see what's changed and what stay, you know I think if you concentrate on those as a thread through I think the kids get it.

I: **So this is you teach your course with a single chronology from 1066?**

R: We have -

I: **Yes.**

R: That's what we have done more or less yeah.

I: **Err but the key concepts more generally why do you like them?**

R: Because I like cause and consequences I like, because I think once the kids get it they get it you know, why should we study the First World War well we should study the First World War because we should look at the causes of it and the reason why we should look at the causes of it is so that we can hopefully avoid it because we don't make those mistakes again err and you're educating children and even if we don't do it, even if 'cause it doesn't work it just by umm you know teaching causes to children doesn't mean that they, when they get to adults aren't gonna make the same mistakes but I think it can focus them, I think we, we, we should do cause and consequence because you look at the causes of World War I and you look at the consequences of World War I. I don't really wanna look at World War I and look at trench fort, I'm not interested in what life was like in a trench to be fair I think the most important thing about World War I is what caused it in the first place and what happened as a consequence of it, so that's why I like things like that 'cause I think they have a value at the end of it.

I: **These, these concepts where do you think they've come from in similarity, indifference, significance, where, what are they for, where are they from? Do you think the -**

R: You mean whose come up with them?

I: **Yeah do, do you think they're things that, that historians would all agree on as a consensus that these are history?**

R: Probably not. Probably not I mean probably some historians wouldn't agree that they are the most important I mean for instance some historians might like you know teaching World War I and teaching every single aspect of World War I and you could spend, you could spend a year teaching World War I couldn't ya umm and I think one of the ideas is that I think when you're looking at continuity and change and cause and consequence that would help focus on what, what you would teach for say World War I 'cause you can't, I'm not gonna teach the Battle of Somme, I'm not gonna sit there and say "this happened on day 1 and this happened on day 2" 'cause I think it's irrelevant for the children I think it's, I think it's boring umm I think you could switch a lot of people off and I think you've got to in order to get through that you've got to teach certain things and I think a theme would help you to teach a unit.

I: **But you could umm you know theme teaching a unit could you not use these things to make things more relevant and could you not ask the question how significant was the Battle of the Somme or something like that?**

R: Yeah you could. You're absolutely right you could.

I: **Is this, I mean this depends on what the teacher likes doesn't it?**

R: Yes.

I: **Again. (laughs).**

R: (Laughs) You're gonna have, yeah.

I: **Yeah, yeah.**

R: I'm sort, yeah you do, it does matter, it's making me think about why I've highlighted these things and why I think about this is my own personal trust isn't it?

I: **It, it is interesting in these discussions that you're, you're the only person who's looked at the aims, whose looked at the key concepts and, and rather than just looking at what it says -**

R: You look at the content you mean?

I: **Yeah rather than just look at the content you've, you've looked at the key concepts.**

R: Because I, because what I think that we teach when they first come in in Year 7 is skills, we try and concentrate on skills.

I: **What do you mean by skills?**

R: So we're looking at umm chronology, so we're making sure that all our kids who come in Year 7 have a good chronological understanding 'cause I don't think you can, if we're gonna start in 1066 you've got to know what chronology is.

I: **What is a good chronological understanding?**

R: Umm that you can put, that you can put dates into order that you know the difference between BC and AD because you'll be surprised, well no you won't be surprised at the amount of children that didn't.

I: **Isn't putting dates in order is that chronology because they go in numerical order don't they, or certainly after AD.**

R: Yeah, yeah.

I: **You know the year 3 comes after the year 2.**

R: Yeah.

I: **Is that an understanding of chronology?**

R: Umm it's a basic understanding of chronology, umm we also like to teach analysing and evaluating the sources in -

I: **What does that mean?**

R: In year, looking at them, what, what's it actually tell ya, what can you see umm and then the you know evaluate, you know what does it suggest we, we can move on to those types of things with some of our year 7's, some of our year 7's will struggle with that but what we try to concentrate on year 7 is, is the skills we do a baseline assessment when they first come through the door to see what they do and what they don't know umm very few of them have

good chronology skills even though it's only counting, putting dates in order umm very few know the difference between AD and BC so I don't think you can do that, you can't do any, I don't mean we spend 6 years or 6 months on BC and AD I mean we spend, we spend half an hour there you go this is what this is, this is what this is and you know it doesn't, it doesn't take forever but they don't know and I can't move on.

I: **A huh.**

R: You know I can't move on to a task that's got something to do with BC and AD when they go "I don't, I don't know what that is" so I think we, we, we do the basics first.

I: **So you do chronology, you do, you said you look at sources?**

R: Yeah.

I: **Umm what other things do you consider to be skills?**

R: Umm well the lower level ones are chronology and umm comprehension umm and then the high base skills are analysing and evaluating. So initially they, you know they are low level but we find that they can't do it.

I: **And, and how do those skills tie in with these concepts?**

R: Umm continuity and change I mean you can, you can, if you can think about, 'cause I always think about chronology as in my head I can put things into, into order so when I'm looking at umm causes and consequence I would think well what were the causes of World War I well it's not just necessarily what happened the day before, it's not necessarily just what, what happened about the week before it might actually be what happened 30 years before so if we're teaching chronology and important events and dates they can put them into the context of something else, so that's why I think skills are important.

I: **Okay umm we're coming to the end now umm I just wanna ask you about your views on umm the Historical Association and umm the schools history project.**

R: Yeah.

I: **Umm so you, you said you read Teaching History magazine, does that mean you're a member of the Historical Association?**

R: No, no.

I: **You have read it?**

R: I have read it, I've read it umm now and again I've downloaded one on me kindle now and again when there's an interesting article, I don't do it very often umm I used to subscribe to the other one and I can't remember what it's called.

I: **The Historian? History Today?**

R: Umm it's err, I used to really like this I had people say I must subscribe to that one again, let me just get it 'cause I've got some here....

WALKS OFF TO LOOK FOR MAGAZINE

I: **It's not massively important anyway.**

R: Oh I can't remember it, I really like it and I keep thinking I'll subscribe to that again and I miss sign up.

I: **So umm what do you, what do you think is the role of the Historical Association?**

R: I don't really know much about it, umm the Historical Association I'm assuming is an association that just wants to inform as many people as they possibly can and subscribe to their magazine and I'm sure they're, they've very interesting but I really don't know an awful lot about them.

I: **That's fine and umm the school's history project, what do you see it as?**

R: Umm I do, I do quite like it, I'm not -

I: **Well first of all what is it to you, what does it mean to you?**

R: The school's history project.

I: **The school's history project.**

R: To me means is the, is the course that we did, is that the one you're talking about?

I: **Do you mean the, the -**

R: The AQ -

I: **You mean about it just in terms of the GCSE course?**

R: Yeah that's how I think about the school's history project.

I: **Right.**

R: Umm I'm (sighs) I'm not a massive fan of the choice that they give us but that's my personal opinion again because I really probably Gove would love me 'cause I like the course that we used to do and they've, AQA have narrowed that and we've picked up on the school's history project and I'm -

I: **So what don't you like about the, the school's history project GCSE?**

R: Right medicine through time I think is absolutely massive, there's, there's too much to cover umm my time constraints 'cause I only get 2 hours a week I have to cover a massive amount of information in that time, I don't like that umm -

I: **But isn't that your change and continuity that you're -**

R: Oh I know but I've gotta be able, I've got to be able to fit it in to my timeframe and I find that I have to rush the school history project medicine through time because it's so, there's so much content 'cause you're starting at pre-history, you know Egyptian, Greek, Roman and it's bloody Christmas and I haven't even got through Dark Ages, Medieval, Renaissance, Industrial, Enlightenment, umm modern, modern modern, it's I just find it massive. I wish we could concentrate it a little bit more.

I: **So you'd like more depth and less prep?**

R: Yes.

I: **In -**

R: On that one yeah.

I: **Umm can you think why the school's history project decided to do that because obviously if you study modern worlds which is the alternative.**

R: Yeah.

I: **It is all depth.**

R: Yeah.

I: **What, what is the thinking behind the school's history project wanting the study?**

R: Well I'm sure their thinking behind it is that you, you know you've got everything haven't you, you've got from the begin, you've got from the very beginning to now so you cover absolutely everything so you can, you can look at the continuity and the change right from the beginning umm for me as I said before 1066 that was for me was a turning point, that's, so but maybe for the school's history their, their starting point has to be prehistoric and I get it, I just can't get through the content too much and modern world would've been better 'cause it's a, it's less breadth and more depth but it wasn't my choice to do it. My head of department decides which course we're doing and that's the one that we're doing.

I: **And umm so you, your only kind of awareness of the school's history project is that, that syllabus.**

R: It is.

I: **For you school's history project just means that's a -**

R: That's the only place I've come across them.

I: **Okay umm it doesn't mean anything about you know the, the conference that they have, the, the text books that have been written -**

R: Oh I've seen the text books.

I: **You've seen the text books.**

R: I've seen the text books because what we've done is over the years we have sometimes bought SHP text books but not followed an SS, SHP sort of curriculum as it were, we've used them.

I: **Yeah.**

R: For the things, 'cause some of the, I, I do like some of the SHP text books umm and when we've not always bought a whole set we might buy one but then photocopy from it so I do like, the text books I do like.

I: **Okay umm and this is, a, a, again a question that doesn't matter if you don't have an answer to it, umm can you think of any umm history educators, or, or people in the field of history education who have influenced the way that you think about the past, so text book authors, that kind of thing. You know from teaching history magazine, teaching history articles possibly?**

R: Umm I'm a massive fan of David Starkey although I don't agree with everything that he says and I think that's what historians are allowed to do, I think you're allowed to buy into something. Umm I'm a massive fan of umm Simon Sharma as well umm not so much, so much a massive fan of umm it is Tristan, is it Trisan?

I: **Tristram.**

R: Tristram have I got it right, not such a massive fan of his but I've not come across, but to be fair I've not read an awful lot about his stuff. I do like umm, I can't remember the girl what's that nice lady on, she was on the telly the other week, I've only seen some of her programmes I've not read her stuff but oh you'll know her.

I: **Yeah.**

R: Umm but I, I like -

I: **What about history educators like text book authors, any of these people come on your -**

R: Umm the one, yes, yes. I like oh God Ben Walsh, I like his text books, umm some of his text books and I like some of his work, umm Mcalevy I think is very simplistic but I do like the other one which is the SHP one, is it yeah, no it's not I like that, that one's good. I like them.

I: **Ian Dawson and Dale Banham.**

R: Yeah and I've come across them before in, in some other text books. The Mcalevy one I think is very simplistic I think that's got a good range and a good level.

I: **Yeah.**

R: Umm I'm trying to think of any others.

I: **No that's great. That, that's the end of it thank you very much.**

R: Yeah. But an author that I used to read fiction on even if it's err rural fiction, fiction when I was a child I read books by a woman called Jean Plaidy, have you ever heard of her?

I: **No.**

R: No. You won't have ever heard of her, she's still in the library she used to write historical novels. I'm not saying that they are of any merit at all but it, that was what got me, that's what I read avidly umm as a 10 year old and they were quite high level. She just used to write about historical figures and well written but not necessarily accurate specifically.

I: **Right that's everything I need to say, have you got any questions before I turn the tape off?**

R: Umm no that's it.

I: **Okay.**

## ii. Mature Resistor

- I: Okay, can you just confirm for the tape that you've read and signed the Ethical Consent Form?**
- R: Yeah. Yes, I have signed the Ethical Consent Form.
- I: Thank you very much. Okay, umm, so just to, umm, kick off, could, umm, tell us how you would describe yourself as a history teacher?**
- R: Er, describe mys... in terms of the type of teacher I am?
- I: Umm, yeah, what you think's important, things that you identify with what you do, those kinds of things.**
- R: Okay. I mean, yeah, I'd like to think that, the most important thing of all, that we deliver something that's really dynamic and engaging, er, and interests kids. Not just in the s... not just in the fact that something's happened in the past but that it actually has relevance to what they're doing today, er, and that's something that's, er, throughout our whole department and in terms of the lessons and the schemes of work we produce. Umm, you know, we're always kind of looking to develop something that means something and that the kids can take away with them.
- I: So what would you say is the most important thing that a history education gives a young person?**
- R: Umm, it gives them, umm... it gives them a sense of where they are now, er, you know, so by using the past, er, and it gives them a valuable skills set for which they can then move on and do whatever they want to after they finish their history, whatever level that is they complete. So, you know, it's like that could be anything from essay writing, which eventually turns into how to write a good application letter, how to get a job, er, through to kind of learning to kind of sell themselves at interviews, through to kind of like whatever future career they go into.
- I: Umm, so there's the kind of, umm, role of giving the young person identity as part of it?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: Umm, and there's also these skills that you just mentioned. Umm, why is history better placed than other subjects to give those skills, report writing and...?**
- R: Umm, I wouldn't say that it's, umm, necessarily superior to the other subjects in that respect, other subjects will develop analytical and evaluative skills and will develop kind of written skills like English and the rest of humanities, but it's just another theme, another thread by which, you know, kids can hang these kind of skills on. Er, and in the same way, you know, take, umm, er, when it comes to kind of, er, creating identity, well, you know we work really closely with all three departments inside humanities, with Geography and RE, and we all work towards that goal of kind of developing this kind of sense of identity but it's not just their place in the w... it's not just their place in [our school] but it's their place in the country, in the past, in its future, as well as the kind of global kind of citizenship kind of idea. So, umm, you know, I mean, history's ideally placed to do that because obviously it's the study of where we are and where we've come from, er, and it's also understanding those kind of changes and developments over time. So our curriculum is very much based towards that but tied in with everything that Geography and RE do.
- I: Umm, in terms of, umm, what you've written in your written response, one of the questions was 'Do you think there exists a history teaching community?' and you said, umm, 'There are different communities not unified'.**
- R: Yeah.
- I: Could you expand on that?**
- R: So, for example, umm, I chair the... I chair, er, a Head of History, umm, meeting, er, that... you know, it's like a group, which is originally based around the East Cheshire eight schools, er, and now it's expanded to incorporate two or three from outside that as well, er, and we're expanding a little bit more and hopefully this summer where... you know, so hopefully we'll get another three or four schools joining in. So I know there's a network between, umm, the Heads of History, umm, across, you know, a dozen schools around Cheshire but in the same way I know that there are schools who do things absolutely isolated on their own and I know of other areas who don't have those sorts of networks, umm, or... yeah, or if they do they're very informal, er, and they don't have anything tied, so... So I know that other networks must exist like the one we've created around East Cheshire, umm, , but yet I also know of schools that are very disparate or who choose to be that way, who choose to work in isolation.
- I: What about defining community more broadly? So we're not just talking about a spatial local network –**
- R: Right.
- I: - but history teachers identifying with other history teachers nationally, internationally.**

R: Yeah. I mean, I've signed up to and I've taken part in some of those kind of national kind of chat forums and stuff, in the same way I've done work, umm, you know, that's gone across counties, let's say, er, when I'm working with exam boards, umm, and, you know, history teachers will get together and they'll talk about history things, and I've been to SHP conferences in Leeds, for example. Umm, but, you know, you wouldn't necessarily say that they're kind of permanent communities, they're kind of very disparate and they come together once in a while, as it were. Umm, whether there are stronger ties between some of those schools and those organisations, I don't know, er, certainly on my own part, you know, we've taken part in things but we haven't necessarily fully been part of that community where we've networked and developed things and so on. Umm, you know, we subscribe to things like the Historical Association, umm, er, and, er... and we get the History Today and stuff like that, umm, but whether that makes us fully fledged members, active and participating in things, we dip into some of the things and some magazines and pick and choose what we like and generally ignore what we don't, as it were. Umm, but it's doesn't necessarily kind of tie us to anything or doesn't make us feel like we're part of a community in that way.

I: **Yeah. So in terms of the SHP and the HA, I think what you've said is perfectly reasonable, you borrow what you like and you discard what you don't, and probably elsewhere there are other teachers, you know, taking the parts that you discard and discarding the parts that you keep. Umm, does... what does that... does that tell us anything about the SHP and the HA as... as... as... You know, a community does not have to be united all the time –**

R: No, I know, I appreciate -

I: **- do you see those as a community?**

R: Umm, I'm not sure if I do. You know, it's like, er, I mean, we... you know, for example, we were setting up a primary school project this year where I was in discussions with... er, at the beginning of it I was in discussions with the HA, er, about what we were doing and they were interested in what we were doing and I thought that would be fantastic to kind of like get their support on it, and, you know, I spoke to one of their advisors, to Alf Wilkinson, and that was, er... that was really positive. You know, he confirmed that we were in the right direction, as it were, in terms of what we were thinking. Umm, he gave us, umm, I suppose some insight info in terms of the revised draft curriculum, in terms of the key things to look out for there, er, and he was really generally useful, but they haven't... But it's not like... It's... it's... But they were there to be used as advice, I suppose, er, and they were very open in terms of whenever... you know, whenever I called that they were there, they were available. Umm, but I suppose it's not necessarily... it's one of those things where you're thinking, "Well could they have done a little bit more," you know, it's like if... if... if... and I know their finances are... they're not infinite but, umm, you know, if they're going to act as... if they're going to act as advisors there I was hoping that I might actually have someone acting as an overseer for me, someone who has a bigger idea of Key Stage 2 history and Key Stage 3 history, especially with the new revised curriculum. Umm, whereas very much it was a sounding post and an advice kind of stop, umm, but it didn't necessarily, you know, offer the support that perhaps I was kind of looking for.

I: **But so you were expecting the HA to be more kind of proactive in leading and showing the direction (overspeaking)?**

R: Yeah, I was hoping to, or to certainly... or to certainly kind of like, umm, to... to... to give me some models or some more connections.

I: **Yeah.**

R: Er, and any advice they did give me was always really useful. So, for example, I got in contact through them with, er, Professor Hokinson at Liverpool Hope, er, and... and... and that was really, you know, useful to kind of like once again to confirm that we're going in the right direction, but also to see a different perspective on things from someone who's researched this area thoroughly, er, and, as someone who's not very much on that research side and that academic side of education, I kind of... I was looking for a little bit of guidance in that respect. Umm, and, you know, you talk about community and does one exist, I was hoping for someone just to kind of keep tabs on me a little bit more.

I: **Yeah. Okay, that's a... So turning to these, umm, the February draft then. Umm, you said that overall your view of it was negative, umm, could you expand on that for us, please?**

R: Yeah, just... you know, it's okay. (Laughing) It was, er... it was like something dreamt up from some kind of outdated 1950s grammar schools master; umm, the thought my 4-year-old would be studying the political theory of monarch and parliament, er, in his first year, umm, was just ludicrous. Umm, and you could see what... you could see... you could see the principle behind what he was doing.

I: **Which was what?**

R: To... to kind of like have that chronological spread, to have that so-called 'narrative of the islands' being developed. But the problem was is that it was conceived by someone who just didn't seem to have an idea of what teaching school... of what teaching history in schools is like. Er, and, you know, it was one of things where, er, I didn't necessarily disagree with the overall principle, it was just the way it was then trying to be implemented that I was... I felt was completely wrong, er, and the whole... and the whole fact that you were going to go from Year 1 in Year 1 to Year 2001 or whatever it is by Year 9, umm, it was just... it was just preposterous because it didn't take into account

any notion of what kids actually are like. So, you know, it's like that issue of the fact that kids compartmentalise, they'll... they'll dump stuff out their head as soon as they've finished using it one year and then start afresh the next year. So... so basically, you know, it's like by the time they got to high school anything pre 1700, according to that scheme of work, would've just been completely forgotten, there's no connection.

**I: So what... what... how much would this have been improved if more of... if they kept the chronological structure but more of it had been moved into Key Stage 3?**

R: Umm, you know, I don't... I don't think... I don't think it would've improved a great deal anyway, I think fundamentally it was just, er... it was flawed because of the implementation of it, because, you know, it's like... because just... just because kids... just because it happened earlier it doesn't mean it's any easier to study, and you might actually argue that actually some of the more complex ideas of society existed around medieval and in modern times, which is what primary school kids were going to be doing. And, you know, it's like if you completely looked at it from a different perspective by looking at it in terms of complexity some of the primary school children were tackling some of the most complex issues in Year 2. Umm, you know, it's like religion and medieval beliefs, er, and being able to kind of like place that, you know, in their current context, er, would be near impossible for a 5-year-old. Er, and in the same way, umm, just because it happened later on it doesn't mean that high schools should be restricted just to teaching the most boring down... the most boring dearth kind of like 19<sup>th</sup> century type stuff just because it happened then and then you have to go through the 20<sup>th</sup> century; it was just... it was just such an old-fashioned way of thinking about how chronology works.

**I: Umm, you said it's like a 1950s curriculum, grammar school curriculum, but then you've also said that you think that the material in primary school wasn't age appropriate, umm, which of those two things is it? Because if we're looking at a grammar school, we're looking at a school that's devising a curriculum after the 11+ -**

R: Yeah.

**I: - umm, would a grammar school have devised this curriculum, I suppose, is me question. (Laughing)**

R: Well, yeah, maybe I'm just taking a stereotype there. I mean, what came across, er, was that the topic matter was just so old-fashioned highbrow history, it was almost like the kind of like, you know, the Age of Historians, like Trevelyan and stuff like that, where it was just all... you know, it was like political top end history. Er, and these days now, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, you know, it's like history's expanded and stretched so much into kind of social issues and social demands. You know, so Key Stage 3, they're covering the enlightenment and , you know, take... and high... the high Victorian era of Gladstone and Disraeli, umm, you know, it was just... it was just so much about top end history and political history, and, you know, it almost kind of like destroys some of the kind of really interesting stuff that that schools would've been doing, and especially schools like ours would've been doing if we had to follow it. Umm, you know, it's like some of the kind of social revolutions and the social changes and the developments in life that actually affect the children today. You know, it's like... Although the political issues do affect children today, you now, it's like you don't want to ram it down their throats for a whole year at Key Stage 3.

**I: So it... it... it's, umm... from... from a historical point of view it's the top down political history, the history of the elites, which is a problem?**

R: Yeah, and it's... and... and not just that but it's just the fact that, you know, it's like that they were going to be done... although it's not supposed to be done in isolation because Key Stage 2 was supposed to do the previous period and so on and so on, in effect they would be done in isolation because kids, by the time they move from primary school to secondary school, basically forget the vast majority of what they've got in primary school and they're looking to move on and do something new in secondary school. And so you've kind of got that kind of situation where, you know, it's like kids will then be kind of moving on and looking at the 17<sup>th</sup>... 19<sup>th</sup> century stuff, er, and then the 20<sup>th</sup> century stuff, and there'd be no connection to what they'd done before.

**I: So you're worried about an impoverished understanding of this is history before 1750s and (overspeaking) -**

R: Yeah. And if the ultimate aim was supposed to be this narrative of the British Isles, this so-called story, then that curriculum wasn't going to achieve it because, you know, it didn't take into account the way kids work and the way kids thing, you know, it's like... And I think, you know, it... this is something that has been championed a long time ago in 2008 by people like Ian Dawson and the HA there where they were talking about chronological frameworks, er, and explicit chronological teaching to really teach chronology, and if... so if that was the real goal and that was the real aim then, you know, it's like that method of doing it wasn't going to achieve it and there's not scientific, er, research to kind of show that that sort of national curriculum was going to work.

**I: So it's based on a misunderstanding that teaching things in order will give children the understanding (overspeaking) happened in that order?**

R: Yeah, over nine years. Yeah, teaching things in nine years, you know, sort of one year at a time in order, you know, it's like... Yeah, it was absolutely based on... You know, it's like speaking to Alan Hodgkinson in the Liverpool Hope University about it, you know, it's like when I read his paper about the previous national curriculum, which is basically doing the same sort of thing, there was no rhyme or... there was no actual scientific or no actual research based reason why it was done that way, it was just done on... not quite on a whim but on so-called common sense of, "Well

if you teach it in order therefore they'll learn it in order." Well, yes, if they're taught it in order in a really short timeframe and a really short intensive timeframe but not over nine years.

**I: Do you think... How much thought do you think, umm - I mean, we've said Michael Gove, to be charitable – the authors of this –**

R: Okay, the authors.

**I: It probably is Michael Gove but, you know, the authors. Umm, do you think they really gave that much thought to the... the 'capacity' is the wrong word but the way in which children in primary school age do construct chronologically? Do you think –**

R: No, I don't think... or even high school, I don't think they did. And, you know, I mean, we all know that... we all read the stories that the so-called history advisors and experts who were working with Gove were the ones who fled from it and actually demanded a revolution in history teachers. Umm, so, you know, it's like if they didn't support and write this national curriculum then Michael Gove didn't have any history specialists taking part in this and actually writing that f... and writing that version.

**I: What about, umm, the fact that, yes, this was criticised by many in the history education community, it was criticised very publicly by Simon Sharma at Hay, umm, what about the fact that Anthony Beaver and David Starkey thought it was really good?**

R: Well, you know what, you know, it's like if they've actually taught in a high school before, and I know David Starkey has, you know, it's like then he should actually have a better understanding of it. The problem that David Starkey has, as we've all seen on TV, was that he actually was very incompetent at teaching at a high school. Er, you know, it's like if his lessons were being rated on what he did in the experiment with Jamie Oliver –

**I: Jamie Oliver.**

R: - you know, it's like it was just... it was just inadequate from the very beginning because it was based on old-fashioned kind of chalk and talk methods. And so these kind of old-fashioned chalk and talk method type 'teachers', and I use that in inverted commas, you know, it's like are expecting... you know, it's like modern high school teachers to follow their lead. Well they're using the wrong role models there and they're using the wrong people to kind of set this forward. This curriculum should've been written by teachers for teachers, not by academics who have no idea what it's like to be in a classroom.

**I: I... So you... you're setting up a distinction between people who know what it's like to teach and those who don't.**

R: Mm.

**I: Umm, how then do we inform the content of it? Is there not a risk that if we rely on what teachers want we... we slide into what we've... Teachers have been accused of dumbing down, of going for soft touches, of ignoring the... the big stories that are boring, you know, they don't do the Industrial Revolution properly because it's not interesting. Is there a risk if you entrust it to teachers too much that that's what happens?**

R: I appreciate where you're coming from, you know, it's like as my work as an advisor has shown me that, you know, it's like there are plenty of teachers and there are plenty of departments in schools who don't change and who don't kind of... you know, like develop concepts and in fact take the easy route, I'm very happy to accept that... that point. Umm, and I suppose it's one of those things where what you're doing then is... when you're kind of... you know, if I was the Minister of Education I would be looking to kind of seek out those who do develop, those who do develop best practice, not just as a... on a teaching level but at an academic level as well and have that blend.

**I: How... how would Michael Gove or the DFE know where to go to, who to go to, to find what you call the best practice?**

R: Well, you know, it's like it's not difficult because they're the ones who create things like National Teaching Schools, er, you know, it's like... and all you need to do there is then... you know, it's like scan things from... A starting point would be results, and I know results aren't everything, but from that you then look at kind of the personnel involved. Er, you know, it's like national colleges are creating networks of specialist leaders of education, well they've gone through interview process so that's proved that they are cutting edge, they had to prove that they are at the forefront of their profession. You know, it's like those people should've been consulted and they're part of this network that's been created through the government.

**I: Is there not an argument, though, that, umm, an outstanding teacher who happens to teach history might not be an outstanding history teacher/writer of a curriculum?**

R: Oh, I mean, I know where you're coming from but I wouldn't say... you wouldn't put all emphasis on them. I mean, like I said before, I think you need that blend of everything. You know, so there needs to be the blends of the academia, there needs to be a blend to university, but in this case, you know, you're looking for people who are

experts in the field of education as opposed to just the field of history. Yes, do have some of those in as well but you've got to have that blend and you can't let one side dictate to the other and vice versa.

**I: And what about the field of history education, do you recognise that as a field?**

R: Yeah, absolutely. You know, it's like... otherwise what's the point of teacher training and all those teacher training colleges? I mean, you know, it's like they are a field in themselves and the fact that they are developing pedagogy and the understanding and the future generations of teachers. So there is a... there is a separate layer there, as it were, between... between those at the forefront on the chalk face, as it were, and those who are developing the next generation, as opposed to those who are in academia who are studying the subject on a pure level.

**I: And lastly before we look at what you did, umm, surely the argument that, umm, David Starkey and Anthony Beaver would make is... you called it a 1950s grammar school curriculum, they would say, "I went to a 1950s grammar school, it never did me any harm and now I'm a world leader in Tudor or 20<sup>th</sup> century history respectively," what about that argument?**

R: Well he's a world leader in his own right but, I mean, you know, it's like there are... there are other people who study history who want to develop different things, er, and, you know, it's like and that sort of style of education, as someone who went through that style of education as well but not in the 1950s but it felt like 1950s, umm, you know, it's like it was designed to do one thing and that was to create history academics, er, and it was one of those things where it just so happened that you developed a passion and love for the subject but on a more practical level when you got out into the real world you realised actually there was stuff from it that you could've used in a far more better explicit way.

**I: Hmm hmm.**

R: You know, it's like... and it's one of those things where, you know, good content doesn't necessarily equal good teaching, and vice versa but... But, you know, it's like if you get the happy combination of both that's when you get success and... Er, and, you know, I don't... you know, it's one of those things where you can't see that... You couldn't see schools delivering that, you know, it's like you could just see schools, you know, like paying lip service to it if they had to, but –

**I: Do you think it would've been ignored then?**

R: Yeah, I've got a really strong feeling that teachers would literally just ignore it and just basically get on with what they're doing. The problem that's... the problem that we've had is that teachers are basically... Many... a lot of teachers have actually ignored a lot of the changes that have happened since 1985 and they're still teaching national curriculums like 1985. So, you know, I certainly can't believe that they would've changed a great deal just because of that.

**I: Okay. Umm, so moving on from looking at the curriculum itself to what you did about it. Umm, can you just run us through about... Obviously you've got... you've very well expressed the reasons why you've got a problem with it, can you say what you practically did about these objections that you had?**

R: Well the... I mean, the shock and horror of what was happening, what was being proposed in the original draft, got me thinking that, you know, it's like as an academy, er, at this school, umm, we don't have to follow the national curriculum, er, and I certainly didn't intend to follow that national curriculum, umm, but what it did get me thinking was, umm, you know, although... although it's alright to sit on the fence and go, "I'm alright," umm, I suddenly realised that actually most of our primary schools that siphon... that filter all their kids up to us by Year 7, er, would actually be part of this national curriculum, so that got me worried. Umm, you know, it's like and straightaway basically I put my head to thinking about a possible solution to this, you know, it's like how could I use this without actually using it and actually create something for primary schools that would not just tick the boxes of what the national curriculum, the original draft, was trying to do, but actually put them at the stage where they would be beyond any other further reform, because whatever they were doing was going to be cutting edge, was going to be forward thinking, you know, it's like more forward thinking than any Secretary of State could change, er, and so long as it... You know, so like my thinking was that so long as it fulfilled the ultimate aims of what the national curriculum was doing, you know, it's like we could play fast and loose with the content.

**I: So you began to work with primary schools on implementing this?**

R: Yeah. Yeah, so, you know, it's like the local district, er, around... around us here the seven... you know, seven primary schools were initially pitched with an idea of, umm, re-evaluating the way they delivered history. So they've... They basically, umm... I'll be honest with you, I can see why, er, Michael Gove had such a problem with history, umm, because it's not necessarily maybe the secondary history in some cases that was the issue but certainly the issue at primary school where, umm, where the vast majority of primary schools - in fact not even... there's no point in saying vast majority, all of them – was basically doing the 1988 national curriculum. And it was a pick and... it was a pick and mix, umm, it was like a... it was like a series of Dr Who where, you know, kids would jump in and out the tardis and appear at different points in human history, er, with no connection whatsoever. So Year 1 would be doing Victorians, er, and Ancient Greeks and then Year 2 would be doing World War II and (overspeaking)



- I: Episodic history.**
- R: - and Tudors. And it was just literally bits and pieces, there was no connection. And you can totally sympathise with the Secretary of State and... and as much as I could empathise with him I just... I just... I totally... I totally agree actually with the principles of what he's trying to do, I just can't stand the methods he chose or the –
- I: So what is the principle then?**
- R: The principle of this. I mean, the aims of the national curriculum haven't changed much between the two... between the two national curriculum... between the two draft versions, and for me the very first point that they make is the strongest one and it's the one that they've really tried to hammer on about for ten years but it's the one that he was trying to do something about, was this story of the islands, was this narrative to understand the places of... understand the place and the context of everything. And... and I think that's an important thing for... for students to have, to understand their place in time but also understand the changes and developments that have got their lives to where they are. And so, you know, with that in mind, you know, it's like I took onboard an approach that Ian Dawson had been advocating since 2008, that chronological thematic kind of approach, but rather than just applying it to a scheme of work at a high school at Key Stage 3 I basically applied it from Key Stage 1 right through to the end of Key Stage 3. So from Year 1 to Year 9 to have this kind of, umm... to have this consistency of approach there where –
- I: And this... and by the Ian Dawson approach you mean teaching chronological periods again and again and again?**
- R: Yeah, exactly.
- I: Re-learning the same periods through different lenses?**
- R: Yeah. Yeah, through different lenses, through different themes. Er, and... and when... when I started kind of like exploring it just in my own head it was something that we were already doing at high school, you know, it's like I'd been a convert to that sort of approach a while back, but that's not the be all and end all approach equally, you know, we have a balance of in-depth topics as well as these broad chronological sweeps, er, and it works really well. Er, you know, and I've seen it work really well in two different schools that I've worked at. Umm, but, so... So I knew the approach worked at high school, er, and it was just convincing primary schools that it was the right thing as well and... And I'll be honest, any time I've pitched the idea to primary schools, primary schools have usually jumped straight onto the idea, er, and been onboard. So six out of the seven primary schools... six out of the seven primary schools, er, are directly involved in, er, in the project in this local area. Er, the seventh one is not because of a recent Ofsted report and they were actually the keenest supporters of it. So, you know, we've got some real success there, er, and, you know, it's like they've bought into the idea of it and they can absolutely see how it just makes sense in terms of the delivery of the history as well as the continuity it offers from primary to secondary.
- I: So it's interesting that you say that you were so keen and ready to begin working with primary schools and implementing February when you said that you didn't... you know, you had an immediate dislike to February, umm –**
- R: Yeah, couldn't stand it so I wanted... so I was going to do something about it. Umm, and my Head... when I approached my Head, er, who just happens to be my line manager as well, with the idea, he then turned round and said, "Make it happen then."
- I: But what... what did you then do with the secondary curriculum, because, as you've said, the Key Stage 3 begins in 1750, did you being to think about how you were going to implement this?**
- R: No, I mean, we'd... we'd already... we'd already kind of like gone through the chronological approach so we would... most of those content boxes would've been ticked, as it were, you know, as in our chronological thematic kind of studies, we just wouldn't have done them to the same depth.
- I: So you... you... you looked at this and effectively disregarded it?**
- R: Yeah, basically, yeah.
- I: Yeah, okay.**
- R: Basically. You know, we looked at it and paid a little bit of lip service to it, umm, we looked at it in the respect of, you know, "Are we covering most of it there in one way or other?" just to make sure we were covering our bases.
- I: And were ya?**
- R: Umm, you know –
- I: Gladstone and Disraeli, were you covering that?**
- R: No, but we were certainly dipping out –

**I: Corn Laws? (Laughs)**

R: We were dipping out of the period we were dipping out of the period with. But, yeah, I mean, effectively we ignored it but we didn't... we didn't make any massive wholesale changes, er, to what we were doing at high school because of it but we did make massive wholesale changes to what seven other schools, or six other schools were doing around here, and we've now expanded that in... across the county.

**I: And looking specifically at the opposition that you did, you responded to an HA survey, you signed a petition, you posted on an internet discussion, you, umm, went on the BBC Education website, umm, why were you prompted to engage in the debate in this way?**

R: Well it was... it was just my... it was my immediate reaction to the February one, it was just... it was just a reaction of incredulity, the fact that I just couldn't believe anything so half-baked could actually be government policy, umm, and the fact that, you know I... you know, if... if a teacher had been involved in this process I would have loved to have met that teacher and I would have loved to actually see them teach, actually kind of say, "Come on, show me, show me how this is engaging for the 21<sup>st</sup> century student (overspeaking)."

**I: And were these the points that you were making in these discussion groups and the HA survey (overspeaking) –**

R: Yeah, absolutely.

**I: - "This is not something a teacher could have conceived of"?**

R: Yeah. And the fact that... the lack of consultation on it, umm, you know, the lack of... the lack of just... the sheer lack of just thought behind it, umm, you know, it's like... And this is from a position where I know from my school that we don't have to follow it. (Laughs) So, you know, it's like it wasn't as if, you know, I was reacting because this is what I was going to be forced to do in September 2015, because I had the option just to ignore it, umm, it was the fact that my fellow professional community, er, and the reaction from all the other Heads of history in this locality, the group that I chair, was very, very similar, it was just absolute disbelief.

**I: So it wasn't done out of self-interest because it wouldn't have affected you anyway?**

R: No, doesn't affect me anyway. Umm, but then... but then that's what the... but then I started getting more involved in some of the things, like doing the HA surveys and stuff like that, because the more I started thinking about, "Well if I hate it so much let's do something about it," and I'm at a school which, fortunately enough, has that same sort of attitude where if you don't like something then change it, do it, you know, don't just sit there moaning about it. Er, and so when we started kind of like doing the thinking work behind the primary school project, er, and what we were doing at high school then this is why I got more and more involved in some of the other things because I just also wanted to see what the rest of... er, what other history teachers were saying about it or the historical associations.

**I: 'Cos you've said here, umm, 'support the consensus who thought it was wrong', how did you become aware that that's what the consensus thought?**

R: Umm, you know –

**I: 'Cos (overspeaking) be beyond just your local colleagues.**

R: No, absolutely. You know, so obviously it started with local colleagues, er, but then, you know, when I was joining some of these kind of national surveys and... er, and some of the kind of chat forums about it, you could actually see that... you know, it's like a... there was... well there was no positive response that I saw on any of them, umm, and the reaction from some teachers was as strongly as I felt about it.

**I: Where do you think that consensus emerged from? Do you think it was, you know, 5,000 history teachers each coming to their own conclusions, each acting independently?**

R: Umm, I think there's something to be said for it because, I mean, as professionals you only have to look at that national curriculum to kind of... to see how bad it is. Umm, and, you know, it's like... you know, yes, I imagine that some of them probably have... obviously already have ties to particular organisations and stuff like that, umm, but, you know, it's like... I can't imagine... I can't imagine the history teacher in this country who would've turned round and looked at that and went, "Oh I love the sound of that."

**I: But the consensus thought it was wrong, how united do you think that consensus was in the reasons for opposing it?**

R: Umm, I saw lots of different things, you know, so some people looked at the logistics of how do you put that into, you know, two hours a fortnight or three hours a fortnight, umm, you know, and some of them kind of objected in terms of the political kind of right wing kind of aspect of things. Umm, you know –

**I: 'Cos that's not something you've mentioned.**

- R: No, I'll... you know. I'd give and take... you know, I... I'll take that with a pinch of salt, as it were. Umm, you know, take, umm... I understand that history can be manipulated but, you know, it's like, er... umm, it's not like... it's not like all of these things were passed by Tories, for example, so you've got the Liberal reforms in there and stuff like that and, er... and even things like the NHS and things. So, you know, it's... And not all of the things show the Tories to be in the best possible light, like the Boer Wars. So it's not... you know, it's like it doesn't come across as a real right wing agenda, what comes across is that it's a real conservative agenda in terms of – with a small 'c' – a kind of old-fashioned approach of thinking and doing things, as opposed to anything that's been based on research or on modern teaching.
- I: **Umm, that's... that's pretty much coming to the end. The last thing I just wanted to ask about is, umm, you felt that you – forgive me if I'm getting it wrong or correct me if I'm getting it wrong – you felt that by getting involved, don't moan, try and make a difference, umm, do you think a difference was made, do you think it was opposition from the history teaching community that led to the rewrite?**
- R: I don't honestly know. I asked Alf Wilkinson this because when I read the... When I eventually saw the revised draft of it - and obviously I was... I was looking at it from very... very much a self-interest point of view there because we'd already started the history project with all the primary schools – when I saw it it... it... it just had that kind of Historical Association feel about it, you know, (overspeaking) –
- I: **Meaning what?**
- R: Umm, meaning that the kind of... the sense... the sense and feel of it. There's a... there's a kind of Ian Dawsony type kind of thinking in terms of chronological knowledge and chronological place and context. Umm, even the aims, although they weren't changed massively, they were just reworded enough to be kind of very much the kind of SHP type kind of formulations of ideas that I've seen for years now, er, and... and a lot of it smacked of HA. And when I speaking to Alf Wilkinson about it, you know, he admitted that, you know, said, "Yeah, they finally got consulted." Because they hadn't been consulted on that one and yet eventually they'd been brought in, er, Gove had brought them in for this second re-draft of it, the revision of it, er, and, you know, so you can kind of get a sense of that and a feel of that in there. And, you know, with the draft... with the draft the way it is right now, you know, it's like, umm, I'm looking at it going, "Well there's not much there that, one, we don't already do, umm, but, two, there's not much there that I would disagree with explicitly." You know, so I think some of the things that they've done for primary schools, let's say, where... where they have to kind of do other cultures, umm, sometimes they just feel a little bit left field, you know, like African empires and stuff like that. And I appreciate that, you know, if you're teaching it in inner city London and you've got a large black population maybe there's relevance there but, er, you know, it's like, umm... but, you know, it's like on the whole, you know, you can't help looking at it and going, "Well there's not much to really disagree on there, they're wide enough and broad enough to (overspeaking)."
- I: **But this... these first kind of four bullet points seem to be everything that the last curriculum was, everything that the draft was; it's a chronological framework, it's the island story, and then you've got these bits bolted on.**
- R: But... but without... but without the kind of prescriptiveness of... of... without the prescriptiveness of certain things, you know, it's like... So you don't get that kind of like, umm, you know, exact kind of precise bullet-pointed content that you did in the very first one, you don't get Clive of India and this and that, you get kind of like more wider kind of issues like franchise and social reform. And that gives you scope as a professional to do something with it, er, and whether you do it very much in the kind of 1985 model where Year 7 will do the medieval stuff up until the 1500s and then Year 8'll do, you know, the early modern stuff and then Year 9'll do the kind of, you know, 20<sup>th</sup> century and Industrial Revolution. If you wanna go down that approach that's fine, I suppose, you know, there's the scope to do that, and so history teachers won't be too scared by it, but in the aims and in the kind of the skills and the proposal, the purpose of the study, there is a really clear message there that, you know, that students need to have that greater sense of place and that greater sense of context and chronology.
- I: **So... so last question. Umm, you've said that you think this feels very heavily influenced by the SHP, you've said that Alf Wilkinson has said that the HA had an influence in it, umm, do you think that the SHP and the HA were reflecting the views of the individual history teachers who complained to the, umm... who spoke out, or do you think that they were taking it in their own direction for their own purposes?**
- R: Umm –
- I: **To what extent do you think the SHP is a vehicle for... a mouthpiece for the history teaching community or to what extent do you think it's an end in itself?**
- R: Umm, I... I... I think they've got... I think they've got their own agenda but, you know, it's like for any teacher who's been kind of like trying to keep up to date with things throughout the time then, you know, it's like I don't think that agenda will be massively different maybe to what (overspeaking) –
- I: **So what do you understand to be their agenda?**
- R: To develop that kind of greater chronological sense. Umm, you know, it's like it harks back to their GCSE of Medicine Through Time, as it were, but, you know, it's like, umm, what... and so there's a greater sense of that. Umm, you know, it's like and certainly, you know, it's like, er, the little touches like the local study and things like that all smack

of kind of like SHP type approaches. So, you know, it's like it's kind of getting their vision of history over I suppose that kind of... that overall story, the chronology, the narrative, er, and the local studies as well. Umm, you know, it's like... I mean, I think that certainly comes through, that's what I see coming through.

**I: I said last question, this is... this is the last question. If the SHP has its own agenda then what is it, who does it consist of?**

R: Oh right, is it... does it represent the... yeah.

**I: If... if... if... if –**

R: I'm not sure –

**I: If it's... if it's got its own agenda that suggests that it's an agenda which is separate from the (overspeaking) –**

R: (Overspeaking). I mean, I don't know, you know, it's like is it representative of your chalk face teacher, I don't know. Umm, you know, it's like I haven't met enough of them to... to really kind of get a (overspeaking) -

**I: Who's 'them'? Chalk face teachers?**

R: Yeah, exactly, I haven't met enough of them around the country, you know, it's like I've met a small proportion of them. Of the small proportion that I know and I work with collaboratively, umm, I think it represents some of them, and then in other cases, you know, it's like some teachers probably haven't changed anything, umm, since... since we've... yeah, since the very first national curriculum. So, you know, I think it's partially representing it but I think it represents the more progressive forward thinking ones.

**I: Do you feel it represents you?**

R: Umm, yeah, I think there's... I think there's... I think there's a... Yeah, only because, you know, it's like I've been following a lot of what they're doing, er, and I believe in quite a few... quite a lot of the things they do. Not wholeheartedly, you know, it's like I will chop and change and do things individually, but, you know, it's like overall yeah, I have no complaints.

**I: That's fabulous. Thank you very much. Cheers.**

### iii. Instinctive Resistor

- I: **Okay umm so umm thank you for volunteering to umm take part in the interview and can you just confirm umm that you have filled in umm a consent form?**
- R: I filled in all consent forms and signed them and dated them I think correctly.
- I: **Okay.**
- R: Hahaha.
- I: **Marvellous. Umm what I'm basically going to do umm is just ask you to speak a little bit more about the answers that you gave to umm the closed questionnaire umm earlier in the year umm and just try and get a more rounded sense of the way that you see yourself as a history teacher, umm the way that you see debates about the history curriculum and umm and that's it really those two things, and particularly**
- R: (Coughs).
- I: **Focussing on how the way that you see yourself umm, the way that you see the history teaching community how those things umm informed your response to the February draft curriculum.**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **In 2013, okay. Umm so umm to start off umm a, a very open question umm how would you describe yourself as a history teacher?**
- R: Umm as a history teacher umm I would probably describe myself as being quite forward thinking, quite positive, quite dynamic in my teaching style, umm I like to teach a variety of different topics, I like sort of the, the broad range and, and was or what it considered to be the flexibility of the curriculum, I've umm quite a flexible department who allow me to do what I want and, and when I want you know within reason. Umm just try and make lessons animated and exciting as possible to engage young people with history or, you know within the subject and to try and bring up numbers for our key stage 4 (laughs).
- I: **So what, what would you say is the most important thing that children get from a history education?**
- R: Umm I think really the most important think from a chil, from a history education is probably a wider understanding of what is going on in the world around and what has gone on previously which has informed the, the lives or you know the country the lives that they live today, the important decisions that have been made there particularly with the British history obviously but for my students with being 98% Asian heritage at my school doing other you know international history so we do Islamic empires in year 7, I think that helps them understand more of where they come from and how they fit in, particularly being part of a multi-cultural society as well.
- I: **So -**
- R: So.
- I: **For, for you it's about umm enabling children to use the past to have a better understanding of the present?**
- R: Yeah, yeah.
- I: **Yeah. Okay umm do, do you think your typical in thinking like that, do you think, do, do you I think there's an idea of a typical history teacher?**
- R: Umm I think there's the stereotypical history teacher that when some people say history they, they automatically think a stuffy old professor with pullover type shirts and umm a monotone voice but I've yet to meet a history teacher that is like that, I think what you do find umm typically amongst history teachers is probably very, very strong umm leader types in teachers you usually get at least one member of a history department in some sort of senior leadership umm you get very, very strong umm teacher learners sort of within the, in the faculties as well so you get a lot more variety and scope I think within history teachers, umm usually find the, the most dynamic err people in the school really. I know they say that musicians are quite eccentric but I think historians can be quite eccentric as well but yeah I think we're stereotyped very, very inaccurately, ha.
- I: **But in, in, in terms of you, you said the, the typical history teachers you see it from your meeting other history teachers is dynamism the thing that you, you would pick on as the typical history teacher or -**
- R: I think, I think -
- I: **You talk about their leadership qualities.**
- R: They've got leadership qualities I think umm if your teacher's compared and I think I feel a bit rude saying this to some parts other subjects are more academic, I think a lot of history teachers I know obviously you know I've only been in teaching myself now properly for 2 years and training for the year before that, I think all the colleagues that I know still keep an eye on what's going on with regards to policies within government but also what's going on you know with historically thinking as well in what's going on amongst academics so one thing that I personally like to do I like to consider myself as a historian academic before considering myself as a teacher and I think a lot of my friends who that are history teachers do the same thing as well, they take a vested interest within the subject and I can't really say that all the mathematicians or the scientists keep one eye open to new thoughts or new umm theories on what's going on in their subjects like historians do in their, their own.
- I: **Do, do you think that's the nature of the people or the nature of the subjects?**
- R: I think it's the nature of the subject because a subject is so vast and so you know it's never ending really, there's so much to choose from I think it, it makes people want to go and engage themselves with it more and I think that interest in it from a teacher perspective and from an academic perspective is what the teachers hope to pass onto their students but obviously I think with historians being academics and the government has you know put, put forward to try and encourage academics to go into teaching and obviously have you know hold great value in the level of degrees because they have more money bursary wise for higher level degrees so that's where it becomes absurd to me that they try and take away some of that aca, you know academic knowledge and pass it over to primary schools and that's where it gets a little bit silly.
- I: **Okay umm so you, do, the next question is do you think there's such a thing as a history teaching community?**

- R: Yes. Umm I think in, in a variety of different ways potentially I mean the way I keep in touch is a history teaching community or umm it could either be local communities in within boroughs for you know local authorities, the history teaching one at schools, there's you know stuff that's viral like on Twitter and things like that, that's how I follow the, the majority of what's going on umm so a lot of teachers have now got a say on teacher Twitter feeds and there's a community there of academics, there's a Historical Association which you can obviously sign up to and, and keep up to date with what's going on there, there's that sort of history teacher community umm there's my own like small selected one which is our PGCE group that we sort of kept that teaching community going we keep ideas going amongst each other as well so, so yeah I think there's several different types of teaching community going on.
- I: **And, and so what do you think binds these communities, what holds them together?**
- R: Umm interesting, passion for the subject but also subject in how to deliver the subject successfully I think one of the things that you know 3 years on we're still talking on a regular basis, on a weekly basis to each other and still communicating with each other and sharing good practice, sharing ideas you know "I've done this really well at the moment, I've tried flipped learning with this" and you know and it's those ideas and enthusiasm for the subject I think and seeing it happen, what you do it well with the students and have the impact on the students where they've enjoyed it I think that sort of keeps it going together. (Spoken quite fast and enthusiastically).
- I: **And do you think there's unity or consensus about what makes good history learning?**
- R: I think there's, I think there's more consensus and, and a, I think about good history and learning really I think there's a small minority of people would argue that good history learning is, is purely restricted to knowledge. I think the majority of history teachers would agree that with regards to learning it's, it's how students learn and how they engage with it and the skills that they pick up I suppose with that. I think there is definitely a sense of unity amongst history teachers and I think that's why history teachers came across so strongly in reaction to the, the national curriculum because there was very little dissent, everyone felt exactly the same way.
- I: **So if, if you think the majority of history teachers think the same way about their umm -**
- R: Their teaching.
- I: **About, about what their subject really umm why do you think that is?**
- R: Ooh quite tricky, I think that the majority of the teachers will probably feel the same way about their subject because they prob, they wouldn't have cho, you know they wouldn't have chosen you don't really fall into being a history teacher, it's, it's not like being a PE teacher you've, you've enjoyed sports for so long but there's only so many routes you can take in which you can do something with it and you know stay in trackies all day every day, to be a history teacher it's not a job you fall into it's a job you choose to do and you know it's not easy to become one so I think there is more, I suppose it's just the interest, level of interest that keeps you.
- I: **Well I think, I think the thing that surprises me the thing I'm getting at is if you take a range of historians, a range of history teachers they will have massively divergent views about say a particular event in the past.**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Why do you think it is that they have, as in your words like a, a more united view or a more consensus view of their subject?**
- R: In relation to the actual topic matter or how it is a subject within what -
- I: **The history learning, how the subject should be taught, the ideas about the purpose of the subject those kind of things; why do you think there's a consensus about those things that there might not be about the way in the past -**
- R: Actual history itself?
- I: **Yeah.**
- R: Umm to be honest I'm not too sure it's quite a difficult one to, to sort of address umm (.) I think it's a case of (laughing) when, when faced against the greater evil (laughs) you go with what, what you're comfortable with, what you know and what you know works and I think that's perhaps when, when you're not up against the likes of Gove, there might be more consensus but, but when faced with something that's quite absurd and quite horrific it's the lesser of two evils isn't it really. I don't know.
- I: **Okay so umm moving onto the umm document that you described as umm absurd and horrific.**
- R: (Laughs).
- I: **Umm what do you umm, how would you describe your view of this umm February draft in your written umm reply you said it was ill advised umm the ravings of the luna, lunatic.**
- R: (Laughs).
- I: **Umm based on an assumption that primary school can teach history effectively until the end of the civil war.**
- R: Yes umm and I'm not changing my opinion whatsoever yeah I'm, I'm don't, I don't mince my words to be fair, umm the content it was ill advised, ill thought out it was biased.
- I: **Biased in what sense?**
- R: Conservative propaganda you know the rise of the conservative, rise of conservatives I think was on there at some point, there was nothing really about -
- I: **So too was the birth of the labour party, the first labour government, umm the creation at the government and the growth of the welfare state, isn't that balance?**
- R: I think in the way that it was, it was put across was it not the rise of the conservative party, Thatcher was on there.
- I: **Thatcher's on there yeah, umm -**
- R: Clive of India all, all the successes of empire it was just -
- I: **But so is decolonisation the independence generation, Ghandi Nehru, Jenna Kenyatta.**
- R: Yeah a bunch of stuff that's so boring it's, it's, it makes you want to cry actually.
- I: **So it's boring as well?**
- R: It's boring as well, it is boring as well. I do think it's too (sighs) it's limited, it's so scripted and so dictatorial almost, it gives, it allows, or it doesn't allow sorry teachers to have any scope in or say in what they are teaching, what they're doing, have any flexibility, there's no room in there to be able to sort of go with something, take a topic and,

and allow you know kind of what OFSTED and stuff were hinging towards was go with what the tea, the students want to learn about you know make the students their own enquirers and there is in that because it's so huge and, and so prescriptive there is no, there's no room in there to be able to, to go off and do something there. It's not very diverse, it takes a lot of the international elements away from it, it's, it is boring, it really is boring. I mean students at year 7 are they really gonna wanna start with what the conquest of Canada and Clive of India, seriously it's you, you hook them with, you know they're not, they've not got the, they've not developed the skills enough to be able to attack something like that. You're gonna struggle as, even as the best history teacher to be able to hook a child and get them interested, it's, it's always good to start with something quite simple, quite basic they can relate to something they quite find is funny, amusing.

**I: So what do you start with in your current format?**

**R:** Umm oh it's changed actually, last year it was the Romans when we had a 3 year Key Stage 3 and since then we've turned into a 2 year Key Stage 3 something I do not like at all umm because of that umm we'd have to get rid of the Romans which was something all the students were familiar with, it was a nice starting point for us to work with the What is History, we'd have to start with the Battle of Hastings umm and that's something I love to teach because the year 7's when they come in it's quite comfortable for them, it's, it's quite grounding and it's something they enjoy and you can make it quite fun, you can make it quite humorous, engaging.

**I: In what sense is Rome easier and more fun or the Battle of Hastings -**

**R:** It's familiar.

**I: Would be easier and more fun than the American Revolution or the Jacobite Rebellion, there's an awful lot of, there was an awful lot of classic historians who'd be offended by you saying that studying ancient Rome -**

**R:** It is it's true.

**I: Is easier than studying the British Empire.**

**R:** Yeah, yeah I suppose I am biased because any historian would be (sighs) err you, you have your things your enjoy and your things you, you dislike and, and for me I enjoy all things medieval and up until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and then I'm a closed book until modern world. I do not like the things in between and I suppose that's my own bias there but I think as well we're starting with the Romans a lot of students have done the Romans and they have touched upon medieval umm life medieval towns or Vikings or Saxons and they've touched upon that in primary school so having that, make it to be able to make that link when they first transition into secondary school is really, really good for them and it also, we were doing the Romans through, or we were teaching what is history and bias and stuff through the Romans, so we weren't actually teaching the Romans the whole unit we were using the Romans as a foundation to, to learn historical skills umm.

**I: But what, what, what confuses me and, and not to get on your case about it -**

**R:** Oh no don't worry.

**I: But, but is it, you, you seem to be implying that the, because the earlier stuff is more fun and more interesting.**

**R:** It is.

**I: It's more, it's better suited to younger students.**

**R:** Yes.

**I: So then why then object to it being taught in primary school?**

**R:** Because they're not specialists.

**I: What does that mean?**

**R:** They, the, primary school teachers are taught not how to teach individual subjects as, as an academic specialist they're taught how to teach a broad range of subjects to a basic level. Their main, or the main focus in primary schools and that has been hammered on through the government, particularly by Blair obviously, is, is to teach the students numeracy and literacy and to teach it effectively and they teach it through themes and they use history as part of their themes and that's great because it gives the children some, something to get excited about and something you know, some more contextual knowledge and a little, a little bit of culture but they're not specialists, they don't have that academic you know background, they don't have the, they don't focus on specific historical skills like inference in primary schools in the same way that an actual historian would do so I think -

**I: There's inference to historical skill?**

**R:** Well it's historical English, we use it the most we were having this argument before actually (laughs) when, when an English teacher said umm, was telling teacher just say in CPD about inference and umm was, was put up a particularly poor scaffold on the board and the rest of the English teachers all sat there and just went (.) like that umm, it's not just a historical skill but it's a skill that is, is umm probably the most promoted in history and is used across other subjects and that's something that we discussed in, in CPD yesterday that more subjects should use an inference, umm you don't learn a lot of the skills that we, we teach you don't learn earlier on in primary school 'cause you've still gotta learn the basics and I think also you're not doing it justice really, you can't go into, the students do oh, primary students do Tudors a lot of the time and Henry VIII and his 6 wives and they do a bit of black death in primary school but when they come to high school we do them again, "oh Miss we've already done this before" "yeah you have but we're gonna do it a little bit further now" and they won't be able to understand fully why Henry VIII cut off, you know divorced his first wife to have his second wife you know. In primary school you know Anne Boleyn had a prettier smile than Catherine of Aragon so Henry changed his mind, obviously it's a lot more complex than that, it's about the Church and, and the need for an heir umm and then you go into the dissolution of the monasteries and things like that and you know there, there's layers of understanding and you develop those further I think at secondary school, likewise with the Black Death.

**I: But, but why is it important for the students to have those things taught at an early secondary level as opposed to, like why -**

**R:** If there was a GCSE on Tudors I would completely or there is part of GCSE on Tudors if my school did it I would go with it 100%.

- I:** But how, how do we get away from it being completely arbitrary where you decide is the right level of interest and complexity to start in year 7?
- R:** You mean starting with Clive of India in year 7?
- I:** Why, why is Clive of India less right than the Battle of Hastings?
- R:** (sighs) I suppose it's not less right but it's, it's almost like their first, their first ooh what, trying to think, 700 years of, of history from, from say 1066 even perhaps before.
- I:** That's not 700 years of history 'cause there was -
- R:** Yeah.
- I:** History before 1066 but why -
- R:** There was but they're the first -
- I:** Why don't we go further back in secondary school?
- R:** Because you've got so, you're not, you're limited for time I mean for me to teach 1,000 years of history in 2 years now I'm down to the 2 year Key Stage 3 is, is difficult. This yeah perhaps this would have hopefully made it easier but they would, students would have a very intense knowledge of, you know and a more developed knowledge from the end of the Civil War onwards and, and their earlier knowledge of history is, is much more you know simplified. It, it's almost not biased but it's, it's wrong that they sort of have this baby knowledge of one half of history and then well, one half of the British history that we would teach normally from 1066 onwards to, to having this more developed insight later on and I do agree and I, I can't believe I'm saying this, I do agree with Gove that they should be taught chronologically I'm not a fan of thematic schemes of work because one thing, you know it might work in some schools but in my school children struggle with the concept of chronology, they struggle with where things come over time, they struggle with you know centuries and, and years and dates, they, they struggle with that in itself so I do agree with teaching history in a you know in chronological view but I don't agree with having a very basic level up until the Civil War and then it starts to get more complicated 'cause students will leave school perhaps if they never continue it again, with, with the idea that, that is fact and, and that is what happened and, and there's not much more about that and it, and there's topics earlier on there that you know, there's far more interest for you to be able to expand upon and develop further and, and things like you know the birth of the Church of England. They, they're not gonna know about how the Church of England came about because they won't really learn that in primary school but yet it's too late by the time they're at secondary school we can't go back we must go forward and, and that frustrates me a lot; but I suppose there's a lot of bias on my part because the, the things I enjoy were gonna be taught by primary school teachers who wouldn't know what they're talking about (laughs) and the things I, that I don't like I was almost going to be force the teachers by the government and I want those, you know I kind of felt almost shackled to that and that's not really why I went into teaching, I didn't go into teaching to be told you must teach, this, this, this, this and this (sounding enthusiastic) in this particular way and take away the things that I enjoy as well which is really selfish now I say it (laughs).
- I:** In, in term, in terms of your objection to it then how much of it would you say is -
- R:** Enjoyable.
- I:** Is, no is you're objecting to it because of what you want to be in a classroom talking about, how much of it is because you think this is politicised and how much of it is because you think it's bad for children to have -
- R:** Majority of it -
- I:** Ignorance.
- R:** I think it's bad for children, I think that for me it's the ignorance that annoys me the most, I think the fact that they are going to have such a limited knowledge or would have had such a limited knowledge of history prior to, oh prior, prior to the beginning of, well Canada and things like that, that, that's what frustrated me I think and there was no scope to go backwards and with the changes to Key Stage 4 as well it, it seemed that teachers were being more and more dictated by government, national curriculum than having the flexibility to, to do what they could do well already I mean he got away with taking the wars off us at Key Stage 4.
- I:** But, but you spoke, umm you spoke earlier about using skills.
- R:** Yeah.
- I:** There's nothing to stop, well first of all how do you understand those skills, what are those, you mentioned inference but what are those skills that history education gives you?
- R:** The, well you've got the skills of written skills, we've got the key concepts in general anyway, you've got the written skills as well of how to be able to write.
- I:** What do you mean by the key concepts in general?
- R:** Oh don't make me go through this (laughing), Ian tries teaching the key concepts and I was just, I can't even sig, you've got skills like the key subsets which are significance, causation, I can't remember any more (laughs) off the top of my head.
- I:** What, what are they, where, where do they come from, what's their importance, what is their role?
- R:** Oh please don't make me say, link it back to the government and say something -
- I:** No I'm just asking -
- R:** Well the role is, it structures -
- I:** Do, do you think they're important for -
- R:** It structures the way that you think and it, it structures the way that you investigate something so the skills that you teach are almost the skills of, of how a historian would look at something and form and judge, form an opinion and make a judgement and you teach them how to back up and support their own judgements using literature, you know using academic theory or using sources, you're also teaching them how to put that judgement forward and how to put, you know articulate themselves correctly so you're working alongside other subjects which I think English enable to, to be able to do this and I think history is an important subject in teaching children how to write and how to form judgements and how to form arguments, how to, to look at a piece of evidence and understand that what you see isn't what you get, there are always several ideas and several concepts behind something you know nothing is ever strictly fact and you know those, those skills are explored in history and yes would've been



explored through, through the scheme of work but would not necessarily have been explored in that particular way in primary school because that's not where their focus is at, it's not what the students need to learn at that stage in their life.

**I: So they'd be losing that conceptual approach in primary schools?**

R: Yeah.

**I: Okay that's fine, umm okay so umm -**

R: There is a lot of bias from me obviously but I like it like that.

**I: It's not, it's not bias having a personal preference though I wouldn't say is biased, why is this an improvement then?**

R: I think it -

**I: Or is this an improvement?**

R: It's -

**I: If so why?**

R: I mean obviously it's, it's linked a lot with the, the change, too much change or change for change you say is not always necessarily good and too much radical change just makes things much harder as well and much more difficult. If it's not broke why fix it and, and it wasn't there was nothing wrong with the curriculum that was already being taught it was enjoyed, history was one of the most popular subjects, you know it's always been opted for at GCSE and students always go on to do it further at A level and, and degree level and it's well respected subject as well. Umm I think this is much better, I think the, there is still flexibility within the curriculum, umm it's, there's not much change there, there isn't as much change and there's still that flexibility for historians or teachers or you know heads of department to have choice in what's taught as well so you can take out some of that and where you've got things like we have the two year Key Stage 3 you need to be able to have choice because you need to be able to cut things out. If you'd have gone with the other one that is really a very strict like chronological approach and it's very difficult to, to cut things or whittle away that, the, the February 2013 curriculum without there being big gaps in knowledge and, and causing confusion when you go onto another topic if you do a two year Key Stage 3 approach. With this you can easily take a few things out and we have sat there and we've crossed out certain things, we don't have time to teach that one and we have put this into our umm new scheme of work quite easily and without too much change or too much work for teachers umm 'cause at the moment we don't have time to do that work, we don't have time to, to do it and we have the resources here we don't need to go and spend extra money on buying new resources in because we have all the books etc readily available and we can just tweak them, the lessons, the schemes of what we've already got in order to suit this.

**I: Do, do you umm, so you think this is an improvement umm why do you think it was changed?**

R: Because, there's such outrage from the historical community umm I mean I, one of the things I hear is sort of where did you hear from, where did you hear about it or how did you see it being actioned, umm for me I saw it on Twitter, I saw Facebook and participation in Facebook petitions against it umm I follow people like Ben Walsh and Historical Association umm Russell Tart, Russell Tar sorry on umm on Twitter as well and you can constantly see posts going up by them, umm about what's going on -

**I: So was, was -**

R: And link to BBC etc and links to new sites as well to, to sort of direct you to where you can find that information, that's how I was following it and I think there is a big kick off from academics because certain academics are specialist in Starkey, specialist in 16<sup>th</sup> century, Tudor history and it was gonna take away a lot of attention from that.

**I: But ironically Starkey he was one of the biggest -**

R: He went, he went for it I know.

**I: Pro.**

R: I know he went for it I just realised when I said it, umm -

**I: Umm so social media is very important to you?**

R: Yes. (Enthusiastically).

**I: And, and you've used umm anger and kick off.**

R: (Laughs).

**I: In the way the history teachers responded.**

R: Not just history teachers, historians as well.

**I: Historians as well.**

R: Yeah.

**I: Umm what do you think lay behind that anger and that kick off, why do you think they was, what do you think the main thrust of the argument against it were?**

R: Gove.

**I: You think it's personal -**

R: I think a lot of it was -, yeah I do think some of it was personal umm against him and, and it's you know people are still very much against him.

**I: But if Michael Gove had produced this second version first do you think there would've been the kick off?**

R: Yes.

**I: Yes?**

R: I don't think it would've been to the extreme that it was, I still think there would have been some spitting of dummies out yeah I do, I do think.

**I: Spitting dummies so what -**

R: Yeah.

**I: What, what would be the reason for this kind of -**

R: Because it was coming from him and I don't I (.) he seems to make a lot of changes for changes sake or without really thinking things through. I mean when he wrote that initial one he didn't consult with historians, he didn't consult with history teachers he didn't consult with other people to, to make well informed decisions and I think if he

had done the same thing again I think yeah there would have been a little bit of backlash but not to the same extent but without consult I think a lot of it was he didn't consult with the people who are more informed to make, not make the decision but more informed to help guide the decision.

I: **Doesn't that just make history teachers into kind of -**

R: Revolutionaries.

I: **Precious, they, they, you haven't asked us so we don't like it, would, would, would, the given that -**

R: It, it'd be like -

I: **This was warmly welcomed by -**

R: It'd be like letting me write a scheme of work for maths, I haven't got a clue what I'm talking about.

I: **But this was, this was welcomed by The HA so why wouldn't, you don't think they would've welcomed it or you think they might have welcomed it and other history teachers wouldn't have.**

R: I think it would still have been scrutinised, I think the, the nature of historians is always to look at something and, and to, to criticise straight initially. I think it wouldn't, there wouldn't have been the backlash that the initial one did but I still think it would've been criticised I do.

I: **So you, you've got -**

R: But I think that's lesser of two evils and that is much better and it's much more similar to what's current and what, what was put before.

I: **So you got umm information from social media?**

R: Yeah.

I: **How did you then protest?**

R: Umm I would, I joined the Facebook petitions and I had a little tantrum at my head of department umm (laughs) that was my form of protesting umm so there were a few petitions going around on Facebook against this one, umm and I think there was a link on Twitter I followed to a petition through a website, I can't, I can't tell you I couldn't remember what it was now umm a lot of history teachers have joined that one and I signed up to that one as well, umm and obviously discuss it with my head of department, he was all for that February 13.

I: **He liked it?**

R: He liked it yeah he liked it, umm the rest of us didn't.

I: **What did he give as his reasons for liking it?**

R: It's his specific interests, his interests lie in those topics so he was all for you know delving into those topics in more detail.

I: **'Cause the, the impression I'm getting is that history teachers are actually quite selfish that what -**

R: Yes we are (laughs).

I: **The, if it, so you don't, you know you don't like it because it's not the stuff you like but he likes it 'cause it is the stuff he likes umm the, the history, history teachers would've kicked off even if it was a pos, a, as positive as this August document because they weren't asked?**

R: I think, not kicked off as such I think with that one they, there still would've been some moaning about it because people were happy with what it already is, we were happier with how it was because there didn't seem to be any problems with it so people felt it didn't need to change so I think any change would have been ill, poorly received but had that come first there would've been some complaining how the -

I: **Complaints about what, what would people have not liked?**

R: The change, any change of that -

I: **To what extent has it changed from 2007?**

R: It's not really, it's not really but people wouldn't have welcomed change full stop, I don't think because they didn't feel that change was needed but that was welcomed.

I: **You talk about saying people wouldn't have welcomed it because I know a lot of history teachers who think that the absolute absence of anything before 1066 was a major -**

R: Probably.

I: **Hole in 2007.**

R: Yeah.

I: **And actually are delighted that -**

R: There is something.

I: **That's now been included.**

R: I, I don't, I have no idea to be honest umm -

I: **Are you basing it on people who, who you've spoken to -**

R: My own community. Yeah my own approach.

I: **So what is your own community?**

R: Local colleagues and local schools but also the people that I trained with as well so schools based in Liverpool, London, I still keep in touch with that community as well but also my colleagues.

I: **Umm and, and in terms of the wider history teaching community, we're nearly finished now, umm the SHP umm and Historical Association, how close would you say your links are with those bodies?**

R: Umm not as close as they were 3 years ago possibly, umm -

I: **Was that when you were training or when you first -**

R: Yes when I was training, yeah so not as close as they were umm through, through no particular reason it's not, you know I still respect and appreciate them as much as I ever did umm just department won't pay for memberships (laughs) umm so yeah because of lack of access I suppose to it and also lack of time to keep accessing some of their stuff and read into some of their stuff too but yeah the links I have with them are not as close or I'm not as informed by them as I used to be.

I: **And do you think that's just as simple as a kind of drifting apart because your department won't pay for, is it or -**

R: Yeah, it's the limitation of time obviously things have been going on in my school that have sort of taken my time and attention elsewhere, umm whereas I perhaps would have liked to gone on like the SHP conference in the

summer, umm I would've liked to, to have a subscription to Historical Association and I did for a while 'cause I kept using Ian's, umm my attention has been you know elsewhere diverted through problems in my own school umm that seemed a bit more significant than what was going on in my own department.

**I: And, and the last question how important do you think the HA and the SHP were in mobilising opposition to the draft?**

R: Umm I think they were quite significant really but I also think that much can be said about sort of the more popular leading historians as well.

**I: Meaning who?**

R: So for example Simon Schama, umm I think you know that they did do a lot, they did sort of drum up or people looked to them for support sorry not that they didn't drum up support people looked to them for them to take action and them to put something together towards the government.

**I: But, but it's not like the history teaching, history teachers maintained, you know Starky's intervention at the Hay on Wye Festival was quite late wasn't it and it wasn't like the history teachers didn't have an immediate reaction to it, history teachers reacted before Starky reacted to February. [means Schama]**

R: Yes, yeah umm but I think to be honest in order to put something collaboratively together they needed an organisation like that, that almost unite them to join together because you, you need an organisation in which people go to otherwise it's, it's down to the history teachers to communicate and liaise with one another and I think what the Historical Association and SHP do especially SHP with the conferences is they provide opportunities for history teachers to get together and I think that's why they were, they were needed and they were quite umm important in putting across that view.

**I: And this, this very definitely is the last question to follow on from that, do you think the SHP unites history teachers views or do you think it has a leadership which shapes history teachers views, do you think the ideas come up from the ground and then are mobilised by the SHP and the HA or do you think the SHP and the HA have to take a decision which then influences downwards?**

R: Do you mean with regards to this or regards to teaching in general?

**I: Umm both.**

R: No I think it comes, I think that the SHP personally from, from what I've heard and what I've seen I think they take ideas and, and thoughts and opinions from history teachers and they promote them and, and share good practice rather than preach down you know umm and they take it from not just from academics but from practising teachers as well, I'd say like you said it comes from the ground rather than comes from above and goes down.

**I: Okay that's fab thank you very much.**

R: That's alright.

#### iv. Engaged Resistor

- I:** Okay um, can you just confirm that you have read and signed the consent form?  
**R:** Yes I have done.
- I:** Thank you, um, so the first question; how would you describe yourself as a history teacher?  
**R:** Um, I feel that I don't do things by the book as a history teacher; I feel that my role as a history teacher is to empower students and you do that through teaching them about the past and events that have happened in the past so they can make a positive contribution to the future. That's why I became a history teacher.
- I:** Um, what do you mean by by the book, you said I don't do things by the book?  
**R:** So, so for example traditional history teaching to some people, like one of the main, main things when a kid starts in my class in September, whether it's Year 7, 8 or 9 it's Miss, history is boring. And if I've never taught that kid before I make it my personal mission to disprove that statement, like what's the point of history, it's just about the past, it's happened and what, that's boring. So what I mean by I don't do things by the book is I mean I rarely use a text book but there's a time and place for a text book, I'm not saying that that's not valid. I mean I recreate the history classroom, I bring history back to life and I do almost things that would seem outrageous to students, er, to other students or maybe even teachers as well, looking into the history classroom, like what's going on in there, dark in the room, trying to recreate um, almost controversial topics, trying to recreate them in our classroom.
- I:** Um, so when you say by the book you mean literally you don't do it by the text book as opposed to the saying by the book?  
**R:** By the book um, to some extent in that way I don't do it by the text book, that is true but I mean almost as well, if someone tells me I need to do something, you need to, you need, this needs to be taught in this way, it's a sensitive issue, it's slavery, it needs to be taught in this way and if I feel my group of kids that I've got, that's not going to be the best way, they're going to be able to access the work or learn from it, then I won't. And I will shake things up, I will change it, I will challenge things, I will argue with the child about historical content instead of this is history which is what the national, the original February national curriculum stated really, it was almost a telling, students must learn this, this, this and this. I don't teach them that way.
- I:** What, you use the phrase um, that its role is to empower students, what does that mean?  
**R:** It, it means activate them, it means engage them and then essentially make them do something, whether that is make them question something, make them go home and say something to their parents. It's essentially the activity that I mean by empowerment of students, so it's Miss I was reading this thing yesterday but that's not true is it, it's this; why don't people do this, why don't people do that, it's questioning, it's debating, it's historical thinking essentially which in turn then politicises students.
- I:** So is empowerment the act of questioning or is empowerment to be politicised?  
**R:** Well empowerment is active questioning to a certain degree but students are still, my students that are up to 16; eleven to 16 so there's a, there is only a certain amount really that they couldn't be actively engaged um, in politics. But it needs to start with the questioning for the politicisation to take place and for their active engagement in society and politics to take place.
- I:** Why is politicisation desirable?  
**R:** It's essential not desirable and the reason for that is otherwise you'd just be (laughter), injustices would be taking place, we'd see a recreation of past atrocities as well as, as well as, it's, you'll be living in almost dictatorship where the government tell you this is what we're doing and if students are politicised, if people are politicised they will never be able to object to something that discriminates against a certain peoples. Or they will never be able to hold anyone to account, it's essential, it's fundamental for being a citizen.
- I:** So to you does politicisation, is it the same as just questioning the powerful or resisting the powerful?  
**R:** It's questioning to, to then resist, so it's questioning so they actively engage in protest of some sort, I'm not talking about going out on the streets although there's a place for that. Different types of protest, whether it's writing letters, whether it's signing petitions, whether it's calling meetings, going to surgeries of those in power, it is active engagement that, that I'm talking about really.
- I:** Um, do, do you feel that or how important is the topics or the, the content that students study in achieving that aim then?  
**R:** Crucial; crucial, there is an argument that says you can teach them anything and they'll get it and they'll be able to be politicised, they'll be able to be actively engaged in their society. But that argument is strengthened with content really, with specific content, for example I am gonna have a far easier time um, achieving that aim, teaching about something like the suffragette movements and the, or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the Holocaust than I am teaching something like Clive of India or the Romans, for example.
- I:** But isn't there a danger that what you're saying is you're basically making the content, the events of the past subservient to your political aims?  
**R:** That is a danger but I would never, I would never just teach that so I would in, a curriculum has to be balanced and there is a time for, there are content that easily um, lends itself to more of a political route, popular protest, the power of the people, democracy, that type of things. But the curriculum has to be balanced so we have to have, content is important, historical content is very important and there is, I would never just teach my political aims, it has to be diverse, it has to be wider breached.
- I:** But I'm, I'm interested then that you were almost dismissive of the Romans because if you want to look at ideas of democracy and powerful and, and slavery and Spartacus and resistance um, why, why not the Romans?  
**R:** Um, I mean –
- I:** Because you can't have a more perfect model of resistance than the Spartacus revolt.

- R: No, that is, that is true and the for, it can be done and it has been done, for example I did it most recently with the peasants revolt, compared it to the Arab Spring and the revolution that happened in Egypt and Tunisia started off with. So um, it can be done but you ask the question of which would it be more relevant to students wise, would it be, is, is content as important to do this with students and I feel that, that certain content lends itself easier. So I am not dismissing the Romans, don't want this to be, that I am completely dismissive of the Romans and what the argument I am trying to make is that it's easier to do that, for me, from where, how I view the Romans which all history teachers have an agenda, everyone. Someone that sits here and says um, they don't, that's inaccurate, if you have a brain then you have an agenda and you, you have an ideology. So for me personally it's easier for me to do that with something like the suffragettes and slavery than it is for something like the Romans.
- I: **Um, I forget what I was going to say now; yeah I, I'm also, I'm interested in this idea of comparing the peasants revolt to the Arab Spring; is there not a danger that you are instrumentalising the peasants revolt though, that this is a, an, a revolt which is very significant in its own terms and you're almost, by comparing it to a contemporary example you are robbing it of some of its own power?**
- R: No, no you're making history relevant when you do things like that, you're directly engaging with students and things that they may already know and then comparing it with er, historical revolts, such as the peasants revolt. If you look at the, the reasons why the peasants rebelled, almost identical to why they um, the Egyptians rebelled against Hosni Mubarak, um, -
- I: **So do you think that your students have an understanding of the Arab Spring and therefore it's easier to make the links that way?**
- R: Well my, if you look at the ethnicity of the makeup of my school, a lot of them are from Egypt or from Arabic speaking countries, so yes they do have an understanding. Even in Year 7 they have an understanding; if I said to them who's Hosni Mubarak, the Arabs in the classroom would definitely be able to know he um, was the ex-leader of Egypt. So if you, if we're looking at, I'm not going to say that this is the case down the road in Our Lady's High School, but it is the case in, in my school to a certain extent, it is the case.
- I: **How do you get round the fact then um, that there may well be a diversity of opinion in your classroom about the Arab Spring, in the sense that no, no revolt is as simple as goodies versus baddies; is there not a, a, a sense in which you're robbing the children in your class of having an alternative view of the Arab, Arab Spring?**
- R: Um, no because students have directly voiced their opinion on it in certain extent and I welcome that, I welcome -
- I: **So you've, you've had students who are, defend the, the governments and are critical of the Arab revolt - ?**
- R: Um, I've never had anyone directly defend the government but I have had them speak badly of the, the, the grassroots rebelling and those opinions have never been shut down, they have been welcomed, we've explored them in the classroom. And then again, we've compared them to um, King Richard and why he would want to defend his nation. And I think one of the most important things is doing that, you can't look at history as history; history needs to be taken in with context of today, that's how we need to teach history and some people don't teach history like that. But I feel if we're looking at elements of the past, we have to compare it and make analogies with the present, for any sort of comprehension um, to be successful with the students, for them to comprehend anything we need to bring it back to a time that is relevant to them. So if I was teaching in an all white school, that would not be the analogy that I would use, I would make it relevant to my students and use something, thinking from the top of my head here, maybe um, maybe the riots that happened in London a few years ago and the elements behind that.
- I: **But is, isn't um, isn't an important part of history an appreciation of the fact that people in the past thought differently, historical imagination, historical empathy that actually when you say that similarities between the Arab Spring peasant revolts are clear, I would argue that actually you're imputing your own view onto that and you're extracting the similarities because they are convenient for you when actually the difference between a society in which you have had a literal bondsmen, you have had um, a very oppressive feudal system, you have had a plague, you have had massive upheaval. I would argue that in many ways the differences are, are greater than the similarities; aren't you doing your children a disservice if you don't emphasise that the past is different?**
- R: Um, that's a really interesting question, I, I don't feel like I'm doing them a disservice otherwise I wouldn't teach in that manner but I do feel like, the past is different and I understand the arguments you've just made in relation to the feudal system, the plague, obviously the disparities are evident. But there are similarities as well and I feel in order to make anything, to give any meaning to children, for them to be engaged, similarities need to be born out. I will never exaggerate similarities but I will highlight similarities that are there and if others view that in a sense that I would be doing children a disservice by doing that then so be it. But I still teach the differences but whereas, whereas teachers, some teachers, most teachers probably will never draw on similarities with, in relation to any revolt or revolution, I would. And if Arab Spring didn't happen I'd find something else to draw similarities with.
- I: **So drawing on what you've just said there about most history teachers wouldn't, what is your view of a stereotypical history teacher and how has that view come about?**
- R: Um -
- I: **not stereotypical, the typical history teacher because you've said most.**
- R: I, yeah I did say most, my view of a stereotypical history teacher is to really, really be engaged in history so the past is the past and this is not accurate, I'm not trying to say all history teachers are like this um -
- I: **Well let's leave aside stereotypes then, what do you think most history teachers are like?**
- R: Engaged in history in itself, history being a historical, the historical events that have happened in the past that, where politicisation rarely enters their way of teaching.
- I: **And where does, where have you formed his impression from?**
- R: From speaking to teachers, from going to conferences, from being on my PGCE course where I was with training history teachers, from meeting others as well.
- I: **So do you think there is a history teaching community?**
- R: Yes.
- I: **Yes um, you've said yes and you feel part of it; what is it?**

- R: The history um, the community is the HA really, that's the community; you go on there um, there's another forum the school's History Association I think where I go on regularly and I, I just read what history teachers are struggling with, I read them having a moan about certain GCSE questions, I read them saying, right I'm teaching a lesson on this but I'm stuck with ideas, how would someone else teach this. I'm trying to embed chronology into my curriculum strongly, how would, how would someone else do this and online people can go on and comment, oh this is what I've done, this is what I've done, oh I've got a lesson on this if you'd like it and that is really, really strong, it's really powerful. You see the same names come up on the forum as well, whereas I don't, I have said on that form that I feel a part of it whereas I don't necessarily comment on it, I go on it regularly to read.
- I: **So is it a virtual community then, does it exist only as a kind of social medial website?**
- R: It doesn't exist only as that but it does exist predominantly in that, so my main method of communication, a part of that community is predominantly virtually, however there are more than enough opportunities for it to be face to face.
- I: **So what is its physical existence then?**
- R: Its physical existence for me is um, conferences, that's where it is really where you meet people; you meet the greats of the history community, the people that you've been reading about.
- I: **Who are the greats of the history community?**
- R: The greats are, for me, my interpretation is Jamie Byron um, Ben Walsh, Christine Counsell, these types of people that you've been reading for since you became into history education really. Alison is one as well for me, because when I was doing my PGCE and I had to write on Alison Stephens's book, reading her articles on the H, the historical teaching history [continues to talk in a way which makes school identifiable]
- I: **Well, so I'm, I'm a little, I just want some clarification in that you say that these people are members of the history teaching community and yet you say that most history teachers that you have met don't teach history in that way, in the way that you teach.**
- R: But they're not, yeah but they're not really history teachers, they are part of the history, the teach, the history community but I feel that what they do is so inspirational and so great because they are not constrained with the actual essence of being in a classroom and teaching and how much has changed. So they purely focus on history and its essence, history at its greatest level, which is excellent but history can easily and is diluted by the restraints of a modern history classroom or a modern teaching classroom. So the teachers that I have met who are, who are history teachers, their, in these conferences, face to face, their notion of ideology of history is very much what I've described which is where I formed this opinion from. I'm not trying to say my opinion is correct but it's where I've formed it from.
- I: **Well how influential are these people that you call the greats then, because if they go to these conferences and present at these conferences and they've got one view of history teaching and yet the people that you meet that are delegates at these conferences aren't agreeing, how does that come about?**
- R: Um, yeah that's a good point, I feel that you can, you can listen, you can um, be present in a seminar, in a workshop, in a, in a talk and then what you take away from that is up to anyone's interpretation. Everyone will take away something different; some people take away strategies, some people take away theories, some people don't think they've learnt anything from what they've seen and that's a very much, I don't want to say they aren't influential because they are influential but on many people who read um, teaching history. Each time the journal comes out, but equally there are, there are many people who don't as well.
- I: **But, but going to, I presume you are talking about the SHP conferences, £300 for two days, it's two days of your weekend, that suggests a level of engagement and yet you are saying that people go and then don't listen or take only part of the message.**
- R: But everywhere you go, everywhere you go you're gonna listen to a talk and you're gonna say yeah, excellent, I agree with that, that's fantastic and then you'll go into a different workshop and then be like, yeah that's good, I agree with that, oh not so sure about that, that's not really valuable to me. Teaching is all about personality; if it's not to your personality to um, create a crazy, controversial debate in your classroom you're not gonna do that, if you don't debate on a day to day level.
- I: **But don't people who sign up for these conferences know what they're getting into, they (loud beep) –**
- R: Sorry; sorry.
- I: **Surely they are people who do think like you or are sympathetic to the people like Christine Counsell and Jamie Byron or they wouldn't go to a conference where they presented.**
- R: But that's really naive way of looking at it because if they, there are, I agree to a certain extent but not really because there'll be people with different personalities everywhere you go. There are hundreds of people that attend these conferences, not everyone is gonna have the same teaching strategies, not everyone is gonna have the same ideology on teaching history and not everyone is gonna teach in the same way. Even when you, you go as an observer to these things, you, you go from one workshop to a next workshop, to a next workshop with three very different teaching styles, they've asked you to do very different things, they've been engaging in different ways, some maybe not engaging at all. And there's, you can't brand everyone together who goes to it as having the same discourse, being engaged in the same way and having the say ideology as everyone else. I don't think that's –
- I: **But, but I agree with you that you have to appreciate these people as individuals but you said you can't say they all have the same discourse, but they know partly what they are signing up for. For the same reason that I assume you've never been to the Conservative party conference.**
- R: No.
- I: **Because you know what you'd be signing up for if you went, these people have signed up for the SHP, they recognise the names of the people who are being presenting, they read the contents of these sessions and so when they choose to go, are they not engaging in, do they not share something?**
- R: Well yeah they must do, whether they've been asked to go by their school or they've asked the school whether they can go, yes they must share something which is why I don't, I, I feel strongly that I'm not saying that they're not engaged in history, they're not doing it properly, all the history teachers are terrible; not at all. But what, I do feel from the conversations that I've had with history teachers that the majority of them don't teach in history in the way that I do and that's something that I've, I've personally experience.
- I: **So do you think there is an SHP ethos or an SHP approach?**

- R: Yeah.
- I: **What is it?**
- R: It's um, the ethos is purely um, history focussed, it is politicisation as well but the ethos is definitely about engaging students through enquiry, through um, there are questioning as well, it's through linking different things together. The ethos almost changes, no it doesn't, doesn't completely change but it latches onto what the latest developments are in teaching, so for example in the past two years if you look at the history conference and the programme of study, a lot of it is literacy focussed, whereas that wouldn't be there five year ago because that is the latest thing going on. So it, it, while, while the pupils and teaching history and learning is in an exciting manner is fundamentally at the core of SHP, it does change with the latest developments of teaching as well.
- I: **So what, but at its core, you said enquiry I think, what is enquiry then?**
- R: Enquiry, historical enquiry is, for me I've interpreted it as being questioning, historical enquiry is looking at a range of different sources and forming some sort of judgement based upon them. It is enabling students as investigators and as questioners as well.
- I: **How close is that SHP methodology or ethos to your own?**
- R: Yeah it's pretty strong to be honest, I do do that, I, I try to but not because of SHP, just because I think that's the best way. So if Mohammed says to me, er, no Miss you're wrong, I would never be like, well actually I am right, it's on the curriculum and this is the GCSE and you've got to know it. I would always be like, why, why am I wrong, tell me why I'm wrong and then engage that from them and then, then it develops further; well have you got evidence to prove yours, where are you basing that on. So then it's getting them to look at sources and be like, yeah well this says this and they're saying this for that reason and it's all about the debate.
- I: **But there's certain things that aren't open to debate that if a child says, are wrong.**
- R: Yes.
- I: **So how, how do you enable the child to understand the limits of the opinions they're allowed to express?**
- R: By doing it tactfully so you don't, you don't go in and be like, right guys, everyone's opinions, share them, let's go, let's incite racial hatred or anything crazy like that. You have to do it in a very um, you have to be aware that there are students opinions, especially in my school that are offensive, there will be. I'm not trying to say that's majority because it's not, but people will have offensive opinions but it's being able to do it sensitively, being able to have a debate, there are questions you ask, very much the way you ask it will almost stamp out that type of um, negativity. So for example, it doesn't happen often and presumably with a makeup like mine, it would make the school like mine a lot of questions that I get asked is like, ooh how do you students feel about learning about the Holocaust though and things like that because predominantly a Muslim school. But that's not really where I've had the most challenge because we do it so sensitively, it's taught in such a sensitive manner that they don't, almost don't have the opportunity to voice that. But where it has been present most recently is by white children who are the minority in this school and they're almost pro-stance on Enoch Powell in the GCSE course in his rivers of blood speech and that, that was something I was really challenged to with my debates, I, for the first time felt really challenged with that when I've got a student who's, um, without saying it almost pro-Enoch Powell and the views she was putting across. And then the Muslim children debating with her, getting a little bit heated.
- I: **But, but, I, I, holding an opinion of the rights or wrongs of mass immigration is not an historical judgement is it?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Enoch Powell said what he said, if, if somebody happens to think that what Enoch Powell predicted is the case, they're not making a historical judgement are they, they're making a, a contemporary, political judgement.**
- R: Yeah, they are.
- I: **So can they be wrong?**
- R: No but not necessarily because it's their opinion, but what, what I found challenging is when a student is saying what his opinion isn't racist because that's wrong, so that's directly something there that I need to challenge and I need to get involved in in that sense. And I need to directly hold that student to account and say, well actually he is. So in things like that, that's when I step in and that's when I, I try to bring it back down to less offens..., when debates happen it's not offensive. In this sense very rare occasions when it can easily become that way, for example the Enoch Powell thing, so like it is a political opinion that was voiced by the student but it could quite easily become a racist opinion which is when I need to step in and when I need to make sure that things like that are not um, my students don't walk away thinking that's acceptable. They can't leave my classroom thinking that's acceptable –
- I: **But then you then become the arbiter of what bits of the rivers of blood speech are racist so, you know, if you take away like pickaninny that's used, okay we probably commonly agree that that's racist. If we take the prediction that there will be mass violence, the rivers of blood, is that racist, I don't know. If, do you understand what I mean?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Ultimately are you not just going to be the arbiter of where you allow people, of the kind of boundaries of acceptable political opinion in your classroom?**
- R: Well he was sacked so, he was sacked for the offensive language he used in that speech so I, I try and use elements like that to say, well actually he was deemed to be um, inciting racial hatred in that sense because he lost his job for it. And he lost his job in the '60's, in a time where it was so much more, it was far less rigid in the sense of you could say so much more offensive things than you could say now and he lost it in the '60's so we have to take that into consideration. So I am not making the line when I do this, when I step in, when I say what's right and what's wrong which I rarely do, but I'm not making that line, that line is done for me in things like that and that's what I use to speak to students and to um, almost get them to think in that manner when I do hold them to account.
- I: **Okay so um, can we move on then to look at the February curriculum itself. The first question is how did you find out about it?**
- R: Um, I was waiting for it so I immediately, I got a series of texts from people as well saying have you seen the new national curriculum. Um, my head of department phoned me to ask, oh no, sorry my colleague phoned me to say have

you seen the new national curriculum, it was, basically everyone was speaking about it, it was just how I got my hands on it.

**I: And um, what was your initial response to it?**

R: Terrible.

**I: Why?**

R: It, it's all knowledge isn't it, it's all historical knowledge, less emphasis on skills, I mean historical content is important but it's um, it's British history as well, it takes away the concept of wider history. Seeing it on a national, on a um, on a international, on a global level, it glorifies Britain almost and I was in complete; my, to put it bluntly I was gutted. If we were told that I had to teach this I wouldn't know where to start, it's everything that I feel um, I, I was thinking how am I going to teach this in a way where I can get the same thing out of my students. How am I going to teach this in a way where students will be further politicised and will want to make a positive contribution to society; how am I going to do that when they've irradiated the elements of the national curriculum that enabled us to do that.

**I: But that sounds very much like the previous national curriculum was a pick and mix to forward your attempt to politicise children.**

R: But I, I want to politicise children, I think it's important and there will be many people that disagree with me, many people thinking I am not, there needs to be a difference from indoctrinating children to think in my way because that is not the case at all; I encourage historical thinking, I encourage political thinking, I encourage independence and autonomy on that. But I want them to think and that's politicisation; I want them to think and then act.

**I: But then I suppose what me question was is why can't you encourage a questioning, interrogative, politicised child with these events?**

R: Well you, you could, you could but the strength of it and the success of it I feel would be limited. It just has a purely British focus; if I asked my children which I have done just as an experiment how do you identify yourself, not one said British, not one. So I need to make history engaging to our students in a sense that yes they are in Britain, of course in Britain, Michael Gove recently spoke about British values, what are British core values. Um, but they are in Britain but that, this looks at Britain in isolation, this looks at Britain's role in everything. Whereas the, the beauty of the previous curriculum and the new one that's came out is it's very much wider scope, it's very much international history, it goes back further which is excellent and –

**I: Why is the going back further good?**

R: Because history didn't start from where this national curriculum explains it does (laughter) or outlines that it does. Going back further –

**I: It didn't start in 1066 either.**

R: It didn't start in 1066 but 1066 is a time where I, I feel, I feel that um, going, for me going back further is important because it broadens the depth of history. It's very much um, skills are able to take place, we can make links further between the past from the, the, the further down the line to recent past to the present and that's easily done. And, or far more easily done when it goes back further and I agree with you, it didn't start from 1066 and which is why there are further changes taking place in the GCSE, 2016 GCSE's where we will go further back than that.

**I: But, but this may sound like a repetition of me earlier question but if, if you want the skills why, why do you need to do the skills with medieval England, why can't the skills be done with the French revolution, um, the, you know, the abolition of slavery, the Gladstone and Disraeli, why can't they do the skills there?**

R: Because medieval England was a very important time for Britain and it contributed to today's society drastically.

**I: But every time is equally as important isn't it?**

R: It is, it is but, but this whole, this is so narrow, it looks at such a small, narrow timeframe and it's not just about the skills. I understand your point but it's not just about the skills, it's about further as well, it's about the contribution of places like medieval England and what they did for us today. And that's not saying medieval England is more important than any other time, but it's essential that students understand more timeframes than what this, the draft curriculum brought about.

**I: You, you've also said in your reasons for not liking it that it was very elitist; what does that mean?**

R: Look at it (laughter) about um, Gladstone, Disraeli um, is there anything about, about popular protest here?

**I: There's quite a lot actually um, Peterloo, um, abolition of the slavery chartists.**

R: Yeah but even then, even these, they are nowhere near as um, on a grassroot level they are nowhere near as the ones that I've previously, I've been put forward in September and –

**I: It does carry on, you know, Annie Besant um, the Rowntree report –**

R: Yeah and Gandhi.

**I: - suffragettes um, it then talks about the um, the creation of the welfare state, it talks about the retreat from empire, Gandhi, Nehru.**

R: But the, the way it's been, the way it's provided to us is in a sense very, very elitist; if you look at it it's what has Britain done for others, it's all about Britain, it's all about Britain's involvement in other things to glorify the State itself.

**I: So is, is elite, is what you mean by elite that it's, it's jingoistic or is it just it glorifying Britain, is that what makes it elite?**

R: Well the elite are those at the top, those at the top would, like Churchill, history intend, it will be kind to be because I intend to write it. They are rewriting history for us, making it kind to Britain itself and that, that means that it favours the elite and that's what I feel this document did.

**I: But who, who are the elite, are the elite a historical group like Gladstone and Disraeli or are the elite a current phenomenon? You say it favours the elite, do you mean it favours the memory of people like Churchill and Disraeli?**

R: Yeah, that's what I meant by that, so the, the people in power essentially.

**I: In the past.**

R: Yeah.

**I: Not that it's got a, a modern social control function?**

R: Well I feel it has that as well but that's not what I meant by that, but I do feel like when Gove put this forward it was very much trying to create what he wanted children to learn in a very much they get told this, you teach them this, you teach



them that. So you, we talked before about ideologies and, and this is essentially, I feel, his, that he wants to put, put on children.

**I: But you've said it's politically motivated, you've spoken about your own political motivations; what is the political motivation?**

R: Um, I feel it's to glorify Britain, that's initially, when, when I first looked at it it was essentially to eradicate the, the (laughter) the world, international history, to get rid of that and to glorify the status of Britain itself. I feel and I would argue that that is the political motivation.

**I: What for?**

R: For an intention of um, for empowerment of, of Britain, for an intention of Britain is powerful, here are past events that took place in Britain, we are a very important country. And it's to enable children to realise and to believe that Britain is an extremely powerful and historical powerful western country.

**I: Isn't that just fact that Britain was historically the most powerful country in the world and it continues to be a powerful country?**

R: It, well it's not the most but it's definitely not as powerful as it once was with it's relinquish of the empire, but that that's not, you can't do that, you can't do that. Just because you are a western country and it is power, you, you must talk you must speak about other countries; you must teach about the Rwandan genocide, you must teach about other countries that um, just because they are not powerful doesn't mean they are not important. And this relinquishes the importance of other countries.

**I: But to use the example of the Rwandan genocide, doesn't that give children a very negative view of central Africa, of civil war and genocide?**

R: Yeah and I'm not –

**I: It doesn't, it doesn't help children think that Africa is powerful.**

R: But that's not what I'm saying cos it's not powerful, so I don't want children to go away and believe an incorrect statement that Africa is powerful because that's not true. But we must teach other countries other areas than this, we must teach about Bosnia, we, we must teach about um, about these sorts of things, that this just takes away just really, really, no area of movement here and that's what I have a problem with.

**I: Well I accept that its narrow but I, I think that you're inferring a political motive, I accept that in terms of breadth the complete absence of world history is obviously missed, you know, is an obvious thing that needs to be there. But how can a list of events be political?**

R: Easily, without a shadow of a doubt this is political, history is the most political um, and citizenship um –

**I: Doesn't tell you, doesn't tell you what you should think about these things does it; it just gives you a list of events.**

R: But the way it's put forward is obviously for glorification of Britain, there is no sense of um, I, I realise that we've already established there's no world history but maybe you're right, maybe it's my interpretation of it, but I strongly believe that history is very political. If you look at, for example, you look at the draft changes to the geography curriculum, a subject that we get put with; even though we're nothing like it really we get put with the most out of all the subjects in terms of connection. If you look at the changes, minute in February when they came out, this drastic, complete shock when it came out and there's, obviously it has a political agenda. We can't say it doesn't.

**I: But, but Michael Gove would say this is just a list of important things that happened in Britain and you're kind of leftist conspiracy theory is twitching. And I meant no political intent by this, it's just you as a, as a typical left wing agitator that sees ruling class conspiracies and everything.**

R: Yeah, that's a ludicrous point, absolutely ludicrous. For, for this not to be political charged (laughter) or politically motivated is ridiculous; Michael Gove since day one has had a vested interest in history and the history national curriculum. He's directly expressed and continue, continues to express with his recent um, assertion of British values that the way he is going to push through his political agenda, the way he is gonna do it is through the classroom. The way he's gonna engage children in a way that he wants them to be engaged, not even engaged, I'm gonna say taught and the information, the content he wants them to learn about is clear through this. It's completely clear and the way he wants them to progress in terms of content and knowledge is evident in this document. And for that argument there's no way that argument can be sustained, it's a ridiculous argument.

**I: Okay um, in terms of what you um, did about it um, you are someone that I would say is very engaged in the history teaching community; you are a member of the HA, you read Teaching History magazine, you've been to SHP conference, you are a mentor for training teachers so I would say you are very engaged in the history community. What did you do about this when you read it, obviously I can detect the anger, what did you do?**

R: Um, (laughter) obviously the consultation online so we um, we had a departmental meeting in school time really where devoted to that the online document where everyone expressed their views. And that was something that was essentially um, there was no question that we wouldn't do that, of course we would give our opinions online and we did it collectively in unison. Also –

**I: Where did you, where did you go to -?**

R: Um, what do you mean, what - ?

**I: Where did you, you gave it collectively to –**

R: Oh yeah so what happened was it was online when we went on, the national consultation, the DfE, we, all of us went on and we literally, we discussed first different things, everyone's different opinions and then we spent around 40 minutes just fulfilling that document and put it through and –

**I: This was the DfE's consultation?**

R: Yeah the DfE's consultation, which a lot of history teachers didn't do, so if you look at the ones that I, I know personally, my friends who are history teachers, I was the only one to do that out of them. Yet they still disagreed with this um, and spoke negatively of it but they weren't as politically charged in a sense to do that, which is quite easy really, doesn't really, you don't have to actively do something, move forward.

**I: So are those, are those people just lazy, apathetic, what, the people who don't do it who are cross and don't do anything?**

- R: Apathetic yeah well they have to be, they have to be to be able to do that but I would never, I would never be like you must do this, come on let's go in the same way in my classroom, I would never like you must believe this guys but I will put forward the arguments of, of what I think really. So in, in this sense added that, I also um, wrote to my MP on numerous occasions regarding these and um –
- I: **Did you get a reply?**
- R: Yeah I did get a reply and my views would be put forward but again, that was only because I live in a predominantly Labour area, whereas um, I know a person that doesn't and lives in a predominantly Tory area and the response they got back was not as, it was from a Tory MP and it was nowhere near as understanding or as hard line as my response that I got back, which I was very happy with my response. It showed that he was gonna put this forward, he was gonna take it to education minister and um, and let me know the response of that.
- I: **And you signed petitions as well?**
- R: Yes.
- I: **What petitions were they?**
- R: There were um, many petitions online that was, there was one set up by um, I think it was an organisation, it was a history organisation on a blog post and there was one set up there and I literally just signed it. And then did that, I feel that that's necessary really, some may not see it as necessary but I feel that it is, because it adds to, it's like if no one does it then it won't be successful but if we all do it and then that puts political pressure on the government to act. So I do feel that that was –
- I: **Do you, do you feel the pressure worked?**
- R: Clearly.
- I: **So here's the new thing –**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **- um, what made the difference?**
- R: What actions made the difference?
- I: **Yeah what do you think, well what is the difference first of all and what do you think made the difference?**
- R: Oh the difference is massive, it's, it's more, its' less of a diktat almost and it's more of a um, concept of ideas to be explored, the, the recreation of world history and the reincorporation of that is clearly evident within it which is excellent. This one I absolutely love, at least one study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments; that's key, that's amazing. And when, when you look at why this happened it was because of the HA if I'm, if I'm gonna be brutally honest it's because of the relentless um, protests that took place, the relentless, they just didn't drop it, they did not drop it and –
- I: **You didn't fill in the HA survey though.**
- R: No I didn't.
- I: **But yet you think the HA were the people who made the biggest difference?**
- R: Yeah, I believe that they did because of their, there were a few insiders there as well and if you want to get something changed you have to have a few insiders. And in the HA that's what, that's why they really have there, a few –
- I: **What do you mean by insiders?**
- R: Insiders, people who are in, are advisors to the government in positions of power, who sit on select committees and give their expertise opinion and those people who, who did that were members, some of them were members of the HA.
- I: **But why weren't the HA consulted for the first draft then? If anyone accepts the HA the people to ask why weren't they considered for the first draft?**
- R: Um –
- I: **Why write something terrible and then ask the people that you say are genuinely considered the experts?**
- R: I think, I personally think the government were shocked with the level of criticism they received from it, almost an arrogance there by the education department to publish something like this without consultation from the experts. Nobody is gonna, you use the word think that I'm, that they're the experts, nobody can deny that they're not the experts, they are and they, there weren't consulted. I think this shearly because the level of arrogance and they just didn't know how powerful they could be, should they want to be. And many people, they didn't do it silently, yes they didn't take to the streets literally but they did take to the streets through um, through a sophisticated manner in the sense through written format, through political pressure, through um, discussions and there, they just were not willing to accept the first draft. And I don't know how they felt but I felt shocked when the September, when the September curriculum came out, I was really taken aback, I was like, what really; the two cannot be more different. And it wasn't just like, okay we'll appease you, we'll put in a little bit of changes here and there, it's completely revolutionised to the document and that's really, I was really shocked, did not expect that at all. Even when I was writing my letter to my MP I did not expect this to be the outcome, even when I was, filled out the DfE consultation, did not expect it to be the outcome.
- I: **What is the role of history teachers in the HA then?**
- R: Um, normal history teachers, the role?
- I: **Well, well what is normal, history teachers in general.**
- R: Um, I think it goes back to the sense of community really, I don't think it's so much that, we, we have a lot to contribute in a sense that we are classroom practitioners so whenever something happens that we think is great, we can contribute, can speak to um, those, the chief executive and maybe bring things in, we can publish articles. Obviously the majority of us don't do that but it's not specifically as you have this role, you have this role, I think it's a sense of community that we get really, really strongly with history; more so than other subjects.
- I: **And what is the role of the SHP, if any?**
- R: Um –
- I: **Or what is the relationship between the SHP and the HA or - ?**
- R: I, I don't think I'm able to comment on that really but I, I feel that the SHP, for me, and history teachers is, the role is to make us not forget; not forget the why history is so important. Not forget that when, when we're in school and there's all different sorts of um, things that take up our time, all this extra administrative duties that we've got, the, the SHP brings us back to life and realise, makes us realise yes, this is why we're doing it, this is why history is so important.

- I: **So this is a document the, the final thing that the HA like, do you think the SHP would like it too?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Why?**
- R: Cos similar things, it gives a similar ethos to what um, I believe SHP agree with in the sense that um, enquiry is there, historical enquiry is present.
- I: **But why is it, why is historical enquiry any more present in this than the other one, this is still a list of events, albeit a broader list from which you can select? It doesn't place any greater emphasis on enquiry does it?**
- R: But the depth is greater.
- I: **Breadth.**
- R: Yeah sorry, the breadth is greater so you're, you're able to delve into different aspects of it, therefore the historical enquiry that can take place is widened in terms of what you want to go into. And I just feel that this is so much more engaging and um, different elements are explored in different ways with this curriculum.
- I: **So do you think, last question really, do you think that this was changed because of a few people at the top of the HA or do you think that history teachers in greater numbers had an impact?**
- R: Yeah, history teachers in greater numbers had an impact.
- I: **How and why?**
- R: Um, well we, we just didn't accept it; history, if you look, if it was just a few people at the top um, disagreeing, history proves us with Michael Gove since he became the Education Secretary like, right well I'm not listening to you am I, I'm doing what I'm doing anyway. But in this case it was the people at the top, accompanied by a huge grass root level of teachers who were like this document as it stands cannot be effective. We are not going to get the same response from children that we have got from the previous 2009 one and the way it was able to happen was through um, collectivisation of the teachers. Everyone had same goal, everyone believed in the same outcome which was to change the curriculum and because, because everyone was united in that thought process, that's how it was able to happen. The pressure was too much.
- I: **Could, could it have happened without the HA by sheer force of numbers?**
- R: Um, that's an interesting thing, I personally don't believe it could, it would have happened by maybe not in the same, maybe not as, maybe, may not have been such a sophisticated response or such a um, a tidy one almost. They, they tied all the knots for us at the top.
- I: **Because my question would be there's, there's two things here that are getting, sort of, elided; one is hating this draft and the other is coming up with this draft. So kind of howls of teacher's anger might have made people think we don't like this, how do you go from the DfE saying it sounds like teachers don't like this to something that you say that all teachers can like? How do they know what teachers like?**
- R: Well we express that in our opinions, I know I did, I can't speak for all history teachers that did but I know I specifically gave examples. Obviously this interview has proved that I'm a big fan of world history and the importance that is on children of diverse backgrounds as well as just English um, white British students. But I think, I think that, I feel, I feel that this document in itself is richer in terms of student's experiences than that one. Without the HA, how do, how do, how did the Education Department know, we expressed it ourselves but I think the HA made it clear. I know lots of people complained to the HA directly as well and they, they epitomised really what all of us felt and what all of us wanted to see back in the curriculum. So whereas some people might have felt strongly about medieval England, others might have felt strongly about um, world history, they brought it together in a, and collected it and collated it almost; that's how I feel anyway.
- I: **Okay um, that's it, thank you very much.**

## v. Political Resistor

- I:** Right it's recording, can you just confirm that you have read and signed the consent form?
- R:** Yes I've read and signed the consent form.
- I:** Thank you very much. Okay so umm first question is how would you describe yourself as a history teacher?
- R:** Umm, I don't know what to say, err I would probably say that I'm quite rigorous in the teaching of the content umm I would say my delivery of the subject is probably umm more active I suppose I'm, I'm constantly looking for ways in which to deliver the contents so that the kids will enjoy learning it rather than feeling like they are going through specific facts and figures, I suppose that would summarise how I try and deliver lessons.
- I:** Why do you think it's important for children to have a history education, what is the point of it?
- R:** I think it prepares for life after school really, I think it's you know everything that we look at the world around us to me would centre, sorry, would sense that around umm the idea of, of history if we're you know meant to be learning from the past then knowing what happens in the past is surely crucial to that. I also think it makes them better citizens when it comes to things like participation in electing representatives on a, on a bigger scale umm and I think it prepares them in terms of transferrable skills, the analysis and the critical thinking that they get from the subject goes on to help them in the future I would argue so I think it's history is exceptionally important to them being better students and more kind of well-rounded I suppose when they leave school.
- I:** Do you think that's something that history does uniquely among subjects or -
- R:** Umm in some regards I suppose yes I think it's unique in the sense that they're understanding of how we've got to where we have comes only from our, from a history subject I suppose. I don't think it's the only subject that gives them transferrable skills or allows them to think critically about the world we live in, but I do think it's the only subject that allows them to umm to look back with hindsight on past events and begin to understand the world that we live in today.
- I:** What do you mean when you said earlier about teach, students learning actively, what does that mean?
- R:** Umm I suppose from the very foundation of it it means them engaging in the learning rather than me umm delivering the content to them very heavily that they might umm, that they might not be fully engaged by it so I'll look for ways in which to get the kids to, to have a thirst for learning about the topic or subject they're studying rather than me delivering the subject to them and expecting them to want to listen to me or, or wanting to, to read heavily for the full duration of a lesson.
- I:** Well how does what you call active learning differ from independent learning?
- R:** Umm I think at times they go hand in hand actually I would argue that if you're creating independent learners then on the whole they've gotta be more engaged and therefore potentially more active within, within the lesson so in some regards I would, I would say that those things are the same. One difference that I wouldn't, that could be stated I suppose from a lesson by a lesson point of view is those students that are most engaged or most active are not always the most independent learners across the whole school I suppose so I think that your active learning in a sense or active activities comes from the way in which I piece them together and put them together which hopefully allows for the learners to become more in control of their learning which might allow them to be more independent I suppose.
- I:** Umm you're talking about umm active learning and the thing that you keep going back to is engagement.
- R:** Yes.
- I:** Is that the primary benefit of what you see as active learning?
- R:** Umm I think they're more prone to engaging with a lesson if they've had some role in that lesson so in that sense active learning on a broad spectrum could be them putting, putting their hands up or answering a question or engaging in any way so I do think that having them be active in a lesson is crucial to them engaging with it, does that mean that they need to be up and out of their seats and moving around the room and market stall activities, no not necessarily because that, that doesn't in that sense being active doesn't, doesn't mean they're necessarily engaged because they're doing something you've asked them to do so I would argue that although it's part of engagement I think there's, there's a wider spectrum there so I think active learning allows them to engage better with a lesson umm but I wouldn't say it was the most important way for them to engage, I do think that things like questioning are absolutely crucial if you're gonna seek to engage stuff that you do at the start of the lesson, making sure that you've inbuilt structures within their learning so that, that they are as, you know they see your lesson as a lesson that they're gonna come to and get involved in and I think that comes from at first wanting to know more and the activities that you put together surely links to that.
- I:** Do you think there is such a thing as a typical history teacher?
- R:** Err I would say there are stereotypes, I don't know if that means that they're typical umm I would say that over time I think history teachers have probably been portrayed as slightly cynical umm and I think over time I would probably argue that history teachers have been pinpointed as being teachers that, that focus on facts and figures and astute writing and listening and not really getting involved, do I think that is typical of a history teacher no I don't.
- I:** Do you think there is a -
- R:** But I think it's stereotypical.
- I:** Do you think there is a typical history teacher?
- R:** Umm I would like to think that history teachers all have their, the kind of same passion for the, the subject and a, and a real love for what we deliver in terms of content umm and I would like to think that would be something that was typical across every historian really and history teacher.
- I:** Yeah and umm I asked umm do you think there exists a history teaching community and you said yes and I feel part of it.

- R: Yeah.
- I: **What is it, what is it that you're part of?**
- R: Umm well I think it starts from, from the PGCE course really for me, I think that starting to get them having a community they're already built through the tutor, through the schools that we went through to and through the kind of community that we had at Edge hill, I think that gave me the foundation to come into a school knowing that not only I was going to a new history department but that I already had a group of 18 other newly qualified history teachers that were willing to share ideas and thoughts so from a, from a very kind of starting point I think that the PGCE was a big part of that. I think the wider history community begins when you attend things like the SHP Conference umm and not only that there's been other conferences that I've gone to but you see the same faces and same figures. Using things like Twitter has allowed me to umm to further develop links with these particular kind of history teachers or history community umm and equally then being able to contact different historians from other schools and being able to share ideas with best practice I think that all builds into this idea of community and I think it's there if you want to engage with it. Not every teacher does umm not every teacher in the country goes to, to SHP umm but I think there's enough history teachers there to, to warrant there's a strong community of people that are focussed on achieving the same things for our subjects.
- I: **What, what is it that they're trying to achieve, you said there's a strong community focussed on achieving the same things, what -**
- R: I think to try and deliver outstanding history teaching umm in whatever format that that takes place I think they're trying to show the relevance of our subjects, I think they're trying to show how engaging the subject can be. I think trying to develop a love and passion for the subject amongst the people that we teach.
- I: **Do, do you, you say that umm they're trying to deliver outstanding lessons do you think they have a shared vision about what makes an outstanding lesson?**
- R: Umm I would ar, well I would argue from the sessions that have been to SHP that on the whole yes they, they do seem to share a similar, a similar understanding for what they believe an outstanding history lesson to be, whether that's an outstanding lesson but for Spanish or for DT I'm not sure but I think there's a definite shared aim about what we should be trying to deliver as history teachers and I think that, that is what it starts with the effective planning of lessons, being able to understand how I'm gonna deliver the content in an effective meaningful way and ultimately at the end show that our students have become not only better err by progress but they've become better historians because they're picking up skills as well as being able to recall a, a name and a, and a date alongside that so I would argue that, that there is a shared vision there of, of what we can achieve as a collective rather than settling.
- I: **And what holds the community together?**
- R: Umm I think there's two things really, I would argue there's the people at the top those that continue to put together the SHP Conference and those that continue to -
- I: **Who are the people at the top, the top of what?**
- R: Err well the, the kind of SHP fellows I suppose, those people that are umm I'd had a case about making sure that the conference runs so obviously the, the main figure or the main one that I think of Michael, Michael Riley he, he seems to, to be umm obviously one, one of the most important characters in, in putting together the conference as well as all the other stuff that SHP do, but I also think then that they've got a collection of people that are there that play an important part in making sure that the conference runs not only the SHP fellows but those people that are willing to put on conferences there that are willing to show what they've been doing over that past year that, that they would think is, is worth sharing so I think that holds it together, having somewhere to go. I also think fundamentally that, that if teachers have committed to delivering this stuff and if teachers want to ensure that we are umm part of the community that it's our desire to attend these conferences that makes it so effective because it's okay having the SHP fellows there, it's alright having sessions being run but you're nowhere then if people don't attend so I think fundamentally it's something that comes from within the teaching community that makes them want to be part of something bigger and be part of a wider community.
- I: **Okay thank you, umm so turning now to the February draft.**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Umm first of all how did you find out about it?**
- R: Umm it was something as a department that we umm had been keeping an eye on the umm, on the, on the stuff that was coming out of the umm Department for Education really and then umm when it, or when it dropped it was something that we, I actually shared it amongst the department umm 'cause, just 'cause I'd seen it.
- I: **So you'd been look, checking the DFE website?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **For updates?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Umm and in terms of what you thought of it you said umm somewhere in between mixed and negative.**
- R: Yes.
- I: **Umm what specifically were your problems with it?**
- R: Umm I think I identified on -
- I: **Yeah they're here.**
- R: Did I identify the, some, some issues umm yeah I mean the, the second one down that I put here which is, is narrative err telling the story of Great Britain umm my issue with that is that I teach in, in a, in a school we deliver thematic history which obviously then leaves us, it's chronological but it's, it's all set and done in themes and, and it's actually exceptionally popular with the students that we, that we teach we have a very high intake at GCSE and I think a lot of that is due to the style that we're teaching at Key Stage 3 so for me the idea that we would be teaching something purely chronological umm was slightly worrying because I believe that that's, that, that removes umm in a sense of thematic stamp I suppose on the way that we deliver that the history that we teach so for me my initial concern was does it have to be chronological for it to make sense.

- I:** What, what for you are the benefits of having these multiple chronologies or teaching a theme and then re-teaching the same periods?
- R:** Umm the reason why is, is because actually I, I've got a real strong belief that the kids become very prone to being unable to understand change over time effectively, umm equally they can see things between umm key events which have occurred over time because what they're actually doing is looking at focus, so for example when we, when they first come in in Year 7 we do umm who do we think we are and we focus on migration into Britain, so we start with the invaders and go right the way through to modern day and what they're able to look at is reasons why people have come, the impact they've had on us and how they've shaped the world that we live in err and more importantly umm the idea of, of ways in which immigrants have been treated in the past and how that's changed over time so for me those students have a much more well-rounded understanding of immigration to Britain, how Britain has been shaped than they would do if we did err, if we did it chronologically because what you're trying to do is underpin millions of themes really through everything you teach and then you're looking to go back to individual themes to pick them out as you go and I think that's a much more difficult skill to do than if you take your themes, put it all together and have the students go through the history that, that surrounds that theme. It wouldn't be everyone's cup of tea, you know we do at times I suppose gloss over areas where we could spend, spend longer on umm but then I suppose that's, that's part of it you know the kids pick it up very easily and when we move into a new topic they know they're gonna start again with the Romans and they know that we're gonna go through. So by the end it's quite easy to get them to reflect on things that you've done in September when you're now in February because the kids are aware of, of the stuff that they've, that they've already done.
- I:** Okay umm other issues you have with this?
- R:** Umm I, I found that the inclusion, I've put here wasp based, I think the inclusion of err a certain umm areas of British history that we don't currently umm have, for example I think was, was Clive of India was that, was that in this one umm you know things like that, Wolf and the Conquest of Canada.
- I:** But in what sense is this white anglo saxon protestant?
- R:** I think it runs right the way, right, right the way through the whole thing.
- I:** Meaning what?
- R:** Meaning that I think there's very little room for diversity of ethnicity or gender would argue with the exception of, of a, the drop in of Thatcher would argue it was very little umm that, that breaks us away from, from that mould that idea of, of one big narrative story of our white history I suppose. I appreciate that there is things dropped in umm but I think it's, it's more tokenistic than essential.
- I:** So you are saying that this focus is overwhelmingly on white anglo saxon protestants?
- R:** On the whole.
- I:** Right.
- R:** Yes.
- I:** Umm.
- R:** There is areas that, that aren't in line with that and I appreciate that but I think the reason, there's a reason why they've included those topics and that is because they, you know that they're aware that they're key pieces of history that, that they, you know if they were dropped out people would begin to question, I would argue.
- I:** So they're included as a kind of sop to the -
- R:** Potentially.
- I:** Politically correct.
- R:** Potentially.
- I:** Umm and, and so why is it that this umm focuses, why do you think it is that it focuses on white anglo saxon protestants history?
- R:** I think that's because more often than not it's perceived that you know in a sense I guess that the winners write the, the history books I think it's often the process I ever think you know I think most schools have moved to try and be more inclusive of, of different elements of history and I think what this goes back to is the idea that actually you don't need to include that stuff so long as you've covered the kind of the greats of, of our history I suppose and, and I wonder how potential including that, that stuff is but clearly to, to the government it's important that those things are included umm whereas maybe previously they wouldn't have been seen as, as being necessarily not that they're not important topics but I think that they're worth within an overall delivery of history was not crucial now they're seen as, as being important and I would argue that I'm not 100% sure why, why that is really. I would wanna indicate that it's because of this government but then I, I feel that really you know if we teach a subject it shouldn't be politically umm motivated I suppose in terms of what they've laid out then there's no reason for it to be different than what another government would've put together.
- I:** So you think the history ought not to be politically -
- R:** Motivated.
- I:** Motivated?
- R:** Yeah because what happens when that, when that government leaves office and another government comes in.
- I:** And do you feel that this is politically motivated?
- R:** Err yes.
- I:** Umm you've said narrative/chronological?
- R:** Yeah.
- I:** Umm it, it actually is the phrase is coherent chronological narrative umm what is the relationship between chronology and narrative in your understanding?
- R:** Umm to my understanding well if you start with chronological it means everything goes in order.
- I:** A huh.
- R:** Narrative is telling the, the story of that order I suppose and I think that's what, that's what this does.
- I:** So all chronological history is narratives?
- R:** No I don't think it has to be, I think what this is getting at though is that that's the way it's walking towards as though you're telling a story of the past I suppose rather than vigorously evaluating key events within, within history. Now

obviously I suppose it depends on the way in which you deliver it and that's gonna have an impact on umm, on the individual subject I suppose err you know looking through you can see that there's areas that might immediately be given more I dunno of a, of evaluative umm delivery from particular teachers I suppose but then I look through and I think well it's leading from one event into the other and I don't know necessarily whether, whether that allows the students to pick up skills that I would them to, to gain rather more they'd see it as, as literally doing that moving from one event to another but without really understanding the coherence and importance because they're focussing on the contents of, of that rather than looking at it as an event that, that changed the world in which we live I suppose which is -

**I: So do you have a problem with this more because it is a narrative or more because of the nature of the narrative that it is telling?**

R: Umm probably the latter of the two. The idea that I think it's telling a particular, or it's aiming to tell a particular narrative, not all of it, you know there is, there is areas of this that I think well yeah of course that, you know that's got to be included, that's got to be included, there's definitely areas that I look at but equally there's a lot of areas that I look at and think does that, does that really what, what purpose does that serve and I think clearly that the government put it together you know for the Department for Education, it does serve a purpose to them and my question will be what purpose because for me it doesn't, it doesn't seem to, to fit.

**I: Okay umm and in terms of, so your initial reaction was what you just said.**

R: Yes.

**I: What did you do about it?**

R: Err I will be honest not, not a huge amount. Err I did a significant amount of reading umm -

**I: You did a significant amount of reading, what did you read?**

R: Oh just as in like umm via social media, getting other people's opinions of it umm I err assign -

**I: What was, what was the social media environment like when this came out?**

R: Umm I felt on the whole that it was, it was mainly negative umm there was people that were arguing that there was the inclusion of some necessary topics here that hadn't been, you know that umm the kind of reinvigoration I suppose of, of our subject and making sure that there was topics that were included there that need, you know it needs updating, things need to be included umm I also think that there was an awful lot of people that were commenting on the fact that it was good to see that history was, was so prominent in the curriculum changes actually umm but on the whole in kind of direct links to certain topics that were included and I think many people shared the same view

**I: Umm so, so that was the, the predominant feeling on social media?**

R: I think so yeah.

**I: You seem to be very involved, you joined the Facebook campaign, you responded to the HA survey, signed a petition, you posted in certain discussion, you follow Twitter campaign.**

R: Yeah but that's I mean I never, I never went out much in the streets or wrote a letter to, to Michael Gove, I mean all of that stuff I did from, from phone or, or computer so I wouldn't, I wouldn't necessarily say I was out there on the front of the, the campaign trail I suppose but yeah I do feel passionately about it and I wasn't happy.

**I: But this, but this shows a level of engagement?**

R: Yeah.

**I: Doesn't it?**

R: Yeah I wouldn't, if you're not gonna be engaged in your job then, then what's the point in doing it!

**I: I'm just surprised that you're kind of umm diminishing your involvement in this because it, it you know it was never gonna result in a civil war, you know -**

R: No it wasn't.

**I: Or a coup was it?**

R: No.

**I: So -**

R: No.

**I: Is it, I think you're perhaps being a little bit hard on yourself with the -**

R: Well like I did what I felt was, was necessary I mean the Historical Association survey I've been on the Historical Association website and it was there so I filled it in, Facebook I was actually invited to join the group by Ian, I join, I joined the group so in some regard I would argue that it wasn't like I had actively gone out of my way to find these things with the exception of going on social media and picking up newspapers and beginning to read but you know the, the stuff, all the other stuff there was stuff that I'd seen and thought you know I'll do that but it wasn't stuff that I actively, that's what I mean in terms of going out I don't feel that I did anything above, above and beyond really. I never set up the group.

**I: But I'm interested in, but only one person can ever set it up so only one person can ever take credit for that but I'm interested in you're, you're talking about the SHP and the community and your, the role that you think social media has in there?**

R: Yeah.

**I: Umm can you say more about the, do you think, do you, how important do you think social media is in the history teaching community?**

R: I think it's increasingly important actually I mean you know I'm a relatively new teacher with 2 years' experience behind me so I can't say an awful lot about what it would've been like 10 years ago umm you know when, when that stuff was just being developed I suppose but umm after initially going to SHP I mean they, you know they, they tweet with a particular hash tag per conference which therefore means that you can, you can tweet stuff you can run the hash tag and see what other people are saying about it so in that sense I think it's important in terms of sharing views, I think it's also important that when you come away from SHP and err people request to follow you and you request to follow them and, and they're history teachers and before you know it there's a, you know you've got a community of people there that you umm, that you can speak to I suppose or communicate with so I do think in terms of social media I think it's probably increasingly important to that community whether the SHP follows

- would think it was important I'm not sure but I think as a, as a new teacher to it it's you know relatively aware of how to use Twitter I think, it has become something. You know it, it gives you immediate access to people that, that you would never normally have access to teachers that teach in London that I wouldn't communicate with had I not have met them at SHP, followed them on Twitter you know so in that sense I think it of course has got to be increasingly important because it's how you make your links.
- I: Okay umm I know historians hate counter factual questions but do you think if social media were not there the community would be as strong?**
- R:** I think so, mainly because it's existed since what 19, late 1990 was it, no, it was, what was -
- I: What, what?**
- R:** SHP, you're talking about community I regularly it to SHP so you're looking at them developing and creating umm these things from the initial national curriculum is that right?
- I: No I think you're going further back from SHP conference you're looking at -**
- R:** Was it, was it 72?
- I: Umm it depends on what document you mean but the -**
- R:** But -
- I: A New Look at History was '71.**
- R:** But yeah so, so you're looking at a community there that in my opinion and I'm not saying that the only community to ever come out of history teaching is SHP but, but to me that's a big part of the community now I would argue, it's a big part of the community that I would want to be part of I suppose umm so if you're arguing that they, they developed 70's, 80's, 90's or whatever and they've grown, social media wasn't there then and they, they managed to create a community so I would argue that, that no it's not the be all and the end all.
- I: And what about the HA, you talk about the SHP a lot -**
- R:** Yeah.
- I: And the role of the Historical Association is.**
- R:** I think it's been very influential on my teaching, there's an awful lot of stuff on there that, that I actively go on and, and use and look at umm in terms of, of the umm teaching history journal I've umm, well we get it through school so I read it when it comes out, I also had a umm something only very little published in it umm which, which again I was asked to do by Ian which was, which was then passed on umm so I do think it's important from a point of view of readily being able to access practice that's gonna happen every single day in schools all around the country so I think SHP is more you're getting meeting people networking side of it, I think teaching history allows you to have an insight into other teacher's practice without needing to be in the room with them so I think that's probably just as powerful as SHP really.
- I: Do, do you think that the, there's a relationship between H, HA and SHP, do you think they're now saying the same things, are they part of the same community?**
- R:** I think so yeah. Yeah.
- I: Umm okay, in terms of why you decided to act in this way you said if we do not address areas concern, of concern it won't change.**
- R:** A huh.
- I: The second draft was much more suitable and it was obvious that action resulted in change.**
- R:** Yeah.
- I: Umm you're, you're making a, a statement about causation there that action resulted in change.**
- R:** Yeah.
- I: Do you think that's the case?**
- R:** I do think it is the case because I think enough people in a sense I suppose complained about it and I think, you know it wasn't just ours that was looked at and was changed this was something that, that I think the government realised that they, they needed to make some changes and whether they looked at everything every single person had said and then decided to, to change I don't know. What I do actually think probably happened is that they, they did take in some of these concerns and areas of issue and they readdressed those when producing a new, the new draft, the curriculum so I would argue that had people had just gone 'yeah that's fine we'll do it' I don't necessarily see that they're making any changes so I do think that the, the profile of the curriculum changes had an impact on the government and I would say that comes from things like social media you know they are more aware of, of maybe what people are thinking than they might have been 10, 15 years ago which allows them to adapt.
- I: So who did they listen to if you're saying they changed it because they listened who have they listened to?**
- R:** Well I think they, they listened to umm, well I don't think it was one particular person that appears at Michael Gove's door saying 'I think we need to change these', I think what they've done is umm, is that they've made most use of those people that are able to go away and do research for them and they've come back with thoughts and ideas about areas of potential concern umm and I think from that then they've been able to build in elements of change to the curriculum. I think there was also communication to umm a scholar immediately after the, the bill was put together but I don't think that was in umm from a point of view of you tell us what to change and we'll change it I think it was more of a consideration of how things might be readdressed.
- I: But are, are we looking at the changes being made because of sheer weight of numbers on social media, are we looking at it because actually what was being said is eminently sensible and couldn't be argued with?**
- R:** I think it would be that.
- I: Umm -**
- R:** The kind of success behind it.
- I: Do you, do you, do you think everybody was speaking with one voice on this then?**
- R:** Umm on the whole I would say yeah but then I think you're always gonna get exceptions so I would be arguing that the percentage of people saying the same thing was higher than, than those that were disjointed but then -
- I: So -**



- R: Like I outlined earlier I think, I think there was a mixture of views, I think there was those arguing that it was good to see history being, being up there and being discussed and talked about.
- I: **So you, you think that your criticisms that it is a umm a narrative, that it is a politicised narrative you think they were widely shared?**
- R: Umm -
- I: **Are they the things that -**
- R: Maybe I'm wrong in, in thinking that but, but I would argue that from the things that I saw that my worries and fears about this were shared by, by general majority whether, whether that's correct or not I suppose.
- I: **But I'm just, the reason I'm, I'm asking you about this is you said that they put together a politicised narrative for a particular reason, then there is a groundswell opinion against the DFE saying that's a politicised narrative and then they go 'oh is it sorry here's something different.' Is that what happened?**
- R: But I don't think they've completely changed the new curriculum from what this is, I think there's still, they're still attempting to achieve the same things that they were with this. I feel that they've just, they've altered things that they believed might have not fitted with not potentially what they were trying to achieve but things that might not have fitted with what history teachers as, as a whole population might have wanted and equally areas that they've included that they've realised might not have fitted with, with the overall kind of chronological umm history that they've put together so I would argue that they made an awful lot of changes to the stuff at Key Stage 2 as well. Things about that they specified the children you know by the time they, they reach Year 6 should be able to know what umm monarchy republic empire and, and other things and they changed those types of things so I think it was, you know it wasn't just they looked at the history curriculum for Key Stage 3 and thought right let's get rid of these and let's move them round, I think it was more, more part of the process. No document is ever gonna be produced widely accepted and, and left unchanged.
- I: **But why, why did they not listen to people beforehand, why did they produce something, provoke these reactions and then change their mind?**
- R: Only Michael Gove can tell you that one I suppose I mean ultimately they've got to produce something haven't they and, and I think the information that they were getting beforehand you know a lot of the people that they were talking to when they were beginning to put these things together I think a lot of those talks were disjointed umm I think there was occasions where they'd asked people to get involved and then they decided that they were gonna speak to them, I think they you know from a scholars point of view they picked umm not extreme scholars but scholars that have particular view points and I think that's gonna impact what they produce. You know I'm sitting here saying it's politically motivated they might be looking at it and thinking well, well your opinion is politically motivated and you know maybe it is so I think they've had a shared view on this and that's what they've brought out.
- I: **But you've, you've said that there is, that using the history teaching community is very united and if it is very united -**
- R: No I didn't.
- I: **How did something emerge that was so at odds at what the history teaching community -**
- R: Because they weren't communicating with them effectively.
- I: **But if they're so united why weren't they consulted, why weren't they communicated with?**
- R: I honestly don't think that when, that when they put that together they sat there and thought right who can we contact from, from the history teaching community, who can we get involved in this. What they did was stripped it back to the basics, engaged with scholars, thought about creating wider links between what we offer and Key Stage 4, 5 and university level rather than, than specifically considering what contents history teachers would see as being necessary.
- I: **Why, why do you think they didn't take the views of history teachers into account then?**
- R: Because I think they, they believed that they, well they knew better but I think they had a very specific focus in mind for what they would've liked to produce and I think it's very clear if you look at a lot of the stuff that goes on within the history community that not everybody will have been behind what they wanted to produce and I think that's one reason why they failed to engage effectively with the history teaching community because they knew that potentially there might've been areas of, of discrepancy between what the government wanted and between what the, what history teachers felt they, they wanted.
- I: **So they knew that, they knew what history teachers were going to say so they chose not to ask them?**
- R: I think so. Again you know maybe I'm wrong.
- I: **Yes.**
- R: No, there's no outline for me you know Michael Gove's not published a diary to say what he did on a day by day basis by putting together this so it's, it's purely -
- I: **But would that be a satisfactory source even if he had?**
- R: No. No but it's purely you know -
- I: **But then why listen to them afterwards? That's what I don't understand, you, you know what they're gonna say so you don't ask them, then you publish this thing they say exactly what you expected them to say, why then change, why then listen to them?**
- R: I, I, I think he thought that it was just gonna be, it was just gonna be fine, he'd publish it people would just get on with it, you know -
- I: **He didn't expect -**
- R: And I think -
- I: **The level of response that he got?**
- R: No and I think one reason for that is because obviously with a lot of schools moving towards academies I think he knew that many schools would look at this and go well you know we don't necessarily have to, have to teach that or depending on your, your views will this encourage more schools to become academies because they didn't wanna teach it so I think that you know -
- I: **So he invented something deliberately terrible so that people would not do it?**

- R: Well I think you could, you know there's, there's mixed views on, on this I think and definitely from listening to the views of other teachers you know reading things in the papers, there's the idea that he has created something that people weren't happy with, I'm in an academy you know the first thing my, my head of department did was look at it and go well you know we might try and include some of it but, but if we don't it's not, it's not the end of the world so from that point of view clearly he wasn't gonna get out of his chair and go out campaigning, now whether he did, whether he filled out the HA surveys or whether he did other things I'm not sure but the point that I'm making is surely there's areas within this community that know that they don't have to teach that so therefore we're happy enough to have a glance through it, to look at it and then think very little more of it.
- I: **So you, you, I mean well in that sense you've said that you don't think you were particularly engaged but compared to what you've just said -**
- R: Oh I -
- I: **You could've been a lot more apathetic about it when you were -**
- R: Yeah I could've been a lot more apathetic of course and, and you know teaching in an academy of course I could've been like well 'yeah I'm not really bothered' but I don't want, I don't want my subject to become a subject that is you know that has students coming through school that aren't engaged or turned on by what they're learning about or you know seeing wider worth of it and equally you know if we went into the academy what we currently offer thematic history that would, that would've been straight out the window and equally you've got to think about workload for this stuff as well I mean for schools like ours where we teach using umm themes to completely change to chronological history, to have to rebuild a new Key Stage 3 curriculum but not just chopping and changing, completely redraft along with Key Stage 4 changes, Key Stage 5 changes, you know that, that's a huge, a huge ask.
- I: **So do you think the Department for Education underestimated the response of the history community?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Do you think the, they misjudged the unity of the history teaching community?**
- R: I think so yeah. Yeah I think they felt that as a, as a whole the community was very weak and, and in that sense I think they were wrong 'cause I think you know there, there is people within this community that the government could engage in conversations and talks and, and they chose not to do that and there's only one reason for that which is because clearly they thought it wasn't, it wasn't important to engage them. I do think had they have used more teachers within the conversations around the curriculum there would've been less complaint about it because I think one thing you immediately see when you, when you're reading about different scholars being brought in and then being kicked out and then somebody else being contacted and then it does make you before it comes out it fills you with a bit of dread about what are we gonna get from someone who's, who's never been a teacher, ultimately not just not a history teacher but what are we gonna get from, from people that -
- I: **So you were following the kind of discussions while this was gestating?**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Even before it came out. Umm I think we are about coming to the end of what I wanted to ask umm yes I think that's it thank you very much. Cheers.**

## vi. Historical Pedagogist

- I:** Okay err can you just confirm for the tape that you've read and signed the consent forms?  
**R:** All read, all signed.
- I:** Thank you. Right umm so to start off umm how would you describe yourself as a history teacher?  
**R:** What do you mean specifically?  
**I:** As a history teacher how would you describe the way that you teach history?  
**R:** Okay umm I would say the way I teach history would be a umm I think kind of one of my umm (..) I, I think there's, there's one element where it's quite umm you know I emphasise the kind of skills element to history umm that I think the (sighs) you know knowledge for knowledge sake isn't, isn't you know very useful in a day where we have you know the internet to find out factual information umm so I think that's, that's important. I think obviously there are important things you need to know in history umm but only in so much that umm if it kind of helps us understand the world that we live in today to some extent I don't, I think if we just study events for events' sake it turns into like, and it's totally irrelevant to students it's, it's, it's as relevant as classics is you know to, to the modern world which I don't think is particularly relevant. Umm (..) I think, I think lessons that I deliver umm you know I know Michael Gove and, and Michael Wilshaw's kind of anti 60's agenda but I think there's an element where it is quite umm student led umm in, in lessons there's a lot of group work, there's a lot of discussion umm rather than it just being err teacher led umm what else?
- I:** What do you mean by student led?  
**R:** Umm it's all, it's scaffolded and it's not umm, it's not, you know umm maybe student led's the wrong word umm student centred I think is probably, I, I think with any history lesson that I do I think err you know the starting point for me is, is what are the students gonna get out of this, you know what reason have they got to be in my classroom you know how can I make this interesting, how can I relate to the students rather than it just being here's some information that you need to know so I suppose it's more student centred. The student is at, is the central concern when I'm planning a lesson umm you know I, I think I like to use you know to, to promote interest I like to use controversial issues umm to try and find a connection to try and get students to, to make their own mind up about things rather than umm being didactically told you know this is what happened.
- I:** What is the benefit of a history education do you think, why do we teach it to children?  
**R:** Umm I think the, I think umm really I think it's probably getting students to think, think about things from a, umm I wouldn't even say two sided, multi sided kind of umm perspective umm getting students to develop judgement and evaluation umm looking at the ability to, to develop evidence umm and to criticise evidence so that they are fully kind of trained for a world that often is quite intent to try and mislead people, you know I think, I think newspapers, adverts, you know army recruitment whatever I think it's very, very important for students to, to be equipped with the skills to kind of navigate and you know in a society that's often you know, can be quite misleading. Umm I think history is useful in some sense about you know it's, I don't buy into it totally but umm in terms of you know learning lessons of the past to, to prevent them happening again unfortunately and I'm being quite cynical I think human beings some lessons they never learn and I think we're all destined to keep going round in circles but I think it's a duty to at least inform students of what's happened in the past and, and with a hope that things could change.
- I:** When, so when you talk about student, student centred as opposed to student led what does that actually mean tangibly in terms of what the children are doing?  
**R:** Umm so umm it could be err an activity where I set a problem or a dilemma at the start of the lesson umm and I set up the task umm so that students are judging a, a, a particular character for example umm they might think of the criteria used to, to evaluate say a Nazi war criminal or something like that so they're making key decisions they've got a stake in the lesson straight away because they're thinking of, of ways of evaluating that, that particular character umm so to that sense it's, it's a little bit designed by students in terms of their shaping the kind of outcomes, umm rather than me saying right well you know this is what one stu. this is what some people, err sorry this is what I think about or this is what you're supposed to think about umm you know umm, what's his name, Nazi guy, umm Auschwitz commandant what's his name?
- I:** Hoess?  
**R:** No.  
**I:** Hoes.  
**R:** Who's the other one then?  
**I:** I don't know then.  
**R:** Who's the guy, who's the fella?  
**I:** I don't think it's important.  
**R:** Okay. Umm but, but yeah so, so rather than umm you know get, telling, you know telling the student this is what you're supposed to think it's getting them to, and these are the criteria you must judge it by it's getting them to kind of design that.
- I:** So the, the students are constructing their own knowledge?  
**R:** Yeah, yeah and you, you're then coming back to them and then, then you can question and challenge and you know you're not letting students get away with poor criteria.
- I:** What is, is there not a danger that they'll come up with something which is counter factual or untrue?  
**R:** Umm not if they've already got the, you know the, they've already got umm factual information which, which prevents that from happening umm and then you've got a reinforcement so, so they're, they're making judgements and, and you know they're entitled to make their own judgements from that factual information there isn't necessarily a right or wrong answer umm but it's controlled in terms of the information given umm but not, you know they're not necessarily going on websites and finding their own where they could be getting counter factual information, this is reliable information that, that they will have and then it's, it's checked up on through, through

- question and answering you know as, as mini plenaries in the lesson to, to make sure we're all going the right direction.
- I: And do you think that that approach you've just described is fairly typical of history teachers?**
- R:** No.
- I: Can you say more about that?**
- R:** Umm.
- I: What do you think is typical then?**
- R:** I don't know you know I've, I've gone, I've done, I've, I've done supply in schools I've, I am married to a history teacher at a private school and I know about what some private school teachers do there and I think there are schools where a text book will, will feature very, very heavily in a lesson which is a narrative to essentially and you know the questions are testing knowledge and understanding but nothing deeper than that, umm I think, I think maybe when it comes to GCSE maybe more so, maybe more so but I think, I think at Key Stage 3 I, I, I don't, I don't think maybe the other departments of other schools are doing that, there's obviously been some good practice everywhere so obviously Beacon's a good practice everywhere that do that kind of thing but I wouldn't say it's wide, I wouldn't say it's, it's, it's widespread. You know there might be student led, there might be student you know centred lessons I don't know how well constructed they are and, and a bad student centred lesson is, is pretty counter productive if it hasn't been well organised, if it does lead to counterfactual understanding about events it's, it's, it's problematic and I think bad student centred lessons is probably what's partly driven the agenda against you know and a move towards a more chronological narrative based history is, is because of when OFSTED have seen it badly I don't know I mean that's my, that's my impression.
- I: So would you say, you've described two - what seems opposite approaches - to pedagogy, you said that you think an awful lot of schools are doing bad student centred teaching but you've also said that you think a lot of schools are doing bad teacher led teaching.**
- R:** Well no it might be very good, it might be, you know for that particular style of teaching they've probably got excellent classroom control, the kids are probably from a background say at a private school where umm you know where those skills are developed in other ways maybe in other subjects I don't know, umm I wouldn't say it's bad teaching I would say it's, and certainly increasingly some people might say that's you know if that's the way the agenda's moving might say that's, I'd personally say it's bad practice but -
- I: So do you think that there's a history teaching community?**
- R:** Umm I think there's hubs that exist so for example SHP form a big hub when they do the kind of conference every year and I think that's a very good focal point for history teachers and I think it, if that were to die I think it would be a huge loss to school history teaching umm I think that our networks, so for example active, err not active history umm Ian Dawson one, Think History would be an example of a hub for teachers that are willing to be more experimental with their history teaching and take risks, I think it might put off a lot of people because it is umm you have to have very good behaviour management and, and I think you've got to be a few years into your teaching before you can make some of that stuff work. Umm I think there are you know things like the schools history forums where the discussions happen which are maybe of some use to some people, I don't find them particularly useful umm but things like schools history also short cuts for people just to get bad download of resources as well so you know I don't, I don't think, I don't know how big that community is but I would say for me umm you know there isn't much of a local history community here, I don't think in Sefton that really exists, we have meetings called Links meetings there isn't much collaboration and cooperation and largely because I think departments are at different speeds and at different levels and a good department hasn't got anything to gain.
- I: So these different hubs do you think they are mutually exclusive so is there a, a, a think history group and an SHP group or -**
- R:** No I, I think some people umm have turned away from the SHP project.
- I: What do you mean by that?**
- R:** Umm I think there is an element with some history teachers that may view it as being left of centre in its approach to history and, and I, I certainly think the current government umm probably is against the SHP agenda generally umm and, and there are, there are history teachers that, that umm you know are sympathetic to a, to, to what the changes that are currently being made so -
- I: How, how can an approach to history be left of centre?**
- R:** Err well I, I, I see you know I, I would define kind of right of centre history teaching to be very much about less skills more national values that are, that are encouraged so umm you know big develop of creating a citizen, creating patriotism, creating national values like, like umm David Cameron and Michael Gove have been banging on about recently after Birmingham and scandals in the Islamic schools there umm I think teaching a, an island story with a chronological approach I would regard that as, as, as to the right of centre or right wing or whatever, I don't, of depending on the how far you go down that road I would say left of centre teaching would be more talking about not great individuals but maybe looking at more social history umm I would say err an emphasis on skills more, more than umm, more than you know maybe values perhaps umm things along those lines.
- I: But you can have a, a left wing narrative can you not? That's what -**
- R:** Yeah.
- I: Marxist history is.**
- R:** Yeah, yeah you can.
- I: But you're associating narrative with the, the right usually?**
- R:** I, I'm wrong to, I'm wrong to.
- I: No you're not wrong to at all just, I'm just clarifying.**
- R:** Umm I suppose it's, it's what, I suppose you know I guess there's never been in schools and Marxist, certainly there's quite a few teachers there hasn't been a Marxist narrative that is getting promoted by a government that's in power, I'll probably be more exposed to a, a right wing you know more of a conservative narrative of events. Umm I suppose the difference is that Marxist narrative isn't, isn't nation based is it?
- I: No, no that, that would be a difference.**

- R: So it's more a national chronology maybe.
- I: **As well as, when you talk about right and left you made a distinction about kind of narrative being the future of, of right which you spoke about but you also talk about an emphasis on content in a right wing approach and an emphasis on skills in a left wing approach.**
- R: Mmm.
- I: **What do you mean by skills, can you say more about that?**
- R: Umm yeah I just, I just mean umm equipping young people with the ability to umm you know as I say kind of function in society it's designed to maybe mislead people, I just mean analysis, evaluation, judgement umm not, not taking everything at face value and challenging, challenging essentially you know the, you know umm the world that they live in I suppose umm I see that as being a little bit, I want to go as far as anti-authoritarian that's too far but I, I see that, I see perhaps you know, you know if, if you look at like Nazi history or whatever you know like Nazi education they didn't want people to question anything because then you know you, you, you're challenging the existing order I think maybe with you know left wing history or left it's getting, getting people to ask questions of, it's getting people to ask questions of umm, of the government perhaps you know it challenges society more, it challenges the status quo more.
- I: **Okay umm and, and but you just kind of it's very difficult to say this but what approach would you say naturally more history teachers lean towards, leaving aside what the curriculum wants, what would you say?**
- R: I would say most people are sympathetic to the school's history project and what they did umm and most people I think see the introduction of the school's history project as, as a turning point in history teaching for the better, most people I would say where the, and you get this when you speak to parents, any parents at a parents evening when they describe how history used to be very boring, narrative, you know being told this is the version of events and so on umm whereas I think things start, things started to change in the 1980's I think to some extent where students were allowed to make their own mind up by looking at you know a variety of sources and coming to their own, their own conclusions I think SHP got it wrong by too much source work at times. if you look at the early kind of SHP book contrasts and connections there is no narrative or it's like 25 sources on a chapter it's a nightmare, umm I think they probably perhaps got that balance wrong but I think they've, they've addressed that since.
- I: **What umm do you think that, you said you think, you said you think most history teachers would be sympathetic to the SHP, are they sympathetic to what you see as the politics of the SHP or the methodology of the SHP or both?**
- R: What as in the left of centre thing?
- I: **Yeah you said -**
- R: Oh methodology I would say.
- I: **Right.**
- R: I, I would, I, I, I, I think most history teachers want lessons to be more focussed on, on the student than, than led by the teacher.
- I: **Okay umm so if we turn now to the February draft umm how did you find out about it is the first question?**
- R: Umm didn't you phone me up and say "what have they done."
- I: **I might well have done.  
(Laughter).**
- R: Look what they've done, umm I think, I think, I think it was a fellow history teacher who, who informed me but I was very much aware that it was getting released and I would've, I would've looked it up on the news anyway umm -
- I: **And what was your initial reaction to it?**
- R: Umm horror, umm just the amount of time, if we were to do this properly the amount of time necessary to deliver this curriculum would be ridiculous umm it would not be, we get two lessons a fortnight in Year 7, 3 lessons a fortnight in Year 8 and 3 lessons a fortnight in Year 9 there is no way that this is achievable in that small amount of time that's available umm so what it would result in if, if we had to tick all those boxes what it would've resulted in is umm almost like check list history where you're spending just one lesson on that topic and never developing any depth, any real understanding or certainly you just would not have any time to develop any skills because you've got to have the content in place first and their understanding in place before you can develop the skills necessary and it, it just would've been absolutely impossible. I think it's umm, it's umm you know the Key Stage 2 curriculum for example is, and Key Stage 1 curriculum is beyond what, what I think Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are capable of I think, I think some of the concepts that they would have to get their head around would be too difficult umm I think there were a few concerns for example you know economic change in crisis the end of post war concerns in government up to and including the election of Margaret Thatcher, why finish on you know Margaret Thatcher it's almost seeing Margaret Thatcher as a saviour that, that saves us from economic crisis and change. I thought that some of it was quite political, celebration of, of I think there was an underlying celebration of, of umm, of, of Britain's impact in the world.
- I: **Where do you get that from?**
- R: Umm actually I dunno really. (...) I suppose it's umm development of modern nation, Britain and their empire including Conquest of Canada, Clive of India, competition with France and Jacobite revolution I think it's, I think it's the use of the word Conquest of Canada that I find I don't know, Wolf is seen very much as kind of an, archetypal kind of hero of umm kind of British empire really you know he, he, he helped, you know he was the person that attacked Quebec and umm was a martyr to the British empire and was a celebrated martyr, I think that's probably where it came from. The other thing of course is, which, which disturbs me about this is the fact that it started in 17 umm about 1750 so it meant that Year 7 and Year 8 all the skills and all the, all the content we've used up to that point had been laid redundant and I suppose it's kind of this you know if, if you're not doing that til umm you know if you're not doing umm like I don't know the middle ages or the Tudors you're leaving that to primary school, the actual understanding they're gonna get is gonna be minimal and it's actually probably more complex you know in some ways you know because you, the leap that you have to make to, to get the students to, to really understand

how values were different, how society was different, how umm you know I think that would be too much of a leap for primary school students.

**I: Isn't, isn't any start date gonna be arbitrary why is 1066 a better start date than 1750?**

**R:** Umm because I don't, I don't think, you know I, I think it's questionable even in Year 7 how, how much understanding, I think you're only really putting the foundation blocks in Year 7 really, it's rare for me to, for me to feel that I've really given any Year 7 class a real deep understanding of what we do and I just think it's development of the brain you know umm and I think I, I just think the, Britain's island story the most important aspects of Britain's island story starts, starts probably with just before the Norman conquest and I think that's probably why it's got to be the starting point for Key Stage 3 because I don't think students are ready to really understand the island story until, until they've arrived at secondary school and even then I think arguably I would question how much they get out of the medieval topic in Year 7.

**I: Umm what interests me is that you said that umm the SHP approach were thinking about a methodology as the methodology that appeals to people not a left of centre approach to history, could not the SHP methodology have been applied to this? You know you seem to be saying that this is jingoistic and, and patriotism couldn't something have been done with this to make it critical in the way that you've been talking about?**

**R:** No. There's too much content, they haven't got time to criticise.

**I: But it does, it does say the content should be taught in a combination of overview and in-depth studies so when you say there's too much content it doesn't suggest that you would spend exactly the same amount of time on every single bit of it. You would -**

**R:** No, no, no it doesn't obviously umm but say you did, I mean, I mean yeah I think it would be a challenge, it's possible course it's possible I think it would be a challenge. I mean I think some of the topics have no, no bearing on what the students are gonna be interested in in Year 7 I mean to start with in Year 7 umm Wolfe and the Conquest of Canada or I mean halfway through the year to be doing the Conference of Vienna I did the Conference of Vienna at A' Level it's bloody boring you know, umm (...) it's, it's obviously possible for SHP but if you look, look at this it's a lot, you know it's, it's you know say about the SHP project, part of the SHP project is looking at society it's not a big society aspect of this alright the through in the Olaudah Equiano kind of aspect with more of an ordinary kind of person but you know you've got Gladstone and Disraeli, Chamberlain and Salisbury you know alright there's a bit, there's a bit about kind of Peterloo second and third reform Acts but it is very individual driven isn't it?

**I: If you mean it's, it's the history of the people in charge?**

**R:** No it's not, to a certain extent umm I mean obviously we've got the great reform Act chartists in there, maybe not, maybe not, maybe not but -

**I: Umm you said umm you thought that this was motivated by umm the Daily Mail agenda of three quarters of children don't know who Winston Churchill is, umm can you say a bit more about that, what is that Daily Mail agenda?**

**R:** Well it's the agenda where it's the kind of quiz agenda of, of you know you should be able to question any, any umm person in the street over the age of 18 or over the age of 15 or whatever and they should be able to tell you 10 key facts about British history and if they don't know those key facts then somehow they are umm they haven't been taught properly, properly at history. Doesn't matter what skills they've developed, doesn't matter the fact that they're, they might have exemplary judgements when it comes to actually arguing an essay or arguing a point, that's not important what's really important is, is you know knowing kind of gobbets of, of factual information.

**I: But if, that may be a particular view of what should be happening in classrooms but what, about the word agenda what, what do you mean by that?**

**R:** I, I just mean that umm for the conservative government I think the Daily Mail and its news and its readership is, is umm, is a big influence. Every government umm you know to a certain extent can be in the pocket of the media.

**I: But agenda suggests that, that they've got a, a kind of umm -**

**R:** Control -

**I: Illicit motive for doing it they've got, they've got a plan is what agenda suggests?**

**R:** Right.

**I: What, so is that what you meant? Agenda suggests that there's, there's a goal to why they're doing this, or is that not what you meant?**

**R:** Umm dunno really umm what do I mean by agenda umm (...)

**I: Umm okay so looking now at what you did umm about it.**

**R:** Yeah.

**I: Umm you indicated umm -**

(knock on door)

**M:** Just find this.

**I: That you, oh no we'll talk first about your involvement in the history teaching community.**

**R:** Right.

**I: Umm you have been to the SHP conference?**

**R:** Yep.

**I: Umm do you read Teaching History?**

**R:** Err I have done, I haven't recently.

**I: Yep.**

**R:** Yeah.

**I: Umm so what, what do you think the, the attendance of the SHP conference gives you?**

**R:** Umm.

**I: Why go?**

**R:** I, I think it's an opportunity to see best pedagogy in practice really umm to at the end of a long term to kind of refresh umm and think about your kind of practice, reflect upon the previous year what you could do better, you've

got you know access to, to resources through the Resource Fair umm I think it's an opportunity for the history community that goes to the SHP to come together and discuss the state of history teaching today and you know umm and perhaps you know I dunno, I don't, I remember when I was there once we had you know Lord Adonis was there I think he was doing like a video conference call umm and obviously I think at the time there was fear that history was kind of getting squeezed out, that there were some schools where it was becoming a two year Key Stage 3 rather than doing history over 3 years they're doing history over 2 years. I think it was kind of an opportunity to, to challenge government policy umm and, and to kind of collectively try and defend the interest of history.

I: **So that was what sort of 2007/8 time?**

R: Yeah I think so.

I: **And when you said there was an opportunity to get, get together collectively to challenge government policy who got them together, where, is there leadership of this or how -**

R: Well I mean look at -

I: **What is the SHP, how does it work?**

R: Err well it's, it's, it's I believe it's, it's in part of Leeds Trinity University.

I: **But what is it, what is it?**

R: And there's obviously, there's people that, that obviously involved in Leeds Trinity University I presume it's people like Culpin and Ian Dawson, I might be wrong umm, umm I don't know what do you mean?

I: **Well what I mean is you said it was an opportunity to get together to challenge government policy.**

R: It's not a pressure group.

I: **It's led.**

R: I just mean it's, it's umm you know if there's any historical pressure group it's Historical Association you know in terms of probably having more direct access to the government I just mean umm it was an opportunity for whatever reason Lord Adonis wanted to speak to, to the, to the history conference umm and, and it was an opportunity to perhaps just you know raise concerns.

I: **But do you feel that those concerns were being raised by the SHP as an organisation or do you think they were just being raised by history teachers?**

R: Umm a bit of both, I think the SHP were facilitating it to allow people to voice, ordinary teachers to voice their concerns umm maybe they drove the agenda a little bit perhaps I don't know.

I: **But you, you've spoken about that kind of contesting the government, obviously the government was contested over this -**

R: Yeah.

I: **Umm what did you do personally umm to resist, it will be on here. (..) It says here that you -**

R: Assassination attempt of Michael Gove is that the one, no?

I: **Umm you spoke to SMT in your school -**

R: A huh.

I: **You (..) you joined a Facebook group.**

R: Yeah.

I: **You also -**

R: Filled in a survey Historical Association.

I: **You filled in a HA survey, you signed a petition.**

R: Yeah.

I: **And yeah.**

R: That's it yeah.

I: **Okay so signed a petition, Facebook, say more about those?**

R: Umm.

I: **Why did you feel it was important to resist?**

R: I mean I wouldn't (..) because it's what we do it's you know we obviously we, we have the, we believe in what we're doing and I believe that the teaching that we, the history teaching we do at our school is worthwhile as it is umm I think the people that leave our school and have done, err have been taught history all the way through have come a, you know even if finished at Key Stage 3 have got a umm you know umm, have come out as, as well taught history students umm -

I: **So when you said 'we' just then do you mean the school?**

R: Our school yeah.

I: **Our school.**

R: Yeah. So, so you know it's a duty to protect a good thing that I feel that we did and I felt that the, the curriculum was a threat to that I think out of all the things I think probably the contacting the Historical Association it's probably the most valuable because I think they've got the most weight behind them, I think the Facebook campaign was probably a way of venting frustration perhaps more than umm but it was quite reassuring things like the Facebook campaign to see that other people felt the same way, you know that we're in the collective boat and that, that there was a lot of opposition to what Michael Gove was, was proposing to do.

I: **So do you, were you opposing it umm because it would have directly affected your school or was it a wider sense of the history community, or did you only become aware of that when you went on this Facebook group?**

R: I'm, I'm gonna, I would like to say it's, it's, I would like to say that it's, it's a wider history community umm because going to things like the SHP you know you get a sense it's a lot of, there are lot of good history teachers out there you know and we're singing from a similar page you know, from a similar hymn book or whatever the analogy is umm, not the analogy is the phrase is umm but there is a selfish motive as well probably, I don't want the extra work you know because I, I don't mind doing extra work when the work I feel is a change for the better, I don't, I resent having to do extra work when I feel that the work I'm gonna be asked to do is, is detrimental to, to and I thought you know, a negative force in terms of, of what we're doing.

- I: **Do you think umm I mean it's difficult to speak for other people but do you think that the other people in the Facebook group what was their main concern, do you think it's the same, do you think it was about protecting what they do, protecting their good practice?**
- R: Umm maybe it's just that, maybe it's just the fact it was on Facebook I, I would say it's a wider umm concern about history teaching in general.
- I: **A huh.**
- R: And what they thought the value of history was. I think that came across very, very strongly on Facebook that it was, it was a wider concern. I don't think probably it was the forum to be whinging individually about the extra work that might be created, that was probably more conversations in school with senior management teams, I think on the Facebook community it was, it came across as more being a, a concern that there was an agenda behind this, this that, that umm it was a narrative history and umm and it was a history of rightly or wrongly a perception that it was of, of great individuals in society in positions of power.
- I: **And you said you thought the HA survey was the most valuable thing you did, why?**
- R: I just think it had, I think the Historical Association is respected more umm by, by the umm the government umm you know I think it's listened to generally by the government and I think I felt like that was gonna have a, a much more positive direct impact on the government umm and I think the other thing that I felt contributed probably some high profile umm historians coming out opposing it. You know I'd say every 4 out of 5 kind of tv historians or famous historians probably spoke out against it, or maybe less but it felt, it felt like a majority were speaking out against it. I don't know how many of those were linked to the Historical Association or not but they seemed, they seemed to be almost a kind of I don't think it was a coordinated campaign but it felt like they were kind of working together quite well.
- I: **So without the umm HA would we, would history teachers had the same impact?**
- R: Would this be still going ahead?
- I: **Yeah.**
- R: Umm -
- I: **It's difficult to -**
- R: It's difficult to say.
- I: **It's counter factual isn't it but -**
- R: Umm I think there's a greater chance, I do, I do think there's a greater chance I think it was a very, very effective at organising opinion and, and I think the thing is with the Historical Association is the SHP is just teachers really whereas the Historical Association isn't just teachers and you can't dismiss the Historical Association as being a bunch of whinging teachers you know because there are lecturers in there, there are umm you know professional historians in the Historical Association so I think it was harder for the government to dismiss them.
- I: **Do you think the SHP would be dismissed as a bunch of whinging teachers?**
- R: Yeah probably.
- I: **So because they're solely staffed by teachers?**
- R: Teachers yeah.
- I: **Umm so obviously umm this, this did change umm what do you think of the final curriculum?**
- R: I'm surprised how much they, they caved to be quite honest.
- I: **They caved.**
- R: I think so.
- I: **They caved suggests that they didn't want to give in but they were forced to by weight of, what weight of argument, weight of numbers?**
- R: Umm I think weight, I think weight of argument probably I think, I think some quite high, I can't remember them but I think there's some quite high profile historians kind of rubbished this curriculum, I think Michael Gove intellectually kind of or academically had to kind of retreat really, umm and obviously it was all managed the kind of retreat, it wasn't you know the, the announcement of the draft was probably, I think got far more news coverage than, than actually what, what was introduced. I think what was introduced is largely the same as, as what we've done with, with a you know a focus on umm, you've still got a chrono, chronological focus but a sensible one in a sense that umm you know you, obviously it's got to be taught in chronological order which is fine, umm but with also a theme that you've got to, you've got to follow from 1066 so I think that's quite useful just to see change through time which isn't dissimilar to looking at something like crime, crime and punishment which was kind of an SHP idea or medicine through time; umm a local history study again it's something that the SHP were quite big on when it kind of was, was formulated umm and I think there's definitely room for that. Umm it's got, it's got umm more world history whereas I think the previous one was very, very much focussed on Britain and Britain's nation story umm you know I think most of the complaints that people put in have been listened to and again you know Year 7 will probably be 1066 to 1509 like it has been.
- I: **So who do you think was listened to, is it the academic historians, is it history teachers, do you think, do you think history teachers have had a say?**
- R: I think they have had a say because I don't think it would necessarily look like this if it was just academic historians, I don't know if it's academic historians who've listened to history teachers and put their case across you know or the Historical, Historical Association have listened to history teachers and put their case across very strongly but this, this curriculum looks like I would argue looks like the SHP or people who are sympathetic to the SHP have made significant contribution to it.
- I: **What makes you say that?**
- R: The local history study, the change through time umm the, the additional focus on world history and the fact that you can pick and choose a little bit more in terms of what you study through each of the, the key time periods it's not you must cover all of this, this is a check list of everything a student must know.
- I: **So this is me last question really, umm the, the draft comes out history teachers don't like it, they don't like it on mass on the Facebook group and the HA but they are reacting negatively to a curriculum.**
- R: Mmm.



- I: **Where does, you say the, the SHP have got a hand in creating this, how do they go from being you said earlier they wouldn't be listened to they're just a bunch of teachers, how did they go from being ignored or even divided to having such a big say?**
- R: I, I would be totally guessing, I don't know.
- I: **Okay.**
- R: But I, I presume that people in the Historical Association did listen to SHP and reflected their views.
- I: **When people listen to SHP -**
- R: Or, or SHP, a lot of people have been so used to the SHP project and like it, a lot of history teachers that umm indirectly they've had an influence by, by the, doing the teacher surveys.
- I: **So when you say listened to the SHP who in fact are you listening to, are you listening to the people who attend the conference 'cause it's not an organisation that you can join is it, you can't get an SHP membership card?**
- R: No, no, no I think it's, it's umm their style of teaching that is umm, that's largely been promoted by a lot of their materials and a lot of their individuals so for example Ian Dawson umm I can't remember which text book he's written, was it the Cromwell depth that he did, umm who's the other one Dale Banham Year 7, King John text book, I think if you look at those text books they're, they're published by the SHP, those people contribute every single time, they, they play a big role in the SHP conferences and there's a clear umm approach in their history teaching it's very skills based, very in-depth umm you know it isn't just about big individuals umm there's, there's looking at for example the Dale Banham looking at the, the monks and how they've written history looking at you know interpretations based umm -
- I: **But is, what, how is, when Dale Banham says what he wanted to do for history, is he just forwarding Dale Banham's ideas and all the history teachers follow Dale Banham? Who, who comes up, are there kind of leaders?**
- R: Imagine no.
- I: **Leaders who come up with things.**
- R: I don't know.
- I: **And everybody else follows or are they reflecting what history teachers want?**
- R: I just, I just oh -
- I: **Is it a question -**
- R: I just think it's a group you know I have no idea, I really don't, I really don't know I would say it's an informal group of like-minded teachers umm who some of them may work for you know Leeds Trinity I don't know, umm you know I would say probably those people that lead SHP are the people that have been there from the beginning like Chris Culpin umm and I know Ian Dawson is, is, has been heavily you know linked to that as well but umm I don't know how SHP works I'll just be guessing I've got no idea.
- I: **History teachers like their things and want to use them -**
- R: Yeah.
- I: **Or do history teachers contribute to creating this approach?**
- R: Umm well I think they, I think (sighs) I think with magazines such as Teaching History umm it's Historical Association umm but you know I think a lot of the, the approaches that you see there are tied in with, with a similar SHP approach so in that way contributions can be made, you can do workshops at the school, the school's history project umm you know that's available to anybody as long as you've got a, a worthwhile proposal umm so, so obviously you can contribute that as part of the community umm yeah.
- I: **That's it thank you very much.**

## vii. Skills Resistor

- I:** Okay umm so first of all can you just confirm for the tape that you've umm read and signed the umm Ethical consent forms?
- R:** Yeah I've certainly read and err obviously agree to all the forms and everything being used as we've suggested previously yeah.
- I:** That's great thank you. Okay so umm the first question is how would you describe yourself as a history teacher?
- R:** In what sense sorry so just to -
- I:** What, what do, how would you describe the way that you teach history, how would you describe what's important about history to someone?
- R:** Okay well I suppose ultimately there are a number of things that we try and get in with obviously good and outstanding history teaching, umm obviously it's gotta go alongside the, the key concepts in terms of you know what, what in a history sense umm how we can develop people's key skills and also in terms of getting them to bring out umm, getting them to develop the historical thinking essentially. Umm Key Stage 3 we're trying to bring pupils on as, as much as we can in terms of we've used our, our level ladder which is roughly based on parts of the curriculum umm, what was the question again?
- I:** Just that what, I suppose the question is what do you think is important about the way the children get taught history?
- R:** Right.
- I:** What do you think good history teaching is like?
- R:** Umm it should be very much pupil led, umm it should be varied it should enable pupils to obviously get an underpinning of the historical skills that we, we know as history teachers to be good for developing historical thinking.
- I:** What are they?
- R:** Umm in terms of cognitive, developing cognitive skills.
- I:** Yeah what are the skills that you're thinking?
- R:** In terms of getting pupils to, to explain on different levels, getting them to explain their thinking and be able to justify it using evidence and sources as we know, you know historians should do and hopefully try and get them to that kind of, that point where they're able to, to evaluate the thinking and the strengths and weaknesses of various arguments as good historians do; and ultimately us specifically we try and do that in as much of a varied way as we can umm because ultimately you know whether it's active history, whether it's getting pupils to engage with it but different mediums. I suppose that ultimately if that makes sense is kind of what we're trying to achieve at [our school].
- I:** When you said umm pupil led what do you mean by that?
- R:** Well I think at the moment we we're trying to have a big drive on getting pupils to kind of be more independent in their thinking and if we take for arguments sake GCSE, and I know this is more difficult because we are set to a framework set by the Examination Board, but clearly allowing pupils to, to be more independent and given more gifted and talented to pupils I suppose more opportunity to really stretch and drive themselves and that seems to be the, obviously I know we've talked a lot but you've talked a lot and I know I tell it here in terms of flipped learning, being a big thing and we're looking at the possibility of implementing that for next year, but that aside we, I mean in all key stages we try and ensure that obviously pupils are stretched and challenged across the board and we do that quite significantly, especially at Key Stage 3 with our, again go back to our level ladder and stuff like that. Umm I've forgotten where I was to the question (laughs).
- I:** That, that's, that's fine.
- R:** I'm waffling.
- I:** Umm no you're not waffling, umm so do you think that there is a typical history teacher, do, are you a typical history teacher, is there a typical history teacher?
- R:** No most certainly not. I think ultimately umm the people are ultimately different and I've seen this obviously only being a relatively new teacher umm obviously within those couple of years and it is literally a couple of years which is a stone's throw, I feel I've very much developed who I am as a teacher, as a history teacher and what I want my pupils to do in terms of the history sense what I see as good history, umm and good historical thinking which I know has been embedded to me.
- I:** Where does that come from?
- R:** Umm obviously the, the course umm that we, we obviously studied in terms of teacher training that was put together by obviously yourself, Ian Phillips at Edge Hill, umm and obviously just from being an historian and, and obviously studying at, at a degree level I suppose and then obviously when you go onto to be a, do your teacher training that's an obviously a more intense level. Umm question again?
- I:** Err just umm do you think there's a typical history teacher because -
- R:** Oh sorry.
- I:** Because you spoke about -
- R:** I think yeah -
- I:** Doing a history degree and then doing a history course, a history teacher training course.
- R:** I think well, well in an ideal world we would like to have a kind of guide and grid for everyone to be able to place themselves within that yet clearly there, there are very certain threads which do we've gotta acknowledge are, are massively important to us as history teachers, however I think you know and this is probably as broad as teaching points, people are different you know pupils are different they will respond differently you've gotta understand pupils and to get to that point every, every history teacher will do that in a different way and I think that's massively important for, for it to be effective and to be good. Clearly to, to have differentiated umm outcomes, not just outcomes but umm how you treat pupils and get the most out of them and clearly people do that in, in different ways

and people can get certain activities to work really well whether it's a market stall, whether it's a drama activity based on a historical theme or topic or event, I think it's massively important that you know it's not simply a one size fits all, I don't think it's happened.

**I: Do you think that, I suppose which is, that's all valid but do you think that there is a shared view of what good history teaching looks like among history teachers, do you think if history teachers would get together they would agree about what it is they're trying to do?**

R: Definitely. Definitely.

**I: And that would be what?**

R: Haha, err I think to give, give pupils the very best history education based on the kinds -

**I: Which means what?**

R: Umm embedding them to understand the key aspects so getting them to rigorously analyse sources for them to create judgements, for them to be able to explain various aspects of the past whether it's different interpretations, looking at the diverse nature of history. I suppose the only way I think a really good way is you know what we do at the moment is linking to those, those key skills that we've got within you know the curriculum in terms of diversity, umm interpretation cause and consequence because they are, you know and whether it's SHP, whether it's also on modern world or whatever you're doing, those key historical skills are key to what we do and we try and embed them throughout all of our, our curriculum if that makes sense. I'm fairly certain that historians would, or the only difference, some of the finer point I think that everyone would agree a theme to be at the core of what we do, but the skill -

**I: Where do they come from those things?**

R: Umm as practitioners in a classroom by getting teachers to develop those skills.

**I: Yeah but at the moment, my question wasn't clear, where do those concepts that you've just described come from?**

R: Okay. Umm I suppose by doing what we've done over a number of years umm these things have come to be good, there's an agreement among historians that these things are you know a good history if that makes sense.

**I: So, so do you think umm there's a history teaching community that agrees on the definition of what good history is?**

R: Yeah I agree.

**I: And it is underpinned by key concepts -**

R: Yeah.

**I: Working with evidence.**

R: Yeah.

**I: Do you think that all history teachers sign up to that?**

R: Umm I would like to think so because ultimately I think you know we are a sharing kind of community one, I think every history teacher is passion, or should be, passionate about history and really does you know want the best and pupils to develop the best in a history sense and love history and be engaged with it, I suppose clearly like everything not, I suppose ultimately if you have to be honest about it well clearly not everyone would and we'd like to think in an ideal world that people, well there's clearly gonna be people that disagree with that if we're being realistic about it.

**I: Okay umm right so looking at the February draft, umm you said oh just, just before we do that actually umm I, I asked you whether you think there's a history teaching community and you said yes and you feel part of it, where is it, what is it that you are part of?**

R: Umm I think ultimately we obviously with, being a relatively new teacher I suppose we could argue that, I mean it, it's fairly new to me to be part of this community but from since we finished at Edge Hill we still kept in, in very close contact with all the, the history trainees I trained with and also we've had an input into obviously this year umm this year's trainees coming through obviously this year as a mentor umm to a degree obviously with umm one of the MMU trainees I basically mentored her it's my first experience doing that, so although relatively new as a teacher I feel part of a community that I suppose ultimately for me I know at this particular school I feel, and I know in terms of our results and stuff we do history well and I think that translates itself. I'm, I'm very proud of, of obviously being in that position. I think in a wider sense having those links with Edge Hill still and obviously trainees and speaking to people there is definitely a forum and we also give ideas about, about the best way to do things and we do this has anybody you know done particular lessons on this, what focus would you have. Err in a broader sense I'm just starting to now be at a point where obviously I'm, we've got umm I think it's an SHP, an OCR conference on umm on Monday we're going to just a general one about the development of some of the changes and stuff so I'm starting to feel more involved in a, in a wider sense but I suppose ultimately the way I feel part of a community is, is obviously my training and the links I've still got to that and those body.

**I: And what about on a, on a larger scale so what do you think about the SHP and HA are in... do they have a role in a history teaching community?**

R: I think we, we very much in the past we have done a lot of SHP style work and obviously investigations in terms of developing historical thoughts and stuff. I think there's definitely still a role for it because the activities that kind of people like SHP do and we've still got a number of the text books and follow some cases, they are quite old, the methodology and the level of, and the way of developing thinking is still really valid especially and it does work exceptionally well with our pupils so definitely that, they should have a big role and I think in the last year that's probably something that I've not had a huge amount of exposure to and something I'd love to do.

**I: Right.**

R: In the future there, definitely

**I: Okay good stuff. So you said you had a negative view of the February draft, could you expand on that and tell us why basically there it is?**

R: Yeah I think umm what the ultimately, and this is probably where we're coming at it from a school, previously in the February draft was super prescriptive err it did suggest that you had to teach a number of, of these key things and you had to do that there was, you know there wasn't a huge amount of, of wiggle room with that umm when we sat down and looked at it I mean we do touch on some of the stuff, some of the key points anyway but ultimately for us

we I suppose our curriculum we try and underpin it with obviously there's a certain amount of knowledge that has to be had for history to be effective and we also try and match it obviously with the previous government's kind of key skills idea whereby pupils can do a range of, of the, the topics and the content and it should be underpinned by a historical skills and a wider kind of PLTs skills. We still use that to a degree umm we didn't really see any particular reason why it needed to be so prescriptive based on the fact that we do study some of these things anyway and personally we thought that there was too bigger emphasis on the knowledge side of it and not enough on the development of the historical skills and also the wider life skills if that makes sense?

- I: **That's, I mean that, that's something I'd like to talk about a bit more if that's okay so what do you mean by too much emphasis on content because?**
- R: Umm ultimately from our point of view, and I suppose this is where we're trying to develop historical thinking and get pupils to think around sources and think independently and I think that for us is a really kind of, you know there's a holy grail getting pupils to a level and we can do that to the very best we can use and umm specific activities and development over time and within schemes of work but ultimately this, the, the February draft simply wanted pupils to know far too much knowledge. Umm if we, if we had to look at good teaching and learning and link it to Blooms Taxonomy simply recollection of dates is a low order skill.
- I: **But where does it say the, the priority of this document is the recollection of dates and key events, it certainly lists a lot of -**
- R: Sure.
- I: **Key, key events. Possibly too many.**
- R: Sure.
- I: **But why doesn't a list of events preclude the kind of historical thinking?**
- R: Umm for, it just, for, for us to be I think ultimately this has to be, I mean the amount of stuff within it seems an awful lot to be able, you know to get through in a depth that it would be wanted if that makes sense. Umm -
- I: **But I'm, I'm looking at something say the development of the modern economy so there would be very few people who would argue that the industrial revolution should be included in the curriculum, what's to stop that being taught in the way that you describe?**
- R: Umm well I mean from our point of view we do actually look at the industrial revolution anyway so umm you know we teach in that way that we've described previously if that makes sense.
- I: **A huh.**
- R: So we didn't really see any, any huge you know any particular reason why we needed to include it all if that makes sense I mean I'm not -
- I: **Yeah it, it's umm yeah that's fine so what, what would, how would you have liked this to have been different then?**
- R: I think ultimately what we wanted to see, what would have been better is for schools to have more, more freedom in what they're actually taught and more trust left down to history teachers who are the chalk face so to speak, but they ultimately know the pupils that they've got and I think for example where, where we are if we had to use, use, use the phrase class we, we could argue that you know our particular school's got a very niche umm kind of demographic and we could argue that it's very middle class I suppose but ultimately what works for us in our school may not necessarily work for somebody else in somebody else's school so this, that one size all approach isn't gonna work across nationwide it's simply not because clearly some schools need to, need to build into their history curriculum awareness and umm you know of certain particular issues might, might be more apparent. I think we do need to do as a school and that's personally but is kind of build more diversity into what we do, I think we do it very well but next year we're looking to kind of build indefinitely more diversity not just British history but a little bit more international history as well and I think that's, that's really important.
- I: **But you know what umm the people who support this document would say which is children don't know what they ought to know.**
- R: Mmm.
- I: **But if you allow schools to pick and choose you will get umm you know the old phrase Hitler and the Henry's and cowboys and Indians.**
- R: Sure, sure.
- I: **Umm what about that as an argument?**
- R: I think it's, I think it's entirely valid I mean clearly there are some people who will say well ultimately and to be honest you know there is some mileage in that argument clearly because if pupils aren't, don't know but you've gotta ask yourself the question I mean this is kind of another angle we're coming from, we're trying to our school motto is not to propagandise but we are trying to prepare learnings for a changing world and clearly some of these topics don't necessarily do that, err I suppose ultimately we do a lot of modern history but we do go far back as the tudors but you know in, in year 7 we go back to, to umm, to, to you know 1066 and all that. I think ultimately the, the topic we do umm kind of having my own argument there haven't I, umm because clearly these, these subjects for us umm seem really are now imperialistic maybe, they're all very British dominated and we feel I think that in some cases does need to be, to be cast wide and what we've got works for us.
- I: **So is, is your problem with this that it is narrow or that it's imperialistic, is, is it a political objection to it or just a breadth objection?**
- R: Probably a bit of both to, to be honest I think umm you know there is clearly the modern nation which is you know when you look at the topics there this is all very, very umm you know, is it, English, English focussed I suppose British focussed, very imperialistic umm you could argue yeah in a political spectrum there is that argument to be had as well definitely.
- I: **Okay umm so umm you said, I asked whether you thought it was particularly motivated, this is what you said 'umm yes I firmly believe that it was introduced to shed history in a bad light to create problems and issues and to marginalise the subjects whereas there was an importance previously attached to it under the E Bacc as a more traditional and academic subject.**
- R: A huh.

**I:** Can you expand on that for us?

**R:** Yeah I think I can yeah (laughs). Umm we think umm I mean obviously from a, as a passionate hist, historian who wants pupils to you know develop the thinking in the very best way, umm we, we were of the opinion that this, you know we think that history, well I suppose this is my personal view that history is, has got massive importance in terms of transferrable thinking skills, not just in history and I suppose if you ask any subject they will be able to justify it from their point of view and that, that's fully valid but for us umm in terms of going back to what we said about the contents, the contents seem really prescribed, seem really narrow and it did, you know it looks a lot to it and it seems more concerned on remembering key dates on key people on those key stories which to a degree is important but you know we, we feel, or I feel personally that it's kind of detracting from what history really is to me and that is that the way, way it is at the moment and the balance it's got in terms of the pupil's understanding and knowledge, being able to work on schools on different levels that it kind of diminishes its importance as a transferrable subject if that makes sense? And this is my view.

**I:** **It, yeah it makes sense but when we use the words traditional and academic don't we mean hard stuff, hard knowledge, those, those, there was, I mean this is just what those words say to me.**

**R:** A huh.

**I:** **You're talking about transferrable skills and history's value as transferrable skills, I wouldn't say if I used the words traditional or academic I would be talking about transferrable skills.**

**R:** Mmm.

**I:** **I would take those words to mean the kind of knowing lots of stuff and doing lots of writing.**

**R:** Sure. Umm need to go over the question again (laughs).

**I:** **What, what I mean is when you're talking about history being important because of the skills right so if you take that, that's actually a, a very modern argument so that is an argument arguably which is most closely associated with the last labour government.**

**R:** Sure. Sure.

**I:** **Umm 2001 curriculum, 2000 umm 7 curriculum.**

**R:** Yep.

**I:** **When you, but you say the, the importance that was previously attached to it under the E Back as a more traditional and more academic subject.**

**R:** A huh.

**I:** **I would say that what is here in the February draft is very traditional, is very academic.**

**R:** Okay.

**I:** **So I don't, I don't understand what you mean by how this is trying to marginalise it.**

**R:** Okay umm we, obviously with the E Bacc there was umm there was a great, I suppose history could argue it's always been seen as a great, you know a more, more academic subject 'cause there's more writing, more source work I, I don't know has that always been my interpretation of it is that, that the, there's just, history, history as a subject has been marginalised because of these changes if that makes sense to me personal.

**I:** **The, this, this February change.**

**R:** Yeah, yeah.

**I:** **Right.**

**R:** In the sense that it's umm, you know it's too prescriptive.

**I:** **Okay that's great.**

**R:** Gone. Did that help or did it not help I don't know?

**I:** **Umm yeah I mean I, I just found that particular statement quite interesting because if, if we, if we, if we want history to be seen as traditional and academic -**

**R:** Should we not go back to -

**I:** **What Michael Gove has given us here is a very traditional and academic curriculum.**

**R:** Mmm.

**I:** **If we want history to be seen as useful as having transferrable skills as to use your skills motto prefer, preparing learners for life.**

**R:** A huh.

**I:** **Then that's not this.**

**R:** Yeah sure.

**I:** **But then it's also not the commonly agreed understood of traditional academic.**

**R:** A huh.

**I:** **It's the opposite of what we mean by traditional and academic.**

**R:** Sure, okay.

**I:** **That's, that's all I was trying to -**

**R:** Yeah no, no I see what you're saying.

**I:** **Yeah.**

**R:** Umm I see what you're saying I think umm, I think ultimately yeah I mean I can see, I can see the point you're making like this we could argue is very, very, very traditional and you know academically if, if it's a return to maybe know more knowledge maybe that's once, once upon a time definitely umm I don't know I've undermined my own argument.

**I:** **So do you think that academic has been redefined to mean something else, do, do you think that academic doesn't mean hard and lots of writing and nose in books?**

**R:** I would say so yeah.

**I:** **What does it mean now then?**

**R:** Umm the ability to think, think, I mean I'm, I'm that, that's my personal -

**I:** **Yep.**

**R:** And then that's where I would come at it from, I, I believe it's not, if you're saying academic yeah there is clearly whenever you study an academic work you have to sift through a lot of information to be able to get to that end point,

but ultimately for me it's about that, you know how you put it together and how you're able to think your way through it. So to me that would be my definition on it and I know people will argue with that clearly.

I: **That, that's fine if, I'm not saying that your definition is wrong just saying that's -**

R: No I understand that.

I: **That's not the way that I would use it.**

R: Yeah fair enough.

I: **Umm okay so going from umm looking at that February draft, you did the following to try and make your views oh err public about it, you raised concerns with the school management, you wrote a letter to the DFE or your MP.**

R: A huh.

I: **You responded to government consultation, you responded to the HA survey and you posted that on an internet discussion.**

R: Yep.

I: **Umm why did you do them things, what made you wanna do those different things?**

R: Umm ultimately it's just to be driven that we, you know I think history teachers should be, should be allowed and given a trust that obviously people who are doing a job and I'm not saying that people who aren't doing a job or who don't consult on it don't know what they're doing, but ultimately a certain amount of teachers are professionals and intelligent and in lots of cases they've been doing teaching or they've been, had an association for a long time and even if they haven't they're coming through with ideas of what is good history teaching because that's what they're taught as teachers and those people should be given trust to do the right things for the pupils that we've got in front of us because we, we are there doing it and it's that simple for me. Umm -

I: **But why did you think it was important, did you write to the DFE or your MP, who did you write to?**

R: I think it's, it was the DFE posted on a umm, posted on a website you know about some of the conversations and to be fair there's, I think this is you know in a history sense yeah clearly but there seems to be a wider landscape of trying to vilify teachers at the moment on a number of different levels and it seems you know not whether it's social media or media itself, there's just a big campaign on to smear teachers in every, every form and it's just when ya, when you're actually doing that job and doing it very well and doing it, putting a lot of time and effort into it, it's difficult to take that people are kind of slating teachers it's not on.

I: **How about responding to the government consultation, what made you wanna do that?**

R: I think it is important that, I mean ultimately we live in a democratic country and we do have a say in that process and I think it's massively important to actually get involved because you know as a school obviously and I know my kind of contribution is, is through [mature resistor] essentially because he's, he's got more, obviously been, been a teacher for a lot longer he's actually involved in, and I know our head is, sits on some of the board that actually advise the government and what they think and how they do it so you know by getting thoughts through to, to [Mature Resistor] and through to [our head] hopefully we can, we can have some impact on how that ends up ultimately.

I: **And what about responding to the Historical Association survey, why did you wanna do that?**

R: Umm again because the Historical Association for me, I mean obviously ever since being a trainee umm the work they do I suppose coming at it completely fresh the work they do is exceptionally good, it's really, really good history, it's really good practice, it's engaging for people you know and they, they do carry a lot of weight as well, not to use the pun but they do, they're important body of work you know they're constantly ongoing and those people we need to nod and genuflect that these are important people within our history for, within our history community if you like.

I: **So who are you talking about who, who -**

R: Historical Association.

I: **Well these individuals who specifically should genuflect to.**

R: Oh. Umm I suppose if you're looking SHP I suppose people like Ian Dawson umm is one who's kind of in terms of developing, keep using this phrase historical thought but in terms of the activities and getting pupils engaged you know he's, he's someone I always go to I daresay there's probably a number of others which I can't think of now, but obviously those activities in that way of thinking of getting people to engage with his, history people like you know err Christine Counsell and Ian Philips all those kind of people who are associated with those, those bodies are definitely you know hold a lot of valid weight in, within the history community and we, we need to reference them?

I: **Did you, how familiar were you with what the HA and the SHP were saying about the draft, obviously responded to consultation did, did you keep in touch with what they were saying?**

R: Umm I did to a degree but probably not as much as I should've done to be fair so I'll be honest.

I: **Right and did you think, do you think what they say makes a difference, do you think they are listened to?**

R: By the government or?

I: **Yeah.**

R: No I wouldn't, wouldn't suggest no. I don't think they are and I think that's a shame because they really do know what, what they're doing and should be listened to far more in my opinion.

I: **Why not, why, why not listen to them? If, if they are experts surely it should be clear to everybody that they're experts?**

R: I agree umm that's, I suppose ultimately that's something you'd need to put to the government consultation panel, umm but ultimate to me if you've got a body, a body of work that's proven over a number of years in a particular area and you don't take that on board well that's pure folly isn't it but -

I: **Well it, it, the, there's got to be more to it than folly hasn't there?**

R: What?

I: **If, if, if somebody is acknowledged as an expert in a field and you choose not to listen to them.**

R: Yeah sure.

I: **Why, why have they chosen not to listen to -**

R: Is a potentially a political agenda, is a you know it doesn't necessarily fit with what that particular person wanted given time to then be able to prove the outcome on, if that makes sense? It's an agenda there, I mean these are questions I don't have the answer to these are just questions clearly aren't they but -

- I: **Yeah.**
- R: Umm that, that would suggest that that was the out, looking at it from an intelligent point of view one would have to surmise that potentially there's, if, if we've got a government that's creating something new, a curriculum, a draft curriculum and not consult, consulting a really important body well possibly the only outcome you could suggest is that there's clearly an agenda, there's a political agenda, it could be a number of different things but that is one thing what a lot of people will generally surmise with that.
- I: **'Cause I, I happen to know that Michael Gove hates the SHP and in fact umm Nick Gibb the Schools Minister has gone into schools and said umm, criticised history teachers for using SHP text books with the pupils.**
- R: Mmm.
- I: **Have you got any guesses of why they might be -**
- R: Down to money I'd imagine. Money, political agenda because the history that the SHP are doing is probably not, I dunno a political view that err Michael Gove they hold on a peddle in line with current government's view of things I'd imagine that's what it's gonna be, definitely.
- I: **Yeah umm.**
- R: Ideological.
- I: **But, but, but where's the ideological difference, what is it that the SHP and HA are believed do that is different or antagonistic to what Michael Gove?**
- R: I mean I'll be honest I, I can't see it, I really can't see what the issues they might have with it, umm from a teaching history and if we had to say objective point of view the history that the SHP and, and everyone else seems to do if Gove doesn't like it, it doesn't really make any sense because they're doing pure, pure effective of history which is you know equipping our pupils for doing history better without any kind of bias of you know, I think the history curriculum got a, you know in terms of what SHP and the History Association do do it very well and it is objective and it's aimed at its core with developing historical thinking and I don't see why anyone would have an issue.
- I: **But what about these err, those that Michael Gove is always reading out which say that children don't know when the Battle of Agincourt was? He would make a case that actually the SHP approach hasn't given children the historical education that they need.**
- R: Umm I think clearly when we're using statistics and using facts we can use them in a number of different ways to prove a number of different things I suppose ultimately, umm by maybe using a set of data that is truly representative or whatever clearly and any details could be skewed. I think I mean there's a good argument of saying we, we try and do everything we do chronologically because that seems to be a good way to do it in line with what Dawson and people will say and we, we understand that by doing it.
- I: **So not a single chronological but multiple chronologies?**
- R: Yeah I mean we, we do a, we do a number of different ways I mean in year 7 we look at life and health through time which is very similar to what they do but it's not called SHP, it's just something we've developed as a school. With that I suppose in mind because developing pupils chronological understanding in that way has really good impact on pupils being able to place dates and to be fair I don't know, you know I suppose if you could ask any pupil when that was potentially they might not know, you can massage the data to show that the kids don't know that but ultimately the way we've done it in the chronological way of doing it, it does work well as the fact we can prove that, clearly I think that the data must be a very small sample of data possibly but we, we do it that way because we know before all these changes we know that there's good, good methodology in doing chronological studies so we do that.
- I: **That is the last question but, but well the second to last question, what do you mean by umm good methodology, why do you, you say objectively it's better.**
- R: A huh.
- I: **Umm so what you are basically saying there is that the SHP and the HA are motivated solely by what is objectively good history teaching whereas their critics must be motivated by something else?**
- R: Yeah politics.
- I: **Why is it objectively better?**
- R: Umm it's a good question haha, and it's late in the day, umm because it's I'm gonna use the word biased now it's..i'll slap myself for using that as a historian, I think ultimately we, I've said that word loads of times as well, umm we find that it's, why is it objectively better because it's, it develops thinking in a way that would I suppose we're trying to, trying to do I dunno it's done better, umm the question was why does it, why objectively is it best to do it that way?
- I: **Yeah if, if you're saying something's objective, any fair minded person would agree that if it's objectively better any fair minded person would agree it is better but clearly some people don't.**
- R: A huh.
- I: **So either you have to say that everybody who disagrees is motivated by something else?**
- R: Yeah sure.
- I: **Or we've got to put a question mark over objective, saying that some history teaching's objectively better than others?**
- R: Okay, umm I think ultimately yeah from would it be that most people generally agree that that way of doing it is, is the best way of doing it, is that not what you think?
- I: **Yeah well and, and that's, and that's gonna, that is gonna come onto the last question, umm you say most people agree that the SHP HA approach is the best way of doing it, is that what you're saying?**
- R: Yeah, yeah.
- I: **Is the SHP and the HA speaking for history teachers who say this is the best way of doing it and the SHP and the HA just take that forward or is the SHP and the HA leading history teacher opinion?**
- R: Umm no I don't believe that the SHP and the HA are leading historical opinion I think what they do is there for taken on board by people who then agree that it is, it is good practice that potential -
- I: **So what comes first, the, the history teachers in a classroom have an idea of what history teaching should look like, which the SHP and the HA then do, or the SHP and the HA blaze a trail by saying this is better and that feeds down into classrooms, is it bottom up or top down?**

R: I'd say it's a combination of the two to be honest because I know a lot of people who, who kind of do work for the H, HA and the SHP are classroom practitioners who go and put those ideas forward so essentially it's, it's classroom teachers isn't it who are feeding the ideas and the SHP and HA then represent that to everybody else as good practice, so I think it's definitely, it's probably a combination of the two similar relationship if that makes sense?

I: **But if, if do you kind of, can you imagine a situation where somebody really likes Gove's curriculum wants to teach in this way would that person be given a fair hearing by the SHP and the HA?**

R: Umm I don't suppose they would if this person, well and it's an interesting question so if we've got someone who wants to teach this, this February draft of the curriculum.

I: **Who thinks that's great.**

R: Umm there wouldn't be, there wouldn't be any issues with them teach, teaching the contents in, in obviously a different way would there, there wouldn't be any, any issue with that if that's the question?

I: **No well what I mean is you're saying that this is not, this is the last thing, this is not what SHP and HA do.**

R: Yeah.

I: **But you're saying the SHP and the HA listen to what is happening in classrooms, they, they, do you think somebody who is very supportive of this will be given much time by the HA and the SHP and they'd be listened to do you think they'd -**

R: Yeah I would think so. I would like to because we, again I suppose getting back to objectivity I think ultimately yeah the SHP will be prepared to listen to, to people on you know and then form a judgement based on the evidence widely overall yeah definitely. I don't think there would be any, any political agenda again it would be down to objectivity and I sincerely believe that you know those people who work for the SHP and the HA would definitely hear the other side of the argument, whether that's the case or not I'll be honest I don't know but I would like to think that that's, that's what would happen yeah.

I: **That's great thanks very much that's the end of it.**

R: Hope it's okay.

I: **Cheers.**



## viii. Classroom Engager

- I:** Right can we just er, confirm that you've um, completed the Ethical um, Consent forms?
- R:** Yeah, I've completed that.
- I:** Thanks very much. Okay um, so we'll start with the open question; how would you describe yourself as a history teacher?
- R:** Hmm (laughter) well in general terms I've got a range of different approaches, I've um, I'm an experienced teacher of fourteen years now, um, taught all ages and abilities or most age and ability I should say. Um, and yeah, I like to teach in of, in a range of styles to suit the children that I teach.
- I:** What, what do you think is important about a history education then?
- R:** Um, well obviously I think if you ask me today in 2014 I'd say the, the grades, obviously you'd say that, that is pretty much the, the top priority for everyone I think. But for me it's more about, it's a cliché, I know it's cliché ridden but it's about teaching children to not, to question things basically, to you know, to think things through, to not check the easy option, the easy answer, to think about why the world is in the situation it is in today and to try and draw parallels between the past and the present really, that's why I see it; that, that's how I see it.
- I:** And do, do you think you're fairly typical in valuing there or do you think that, that is an unusual thing for history teachers?
- R:** No I think that is quite common, yeah I think when you speak to people um, you know, when you speak to colleagues it's always the same, the number one thing is the grades; are we on track, are we gonna get roasted in September. Um, but when you talk about the subject, that is the big thing is, is how we can basically make history accessible for as many er, students as possible and to, to get some sort of enthusiasm for it as well.
- I:** And you think that most history teachers would agree with you about questioning things being the most important aspect of the subject?
- R:** Um, I think its split; I think some do, yeah. Some, I think some have got a genuine enthusiasm for the sort of old style history, the Kings and Queens, the facts and figures, the timelines, that kind of thing. I think others see it more as a, sort of enquiry based thing of, you know, how can we apply that, you know. I mean the big one, so many students love conspiracy theories and I think a lot of history teachers love the conspiracy theories themselves because the students are interested and you're, you're hitting all the history skills that you need to use in, in looking at those kind of things.
- I:** I'm interested in the way you said the old school is Kings and Queens and facts and dates and timelines I think you said.
- R:** Yeah.
- I:** What, if that's old school, are you suggesting that what's replaced it is superior, what or what has replaced it, if that's old school?
- R:** Yeah I think what's replaced it is we went through a phase I think where a lot of history teaching was done thematically, I know my last position we did history of medicine through time, history of um, what else did we do, protest through time, things like that. And that was great cos it allowed us to do, you know, there was still a chronological framework, you were still looking at issues that were relevant to today so you look at like, you know, traces so back to Magna Carta. Um, but I think the difference is to me, reeling off facts and figures, although it's part of it and it can help to um, form judgement it's only one ingredient, it's not the be all end all, reciting facts and figures to me is just one weapon that a history student has, otherwise it might as well be anything. It could be, you know, it could be tell me, you know, about a whole host of footballers, who they played for, how many got...it doesn't mean you understand football, it just means they can tell you statistics. It's the same with historians, I think anyone that's got a history, to construct an argument they obviously need to know the facts and the figures, to be able place something in chronological context they need to understand a broad history. But I don't think knowing, you know, the date of birth of every monarch, you know, from 1066 onwards is necessarily make someone a better historian. And so I would say history today is better in respect that students are more questioning of the history, however I do think we have lost a little bit of that chronological framework, a little bit of understanding. I think students known the main, if you like, 'figures in history' but they are not very good at saying, okay um, you know name me a Plantagenet monarch; they don't really know that. Now whether that's a sacrifice that's for the great of good is debatable.
- I:** Whether it's a loss the children can do it. Um, so do you think there's such a thing as the history teaching community, you know, I've asked you questions about most history teachers, typical history teachers. Do you think there is a community of history teachers?
- R:** I think there's several communities really, I think it's, if you go on, I know lots of history teachers you love online resources, things like TES online, you know, some of the history, active history all those sort of websites. They love them, there is others who hate them and I do think you still, within those communities you can see divides, you can see people who still sort of, love the sort of national heritage approach to history and there's others who love the more conceptual and literacy based enquiries I think.
- I:** You say, you say divides, is it as simple as two camps, you know the national story and the -?
- R:** No I think it's a bit of both, think you get, you get overlap because you get, you know, there's people who are obviously enthusiastic, I mean we all are enthusiastic historians but the ones who, you know, remind me of the teachers I was at school who we would've been taught by who, you know, "colour in the Roman soldier" type history approach where undoubting enthusiasm for history but if left to their own devices that is how they'd always teach it. And there's others who, I mean I probably put myself in both camps because I have, I you know we do a lot of, I do a lot of work where I'm trying to get students to put together arguments but I also want the students to know 'the basic facts'. So it's more, it's more of a spectrum rather than two camps I would say.
- I:** So when, when you've said which, oh it's here; I've asked do you think there exists a history teaching community and you've said yes but I don't feel part of it or want to be part of it; which of those is it?

- R: yeah um, yeah I think that's, see where, one thing is I always like to do things me own way, I've never been one who's given a resource by someone who's met, I always like to, I always prefer to make me own because it's, you know, what you are doing with it don't you and you know how it works. Um, I quite often find when I'm um, particularly if I go somewhere like um, LINC's across the meetings or things like –
- I: **is that a local network of history teachers?**
- R: yes, Liverpool north cluster, yeah its' if we um, if we meet and we are doing some sort of group activity on how to do something, quite often my approach would be different. And I might be that, you know, it might be I am the one who's got it wrong and everyone else got it right but I think um, I think it's, I think sometimes the history teachers, other history teachers can get bogged down with, with things that aren't necessarily conducive to the big picture which is, to me is, and it's very cynical to say it but what is the most effective way to get the students the knowledge they need to pass the exams they need, so they are basically, you keep the heat off, that is basically what it comes down to.
- I: **And what do the other history teachers think is important then, if you find yourself like outside that group, what is it they, they think is important?**
- R: I think they, I'm being very generalised here, I think they tend to push their own, sort of, I am quite, say happy but I would rather teach something I don't particularly like, what the students would like and will get better results from than teach something I think, oh in a wider picture, this is important for the children to know. I mean I'll give you, I mean I was in a lunch meeting at er, about six, seven months ago, I was pretty much the only person who wants to see the British depth study be the liberals, not because I think it's particularly interesting but because I know I can get good grades from it. And there is right and wrong to suggest either way isn't there, you know, well we should do another one because I think interest the students more, yeah higher uptake of GCSE. But I think, I have to, I've almost gone the cynical, clinical way of what will get me the best results and then try and build enthusiasm into it from there I think.
- I: **Right, that's great. Um, so in um, terms of the February draft, what um, was your response to it?**
- R: Um, well I must admit one of the first things I thought was it was very much a draft and, and when I looked at it I thought as with, as with any, it was a much bigger change than I thought there was going to be. Um, and when I saw the, (sighs) there were some bits that I thought great, there was a lot of bits that I thought aren't gonna be interesting. My basic sort of view of it was they'd taken the key stage 3 and passed it down to key stage 2 or taken the best bit to key stage 3, passed it down to key stage 2. I also thought it read like someone and suspect this was the case, had just basically listed everything they personally wanted to do and there wasn't much consensus amongst, you know, the leading sort of history experts in the country.
- I: **So, who do you mean by the leading history experts?**
- R: Well I mean the sort of people who dominate, you know, so it's like, likes of er, you know, oh I've forgotten all their names now; Ben Walsh and you get the, you know um, it's where me mind has gone blank now. You know, you've got like the big three who make all the text books, I've forgotten all their names now; er, Christine Counsell is it, yeah those sort of people where, you know, from looking at their work in the past that they would be horrified by a big chunk of this and I think it reads, there was also spin on it, like I think it was somewhere, the British Empire stuff, it almost seemed to be very pro, almost jingoistic, you know, it wasn't, it was um, it was look how great we are which there's an element of that, you know, understanding your nation isn't it but there's also bits where I thought it was um, it was quite elitist. Having said that, I was surprised when there was an emphasis on things like the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the trade unions and I thought, you know, from, from a Gove point of view I wouldn't have thought that would've been something he'd be keen to promote but he seems you know, that's in there. Maybe that was um, some kind of er, concession.
- I: **There's an interesting story though if you look at the December leaks that those things weren't in there.**
- R: Oh okay –
- I: **It was leaked to the mail in December and those things, and then they were kind of sprinkled in er, in time for February.**
- R: Oh that makes sense, yeah cos they do fit, they do stick out a bit don't they, amongst other things.
- I: **How um, you, you look at this and you said you don't think Ben Walsh or Christine Counsell would like it; how, what makes you so sure that they wouldn't like it?**
- R: Um, -
- I: **I mean they didn't but what makes you so sure?**
- R: (Laughter) Yeah fact they told...no er, alright I think, I think basically because it goes back to the thing before; it's, it's, it's making it accessible and interesting, if you look at what, I mean I know they tend to, to steer towards the more modern history, they tend to go for the more colourful aspects of history. Whereas this is very much, this reminds me of a sort of text book you find in the stock room at the back from the 1960's, in fact I found one the other day with pretty much everything there in it. And I think their idea is it's sort of moved on past that and if you wanna get, for history to be effective you've got to get students interest okay and it's like you could name ten things that are important, we think, to know but you just can't motivate a thirteen or fourteen year old to find that interesting. You know, they're never gonna find, as, as much as we can see the importance they're not gonna find something like the Indian Mutiny as interesting as the rise of Hitler; it's one of those where, again you could argue that we've gone too far with the modern history, too much emphasis on Hitler, on Henry as well going back to early modern. But I, I think they would strike that as bland and, sort of, encouraging the old style methods that we looked at before of, you know, rattle off the terms, Factory Ac, yeah tell me which Factory Acts did this, you know, um, those sort of things.
- I: **Do you think that the, the content determines the methods of teaching then, couldn't this have been taught in a creative and engaging way using methods to make this more interesting?**
- R: I think it could but I mean I've tried some of these things meself, you know, I mean we've brought in, we've done Ireland before and something that we, you know, I look at, when I look at this I must admit there was a part of me that I sort of kept quiet just thinking, oh that could be quite interesting, teach something new. I do get, I can get a bit bored teaching the same material over and over again. Sometimes a new specification or a curriculum actually motivates me to try something new and I did think, okay well this is a challenge, how can I make these sort of things interesting to twelve, thirteen, fourteen year olds. And I think to some of them you can, I think others it doesn't matter how much you push it's, it's never gonna be a winner with, with teenagers unfortunately.

- I: Cause when, but when you look at what you said, you do tend to....you said dry nature of the topic which is, you know, obviously is what you've just said. You've also said too elitist; what does that mean?**
- R:** Well I was thinking along the lines of, to me like the Victorian stuff or Gladstone Disraeli, I think when, I think at university level and I think at A level you would understand the important to Gladstone Disraeli, but really it's not, I mean off the record one of the things I would say to the students if they've made a film about it, it must be interesting, okay. And if there are exceptions that obviously –
- I: There's no off the record by the way.**
- R:** (Laughter). I now that, as soon as I said it though that's a stupid thing to say. I think –
- I: If they've made a film about it, it must be interesting and –**
- R:** Yeah, I couldn't imagine doing an epic and Gladstone & Disraeli, it's just, I find it interesting, you know, I've sat there, watched BBC4 programmes on them, but I can't pick out the main things for those guys. I mean I think you could do a lesson on them and make it quite interesting but I think to me it says a lot about the personal experiences of and say Gove, I can't say for sure it was just Gove who came up with this. But things like Gladstone Disraeli Reform Acts...maybe elitist is the right word actually but I think it's very much a parliamentary you know, history which again obviously parliament's very important and the first of, you know, the second and third reforms are usually very you know, massive part of social history. But I think constantly going over Victorian legislation because if you look at the, it goes from High Victorian era, through to the emergence of a modern economy and it is essentially 100 years or parliamentary reform, which again, you know, it's interesting for people who are interested in that. But I think to get the twelve and thirteen year old imaginations going, I think at some schools, it's a different social economic composition to this school, no matter what you're talking you'd sit and listen to it and learn it and regurgitate it. But I think when you are trying to get comprehensive school children to get an interest in that, that doesn't float the boat.
- I: So, so by elitist do you mean that it is suited only to students who are the elite or do you mean that it's a history of the Elite?**
- R:** I think it's a bit of both, I think there are, there is certainly sections in there which look at great social reform, great social change and, you know, I would say absolutely need to be in there. I think, I find this already with Year 8, you can't get a dip in the curriculum where you think it is, you know, it is like sort of walking through a swamp basically with students who are, they're comfortable in Year 8 and they're not really, you know, they're not really paying full attention or giving it their all in Year 8. In Year 9 something happens and they switch back onto, you know, when you go into modern history, so it is, I would say it's elitist in that respect but I think some of the, some of the issues in there, the reason I call them elitist topics is more because it's, it's going back to this thing of who are the great people and obviously you could argue that there's great social reformers. But I think when you spend a huge amount of time looking at politicians and monarchs and, you know, empire builders, that to me goes back to the old history idea of well, you know, that's a tiny, tiny percentage of the population who, who would embody that kind of history don't they. So, so there's not, although there's um, it looks like the industrial, you know the industrial revolution is a good example; obviously that covers everyone but the focus on the big innovators yeah, absolutely agree that, you know, it's important you understand the work of people like Watt and Brunei. However, there seems to be, social conditions is put into one little tiny section and it's like well what about the experience of 96%, 97% of the population which kind of gets squeezed out. Not as much as some said I think but it does get squeezed out a bit.
- I: So do you think it's the subject of history that has changed to stop concentrating on the small minority of the elite or do you think it's the teaching of history in schools which has changed?**
- R:** I think it's a bit of both, I think, do you mean just with regard to key stage 3?
- I: I mean you, you keep talking about this old way of doing things and this new way of doing things, do you mean that the old way of doing things in terms of what happens in a school classroom or do you mean the old way of doing things in terms of the way the history is written, historiography?**
- R:** Oh yeah I think so, I think, yeah I mean when I say the old way I mean learn these facts, figures, dates and you know, as we were saying before they are important and they're useful. But I think looking at interpretations is, is equally important because otherwise, essentially this is just a story that you might as well be doing English literature and rather than, you know, you see English teachers trying to teach the Holocaust through 'the boy in striped pyjamas', you know, it's almost like that can be done by anyone, anyone can teach that. But history, a trained history teacher would like, would get more out of this material basically I think is what I'm saying.
- I: Okay um, so you um, what would you have done with this in school if they'd have said, right this is what's happening, how would it have worked?**
- R:** Well in one sense the um, well say Year 9 because we've got two year key stage 3 with a compacted all the modern stuff into a term, well in fact I say compact, we'd have actually, say a term and a half, we probably will try to push it out a little bit more at the expense of some of the Victorian era stuff which um, probably more with the Empire based stuff. So when I looked at this there were some bits where I thought, okay we could pull that out, the problem was always gonna be because this was, I mean there was a draft, the, the eventual finished document was full of non-statutory examples wasn't it, if these were ones we had to do all of them, we would just basically pretty much have to squeeze Gladstone Disraeli into one lesson, reform Acts into one lesson rather than drag them out. So basically compact in places and expand in others so, you know, I think from speaking to historians when this was launched, I think the 20<sup>th</sup> century basically would have been expanded. I think it would have backfired in fact because taking an emphasis away from the more modern, I say more modern, the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I think most people would've tried to expand that out across the key stage 3 to make it bigger at the expense of the stuff, that I get the impression that developments of the modern nation was more the, sort of, I think 20<sup>th</sup> century was kind of like a concession um, developments of the modern nation was very much this is what I want you to focus on and the other stuff is kind of like a bonus.
- I: You said from speaking to other history teachers, how did you do that, when this came out, who, whom did you speak to, how did you - ?**
- R:** We had um, there's two links meetings a year, this came out in the February and we had a meeting in the May or the June and we talk about the possible implications if we, if this came in.
- I: So this was other history teachers in North Liverpool?**

- R: Yeah, there's a group of about ten of them, yeah. We also spoke about it in September 2013 but by that point we knew that this, it seemed daft, we debated it for an hour even though we knew...maybe it was October/November actually, we knew that this wasn't going to happen by that point but we still talked about it for about an hour and everyone was pretty much of the same opinion. And in fact we actually um, the guy who runs the course brought in a couple of opinion columns, people like Simon Sharma in which, you know, they basically ripped it to pieces themselves, you know, said a lot of the things we were thinking actually.
- I: **So at, at this local meeting um, who, who you said the guy, the guy who was running the meeting who was, who - ?**
- R: He is the, oh (sighs) director of links, he's basically, he is um, he is not a history teacher but he is basically responsible for, I can't think who's director, he's basically, he works with all the secondary schools in um, in the links cluster and he basically visits them, does quality assurance in all the schools. And he basically did, the aim of links is to meet up twice a year to discuss what developments there've been and, and to come up with some kind of group strategy for how we'd cope with them. And it's kind of sharing ideas and best practice.
- I: **And at that meeting you said there was about ten people and what kind of things were they saying, everyone was in agreement on it?**
- R: Yeah that we, one of the things that most people focussed on was, I'm just trying to see what it is and then the slave trade came up a lot because we felt that there was, I mean when you look at it um, it's come into it there hasn't it, I'm sure it did. Ah ... abolition of the corn laws... isn't it there, trying to think where it came in this.
- I: **Oh and the slave trade, the abolition of slavery –**
- R: Oh yeah, that's it. Yeah we felt that um, there was, it was kind of like, it was almost forgotten that um, you know it focussed on the abolition of slavery, almost the case of look how good we are, we abolished it. And the attitude that most people were saying, well it kind of undermines the idea that Britain was heavily involved in starting it up and it was almost like, you know, this 'look how could we were, we freed the slaves years before America it was just, the attitude was basically just that it was, it was basically the rantings of a very sort of er, reactionary old man basically; he's not that old, Michael Gove I know but he's um, quite reactionary.
- I: **So what, in terms of those meetings cos I'm interested in these now, did, was anything agreed in terms of action of was it just complaining?**
- R: Yeah it was actually, what we did, I'm trying to think what it was with the new, with the new, the new curriculum come out in November, October wasn't it?
- I: **Well it, August and then I think it was –**
- R: Oh yeah, yeah so I think basically what it did um, we've actually got another meeting next Wednesday, I'm out all day Wednesday with them and we've all, we all did a group activity, we looked at how we can apply the new curriculum. So basically, originally we will meet to discuss this –
- I: **But what did you want do about this, was anything decided about this?**
- R: Well do you know what it just hit me there actually, what we did, in the summer meeting last year, when we talked about this we thought there was quite a bit of emphasis on empire and we all agreed that that was the toughest topic to teach because one, there is a lot of conceptual stuff. But also, we all agreed that we hadn't had a great response from the students when we've tried to teach it, doesn't matter, you know, there's some bits that gets a bit of attention. So at the July meeting last year, so July 2013 we agreed that in September or October/November, whenever the meeting was we would all bring the materials we were planning to use to teach the empire. And we actually all went off and brought back some quite good stuff and when we reconvened obviously the, it had all changed so we actually spent a morning in groups talking about how we were going to do a curriculum and that was, that's our, that's what we are taking to the meeting next Wednesday, we are all taking our new curriculum plans to say well this is how we're gonna add it in.
- I: **So even though you complained your response was to think about what can we do with this rather than, sort of, make your complaints more known?**
- R: Yeah, that's a good point I think, I guess our thinking was, he's not, oh he's backed down over a few things I guess in retrospect hasn't he, really but I think the thought was we're stuck with it and it's, we're gonna, yeah we're basically gonna have to make the best of a bad job and just –
- I: **Very defeatist.**
- R: Yeah it is, well I say that, slightly defeatist but also slightly defiant because we were thinking, okay how can we hide some of these things, how can we say, okay we're doing it but we're sort of shuffling it off to one side.
- I: **So looking at subverting it by paying lip service to what, doing it really.**
- R: Absolutely, yeah.
- I: **Um, because in terms of open opposition to the draft um, you only did two things according to this; you raised the concerns with the school management and you posted it on an internet discussion.**
- R: Yeah, I'm trying to remember what work that was; the management one, well the head, the head himself, when the, when this spec was introduced I didn't have to go to see him, he came to see me and he said, "What do you think, this is, you know," he's a geography teacher but obviously there's a link with humanities there and, you know, and obviously affects his school. And he came to see me to say what do you think, what could, you know, is it and (sighs), I don't know, don't know if maybe the reason there was a bit of um, apathy about it is that in one sense we thought let's prepare for the worst and hope for the best, that we thought, okay well we can, if we have to do it we will. But there was already, I think when it was launched cos it was interesting cos Simon, I notice Simon Schama um, he, he was bosom buddies with Michael Gove once or appeared to be. But when this draft spec was released, he was one of the first to criticise him in the papers wasn't he and I remember thinking, well if there is a bit of a divide there and it was stressed that it was a draft. So I remember thinking, well you know, its' one of those where maybe won't happen and if it does we've got a contingency plan anyway.
- I: **So you were hoping it would go away but you didn't feel compelled to do anything to try and make it go away?**
- R: No because, why wouldn't we do that, I guess, I guess because we just kind of, the thinking I guess was just, you know, the, I mean this is going back twelve months isn't it, the thought that, you know, Gove has got an agenda and that he was going to, you know, he had the support, he had a lot of support. I think if it was this time, if it was 2014 with what

he's been through in the last few months possibly there would have been a bit more. But there was also a feeling I think that there was people in the public eye like Simon Sharma fighting a battle there anyway and I think that was the kind of feeling that, you know, it's kind of been done. And I guess there is, you know, what of, what difference would it make; I think mine was just, I'm trying to think was the comment was, it wasn't a debate I started, I just threw in something to, something that a friend of mine said they'd posted and have a look and just

**I: Can you remember the website it was on?**

**R:** Can't to be honest, there's so many now, what would it be, it was an ex-colleague of mine posted something and then linked it on Twitter so I followed it and just put something on.

**I: Right.**

**R:** yeah.

**I: Yeah so you, you wanted to go away but you didn't feel motivated to do much about it, I'm interested in when you said um, we're coming to the end now by the way –**

**R:** No it's alright.

**I: I'm interested in when you said earlier about um, people like Simon Sharma who were already in the public eye seem to be pushing it. Do you, do you mean that you were happy to let those people fight the battles for you or - ?**

**R:** I think they were more, I think, call it paranoia but I think in the teaching profession I think if we object to something the public perception was, it seems to be that we are doing it because we wanted an easier life. And I think the way its portrayed was that this was a radical overhaul and that the teachers were revolting, or not all, not revolting as it turned out, because they didn't want all the work and the burden of doing something new. And I think if someone like Simon Sharma who, rightly or wrongly is regarded as quite a proper historian, if he's saying well I don't think that's very good, we sort of thought, well actually that's probably a better way to fight it, or not fight it than to do it ourselves. And also there isn't really, I don't feel a history teachers, I know there's a Historical Association but within the unions I don't feel there's any sort of organisation in place to fight these things with a particular subjects. Because I think um, I think for historians we're kind of, we still kind of feel like, well we are in the minority I guess, though it's interesting in light of what's happened with the English with the fuss over the mice and men in the last few months. It's interesting that maybe if there'd been more of a fuss made last year but then that's been taken up by celebrities as well hasn't it or, you know, prolific writers. So yeah, to answer your question, yeah I think it was because I thought people like Simon Sharma would be more effective getting the public sympathy brought up, getting through hopefully to Whitehall and kind of think, alright we need to rethink this.

**I: I'm, I'm interested when you say that um, unions aren't organised to deal with subject specific curriculum problems um, and then you said yeah, there's the historical association obviously and you seem to be quite dismissive, cos I wouldn't have said it was a trade union's responsibility to get involved in debates over what's in a curriculum. But I would say it's the Historical Association's job so what's your view of that?**

**R:** Well (sighs) to be honest, I mean yeah I'd say you're right, I mean it's yeah, because I think as well it would backfire if trade unions were involved in curriculum, again you get the same old accusations, you just want an easy life, they want to keep doing the same stuff they've done for 30 years rather than try something new. Um, but I don't think, it's catch 22, Historical Association don't feel has quite got the profile yet to be able to do that and I don't think anyone in DfEE, I could be wrong but I don't feel that there is any sort of insider groups where anyone sort of has this direct line to Gove or anyone in, in the department to say, you know, we've got concerns with this. And certainly I don't think they were consulted as far as I know were they, before this was drawn up. There's definitely a role there and I've been far happier with Historical Association having something to do with it and they're certainly, I think most, the consensus from when I speak to people, there should be some kind of national panel of teachers from all subjects who are consulted. And that is the big thing, that, I think that is the big thing with this, is that the lack of consultation and that was the, you know, the big, big issue.

**I: Um, but um, do you have a national panel of teachers of all subjects but actually as a history teacher I wouldn't feel confident commenting on a maths curriculum and nor would I be happy to have a maths teacher comment on my history curriculum. So isn't that, isn't the Historical Association trying to be that, history teachers or people with an interest in history forwarding the agenda of history in schools?**

**R:** Yeah absolutely and I think what I'm maybe showing is a sort of apathy of, well it's almost like build it and we will come, rather than we will help you build it, you know. So it's like I think we're all under so much sort of time constraints that the idea of, cos the Historical Association stuff arrives, you know, on a regular basis in the pigeon hole and you think, oh yeah great, I'll put it to one side. I think you're probably right, probably we should be more, sort of, making our voices heard and that, but I think until, again catch 22, until the government shows willingness or a government shows willingness to work with a group and respect that they might have an input or might be of a sort of, a wisdom on this through experience then people aren't going to get involved. But obviously again, if you don't get involved then they're not going to ever build that.

**I: But does, a sense in which if you look at the, what was actually decided –**

**R:** Go on.

**I: - do you think there has been an input in this from history teachers?**

**R:** I think, to me no, well unofficially possibly yeah in the sense of I think what they've done is pretty much say, okay; huge chunks of the original one have gone haven't they and I think basically what they've said is okay, and I don't just think it was secondary school teachers, I think a lot of primary school teachers were probably swamped with the thought of what they were going to have to take. And I know the are actually, I have been involved ..... cluster [names location of school] schools where I've gone in and spoken to primary school teachers about what sort of, you know, giving them ideas and we do, we're due to do that again in the next few months. Um, they were genuinely frightened by what they got the second time round, they were absolutely petrified of the first draft and I don't know if that's filtered through somehow and they've basically, to me, if you look at the second curriculum it makes sense as a progression from what we've already got. I think you look at it and you think, yeah okay I can see where that's gone. Um, there's this huge chunks of it that have, that have been taken out, somehow that opinion has got through but I don't know whether, (sighs), I wouldn't be able to, no I don't, I think it's got through unofficially and it's leaked through rather than, I don't

think, I don't think DfEE has actively sought the opinions of teachers. I think basically the people with there are have basically be able to say, look this isn't gonna work because the, the, you know, the information, the um, the feedback, unofficially we're getting is this.

**I: So cos I, this is like something I really wanna unpack; you imagine there's the people who design the curriculum have said there is a strength of feeling that that's a bad idea and this is, this is the better one. How are they getting that strength of feeling?**

R: It's a good question, um, (sighs) I'm trying to think idea we'd get, I mean that's a point because there wasn't much of a reaction. I can only assume, hmm, you know, it's something I've not thought about that, how they got that through. Hmm, you've snookered me there, I'm trying to think how they'd have got that reaction back, other than head teachers associations tapping into, you know, like our head teacher, you know, what do you think of this. It's workable if we're pushed but ideally it's, it's not what we'd like to do and that must filter up some way.

**I: So you think its heads, ordinary classroom teachers haven't got a, a say or an input or will not be listened to?**

R: I don't feel that they do, no I don't think um, I think you know, if somebody started teaching when you know, in 2000 where the attitude was very much make you on a par with doctors which I know was always going to be a difficult task, but in the last four years it seems to be that if you say anything it's perceived as just moaning, I think that's the rhetoric. Maybe it's paranoia from teachers but I think that's how many teachers feel, is that if you have, you know if you try to call the experience card it, you are almost shot down straight away for, oh yeah but you can't see it from an outside perspective and you can't see how insular and sort of narrow thinking you are, only people from outside it can do this for you.

**I: And last question, what do you think is the, is the role of the SHP as a body, what do you think that does, what do you think it's for?**

R: Um,, cynically making text books (laughter) and be, it's, it's not something I've had much to do with to be honest, it's, again you sort of, you know, you qualify, you start teaching and you sort of, you almost like head down, just doing your day to day business and sort of like years pass. And other than getting SHP publications and reading a few articles, I've not really got that involved with them or seen much of, or made myself, sort of aware of much of what they're doing really. So in all honesty, that's a plead of ignorance there and say I wouldn't really know too much about them.

**I: Okay um, that's probably it, have you got any questions?**

R: Um, no, no I don't think so, um, -

**I: Okay, that's, that's great, thank you very much, cheers.**