History in the Primary School; Re-Shaping Our Pasts. The Influence of Primary School Teachers' Knowledge and Understanding of History on Curriculum Planning and Implementation.

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Abstract The article reviews different views of school history and questions the extent to which official policy is implemented in schools and classrooms. It suggests that the origins of many of the beliefs which primary teachers hold in relation to history are located within their own experiences of learning history and their family backgrounds and interests. Ways in which these beliefs about history impact on teachers' curriculum decision making are explored through individual case studies. In terms of classroom practice, the article explores the relationship between teachers' historical knowledge and understanding and their pedagogical beliefs about children's learning. In the discussion, the important mediating influence of teachers in implementing policy is acknowledged and issues for further consideration are raised.

Teaching history in schools: changing rationales and changing histories.

Over the past hundred years shifts in the rationale for teaching history in schools have occurred. As the present becomes the past, changes arise in beliefs about what constitutes history and what a study of the past should involve. In the early years of the twentieth century, history was regarded as an important subject for moral training, as, 'the lives of great men and women, carefully selected from all stations of life, will furnish the most impressive examples of obedience, loyalty, courage, strenuous effort, serviceableness, indeed of all the qualities which make for good citizenship' (Board of Education, 1905, p. 5). It could be argued that as the influence of the church over education declined, historical stories were providing exemplars of moral behaviours for children to emulate. Straightforward stories about famous characters (mainly men) and their contributions to the nation's and empire's well being were advocated.

The slaughter of the first world war tempered strong nationalistic histories, and the importance of learning about other countries' histories and the work of the League of Nations was emphasised in the 1920s. As child centred ideas gained credence in official circles, the importance of history for developing children's own sense of identity was increasingly acknowledged. History offered opportunities for building on children's own enthusiasms and extending their imaginations. Progressive ideas incorporated within Plowden's report on primary education emphasised the importance of learning about children's personal histories and local studies. Topic approaches permitted linkages to be developed with a range of subjects (CACE, 1967).

The above rationales for learning history are included within the different versions of the history National Curriculum which outline the content for children's progress in history from ages 5 to 14. History's contribution to citizenship education and its potential for generating children's enthusiasm and interest are acknowledged in the National Curriculum (DES, 1991; DfEE & QCA, 1999). In addition, specific skills and distinctive ways of conducting historical enquiries are also included. For example, the current history National Curriculum includes in its statements about the importance of history, 'History fires pupils' curiosity about the past in Britain and the wider world. Pupils consider how the past influences the present, what past societies were like, how these societies organised their politics, and what beliefs and cultures influenced people's actions......In history, pupils find evidence, weigh it up and reach their own conclusions. To do this they need to be able to research, sift through evidence, and argue for their point of view.' (DfEE & QCA 1999, p. 103).

The breadth of aims, and the Programme of Study within the history National Curriculum require primary
teachers to have a complex and detailed knowledge of the subject. In this respect, teaching history provides a challenge for many primary school teachers, who are also expected to develop a depth of knowledge about a further seven foundation subjects as well as the core subjects of maths, English and science.

**From policy to practice; implementing the curriculum**

Curriculum implementation, however, does not always correspond with official rhetoric. For example, there is evidence that many of the progressive ideas included within the Plowden Report were not incorporated within primary schools in the 1960s and 1970s (Galton & Simon, 1980; Simon, 1981; Gammage, 1987). In their 1978 Primary Survey, HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) present a picture of very narrow curriculum provision, with a concentration on the basics (DES, 1978).

Within the last decade, it might appear that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum with its Programmes of Study for different subjects introduced in 1990 and 1991 would ensure greater congruence between official policy and classroom practice. Several studies however, indicate that official policy is often mediated in practice (Bowe & Ball, 1992; Helbsy and Saunders, 1993; Pollard et al., 1994; Croll, 1996; Phillips, 1998). Ball & Bowe (1992) identify constant 'curriculum slippage' as teachers implement policy texts. A number of variables may be identified as contributing to such slippage, including resourcing and institutional constraints. However, a key factor remains teachers' own subject knowledge and understanding and their interpretations of curriculum requirements. These understandings are based on a complex set of beliefs and values deriving from teachers' personal experiences and career histories.

**Teachers' beliefs and values and pedagogical content knowledge**

The range of factors which influence teachers' decision making is identified within Shulman's description of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, which he describes as a blend between knowledge of content and knowledge of the diverse factors which effect its implementation in the classroom (Shulman, 1987). The influence of Shulman's work can be seen in the work of Peterson et al. (1989), McDiarmid et al. (1989), Grossman (1989), Ormrod & Cole (1996) and Askew et al. (1997) where different components of pedagogical knowledge are identified.

In terms of history, John (1991) suggests that secondary history teachers' knowledge draws on a range of elements to inform planning and teaching, which incorporate personal beliefs and values, knowledge and understanding of history and an awareness of educational contexts. A more complex model of teachers' subject knowledge is developed by Turner Bisset (1999) who includes John's elements and also stresses the dynamic nature of teachers' knowledge as it is developed in day to day classroom interactions. The eleven components of her knowledge bases for teaching include substantive and syntactic subject knowledge and curriculum knowledge, alongside general pedagogical knowledge and knowledge derived from teachers' classroom experiences.

This broad range of factors which influences teachers' decision making and curriculum implementation can account for the variations in interpretations of official policy. Knowledge and understanding of the subject are layered across educational concerns such as children's learning, effective teaching strategies and respect for the outcomes of education.

The history National Curriculum requires primary teachers to have knowledge of history's syntactical and substantive understandings. Substantive knowledge comprises the series of facts and concepts that can form a network of semantic understandings. This aspect of historical knowledge is embedded within the areas of study and study units in the Programme of Study. Syntactic knowledge relates to the truth claims of particular
disciplines; it concerns the procedures of the discipline and how valid judgements may be made (Schwab, 1964). In this respect teachers are expected to be familiar with skills and understandings of the subject, outlined in the Programme of Study for history.

**History teachers and pedagogical content knowledge**

However, whilst the distinction between syntactical and substantive knowledge is helpful for describing different kinds of subject knowledge, in practice both components are often very dependant on each other. Different historical enquiries influence both the selection of historical knowledge and its interpretation. This interdependence of syntactical and substantive knowledge is acknowledged within the history National Curriculum. Phillips (1998) describes how members of the History Working Group fought hard to link the acquisition of historical knowledge with children's development in historical skills in their recommendations for the first version of the National Curriculum. Thus a first version of the National Curriculum incorporates Knowledge and Understanding in history within the assessment target Attainment Target 1 (DES, 1991). A second version of the history National Curriculum recommends that historical content in the history study units and areas of study is to be taught alongside Key Elements incorporating historical skills and concepts (DFE, 1995), and the most recent history National Curriculum links skills and understanding with knowledge acquired within different history study units and areas of study (DfEE & QCA, 1999).

The dialectic relationship between substantive and syntactical history knowledge is identified in Evans' (1994) study of secondary history teachers. His typology of history teachers indicates that their beliefs about history influence both selection of content and ways in which they teach the subject. Five broad categories of history teachers emerge from Evans' data: storyteller; scientific/historian; relativist/reformer; cosmic philosopher and eclectic. Storyteller teachers emphasise the importance of telling children about events and people in history to gain cultural knowledge and a sense of identity. Scientific/historian teachers focus on historical explanation and interpretation, valuing analytical and research skills and approaching history with an element of objectivity. An emphasis on the importance of an historical perspective for understanding current issues, creating a 'better world' and learning from past mistakes is a feature of relativist/reformer teachers. Cosmic philosophers search for general laws and patterns in history and eclectics are teachers who do not respond to any particular typology.

Evans' study (1994) acknowledges the important influence of family, personal backgrounds and teachers' own beliefs and values on their professional identities and work practices. He suggests that teachers within different typologies share similar backgrounds and interests and that teachers' conceptions of history can also be related to their political beliefs.

This close relationship between teachers' personal and professional identities is also in evidence in several studies of teachers' lives (Middleton, 1993; Goodson & Walker, 1991; Goodson, 1992; Goodson, 1995). Nias (1989) explores teachers' private and professional identities and suggests that teachers' own identities are interlinked with their teaching roles in terms of personal fulfilment.

In considering the implementation of the history National Curriculum within primary schools, account needs to be taken of both teachers' knowledge of history and their personal beliefs and values. The history curriculum presents one view of history. Teachers are surrounded by history in their everyday lives. They have a view on the past - which may or may not always correspond to school history, prescribed in the curriculum. The different ways in which teachers' views concur with the history National Curriculum and relate to their beliefs about education and children's learning are analysed in the following case studies.

**Researching primary teachers' pedagogical content knowledge in history**
The research with primary teachers outlined below took into account different beliefs and rationales for teaching history and insights gained from earlier studies on teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge (John, 1991, Turner Bisset, 1991). Data relating to primary teachers’ knowledge and understanding of history and their implementation of the history curriculum in primary schools were obtained through interviews with individual primary school teachers.

Key areas for analysis were identified which were then broken down into further categories as different issues began to emerge from the data. The structure for analysis which evolved is outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key areas for discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers’ backgrounds and interests</td>
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<td>b) teachers’ own school experiences</td>
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<td>c) teachers’ current interests and leisure pursuits</td>
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<td>d) teachers’ qualifications</td>
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<td>e) teachers’ career details</td>
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<td>a) the ‘basics’</td>
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<td>c) personal and social development</td>
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<td>d) education as process</td>
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<td>e) curriculum integration</td>
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<td>Teachers’ views on history and the history National Curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) the rationale for history as a subject</td>
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<td>b) internal aspects of history as a school subject</td>
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<td>c) ways of teaching and learning history</td>
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<td>d) subject classification and the relationship of history with other subjects</td>
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Responses by individual teachers to these different areas were noted and discussed at collaborative meetings.
which served to verify initial impressions and analysis. In addition, data maps were made of individual teacher’s responses to these different areas. Words and phrases which teachers frequently used were plotted on a data map, which enabled the identification of key concerns and issues. More detailed comments which further illuminated teachers’ understanding of these words and phrases were then added and connections between them traced.

Common features within the data maps were identified, together with the frequency with which teachers referred to them. Comparing the data maps of individual teachers also enabled the identification of different emphases which teachers placed on their history teaching. The frequency of comments which related to the key issues which teachers had mentioned were noted and compared with the clusterings on the data maps. Through charting the frequency of certain comments, some conclusions about the main beliefs and emphases of individual teachers concerning history and history teaching were reached, which were evaluated within Evans’ (1994) typology of history teachers. Grids noting the frequency of teachers’ comments relating to Evans’ different typologies were constructed.

The following case studies reveal the diversity of beliefs about history and ways in which it is taught in primary schools. They provide insights into ways in which primary teachers’ knowledge and understanding of history is layered within their educational beliefs and values.

a) Harriet

Harriet was an experienced teacher, deputy head and humanities co-ordinator of an inner city junior school, who had been teaching since 1972, with a career break for raising a family. She had a broad range of teaching experience ranging from nursery-aged children to A level Geography and had taught in a language centre for Asian children from Uganda. Harriet had also taught for several years in India.

Harriet had an A level in history, and history had also been part of her degree. She had not enjoyed her degree work in history which had repeated work she had done at A level, and said that her disappointment in this subject had, ‘given me an agenda about how I teach history.’ Following a secondary PGCE course, Harriet had undertaken several in-service courses including an history/geography project under the auspices of an inner city rejuvenation scheme.

Looking back on her own experience of learning history, Harriet remembered being bored by A level note taking and the detentions which ensued if notes were not correctly written up. Yet she also remembered particular, ‘dynamic’, and ‘interesting’ teachers who ‘really knew how to communicate.’ She recalled two particular history teachers who were, ‘always full of story telling.’

Harriet remembered her parents and grandparents telling her stories when she was little and believed that this had really helped her to understand her roots and appreciate the concept of time. She contrasted her experience with those of present day children who lack an appreciation of time because, ‘they haven’t got the background of it, whereas I think hearing those stories about India, and you know, bombs and wars from my own parents, right as far as I can remember, perhaps as early as two or three and my grandfather taking me in his old vegetable van round the streets ….’

Whilst working in India, Harriet had become fascinated by Indian history, culture and the architecture and had travelled extensively around the country. Her other interests in history were very far ranging, including the Reformation in Germany, haemophiliacs within the royal family, eastern Europe, Germany, art and architecture and anthropology. She also hoped to do some research on her own family’s genealogy. Harriet enjoyed watching TV documentaries and the news. On holiday, her family would visit sites of historic interest.
Harriet's interests and family background were reflected in her views of history and the way she taught it in school. Drawing on her own experiences she was able to comment, 'And the most important thing for a primary teacher is to be interested in the subject and to be able to inspire the children.' Harriet talked about the successful visit of a member of the local history association to the school, talking about his life in the community as a coal miner. She noted that the children were able to listen for over an hour and commented that they were, 'spellbound...and that's how it should be.' A further group of children had been taught about the Indus Valley by another teacher who was, 'seriously excited about history.'

Harriet's experience of listening to family stories had also impacted on the way she felt history should be taught. She commented that stories enabled her to get ideas over and that she always started with a story. 'That's how you grab them in the beginning, the story telling bit. ....that is probably my most effective strategy.'

Harriet recalled the days when people in communities listened to the stories of, 'scholars who were seriously interested in what they were teaching.' She suggested that if teachers were not interested in history in school, then the school should go out into the community and invite those with an interest in history to come in. Harriet's enthusiasm for local history was connected with her beliefs that through learning about history and the locality children developed their, 'cultural understanding,' and also the 'sense of being rooted.' Many examples from the interview data emerged of how Harriet took the children out into the local community to learn about their history and to look for evidence of the past in their surroundings.

Harriet criticised the history National Curriculum for lacking continuity and being too piecemeal. It 'ruins motivation', she commented. However, her strongest complaint was that, '...they have not given people the freedom to develop the interest of the community. You can't impose on a community where they should start learning history, because I sort of think it has to begin with roots and local stuff...' Her views on history also influenced her comments on the distinctive methodology employed by historians. 'I don't think historians have got a methodology, because if there's a sort of sense of belonging and story telling and part of culture, there isn't a methodology to that... I want to see history as, because history is an art. I think of methodology as being a science.'

In terms of Harriet's views we can see that they most closely identify with those of Evans' (1994) storyteller teachers concerned with passing on cultural traditions.

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<tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific/historian</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Relativist/reformer</td>
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The absence of any strong storytelling tradition within Key Stage 2 and the lack of emphasis on local history cause Harriet to criticise the history National Curriculum.
Harriet’s vision of culture includes grass roots culture and the culture of the community, not just the inculcation of knowledge about the great and good. Her views are also tempered by the developmental needs of children in the ways in which she describes how to interest children in the subject through ‘hands on’ activities and inspiring teachers. There is evidence from the data which illustrates that Harriet is responding in creative ways to the history National Curriculum and interpreting it within her own beliefs about history and education.

b) Ruth
Ruth taught year 4 (8-9 years old) children in a large primary school in a city suburb. She was an experienced teacher who had qualified in the 1960s and had been teaching for 15 years full time, with various other temporary and part time appointments. Her teaching experience ranged from reception aged children (4-5 years old) to year 6 (10-11 years old).

At primary school Ruth had enjoyed doing history topics and researching her own information about various historical periods. Her interest in history had continued at secondary school although she admitted that historical study had involved a lot of dates.

The close relationship between Ruth’s professional and personal identity was revealed as she described how much she enjoyed teaching history and that prior to teaching any topic she bought books and enjoyed researching the area. Ruth was keen to pass on this enthusiasm to her children. ‘I always say to the children that come into my class, that I enjoy history, and they are going to enjoy it by the time they leave, and I have had several children come to me and said “I really love history now”.’

Ruth viewed history as important since it related to contemporary life. Many of the classroom examples which she gave of her practice included developing children’s awareness of particular issues such as unemployment, racism and other social issues. She was very keen to ‘link the present with the context of the past.’ Ruth also contrasted saving resources in the second world war to current concerns about the environment and compared wars in the past, with reasons why there was continued conflict in Europe today.

Ruth used history as a vehicle to help children understand people's motivation for their actions and their feelings. She explained how talking about the Jews and Hitler's treatment of them had extended children's awareness of racism, and was keen to point out that children could relate talking about other people's feelings to their own social behaviour, ‘...you know why people behave in certain ways, and there are probably reasons for it, and I think it helps them to become a more full person. I mean they will look at people in different ways, so it is important for their development socially.’

Ruth's approach in the classroom was to foster a 'spirit of enquiry, ....we're detectives and we have got to find out, there is some evidence that we've got, some sources that we've got.....’. Raising questions and developing critical judgements were central. 'I think the most important thing that history can do is making children think, and to think for themselves that all the knowledge that has been given them, is it true? Reading different accounts in different books, which one is right? and actually forming opinions for themselves.'

To achieve this, Ruth believed that she needed to do a great deal of preparation in the classroom to make historical ideas and concepts accessible to children. She gave many examples of activities which she did with children to help them grasp the significance of particular issues. In this respect she was very much drawing on Brunerian notions of the curriculum spiral; that children are capable of engaging with all subjects provided they are presented in a meaningful way to them and in ways in which they can understand. 'You can't just give them the facts and the information, I think with primary age children you have got to do so much foundation work to start with before you actually start putting the knowledge that you are supposed to cover in the National
Curriculum...you need to do an awful lot of background with the children before you start giving them the knowledge about the Greeks.’

Ruth welcomed the history National Curriculum, but she did feel that it contained too much and this could result in teachers being tempted to teach just the facts and neglect the enquiry skills. However, Ruth had a good grasp of the subject herself and it is possible that she perceived the study of history in greater depth than most of her colleagues in school.

Ruth's classroom practice clearly reflected the views which she articulated. When I visited her in school, Ruth was preparing a lesson which focused on selecting an appropriate place to build a settlement. She explained how she planned to organise the activity and how it built on earlier work. In earlier work, children had discussed people's general needs for shelter, security, food and water. This was the background knowledge which Ruth had stressed was so important in her first interview. Using a map showing a river and marsh, wood and heathlands, the children had discussed possible sites for an Anglo-Saxon settlement. They located the settlement taking into account different needs as well as the geographical terrain.

The activity which I observed developed from this work and children were again asked to consider the possible site of a settlement taking into account different geographical features. In this instance, the map which the children were given was of Bristol in Anglo Saxon times, although the children were not told that it was of Bristol until later on. Ruth hoped this would involve, 'using the knowledge that the children have and actually sort of finding out things themselves.’ The activity which Ruth organised reveals evidence of her enquiry approach to history; she organised a problem solving activity which would enable children to make links between the past and their present locality and which would enable children to identify some key features of settlements. She commented, '...well I think they are looking at the past and how sites develop and perhaps thinking about, you know, how a town would grow, and perhaps using it as a link with later on if they look at XXXX( locality of the school) and how that’s grown and sort of houses, and how they can look at buildings and see how old they are.... and how settlements need certain things, like probably churches and town halls and different sorts of people trading...’

Ruth also drew attention to cross curricular links, particularly those with geography as children worked to develop their understanding from the maps. When she evaluated her lesson, Ruth recognised that many of her learning intentions had been achieved. She commented that, 'they were learning hopefully to look at a situation and bring the knowledge that they already had having done a similar exercise, and realising that you have got to look at all points of view, for all things that were important, and assessing it....they were learning about history, but also about how to have discussion and arrive at decisions.’

Ruth's emphasis on problem solving approaches and explaining current social issues could connect her with Evans’ (1994) concept of relativist/reformer teachers. She described many ways in which she attempts to make the curriculum accessible for children, building on their current interests and understanding which accords with developmental perspectives of the curriculum. Attention to analysing different sources of evidence also aligns Ruth with scientific historians. Interestingly, storytelling appears less significant in Ruth's approaches to teaching history.
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<tr>
<td>Relativist/reformer</td>
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c) Anne
Anne had been teaching since 1985 and was currently teaching a year 4 (8-9 years old) class in a junior school. Her teaching experience had ranged across the whole of Key Stage 2 (7-11 years old) and she had also taught year 2 children (6-7 years old) in a former school.

Anne could remember little history being taught to her in her primary school in the late 1960s and early 70s, apart from a little history on her local town. Her chief memories were of topic work, which were largely dependant on her teachers' interests.

At secondary level her enthusiasm for history diminished. She remembered taking 'loads of notes, which you learned by heart for an exam question', and remembered nothing, 'practical or skill based.' This approach had put Anne off learning history and still effected her in that she was reluctant to read books about the Victorian era, although she did, 'really enjoy 'rabbiting' with records and things and census returns.' Anne had an O level in bi-lingual history and her degree had included some modern European history and politics.

Anne had a broad interest in history which included archaeology and she spoke of her archaeologist husband who acted as a personal guide to the different sites which they visited. She enjoyed well researched historical narratives and some history programmes on TV such as the Time Team.

Anne enjoyed history since she liked, 'finding out how things were, how they've affected now.' She spoke of her fascination in touching an old artefact and recalling all the other people who had touched it previously, or viewing the landscape and thinking about how it had changed. Looking for evidence of the past was important for Anne's enjoyment. '...that is really what makes it interesting for me - is being able to develop my own ideas about the past or about something by looking at the evidence that has been left behind, whether that's a site or an artefact or whatever.'

From an early age Anne's family had interested her in history. Her grandmother had taken her to visit stately homes and shown her around London where she lived. Consequently, Anne commented, 'I was indoctrinated I think really from a very early age, and that's how I started - going around all the stately homes. And that's when I was little I saw history as happening in stately homes and not anywhere else....' Anne felt that this grounding in history had remained with her and had developed her subsequent interest in pre Victorian times. She also recognised the influence of her childhood on her current teaching practice. 'I would like to communicate my own interest to the children in the same way that maybe my grandmother did with me..'
Anne's personal interest in investigating different sources as evidence of the past is apparent in the teaching approaches which she emphasised in her classroom. Anne focused on enquiry skills, teaching children how to find out from a range of evidence. She commented, 'So although I think that yes history is linked with facts, I don't think the facts are as important as the skills. I think the skills are much more important.'

Consequently when Anne discussed her curriculum planning she described how she would prefer to begin with skills and to incorporate facts as appropriate. Thus she explained, 'my class have been practising looking at what Roman writers said about themselves and about other people, .....and if you knew you were focusing on that I wouldn't be feeling like, well I've got to do Julius Caesar and I've got to do Claudius, and then we have got to go on and do the Iceni, the rebellion, and all the rest of it, and we had better have a look at everyday life as well. I would far rather say to myself I want to look at Roman writings and how that might be biased, and along the way I would be doing those things....I would rather see it that way I think, rather than you have got to do this long list of facts and events, and this body of historical knowledge.'

This approach which most closely resembles Evans'(1994) scientific historian, however was an approach which Anne developed in all curriculum areas. 'I mean if you think about it the way of examining history and looking at evidence and weighing it up, it's the same as science in a way isn't it? You are conducting an investigation and there you are weighing up what you have observed, the evidence what you have gathered from your scientific experiment, and drawing conclusions from it, and that's really, a similar way of working an investigational technique to history.'

Anne concluded, 'I have always felt that the National Curriculum would have been better done, rather that items of knowledge that you will know, would have been very much better done from a skills base.'

In this respect there was a congruence in Anne's beliefs about history and the views which she held on children's learning and the aims of primary education in general. Anne very much viewed children's learning in holistic terms and wanted to create a unified curriculum. It was for this reason that she disliked National Curriculum with its separate subject boxes which didn't 'mesh' together. Several times during the interviews Anne returned to this theme. She identified history's close links with english in several comments, but was also aware of the links between other curriculum subjects and history. Since the introduction of the literacy hour in September 1998, Anne felt very pressurised for time, and felt that her tight learning objectives did not permit her enough opportunity to develop individual children's interests and meet their different needs.

Anne described her favourite classroom lesson on the Romans where she took in pieces of Roman pottery and the children had to think about the purposes for which the pots might have been used. She explained how she encouraged children to think about the design of the pots and the materials which were being used. Such work addressed two curriculum areas. 'I mean it's history, and it's using historical enquiries, but it's also technology.... I think this is where with time to sit down and actually think those things through, I think a lot of overload can be reduced, and its why I would like to see a curriculum not in 9 separate little boxes.'

Anne's emphasis on enquiry skills and the cross curricular nature of the primary curriculum was revealed in the lesson which I observed. The lesson on historical maps developed from work in geography and also earlier work which had focused on the derivations of local street names. During the activity, Anne wanted children to sequence a series of maps of the same area and explain the reasons for their order. Maps of the local area were chosen since Anne felt they were real for the children. She wanted children to have an appreciation of change and continuity and also of using maps as evidence. Alongside these aims, Anne's other focus was on children presenting and communicating their investigations in an interesting way. She wanted the children to work together, 'so there is a lot of sort of PSE (personal and social education) issues coming in out of it as well.'
When she evaluated the lesson, Anne spoke of her frustration in finding time to work with the two groups and simultaneously managing the rest of the class. She observed that children had acquired ideas about change and continuity and that they, 'were slowly realising that things might change and why they might change.' Anne recognised links with geography and language development and also noted that broader aims had been achieved in terms of learning habits and organisation. The children had co-operated well in organising their tasks and had thought of ways in which to communicate their findings to others.

Anne’s emphasis on methodology contrasts strongly with those teachers emphasising cultural transmission through stories and community traditions and also relativist/reformers, studying history to explain contemporary issues and concerns. Anne did mention myths and legends and the value of story, but did not dwell on these aspects or elaborate them within the interviews.

In terms of Evans’ (1994) typology, her approach to teaching history most closely resembles that of scientific historians.

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**Discussion**

The above case studies provide insights into ways in which teachers’ beliefs and interests impact on the implementation of the history curriculum in primary schools. The influence of teachers’ background and experience contributes to different interpretations of official policy. Thus it could be argued that the curriculum cannot be imposed from above, but develops from the reality of different encounters within the educational context. Total compliance is not achievable and is a factor which needs to be considered in the current educational climate of accountability, standards and target setting prevalent in English primary schools.

A broad range of aims are incorporated within the current history National Curriculum and the case studies reveal that individual primary teachers emphasise particular aspects more than others. Harriet is concerned with passing down cultural traditions through stories; Ruth employs history to explain current events and focuses on problem solving activities. The development of skills in analysis and deduction are key features of Anne’s approaches. In this respect teachers are according different priorities to particular aspects of the history curriculum and to history’s syntactical and substantive structures. However, the data also suggest that whilst teachers might emphasise particular features, they do not neglect other areas completely, since comments, albeit fewer are recorded in all other categories.

In terms of the rationales for learning history identified at the beginning of the article, different strands can be
discerned. The potential of history for citizenship education is particularly in evidence from Ruth's comments and to some extent from those of Harriet. However, the notion of citizenship education has altered radically from the beginning of the twentieth century where it comprised generally listening to stories about the great and the good, to a more active approach, involving children in participation and decision making. In line with child centred approaches, all three teachers were keen to generate children's enthusiasm for the subject and their planning took into account children's interests and stages of development. The teachers also encouraged children to raise questions and to draw conclusions from different historical sources. Although Harriet commented that she felt history did not have a methodology, she described several instances when children were encouraged to evaluate evidence either in the classroom or as they worked in their local environment.

Evans' (1994) typology provides a structure for evaluating teachers' different views of history. It enables comparisons to be made between teachers, together with some assessment of the links between personal backgrounds and teaching history. Negative as well as positive experiences of learning history contributed to teachers' teaching strategies and teachers also drew on personal interests to inform their teaching.

The three case studies provide a glimpse of the breadth of teachers' personal interests which ranged over different aspects of history within different historical periods and societies. It could be argued that this breadth enabled teachers to feel confident in their history curriculum decision making; they were aware of what they hoped to achieve and of the strategies through which they might accomplish their aims.

The breadth of experiences furnishes a contrast with the current standardised and utilitarian initial teacher training (ITT) curriculum which focuses on the acquisition of a narrow range of standards and provides little opportunity for reflection (DfEE, 1998). The primary teachers within the case studies were able to transform the written curriculum into meaningful experiences for their children. They did this by reflecting on their own knowledge and beliefs and linking them to their evaluations of the needs and interests of their children. As they talked about history, teachers were constantly making pedagogical connections. As Bennett and Turner Bisset's study (1993) indicates, it is often difficult to distinguish between teachers' pedagogical knowledge and their specific subject knowledge.

The case studies illustrate teachers' important roles in mediating the curriculum and in re-shaping it for the children in their classes. They serve as reminders that in a technical age, personalities are still important and teachers remain powerful influences on children's learning.

The beginning of the article reviewed the development of different rationales for teaching history in school, during the past hundred years. The case studies provide further evidence on how this process continues to occur and ways in which history is legitimated within the curriculum. Questions relating to whose history and who creates the story of the past are raised. Teachers’ different interpretations of the history curriculum suggest that history cannot be viewed as a distinct body of knowledge which can be handed down intact to succeeding generations. Rather, it is a fluid cluster of understandings, shared and shaped by everyone who comes into contact with it.

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