Free-form assessment:

A Multiple Intelligences approach to History at Key Stage 4.

A dissertation for MA History

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Word Count = 15,753

Contents

Abstract

Academic Context

This paper is an attempt to harmonise three important contemporary debates in history education. The first is the question of what level of historical epistemology should be taught to students and at what age. While this simply an extension of the insoluble debate between constructivists and developmentalists, the debate as pertains to history has been revived recently by Peter Lee and Rosalyn's Ashby's Project CHATA[1] - the first rigorous large-scale study into the way that children of different ages construct and explain historical interpretations. The second debate is over the contribution that postmodernist philosophy is making to the discipline of history. While postmodernism has been a theme in university history since the 1960s, the first meaningful attempt to apply the postmodern debate to school history was not made until 2000 in Peter Seixas' essay, "Schweigen! die kinder![2]" Seixas' conclusion is clear: while few historians (or history teachers) would agree with Keith Jenkins' gleeful description of the "collapse of history,[3]" the postmodern challenge is too powerful to ignore and so history teachers must find a way to assimilate it into their teaching. The third debate is over the role of multiple intelligence theory in the classroom. History teachers have long recognised the value of Multiple intelligence, but evidence for its effectiveness is patchy and anecdotal: assessment of MI has not moved beyond the small-scale studies in Teaching History[4].

Aims and Rationale

This paper intends to use one very simple principle to assimilate these three diffuse debates – children are, in fact, natural postmodernists, but that the strictures of

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[1] P. Lee and R. Ashby, "Progression in Historical Understanding among Students ages 7-14" in Ed. P. Stearns et al, "*Knowing Teaching and Learning History*" (New York, 2000)

[2] P. Seixas, "Schweigan die Kinder! Or, Does postmodern History have a place in the schools" in Ed. P. Stearns et al, "*Knowing Teaching and Learning History*" (New York, 2000)

[3] K. Jenkins, "Introduction: On being open about our closures" P3. In Ed. K. Jenkins, "*The Postmodern History Reader.*" (Routledge, 1997)

[4] For an example of these small scale studies see P. Benaiges, "The Spice for Life? Ensuring variety when teaching the Treaty of Versailles," *Teaching History* 119: Pp 30-35

school history (and the academic form in general) actually stifle this natural scepticism. By embracing multiple intelligence theory and removing the requirement to communicate in a particular way, children can better communicate their understanding of complex ideas.

This paper is predicated on the principle that the post-Socratic Western academic tradition has no monopoly on sophistication of thought, but that this tradition wrongly underpins our notions of "progression" in pupil thinking. It is argued that when students are liberated from the arbitrarily-defined demands of "good history" they are able to comprehend and enjoy the subject more. The method for achieving this is to dispense with the traditional dialectical essay-form and allow students to communicate their ideas in a way in which they are comfortable. Multiple Intelligence theory will then be used to analyse the extensive range of responses which result.

Method

The study focused on one group of mixed-ability Year Ten students. The first stage of the study (Chapter 2a) used grounded-theory asked students to explain the contradictions between two conflicting account of the same period. This was not inductive research since no hypothesis was used, instead pupils' responses were coded and patterns were seen to emerge organically. The second stage of the study (chapter 2b) assessed pupil responses against commonly-used indicators of "ability" such as Cognitive Ability Tests and Fischer Family Trust target grades. The intention here was to see whether there was a correlation between "ability" and pupils' willingness to embrace a post-modern interpretation of history. The emergent pattern – that pupils with particularly high or particularly low CATs profiles thought in a post-modern way - enabled students to be selected for follow-up interviews about their opinions (Chapter 2c.) These interviews revealed that pupils at the extremes of the ability spectrum possessed remarkably similar approaches to history, but for different reasons. Both groups of students agreed that the past was unknowable, but gifted students revelled in this fact while less-able students saw it as a reason for despair about the practice of history.

The third stage of the study introduces the idea of free-form assessment and multiple intelligences. Pupils were introduced to the concepts of post-modernism and the class were brain-stormed to collect alternative modes of assessment. The fourth and final stage of the study consists of the analysis of pupil responses both collectively and individually. Multiple intelligence theory was used to categorise and analyse these responses.

Free-form assessment: A Multiple Intelligences approach to History at Key Stage 4.

The relationship between academic history and School history

The History teaching profession rightly prides itself on the advances made in the past three decades. Traditional Piagetian wisdom had it that young children "couldn't cope" with the abstract and conceptual in history and must be taught substantive material in a didactic way that would prepare them for the time (16+) when the more abstract could be introduced[5]. Thanks to the rise of social constructivism approaches to education and the work of the Schools' History Project, it has been proven that it was not the concepts that children struggled with, but the way in which they were communicated. The SHP has led the way in making difficult concepts accessible to children and the work of the Cambridgeshire cluster History Transition Group[6] seems to prove that there is no apparent lower age limit for introduction to "difficult" concepts such as interpretation. These developments have led to a shift towards a more procedural approach to history teaching in the 2000 and 2008 Key Stage Three National Curricula. The more recent of which highlights "key concepts" and "key processes" which must be taught in each subject rather than specifying course content; history at Key Stage 3 is a craft with its own set of skills, rather than a body of knowledge.

History teaching, then, has long strived to keep pace with academic history, but this relationship has decoupled over the issue of postmodernism. While all university history departments are modifying courses to respond to the challenge of postmodernism; school history has been unwilling to follow their lead. There are three possible explanations for this: the first is that schoolchildren are too young to cope with postmodern arguments, but surely the triumph of constructivism over developmentalism has answered this charge. The second explanation is more sound: that only very recent graduates would be fully immersed in postmodern arguments,

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[5] M. Booth, "Ages and Concepts: A critique of Piaget" in *"The History Curriculum for Teachers"* Ed. C. Portal
[6] The conclusions of this group are available in pdf on
http://czv.e2bn.net/e2bn/leas/c99/schools/czv/web/website_files/final%20report.pdf

many schoolteachers would have graduated long before postmodern arguments became mainstream discussion in history seminars and so there is a lag-time before postmodernism reaches our school classrooms. Ultimately, though, postmodernism is excluded from our schools because of a climate of fear and suspicion for the postmodern challenge risks undermining the fundamental tenets of not just history, but education in general

The notion of "progression" is fundamental to educational theory; it is, after all, the role of a teacher in encourage a student to "get better" at whatever it is he is trying to grasp. Since its development, Bloom's hierarchy of thinking skills has been a rather uncontroversial model of academic progression and has been the bedrock of teacher-training. This model has raw knowledge at the bottom of the hierarchy and progresses through analysis to evaluation. A postmodern analysis of this hierarchy shows it to be chimerical, though since Booth's taxonomy does not describe a progression in thinking, but a description of thinking skills in the order that they are prized in Western academia. The difference is subtle, but devastating.

The Western-academic method which underpins Bloom in which "truth" is arrived at through the competition of ideas in a kind of intellectual Darwinism is not a naturally occurring dialectic, but an arbitrary schema which westerners are trained to follow. This colours our educational planning since children learn quickly that the ability to reach a judgement after playing one idea off against another is met with high praise, while the students who are paralysed by wonderment are seen as "less-able." Our shared academic heritage since Ancient Greece has valued those who have imposed rationality on the universe, even if their explanations have subsequently been discredited; while those such as Pre-Socratics and postmodernists who admit the fundamental disorder of the universe are pilloried for their lack of imagination.

The persistence of this academic ethno-centrism has coloured all of our discussions of child-development and educational theory. The well-worn debate between constructivists and developmentalists over how and when children learn to think critically assumes that "critical" thinking is an intellectual endpoint, when in fact it simply demonstrates that a child has accepted the rules of Western thought. The implications of this rethinking of thinking to history are colossal. To accept

postmodernism is to accept that answers which historians value are not in any sense "more sophisticated" than others, they simply accord more closely with the way history is written in the west. In other words, we do not prize what is sophisticated, "sophistication" is simply the word we use to describe what we have come to prize. Considering the magnitude of these conclusions it is unsurprising that educationalists have been hostile to postmodern theory.

The postmodern challenge, though, is not wholly destructive; in destroying the shibboleths of academic practice it challenge us to put new structures in its place. The challenge for school-history is particularly intriguing since history teachers must completely rethink what they mean by "good-history." For too long, school history has taught students to write in a pseudo-academic way – to compare facts and reach a judgement, this has been easy to assess since the teacher compares the piece against his expectations of academic history and marks it accordingly. If the western-academic style is simply one of many "ways of thinking" how can we set work? How can we assess? How can pupils progress?

These questions are enormous and it is not the intention of the present study to answer them, but this study does take the first tentative steps towards a new approach to school history: one which does not aim to measure "sophistication" or "progression" in pupils' understanding against arbitrarily agreed norms but which aims to remove the strait-jacket of academic practice and so liberate pupils to think and express themselves in an individual way.

An analysis of current trends in school history

As stated earlier, history at Key Stage Three has largely abandoned a substantive (fact-based) approach to history in favour of a procedural approach. This has made history simultaneously challenging and entertaining for schoolchildren. It is fair to say, though, that this good work at Key Stage Three is not sustained in Key Stage Four. Christopher Culpin's strident 2002 essay, "*Why we must change history at GCSE*[7]," was an eloquent description of an examination course that betrays the

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[7] C. Culpin, "Why we must change History at GCSE, in *Teaching History 109*, (2002)

progress that pupils made at Key Stage Three: where Key Stage Three is vibrant, inclusive and relevant, GCSE seems dry, inaccessible and repetitive. Culpin argues that the procedural approach which has been cultivated so diligently at Key Stage Three is abandoned at GCSE so that the exam rewards copious knowledge communicated in a formulaic way.

Culpin has, in fact, identified an examination course that falls between two stools – it aims to be as inclusive as possible, while also preparing students for A-Level and beyond. In trying to satisfy both sets of students, GCSE satisfies neither as Culpin charges, "the exam is so easy that some highly selective schools do not bother with it. At the same time… it is far too hard for others.[8]" Notice Culpin's words here, it is not the *course content* that is too challenging for the less able, nor too easy for the gifted, it is the *examination*.

The problem at GCSE is principally an overreliance on written communication. History has always been the most politicised of subjects and it seems that there is something of an expectation among non-expert commentators that History should be "hard," where "hard" is synonymous with "involving lots of writing." This reliance on written communication is only the most egregious example of the academic ethnocentrism identified earlier in which pupils are rewarded for their ability to "be objective" or "write a balanced argument." History at Key Stage Four, therefore, rewards a student's ability to play by the rules of academic expectation. These academic expectations are emphasised less at KS3 since the National Curriculum insists that all students have an entitlement to the same diet of historical processes and skills irrespective of their literacy or ability. This entitlement has forced history teachers to be innovative: where differentiation previously entailed a wholly different curriculum for the less able, it now consists of the delivery of concepts in creative ways that do not alienate through overuse text. Richard Harris and others have shown how difficult concepts such as authorial intention and significance can be made accessible to students of all reading ages[9]. The traditional academic nature of GCSE history has made teachers reluctant to innovate in this way at Key Stage Four.

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[8] Ibid
[9] R. Harris and I. Luff, "*Meeting SEN in the curriculum: History*" (David Fulton, 2004)

Throughout Key Stages Three and Four, children are now introduced to historical information in literally dozens of forms: graphs, tables, films, photographs, cartoons, letters etc, but the GCSE still demands formal written communication. Lengthy essays (far lengthier than those required by other subjects at GCSE) are still seen as the best way of gauging a child's historical ability. The current GCSE does not reward "good history," but pseudo-academic essays written to satisfy the demands of a prescriptive mark scheme. These formulaic answers which fail to stretch the most able while alienating completely the less literate. This encourages teachers to take a behaviourist approach to teaching since - in terms of raw exam success - there is more mileage in practising examination technique than in furthering the complexity of historical understanding. Consider a simplified OCR mark scheme where the question asks whether a candidate agrees with a hypothesis:

Level[10]	Criteria	Award within range[11]
Level 2	Agrees **OR** disagrees, limited evidential support	2-4
Level 3	Agrees **OR** disagrees, with evidential support	4-6
Level 4	Explains points of agreement **AND** points of disagreement	7-9
Level 5	As level 4, but reaches a judgement as demanded by the question.	9-10

Two things are clear from this mark scheme: firstly, a candidate who offers a "two-sided" answer must be awarded level four; secondly, only one extra mark is available to the candidate who makes a substantiated judgement (even though this evaluation is the most complex of Bloom's thinking skills). This prescriptive markscheme means that that history teachers dedicate a good portion of their time encouraging pupils to write "two-sided answers." But what exactly are those "two sides?" Surely "history" consists of an infinite number of sides? This is not simply postmodern pedantry; the most able students at GCSE do not see history in terms of binary statements, but in

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[10] Level 1 rewards answers with little or no historical support.

[11] Within levels marks are usually determined by the extent and accuracy of the knowledge on display.

terms of a universe of interpretations. Conversely, the less able frequently lose marks - not because their knowledge is insufficient - but because they read the question literally i.e. if a question asked "The depression was the most important reason for Hitler's rise to power." Do you agree" they will say whether or not they agree, but lose marks for a lack of balance! Like all behaviourist approaches, the history teacher's failsafe of insisting on two-sided answers is a satisfactory approach to maximising marks, but an unsatisfactory approach to furthering historical understanding. It is clear, therefore, that the disproportionate reward given for formulaic answers leads to a prescriptive teaching which constrains the most able while bewildering the less able.

In short, students at GCSE are taught to write according to a pseudo-academic structure. With slight changes to allow for literary sophistication, essays follow the traditional "four-part essay" formula (introduction, paragraph for, paragraph against, conclusion). History teachers are comfortable assessing work that follows this pattern because it has the appearance of "proper history;" that is, it is balanced, analyses and selects evidence and reaches a substantiated conclusion. There is a paradox here: while the inputs that children receive are pluralist, multimodal and frequently controversial, the outputs that we demand are formulaic and artificially "balanced." There is a bizarre interpretation of progression here: History teachers know that History at KS3 is more challenging and stimulating than at GCSE but, under pressure for results, they must deliver what the examiners demand. The ability to assess the interpretation of visual media, for instance, or the writing of empathy exercises challenge students up to 14, but are absent thereafter. Empathy exercises are now discredited at GCSE, but at least they challenged students to develop intra-personal skills as well as factual recall and formulaic communication. In terms of developing students: GCSE actually represents a retrograde step as the role of judgement and self-expression – so central to KS3 - is forgotten as soon as children opt for history at fourteen.

If GCSE history is to stretch the most able and move students on from Key Stage Three then the skill of historical judgement must be treated as a discrete skill and given a much higher priority. At present, many of the best prepared students explain their lost marks by saying, "But I don't know what I think." The irony is that children

that best understand the complexity of the past have most difficulty in reaching judgements. The challenge, then, is to raise the profile of historical judgement while maintaining the goal of inclusiveness that lay behind the launch of GCSE in the 1980s. This goal of simultaneous inclusiveness and challenge cannot be achieved through tinkering with a decrepit and creaking system; it requires a rethinking of teaching and learning.

An alternative approach to historical assessment at Key Stage 4

At present, historical judgement is the most daunting skill for GCSE students. This is hardly surprising since teachers focus on developing a "balanced" and "two-sided" approach to historical questions. The result is that pupils frequently tie themselves in argumentative knots and, in lieu of a conclusion, reach non-judgements which are often weak or, at worst, totally nonsensical. Concluding sentences such as those below will be familiar to any history teacher:

"In conclusion, I do not know whether appeasement was the
most important cause of World War Two because World War
Two had many causes"

OR

"In conclusion, I think appeasement both was and was not the
most important cause of World War Two."

OR

"In conclusion, I think that it was somewhere in the middle."

Such answers cannot attain top level because they do not reach a judgement. Teachers have taken a behaviourist approach to this problem by simply training students to "pick a side" to "get the judgement mark;" but like all behaviourist strategies this is a short term solution and no fit preparation for A-level or university. Such an approach makes historical judgement something that the candidate does because he has been told to and does not indicate whether he is understanding what he is doing. Assessment of history must place a greater emphasis on the role of the historian as a historical actor. Pupils should not be assessed on their ability to recall and write at length, but on the extent to which they have engaged with and assimilated

the material. This necessitates a wholesale rethink of what we want students to do with history.

It is clear, therefore, that the greatest barrier to pupils achieving genuine historical judgement is an exam system which encourages prescriptive and formulaic essay writing. An important step in allowing pupils to formulate their ideas, then, is to allow them to experiment with new forms of historical expression. Recent influential works such as Montefiore's *Court of the Red Tsar* and Orlando Figes's *A People's Tragedy* show how information can be communicated in an original and engaging way without compromising on scholarship, research or intellectual rigour. These works, though hardly post-modern, reject the straightjacket of "good history" which has changed little since the war. Montefiore eschews a wholly scholarly tone by describing characters' clothing and using non-standard English; while Figes frequently uses the first person and describes the Russian Revolution through the feelings and personal experiences of characters including General Brusilov and Maxim Gorky. In short, these hugely successfully and widely respected historians embrace the fundamental unknowability of history and so take aggressive ownership of their own interpretation of the past. They accept Geoffrey Elton's sanctification of exhaustive research, but reject his imperative to be distant and objective. If academic history has moved away from the Rankean tradition of "telling it how it was," surely we owe it to schoolchildren to move GCSE history in the same direction.

The study – Encouraging pupils to communicate historical understanding through mixed-media assessment

The study which took place in the summer term of 2008, took an alternative approach to assessing the early-Cold War with a mixed ability Year 10 class. The first step mirrored the work of project CHATA and consisted of an analysis of pupil attitudes towards the practice of history and follow-up interviews (see chapter 2.) Pupils then followed the demands of the GCSE syllabus unit on the origins of the Cold War. To conclude the unit, though, pupils were taught about the evolution of western art and its parallels in historiography in order to offer alternative conceptions of "good art" and "good history." There then followed a class discussion of possible non-written media for communicating the cold war. Pupils were then given three weeks to

demonstrate their understanding of the cold war in a way in which they feel comfortable (see chapter 3.)

The aim of this study was to encourage pupils to arrive at their own interpretations and judgements on the cold-war by removing the formulaic four-paragraph GCSE answer. More specifically, the study aimed to raise the confidence of low-achievers by removing the daunting proposition of an essay while simultaneously raising the achievement of the most able by legitimating a judgemental and interpretative approach to the subject. The extent to which these aims were achieved was gauged from analysis of submissions and follow-up interviews with students (see Chapter 3c.).

Mixed-media assessment and Multiple Intelligences

In order to allow pupils the maximum possible level of ownership over their work, there were no conditions placed on the mode of communication. This mixed media approach is grounded in Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences. It is fair to say that few psychological texts have had as much of an impact on education as Gardner's 1983 book, *Frames of Mind*[12]. Gardner's basic argument – that intelligence is not a unitary faculty, but a broader term encompassing several aptitudes – is familiar to all educators, but it is likely that few fully comprehend the nuances of Gardner's work. In Chapter 4 of *Frames of Mind*, Gardner outlines criteria to define his multiple intelligences which include biological, neurological and behavioural considerations and arrives at 7 intelligences (to which he later added two more.) Key to these criteria is the idea that an individual can exhibit exceptional performance in one intelligence while displaying average or below-average ability in others. Gardner distinguishes between "intelligence" and "talent" by using a neurological criterion – the intelligence must belong to a scientifically distinct area of the brain which is susceptible to localised brain damage. In this way prodigious ability at chess is a *talent*, but may be indicative of exceptional spatial or logical/mathematical *intelligence*.

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[12] H. Gardener, "*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*." (Fontana, 1993 Edition)

The idea that every child has a unique intelligence profile obviously accords with most teachers' inclusive instincts and experiences in the classroom, but it is unfortunate that a bastardised and counterproductive derivative of Gardner's ideas has taken hold in schools. Instead of the eight or nine *intelligences* identified by Gardner, the National Strategy identifies three "*learning styles*": visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The transition from "intelligences" to "learning styles" represents more than a simple changing of terminology; rather it is described by an irritated Gardner as a "confusion" and a "misinterpretation" of his theories[13]. The difference is subtle, but critical: intelligence is a cognitive faculty which explains how an individual orders and classifies information, while a learning style refers to the way that an individual prefers to be instructed or shown new information. A visually intelligent person is not necessarily a visual learner, but he is likely to conceive of, or communicate, concepts in a visual way. An overly visual approach to teaching which relies on photographs or videos will, in fact, hinder a visually intelligent person's understanding by providing the learner with a "correct" set of visual images rather than allowing the learner to construct his own visual understanding. To use a specific example, a visual learner could hear a spoken account of Ancient Rome and imagine a scene in his head, but if a well-intentioned teacher were to use "*Gladiator*" or "*Spartacus*" in an attempt to pander to his "learning style," the student's historical understanding could be hobbled by the "correct" image that the teacher had shown him. Multiple intelligence teaching does not, therefore, consist of a plurality of teacher input, but in legitimating a plurality of pupil outcome. The teacher ought to be able to teach in a way that he finds comfortable, provided he allows the pupils to express themselves in a way that *they* find comfortable

Lamentably, Gardner's ideas, which are meant to empower and liberate individuals, have, in some over-zealous schools been used to pigeon-hole students as one sort of learner or another. John White's 2004 lecture, "*Howard Garner: the myth of Multiple Intelligences*" reports particularly egregious examples where pupils are given "smart card inscribed with their preferred intelligences[14]." The title of White's lecture is

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[13] H Gardner, "*MI After Twenty Years*" (www.howardgardner.com, 2003) p8.

[14] J. White, "*Howard Gardner: the myth of Multiple Intelligences*." P1 Lecture at the Institute of Education University of Education, November 17th 2004. Available at www.ioe.ac.uk/school/mst/ltu/phil/howardgardner_171104.pdf

something of a misnomer since Howard Gardner would be similarly critical of this "shrink-wrapped[15]" approach to educational philosophy.

At its most basic level, Gardner's idea cannot be argued with; even the most trenchant defenders of the concept of general intelligence such as Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray accept that an IQ score is an aggregate of at least three intelligences (spatial, linguistic and logical/mathematical) further they accept that there can be large discrepancies in an individual's aptitude in these three areas[16]. This means that an individual's IQ is determined largely by the emphasis placed on each of these intelligences in a given test. Any teacher familiar with school cognitive ability tests (CATs) will know that the three tests correspond to these three intelligences and that pupils can exhibit wildly different aptitudes. By way of an example, in the target group used for this study, one student had a quantative score of 105[17] (group mean) and a verbal of 134 (3.25 standard deviations above group mean); surely evidence of a varied intelligence profile.

The relevance of this discussion to our present study should be obvious: the emphasis placed on written communication at GCSE favours students with high linguistic intelligence and discriminates against those with strengths in other areas. Where Key Stage Three history is truly inclusive and seeks to cater for students' multiple intelligences, GCSE history insists on monotypal expression which leads to a huge disparity in achievement between students.

The role of creativity

The key skill on display in this study is clearly creativity. Creativity is defined by psychologists as "the capacity to produce something that is both novel (i.e. original and unexpected) and appropriate[18]". There is much debate among psychologists about whether creativity is a skill that can be taught or a hard-wired cognitive asset. Edward De Bono is perhaps most useful here; De Bono distinguishes *lateral* thinking

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[15] Ibid P2

[16] R. Herrnsterin and C. Murray, "*The Bell Curve*" (Free Press, 1994) is the most recent defence of intelligence as a fixed and inheritable quality which can be accurately measured by IQ testing.

[17] CATs are scale marked. A score of 100 represents the national modal score.

[18] R. Sternberg and T. Lubard, "The Concept of Creativity" in R. Sternberg (Ed.) *Handbook of Creativity* (CUP, 1999) p3.

(conceiving new ways to solve old problems) which can be taught, from *creative* thinking (conceiving of a paradigm shift in a particular field) which cannot[19]. Despite this ongoing debate, from September 2008, the new National Curriculum insists that Creative Thinking should be taught as one of the core Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTs) to all students at Key Stages Three and Four. The most recent documentation indicates that the QCA is more interested in ensuring that teachers provide opportunities for students to express their creativity rather than instituting a course in De Bono's lateral thinking.

The GCSE course as it presently stands is a barrier to creativity and self-expression, its emphasis on formulaic answers encourages children to write in a particular way, even if they could express themselves more fluently in a different way. The importance of this study – and creative thinking as conceived by the QCA – is to broaden horizons, to demonstrate that historical expression does not begin and end with the four-part essay.

It has been argued that traditional GCSE essays hold back the most able and the least able - in the former case by imposing a creative straightjacket and in the latter case by removing an unattainable target – but will free form assessment improve performance? Some psychologists have argued that intelligence and creativity should be viewed as a "unitary phenomenon[20]" and so creative assessment may actually increase the disparity between the most and least able. In fact, the links between IQ and creativity depend largely on how creativity is defined. Where creativity is defined as a form of problem solving (close to De Bono's lateral thinking) there is a close correlation between IQ and creativity; where creativity is defined as the ability to make something new, the correlation is weaker. The difference between these definitions is between the questions, "What uses could this clay be put to?" (lateral thinking) and "Please could you make something from this clay" (creativity.) It is clear that the present study demands creativity of the latter type and so the less able are at no significant disadvantage.

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[19] E. De Bono, "*Lateral Thinking*" (Ward Lock, 1970) P11
[20] P. Haenly and C. Reynolds, "Creativity and Intelligence" in J. Glover et al (Ed) *Handbook of Creativity* (Plenum, 1989.) Pp-111-132

When the concept of creativity is combined with Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, it is clear that all students will benefit from this approach. Students can choose the area in which they work so that they are "playing to their own strengths." This commonsense conclusion has academic support in the work of Quentin McNemar who has argued that it is wrong to think of "creativity" as a unitary quality, rather an individual can demonstrate particular creativity in certain disciplines. McNemar uncovers an intriguing link between IQ and creativity: in science and technology there is a close correlation between IQ and creativity, but in fields such as art and music almost no correlation exists[21]. This clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of IQ tests as bench marks of human cognitive capacity.

Success Criteria

The decision to abandon temporarily formal written assessment is a difficult one for most teachers. It is fair to say that both teachers and pupils are comfortable with the format of written work demanded at GCSE, but that many are unclear as to the role of their own judgement or input within this format. Many pupils still shy away from giving their own interpretation of the past in essays, despite all reassurance that judgement has "no right answer". This is because pupils see essays as a very academic form over which they have no ownership. By giving pupils ownership over the form of their work, they are more likely to take control over its content. The pupils are able to say what they want in a way that they feel comfortable with.

It will be exceedingly difficult to assess the submissions against any normative criteria. Experiments in free-form assessment have demonstrated great subjectivity in marking and worse, an unwitting bias on the part of the examiner to grade the assessments in terms of linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligence[22]. For this reason, it is not intended to formally assess the work; rather credit will be given for historical understanding, originality and effort. This credit will be in the form of written feedback rather than a mark or grade. Students are also asked to submit a

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[21] Q. McNemar, "Lost: Our intelligence" *American Psychologist 19* (1964), cited in R. Sternberg (Ed.) *Handbook of Creativity* (CUP, 1999) p262.
[22] J. Plucker et al, "Wherefore art thou, multiple intelligences?" in "*Definitions and Conceptions of Giftedness*" R. Sternberg (Ed.) (Corwin Press, 2004) p156

written justification for their work; these are compared with their submissions in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2

This chapter consists of an assessment of the target group in terms of school performance data. There then follows a study – informed by Lee and Ashby's work with project CHATA - to assess historical understanding in the group. The intention is to identify discrepancies between the narrow diagnostic testing undertaken by schools (CATs and FFT targets) and pupils' historical understanding. The chapter is in four parts:

   a) *Introduction to the target group*
   b) *Explanation of the initial survey*
   c) *Statistical analysis of pupil responses*
   d) *Follow-up interviews with selected students.*

Chapter 2a

THE TARGET GROUP

The group selected for study was largely determined by timetabling and was a mixed ability class of 27 Year 10 students. The class contains a wide range of "ability" and so it was important to have an initial assessment of pupil starting points. Schools collect no end of data on pupil performance, but this data must be managed carefully; tests are blunt instruments which favour students with high linguistic and logical intelligences. The group profile is appendix 1.
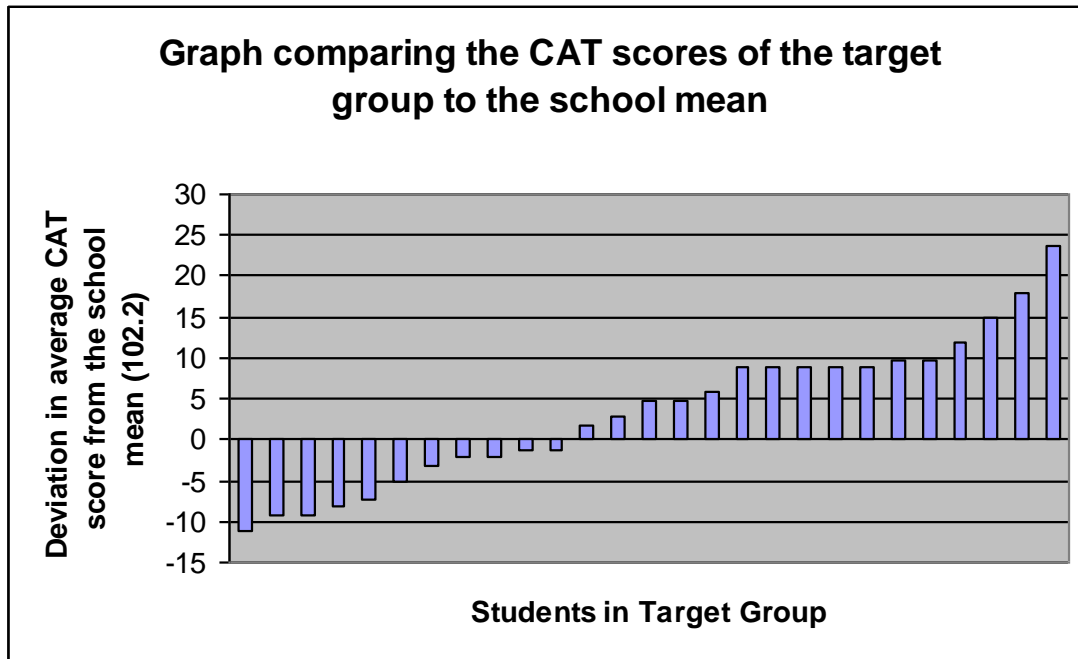
FIGURE 2.1

Although the aim of this study was to encourage pupils to think in non-traditional ways, the use of traditional data in assessing pupil starting points was a necessary evil. Two performance indicators were used which gave similar impressions about the group's ability. Figure 2.1 shows CAT scores (tests in Verbal, non-verbal and mathematical reasoning) which were gathered on entry to the school indicated that the there was a wide range of ability with a slight weighting towards the more able (16 students with scores above the school mean compared to 11 below.)
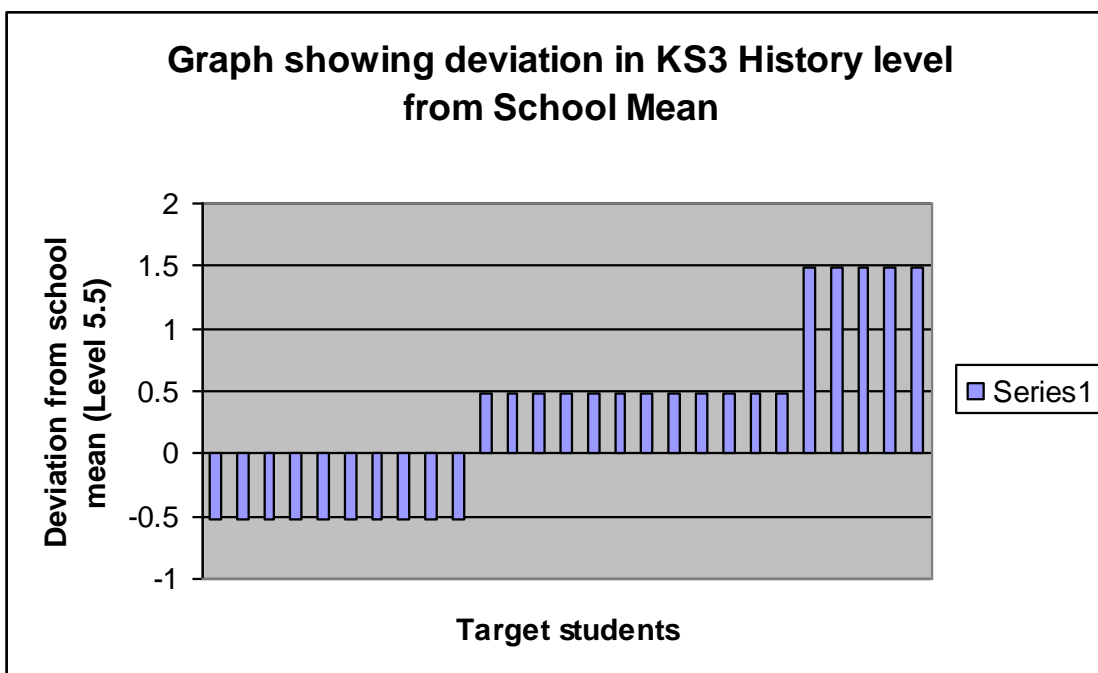
FIGURE 2.2

The second performance indicator was the student's teacher-assessed history levels at the end of Key Stage Three (figure 2.2). This data was specific to history and so, it could be argued, would deliver more accurate results than the generalised CATs, but even teacher-assessed National Curriculum levels are of questionable reliability with one PGCE tutor likening awarding KS3 levels as "using a hand axe to perform keyhole surgery![23]" Although this graph was inherently less smooth than the previous one, it is clear that the pattern is similar. Where that last graph showed 11 below average students, this graph shows ten, where the last graph showed four gifted students, this graph shows 5 (students achieving level 7.)

Analysis of pupil data indicates that the target group is of slightly higher than average ability, but that there is a wide range of ability within the group. Throughout this study, individual pupil data will be compared with responses to questions and, ultimately, against their final submissions. The intention will be to identify correlation between pupil ability as traditionally defined (CATs, levels etc) and pupil's attainment when they are afforded the opportunity of free-form assessment.

Chapter 2b

THE INITIAL SURVEY

The intention of the initial survey was to gauge the student's understanding of the role of judgement in historical writing. It is clear that those students who are more comfortable with the notion of historical judgement will be more comfortable with expressing their own judgement in free-form assessment. It was important to discover whether there was any correlation between receptiveness to an overtly interpretive approach to history and "ability" as traditionally defined by school performance. Much research has been done in this area, but by far the most exhaustive investigation into historical progression is the work of Project CHATA (Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches.) Although, CHATA was principally concerned with undermining the concept of Piagtian age-related progression in History, its conclusion

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[23] I. Phillips, "*Teaching History: Developing as a reflective secondary teacher.*" (Sage, 2008) p126.

that historical understanding is a unique body of knowledge has wider implications. Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby's article *Progression in Historical Understanding among Students ages 7-14*[24] is particularly instructive. Lee and Ashby demonstrated that there was an apparent correlation between age and complexity of historical understanding. When asked to explain conflicting accounts of the fall of the Roman empire, 26% of second-graders used the simplistic argument that "one of the accounts must be incorrect" while this dropped to 12% among eighth graders; conversely the proportion which argued for the "more complex" explanation of "intentional distortion" increased from 3% among second-graders to 26% among eighth graders[25]. The correlation is clear: older children have a more critical understanding of historical accounts. It is this correlation which has led to a misguided Piagetian approach to history teaching: since primary children can only "cope" with monolithic accounts that's all they should be taught. Lee and Ashby's rigorous study allows this conclusion to be exposed for the logical fallacy that it is. Supporters of a Piagetian approach a guilty of making an error *cum hoc ergo propter hoc*, they are confusing correlation with cause. Project Chata exposed the weakness of this logic by demonstrating that there are any number of determinants for the rate of pupil progression in history. One pupil "Jeremy" whose father is a professional historian is seen to have by the far the most sophisticated understanding of history despite being several years younger than the oldest respondents. The scale of the study meant that one undeniable conclusion could be drawn: that specialist history teaching was the prime mover in children's progression. Chata examined 320 students in 9 different schools and concluded that pupils made faster progress in secondary school (where they benefited from the expertise of a history specialist) and among secondary schools progress was most retarded in institutions which offered a diet of mixed humanities[26]. History teachers have long argued that history was a unique discipline and that historical progression is often unrelated to progression in other subjects (even to other "humanities") but Lee and Ashby's study affords the necessary academic support for this argument.

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[24] P. Lee et al "Progression in Historical Understanding among Students ages 7-14" in P. Stearns et al, *Knowing Teaching and Learning History* (New York, 2000)
[25] Ibid P210-211
[26] Ibid. P213

The principle of historical understanding as a unique form of knowledge knits well with multiple intelligence theory. It seems that historical understanding represents not just a body of knowledge, but a unique form of human comprehension. Gardner admits to formulating his theory by deconstructing the key intelligences found in what he calls, "the major disciplines of science, mathematics, history and arts.[27]" It was Gardner's inability to explain specialist aptitude at theology, philosophy and history that has led him to moot the idea of a ninth "existential" intelligence[28]. The conceptual and abstract reasoning involved in complex historical understanding surely owes as much to this existential intelligence as to the more commonly cited interpersonal and linguistic intelligences.

The survey – See appendix 2

Pupil attitudes towards history were gauged with a modified version of Lee and Ashby's "two stories" or event and asked to explain the difference between them. Since the group were just about to begin coursework on Global Terrorism[29] - and given the need for a controversial topic – conflicting accounts of 9/11 and its aftermath were provided by way of a survey (see appendix 2)

Account A was written from the point of view of uncritical support for US policy, while Account B linked US policy to the aims of Al Qaeda. It was important that although the accounts were obviously contradictory, no information should be given about provenance since GCSE students are taught to study provenance and often pass judgement on the "accuracy" or "reliability" of the source entirely based on its author and the time it was written. It was vital that the two accounts be equally accessible to 14 and 15 year old readers, given the range of ability this was difficult to ensure and so respondents were asked to record any words that they were unsure of. It was also important that both sources be structurally comparable, only their tone and slant should differ. To this end, both accounts were of roughly equal length (281 and 300 words respectively) and had a common structure:

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[27] H Gardner, "*MI After Twenty Years*" (www.howardgardner.com, 2003) p8.
[28] H. Gardner, "*A multiplicity of intelligences*." (www.howardgardner.com, 2004) p4
[29] Outline of coursework activity available online at
www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/**shp**/**Terrorism**/**TERRORISM**%20**COURSEWORK**%20ASSIGNMENT%201%20OCR.htm

Paragraph One – What is America like?

Paragraph Two – What happened on 9/11 and what were the motives?

Paragraph Three – Who are Al Qaeda?

Paragraph Four – What is the War on Terror and has it been effective?

It was also vital that the two accounts had mixed fact, judgement and opinion in similar ratios. Where one account engaged in questionable historical practice, it was ensured that it was matched by a similar argumentative weakness in the other account. See below:

Questionable historical practice	**Example from Account A**	**Example from Account B**
Unsubstantiated assertion	Before America invaded [Iraq and Afghanistan] were brutal dictatorships, now they are healthy democracies like those in the West.	America decides that a "good government" is any that does what it wants and an "evil country" is any that does not.
Questionable Value Judgement	America is the most successful nation in the world.	Since 9/11 America… has become more aggressive in spreading its influence throughout the world.
Appeal to emotion	[Al Qaeda] hates freedom and the American way of life.	America has murdered thousands of people in Iraq and Afghanistan to achieve its aims.

After reading the two accounts, pupils were invited to fill in tick-boxes on whether or not they agreed with statements about the passages. It was important to include this binary yes/no section to facilitate analysis by eliminating "shades of grey" responses.

The second section of the initial questionnaire was aimed at examining the way that pupils viewed concepts such as "truth" and "one-sidedness." These responses would be used to select a range of candidates for interview, the final question: "There are no 'true accounts'; everyone has their own version of events.' Do you agree?" was certain to invite the most interesting responses.

Chapter 2c

ANALYSIS OF PUPIL RESPONSES

Analysing responses to questionnaires is always a difficult proposition. Statistical data is only as reliable as the person interpreting it and - since that person always has a vested interest in the outcomes - there is always a risk of accidental distortion. It is for this reason that grounded theory has taken such a strong hold in educational research. Instead of a traditional inductive approach which begins with a hypothesis, grounded theory uses categorisation codes to created anonymous data which will then allow patterns to emerge organically. Grounded theory is not without its shortcomings, though since the report author must code and categorise the original responses and this will always involve an element of interpretation or "best fit" categorisation. Interpreting the responses of children or those with limited literacy is doubly dangerous as there is a sometimes a tendency to impose a coherence on pupil responses that night not have been there. Distortions of these types are unavoidable and are evident in project CHATA. In Lee and Ashby's study, lengthy verbal explanations by pupils are summarised under one-word categories of the authors' own devising in order to facilitate statistical and graphical analysis. This is a potentially flawed methodology which risks inflating the sophistication and coherence of some responses while unfairly downgrading the sophistication of others. By way of an extreme example, the work of post-modern historical philosophers such as Haydn White and Richard Rorty might well be summarised as "Unknowable Past." This corresponds to step 2 of 7 on CHATA's ladder of progression and would be considered an unsophisticated position for an eight year-old!

In order to minimise the risk of these distortions a purer version of grounded theory was used in this study in which only the "tick-box" binary responses were analysed. This data was compared to pupils' CATs scores to identify broad trends between understandings of historical judgement and "ability". To avoid the potential errors of

project CHATA, the lengthier written responses were not used in this way, rather they were used to select suitable candidates for *viva voce* interview.

Overall trends

- Respondents were generally more critical of Account Two, but respondents with particularly high or particularly low FFT target grades were more readily critical of Account One.
- Students with higher target grades were more acutely aware of the author's historical judgement.
- The most common criticism was that the author(s) allowed their emotions to interfere with their retelling. The least common criticism was that the author(s) were mistaken about some of the facts
- Only 9 out of 28 surveyed believed that it was possible to have a "true" account of the past. Those who did not believe in a true account offered a range of explanations with a roughly even split between those believing in intentional distortion of facts and those who thought distortion was unintentional.

Deeper analysis

> *Respondents were generally more critical of Account Two, but respondents with particularly high or particularly low FFT target grades were more readily critical of Account One.*

Questions 2-6 on the tick-box section were criticisms of the author of the account. The mean number of criticisms per respondent for Account Two was 2.7 while for Account One it was 2.3. This difference suggests that in general respondents were less convinced of Account Two's impartiality. It is no coincidence that the judgement which was seen by students as more impartial accords more closely with the interpretation of the War on Terror presented by the British and American governments and, by extension, the broadcast and print media. Subsequent discussions with pupils revealed a startling level of confusion and misinformation

about these issues which would support the view that respondents were acting on prejudice rather than using critical judgement. This should not be seen as a weakness of the present study, though, because our intention is to encourage strong, polemical interpretations of the past.

Closer analysis of the responses in relation to target grade revealed an interesting pattern: those with particularly high or particularly low FFT target grades were more readily critical of Account One (the more overtly pro-American account). Although only 8 out of the 27 students were more critical of Account One than Account Two, this group included all 4 of those students with A* FFT targets and three students whose targets were below a C. This is an interesting correlation and - while we should not overemphasise it − it seems that the most and least able are the most willing to consider alternative viewpoints. There are myriad explanations for this correlation, but the most likely is that high achievers are more likely to discuss current affairs and so will have greater awareness of the issues surrounding the War on Terror while surprisingly it is likely their relative ignorance of the same issues which explains why so many less able students are open to new interpretations.

> *Students with higher target grades were more acutely aware*
> *of the author's historical judgement.*

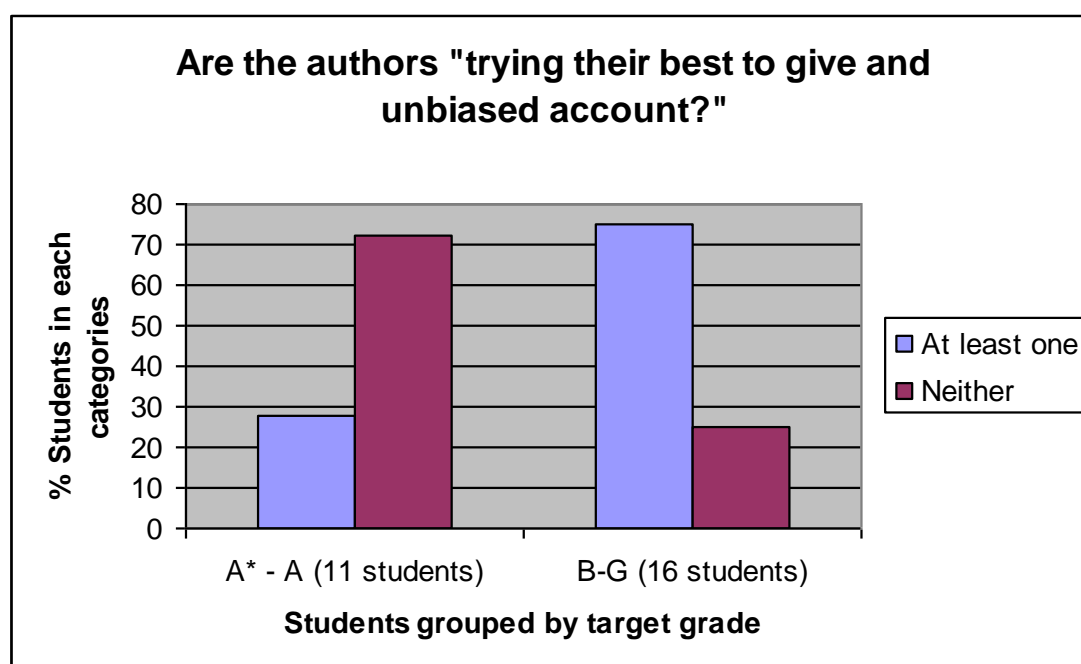When asked whether they thought the author of an account was "trying his best to

FIGURE 2.3

give an unbiased account" there was again a correlation between response and target grade. The idea of an "unbiased" account is, of course, a nonsense to the trained historian, but to many children "unbiased" means lacking in overt judgement, whereas accounts that lead with judgement are likely to be dismissed as "biased."

Overall 12 students felt that both accounts were "biased" (showing overt judgement,) but when the answers were profiled by ability a pattern emerged (see figure 2.3). Even though the groups are slightly uneven in size, it is clear that while nearly three-quarters of high achievers rejected the notion of an unbiased account, almost exactly the same proportion of less able students still believed that either or both of the accounts were written with the intention of being "unbiased."

This correlation has important consequences for our follow up activities. It seems that the more able accept that judgement and "bias" inhere in historical accounts. The most able are less likely to dismiss an account that contains overt judgement, but rather assess the validity of that judgement. Conversely, the less able still believe that it is possible to read a non-judgemental "unbiased" account.

The most common criticism was that the author(s) allowed their emotions to interfere with their retelling, while the least common was that the authors were mistaken about the facts.

The author is letting his feelings get in the way of telling the story.
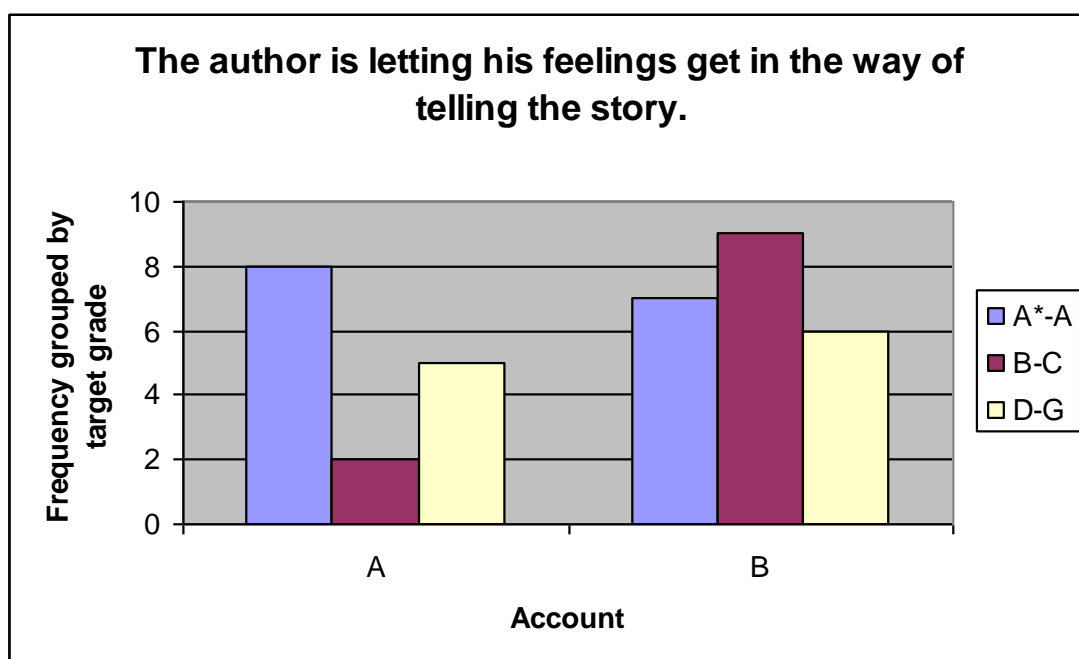
FIGURE 2.4

Every respondent felt that at least one of the authors was allowing emotions to impinge on their retelling of the story. This question is significant because it is clear children perceive emotional involvement as the biggest threat towards impartiality. Children clearly prize those accounts in which the author is emotionally detached from his account.

There was again a correlation between target grade and responses to the question (See figure 2.4). Students with middle range target grades (B-C) were more likely to accuse Account Two of excessive emotional involvement, while those with higher and lower target grade were either equally critical of both authors or more critical of the "pro-American account."

An important finding of Project Chata was that older children were unlikely to explain contradiction between accounts in terms of authorial mistakes with only a small proportion (14%) of eighth-graders explaining contradictions in this way[30]. This finding is supported by the present study which shows that students at Key Stage 4 are aware that distortion is much more likely to be caused by the selection and use of the material by the author than by one account being factually "less true" than the other. This is encouraging for the present study since pupils are already used to the idea that the historian does not have to be "mistaken" about the facts to construct a one sided account. Given that the ultimate goal of the study is to encourage pupils to create their own deliberately "one-sided" accounts it is heartening that pupils appear to understand that they can be well-informed about an event and still produce a one-sided interpretation.

> *Only 9 out of 28 surveyed believed that it was possible to have*
> *a "true" account of the past.*

Pupils were asked whether they agreed with the statement: "*There are no true accounts of the past; everyone has their own version of events*" and to explain their answer. Overall, the belief that there could exist a "true account" was more prevalent

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[30] Lee and Ashby P211

among students with middle to low target grades although it did include an A* student who later developed his ideas eloquently in interview (Child "Y" in Chapter 2d.)

When asked to explain their reasoning, pupils were shown to have extremely considered opinions about the nature of historical "truth." On studying the responses, five broad categories of explanation emerged. Although it was necessary to "pigeonhole" pupil responses, this is still safe practice since no inference was drawn from the frequency of different responses.

Spreadsheet reference	Explanation	%
Unintentional distortion	People have different points of view and inadvertently put their own across even when trying to be "unbiased."	39
Intentional distortion	People deliberately twist accounts for their own reasons	28
Not there	We weren't there so we don't know what's true and what isn't	22
Evidence	Accounts depend on what evidence you find in your research.	5
Majority History	"History" will always be what "most people" say whether it is true or not.	5[31]

It is clear that pupils had given serious thought before rejecting the notion of historical truth. It is also significant that the pupil responses all have parallels in the post-modern attack on History as an academic discipline. Whether it is the argument for an irrecoverable past (Not there) or against accounts necessarily shaped by the prevailing cultural milieu (Majority History / Unintentional distortion) it is clear that some children have naturally arrived at a post-modern critique of History as a discipline. It is, of course, possible to argue that this proves post-modern arguments are childish! But this evidence could equally serve to prove that post-modern arguments accord with our natural cynicism about the stories other people tell us.

If these results tell us anything - and we should, of course, be wary of its small sample size - they tell us that children are inherently suspicious of historical accounts: this is good news for History as a subject. But seeing children expressing these exciting

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[31] Total = 99% to avoid excessive distortion caused by rounding to whole numbers.

ideas, one is reminded of the deficiency of the current GCSE[32]: where history at Key Stage Three is investigative and predicated on assessing competing interpretations, history at Key Stage Four has changed little since O-Level. GCSE history is still heavily content driven and assessed by "essays" and "source questions." The demands of the examination syllabus mean that the past is squeezed into a "narrative of best fit." Many students lose interest in History at this age since the element of investigation and mystery which attracted them to opt for it is removed from the subject. Instead of the past being investigated it is presented, pre-packaged to the learner so that the 1930s become "the road to war" or the time of "Hitler's rise to power." In short, history at Key Stage Four becomes a teleological narrative in a way that would be considered outmoded at KS3. While independence of thought is still encouraged on the level of individual GCSE lessons; on a syllabus level, pupils are provided with a narrative that must be accepted unquestioningly. Even source questions are similarly corrupted: asking candidates to judge the "accuracy" of a given account as through there existed somewhere a wholly accurate version of the past.

It is significant that the most able students actually confess to reigning in their own historical judgement because they know that GCSE rewards an artificially balanced account (see chapter 4.) This is unfortunate: it seems that the most able students - rather than advancing their historical understanding - are playing by the "rules" of GCSE which guarantee success for uncontroversial "balanced" answers. Dean Simonton has demonstrated that this "game-playing" among people with very-high IQs can actually retard creativity; people grow so used to the rewards of "doing-as-expected" that the lose the ability to conceive of doing things differently[33]. This is a possible explanation for the difficulty that some lecturers experience in encouraging students to write argumentatively at A-Level and beyond.

Results in context

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[32] The new GCSE curriculum (first teaching September 2009) has gone some way towards redressing this problem with centre-designed units on interpretation.
[33] D. K. Simonton, *"Greatness: who makes history and why?"* (New York, 1994.)

The overall intention of the present study is to legitimise historical judgement by removing the conventions of the GCSE essay and it was anticipated that the most and least able would benefit most from this exercise. This initial survey - intended to gauge pupil's attitudes towards the role of judgement in historical writing - would appear to corroborate this. Where average (B-C) students are wedded to the idea of balance and objectivity, the most and least able appear to be ready to embrace openly subjective and judgemental accounts of the past.

In the next sub-chapter, a range of pupils are interviewed to provide more developed explanations of their ideas of historical judgement.

Chapter 2d

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

Four students were selected based on their responses to the second section of the initial interview, two whose responses appeared to encourage a postmodern approach (Children A and B) to the past and two who favoured a traditional objective approach (Children Y and Z). In both cases, one student had an A* target grade and the other a C target grade.

Child A = A* Postmodernist

Child B = C Postmodernist

Child Y = A* Objective

Child Z = C Objective

The interviews took the form of informal conversations, but the similar questions came up in all interviews and so it possible to directly compare responses under broad "question headings." The interviews were videotaped to ensure that the pupils' exact wording was preserved. Each interview was between 12 and 20 minutes in length, but only those questions which elicited interesting comparative responses are analysed below.

What was the difference between the two accounts?

In response to this question there was a clear division between the Postmodern and Objective responses which crossed the ability barrier. It was clear that Objective students immediately attempted to explain the differences by referring to author (even though the accounts said nothing of their provenance.) "Z" stated that "one was written by the Americans, the other by the Iraqis" while "Y's" response was less stark, but equally author focused: "one is written by someone who loves America, the other is written by someone who understands things more." In contrast, the postmodern students were less inclined to look at the author. "A" said, "We don't know who they're written by, but they're clearly on opposite sides," while "B" focused on tone and structure rather than content: "Both accounts put across their explanation, but account two is trying to persuade you. It seems more forceful."

These responses reflect the shift towards a procedural focus in history teaching. Since GCSE mark schemes for source questions allow approximately half marks for a content-based analysis of a source and half for analysis of provenance, teachers now train pupils to, in the words of E.H. Carr, "study the historian before the study his facts." The problem, of course, is that pupils can become preoccupied with who's saying what rather than looking at what is being said. Given that both these sources have the same author; it is possible to argue that in trying to infer provenance the Objective students have been too well trained.

What should a historian do?

The four pupils were broadly in agreement about what a historian should do. They agreed on the basic points of the historian's craft: the need to research, to be balanced and to include opinions as well as fact, but there were nuanced differences in their views. "Z" argued that a historian should try and have the same number of facts from each side, but that each fact should be followed by the historian's opinion. "Y", a talented scientist, prized exhaustive research as the historian's ultimate goal, but still argued that after all this research the historian had to "play the odds" in deciding what really happened in the past. "B" was unequivocal that "the conclusion was the most

important part," but that you have to "show your research and evidence to back it up." "A" made an even stronger case for the role of judgement and said that historians have to "go with what they think" because "no one is fully truthful about anything."

It is clear, therefore, that all pupils felt that a historian must use research to make judgements about the past; but the point of departure was the possibility or otherwise that these judgements could be "correct." To the Objective pupils it was important to achieve a balanced conclusion, to the postmodern pupils, it was enough just to reach a conclusion.

Is it possible to have an unbiased account?

Unsurprisingly, it was this question which exposed the starkest differences between the respondents. Excerpts from the two gifted students provided a summary of the debate between postmodernists and traditionalists that exists in academic History. "A" argued that, "the only way you could have an unbiased view is if you knew absolutely everything and since it's impossible to know everything, then you'll always be one-sided." This is the postmodern attack on the historian's apparent claim to omniscience, to this student one-sidedness is totally inescapable and so objectivity is impossible. She argued further that no account could be described as true, but could be "true to you." "Y's" responses can be seen as the classic Eltonian reply to this attack, "You can't change who you are or what you think, but you can do more research. The more research you do, the better your history is. A good historian might look at both sides and then change his mind."

It is possible to argue that A does not understand the full ramifications of her argument, but further questioning showed hers to be a considered opinion which she was willing to explore to its logical conclusion. Consider the following extract:

> **Interviewer:** What if I believed it was right to kill everyone with black
> hair. Would that be okay because it is "true to me?"
> **"A."** – Then I would believe you were wrong. I could try and influence
> you and say that in my opinion you are wrong, but I couldn't say you are
> wrong.

> **Interviewer:** Where does that leave the world then?
>
> **"A"** – That's why people get into arguments, because different people believe different things. No one can have full knowledge of everything so people can believe what they like. People can influence what others think, but they can't say that they're wrong and mean it as a fact.

Can we ever say that an account of the past is just plain wrong?

In answer to this question, the two "average" students were in apparent agreement and argued that an account which contained no truth at all could be described as wrong. The opinions of the two more able students make interesting reading, when "A" was asked about the implication of her radical relativism for the practice of history, she was unapologetic:

> **Interviewer**: If everyone can believe what they want, how can I mark history essays? Surely I have to give everyone 10/10 because I can't say whether what they've written is right or wrong.
>
> **"A":** I'm talking in a general sense, but in this society most people believe that the same things happen in the past and that's what we go off and that what you mark it on.
>
> **Interviewer**: In Ancient Rome you were allowed to kill your slave. If I was marking an essay in Ancient Rome and it said killing a slave was okay, then that would mean it was okay?
>
> **"A":** At that time, yes. Now we would obviously think it was wrong.
>
> **Interviewer:** So right and wrong is decided by when things happen?
>
> **"A"***:* Yes

Here, although she doesn't realise it, "A" is advancing an argument of moral relativism which is also a central plank of the postmodern challenge. In her willingness to accept the killing of slaves as "okay at the time" she has started on the road towards a contextual interpretation of truth which undermines history as a discipline.

"Y" argued that an account must be grounded in facts and that since facts could not, by definition, be incorrect then any account which relied on them could not be incorrect. When pushed on the idea of authorial selection, he used the Eltonian argument for the historian's skill as a way out:

> **Interviewer:** Could I not just find facts that agree with me?
>
> **"Y" -** No you need facts from both sides.
>
> **Interviewer:** Could I ever find facts that disagree with me that are as strong as those that agree with me?
>
> **"Y":** A good historian could, he could see both sides.

"Y" did, though, offer a caveat: "you can pick your words perfectly" to make something that isn't true still be a fact.   He supported this assertion with the example of saying that "Hitler didn't kill any Jews" is a fact because he didn't "kill any Jews personally."

Conclusions

It is clear, therefore, that children of Key Stage Four already have developed ideas about the role of objectivity and judgement in history. Some pupils think that judgement is just the summation of a balanced account of a topic while others see judgement as the most important part of the historian's craft. It is also noteworthy that the more able children in the class are engaged in debates over historical truth which mirror the historiographical debates within history faculties. "A" uses moral relativism and the impossibility of objectivity to undermine the practice of history while "Y" is aware of these shortcomings but thinks that a talented historian can make the best of a difficult job. It is also apparent that less able children are aware of these debates, but are unable to advance their ideas with the same eloquence or fully appreciate the implications of their opinions.

Chapter 3

Where Chapter 2 laid the groundwork and examined pupil starting-points, this chapter forms the main body of the study. The Chapter is in three parts:

   a) *The Lessons - Preparing for free-form assessment*
   b) *Broad Analysis of Pupil Outcomes*
   c) *4 Intelligences – A Sample of pupil work analysed in detail.*

Chapter 3a

THE LESSONS – PREPARING FOR FREE-FORM ASSESSMENT

Following the initial survey seen in Chapter 2, the target group began their work on the Origins of the Cold War in the Summer Term of 2008. From the beginning of the unit, the group were informed that the focus for the coming term was on improving skills of historical judgement, this focus struck a chord with many students who had recently dropped marks in the Year 10 exam by failing to apply judgement in their work. To this end, three lessons were developed. The first lesson sought to emphasise the skill of historical judgement, the second sought to study the role of the historian as a historical actor and the final lesson was designed explicitly to prepare students for free-form assessment. In this section the lessons are analysed in detail in order to explain their role in the study as a whole. Attention is drawn to the most relevant pupil handouts by using inserted images, but the resources can be found in full in the appendix 4 (not fully available in electronic format).

Lesson 1 – How can we use Judgement better?

On entry to the classroom, pupils were given a sheet which asked them to write down what they though the difference was between "history" and "the past." During feedback, several ideas were advanced including chronological proximity, significance and objectivity. By using questioning, the teacher was able to promote the case of judgement in separating the two. Figure 3.1 demonstrates the way in which this difference was explained to the class.

Where does History come from?

The past describes everything that has ever happened. It is not possible to visit the past or even see the past. The past has no existence.
History, on the other hand, does exist. It is a version of the past that a historian has constructed. The historian has two types of evidence to go on.

What's this got to do with my GCSE?

At GCSE level, you are expected to do much more than "describe the past," you are expected to be a historian. This means that you must construct your own version of what happened in the past.
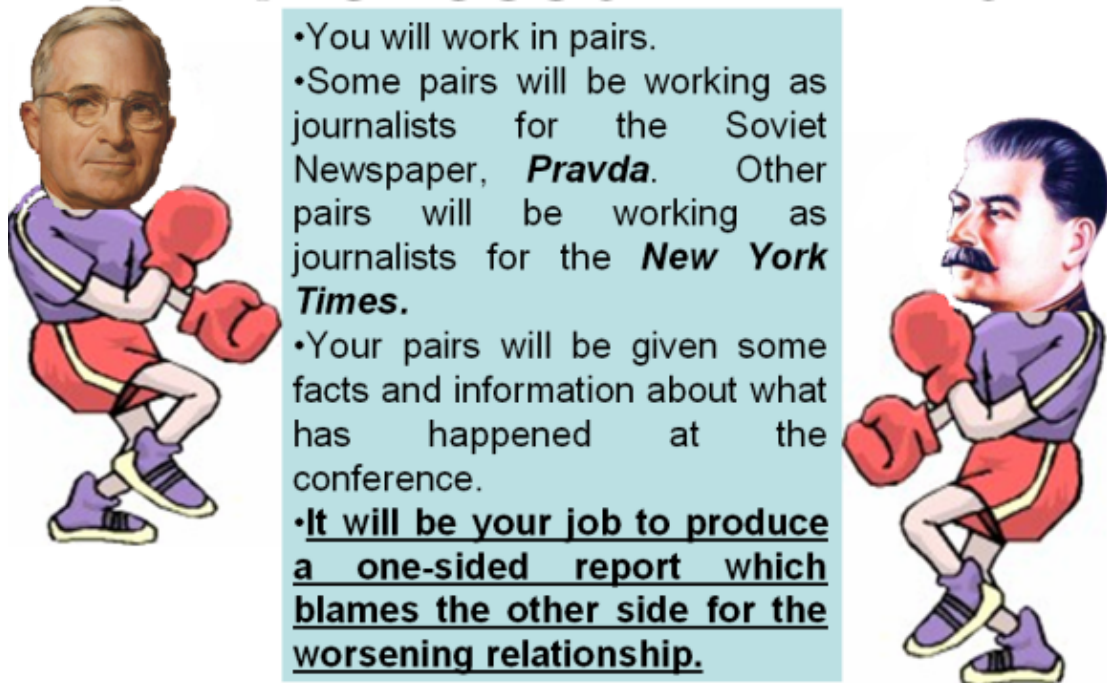
This means that you not only need to say what happened, but also your **judgement** about what happened. Judgement is how you as a historian understand the events.

FIGURE 3.1

A historical role-playing exercise was then used to highlight the significance of authorial interpretation in shaping an account. The class had been studying the global events that shaped the mood at the Potsdam meeting of Truman, Stalin and Atlee in July 1945. The class were already familiar with these events (occupation of Poland, successful testing of the A-Bomb etc.) This familiarity helped to stress that the focus of the lesson was communication rather than substantive knowledge. For the main activity, the class were given blank newspaper front-pages and asked to work in pairs, half of the newspapers were mock-ups of the *New York Times*, the other half of *Pravda* (Figure 3.2). Each pair was expected to use the facts they were given to produce an account of developments at Potsdam that would be agreeable to their

respective editors. Crucially, both sets of pairs had been given exactly the same facts, but the class were not told this.

FIGURE 3.2

At the end of the lesson, volunteers read out their newspaper reports and the class were asked how the accounts differed. It quickly became apparent to the class that although the newspapers differed in emphasis and tone, both newspapers had been using the same facts. The two such radically divergent interpretations could emerge from the same facts was enlightening to many in the group. The teacher used this opportunity to stress the role of historical judgment in essays and that, while judgement is given relatively little reward in exams, it is crucial to reach some sort of judgemental conclusion.

Lesson 2 – What can we learn from the History of Art?

At the end of the unit, a lesson was delivered about the history of art. The lesson began with a sorting activity; the class were given five colour cards (see appendix 3) each showing a typical picture from different artistic movements and they were asked

to put them in order. After this, the class were asked what criteria they had used to do this, ideas included the subject of the painting and the sophistication of the painting. By way of continuation the class were asked the question, "What is art for?" Here pupils gave a range of answers including, "people like doing it," "you try to make something beautiful," "you try to put your feelings across" and "you try to make your picture look like something."

The class were then taken on a whistle-stop tour of the history of art from realism, through impressionism and modernism to post-modern art. The teacher highlighted the changing role of the artist in these artistic eras. From passive observer of a fixed world (realism), to chronicler of a world in flux (impressionism), to active participant transmitting a message (modernism) and finally to the post-modern acceptance that art belongs more to the viewer than to the artist. Following this discussion, the class were asked what they thought the point of "History" as a subject was.

Following the class's discussion of the nature of history, the class were taken on a whistle-stop tour of the historiographical development of academic history. At each stage, parallels were drawn between the role of the historian in his academic milieu and the painter in his. In the final activity, the class were given four accounts of the Battle of Hastings written in a range of historiographical styles. The class were asked to use a template (Figure 3.3) to classify the account by its historiographical style and also to liken it to one of the paintings that they ordered on entry. It should be note that given the time-constraints and age of the subjects involved, the descriptions of historiographic and artistic trends were necessarily simplified. In some cases this has lead to a "tabloid" or caricatured version of the style in question. Since the focus of the lesson was to look at the changing role of the artist and historian in his work, rather than a detailed lesson on art-history or historiography, this was excusable.

FIGURE 3.3

Lesson 3 – How can we communicate our ideas differently?

The lesson following the discussion of art history focused explicitly on free-form assessment. The class now felt comfortable about discussing communicating ideas in non-traditional formats and were visibly excited by the opportunity to showcase their own ideas about the Cold War.

The class brainstormed ideas for non-traditional communication and their ideas are shown in Figure 3.4. The class were then given examples of multi-media historical communication including songs, plays, films, paintings and cartoons. The class were each given a small A5 sheet which clarified the rules of the task and the success criteria:

1. It must have something to say about the Cold War. It could focus on one event such as the Marshall Plan or look at the whole Cold War.
2. It can be in any form EXCEPT AN ESSAY.
3. It is expected that you will try to think of your own creative form.
4. If it is not immediately obvious, you must also submit an explanation of your submission which explains what point your assignment is making.

What is Mr Smith looking for:

1. An inventive and creative way of putting your ideas across (medium).

2. Evidence that you understand the Cold War

3. Evidence that shows you have a personal viewpoint or opinion.

Radio Play   Junk Model   Diary entries   Short Story

Painting   Comic Strip   Telephone Discussion

Overheard Conversation

Sculpture

What form of work could you produce?

Song

Poem

Dance

Cartoon   Film

Comedy Sketch   Piece of Music
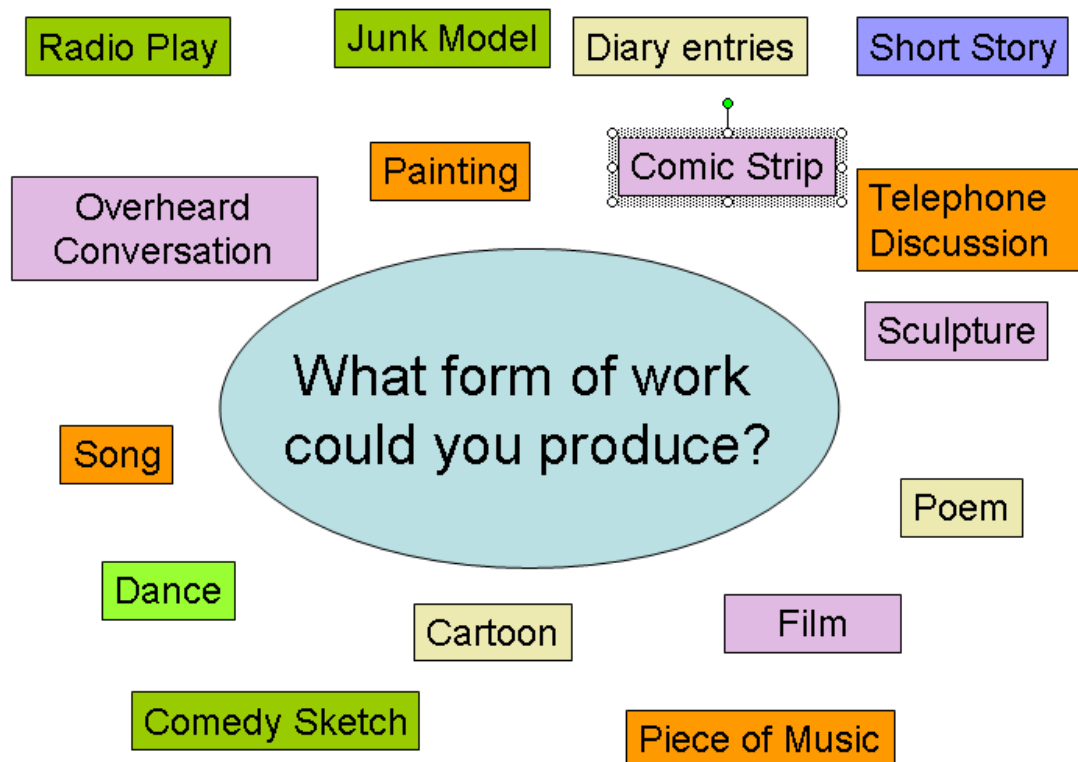
FIGURE 3.4

Chapter 3b

ANALYSIS OF CLASS'S SUBMISSIONS

Intelligence Type	Submissions	Frequency
Visual	Cartoon	5
	Painting	1
	Comic Strip	1
	Poster	2
Kinaesthetic	Decorated cake	1
	Stop-motion animation	2
Logical-Mathematical	Flow diagram	2
	Computer game concept	1
Interpersonal	Diary entry	2
	Short Story	1
Linguistic-Verbal	Poem	2
Musical	Song	2

FIGURE 3.5

Figure 3.5 categorises the submissions by the dominant intelligence on display
Clearly, some submissions (such as songs) were easier to classify than others since many submissions demonstrated evidence of several forms of intelligence. A short-story, for example, shows facility with words (linguistic intelligence), but also an ability to create and empathise with characters (interpersonal intelligence.) Although any classifying is author-led and subjective, I aimed to assess the thinking behind the submission rather than the medium itself; thus, although a concept for a computer game, a poem and Stalin's diary were all written, there are clearly three different kinds of intelligence on display.

A glance at the table above shows that six of Gardner's seven intelligences were on display in this study. The seventh intelligence, intrapersonal, refers to a developed capacity for reflection and independence. While the task as a whole demanded self-motivation, it would be difficult to characterise any work as demonstrating intrapersonal as the dominant intelligence. The table shows that visual intelligence was the most common intelligence on display with the relatively "safe" historical form of the cartoon being the most popular choice.

Analysis of pupil submissions against pupil data (CATs, KS3 levels and predicted grades) showed that there was absolutely no correlation between performance at school and dominant intelligence. Two conclusions can be drawn from this; firstly it is apparent CATs performance is a poor indicator of dominant intelligence - that pupils with high verbal CATs scores did not necessarily prefer verbal communication when offered the choice. Secondly, it seems that "creativity" "defined as the ability to approach problems in new ways) is not a subset of intelligence, as some psychologists have argued, but a separate faculty which exists across the ability range. The study, then, lends support to a pluralist notion of intelligence.

An interesting side note concerns the non-submissions: 5 members of the class (18%) failed to submit any work for this assignment. There are, of course, a range of reasons for non-submission (not least the study taking place at the end of the school year,) but it is interesting to look at these students in more detail. When the group is ordered by average CATs results, the non submissions were clustered at either end of the ability range – two in the bottom quartile and, more interestingly, two with average CATs scores above 110. When challenged, these pupils offered banal excuses (forgot/lost work etc,) but it is possible that these students did not see the value of the work in the way that other students did. Since it was originally postulated that free-form assessment would most assist those pupils at the top and bottom of the ability range, it is surprising that these students were the most reluctant to complete the set task.

Chapter 3c

4 INTELLIGENCES – PUPILS' WORK IN DETAIL

Bodily-Kinaesthetic

FIGURE 3.6

The decorated cake (figure 3.6) was submitted by a female member of the group and is evidence of developed bodily kinaesthetic intelligence. This submission has been categorised as a bodily-kinaesthetic submission both for the high level of dexterity shown and the choice of medium.

At its most simple level, the cake is merely a visual representation of the cold war. The flag is divided into two halves, each draped with the flag of one of the protagonists. Each half of the cake shows the core values of that society as understood by the respondent so that the "capitalist" side is characterised by a large

pile of money and gold bullion, while the "communist" side has smaller, evenly distributed piles of coins and a bread loaf. Each side also has nuclear weapons (the US with more) pointed at the other over the acronym MAD (mutually assured destruction) at the cake's centre.

The cake, though, represents much more than a visual representation of the cold war. A lengthy extract from the student's written justification explains the choice of medium:

> "I chose this medium for a number of reasons. Firstly, a cake is usually divided up and shared. This shows the way that the great powers divided up the world. Secondly, the cake replicates how fragile the world became during the cold war with the threat of atomic bombs because a cake is very delicate and needs to be handled carefully. The world could easily have been destroyed, in much the same manner that a cake is destroyed when the time comes to eat it. Thirdly, although it doesn't look likely now that a country would use atomic bombs, I do believe that in future the world could be destroyed by atomic bombs. This is shown by the way that, at some point, the cake will eventually be eaten and destroyed. You can't have a cake and not eat it. In the same way, you can't have atomic bombs and not use them. It's tempting fate to have them in the first place."

It is clear, therefore, that the cake represented much more than a novel way of showing global division during the cold war. The extract above demonstrates that she is an extremely literate student and one who can express herself comfortably in written communication. She has not, therefore, chosen a cake "to avoid writing," but rather because the form best transmits her internal mental construct of the nature of the cold war. When interviewed, the pupil explained that she "saw it like that in her head;" in other words, the cake is intrinsic to the pupil's *understanding* of the cold war. The cake is not so much an invention, as a physical manifestation of a mental image.

This student has clearly capitalised on the opportunity to submit free-form assessment. Had she been asked to submit a formal written assessment no doubt this would have satisfied the demands of GCSE (her marks are have been in the A*-B range) but it is doubtful that it would have consolidated her understanding of the cold

war in the same way since it would have forced her to fit her understanding of the cold war into an essay structure.

Even critics of multiple intelligence theory admit to the "soft" benefits in terms of "inclusion" and "raising self-esteem.[34]" These benefits are also evident in this particular assessment: the student has used the cake as an opportunity for reflection and self-expression since it is not just used to show historical understanding, but also the her anxiety about the world in a nuclear age. The student has used the cake as an opportunity to vocalise her judgement that the world is as "fragile as a cake" i.e. still vulnerable to nuclear attack. The narrow focus of the GCSE assessment would never have allowed the student to express her anxieties in this way.

The cake's creator had an interesting CATs profile with a high non-verbal score (119,) a slightly above average verbal (107) and a low quantative score (94.) This is a significant discrepancy, her non-verbal score is 2 standard deviations above the mean while her quantative is 1 SD below the mean – if her school year group is placed in order she is 30th in the non-verbal list and 177th in the quantative list. This CATs profile would seem to accord with her chosen medium, her high non-verbal score would account for her description of "seeing it like that" in her head. GCSE assessment as currently practised places an overemphasis on literacy and so unfairly benefits those with a high verbal/linguistic intelligence – the example shows why that might be misguided

Interpersonal Intelligence

The idea of interpersonal intelligence, which refers to an ability to understand feelings and emotions in others, has become rather fashionable. One can hardly open a magazine without reading a questionnaire which promises to assess your "emotional intelligence," with some psychologists arguing that emotional intelligence is actually a better predictor of earning potential than IQ. The three examples of interpersonal intelligence seen in this study consisted of two diaries (one of Stalin, the other of a Briton during the late 1940s) and a short-story. The choice of diaries represents a

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[34] Op. cit. J. White, P1

deliberate leap into the personal and emotional sphere – their authors felt comfortable empathising with a particular historical character. These diaries, however, were of disappointing quality and demonstrated simplistic emotional responses e.g. "I was scared" and "I felt betrayed." In one case, so weak was the emotional connection between authoress (actually "Z" from the previous chapter) and creation that when interviewed two weeks after submission she could remember little of what she had written. The short-story (written by "Y") was, on the other hand, extremely nuanced and well written.

The story was arguably evidence of high linguistic intelligence since it showed developed skills of creative writing: "relief washed over him" and accomplished use of complex sentences, but the content - a third person narrative of a USAF pilot at the time of the Berlin Airlift – focused on the personal and emotional. His choice of an empathy exercise reflects familiarity these tasks at Key Stage Three. These tasks have recently come under fire for their tendency to result in sensationalism and ahistoricism, but this was not the case here. The author eschewed the action-packed approach that one might expect from a fourteen year-old boy and concentrated instead on intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection: "He was spending more and more time with his children to make up for the time he would miss when he left." The story ends not with triumphalism, but with bathos and has the protagonist reflecting on "how terrible things would have been if it had gone wrong." Contemporary accounts of the airlift suggest that this cautious optimism was the prevailing mood at the time.

"Y" is a gifted academic all-rounder: he is in the top decile for all three CATs disciplines and average of 126 places him fifth in the year. Particularly gifted in science, he has a keen eye for detail and used the story as an opportunity to extend his knowledge of the Berlin Blockade and Airlift by carrying out additional research. The story demonstrated a depth and specificity of knowledge (including weights of cargo and names of airbases) which had not been covered in class. Most interesting was "Y's" attempt to research the feelings of those involved. Consider this exchange in a follow-up interview:

> **Interviewer**: Why did you choose a story?

> **"Y"** "I thought it was the easiest way to express how people felt at the time
> as well as the many details that were in it [*sic.*] I doesn't matter what went
> on, if you don't know how people felt about it."
> **Interviewer:** How did you decide how people felt?
> **"Y"** "I mostly used imagination, but I found poems by American pilots
> that said how they felt."

"Y" is clearly emotionally literate, but he does not feel confident enough to presume to know the feelings of others. Critics of multiple intelligence theory might suggest that "Y" believes he can research and recover feelings as accurately as the payloads of an aeroplane, but this is to misread his intentions. The desire to "check" feelings which "Y" shows is similar to the practice of "summarising" in talking-cures wherein the counsellor repeats his understanding of the client's feelings to ensure that there is true empathic understanding.

When asked whether he valued the exercise in free-form assessment, "Y" response was unsurprisingly astute:

> "I would have understood it the same if I'd done an essay because an essay
> is just putting what you know onto paper so that the teacher knows whether
> you've understood it. An essay is just for the teacher to see what we know,
> rather than for us to understand the work more."

There is an appreciation here that the free-form model differs from traditional assessment because it is focused on furthering and consolidating understanding rather than measuring that understanding.

Visual Intelligence

FIGURE 3.7

Visual intelligence was by far the most common dominant intelligence displayed by the class's submissions. The most common submission type were cartoons which showed the differences in strength and ideology between East and West, the more nuanced submissions focused particularly on one event such as the Marshall Plan or Berlin Airlift to highlight these differences.

The best of these submissions (Figure 3.7) was by "A" from the previous chapter. The picture is divided into two – one showing the strength (muscled arm) of the US and its largesse to its allies, the other showing the war-damage and oppression of the Soviet Bloc. The picture also contains useful historic detail by illustrating the precise amounts of Marshall Aid given to the major recipients. Interestingly, though, the written justification adds much to the viewer's appreciation of the artwork. The bottle in the bottom right represents "COMECON and the way it was used to keep Communist countries 'bottled-up,'" while the Western-European flags are shown to be "tattered because they have suffered so much in the war."

As a firm believer in the role of historical judgement, it is unsurprising that her work was one of the few to make explicit reference to historical debate. The barbed wire fence (representing the iron-curtain) summarises competing interpretations of the Marshall Plan by being lined on one side with the words "altruism" and "containment" and on the other with the words "spreading capitalism" and "taking over the world."

FIGURE 3.8

The abstract painting (Figure 3.8) demonstrated most clearly the benefits of free-form assessment to the least able. It was submitted by one of the least able members of the class (CAT average 93) and demonstrates how alternative assessment empowers the less-literate to communicate complex ideas. The painting is a mess of coloured dots which mix and overlap one another. The contributor explained in interview that the red dots represented the Soviet Union and the blue, the United States. The dwindling amount of white space represented "space for communication" which was being overtaken by yellow dots which symbolised suspicion and the atomic bomb. The message, therefore, being that colonisation of the world by the superpowers was

driven by suspicion and that communication and cooperation became less likely as the Cold War went on. This is clearly an intelligent, albeit unoriginal, comment on the Cold War, but it is interesting to compare the complexity of the artwork and the artist's *viva voce* defensive of that work with the written justification she submitted alongside it.

The artist frequently makes good spoken contributions to class discussion and her Verbal CAT score – at 98 – is the highest of her three scores; but she has severe difficulty with written communication. Her marks at GCSE have been poor, not because she doesn't grasp the material, but because her essays (which totally lack any punctuation, even full-stops) are virtually unreadable. The extract below is from the written submission and is intended to transmit the same ideas that she communicated eloquently in a face-face conversation:

> "The blue I feel allows space which america gave themselfs and is overpowering the picture as they did wish to do when the cold war was nationally known however the yellow seperates the natural flow between the two country with america being blue and the USSR being red" *[sic]*

The painting, then, represents an internal visual construct of the Cold War which the artist can communicate as a visual expression, but which she struggles to put into words.

Musical Intelligence

Two students demonstrated Musical Intelligence by submitting songs as assessments; one was a guitar solo and the other a dance composition. The dance composition with the title "Cold War Megamix" by DT Truman Ft MC Churchill is the easier for a non-musician to unpick. The track opens with an explosion followed by calming slow-tempo keyboard music. This calming music is then punctuated by Truman announcing the dropping of the Japanese atomic bombs, the tempo of the music thereafter is much more urgent. The music (one bar repeated over and over) increases in urgency before the track concludes with Churchill's Iron curtain speech officially announcing the beginning of East-West hostilities.

The musician, "B" from the previous chapter, has a Verbal CATs score of 119 and expresses himself comfortably in written English. His written justification explained his composition fluently:

> "After the explosion, Truman's speech confirmed the dropping of the bomb. This speech is played over a slow synth sound representing the feeling of sadness after the bomb was dropped. Then the fast dance music kicks in representing Russia's anger and feelings of paranoia and Russia's race to create their own bomb. I finished with the Iron Curtain speech because this explained how the bomb had caused a divide across Europe."

"B" can clearly express himself well in written English; his ample vocabulary allows him to refer to complex emotions such as "paranoia," but in the hands of a musically intelligent person, these emotions are converted into musical form. The choice of a musical submission was not, therefore, an attempt to avoid written communication. In a follow up interview, he made it clear that he understood the demands of the GCSE course:

> **Interviewer:** If I had given you an essay about who was to blame for the Cold War, that would you have done?
> **"B" -** I'd do an introduction and say why America was to blame and then why Russia was to blame and then a conclusion.
> **Interviewer:** Did you find it easier to do a song, then?
> **"B" -** "Not easier, really, but I felt more up for doing this because when you get an essay it's like, oh no more writing!

These answers provide an interesting take on the idea of multiple intelligences. "B" has shown that he is able to "play the game" when it comes to school history, but he finds the process repetitive and under-stimulating. The decision to make a song was not born out of a difficulty with traditional modes of communication, but rather boredom with it. "B" was grateful for the opportunity to express himself in a musical way, but made was at pains to demonstrate that he did not consider it a soft-option.

> **"B" -** "I wanted to do a song from the off, but I was going to use a guitar, but then the more I thought about it a dance song was better because it went better with the speeches. I wanted to use music, but I wanted the real history in there too."

Interviewer: So did you do research?

"B" - "With an essay I just would have looked over my notes, but this way I had to go on the internet and find the speeches and other stuff. I looked into it more than if I'd done and essay."

Chapter 4 – Towards a Conclusion

Throughout the study two aims have been at the forefront of planning and execution: firstly to raise the profile of historical judgement at GCSE level and secondly to raise attainment particularly among the most and least able. The method for achieving these aims was a reinvention of assessment at GCSE to allow for multiple intelligences and non-written communication. In terms of its aims, this study is best described as a qualified success: the study has confirmed the existence of multiple intelligences and demonstrated that historical understanding can be communicated in a variety of ways, but much work remains to be done on how this kind of assessment can be best used at GCSE level.

The relative success of the study is determined by one's understanding of assessment. It was hoped originally, that free-form assessment could be used to replace – at least in part – summative written assessment at GCSE. In this respect, the study has raised more questions than answers: how does one balance the relative merits of a painting and a song? How does an examiner avoid unwitting linguistic bias? How can we separate artistic and musical flair from the historical understanding which is, after all, what we are trying to measure? These issues are colossal, and it was not the intention of the study to address them. Rather than a model for summative assessment, free-form exercises are best treated as tools in *formative* assessment.

Free-form assessment has a role in "Assessment *for* Learning;" that is, diagnostic assessment that enables the teacher to identify targets for progression. Free-form assessment provides an opportunity for a pupil to communicate his understanding of a period or an event, teacher feedback gives an opportunity for a teacher to comment on this understanding and iron-out any misconceptions. It could be argued that assessment for learning can take place in the existing formal set-up of predominantly written assessment, but this approach encourages anodyne responses and does not challenge the student to present his interpretation or understanding of the past. Existing modes of assessment encourage pupils to recreate pre-packaged narratives, rather than laying bare their own "constructs" of the past. Free-form assessment encourages a pupil's eye view of the past which exposes inconsistencies and

misconceptions for teacher diagnosis. The idea that assessment should take the form of detailed written feedback rather than a mark or grade is already well imbedded at Key Stage Three and should be extended to Key Stage 4[35].

As long as free-form assessment remains a minority practice at Key Stage Four it will always be a struggle to ensure that all students take it seriously. The quality of student responses varied enormously, from the impressive work seen in the previous chapter to rushed and ill-thought out work which showed, in some cases, hostility to the very idea of free-form assessment. It is interesting that hostility towards free-form assessment tended to be concentrated among students targeted grade A and B; that is to say, successful students, but not gifted students. Students with these target grades are the most likely to have benefited from behaviourist teaching strategies and formulaic assessment; meaning they have neither the inventiveness and creativity of the more gifted nor the "nothing-to-lose" adventurism of the less able. It is unfortunate that some students were unable to see the value of working in this way, but it is an indictment of an education system which rewards "tick-box thinking" and places a low premium on creativity. It was clear that some students felt they had "out-grown" this kind of assessment, but this reflects dominant educational practice rather than the age-appropriateness of the activity. Until more teachers begin to explore the value of free-form assessment, isolated practice like this will always be treated with suspicion. It is hoped that the emphasis placed on creative and reflective thinking in the 2008 Key Stage Three curriculum will spill over into Key Stage Four and make activities like this more commonplace in all subjects.

The biggest gains of the study were in so-called "soft skills" i.e. skills of personal and cognitive development rather than subject-specific skills of hard knowledge. There were particularly interesting developments in terms of historical judgement. It was clear that the group used the study as an opportunity to construct their own understandings of the past. In some cases there was historical judgement in evidence, but more often these constructs consisted of a different perspective on the past. Rather than the omniscient voice so commonly used in pupil's history work, pupils tended to look at the past more from "ground-level". The specific gain here is in the

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[35] S. Butler, "Question: When is a comment not worth the paper it's written on? Answer: when it's accompanied by a level, grade or mark!" *Teaching History*, 115 Pp37-41

elimination of - or at least the diminution of - hindsight. Some pupils at GCSE struggle enormously with the challenge of viewing the past on its own terms but in this study, pupils frequently empathised with historical actors and so avoided the cardinal sin of presentism – judging the past by the standards of the present.

All this is not to say that free-form communication may never be used for summative assessment, but that more work must be done to put in place safeguards to ensure consistency. Until this work is done, free form assessment should be treated as another tool in the teacher's toolkit; it should be used to encourage creativity, engagement and self-confidence. It should, in short, complement rather than replace traditional modes of assessment. It should seek to raise GCSE history above the reductive behaviourist training to which too many students are subject. Perhaps is it is appropriate that the final words go to student "Y," "In an essay, you just put what you know down on paper so that the teacher can see you've understood it. This [study] helped you do that, but helped me understand the work more too."

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Name	Predicted grade	KS3	CAT AV	NV	QUANT	VER	Submission	Author is unbiased	Author selection	Author lacks research	Author distortion	Author emotion	Author mistaken	Is there a true account?	Why no true account?	Consistency a to b	number = a	number = b	number = a qt discarded	number=b qt discarded	Total a+b	Interviewed	a less reliable than b?
	d	5	93	86	96	98	V	b	b	a	neither	a	a			2	4	2	3	1	4		*
	c	5	95	93	85	107		neither	both	both	both	both	both	Yes		6	5	5	5	5	10	*	
	b	6	97	95	100	95	V	b	both	neither	neither	b	neither	yes		5	2	3	1	2	3		
	d	5	91	96	90	86	K	neither	both	neither	neither	both	both	no	unintentional	6	3	3	3	3	6		
	a	6	104	96	105	111	LIN	neither	both	b	both	b	neither	no	not there	4	2	4	2	4	6		
	b	6	94	97	89	95	LOG	a	neither	neither	neither	b	neither			4	1	1	0	1	1		
	e	5	93	98	88	92	K	both	a	a	a	both	a	no	unintentional	2	6	2	5	1	6	*	*
	d	5	101	100	95	107	MUS	neither	both	neither	b	both	both	no	unintentional	5	3	4	3	4	7		
	d	5	99	100	102	96		b	a	a	neither	both	b	Yes	intentional	3	4	3	3	2	5		*
	d	6	101	103	97	102	I	both	b	a	both	b	neither	no	intentional	3	3	4	2	3	5	*	
	d	5	100	103	105	92	LOG	a	b	a	both	b	b	no	not there	1	3	4	2	4	6		
	b	6	105	106	107	103	V	a	b	neither	neither	b	b	yes	Not there	3	1	2	0	2	2		
	a*	6	107	107	109	105	LOG	neither	b	a	a	a	neither	no	intentional	2	3	1	3	1	4	*	*
A	a*	7	111	111	112	110	V	b	neither	b	a	a	a	no	unintentional	2	4	2	3	1	4		*
	b	6	112	112	117	107	V	a	b	b	b	b	a	no	Unintentional	0	1	5	0	5	5		
	a	6	111	113	106	114	LIN	both	both	a	neither	b	b	no	majority history	4	3	3	2	2	4		
	b	5	112	114	108	114	V	a	b	a	a	b	neither	no	intentional	0	3	3	2	3	5		
Z	c	6	108	115	107	103	I	a	b	a	b	b	b	no	intentional	1	2	3	1	3	4	*	
	a*	7	114	115	108	120	V	neither	b	a	neither	a	neither	no	Evidence	3	2	1	2	1	3		*
	a	5	117	116	128	106		neither	b	both	a	a	neither	no	unintentional	3	3	2	3	2	5		*
	a	6	111	117	107	108		neither	neither	both	neither	both	neither	no	not there	6	2	2	2	2	4		
	a	7	107	119	94	107	K	neither	both	neither	both	both	neither	no	Not there	6	3	4	3	4	7		
	a	7	114	119	112	112	V	a	a	both	b	b	neither	no	unintentional	2	3	3	2	3	5		
	b	6	111	120	99	115	K	neither	both	both	both	both	both			6	5	5	5	5	10		
	a	6	120	120	105	134		neither	both	neither	b	both	neither	no	intentional	5	2	4	2	4	6		
Y	a*	7	126	130	121	119		neither	b	a	both	both	a	yes		3	4	3	4	3	7	*	*
B	c	5	111		103	119	MUS	a	neither	neither	b	b	neither	Yes		3	1	2	0	2	2	*	
																	2.9	3	2.33	2.7			

Accounts of 9/11 and the War on Terror

Account One

America is the most successful nation in the world. 25% of the world's business directly involves the United States. It is no surprise that America is so successful, its success comes from the fact that it is also the freest country in the world. In the USA everyone has a vote to choose who governs them and everyone, whatever their race, gender or religion, has the right to do whatever they want with their lives.

On the 11th September 2001, four planes were hijacked. Three of these planes were then flown into buildings with the intention of killing everyone inside, the fourth plane crashed in an empty field. Altogether nearly 3, 000 people were killed in what is the biggest terrorist attack to hit America. This was an attack on America by a Muslim extremist terrorist organisation which hates freedom and the American way of life.

Al Qaeda is an extremist Islamic terrorist organisation. It is opposed to western style freedom and supports a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam which includes restricting women's rights and brutal punishment of criminals. It is committed to killing innocent civilians in the West in order to spread its hate-filled ideas.

After 9/11 the American government declared the "War on Terror." This meant fighting terrorists in their home nations so that they could not pose a threat to America. This War on Terror involved fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Before America invaded these countries were brutal dictatorships, but now they are healthy democracies like those in the West. The terrorist attacks in London in July 2005 prove that America is right to attack terrorist in their native countries and that America is making the world more free.

Are there any words/phrases that you don't understand? If so write them here:

Consider these statements about the above passage and indicate whether you agree with them.

Statement	I agree
The author is trying his best to give an "unbiased" account of the past.	
The author has carefully selected the evidence that makes him look correct.	
The author should have done more research before he wrote this.	
The author has deliberately twisted facts to make him look correct.	
The author is letting his feelings get in the way of telling the story.	
The author is mistaken about some of the facts.	

Account Two

America is the richest country in the world. It uses its wealth and influence to bully the rest of the world into giving up its raw materials cheaply. America says that is supports freedom around the world, but they also support brutal governments like Saudi Arabia (which beheads criminals and forbids women from driving) because it supplies America with cheap oil. America decides that a "good government" is any that does what America wants and an "evil country" is any that does not.

On September 11th 2001, four aeroplanes were hijacked and crashed into three buildings killing 2, 998 people. The planes were crashed into the World Trade Centre (the home of American business) and the Pentagon (the home of the American army) in protest at the way that America behaves around the world.

Al Qaeda is an organisation that is at war with America and its allies. It demands that America should stop interfering in other countries and should stop supporting brutal governments. It is not "at war with freedom" because it only attacks those countries (like Britain) who support America, not countries like Sweden or Belgium which are democracies, but don't support America. It does use violence and murder to support its aims, but America has murdered thousands of people in Iraq and Afghanistan to support its aims.

Since 9/11 America launched the "War on Terror" which means that it has become even more aggressive in spreading its influence around the world. It attacked Afghanistan soon after and then Iraq two years later. Altogether around 700, 000 people have been killed in these wars, but Al Qaeda was still strong enough to attack London in 2005. American troops have basically conquered Afghanistan and Iraq and now these countries have no strong governments and have become extremely dangerous places.

Are there any words/phrases that you don't understand? If so write them here:

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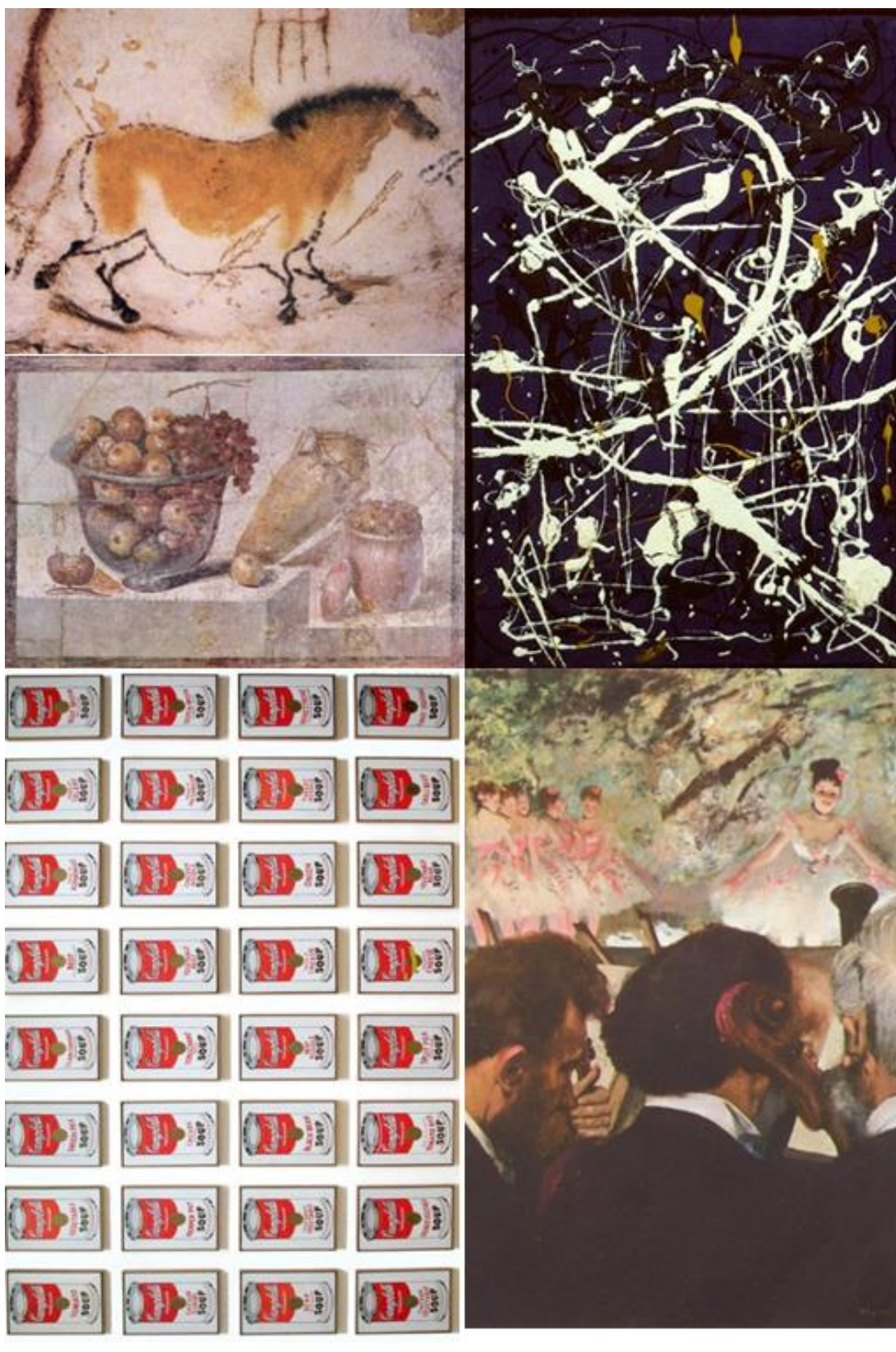
Appendix 4

Lesson Plans and Resources

(Not available in e-format)