Enquiry-based teaching of History with young children: Mediating immersion, resources, and perspectives

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Abstract

The National Curriculum is a document written by the Department for Education and contains the statutory requirements all teachers in maintained schools in England must follow. This research study will examine the path primary teachers in England, those who teach 5 to 11 year olds, navigate to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and encourage the skills of historical enquiry all whilst providing a creative and engaging environment for their young learners. To do this, semi-structured interviews with established primary school teachers, including some history subject leads, were employed to generate a rich description of the strategies they used to successfully navigate this tightrope. Findings show that the teachers involved in this study used a variety of creative strategies including drama, enrichment activities and examination of historical evidence to provide learning experiences of high epistemic quality. This will be used to provide a bank of ideas and strategies for primary ECTs entering the profession and enhance their professional development.

Keywords

Introduction

> Teachers are, in my experience, a creative and imaginative breed who can provide an endless supply of new ways of introducing topics and stimulating learning
>
> (Doull, Russell and Hales, 2019, pp.7).

Doull et al. (2019) go on to assert that it is this design of "new and imaginative learning experiences that maintains a historical focus is a large part of the role of a good history practitioner" (Doull, Russell and Hales, 2019, pp.7). Yet, in the UK the current National Curriculum, which all maintained schools must follow, moves away from this idea towards a knowledge-rich approach. The National Curriculum, states clearly in the Purpose of Study that all children, aged 5 to 11 years, must gain a clear knowledge and understanding of Britain's past (DfE, 2013). It also highlights the importance of understanding the process of history (disciplinary knowledge) as well as the knowledge of what actually happened (substantive knowledge). However, in the years since the publication of this National Curriculum, the emphasis has been on knowledge-rich approach with Ofsted, England's regulatory body for schools, praising schools who prioritise knowledge. (Jenner, 2021).

Currently in England, there appears to be tensions between those who argue that creativity and enquiry within primary history pedagogy have long gone hand in hand (Cooper, 2013; Doull, Russell and Hales, 2019; Nichol, 2013) with creative learning experiences which "excite, intrigue, challenge and develop" pupils and thus allow the teacher to guide them through historical enquiry. (Nichol, 2013, pp.102) and those apparently on the other side encouraging schools to prioritise knowledge. This research study will investigate how primary school teachers in England need to navigate this tightrope; one which includes creativity to motivate and engage the children they teach and includes historical enquiry to allow children's disciplinary knowledge to develop, all set within the parameters of statutory frameworks such as the 2014 National Curriculum and ensuring high epistemic quality.

Citation

Literature Review

Context: The National Curriculum

The National Curriculum, published in 2013 to become statutory in September 2014, emphasised both the substantive knowledge (the *what* of history) and the disciplinary knowledge (process of history) (DfE, 2013). Enquiry is in fact embedded within the National Curriculum, within both the aims and purpose of study, and reinforced within the findings of the recent Research and Review Series produced by Ofsted. Thus, valuing high epistemic quality. Hudson (2019) argued for the importance of high epistemic quality in the teaching of mathematics. When the epistemic quality was high (prioritising knowing how, fallibility and uncertainty of maths and the promotion of problem-solving and critical thinking) the result was an improvement in not only student engagement but also enjoyment and fulfilment (Hudson, 2019). This research study will explore how teachers create learning experiences of high epistemic quality within history.

Historical Enquiry

One of the findings of the Historical Association Primary survey was that out of the 377 responses, one of the two areas participants felt least confident in was historical enquiry (HA, 2023, p.46). However, Russell (2016, pp.26) argues that "enquiry is at the beating heart of good history teaching" in alignment with the 2014 National Curriculum. There appears to be a disconnect here. This leads to thinking about exactly what is meant by historical enquiry and how it fits within primary history pedagogy, the methods used to teach history to young children.

Academics have sought to consider what is meant by historical enquiry and what this looks like in history taught in primary schools. Dixon and Hales (2014) argue that historical enquiry is a process which is necessary not only for children to learn effectively but when it is embedded within history pedagogy, it ensures that key concepts, skills and knowledge are not missed. The enquiry question appears to be essential here. This links directly to the process set out in the aims of study of the National Curriculum of allowing children to ask perceptive questions and to think critically (DfE, 2013). It is also builds on the work of R G Collingwood's definition of historical enquiry as "beginning with a complex of ordered questions based on empirical evidence" (1939 as cited in Cooper, 2013, pp.10). However, historical enquiry is not only about answering a series of questions, but also interpreting, analysing, reasoning and forming an argument to make sense of the past (Russell, 2016). In consideration of this, Dixon and Hales (2014) put forward a structure for teachers to use when planning a historical enquiry. This flexible structure incorporates the main elements of historical enquiry as well as giving teachers scope to adapt it to the period of history they are teaching and the needs of the children in their class.

This historical enquiry can then have wider implications. Not only can enquiry help to avoid the "low-level engagement" and the dreaded "3 Cs (cutting, copying and colouring)" (Russell, 2016, pp.25) it can ensure higher epistemic quality by deepening the substantive knowledge and the disciplinary knowledge of children further. It can also ensure the subject-specific knowledge and skills of history are intact if teachers choose to use a cross-curricular approach.

History and Creativity

High epistemic quality is key within history but how can teachers ensure this is engaging and motivating for the youngest of children? Viewing history as a creative subject, which inspires creative thinking as well as problem solving and critical thinking could be a solution.

A host of academics argue not only the importance of creativity in history but that it is integral and interdependent with historical enquiry. (Doull, Russell and Hales,2019 ; Cooper, 2018). Nichol (2013, pp.102) adds to this debate when he argues that teacher creativity can help to develop the "sophisticated, complex and challenging pedagogy that produces outstanding history teaching and

learning". Therefore, to create high level engagement in pupils, teachers need to ensure primary history pedagogy excites feelings of "curiosity, determination, fascination, excitement, satisfaction, pride, anticipation, elation" (Cropley, 2001, as cited in Cooper, 2013, pp.24). The National Curriculum supports this in the purpose of study stating that history learning "should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past" (DfE, 2103, pp.1). Combining creativity and enquiry to form a creative historical enquiry firmly rooted in a knowledge-rich approach could be used to teach not only the substantive knowledge of history but also the disciplinary knowledge or process of history in a meaningful and powerful way.

Historical Imagination

Historical or plausible imagination is needed for this creative enquiry to be successful. R.G. Collingwood wrote about historical imagination being a "web of imaginative construction stretched between certain fixed points" (1946 as cited in Pickford et al., 2013, pp.24). Cooper (2013) picks up this theme of historical imagination being key, arguing that imagination allows pupils to think of historical evidence in a new way. That if an enquiry is concerned with people "imagination will include empathy, the capacity to imagine, based on what is known, how someone else may behave, think and feel in a given situation." (Cooper, 2013, pp.5). All of these are essential when deepening both substantive and disciplinary knowledge in history. However, Russell (2016, pp.27) offers a cautious voice in this conversation warning that there can be dangers here, that teacher need to be careful that pupils do not 'romanticise the situation'. This is a reminder to teachers that whilst historical imagination is essential, it needs to be kept within the parameters of the historical evidence available to us at this moment in time. Therefore, thinking of this type of imagination as plausible imagination could be helpful.

Creative Historical Enquiry as a Pedagogy

Primary school teachers in England need to tread a careful tightrope of inspiring the curiosity and imagination of the children they teach as well as basing this within the context of a well thought through historical enquiry to enable children to learn the substantive and disciplinary knowledge the National Curriculum requires. This is quite a task. Suggestions are put forward by academics in how this could be achieved. Nichol (2013) discusses the use of *history mysteries* to create the historical enquiry and to create that sense of awe and wonder to ignite curiosity and imagination. Doull, Russell and Hales (2019, pp.6) suggest the use of hooks: "an intriguing artefact, a gory story, a school trip or a quirky fact" can engage the children's imagination which then allows the teacher to provide learning experiences which investigate the past. However, again they warn not to get carried away and it is in fact the "mechanics of the subject that provides the substance of our lessons" (Doull, Russell and Hales, 2020, pp.7). Russell (2016, pp.25) encourages teachers to collect source materials to allow children to explore, question and interpret. The results from the most recent Historical Association Primary Survey confirm this highlighting different methods respondents used to teach history in primary schools: role play, drama, games as well as dressing up and using puppets (HA, 2023, pp.37). As well as teachers deliberately using methods specific to their children and communities, for example using outdoor learning in an area of high deprivation and exploring the "hidden voices" of the past in order to avoid generalisations (HA, 2023, pp.37). This research aims to explore this further. It will examine how teachers working in local primary schools walk this tightrope and celebrate their creativity and knowledge of history whilst maintaining high epistemic quality.

Methodology

Originally developed as an organisational development tool in the 1980s, appreciative inquiry approach focuses on positive (i.e. on what works) rather than the negative (i.e. finding a problem to fix) (Shauyb et al., 2009, pp.3). Dematteo and Reeves (2011, pp.203) further argue that applying this research approach allows personal stories to be shared in a safe environment leading to develop connections within people working towards a positive and transformational change. An appreciative

inquiry follows a four-stage structure: Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny (Jones and Masika, 2021, pp.281) Indeed, for the purposes of this study, the first two elements of appreciative inquiry were followed to identify and share experiences of primary school teachers using enquiry-based learning in a variety of ways when teaching history. This is key because the sharing of this good practice can also create transformative change within the practice of established teachers as well as those beginning their careers in teaching (Reed, 2007; Bushe, 2007; Shauyb et al., 2009; Jones and Masika, 2021). Whilst critics claim this focus on the positive as being naïve and idealistic, that this approach only provides a partial picture of the phenomena being researched (Reed, 2007) there are opportunities to explore challenges and how these are overcome. Jones and Masika (2021, pp.291) argue there is space within appreciative inquiry to explore "the shadow" (i.e. the challenges), that positive questioning can be used to discuss experiences and challenges of participants and thus not only provides a "balanced research picture" but can also been used as a stimulus for change.

In this research study, appreciative questions have been used to explore both positive experiences and challenges (and how participants are working to overcome these challenges) in order to highlight good practice of primary history pedagogy in local primary schools.

Data Generation
Seven participants were self-selected on a first come, first served basis from a wide range of local primary schools and were teachers responsible for teaching history on a regular basis. All participants were qualified teachers, two participants held an undergraduate degree in history whilst the others described a general interest in the subject. One of the participants was male and six of the participants were female. The majority of the participants held subject lead responsibilities for history in their schools and had been involved in making curriculum decisions about the substantive and disciplinary knowledge to be included in their school curriculums. Semi-structured interviews were conducted facilitating a freedom for the interview to become more of a conversation and to go in 'unexpected directions' (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 20212 pp.102). Thus, allowing the participant opportunity to be more open in discussing their experiences of enquiry-based learning. The interview questions aimed to generate rich descriptions of how the participants use historical enquiry in their teaching to develop children's understanding of substantive and disciplinary knowledge. This borrows elements from the appreciative inquiry approach where interviews "seek examples, stories and metaphors" (Shauyb et al., 2009 pp.7) to explore the participants' positive experiences and draw out examples of good practice. It also generates a rich description of the pedagogies employed by participants of varying degrees of experience in primary teaching. Interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams to allow more flexibility with timings and to fit in with busy classroom teachers' schedules. Whilst a disadvantage of interviews can be that the participants' views are summarised by the researcher and therefore at risk of being "filtered through the views of interviewers" (Creswell, 2012, pp.232), every attempt was made to reduce the risk of this to ensure participant's views are represented as faithfully as possible to maintain credibility. To achieve this, a transcription of their interview was emailed to the participant to ensure they were happy with the representation of their views.

Data Analysis
Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data and generate themes (Braun and Clarke, 2019; Braun and Clarke, 2022). Transcriptions were coded and key themes developed from this process to create the stories of the participants' experiences (Braun and Clarke, 2019) The perspective and subjectivity of the researcher needs to be acknowledged here, as a former primary school teacher who used enquiry based learning as a pedagogy in the classroom and now a teacher-educator who encourages trainee teachers to also engage with this pedagogy when teaching history. These experiences and perspectives will have influenced the themes chosen and the experiences which are selected within the key themes and sub-themes, although principles of reflexivity were attempted to minimise this. Once identified, the key themes and sub-themes were then mapped.

Ethical Approval
The ethical approval was granted by Worcester University and process were followed which aligned with the University of Worcester Ethics Policy including obtaining gatekeeper's permission, completion of consent forms, participants' verbal consent at the beginning of the interview and the right to withdraw.

Measures were put in place to manage the risks to participants such as the use of pseudonyms to maintain anonymity, recordings of interviews were deleted after transcriptions and these transcriptions were kept on an encrypted One Drive folder to ensure confidentiality. Interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams to enable the participants to choose a time and place they felt comfortable to complete the interview and to ensure privacy. Participants were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the process. Reputational risk was managed by inviting participants from our partnership schools.

Findings
Introduction
Several key themes developed from the transcriptions and these can be seen in Figure 1. below. Many of these themes and sub-themes overlap and are interdependent with common threads running through them. For the purposes of this research study, three of the main themes will be considered in detail: immersion in history, use of historical evidence to explore enquiry and exploring different perspectives.
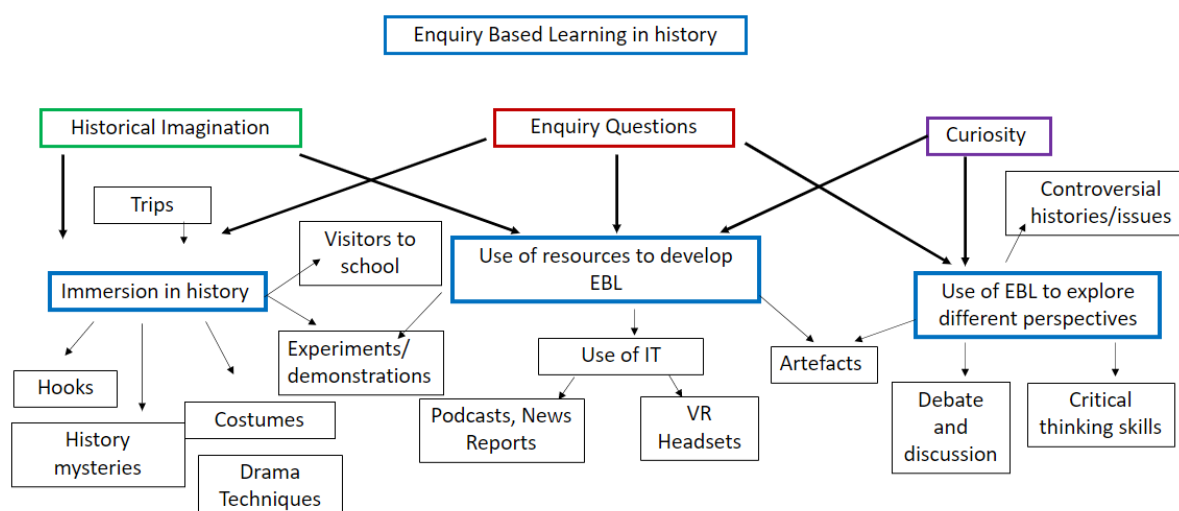

Figure 1. Map of codes, sub-themes and key themes.

Immersion in history
Immersing children in the historical time period studied developed as a common theme throughout many of the interviews. Six of the seven participants spoke about this in detail using a variety of strategies including drama techniques, visits, visitors and demonstrations to allow the children to imagine what it could have been like to live in a specific time period.

Role play appeared to be a popular technique. Participant 1 spoke of how the children re-enacted events of the Great Fire of London:

> They would act out rowing on the Thames. They would act out being the spark, the ember that flew out of the fire.

Participant 2 also discussed the children taking part in role play with the children taking on the role of a Roman Gladiator pleading for their sponsor to release them and how this role play enabled children to not only *"get into characters."*

When teaching about the substantive concept of democracy in Ancient Greece, participant 7 spoke of using drama to create a lightbulb moment. The participant asked all of the children to vote on a relevant issue:

> …and as soon as they all put their hands up, I tell the girls they are not allowed to vote so they to go and sit down. They are mortified but it is useful because you can see when they have that moment of realisation, that it wouldn't be very fair and that's what people actually had to live through.

Participant 6 described giving the children the role of Egyptologists and *"they opened up the tomb of a Pharoah and could see the treasures that were found."*

As well as drama techniques, participants discussed the use of visitors and demonstrations to bring history alive to the children.

Participant 1 recounted a visitor from a local museum taking on the role of Samuel Pepys and conducting *"a fire experiment outside to talk about why the flour exploded and the wind creating tornadoes [with] real actual fire: him on one side, us on the other."*

Participant 7 also discussed using demonstrations to investigate the Great Fire of London, *"we have the fire brigade come in, so we link it that way and they make their own houses and then the firemen light them on the playground and then put the water out to show them that you know this is being done in the safe way. But it also just showing that quickness of how the fire spread."*

Participant 6 spoke of the importance of visitors into school and themed day experiences in reference to their setting and overcoming disadvantage:

> Because we do suffer a little bit with the cultural capital at our school as well with the background that the children are from." This participant described immersing the children in an experience such as "an age-appropriate mock air raid in the classroom and then present the children with the scenario of things are moving very quickly and we need to be evacuated. This is how we would need to be prepared and the reason why. It is always a useful thing to do if you can. You can look into what the lives of children were at the time. It is a much easier shoe for the children to step into.

Participant 2 spoke about this in terms of "*enrichment activities*" which encompass visitors, trips and themed days, each year group have at some stage during their history unit and the purpose of this was to specifically *"to kind of bring it [history]to life."* Participant 7 also described a trip where the children *"used to go on the [steam] train, dress up as evacuees for World War Two and it was amazing."* Unfortunately, the rising financial costs of this experience has meant they are no longer able to take their children which *"is a real shame because I think what better way than to actually put yourself in that position as it was at the time."*

Participant 1 was the only participant to explicitly mention a history mystery approach as a hook. When the pupils begin to study the Gunpowder Plot, they receive a visit from their local PCSO who *"allegedly contacted us because she was most concerned: there's been lots of complaints about*

fireworks going off and she didn't understand it." This led to an investigation into the history of Bonfire Night with the children reporting their findings back to the PCSO via email.

Using historical evidence to explore enquiry.
Another common theme was the use of historical evidence to interpret history and to facilitate a deeper enquiry. Here historical evidence is replica artefacts, written texts, pictures, books and technology such as Virtual Reality headsets.

Using artefacts to try to answer an enquiry question was the most common use of historical evidence mentioned in the interviews conducted. Participant 2 described *"our own history collection which again I bought during lock down and I have got a set of questions that that teachers can use to understand an object."* Questions such as: "*what's it? What's it made from? What material is it and how is it used? What was it used for?"*

Participant 3 described investigating and interpreting historical sources as a key focus for their history teaching and made the link with engagement:

> Florence Nightingale in Year One and they've got the bandages out and the carbolic soap and the basin and the children were telling me about it. Look, smell this carbolic soap. It smells horrible!

Participant 5 also described link between artefacts for enquiry and engagement:

> They [pupils] love being up, exploring, getting hands on" and again, there is a box of artefacts for each topic, which we share resources across the school we've purchased some specific boxes which staff can pull out as well.

Three participants discussed cost as a barrier to using artefacts in history sessions and strategies they were using to overcome this. Participant 7 spoke of *"we've borrowed artefacts boxes from different libraries before and we've got a sister school."* Participant 6 discussed investing in a scheme of work purely for the digital resources to use in history lessons. Participant 1 discussed *"printing off resources, so printing newspapers or pamphlets or anything. We use lots of paintings. It's the idea of how these sources and then talking to the children about the different sources and how they change depending on when they're written."*

Participant 2 explained the resources in their school, *"we have those books. And then, there might be videos. There might be pictorial sources, written sources."* Participants also discussed using local museums, castles and cathedrals as historical evidence: *"So for example, when we've looked at The Tudors, we go off to the Cathedral where there's evidence in the Chapel and they look for the markings. And so that's how they found their evidence there."* (Participant 7)

Whilst some of the participants discussed using the internet for research, Participant 4 described the use of technology to enable and enhance historical enquiry. The participant also discussed investing in Virtual Reality (VR) headsets, *"with history, it's difficult to be able to re-live some of those [experiences]. I know there's some amazing VR resources out there for the Egyptians to go into a pyramid and see Tutankhamun's tomb and Pompeii."* They spoke about their vision for the school:

> That's one of my other visions is that if we can, then if the VR headsets grow a little bit and we may get some for the junior school then that's something that we'll be able to embed within our history curriculum to give them some more interactive experiences which they just couldn't do otherwise.

Using historical enquiry to explore different perspectives

Using historical enquiry as a vehicle to explore the complexities of history and different perspectives developed as a theme within most of the interviews. Teachers used historical enquiry to explore hidden voices and to give children a learning experience which allowed them to see an event from a different perspective.

Participant 1 described examining both sides of the story when teaching the Gunpowder Plot in Year 2:

> So especially with the Gunpowder Plot, which is a really good example, is the fact that what we are told is predominantly from a Protestant point of view. We don't understand much or we don't see much from the plotters' point of view and the Roman Catholics in society.

Participant 3 made direct links to teaching the Sustainable Development Goals through history:

> I think it's goal 16 about democracy, we link that to the ancient Greeks. Then I think it's [Sustainable Development] Goal 5 we link to women's rights . . . for example, with Titanic or we'll link it to class and hierarchy with the Romans or the ancient Egyptians.

Participant 2 described using enquiry questions to deliberately explore more complex and controversial parts of history:

> One of their questions [in year 6] is Should the Benin Bronzes be returned? They do it as a debate and discussion, looking at the reasons why each side would want them to be kept or returned. So, it's thinking about it from another perspective. Building on each other's arguments and contradicting each other and then trying to bring things up to date…they're making it relevant saying that it's still very much a live issue.

Participant 2 also described weaving in teaching about the concept of Empire during a topic on the Tudors:

> We have a lot [enquiry questions] in our Tudor topic because we look at Henry VIII and Elizabeth I and we've tried to draw on world history with Francis Drake and we try to bring as much Black history as when we can, especially when thinking about the origins of Empire. It's thinking about that global picture and circumnavigating the globe and starting to open up the world.

Participant 7 described using an enquiry to teach about Empire too using the context of the Second World War to make history relevant to the children at the school:

> Obviously servicemen and women from different corners of the world fought. So for our children here, their eyebrows go up when you show them images of perhaps Punjab soldiers fighting in a regiment or fighting Kurdish soldiers. They say, what? Really? As their understanding and appreciation of conflicts that pertain to their racial demographic are far more modern. Then some of them even share why they're in this school, in this country.

Participant 7 also described how using an enquiry into the impact and legacy of Tudor exploration, they begin to examine the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade by examining the coat of arms of explorer John Hawkins:

> He [John Hawkins] ends up getting given a crest for his coat of arms, granted by Elizabeth I, which appears to be an enslaved person in shackles. The question I first ask the children is what do they see in that image? Then the second question is to examine attitudes at that time because she's basically letting that man celebrate what he has done by having it on his badge like a football team.

Discussion

Within the Literature Review, tensions between meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum (for both substantive and disciplinary knowledge) and creating an engaging learning experience of high epistemic quality were discussed. A creative approach to historical enquiry could create a bridge between the knowledge-rich learning objectives of the National Curriculum and the creative approaches necessary to motivate and engage primary age children but also to provide lessons of high epistemic quality. This chapter will discuss the strategies teachers working in a variety of local primary schools use to walk this tightrope of creative historical enquiry set within a context of the National Curriculum requirements thereby bringing in the joy and awe and wonder of learning.

Using a historical enquiry to immerse the children into a particular time period allows the children to use and develop plausible imagination and creative thinking skills. Some academics argue that creativity in history is integral and interdependent with historical enquiry. (Doull, Russell and Hales,2019; Cooper, 2018). Indeed, many of the teachers involved in this study appeared to view history as a creative subject and used strategies such as drama to not only engage their children but to develop both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. It was very difficult to isolate some of the key themes which developed because creativity, especially using drama, was woven throughout their approaches.

Cropley (2001, as cited in Cooper, 2013, pp.24) argues the need for feelings of "curiosity, determination, fascination, excitement, satisfaction, pride, anticipation, elation." Plausible imagination within a historical enquiry is needed to create an environment for children to experience these feelings. Through creating a role play where the children rowed out onto the Thames to escape the fire (Participant 1); allowing the children to pretend to be a Roman Gladiator pleading for release (Participant 2) or allowing the children to become Egyptologists opening up the tomb of a Pharoah for the first time (Participant 6) the scene was being set for children to be drawn into R G Collingwood's "web of imaginative construction" (1946 as cited in Pickford et al, 2013, pp.24). It also begins to illustrate Cooper 's (2017) argument for the need for imagination to develop a sense of empathy for people of the past within children to enable them to being to understand how and why they acted in the way they did. This was particularly evident when Participant 7 described the lightbulb moment when their children realised that democracy (a key substantive concept in the National Curriculum) in ancient Greece did not mean the same as democracy in 21st century England. They spoke of children being 'mortified' that they were excluded from voting because of their gender and how this would impact their lives. Participant 6 used drama to explore what it really meant to be a woman or a member of the working class on the Titanic. The data encourages us to wonder, would this have been as effective if the teacher had used a more didactic approach? The use of drama, of visitors such as a PSCO investigating why so many fireworks were being set off in November (Participant 1) enable the teacher to provide a richer learning experience for the children, one of high epistemic quality where children are guided to explore disciplinary knowledge and the process of being a historian.

There was also evidence from the data that this immersion in history could be tailored to meet the needs of their children and communities. In discussing the importance of these immersion learning experiences for children with little cultural capital, Participant 6 illustrates one of the issues raised in the HA Primary Survey (2023, pp.37). One that history can be used to address wider issues within the school community.

The National Curriculum states that history teaching "should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past" (DfE, 2103, pp.1) and Participant 7 succinctly states 'history sparks curiosity through immersive lessons as historians."

All the participants interviewed discussed the importance of using artefacts and replica artefacts to investigate the past and develop an understanding of the disciplinary knowledge of history. Thus, supporting the guidance in the National Curriculum surrounding historical evidence where pupils should understand "how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims." (DfE, 2013, pp.1). Artefacts also help to reduce the "low-level engagement" and '3 Cs' Russell argues are to the detriment of history teaching and learning (2016, pp.25). Participant 5 made the direct link between engagement and the use of artefacts to investigate the past: "they [pupils] love being up, exploring, getting hands on." Artefacts can create and excite the feelings of fascination, excitement and curiosity Cropley states are essential to meaningful learning in history.

Many of the participants used historical evidence not only as a hook, a gateway to the historical time period, but also to develop the skills of interpreting, analysing, reasoning and forming an argument to make sense of the past that Russell (2016) argues is essential to a meaningful enquiry. Participant 6 and 7 wrote and distributed a series of key questions to accompany the artefact boxes to encourage this. Participant 1 actively encourages children to interrogate the historical evidence to understand that their meaning can change depending on when the sources were written.

Historical evidence was also used by some participants to immerse the children in the historical time period. The carbolic soap described by Participant 3 and the use of VR headsets by Participant 4 spring to mind here. It can be difficult to completely isolate themes as they are woven and interconnected to create meaningful learning experiences for the children, just as many academics argue they should be (Doull, Russell and Hales, 2019; Cooper, 2018; Nichol, 2013).

However, artefacts can be expensive and in a climate of stretched school budgets this can become an issue. Despite three participants discussing cost as a barrier to using artefacts, they revealed how they are over-coming this. Participant 1 discussed printing off resources from the internet and put the focus on interpreting the resource rather than the resource itself. Participant 4 and 7 discussed borrowing artefact boxes from local libraries, keeping education visits local and using expertise from parents and the local community to overcome this. The use of technology was also discussed as a solution, with Participant 4 looking to interactive workshops and the use of VR Headsets. However, this does come with a substantial initial investment which may not be possible for many schools.

Pulling together and combining immersion in history and the use of historical evidence for enquiry, many of the participants volunteered how they used these strategies to explore different perspectives. This was not in direct answer to a research question, but all participants described exploring different perspectives in history through an enquiry without being prompted. This illustrates Sullivan's (2018) argument that historical enquiry can allow children to explore the complexities of history in a meaningful way. Doull, Russell and Hales (2019) also argue the need to address the balance through the teaching of hidden histories. Again, this concept of teaching the "hidden voices" of the past to avoid generalisations and meet the needs of the school community was highlighted in the 2023 HA Survey (pp.37). Participant 1 described using role play of a Catholic servant observing the plotters involved in the Gunpowder Plot to explore a different perspective and highlight the fact that we tend to view this period of history from the Protestant point of view. Participant 3 described exploring different perspectives of class and gender through enquiries involving the Titanic, Romans and ancient Egyptians. Participant 2 described using an enquiry question exploring the return of the Benin Bronzes to not only explore different perspectives but also to develop disciplinary knowledge of building a

historical argument. Participant 6 used enquiry questions and examination of John Hawkins' coat of arms as historical evidence to investigate attitudes of Elizabethan England to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Whilst there may not be space to fully explore this within this research study, it does show how effective historical enquiry can explore the complexities of history. It also hints at scope for a more specific research study in the future to investigate how historical enquiry can be used to include and explore different perspectives in more detail. A further limitation of this study is the lack of children's voices within the data generated. A future study could examine children's experiences of historical enquiry and how learning experiences of high epistemic quality influence their understanding of disciplinary knowledge of history.

Conclusion

In overall conclusion, this research study highlights the strategies teachers use to walk the tightrope between creative historical enquiry and the parameters of the 2014 National Curriculum, with the added obstacle of wider community issues. Although this was a small-scale study and so cannot be generalisable to the wider population of teachers, the participants involved recounted how they are using a variety of strategies to navigate this path and provide learning experiences of high epistemic quality for their children. The use of drama, educational visits and visitors, demonstrations, artefacts and resources to immerse their pupils in history then allows the teacher to guide pupils through a well-designed creative enquiry which sits with the 2014 National Curriculum requirements. Whilst challenges with this have been highlighted, so have some very creative solutions which focus on the deepening of learning. This research study has many implications, and indeed practical examples, for primary history ITE in preparing trainees to themselves navigate this tightrope. Creating a bank of creative ideas which allow second order concepts to be developed as well as possible solutions to the challenge of budget could be considered two of the key ideas.

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