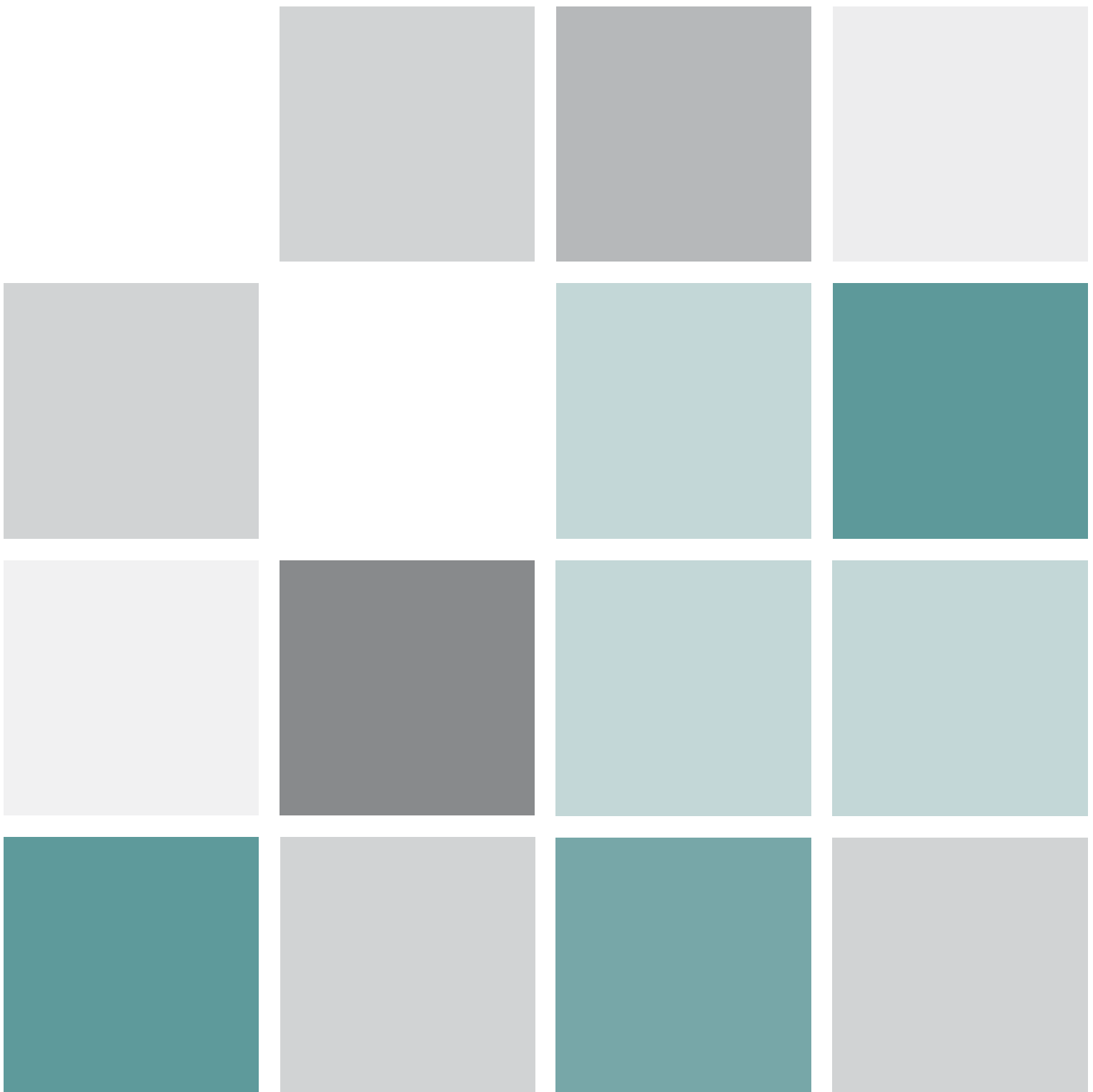




Thinking Historically about Missing Persons: A Guide for Teachers

2. Developing Historical Thinking: Theory and Research



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| 2.1 The place of history in education

In this section

School history is the topic of frequent controversy, discussion and debate in countries around the world. What light can international history educational research and practice shed on debates about the content and delivery of school history?

In the following sections, overviews of the various theories that have been applied to history education are presented, with a focus on the disciplinary approach, which has been used as the basis for this series of educational materials.

Learning history is... a vital and vitalising process: everything has a history and our subject is endlessly intriguing, mind-opening and educative - to be bored with history, is, as it were, to be bored with life. (Chapman, 2009, p.1)

Although it is rare to find a politician or curriculum policy maker who will openly state that history is unimportant, school history tends to have a lower status than subjects such as national languages, mathematics or science and to be regarded as less useful than subjects such as information and communication technologies. History's relative lack of status is often apparent in one or more of the following ways:

- history tends to receive much less teaching time than other subjects;
- history is often not compulsory across all school years;
- history is often integrated in social studies or humanities courses rather than taught as a discrete subject; and
- many of the teachers who teach history do so without substantial initial or continuing education in historical teaching and learning.

Paradoxically, despite this relative neglect, school history is the subject which often gives rise to the most intense public educational debates. When it comes to history, almost every politician, public figure, journalist or academic seems to have a strong opinion about what should be taught and, often, about how it should be taught. Whilst it is rare to attend a social gathering where people propound views on curriculum and pedagogy in mathematics, or science, or languages, it is not uncommon to hear arguments on such occasions about which historical periods or events should be included in history textbooks, about what history education should involve, and about other aspects of historical teaching and learning.¹

The implications of this situation for history education are serious: history teachers are, of course, the people upon whose knowledge, creativity, imagination and hard work the integrity and success of historical teaching and learning depend and yet history teachers typically have to go about their work with (a) greater levels of interference and interruption, and, (b) lower levels of resources, in terms of professional training and support and /or in terms of curriculum time, than their colleagues who teach other subjects.

The chapters that follow are intended as tools to support history teachers in their practice and their reflection on practice. This chapter provides

- a theoretical discussion of **the aims and purposes of history education**
- a discussion of some of the **debates which have taken place around the world about history education**.

This chapter also aims to provide a rationale for the teaching approach, known as the **disciplinary approach**, adopted in the educational materials developed by the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research on the missing persons and other subjects.

1. Two recent works that review debates in history education around the world from a number of perspectives and that also provide insights into the state of history education in a range of countries are Naku and Barca (eds.), 2010 and Taylor and Guyver (eds.) 2011.

2.1.1 The aims and purposes of history education

2.1.1.1 Why do we teach history?

In this section

What is history and why is it important to learn history? A range of approaches to history education exist, and it is important to distinguish between differing interpretations and ways of thinking about history education.

This section reviews and summarises the key features of three main schools of thought about history's contribution to education:

- The collective memory/best story approach;
- The postmodern approach; and
- The disciplinary approach.

In order to explore the question of history's contribution to education, 'history' needs to be defined: different definitions lead to different ideas about the contribution of history in education.

Defining 'history'

A common answer to the question 'What is history?' is the claim that history is simply *knowledge about the past*.

For some, this knowledge extends in the human past as far as there is written evidence, while others include in their definition of history the whole human past, written or not. A third answer to the question includes not only the human past, but also anything that happened in the past and had an effect on human life.

An alternative and **disciplinary** answer to the question focuses on history as a form of knowledge as well as a body of knowledge. History is considered as a discipline with its own methods and logic and it is in this sense that we can also claim that history is a 'mode of enquiry that may have different interests in the past from every day practical concepts' (Lee, 2006). On this account history is not just a collection of knowledge claims about the past but also a way of producing knowledge about the past and learning history means **developing knowledge and understanding of how history works, or knowledge and understanding of historical processes of inference and argument, as well as knowledge and understanding of propositions about the past**.

Finally there is the postmodern definition of history that treats history as a collection of stories about the past rather than as a body or a form of knowledge about the past. According to this approach, we cannot really tell how the past happened but only how people (historians, authors, witnesses etc.) have described it. For postmodernists histories are simply stories or 'tales' that people 'tell'. Postmodernists are particularly keen to focus on the authors of 'history stories', on their ideological, social and political 'positions' in the present (Jenkins, 1991).

Starting from David Lowenthal's distinction between 'heritage' and 'history' and also postmodern ideas about history, Peter Seixas (2000) proposes **a typology of history education approaches**. In this typology he describes three different approaches:

- the collective memory/ best story approach;
- the disciplinary approach; and
- the postmodern approach.

If we think history as nothing more than the knowledge of the past, then school history is about handing over this knowledge. Summarising Seixas' description of the collective memory/best story approach, Perikleous (2010) notes that:

This means handing over a single definite best story (the true way that the past happened) which reinforces the sense of belonging somewhere (nation, religion, culture, transnational entities etc.). Furthermore, it promotes values (e.g. peace, democracy, patriotism) and gives a general knowledge of human behaviour in history (p. 315).

This approach also aims, according to Seixas (2000), at 'enhancing collective memory' and usually seeks to develop a shared moral framework that it believes will encourage students to work for the common good. As Seixas observes, such an approach begs a number of questions, notably the question of who is going to choose the 'best story'. In fact most of the debates over history education internationally focus on precisely this issue ('Which is the best story to be taught?') and the controversies that often arise over school history reflect contending visions of what the 'best story' is (Naku and Barca, 2010; Taylor and Guyver, 2011). **To focus on story, is, of course, to focus on what is to be taught rather than on how it is to be learned and understood.** There is a clear danger here of history becoming meaningless for students, if their role is understood simply in terms of absorbing a given body of knowledge ('the' story) which has been defined and 'fixed' for them by others (teachers, educational authorities, textbooks etc.).

When we think of history as a discipline, school history ceases to be simply about acquiring knowledge about the past and becomes, instead, a matter of learning to think with and think about this knowledge and a way of understanding how this knowledge is produced. This approach emerged in England in the 1970s and gained influence among educators and examination boards mainly through the School Council History 13- 16 Project (later School History Project or SHP). Based on Paul Hirst's theory that each academic discipline is more than the substantive knowledge it produces, but is also a discrete **form of knowledge** with its own ways of knowing, the project aimed to develop students' disciplinary understanding of history and of the ways in which 'historical thinking' aims to construct warranted knowledge claims about the past (Wineburg 2001). This new approach in history education:

whilst not denying the importance of chronology and historical knowledge, aimed to establish a better balance within history teaching between teaching students about the past and providing them with the means to think historically about it. Consequently, there was a greater emphasis in the history classroom on students learning how to analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence obtained from a variety of primary and secondary sources (Stradling, 2003, pp.9-10).

Seixas (2000) points out that the disciplinary approach might, for obvious reasons, raise obstacles to the creation of collective memory (and identity): when learning history becomes a matter of learning to think historically students are empowered to ask questions and to test 'official' stories that are presented to them at home and in the media. **It is clear, however, that a disciplinary approach to history supports an active role for students as learners: once history becomes a matter of investigation and of argument the range of historical learning activities that students can be engaged with in the classroom is greatly increased.** There is also the danger, on the other hand, that students may become sceptical about all knowledge claims and be 'lost to relativism once we tell them that history is not just the facts' (Seixas, 2000, p. 25). When students become sceptical about knowledge claims they can also become sceptical about historical knowledge itself and this can lead to the idea that there is no point in learning history at all.

Postmodern school history is neither about teaching what happened in the past and nor about learning how to learn about the past: according to postmodernists, school history is about learning how different groups organise the past into stories and how these stories serve present aims (Jenkins, 1991). In this way students become aware of the relativity of historical accounts, of the created and 'fictional' nature of historical representations and of the strategies of ideological domination that, according to postmodernists, are served by attempts to 'represent' the past.

Seixas (2000) identifies two dangers in this approach. The first one is that the notion of a history that is completely relative leads to the conclusion that all that history can amount to is a power game between different groups. What is there for students to do, on the postmodern account, other than to unmask and compare the ways in which different groups aim to use history to define how we understand the world? The second danger, as in the case of the disciplinary approach, is the risk that history may come to seem worthless to students as merely the product of historians' biased views.

The 'best story' approach seems to be ill-suited to the demands of the contemporary world where information can easily be accessed, where multiple perspectives and accounts are presented and where 'best stories' are challenged every day. Students who remain 'loyal' to these stories are likely to believe them simply because school 'says so': they may 'know that' an authority has handed them down to be learned but, in the absence of an education in historical thinking, they are unlikely to 'know how' these accounts might be justified or developed and they are unlikely to have the tools that they would need to be empowered to argue about the merits or limitations of the 'best story' and of the counter-stories that they may come across (Rogers, 1979). Students who decide that the 'best story' told in classroom is not the 'correct' one, but who also lack an understanding of how historical knowledge claims are produced and can be assessed and defended, may simply see school history as useless since it does not deliver 'the truth'.

Postmodernism seems unable to provide a convincing rationale for school history: the interpretation of biases in historical accounts is not enough to support the necessity of history as a distinctive subject in schools. In addition this approach will possibly lead students to naive equalisations of all historical interpretations in terms of their validity, which simply means that they cannot learn anything substantive about the past.

The disciplinary approach seems to be able set the limits to relativism and, at the same time, to provide the freedom to explore different stories and multiple perspectives. Learning to think historically (as the disciplinary approach suggests) is also about:

learning that historians and others seeking to reconstruct the past ... will be constrained by the range of sources they can access, will interpret and use the same evidence in different ways and will select and put emphasis on different aspects of the evidence. In other words, that most, if not all, historical phenomena can be interpreted and reconstructed from a variety of perspectives, reflecting the limitations of the evidence, the subjective interests of those who are interpreting and reconstructing it, and the shifting cultural influences which determine to some degree what each new generation regards as significant in the past (Stradling, 2003, p.10).

Traditionally, history education around the world has been dominated by the 'best story' approach. The 'disciplinary approach' that emerged in the 1970s became the main challenger to the 'best story approach', albeit only in some educational systems. In many others the teaching of the facts that make up a traditional official narrative remains the dominant approach. The postmodern approach remains mostly a theoretical one and does not have a substantial practical manifestation in educational systems.

While the three main approaches depicted in the above typology cannot claim to capture the full extent of all the approaches that could be taken to historical teaching and learning, this typology presents a framework with which to compare and assess a range of modes of learning about the past.

2.1.1.2 History's contribution to education

In this section

Following from the discussion in the previous section, this section reviews arguments about the aims and purposes of history education in greater depth.

While some theorists claim that history teaching should serve particular personal, social or civic aims, others prioritise the aim of developing a disciplinary understanding of history. It is argued that the latter provides a more authentic way of approaching history. It is also argued that by developing students' understanding of the logic and methods of the discipline of history we can help them to develop new ways of seeing the world through learning how to study the past and think historically, and that this in turn can enable deeper self-understanding, give greater meaning to the present, and provide the tools with which to view the future.

Like any other school subject, history has to justify its presence in the curriculum in terms of its contribution to children's education and in terms of its value for students.

John White (1992) classifies the purposes of school history under two categories:

- The first category consists of 'personal and social aims to do with the sense of identity, cultural roots and shared inheritances, and an understanding of other countries and cultures in the modern world' (p. 10).
- The second category refers to '[disciplinary] aims intrinsic to the subject (of history) to do with arousing interest in the past, disciplined enquiry and a grasp of historians' methodology' (ibid.).

Prioritising personal and social aims

White argues that personal and social aims should have a priority over disciplinary aims. His argument is based on the idea that school subjects should give priority to wider educational aims (personal and social aims) because of their potential to promote '...student's well being as an autonomous person within a liberal-democratic community' (White, 1992, p. 15). He claims that the disciplinary aims will be met anyway since the subject we teach is history. Although he admits that the development of disciplinary understanding can be useful as a way of opening up life options for those who will pursue a career in the discipline, he argues that this is not enough for these kinds of aims to become a priority. Finally, he denies any special value in history's aim to transform children's understanding about the world, since aims like the promotion of democracy and patriotism are also transformative in a similar sense.

Keith Barton and Linda Levstik (2004) agree with White about the priority of social aims in history education over the discipline's intrinsic aims and argue that the focus on disciplinary history 'seems unlikely to inspire... intellectual and emotional commitment' (p. 259) and also that 'history's place in the curriculum must be justified in terms of its contribution to democratic citizenship - citizenship that is participatory, pluralist, and deliberative - and its practices must be structured to achieve that end' (p. 40).

Prioritising transformative aims

On the other hand, Peter Lee (1992) prioritises the disciplinary aims of history over the personal and social ones and claims that this contributes also to a transformative aim. According to Lee, changing students' views of the world, by teaching them how to study the past and think historically, gives meaning to the present and helps students reflect on the future. Lee argues that learning to think in disciplinary ways can change how pupils understand the world in a number of ways:

Changes, for example, cease to be confined to individual actions and events, and include long run gradual developments too, some of which were intended by no-one. Acceptance of the likelihood of unexpected consequences of action overturns a simplistic picture of political and social behaviour: good intentions do not guarantee happy outcomes, and not everything that causes human misery is the product of wickedness. The beliefs and values of people in the past are understood as not necessarily the same as ours, and even as passing strange, but they are still recognised as intelligible and defensible in their own terms, and as helping make sense of present beliefs and values. (Lee, 2011, p. 145)

Lee claims that the transformative aim of history differs from other transformative aims because of its impartiality and universality – it is possible to think historically in these ways whilst also having a very wide range of substantive beliefs.

Another of Lee's (1992) arguments against trying to promote personal and social aims through history concerns the danger that prioritising these aims may result in the manipulation of the past to serve these purposes – when the aims matter more than the history we may feel entitled to change the history if it conflicts with our aims.

Finally, he points out that there is no evidence that history can promote a wider educational aim like the 'the promotion of the student's well being as an autonomous person within a liberal- democratic community' (White, 1992, p.15). He argues that although we cannot claim that learning history will make us autonomous in pursuing our life options, we can accept that knowing history may help us to think about these options more effectively.

Denis Shemilt (1980) also provides arguments that support the idea that studying history can be transformative. Shemilt argues that history can enable students to analyse their world and to think about their place in it and that it can be a means to make sense of the forces that drive social change and development and a way of understanding the meaning of being human. He claims that history can provide pupils with the tools with which to think about social change, our differences and similarities with people in the past and also our shared humanity with those who lived before us. For Shemilt (2011) 'social engineering' approaches which primarily aim for social goals 'strive to counter beliefs about the past deemed to be socially harmful with the truth, validity or reasonableness thereof being secondary considerations which may, if necessary, be ignored or even compromised in the interests of what is perceived to be the greater good' (p. 93-94).

An approach which prioritises social aims can lead to an 'unhistorical' approach to the past. The pursuit of social and personal aims may result in a subject which teaches ideals like democracy, patriotism, social justice and only those aspects of the past that support these ideals. If history is subordinated to these ideals then, arguably, we lose sight of any special contribution that history can make in the curriculum

Whilst a disciplinary approach does not guarantee the promotion of particular social values, in many cases, one can argue, it does incorporate them in practice as an intrinsic component of disciplinary learning. An example is the case of democracy. **The discipline of history shares common values with democracy since thinking historically involves a commitment to open argument, to the public examination of evidence, and also a commitment to debate.**

There are, however, potential problems with a disciplinary approach, if it is improperly or only partially implemented, as, for example, when the understanding of the discipline is reduced to merely 'using sources' and 'practicing skills' without due attention to developing students' understanding of the discipline's logic and methods.

In conclusion, there are good grounds for claiming that to understand the aim of historical learning in terms of the direct promotion of social and personal aims is to run considerable risks, in terms of historical authenticity.² There are also good grounds

2. In other words, if social or personal aims have priority over the accuracy and the rigour of the history that is taught then it becomes easy to argue that the history should be 'adapted' when it conflicts with the social or personal agendas we aim to promote through history lessons.

for claiming that history can make substantial contributions to the curriculum and that it has the potential to transform how pupils view the world by developing their understanding of the logic and methods of the discipline. As Lee (2011) argues:

If our students learn to approach the past historically, they will have available the possibility, not merely of clinging to or abandoning their loyalties, traditions and social or political allegiances, but of seeing them in a different light (p.155).

2.1.2 International debates over history education

In this section

Most debates about history education tend to be about the kinds of political and social ideas that should be conveyed by history education. Politicians, the media, and other groups across society, by offering their views, contribute to the intensity of these debates, which often surface at times of change or during periods of anxiety connected to political issues. Usually within such debates, discussion about content relates mainly to political ideas and arguments and attention is not given to issues of methodology and teaching practices. Preventing the abuse and distortion of history by competing ideological views of the world is the duty of the educational community, who can contribute to a broader, more sensible and informed discussion about the aims and purposes of history education.

As noted in the introduction to Section 2.1, public debates about history education are frequently highly politicised and conducted in terms of content rather than method.

Soysal and Schissler (2005) observe, in relation to the history of the school curriculum, historically, 'subjects were transformed into citizens through the teaching of history, geography, and the language of the nation' (p. 1). This statement indicates why historical teaching and learning is the subject of so much political and public attention. In most countries, debates about the history curriculum are essentially about the kinds of political and social ideas and values that should be conveyed or supported through history education and these debates are usually initiated (or become intense) during reform processes, periods of perceived crisis and / or when a change of political administration occurs.³

It is not possible to do justice to the manifold complexities of debates in many different countries in a few short paragraphs. Simplifying considerably, we can say:

- debates about the history curriculum around the world are often about conflicts of political values in the present more than about the academic discipline of history;
- these disputes tend to be connected with wider political issues such as relationships between states or about relationships between different ethnic and religious groups within the same states;
- these debates are often highly polarised and, for example, often pit understandings of school history as 'means to instil in the young a sense of unity and patriotism and veneration for nation's glorious heritage' (Foster, 1998, p.159) against contrary views that see history as a tool for promoting internationalist ideas and mutual respect between people and / or multiculturalist understandings of the nature of modern states.⁴

3. See Nakou and Barca (2000) and Taylor and Guyver (2011) and, in addition, Lakshmi (2000), Ogawa and Field (2006), Foster (1998), Dunn (2000), Foster (1998), Philips (1998) and Dunn (2000) on curriculum debates in India, Japan, America and England respectively. Relationships between history curriculum reform and broader changes can be explored, for example, in Dunn (2000) and Taylor (2004).

4. These ideas became more popular in the 20th century due to decolonisation, social movements, the discourse on the universality of human rights, the emergence of transnational entities (e.g. European Union) and globalisation which changed the way societies were organised and made the idea of societies as purely national collectives difficult to sustain (Soysal and Schissler, 2005).

Usually within such debates, discussion is focused on content and on political arguments and attention is not given to issues of methodology and teaching practices.⁵ Despite the intensity of these debates and the public attention they attract, they are often characterised by an underlying agreement about history education's aims and purposes, namely the proposition that history education should be concerned with shaping the ideas and values of future citizens through narrative. The crux of the debate often relates to defining the 'best story' to be taught for this purpose and / or to the kinds of belief and value that future citizens should hold.

5. An exception to the above claim is the case of England where the debate was also about methodology. In this case the debate was between the idea that history should reinforce British identity through a chronological narrative (an empirically untested proposition) and the 'new history's' idea that school history should pursue aims that are intrinsic in the discipline of history (Foster, 1998; Philips, 1998; Dunn, 2000). While the first position viewed history as a 'received' subject which can form the ideas of students (who are passive subjects in this process), the second position argued in favour of the importance of understanding the discipline of history and its interpretative nature and in favour of giving students' an active role (Shemilt, 1980).

| 2.2 Research on students' historical thinking

In this section

This section provides an overview of 20th century developments in history education research. Most studies reflect assumptions about history education prevalent at the time that they were conducted and, since history education focused for so long on the development of substantive knowledge, this was the main focus of early research efforts. Recent research focuses on historical thinking and shows that students are able to develop sophisticated ideas about history from a young age, and supports a greater focus on the development of historical thinking in classrooms.

From rather limited beginnings in the early 20th century, history education research has grown to become a rich and productive field of enquiry.⁶ As the field has expanded, the quantity and quality of what is known about how children learn history has grown and the ways in which historical education is understood have themselves undergone dramatic changes.

In the early 20th century, history education research was mainly focused on the acquisition and recall of factual knowledge about the past and on testing students' ability to recite names, dates and facts. Research findings tended to show that children did not know the facts that they were expected to know and often led to criticism of school practices. The emphasis on substantive knowledge was not a phenomenon restricted to education, but it was also present in the 'prevailing views of knowledge in the discipline of history' at the time (Wineburg, 2001, p.36).

In the 1950s, the influence of Jean Piaget's theories of cognitive development focused educational psychologists' interest on students' thinking processes in history rather than on their acquisition of substantive knowledge.⁷ The results of studies based on Piagetian tradition showed, however, that students' thinking in history was developing later than in maths or science and resulted in doubts being expressed about the ability of adolescents to cope with historical thinking (Hallam, 1967; Stones, 1955 cited in Steele, 1976; De Silva, 1972 cited in Steele, 1976). This research adopted methods derived from educational research in maths and science and used these models to explore students' historical thinking, an approach subsequently considered problematic because of the substantial differences between the logic and methods used in history and in these other disciplines (Wineburg, 2001; Dickinson and Lee, 1978 and Booth, 1987).

Approaching students' historical understanding in terms of reciting substantive knowledge or trying to explore it in terms of forms of thought characteristic of science or mathematics led to pessimistic assumptions regarding students' ability to think historically and, consequently, sustained conventional teaching practices focused on the transmission of factual knowledge. Both approaches to school history, and the pedagogic pessimism that they resulted in, were subjected to sustained critique in the 1970s.

The early 1970s were a turning point in history education in England. The School Council History Project's evaluation study by Denis Shemilt (1980) is probably (along with CHATA project) the most important study of students' reasoning in history conducted to date. The main findings from this study were that adolescents can develop a refined understanding of history as a form of knowledge and that this understanding can be taught. Although Shemilt's work overturned the negative pictures of students' historical reasoning drawn by studies based on Piagetian tradition, he explicitly acknowledged the usefulness of the Piagetian approach as long as it was adapted in terms of history and not physical sciences. Other studies, notably the CHATA project, showed that understanding of the discipline's ways of knowing is not confined to secondary education students, and that younger students can also develop sophisticated ideas about history and how we can produce knowledge about the past.⁸

6. Wineburg (2001), pp. 28-60 reviews the history of history education research and Donovan and Bransford (2005) summarise current research and apply it to classroom practice.

7. Wood (2005), and Harré (2006) provide critical expositions of Piaget's theories.

8. For information about the outcomes of the research project Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches (CHATA) conducted between 1991 and 1996 see Lee (2006), Lee and Ashby (2001), Lee and Ashby (2000), Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (2001).

Today, research in the area of students' historical understanding in terms of historical reasoning flourishes around the world.⁹ In the case of the Cypriot educational systems, though, very little research evidence exists regarding students' thinking in history.¹⁰ As in other cases, this is due to the lack of a research community of experts in history education and the prevailing views of history education on the island. The number of post-graduate researchers in history education is increasing, however, and this will potentially lead to the formation of a stronger research community in Cyprus (Perikleous, 2010) and consequently the exploration of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot students' historical thinking.¹¹

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9. For examples of research in the US and the UK, beyond the work already mentioned, see Barton (2008), Barton and Levstik (2008), VanSledright and Afflerbach (2005), Shemilt (2009), Lee and Howson (2009) and Chapman (2009). For examples of research beyond the U.S. and the UK see Barca (2005), Cercadillo (2001), Hsaio (2005), Kourgiantiakos (2005), Ribeiro (2002 cited in Barca, 2004), Bermudez and Jaramillo (2001), Nakou (2001), Carretero, Lopez Manjon and Jacott (1998), Perikleous (2011).
 10. To date, two studies have explored students' historical thinking in the context of Cyprus. Both have focused on Greek Cypriot primary students, exploring, in one case, students' knowledge of substantive concepts (e.g. freedom, revolution etc.) as they were prescribed in the curriculum at the time (Skouros, 1999) and, in the second case, primary students' ideas about the second order concept historical empathy (Perikleous, 2010).
 11. As part of the evaluation of these educational packs, the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research is planning to conduct a study which will include an exploration of students' historical thinking. Currently, the AHDR is the only organisation in Cyprus with the expertise and declared will to conduct this kind of research.

| 2.3 Developing historical thinking

In this section

This section draws on fundamental principles for learning in different areas of knowledge, and focuses on their application in history education. Two key dimensions of developing historical knowledge and understanding are: developing students' knowledge of the past, and, developing students' knowledge and understanding of history as a disciplined form of thinking about the past and about how we can construct knowledge about the past. These dimensions of historical learning are elaborated upon in subsequent sections.

At the heart of teaching there is the idea that '[m]uch that each human being knows about the world is acquired informally, but mastery of the accumulated knowledge of generations requires intentional learning, often accomplished in [a] formal educational setting' (Donovan and Bransford, 2005, p.1). It is crucial for teachers to be able to help their students to develop this collective knowledge. In a synthesis of the findings of over thirty years of educational research, the US National Research Council set out to identify fundamental principles for learning in different areas of knowledge in its publication *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School* (Bransford, Brown and Cocking, 1999) the following three well-established principles are highlighted.

Fundamental Principles for Learning

1. Students come to the classroom with preconceptions about how the world works. If their initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp the new concepts and information that are taught, or they may learn them for purposes of a test but revert to their preconceptions outside the classroom.
2. To develop competence in an area of inquiry, students must: (a) have a *deep foundation of factual knowledge*, (b) understand facts and ideas in the context of a *conceptual framework*, and (c) *organise knowledge* in ways that facilitate retrieval and application.
3. A *metacognitive approach* to instruction can help students learn to take control of their own learning by defining learning goals and monitoring their progress in achieving them (Donovan and Bransford, 2005, p. 1).

In the context of history, the first principle directs teachers to the importance of understanding the assumptions that students bring to the classroom about what happened in the past and about how we can construct knowledge about the past. The second principle draws attention to the importance of our students developing a strong foundation of knowledge about the past, an understanding of concepts that relate to the content of the history we teach (e.g. government, state, trade, tax) and an understanding of concepts that relate to the discipline of history (e.g. accounts, evidence, cause, change). The third principle highlights the importance, if students are to progress their thinking, of developing students' ability to think about how they are thinking in history, and thus to self-evaluate, in order to develop as independent learners.

In all three cases, developing students' knowledge of the past and developing students' knowledge and understanding of history as a disciplined form of thinking are both equally important. In this section, we discuss both of these dimensions of historical knowledge development:

- developing students' substantive knowledge of the past (factual knowledge of what happened in the past); and
- developing students' disciplinary knowledge (understanding of how we learn about the past and the forms and limits of historical knowledge).

2.3.1 What happened in the past? Developing students' substantive knowledge

In this section

When developing substantive knowledge, it is important to enable students to orientate themselves in time. Students often come to the classroom with knowledge of the past that is incoherent, fragmented, distorted, or open to misconceptions. Overcoming such challenges requires helping students to develop coherent historical frameworks in which the past can be organised in meaningful ways.

This section discusses the development of coherent historical frameworks through teaching and also stresses the importance of engaging with history beyond the traditional focus on political and military national history.

When we refer to substantive knowledge we mean the:

- substantive knowledge of the past (past events, names, dates);
- substantive knowledge of past concepts (e.g. 'slave', 'divine right', 'king' etc as understood in the time in question); and
- knowledge of substantive concepts derived from a range of areas of knowledge (economics, politics, sociology, etc.) that we use to make sense of the past (e.g. 'revolution', 'war', 'unemployment', 'social class' etc.).

Developing students' substantive knowledge about what happened in the past is central to history education. Knowledge is not valuable for its 'own sake', however, and the point of developing students' knowledge of the past is to help students orientate themselves in time. In other words, to help students develop pictures of the past which they can remember, understand and use to make sense of the world.¹²

The findings of recent exploratory research in the England (Lee, 2004, 2007; Lee and Howson, 2009) and also a recent report of the Schools Inspectorate (2007 cited in Shemilt, 2011) suggest that students in both primary and secondary education in England do not possess coherent pictures of the past. Their knowledge about the past tends to be fragmented and in most of cases limited to fragmentary knowledge of events, periods and people without an understanding of how these factual fragments might be connected to each other or to the present (Lee, 2004; Shemilt, 2000). In addition, students' understanding of what they do know tends to be distorted by their misconceptions about the past or how we can come to know about it.

Classroom experience in Cyprus, at least, suggests that the above descriptions apply in the case of Cypriot students also and this claim is also supported by anecdotal evidence of teachers' perceptions: concerns about students' inability to connect the knowledge of different historical periods and about the tendency to confuse chronology and to 'misplace' people and events in time appear frequently in history teachers' everyday discussions.

The traditional and widespread practice in many educational systems of teaching history on a strictly chronological model in which historical periods are taught in sequence without any special attention being given to establishing connections between them does not seem to help students develop the ability to orient themselves in time. As Sam Wineburg (2000) mentions, the claim that students 'don't know the facts' in history has remained unchanged for the last 100 years. Even in educational systems (i.e. the English one) where emphasis is given to the development of students' historical thinking, the claim that students' historical knowledge is fragmented remains. Some of the most prominent

12. The idea of orientating in time refers to the ability of students to access the past in ways that make it meaningful and relate it to their present and their future. In other words orientation in time is about being able to use the past to understand the world (in the past, the present and the future). In this sense the past, the present and the future are not considered as separate temporal chunks, but as developmentally connected parts of the same continuum (time). See Howson (2009) for useful visual models of temporal orientation.

figures in this educational tradition argue that although developing disciplinary understanding is necessary if we are to help students develop a coherent understanding of the past, there is nothing to suggest that this is sufficient (Lee, 2004; Shemilt, 2000).

To tackle this issue it is essential to find ways of connecting the substantive knowledge that students acquire together so that, eventually, they can develop big pictures of the past. The development of historical frameworks have been proposed by Lee, Shemilt, Howson and Rogers as a strategy for encouraging the development of big picture understandings of the past. Rogers reports classroom research that demonstrated some success in helping students develop understandings of this nature through the use of rapid overviews and scaffolds of questions designed to get students to review what they were learning regularly and to ask questions about connections across periods and between past and future (Rogers, 2008).¹³ According to Lee (2004) these usable historical frameworks:

- cannot be built up solely through the teaching of the details of history but require the study of long term patterns of change;
- their building requires the teaching of broad generalisations about how human societies have developed;
- they must be rapidly taught and often revised so that students can assimilate new knowledge to their developing frameworks and also consolidate the frameworks themselves; and
- they must be open to change, improvement, modification or even abandoning in favour of a better ones.

In addition, Lee stresses the importance, to the development of big picture understandings, of explicitly focusing teaching and learning around second order concepts such as *change*.¹⁴

Shemilt (2000) also highlights the importance of a disciplinary approach and suggests a number of practical strategies to scaffold framework development including:

- teaching students summaries of history on large scales that are frequently revisited and deepened;
- the inclusion of long term thematic studies in syllabuses;
- the frequent use of overviews in class at various degrees of resolution (20, 160, 700 years etc.);
- the highlighting of key data to be incorporated into developing frameworks in class to clearly distinguish them from other aspects of lesson content; and
- the frequent revision and summary of key data to be incorporated in developing frameworks.

Building on these ideas, content could be organised pedagogically in a combination of overviews, thematic studies and depth studies linked to key historical themes (e.g. settlement and communication, everyday life and beliefs, movement or power and politics). The following table suggests how these three kinds of studies can assist the development of coherent historical frameworks.

13. Comprehensive explorations of frameworks and big pictures can be found in Lee (2004), Shemilt (2000) and (2009) and Howson (2009).

14. Second order or disciplinary concepts are concepts related to the way we explore the past (e.g. time, cause, change etc.). They are essentially 'rules and tools used to determine what we are entitled to say about the past, how we construct narratives and explain what occurred' (Shemilt, 2010). These concepts are discussed further below.

Study	Description
Overviews	Overviews are taught quickly at the beginning of the teaching of a key theme. Teaching an overview is focused on setting chronological starting and finishing points and identifying the key thematic changes which will be studied (e.g. where did people live in Cyprus from 7000 BCE to 2011 CE). Overviews are the initial forms on which the frameworks are to be developed.
Thematic studies	During thematic studies, students study large scale changes (e.g. how did people choose the location of their cities in Cyprus from 7000 BCE to 2011 CE or how did people build their houses in Cyprus from 7000 BCE to 2001 CE). Thematic studies are used to develop the key thematic changes, identified in the overview, and to fill out the framework.
Depth studies	In depth studies, students study events or short periods of time (e.g. an ancient city in Cyprus). Depth studies are used to test and develop the framework and students are encouraged to locate depths studies in the framework as it evolves.

In addition to the above, the development of substantive knowledge can be assisted by comparative studies that go beyond single national contexts. Students will never be able to really understand the world, especially the complex contemporary 'global village' where people from distant places have to interact with each other on a daily basis, unless they have the chance to study the past beyond a narrow national focus.

On the basis of the arguments above and also on a number of other considerations, we propose a number of principles that should govern thinking about the content of school history:

- During their history education students should have the chance to work with stories of groups (women, children, minorities and religious groups living close to them and the rest of the world) who are usually excluded or neglected by school history. We should not pretend that these stories do not exist since students encounter them outside school and they have a powerful effect on their personal narratives (Wertsch and Rozin, 1998).
- Students should have the opportunity to study a variety of issues beyond political ones dominated by the deeds of important men. In this sense, the content taught must include aspects of history other than the political and military, such as everyday life and working conditions in rural and urban areas, science, education, social changes, technological development, the history of minorities and religious groups, migration, women, and children. The traditional approach of focusing on political history is problematic, both in terms of neglecting a great part of what happened in the past and also in terms of understanding political history itself: the present has been shaped, as the future will be, not only by political decisions or events, but also by a variety of factors, interrelated in complex ways. It is evident also that we cannot fully understand political history itself without viewing it in relation to other aspects of history.¹⁵
- Finally, the sources of content knowledge that we offer our students should be of various kinds, reflecting the contemporary range of the discipline of history and also the core materials that disciplined historical thinking works on and with. The use of sources has to offer more than merely the stimulation of students' interest or the creation of a sense of 'authenticity'.

15. For example, the expansion of empires cannot be understood without reference to developments in technology, transportation, communications and warfare. See Mann (1986) and (1993) for a systematic review of the interrelationships between social, military, political and ideological factors in the development of human history.

The main benefit from using sources is the development of students' historical thinking. Working with sources provides the opportunity to think about how we can construct knowledge about the past using the traces of the past that exist in the present. Working with historical traces helps students develop understandings of concepts that are central in historical thinking (such as *accounts*, *evidence*, and *relics*).¹⁶

Students should be encouraged to work with primary and secondary sources of a variety of kinds which:

- are suitable for their comprehension abilities and age;
- present multiple perspectives from the local, national and international contexts, so that students become aware of them; and
- include a full range of sources of knowledge of the past ranging from the relics of material culture through to historical reports in various genres, from official through to oral histories and traditions: a range of materials essential to the development of pupils' abilities to interpret, evaluate and compare sources and narratives in relation to contrasting accounts.

A very important part of developing students' substantive knowledge is helping them to understand the substantive concepts that are used when we study the past. These are concepts historians use to describe political, social, economic and cultural phenomena (e.g. trade, democracy, king, slavery, constitution etc.). They are numerous and are referred to various areas of human activity. The selection of which substantive concepts are to be developed in classrooms needs to be based on the relevance to the substantive knowledge to be taught.

Students (and of course educators) should be aware of the fact that the meaning of substantive concepts can change over time and space. Gaining the knowledge of a concept in one context cannot always guarantee that this will work in another context. For the example, the concept of monarchy in the Middle Ages had a very different content from the concept of monarchy in the 21st century.

As mentioned earlier, students do not come to history classes 'empty headed' but bring with them their own ideas about the past and how we know about it, based, often, on their everyday understandings of the present. Children begin to develop understandings of the world from a very young age. Research shows that these initial understandings have a powerful effect on the integration of new concepts and understandings (Bransford et al., 2000). Students' ideas can be helpful to history teachers but they can also create problems because ideas that work well in the everyday world are not always applicable in the study of history and to the worlds of the past (Lee, 2005, p.31).

In the case of substantive concepts this means that when students encounter a new historical concept they will often have existing ideas of it based on their experience of the present to which they are likely to attempt to assimilate the new concept, often with unhelpful consequences for the development of their understanding of the past. Thus, for example, it is probable that when students first encounter the concept of 'democracy' in Ancient Athens they will understand it in modern terms and thus misunderstand Ancient Athens by assuming that women had the right to vote.

Research evidence from both sides of the Atlantic provides considerable insight into the kinds of substantive preconception that students are likely to bring to their studies.¹⁷ Teachers need to be attentive to students' conceptual learning so that misconceptions that can impede historical learning do not go unchallenged.

16. For research evidence that explores how the use of a variety of sources can contribute substantially to the development of historical understanding see Rogers (1984) and Yeager and Doppen (2001).

17. For examples of studies about students' ideas about substantive concepts see Furnham (1992), Berti (1994), Delval (1992), Torney-Purta (1992), Berti and Andriolo (2001), Berti and Vanni (2002) all cited in Lee (2005).

Developing a coherent historical framework which extends to our present helps students to realise that the present is essentially the leading edge of the past which moves towards the future.¹⁸ In this way the past becomes important for students' contemporary lives and their thinking about the future. Developing substantive concepts can also make a useful contribution to developing children's' understandings of generic features of the world (for example economic processes). Through history, students can come to understand how modern day institutions, processes and practices have developed and acquired their current meanings. In this way, the development of students' substantive knowledge of the past can contribute to history's transformative aim of changing the way students see their world.

18. The 'leading edge' metaphor is Peter Lee's. These ideas are developed in systematic and accessible ways in Howson (2009).

2.3.2 How do we know/ learn about the past? Developing students' understanding of the discipline of history

In this section

We discuss the importance of developing students' understanding of disciplinary concepts in history, their understanding of historical enquiry and also the development of dispositions relating to the disciplined exploration of the past. **Second order or disciplinary concepts** related to the way we explore the past, such as *time, cause and consequence, change and continuity, evidence, accounts, significance* and *historical empathy* are defined. The ideas that should be developed in relation to each of these concepts are the result of an on-going process of learning. Teachers should keep in mind that developing historical understanding is a long and painstaking process.

Historians produce and articulate knowledge claims about the past through processes of disciplined historical enquiry. Learning to understand history cannot simply mean understanding the product of historical enquiry (knowledge about the past) but must also involve understanding the processes of historical enquiry that generate this knowledge and that give it whatever authority and credibility it has (Megill, 2007; Rogers, 1979). Developing understanding of history as process can also help students appreciate the nature and limits of historical knowledge and also empower them to be able to detect and critique ideological myths masquerading as historical claims. Developing these understandings involves developing our students' understanding of disciplinary concepts of history, their grasp of historical enquiry and their understanding of the dispositions associated with the disciplined exploration of the past.

Second order or disciplinary concepts are, essentially, 'rules and tools used to determine what we are entitled to say about the past, how we construct narratives and explain what occurred' (Shemilt, 2010).¹⁹ Second order concepts include concepts such as *time, cause, change, evidence, accounts, significance* and *historical empathy*. They define the relationship between 'the known past' and 'the real past' and prioritise historical accounts over the products of myth, folk memory, journalism and fiction (ibid.). Since as mentioned earlier the development of meta-cognitive abilities is one of the basic principles of learning, it is crucial to help our students develop some key second-order concepts which may help them explore the past, understand the present and take control of their own learning even after the end of their school career.

Although students might not be aware of it, they already hold complex conceptual assumptions based on their experience of the world inside and outside school before they start thinking about history. These ideas are likely to be misconceptions mainly because historical thinking is in many cases counter-intuitive. For example, when students attempt to explain the behaviour of people in the past (historical empathy), the resources that they rely on to interpret their own experience of the world are likely to be as much a hindrance as a help, since people in the past lived in a very different conceptual worlds and had very different beliefs and values and ideas about the world and how it works.

As in the case of substantive concepts, teachers need to be aware of their students' tacit understandings and conceptual assumptions in order to be able to challenge misconceptions and help them move to more powerful understandings. A great deal is known about students' preconceptions and research based models of progression have been developed that can assist teachers in moving student thinking from simplistic and flawed understandings to more sophisticated and more powerful ones.²⁰ Research progression models cannot predict a student's route to mastery of concepts in a Piagetian way, where all students follow the same route and every subsequent level replaces the previous one (Lee and Shemilt, 2003; Lee, 2006). Progression models 'are like the trails left by sheep on a mountainside, which show us the way most of the sheep happen to go, not the paths they must take' (Lee, 2006, p. 138). Progression models are useful as a guide to the preconceptions that we are likely to encounter

19. They are also known with other names such as meta-concepts and procedural concepts.

20. For examples see Ashby and Lee (1987); Dickinson and Lee (1978); Dickinson and Lee (1984); Lee and Ashby (2001); Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (2001); Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (1997); Barca (2005); Cercadillo (2001); Chapman (2009); Hsiao (2005); Lee (2006); Lee and Ashby (2000); Shemilt (1984); Perikleous (forthcoming).

in any history class and to what we can expect to achieve by developing our students' ideas (Lee and Shemilt, 2003; Ashby and Lee, 1987; Lee, 2006).²¹

The following table presents some of these second order concepts and some key ideas that we should aim to develop through historical teaching and learning. The ideas described below are final points that teaching should aim to move students towards and it is unlikely that students will develop these ideas before the final stages of their school careers. These ideas represent a goal to work towards: when teaching to develop ideas we should always aim for the highest level and not just to move our students from one simplistic idea to another less simplistic one.

Concept	Ideas to be developed
Time	Students should be helped to understand the distinction between what is 'past' and what is 'old' or 'outdated'. They should also develop an understanding of periodization (periods in history cannot usually be defined by specific starting and ending points and these can differ according to the theme we study) and the fact that understanding periods in history demands also depth knowledge of the history that the period labels organise and summarise. They should also be aware that in many cases conventional terms which refer to time can have a different meaning in history, for example, when we refer to the music of the 1960s this does not mean everything that was written (or aired) from 1/1/1960 to 31/12/1969 but refers, rather, to music that expresses what we understand 'the 60s', as a period concept, to connote. Finally, students should develop a sense of duration when they think about events, changes and so on.
Change and continuity	Students should understand that change can be intentional or unintentional and that it has various directions between and within themes. They should also understand that history is dealing with much longer scales than everyday ones and that, in many cases, change is viewed as a change in states of affairs and themes rather than in terms of single events. The latter is a very important distinction since students can tend to reduce changes to single events which cause others. Students also need to understand that history works with the notion of continuity (the absence of change): in other words, history is also concerned with states of affairs and / or themes that did not change.
Accounts	Students need to understand that accounts (e.g. history books) are not copies of the past but representations of it. There is no one complete and true account of the past since accounts demand selection and since there are no perspective-free accounts. Also students need to understand that differences in accounts are in many cases due to the different questions which their authors are trying to answer. Therefore bias and personal preferences are not the only reason for different accounts.
Evidence	Historians construct claims about the past by interrogating 'sources'. Students should learn that 'sources' only yield 'evidence' in the context of questioning and that information about the past only becomes 'evidence' when it is used to help establish or to test a claim about the past. Also,

21. Summaries of key research in relation to a number of second order concepts are available in the case of evidence (Lee and Shemilt, 2003), accounts (Lee and Shemilt, 2004), causation (Lee and Shemilt, 2009) and empathy (Lee and Shemilt, 2011). Lee (2005) is a concise and systematic exploration of all the second order concepts.

Concept	Ideas to be developed
	<p>we are not forced to choose one 'correct' account of the past but we can extract our own conclusion combining various and even opposing accounts. They also should be able to make two parallel distinctions between records and relics and between intentional and unintentional evidence.²² Finally, they need also to be aware of the fact that quality is more important than quantity: even where a large number of evidential arguments appear to support one claim about the past, one opposing evidential argument can be enough to disprove it.</p>
<p>Cause and consequence</p>	<p>Students should understand that identifying causes involves thinking in terms of networks of interrelated events, processes and states of affairs that relate to each other in various ways and not just in terms of a linear chain of interlinked events. In this network the relationships (not only the elements) are important. Exploring this network we can identify elements that are essential for the events we explain. These elements can be identified as causes and other aspects of the situation considered as background elements. Causes can also be understood in terms of their role – one factor may enable an outcome, for example, but another factor may be crucial in determining the timing and manner of the outcome.</p>
<p>Historical empathy</p>	<p>Students should understand that in order to explain the actions of people in the past, they need to consider the ideas and beliefs about the world that people in the past held, which were often dramatically different from the ideas and beliefs that the students hold and that they need to understand past actors' aims, intentions and aspirations if they are to explain what they did and why they did it. Also they should understand that knowledge of the historical context in which people in the past lived is vital to making sense of the different ways in which people in the past viewed their situation and their world in general.</p>
<p>Historical significance</p>	<p>Students should have an understanding that historical significance is ascribed to people in the past by people in the present and that it changes as the present changes. The forms of significance ascribed to a given historical change, event or personality vary also depending on the differing themes and timescales that are used in different representations of the past. The significance ascribed to an event, change or actor also varies depending on how it is contextualised and related to other aspects of the past.</p>

22. Records are sources that were constructed to convey information about past events/processes or states of affairs (e.g. a battlefield combat report). Relics are sources that were not intended to report something (e.g. the remains of a battle). The status of a source depends on how it is interrogated. We can scrutinise reports as reports, for example, by extracting 'the story' that they were trying to tell about a past event, or, alternatively, we can interrogate them as relics, for example, in order to understand aspects of communication technology in the past.

Thinking historically is a way of ordering and exploring the past: historians 'give temporal order to the past, explain why events and processes took place as they did, and write accounts of the past; they base everything they do on the evidence available' (Lee, 2005, p.41). Students need also to develop abilities relevant to historical enquiry and to be enabled to conduct their own inquiries and produce answers to historical questions by gathering, evaluating and interpreting a variety of historical sources. Helping students develop their conceptual and practical grasp of historical enquiry is a key dimension of the history teacher's role.

In addition, students should be able to communicate the results of their inquiries and their knowledge in a variety of ways using the proper historical language and conventions. Also, we should bear in mind that 'history is an interpersonally constructed form of knowledge and historical knowledge claims are tested and established according to debate, hence discussion and debate are inherent to the subject as a form of knowledge and they should therefore be integral to the development of historical thinking' (Chapman, 2009).

Finally, dispositions are also a fundamental part of the discipline of history. In order to try to interpret and understand the past students need to be respectful towards evidence and be prepared to provide impartial accounts (even if examining the evidence results in stories that they do not want to tell). They should also be able to appreciate well-grounded judgments and strive to make them. A respect for the past, its people and their achievements and an acknowledgment of the distance between the present and the past are all crucial to the study of history.

Developing disciplinary understanding is a slow and difficult process. Concepts, abilities and dispositions cannot be developed simply through a few classroom discussions and examples. We must return to these ideas again and again over a number of years in appropriate ways and with suitable materials in order to consolidate and deepen emerging understandings. We should bear in mind that developing historical thinking is not an all-or-nothing endeavour, but a process of the continual development of increasingly sophisticated ideas. This does not mean that students will do it as well as professional historians. History education is not, in any case, in the business of creating 'mini historians'. History education is, however, about creating historical thinkers and doing this involves the consideration of a range of complex forms of thinking (Megill, 2007; Tosh, 2008).

2.3.3 History and collective memory

It is conventional, in academic literature, to distinguish between 'history' and 'collective memory', or, to say the same thing in a different way, to distinguish between the ways in which the past is approached and constructed through the academic discipline of history and the ways in which the past is approached and constructed in social, cultural and political practices linked to the construction of individual and group identities (Wertsch, 2002). It is difficult to distinguish between these two categories in a final and definitive sense, since, for example, the products of academic history can be used in 'collective memory' projects and also, of course, because individual historians themselves operate in contexts and are shaped by them to one degree or another. The difference, however, captures an important distinguishing feature of the disciplinary historical approach to the past, namely, its epistemological intent: as Wineburg notes, although the probative interrogation of sources of evidence about the past is a key component of disciplinary historical thinking, it is not generally welcome at family gatherings, or other social occasions, where the past is recalled (Wineburg, 2007).

Although the content of school history has typically been focused around the products of academic history, as mediated by textbooks, rather than on the study of collective memory texts and practices, curriculum models exist that ask pupils to focus on both. For example, under the National Curriculum revision introduced in England in 2007, as well as studying aspects of British, European and world history, pupils are expected to study 'historical interpretations' which is described as involving:

- Understanding how historians and others form interpretations.
- Understanding why historians and others have interpreted events, people and situations in different ways through a range of media.
- Evaluating a range of interpretations of the past to assess their validity (QCA, 2007).

The 'others' referred to here include 'writers, archaeologists... filmmakers' (QCA, 2007) and the intention is that school history should explore a wide range of forms through which history is constructed and presented in everyday life and contemporary culture.

Teachers have interpreted these requirements in a number of ways and have, for example, developed strategies in which pupils:

- explore how popular cultural representations of the past are constructed (Banham and Hall, 2003);
- explore how the aims and practices of popular history differ from the aims and practices of academic history (Historical Association History Transition Project, 2005);
- explore how popular cultural understandings of particular passages of the past have been changed over time (Card, 2004).

Focusing historical thinking on the ways in which the past is understood through collective memory and popular culture can have many merits, not least in helping students develop the tools that will help them think about the multiple and often conflicting representations of the past that they come across in everyday life. It is to be hoped, for example, that empowering students to think critically in these ways will enhance their ability to recognise and, where appropriate, to challenge, ideologically motivated misrepresentations of the past.

It is also likely that students' grasp of the discipline of history will be deepened if they are asked to think about the specific differences between disciplined historical representation, whose primary purpose is to produce warranted constructions of the past and whose primary focus is epistemological, and other forms of representing the past in public history and popular culture whose aims are often highly variable and range, for example, from entertainment to attempts at enculturation into particular national or communal identities through narrative (McAlevy, 2000; Chapman, 2010). Thinking in these ways is likely to enhance students' historical literacy and also their broader cultural literacies.

Studying collective memory practices through school history can, arguably, help to develop students as critical historical thinkers (Wineburg, 2007). However, to return to Wineburg's observation about family gatherings, it can serve another purpose also. Human beings engage with the past for multiple purposes and understanding history involves understanding this: there are times and contexts in which a critical and disciplined orientation to the past is appropriate and necessary (notably, where claims to truth are involved); there are other times, however, when a reasoned and critically focused approach to the past is neither called for nor warranted (for example, there is little to be gained by demonstrating that an episode of *The Flintstones* is not grounded in warranted historical claims).

2.3.4 History textbooks

In this section

Textbooks play a central role in many educational systems. The majority of history textbooks share two common features: first, they tend to promote official narratives which endorse and advocate the ideas and beliefs of dominant groups in society; second, these narratives tend to be single and authoritative and tend not to allow space for different perspectives. This section discusses the challenges associated with attempting to present a more 'objective' version of history, and offers recommendations about how to re-function the narratives presented in textbooks using a disciplinary teaching approach. The intention of this approach is to engage students with less one-sided approaches to the past and to develop students' historical understanding.

School textbooks play a vital role in everyday educational practice. Although we cannot claim that textbooks are identical to what is taught or learned, their influence is profound (Foster, 2006). Textbooks are the most widely used educational tools: Foster claims that in the 18th and 19th century textbooks were the widest read books apart from the Bible. Although the variety of educational resources has increased dramatically in contemporary classrooms, the role of textbooks remains central in many educational systems. This is partly due to the fact that they offer, at least theoretically, a 'safe' guide in teaching as expressions of the curriculum.²³ The role of textbooks is even more crucial in the case of history since they are often used as means to endorse the cultural, ideological and political ideas of dominant social groups and to assert cultural homogeneity through the promotion of shared attitudes and the construction of shared historical memories (Foster and Crawford, 2006).

International research on history textbooks reveals a great deal about the content of textbooks. The historical text included and the facts and perspectives which are excluded offer us insights into textbooks' ideologies (Foster and Crawford, 2006). Today, the majority of history textbooks share two common features. First, they tend to promote official narratives which express and advocate the ideas and beliefs of dominant groups (usually the dominant racial / ethnic / social and male group in each case). These official narratives are, in many cases, rather nationalistic.²⁴ Although these features can be less obvious in modern textbooks than they were in the past, they are still present and affect the picture of the past presented to the students (Foster, 2006). The second key feature of textbooks is the fact that textbook narratives tend to be single and authoritative and do not allow any space for different perspectives.²⁵

What can be done to counter the monoperspectival stance on historical learning generated by textbooks? Efforts to counter monoperspectival and 'official' features of textbooks and to produce 'balanced' textbooks are one possibility but it is unlikely that simply including content about previously marginalised groups, for example, will make a great difference to the overall outcome unless the existing narrative framework is challenged also (Foster, 2006; Sleeter and Grant, 1991).

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23. The heavy reliance on textbooks is, at least to a degree, due to teachers' anxieties relating to having to teach large classes in many different school subjects (Foster, 2006). In many cases textbooks can even 'become' the curriculum itself and Foster and Crawford (2006) claim that history textbooks often come to have the same authority as government policy papers.
 24. In Cyprus, the textbooks used in both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot educational systems present a narrative dictated by the respective official curricula which 'aim primarily to promote national identity and pride... [and]...focus on the moral (and often military in terms of heroism) superiority of 'our just nation' over that of immoral 'others' (Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, 2008, p. 2). In China the emphasis is on the idea of 'One China' which includes the mainland and all the peripheral territories and a narrative in which China is a glorious but peaceful nation which is usually the victim of evil neighbours or western countries (Vickers, 2006; Crawford and Foster, 2007). The simplistic way US history textbooks present the case of 9/11 as an unprovoked terrorist attack has also been interpreted as an example of a 'narrow and nationalistic perspective' (Hess, Stoddard and Murto, 2007, p. 28).
 25. The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research in Cyprus (2008) claims that 'the majority of the history textbooks used today [in Cyprus] present a monolithic, monoperspectival and ethnocentric official narrative' (p. 5), a judgment that could equally be applied to many textbooks around the world.

While it does not seem possible to have an 'objective' and agreed narrative which includes all stories, unless a textbook becomes a library, history textbooks can attempt to counter monoperspectivity by including a variety of interpretations and thus to 'include multiple perspectives' from a variety of contexts, local, national, regional and international (Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, 2008, p.3).

To achieve mutliperspectivity, textbooks might endeavour not to consist solely of narratives constructed by their authors and aim to include a variety of primary and secondary sources. In this way textbooks could become a means of teaching history as an interpretative discipline and not just a means of promoting selected versions of the past.

Finally, textbooks should offer the materials for building flexible historical frameworks and aim to provide a scaffold around which developmental narratives of change might be constructed.

Textbooks which provide a variety of sources, different perspectives and that aim to facilitate the construction of historical frameworks are not guaranteed to promote historical understanding if they do not offer the opportunities for the students to develop understandings about the discipline of history. In this sense textbooks need to provide 'carefully designed tasks and activities that aim to develop substantive (factual) knowledge' and also 'specific historical concepts, abilities and relevant dispositions' (Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, 2008, p.5). Textbooks which support tasks of this kind are most likely to help teachers with their everyday practice. In many cases the lack of this kind of support can lead teachers, especially teachers inexperienced in history teaching or those who have to deal with large classes and a variety of subjects, to take less sophisticated approaches.

In conclusion history textbooks should not aim to provide just 'objective' and / or balanced stories, but should also aim to develop students' historical understanding. Textbooks that set out to promote this aim should be based firstly on abandoning the single, nationalistic (or any other) authoritative narratives and on presenting the past through multiple perspectives. Combining these principles with a focus on developing the understanding of history as a discipline is likely to help students appreciate history's interpretative nature and to engage with history not as a story to memorise and pass on, but as a means to develop, test and refine their understanding of the world.

2.3.5 Teaching sensitive and controversial history

In this section

There is an extensive international research and practice literature exploring the teaching of sensitive and controversial topics in history and other subjects. In this section we signpost this literature and identify some key principles that can inform practice.

Like many aspects of the recent or distant past, the missing persons issue on which we focus in this set of educational materials is likely to be a highly sensitive issue and one that may elicit emotional responses from pupils and generate controversy and disagreement. There are many good reasons why this should be so:

- the topic is inherently upsetting, because of the injustice, cruelty and inhumanity that missing persons and their relatives endured and still continue to endure in many cases;
- the topic may have direct personal resonance for students and teachers, who may have family or other links to missing people;
- where there are no direct personal links to the topic it is possible that students may feel closely connected to it because of the resonance that the issue has with wider community narratives and identities;
- the topic is very directly linked to the broader 'Cyprus question' and it is not possible to debate it without also making explicit or implicit reference to this wider sensitive and controversial issue.

There are extensive research and practice literatures internationally addressing the teaching of sensitive and controversial topics in the classroom (for example Wiese, 2011) and the topic has been much discussed in the context of history pedagogy and didactics (for example, in Cole (ed.) 2007, HA, 2007(a) and 2007(b)). Strategies for addressing these issues in particular contexts have also been developed.²⁶

Sensitivity and controversy inherently involve questions of value, and, therefore, questions where empirical research can never provide definitive guidance. A number of principles, grounded in research and / or practitioner literature, guide our thinking in what follows and these principles are:

- the principle that it is better to provide opportunities for pupils to address controversy directly, rather than to seek to avoid it, particularly where matters of importance are concerned (Barton and McCully, 2007; Kitson, 2007);
- the principle that controversial issues are best addressed in a focused manner and in relation to a framework that enables disciplined debate (HA, 2007(a));
- the principle that controversial issues should be addressed democratically through open dialogue and debate from which it follows that
 - teachers should aim to provide students with opportunities to openly debate issues rather than seek to prescribe the views that their students should take;
 - that students must feel able to speak freely and, thus, that a classroom climate of democratic respect for a diversity of views and for open debate must be encouraged through, where necessary, direct teacher intervention and, in general, by teacher modelling (Cole (ed.), 2007; HA, 2007(a); Wiese, 2011);²⁷

26. See, for examples of work addressing these issues in the context of the Northern Ireland conflict, Barton and McCully (2007), Kitson (2007), Kitson and McCully (2005), McCully and Pilgrim (2004), McCully, Pilgrim, Sutherland and McMinn (2002).

27. See, for example, the Nuffield Foundations' proposals for managing discussions (Nuffield, n.d.).

- the principle that teachers should enable students to express their emotional reactions to controversial issues rather than seek to avoid emotional issues (Barton and McCully, 2007).

Individual teachers must, of course, make their own decisions about how to approach teaching and learning focused around sensitive and controversial issues in their classrooms.

