

## HISTORY EDUCATION IN UK AND SOUTH AFRICA

### PERIODIZATION

UK	SA
<b>1900-1918</b> History goes to School	<b>1901-1910</b> History & Reconstruction
<b>1918-1944</b> History in Peace & War	<b>1910-1924</b> History & SAP Politics ("Unity is Strength")
	<b>1924-1933</b> History & PACT politics
	<b>1933-1939</b> History & Fusion
	<b>1938-1948</b> History and UP politics
<b>1944-64</b> History & the Welfare State	<b>1948-1970s</b> History & Apartheid (A)
<b>1964-70</b> History for the nation "In Decline"	<b>1970-1994</b> History & Apartheid (B) ## "Peoples History"
<b>1979-2010</b> History and the National Curriculum	<b>1994&gt;&gt; History for the new South Africa</b> <b>1998 + Curr 2005/OBE</b> <b>2000 = RNCS</b> <b>2010-11 = CAPS</b>
(D Cannadine et al (2011) <i>The Right Kind of History</i> (London, Palgrave/Macmillan)	(A Fataar, (2006) Policy networks..... <i>Journal of Educational Policy</i> 21(6): 641-659.)

# THE NATURE OF HISTORY EDUCATION

## ACADEMIC/TRADITIONAL

### (1) Formal Knowledge (Elite??)

Content delivery/Political history

"Talk & Chalk"/Assessment : Written essays

{Learning & memorization of facts" Rote learning ??}

## PROGRESSIVE METHODOLOGY

(Mass education/

UK Comprehensives)

- Motivation/empathy
- Activity methods
- Student activity
- Constructivist knowledge
- Social history/local history
- Interdisciplinary (social studies )

(Messing about with sources??)

### (2) Formal knowledge

Development/Conceptual focus/motivation

(Coltham & Fines *Educational objectives in History Teaching* (1970s))

Thinking/reflection/criticality/assessment thru essays

Based on historical understanding/conceptual

development in historical language + skill (*elite?? language?*)

## 1980s to the present

Content/formal knowledge/historical literacy #

# motivation (psychological aspects/level?)

# Skill development/conceptual development /

"Reading and interpreting an existing body of literature"

## HISTORY EDUCATION

- Educational objectives

Skills/concepts

“thinking/reflection/criticality/motivation”

“cause & effect; change & continuity; time & chronology; multi-perspectivity; historical sources and evidence” (CAPS Specific aims: 2.2 p8)

Psychological aspects of History Teaching

Capacity to engage meaningfully at the right developmental level/conceptual match/motivation (content/method??)

- Content/subject matter/knowledge criteria

The relationship of school history to mainstream scholarship/research in history

- Teacher capacity to deliver (*pedagogic viability*) (Counsell quote)

- Resources available (materials/textbooks/libraries)

- Assessment and Evaluation – *credibility*.

## THE KNOWLEDGE / CONTENT

We teach narrative/chronology/story/events to get a sense of the coherence of history –

- One thing after another is sequence/narrative(s)
- Explanation of how events relate and make sense
- Key issue of SELECTION of stories/events/explanations (BIAS?)
- The varieties of explanations

The match with historical skills/concepts/intellectual development to enhance COHERENCE in the light of the body of DEBATES/research/investigation/associated with the discipline of HISTORY.

How do we teach to promote exploration / engagement with the best intellectual endeavour ? *“degree of objectivity and a sense of standards.”* (M Young)

## THE TEACHERS

Teacher knowledge # Teacher as skilled pedagogue

How do they impart that knowledge? What are we to expect of them?

They need to have a good grasp of the epistemic tradition of history/the need to understand the conditions under which history is made/ they need to know the content/they need to know about the conditions under which the various explanations were constructed (historiography + research methods) and they need to understand the conditions under which meaningful learning will take place and how to ensure that it does take place.

## **The challenge**

**Counsell's cautionary warning about the difficulties of teaching history as an academic discipline at school in the form proposed is of course to be taken seriously. To teach history well at the level we are addressing is an extremely demanding task that requires considerable expertise, resources and commitment by teachers and students. It also requires that the teachers do not only have pedagogic teaching skills in the conventional sense, but that they are able to bring the "epistemic tradition" of history to the classroom in forms and under conditions that will allow for meaningful learning to take place and enable students to gain access to this valuable means of understanding and interrogating the world.**

**(Christine Counsell, "Disciplinary knowledge for all, the secondary history curriculum and history teachers' achievement," *Curriculum Journal*, (2011) 22(2) : 201-225.)**

**For teachers to be able to practice history education in the classroom requires both deep substantive knowledge (of the procedures of historical work and the content to be covered) of the subject matter as well as deep procedural knowledge. (how to stimulate these ways of thinking amongst learners)**

**Key Procedural concepts :**

- Making judgements about historical significance
- Ideas about continuity and change
- Analysing cause and consequences
- Taking a historical perspective
- Understanding the moral dimension of historical interpretations

(Levesque cited by Carol Bertram 2012)

**As Michael Young has pointed out with regard to curriculum innovation in the UK in recent years, whatever the pedagogical merits of the progressive, or technical-instrumentalist view of curriculum, the radical progressive proposals give “scant attention to the nature of knowledge, or to “the cognitive and pedagogical interests that underpin the production and acquisition of knowledge” which gives such knowledge “a degree of objectivity and a sense of standards.” (Young 2008: 33 cited by M Roberts: 8)**

# **CAPS HISTORY G10-12**

## **COMMENT**

- **Too much content knowledge to be covered/Depth ?**
- **Not sufficient coherence and continuity of topics.**  
**“Leads to thinking in bubbles” (John Tosh)**
- **Big sweep “statements” often look more like political science or sociology than history and are inappropriate to the level**
- **Many of the new topics are very interesting but would be nigh unteachable for the average teacher (lack of match between what we can expect teachers to teach with confidence and what is expected of them.)**
- **There is considerable bias and presentism in the selection of topics such as the focus on nationalism or race (racism) without sufficient consideration of the difficulties of teaching and the competence of teachers.**
- **That the lack of knowledge and resources on the part of teachers the new curriculum is in danger of reproducing the worst aspects of the old history curriculum as teachers will fall back on rote -learning and memorization when they are not sufficiently in control of the material to enable them to teach in accordance with the ambitious goals of the new history as spelt out in the aims of CAPS.**



## **GRADE 12**

**General Theme: What is (?) the nature of the post-Second World War world?**

**Topic 1: The Cold War :**

*Statement* : How did the Cold War shape international relations after the Second World War?

**Topic 2: Independent Africa:**

*Statement* : How was independence realized in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s?

**Topic 3: Civil Society protests 1950s-1970s**

*Statement* : What forms of civil society protest emerged from the 1960s to the 1990s?

**Topic 4: Civil Resistance in South Africa 1970s to 1980s**

*Statement* : What was the nature of civil society resistance after the 1960s?

**Topic 5: The coming of democracy to South Africa and coming to terms with the past**

*Statement* : How did South Africa emerge as a democracy from the crisis of the 1990s and how did South Africans come to terms with the apartheid past?

**Topic 6: The end of the Cold War and the new world order: 1989 to the present.**

*Statement* : How has the world changed since the 1960s?

## ***The Statements***

There is much to be said for a comment that attempts to capture the essence of a Topic. But, as has been indicated above, these statements are often framed without regard to the conventions of historical writing, and at times the problems stated are exogenous to the topics under consideration. It is not possible to examine these issues in detail but I will try to give a few examples.

**G10: Topic 3: How did the French Revolution lay the foundation for modern democracies?**

**G10: Topic 6: How did (the events?) of the period 1899-1902 shape 20th Century South Africa?**

**G11: Topic 3: What were the consequences when pseudo-scientific ideas about Race became integral to government policies and legislation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries?**

**G11: Topic 4: When is nationalism beneficial and when is it destructive?**

**G11: Topic 5: How unique was apartheid?**

**G12: Topic 1: How was independence realized in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s?**

**G12: Topic 5: How did South Africa come to terms with the apartheid past?**

# **SUMMARY**

- *EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN HISTORY EDUCATION*
- *PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HISTORY EDUCATION (LEVEL?)*
- *CONTENT SELECTION*
- *TEACHER CAPACITY*
- *TEXTBOOKS AND AIDS*
- *EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT*

**Can we be confident about the selection of content to meet the goals set out in 2.1 and 2.2 and about the promotion of skills as set out in 2.3., and, whatever the merits of the new CAPS history curriculum, can we be confident that teachers as practitioners are able to understand fully and achieve the goals set for them in the guidelines for teaching? Are we not handing them a poisoned chalice in the form of an impossible task and then blaming them when they are not successful in achieving the ends that we demand? And what of our educational responsibility to the students?**