

CONTINUITY AND CONSTRAINT: CASE STUDIES OF BECOMING A TEACHER OF HISTORY IN ENGLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

DAVID HICKS

Over the last thirty years, a solid research base has begun to emerge on the teaching and learning of history.¹ One series of studies focuses on how children develop historical thinking skills and the development of their ideas about the nature of history.² This research has been accompanied by calls to

shift from an emphasis on ‘a story well told’ (or, the story as told in the textbook), to an emphasis on ‘sources well scrutinized.’ [Where students] pose questions, collect and analyze sources, struggle with issues of significance, and ultimately build their own historical interpretations.³

A second series of studies examines history teachers’ understandings, ideologies, content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and classroom practices.⁴ While recognizing the importance of engaging students in the process of historical inquiry and interpretation much of this literature suggests that it is a mistake to assume a strong connection between theory and practice in terms of what it means to engage in the activity of history teaching. Reflecting such findings in the “learning to teach history” literature, specifically the impact of the complex and contradictory “swirl of influences” on “teachers content and pedagogical decisions,” clear differences exist between my student teachers’ often expressed hopes that they will engage students in the doing of history, and their subsequent patterned practice within the classroom.⁵ A patterned practice of history teaching, observed by generations of United States students and detailed in the literature, whereby,

the typical history classroom is one in which they [students] listen to the teacher explain the day’s lesson, use the textbook, and take tests. Occasionally they would watch a movie. Sometimes they memorize information or read stories about events and people. They seldom work with other students, use original documents, write term papers or discuss the significance of what they are studying.⁶

Such a genre of teaching and learning history is not how I remember my own experiences as both a student and beginning teacher in England, where I learned history, as well as learned to teach history, via the influential Schools Council History Project.⁷ Consistently the activity of teaching and learning history for me emphasized working with historical sources in order to marshal evidence and develop historical interpretations. The study of history became important, as Peter Lee notes, not for the stories it told, but because there are standards built into the “doing of history” that allow us to distinguish what we can believe from what we can question.⁸ Learning history helped inform an understanding of myself as a critically minded historical being, whose past, present and future was influenced by and influencing my evolving construction of self. I cannot say that my peers in England shared my convictions regarding the power and relevance of history. For many, history was only significant if they passed their exams. I can say that my observations and experiences teaching and learning history in the United States left me wondering how high school students could make any personal connections to, or see the challenge, power and relevance of a subject that was bound so tightly to the textbook and lecture podium. The contrast between how I remember teaching and learning history in England with my subsequent experiences as a teacher and teacher educator in the United States serves as the provenance for this study.

Currently, no research exists that teases apart and compares how pre-service teachers within different national educational settings begin to reorganize, reconstruct and transform their own experiences, knowledge and perspectives on history and history teaching as they negotiate the process of learning to

teach history. This comparative case study sets out to examine this gap in the literature by investigating how two pre-service teachers' understanding of history and their evolving construction of self as history teacher influenced their everyday pedagogical performances as beginning history teachers in England and the Commonwealth of Virginia in the United States.

Contextualizing the Study

Within the United States, as detailed previously, the teaching of history is represented as following a content focused, chronological telling of the tale of the past. At both national and state levels, fierce debates continue over history's place in the school curriculum and the nature of what should be taught in the history classrooms.⁹ Linda Fore's case study of the design and implementation of the Virginia Standards of Learning for History and Social Science clearly illuminates the role political ideology and rhetoric play in curriculum development.¹⁰ Confronted with such content heavy state standards as those in Virginia, the legendary history textbook, and the objective multiple choice based end-of-year assessment, Bruce Van Sledright's work illuminates the pressures and conflict facing teachers who try to engage their students in the doing of historical inquiry and interpretation.¹¹

In contrast to history teaching in the United States, a heavy emphasis on teaching the skills of the discipline in history appears to be well established within the Key Elements of the National Curriculum for History in England.¹² As Keith Barton notes,

Despite efforts by some politicians and historians in the late 1980's and early 1990's to construct a national curriculum emphasizing narrative treatment of the glory and heritage of the country's past...history in the United Kingdom continues to be viewed primarily as an evidence-based inquiry-orientated subject concerned with social, economic and cultural affairs as much as with politics.... Educators...equate the teaching and learning of history with the application of historical skills to the study of past societies rather than with the retention of the details of specific national narratives.¹³

The introduction of the National Curriculum for History in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, following the 1988 Education Reform Act, made history a statutory requirement at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.¹⁴ The requirements of what to teach and how to assess student progression outlined in the National Curriculum's Key Elements and the prescribed Attainment Targets "marked a radical overhaul of much existing practice and opened up opportunities for primary [and secondary] pupils to develop their own historical enquiries from a range of sources and to question their understanding and knowledge of the past."¹⁵ However, in spite of the admired analytic emphasis placed on the teaching of history,¹⁶ it is important to note that concerns continue to be expressed about the health of history in English schools.¹⁷ Specifically,

At GCSE level there is considerable evidence that the number of pupils opting for the subject is in decline. A number of suggestions have been put forward as explanations for this, including the views that history is conceptually too difficult, that pupils do not see the relevance of the subject, or that senior management in schools gives greater priority to other subjects.¹⁸

It is within the context of the heavily regulated National Curriculum for History in England and the Commonwealth of Virginia's Standards of Learning for History and Social Science that this study will explore how the activity of learning to teach history is negotiated, percolated and constructed over time and space by two pre-service teachers from distinct educational settings. In both settings, an emphasis on educational outcomes, in terms of teaching the prescribed curriculum and the importance of student success on end-of-course examinations, serves as the backdrop for the participant's journey from student to teacher. A journey, that when one considers Linda McNeil's research on teaching within highly regulated systems, appears fraught with traps and pitfalls that may lure even the most idealistic teacher into a ritual of uninspired and defensive teaching strategies.¹⁹ Strategies that, while flattening and trivializing the content of the discipline, serve to manage and control students with regard to their behavior in class and preparation for the final exam. This study is designed to represent the participants' voices comparatively and contextually in order to trace the patterns of influence that are negotiated as they construct themselves as history teachers.²⁰

The Power of Case Studies

Case studies offer an exceptionally powerful method of inquiry for researchers who have little control over the real-life events they wish to study.²¹ The value of the case study lies in its ability to provide multiperspective explanations of events, to show how complex processes fit together and work over time.²² In this study, the cases are designed to serve as a point of entry through which the reader, whether a history teacher, curriculum designer, parent, teacher educator, and/or policymaker can move into the conversation and compare their own stories, understandings and experiences with those in the case studies. The comparison allows explorations of the possibilities and consequences of teaching history and learning to teach history in particular ways.

The participants in this study were enrolled in graduate level pre-service teacher preparation programs. In England, Helen volunteered as a participant from a Postgraduate Certificate of Education cohort in the School of Education at a University in Northern England. Helen entered the PGCE program upon completing a history degree. In America, Amanda volunteered as a participant from a post-baccalaureate history and social science initial licensure master's degree program in curriculum and instruction at a university in Virginia. Similarly Amanda entered the program upon completing a double major in history and political science.²³

The collection of data utilized the following key methods of qualitative research: formal and informal interviews, audio recordings/transcriptions of the activity of teaching history, observations of lessons and departmental meetings and the collection of such documents as lesson/unit plans, schemes of work and lecture notes.²⁴ Field notes of classroom observations, taped conversations with participants and taped lessons served as a primary source of data. The participants' lessons were audio taped to gain further data on their experiences within their respective classrooms. Copies of their handouts, lesson plans, curricula, schemes of work, and teacher evaluations supplemented the data. All interviews and lessons were transcribed and analyzed.

Narrative analysis requires multiple readings of data. Analysis began with such leading questions as: How is the participant's story organized? How does the story explain how events came about and why they came about? This led to an examination of how each participant told her story, how they referred to themselves and others, where they began and ended their stories, and how they talked about their choices and decisions.²⁵ Because of the time spent with each participant, ongoing discussions, interviews and classroom observations provided the opportunity to identify and to categorize events and experiences that the participants saw as influencing their construction of themselves as history teachers, and their understanding of the nature of history as they moved through their respective methods' programs and into their teaching placements.²⁶ This study was guided by the following questions: How is each participant's understanding of the nature of history and the process of teaching and learning history located, filtered, and mediated within and through: a) their "biographic conceptions" of history and history teaching, and b) the context(s) of their teaching internship as they begin to construct themselves as history teachers?²⁷

Teaching As Performance

Ervin Goffman's dramaturgical approach will serve as a conceptual framework through which to explore how Helen's and Amanda's understanding of history and actual teaching of history are negotiated and constructed through the communities and networks of practice within which they moved and continue to move.²⁸ Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor views our everyday social interactions as a series of performances given by individuals he sees as social actors. He defines performance as "all activity of a given participant on a given occasion that serves to influence in any way any of the other participants."²⁹ From an interactionist perspective, learning to teach is not an isolated individualized endeavor that begins upon entering a teacher preparation program, but a process that evolves over time, and is shaped and managed by an individual's actions and interactions with others.

A key feature of Goffman's metaphor that will be used to examine how the process of learning to teach history is mediated transactionally by the expectations and recognition of others is his notion that there are distinct settings/places where performances are rehearsed and subsequently take place. Goffman

suggests that there are specific “front regions” where character performances are staged and “back stage” regions where the performer learns and rehearses a part. A major component of a performance is the “front” that is employed by an actor to successfully define the situation for those observing and/or participating within the interaction. The actor’s “personal front,” which includes the management of “items that we most intimately identify with that actor and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he goes” (i.e., appearance and manner), is styled and played out within the “setting” of the performance.³⁰ Within each setting, any physical item such as “furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props” can be used and worked with to support the particular performance.³¹

While Goffman’s theatre analogy will frame how Helen and Amanda begin to construct themselves in their front stage role of history teacher during their internship, it is necessary to pay attention to two continually interweaving, yet distinct components in an attempt to slow down and examine the complex swirl of influences upon each participant’s approach to teaching history. The first of these, the “interactional past,”³² can be best represented as the biographic conceptions or previous experiences and “well remembered events”³³ associated with learning and enjoying history as an audience member both in and out of school. Being an audience member, as David Buckingham contends, is not a passive activity, but, instead, “is something you do, rather than something you are.”³⁴ Since the work of Dan Lortie, much has been written supporting the impact that years as a student (audience member) have on an individual’s orientation to teaching and action in the classroom,³⁵ sense of self as a teacher³⁶ and perspectives toward specific subject matter.³⁷

The second component can be termed “interactional potential.”³⁸ This refers to the outcomes of planning, practicing and teaching history that are envisioned, experienced and represented by Helen and Amanda as most likely to be successful as they learn to teach via their enrollment in their respective teacher education programs. The concept of interactional potential allows us to go beyond simply acknowledging the importance of prior experiences on the pedagogical practices of teachers toward a recognition that learning to teach “is a time when one’s past, present and future are set in dynamic tension.”³⁹ Within the scope of this article, specific attention will be given to Helen’s and Amanda’s ongoing experiences as they rehearse in the backstage areas of their respective history methods classrooms, and subsequently shift from their backstage preparations to the front stage role of history teacher within the context of their teaching practice/internship.

Interactional Processes in the Social Construction of a History Teacher

Helen and Amanda shared very similar goals and hopes for themselves and their students as they entered into their internships. The importance of appearing to be a knowledgeable and confident teacher of history was vital, as was their goal of making history accessible and relevant while encouraging their students to become knowledgeable critical thinkers. History was a subject they had enjoyed, were successful with in school, and now wanted to teach. Although the participants shared such goals, as we shall see, the case studies reveal that the participants also held contrasting conceptions of history and history teaching.

The Creation of an Interactional Past

Backstage/Audience: Learning History in England

Helen’s biographic conceptions of history and history teaching were based upon her experiences learning the methods of the historian and the skills of the discipline in the context of the Schools Council History Project and the English educational system. Seeing herself as a trained historian, via successes at history from GCSE level at 16, specializing through A level and reading history at Cambridge University, served as important sources of evidence through which Helen represented herself as highly qualified to become a history teacher. In fact, she argued that her academic apprenticeship actually precluded her from teaching anything else beyond history.

I did spend time in a primary school, but it was not really what I enjoyed, in as much as I could not specialize, and I did not feel confident enough to handle the amount of National Curriculum subjects that primary teachers have to handle. I think doing a specialist degree focuses you in more. I am a trained historian and I am trained in how to use historical techniques. Even teaching other subjects is very difficult.

For Helen, becoming a skilled historian was a process of negotiating the hierarchically structured stages of history as demarcated by the English school curriculum. Each stage was marked by the courses she took at GCSE level, A level and degree level. Whether she was eligible to move up to a new stage was determined by how she fared in the final exams at the end of each course. As she passed through each stage, the focus and depth of the study increased, while the number of students studying history decreased. Having an interest and enthusiasm for history, while the motivating force for Helen wanting to study history, in itself was not enough to carry her through the stages/levels of history. As Helen notes,

History is beyond dates and facts. That is the lowest level. Anybody can learn dates and facts, but not everybody can be a historian. Implicit in being a historian is having the enjoyment and the interest and being able to develop the skills that are involved. It is like being a scientist—knowing the periodic table does not make you a chemist. It is how you apply what you know and your interest level that makes you do it.

The importance of analyzing and evaluating history sources to be used as evidence is a format that Helen, as an apprentice historian, had long practiced. In particular, this required her to focus on what Dominic La Capra terms the “worklike” aspects of source texts; as Helen explained, to “evaluate the source, to suggest why the source has been produced and for who it has been produced” in order to build knowledge about the past.⁴⁰ An important key to her conception of what it means to know and learn history was the Schools Council History Project that she successfully followed through to the age of 16. For Helen, the section of the SCHK that focused on local history struck a very personal chord with her. History was something she could see and feel:

Wakefield Girl's High School is on this Georgian square. And I remember doing that as a class. There is this beautiful church in the center of the square and you can see where the railings used to go before they were taken out and melted down during the war. The teacher pointed these things out to us and you are like, “wow,” you get that sort of recognition. The penny dropped, that this happened, and happened for a reason, and I am here looking at it. And even today I bore my friends to death with walking around town, saying, “Oh look at that really old building, let's go and have a look at this. Look you can just see the original writing and you can tell what it is.”

Becoming a Historian: Learning the Rules to Play the Game

Success with the subject of history in England, from GCSE level onwards, was determined by how quickly one could master writing a good essay. As Helen notes, history from A Level onwards was not about finding the correct answer, but crafting and playing with different positions and arguments. To continue with the apprenticeship, Helen had to show herself as being capable of successfully appropriating the habits and skills of historical analysis and interpretation as she moved through her A levels and onto university.

When you get to degree level it is like “there is the book list, there is the question, off you go!” And it is daunting going from A levels, with quite a bit of research and writing where the teacher will help you, to being cut adrift at a degree level with the comments, “you should know how to do this by now.” So for the first term, and even the first year you are floundering all the way.

For Helen the discipline of history and the activity of being a historian is *something that one does*. By the time Helen graduated from university, she represented herself as having accumulated certain enduring, yet transposable dispositions and habits of a trained historian, who then had the ability to find and take on apprentices of her own to teach them the skills and abilities she had learned.⁴¹ As Helen suggested,

I think going into archives, researching, reading, looking and knowing how to get into them; knowing how to write something that is a good piece of work, good history, at the end is all very helpful for being a history teacher. There are lots of skills encompassed in history—analysis, criticism, writing—and the more you do it, the better you get at it. So by degree level, which supposedly is the highest level you can get, I can apply it even onto subjects or periods that I do not know anything about. I can apply my skills and teach it.

From Apprentice to Teacher

Becoming a teacher of history was a transition for Helen. No longer was she an apprentice or audience member; entering the PGCE program served as notice that it was time to find her voice as a teacher in terms of developing the pedagogical authority to perform as a history teacher, to take on her own apprentices and teach them the tools and language of her trade. The goal of history teaching was, as Helen put it, “to pass on some of what I can do, and if I could just enthuse one person like I have been enthused in my career, then it makes it worthwhile.” Engaging students in debates on issues of controversy and issues in which they have a particular interest formed an important feature of her image of self as teacher.

I think that students should be able to learn about what it is they are interested in. To encourage excitement and interest is important. I don't know whether you can do that in a class but you can certainly point them in the right direction if that is what they want. This is easier as the teaching of history gets more advanced and you move higher up the scale, because the higher you go the more independent you become.

Teaching history, especially to pupils who are required to take history, Helen felt, would be different from teaching history to those who have demonstrated an interest or ability in history and at 14 years of age had actively chosen rather than fallen into history as an option for their GCSEs.

I think some of them will be historians, but I can't encourage them all to be. Some of them a) won't have the ability, b) don't have the interest. And I would rather encourage those who do rather than those who don't. If you don't enjoy it then what is the point. You just sit there through your GCSE's thinking, “Why the hell am I here?” Those who choose it see the relevancy; they make it relevant, and they make it have a purpose. They begin to get some idea of how it affects our society today. And beyond that, it means continuing to teach both basic literary skill and historical skills. And you can encourage them to do different things with different skills.

Helen's chance to teach history at Key Stages 3 and 4 would come as she began the PGCE in late September. Within the first week of the program, Helen was assigned to one of the School of Education's partner schools where she would spend the year. Helen was very pleased with her assignment. “Oh, it's a very good school. Its reputation precedes it. It is has a peculiar catchment area. There is a large council estate close by, and then we have some travelers, but the majority of the kids come from Sandal, which is very nice, so there is a bit of a mix. It has very good results. It is second in the league table in Wakefield.”

Contrasting Traditions

In contrast to Helen, Amanda's conceptions of history teaching throughout her formal education in the United States was influenced in style and content by a tradition of history teaching where the role of history teacher was to actively present a body of content knowledge to her students. Within such a tradition, emphasis was given to the importance of transmitting an understanding of the story of a nation's traditions and cultures. A sense of being exposed to history, with emphasis on *what we know and how much we know about the past*, rather than examining the nature of history, in terms of *how we come to know and understand the past in the context of the present*, forms a key difference between Amanda's and Helen's perception of themselves.

Backstage/Audience: Learning History in America

For Amanda, the study of history is designed to develop students' understanding and knowledge of people, places and events for the development of a concept not mentioned by Helen: citizenship. Citizenship, Amanda contends, embodies learning history in order to know about influential events and people for the sake of knowing who we are today.

People today, especially our generation, are really trying to get in touch with our own personal identity, where they come from, what influences them, where did these ideas that are being taught originate from.... I think studying history will supply answers to these questions. I think it allows us to discover why we are the way we are, where we came from, what we can do and why we have assumptions about people. The key is to help produce citizens who are neither apathetic nor cynical. I think one of the important aspects or goals of history should be to create critical thinkers who

can see that problems can be solved in more than one way, that can debate and talk about ideas—why things happened, why you think things happened. That is why I like history.

In contrast to England, the discipline of history, as part of the social studies curriculum in many states, is a mandated series of courses that must be passed in order to graduate high school. History is not an optional subject; it cannot be avoided. For Amanda, the only history courses that stood out within her high school career came in the form of Advanced Placement history. Even then, the activity of teaching mirrored many of her previous history classes except for a marked change in the speed with which the material was covered and the increased level of reading and writing that was required.

It was still all lectures, but we didn't really use a textbook. It was all supplemental reading. I liked that aspect of it; we just had handouts of Xerox sheets and a list of books that we had to go check out of the library, and we had to do these 15 fifteen page book reviews due every month. It was really intense. The teacher moved fast, I remember my hand used to be so sore from taking notes in that class. He had really high expectations, but we learned a lot.

Rather than being able to identify distinct levels by which to mark her success in history, success in high school history for Amanda was based on doing well on the ever present multiple-choice unit tests that formed the key method of assessment from year to year. The ability to remember dates and events for a test was the trait of a knowledgeable student, for as Amanda notes, "I have always had a really good memory. I tend to remember things easily, things for the test like dates, people, events. So, that part of history always came easily."

What is significant, however, is that for Amanda there was little chance beyond the AP courses to continue to develop and practice the skills of writing and doing history. AP history served as a respite from what Amanda called "textbook history," which she had predominantly experienced at school: "It was basically lecture, and the textbook. For homework, we would have to answer the questions at the end of the chapter and there was not a whole lot of discussion or cooperative learning or different teaching activities."

This "grand tour" of the past, designed for the creation of knowledgeable and worldly students of history, continued at university. The discipline of history was predominantly confined to the lecture hall. For her first two years the courses taken were filled with 50 to 80 students. The role of the lecturer was that of "knower" or "teller" of the tale. For as Amanda explains,

In college, I guess because you are dealing with people who are motivated or should be so the professors can get away with lecturing all the time. Like Dr. S., all he ever did was lecture. He would show slides, and he would draw us into his lectures with discussions and questions, but it was pretty much the same every day. I guess because his knowledge was so great, his experience too, he could get away with it and still be great.

Amanda's understanding of what it means to know and learn history was not defined by negotiating clearly defined levels of history as it was for Helen. Even in college, she learned about history by being provided with or exposed to stories and details about the past that were required to be remembered for a test. However, within this sea of content knowledge, there existed islands/courses such as historical methods that stressed and allowed for the doing of history. Such courses, though quite different, blended with the more typical ways of learning history and allowed Amanda to grasp the importance of the interpretative nature of history. While one could argue that an unexamined tension existed between how she had long been taught history and her developing understanding of how to do and interpret history, the conferring of a history degree, as with Helen, served as notice that she was ready, willing and able to become a teacher of history in the United States school system.

To Be a Teacher

In contrast to Helen, however, it is the notion of teacher—as opposed to becoming specifically a teacher of history—that percolates Amanda's narratives when she explores the origins of her decision to teach. The concept of being a history specialist, who through a deep understanding of the structures of the discipline had the tools to teach history, was not the way Amanda represented her evolving image of self as teacher. As Amanda notes,

I don't consider myself an expert, not by any means, just because I have a degree. I feel like I have been exposed to different perspectives. I think it is the courses and the professors I had that pushed me into wanting to teach it. Yeah, I have a history degree, but I don't feel that makes me an expert. You forget knowledge, you forget facts. Ideas stay with you but you know a lot of this stuff is easy to forget.

Becoming a teacher was Amanda's first decision, becoming a history and social science teacher was the second. Having a degree in history and political science was the bridge that would allow Amanda to teach a subject that she not only enjoyed but also demonstrated success in through the earning of her degree.

Shared Goals and Images

Amanda's initial goal in teaching history mirrored Helen's in that she hoped to encourage her students to develop an interest in the subject matter. This meant that she wanted her students to "develop some appreciation for the subject matter or maybe even spark some interest in it." Amanda hoped to stimulate "critical thinking, discussion, and I hope I can get kids who are real quiet and encourage them to be able to speak and talk about their ideas and reactions to things."

Such an image of teacher as motivator was set against a need to make teaching history relevant and interactive in the classroom. It was a concern that Amanda, like Helen, hoped to redress through the material she would bring into her class and by the very structure of her classroom itself.

I think I can find something interesting and relevant for everybody, it is also important that I have lots of interaction, a lot of discussion. I realize I might not get too many of them but I would like classes where everybody gets in a circle and you get everybody involved and the teacher doesn't have to stand in front of the room. I would like to walk around a lot and try to address each student individually and pull everybody into the class by using lots of different media, like images, pictures and supplemental reading to create different forms of stimulation because, you know, kids get bored hearing you talk or just reading something out of the book.

Amanda's chance to teach history would come in her final semester as she began her 10-week student internship in the small rural school district of Haytown. While it was also very different from the high school she had attended, it was not the type of school where she imagined carrying out her teaching internship.

I did not know anything about Haytown except that it was a predominantly white school, and I knew it was poor. And then the other student teacher who was there told me, "Well, the first day of hunting season is like a holiday where half the school doesn't show up." And I know it is a stereotype but I thought, "these kids are just going to look at me like I am some kind of freak. I probably don't look like them, I come from a completely different background I spent half my life making fun of these types of people," and I just thought, "God this is going to be different."

Acknowledging the Importance of Past Experiences

Differences in Helen's and Amanda's personal understanding of history are key in building a clearer picture of the differences in their teaching history both in terms of content and concepts taught and the expectations and interactions with students. Their contrasting conceptions of history and history teaching became meaningful to them specifically because of their past experiences learning history, which then became associated with their understanding of the role of history teacher and the activity of teaching history. However powerful past experience might be in framing conceptions of the discipline of history and history teaching, to fully trace and compare the provenance of the participants' meanings and actions as they construct themselves as history teachers, attention needs to be paid to the second interweaving component; the interactional potential. This can be done by examining the extent to which their current experiences and understanding of history and history teaching are mediated within the context(s) of a) their respective education programs especially in terms of the backstage settings of their methods' courses; b) their initial experiences and observations as they enter into the internship setting and c) the front stage setting of the teaching internship classroom.

Interactional Potential

Backstage: Learning to Teach History in England

Within the context of Helen's methods course and her internship, the emphasis on developing the skills of the historian was consistent with Helen's conceptions of how history should be taught in school. The PGCE program immediately placed Helen within a number of different communities and cultures beyond the university setting. Helen attended the history methods course every Tuesday from 9:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Educational and Professional Studies (EPS) lectures each Monday morning, and spent two days a week at her internship school. Upon completion of the first term, she returned to the school to begin her teaching internship. It soon became clear that within both the methods classroom and her partner school, a key organizing principle/script, that would guide her front stage activity of teaching history, was the National Curriculum for History.

While the importance of developing and practicing the skills of history were stressed, just as they had been during her own school years, new course content in terms of new modules within the programmes of study had been added within the National Curriculum, including courses that Helen had not studied in high school or college. However, she suggested that the process of learning the content to be taught within their assigned classes was a short-term concern.

I had to learn about it because I was told to teach it. Basically, I am a modern historian and everything I am teaching, I am learning as I go along from the textbooks and my own university books and the department's schemes of work.... But, you know, I also have infinitely more knowledge than they [the students] do. That is not being arrogant that is just knowing that in a lesson you do know more than they do even if I haven't studied the period. I have the skills to pick up things fast because I am trained to.

After being presented with the specifics of the National Curriculum and then a "buffet" of teaching ideas, the history methods class was expected to carry out individual microteaching lessons. Such mediated representation of history teaching served as the foundation upon which the pre-service teachers were expected to develop and rehearse the role of history teacher as framed by the National Curriculum within the relative safety of the backstage setting of the methods classroom. The mini-lessons allowed everyone to begin to take on the role of teacher in manner and appearance while working with specific teacher props in front of an audience.

We were given free reign to do what we liked and people tried all sorts of different things. The first ones were just like getting up and getting used to using the chalkboard and the overhead. I picked up some ideas and thoughts. And you would watch one, and you would just think, "this is really dull and boring" because all they did was just speak to you, they did not involve you. Or the information was at too high a level for the year it was supposed to be targeted to.

The importance of knowing and applying the National Curriculum for History was not confined to the history methods classroom. It was made very clear during Helen's first term in her internship school that what one taught was carefully choreographed by the department in order to fulfill the requirements set within the National Curriculum for History. Lesson topics, departmental assessments and available resources that could be used to fulfill the requirements of the National Curriculum were already outlined within specific departmental guidelines known as "schemes of work."

Each year's work is planned out as a series of lessons by the school. It is part of the National Curriculum requirements, and OFSTED inspectors look for schemes of work. So basically I am prescribed what I teach the children every lesson. It actually goes lesson to lesson. The department devises it, and basically the scheme tells us what we need to know, and the resources that are available for us to use. So like if I am going to plan a lesson and I am stuck, I could use the scheme of work to see what they say, what they have, and if you look on the scheme of work it will tell you the book and the page to use.

Each scheme of work made available to Helen served as extra stage directions to direct her to the types of props, resources and materials that could be used in her upcoming classroom performances.

The Role and Expectations That Come with Being a Member of the Cast

Within the history department, the resources and materials were carefully stored and monitored because worksheets and textbooks were designated for use by the whole department rather than a specific teacher. The faculty did not teach a specific year or level of history. Instead the timetables of each teacher incorporated history classes from different years and different bands of students. Helen's timetable consisted of classes taken from the timetables of each teacher in the history department, who in turn became responsible to advise, observe and report back to the mentor on how well the department's new cast member was performing. Locating and using specific resources detailed in the schemes of work for each unit of study became an important part of learning the stage directions for her performance.

This file cabinet here is for Romans, and Rob is in charge of this one and a couple of others. Yes, and I think Greg does "Medicine through time." And I looked through the material last week and pulled out loads from the file cabinet.... I am going to be teaching medicine through time and there is some stuff on different types of doctors which I don't know anything about, so some of it is useful for me.

While the schemes of work served notice as to the content that was to be taught, additional directions, in conjunction with the "stage scenery" within the history departments gave Helen more information about how to approach and flesh out her role as history teacher. Specific examples of how to teach history were not only found in the textbooks and worksheets; the walls of the classrooms and hallways of the history department also provided Helen with insights into the type of work expected of history students. Examples of student-based work could be found along walls of classrooms and hallways.

It was very noticed when I first came in the department. I think the visual is carried from the textbooks we use on to the displays on the walls. But if you look you realize that it is never just draw a picture, there is always some task that they have to do, like it is a poster showing something, or part of a letter or newspaper article.

Preparing to Go Front Stage

Before being able to teach history, Helen was required to learn and fit into the needs and requirements of the department, which continued to come to terms with the requirements of the National Curriculum and the OFSTED inspectors. She was provided with teaching scripts and stage directions in the form of schemes of work, departmental lesson plan templates, school textbooks, and departmental profiles, as well as the displays of students' works that laid out the "official" expectations for their performance in the role of teaching history.

When I first started I felt really overwhelmed. Helen B. [school mentor] gave me all these textbooks and stuff on the first day. And I had to carry all these textbooks and 3 schemes of work home with me on the bus. And I was walking through town and it was pissing it down with rain. I had my best suit on. I could not put my umbrella up. I was getting soaked and I was bordering on tears. I was like, "All this stuff. What am I going to do with it all? Where the hell do I start?" And Helen B. said, "Well read the schemes of work."

Planning became a balancing act that she thought was "initially bloody hard work" since "I know at the moment I can't come to school having not got the day's lessons prepared and do it off the top of my head." Although planning, Helen argued, was a necessary evil, it was a process she felt comfortable with due to her experience as a history student who realized that there were many different levels of history.

Sometimes planning is hard. I have to write some notes to myself to know about the content, what is happening. And once I have the basic content I think of tasks for students.... They need to feel as though they are doing things, progressing and being stimulated so you need to build in various tasks like maybe discussion, then looking at documents or evidence, then assessing the evidence. I mean they need to be challenged at whatever the level they are. In year 7, I think they need to start to understand source reliability because when you get to year 9 I think it is too late. By year 7, they should have at least a real understanding of primary and secondary sources and that you can have different interpretations. By the time they are 13, they believe everything you give them. I know when they get to GCSE, they have to know certain stuff like dates, places, and events, but they do also have to be able to apply the skill. Because like in a lot of syllabuses you can't get top marks by just giving names, dates, and places, you have seen the National Curriculum you have got to have analysis skill with it. And you have to help them develop this early on.

Front Stage: Script Difficulties and Audience Reactions

The success of Helen's lessons was tempered by teaching assignments in which she constantly struggled with how she should teach history when faced with students who had been placed into lower ability groups. Early experiences in front of her audiences not only opened her eyes to who she would be teaching, but left her immediately questioning her own ability to teach history.

Everyone told me what a nice school this was. But I have got some awful classes. I have students who can't read or write, who have behaviour problems. I mean 8S4 are literally the illiterate group. How do you tailor your lessons to that? ...and last term I was put into a full lesson with that year 10 group and it was horrendous. They were awful and I was like "I really don't need this."

Knowing history and seeing herself as a trained historian did little to prepare Helen for teaching history to students who seemed to struggle with not only the conceptual and linguistic difficulties, but also the boredom of source analysis as they were encouraged to practice the skills of the historian. Such classes left Helen struggling and frustrated in her teaching. The way she had come to understand history teaching, through her own educational experiences, did not prepare her for the reality of such classes.

I am a trained historian but this [teaching] is very different. Standing up in front of them and talking to them on their own level because they don't have adult vocabulary is difficult. They don't have adult concepts of the world. And being confident to stand up in front of a group of thirty-four back-chatting cheeky kids who think they know it all is so difficult.... This is so very different from teaching in a 6th form...you choose subjects you like so you are more likely to get kids who like history as opposed to finding it dull. You can then be less teacher-orientated because they already have the natural sort of leaning to history and they have already done things like their GCSE so they already have higher-level skills. But lower down the school my role is to develop skills they will need later if that is what they choose. But it is really tough because the actual ability level of the group is vital. If you miss their level you can have no end of problems because they will create trouble because they don't understand and for the high ability groups you need to hit a level above them to stretch them.

Within the confines of the teaching internship, Helen did not appear to rethink her implicit assumptions of how to teach history to those students who knew they would not continue with the study of history after the age of either fourteen or sixteen. A script and stage directions needed to be followed with the goal primarily to guide students through the practice of doing history. Her concern with planning and presenting lessons at the "right level" in order to maintain a well-managed class was exacerbated by the fact that all students at Key Stage 3 were expected to learn not only the content but practice the skills of history as detailed within the National Curriculum, displayed all around the history department and previously experienced by Helen as a student herself. Within her lessons, students were expected to work with a series of selected sources to practice the doing of history as initially modeled by Helen. This led Helen to constantly create source-based worksheets for her students to use. Developing such material, she suggested, was a form of complexity reduction whereby the steps to acquiring specific understandings and skills were crafted into more manageable, consumable chunks for her apprentice historians. "I don't like making handouts, it is very time consuming. But I think it is important to make things interesting...to gives them more encouragement to work on things because they are not over-faced." Helen's performance became an ongoing effort to make it through the lesson while still seeking to encourage and look for those magical moments when her students showed flashes of the skills and analysis that she deemed important in the process of learning to be a historian.

Finding the right level for her various classes remained an experimental process in which successes were mixed with frustrations. For Helen, learning the level at which to approach each different audience involved pushing all her classes until she met resistance:

I like to be able to judge for myself because I don't think you can truly know what level somebody is at until you have see them work yourself and get it wrong. Like last week I set 8S 4 a task that was difficult.... And they were quite good at it and they got it toward the end when they understood what they were doing. I agreed with them that it was a hard task but I don't see why, just because they are supposedly a low ability group, they can't do the task.

However, even within a period of one day, such an approach would leave her singing the praises of one class while desperately frustrated with the ability and behavior of another.

The horrible year 10, the way they act it shows that they are not a GCSE group. And a lot of them don't even meet the targets for the level of that unit. I mean another reason why they are low attainers is that they are never in school so what do you do? Everything has got to be simple otherwise they are just confounded, and if you make it too complicated they don't respond. So I have tried to do things with them and they have gone abysmally wrong. And they can be little shits to put it completely unpolitely. Just being in the room with them their mood can swing very violently. You know they can be as nice as pie one minute and they can be swearing at you and telling you to "F off" the next. And doing history just goes out of the window.

Backstage: Learning to Teach History in America

In contrast to Helen, who found herself placed in her internship school from the beginning of her program, Amanda's placement served as the capstone of the program. The academic courses within the program are taken during the first two semesters of the program with the nine-credit-hour internship taken in the final spring semester. A key requirement of Amanda's program, similar to Helen's history methods classes, are two graduate seminars: Teaching in the middle and secondary school, 1 and 2, which are taught in the fall before student aiding and in the spring before student teaching respectively. The focus was very much on how to teach, and as with Helen, time was given to practice and develop various pedagogical approaches within the university classroom. Amanda viewed the various teaching approaches modeled as additional props that were available for use within her upcoming role of history teacher, should she choose to use them.

It is useful to have new exposure to it. Before that, I guess I wasn't really conscious about some of the approaches like cooperative learning. I hated that stuff when I was a student, not in high school because we didn't have any of that. But in having talked about it, I feel like we got a lot of good ideas from each other. And that's good because I think we learn a lot from just each other. Because of that I have a better sense of how to use it now.

The methods course also introduced Amanda to what was presented to her as the official script for history and social science. While the National Curriculum for History serves as the official script for history teachers in England, the Virginia Standards of Learning for History and Social Science outlines what is to be taught by history and social science teachers in Virginia. In the methods class, the SOL were presented as an important script that should be known and used within their planning and teaching. The need to focus on getting through the content, she pointed out, was further exacerbated by the introduction of new statewide objective tests linked to the standards that would be given at the end of April.

I think that I will try to bring in the idea of interpretation, of getting into people's points of view, and developing critical thinking in history but it is going to be hard. I mean one reason it's hard is because of the way the standards are written, and all this emphasis on, you know, "you have to get these kids to pass these tests." And from what I understand these tests are pretty much multiple-choice. But they are written in such a way that it is clear that they want you to teach content that will get your students to pass exams. That is their goal. It makes it hard to think about developing critical thinking skills when you are stuck with this goal, whether you like it or not.

As she began her teaching internship, her university advisor continued to stress the SOL. "She was really hung up on the SOL. She was like, "These kids have tests in April, and you have to get through this stuff in your class."

Amanda did not view the focus on content within the SOL, as radically different from the United States history course she had taken in eleventh grade in New York. Amanda suggested that in stressing the content of United States history over anything else, the new eleventh grade curriculum was "pretty typical eleventh grade history" that would allow little time for anything beyond the usual coverage. In fact, upon meeting her cooperating teachers, few details or expectations were forthcoming that suggested that the content or format of what she was to teach would be any different from how she had learned history in high school. Through observing and talking to her cooperating teacher, Mr. I., Amanda felt they shared a common understanding of what it meant to teach history.

I think our philosophies are similar in terms of our ideas about history, and how it should be taught. We were talking about the Civil War and I was like "Well, I think the years 1850 to 1861 are more relevant than the actual war years," and he totally agreed with me on that. In the first few weeks we would talk a lot at the end of the day about what should be taught and stuff like that, and we just have similar ideas about how to teach history or how to see it, or what periods or things are important.

The Role and Expectations That Come with Being an Understudy

In contrast to the experiences of Helen, any expectations of when Amanda would teach specific material were determined at a much more decentralized level within the department. Such curricular decisions were left to the discretion of the teacher assigned to the course. Taking on the role of eleventh grade United States history teacher for Amanda was more analogous to being an understudy to her cooperating teachers than a new member of a department who had to negotiate a specific role as part of an established cast. A key assumption that comes with the role of understudy rather than cast member is that the actual role has already been defined, developed and fleshed out by the established actor—the cooperating teacher. When the understudy goes front stage, there is a prior understanding of what is expected in the performance. For all intents and purposes, the expectation is that what the audience sees should mirror the timing, delivery and format of the experienced actor as observed, studied and understood by the understudy. In her initial meetings with Mr. I., Amanda was provided with his resources and expectations as to how to accomplish the teaching of history. The importance of knowing and covering the content was stressed as the key to a successful internship. This was to be achieved by using the textbook(s) for the course.

We just talked a lot about how we are going to get through the year and what things are important to focus on as far as the schedule. He set a goal, "If you can get here through to World War II this is great. But don't stress over it, you know." And the first day I came in to observe he introduced me to the class right away and said I would be taking over in a week or two, and he handed me a teacher's edition of the textbook. And he said, "These are the textbooks we are using, you will probably want to start looking at them now."

Preparing to Go Front Stage

For Amanda, just as with Helen, the process of planning lessons began with the textbooks that were provided at the school. The textbook itself became the organizing principle behind the learning and ordering of the content and what would then be tested. Amanda's process of discerning what details should be presented within a lesson began with the routine of harvesting notes from the textbooks that she would then organize in preparation for presenting history to her classes. "I guess note taking has always been one of my really good skills. Whenever I do take notes myself, I tend to be able to not write everything down but be able to summarize and organize things well." What Amanda did find difficult, however, was breaking away from the routine of gathering content to thinking about how she would organize the material into teachable/consumable chunks for her audience.

It gets hard because sometimes when I am writing my notes I look at this stuff and it's so easy. You go through the textbook and then you just get caught up in the content and forget what you really want to be teaching. And I know I need to be more aware of it, and be like, "Wait what is the big picture here? What is the theme? What are we talking about here?"

Amanda suggested that, while time consuming, this initial emphasis on note taking in planning was vital not only as a way to organize and manage the content material that was to be taught, but to carry off the appearance and manner of a knowledgeable and competent history teacher.

It took me a long time to prepare for lessons, because 19th century American history, especially the latter half, is not my forte and I just don't have a whole lot of time, ideas or resources for it.... I would end up getting up at 4:00 in the morning to work on lesson plans. I would either be on the Internet looking for stuff to use or going back and reading chapters and making sure I knew the material. I was killing myself. I didn't know how comfortable I would be in front of the class. So I had tons of notes. Like a lot of it was just getting comfortable with the whole environment, with what I was doing.... Sometimes I wish I had more time to plan, but then you find you just don't have the time to make really great lesson plans and you end up doing something half-assed instead.

This focus on determining, gathering and pulling the content together as a primary part of lesson planning resulted in plans that were very heavily orientated to telling the tale of the past. The pace of teaching on a ninety-minutes block schedule she suggested, served as a stumbling block to breaking free from what seemed to be a perpetual state of note-taking and organizing of the content for transmission as she tried to make sense of the material herself before going front stage.

Front Stage: Telling the Tale of the Past

Amanda's attachment to the pedagogy of telling the tale of the past remained strong throughout her internship. Amanda felt comfortable within the role of teaching history as a subject that requires, above all else, the transmission of content to students. As she continued to plan and develop her lessons, she constantly sought to improve her performance as the teller of the tale in front of her audience. The initial key, she suggested, was to appear knowledgeable and in control with the lines/script that she developed from the SOL and her textbook.

You know I look over my notes a lot as I teach, just because I then tend to remember them better and be like "Oh, I don't want to forget to say that or talk about this you know." But I am trying to get in the habit of not so much memorizing but at least remembering each big point that I am going to cover because I am afraid that if the kids see me look at my notes too much they are going to think I don't know myself.

Because her audience was very different from the audiences she had been a member of, it was not easy for Amanda to develop and maintain the balance, on the one hand as the knowledgeable teller of the tale who could move the student through the content of history, and, on the other as an encourager of student-based activities and "critical thinking." This situation was exacerbated by the fact that she quickly began to view many of her students' abilities as static.

It is a general ed. class so half of them are not motivated to begin with. There are probably a handful of those kids you could stick into a higher-level class and they would be able to keep up, but for the most part they just don't, can't, or don't want to. They don't have any opinions. I mean they don't think. They do what they are told; they are so passive it drives me nuts. It is so different from when I was in high school we had classes and we used to debate and argue and I don't see any of that here. They are so passive. So I can't teach how I was taught history as I would lose these kids.

Amanda's perception of her students' capabilities and attitudes, set against a backdrop of her own high school experiences, and reinforced by the expectation of her cooperating teacher, and the SOL, left her with one clear authoritative and comfortable option for how to approach the teaching of history. "I am pretty comfortable with standing in front of everyone, whether it's going over questions and trying to get them to engage in discussion or you know lecturing. I am pretty comfortable giving them notes, though I sometimes feel like I have gotten into too much of a routine with it." It was only as she neared the end of her internship that she made any mention of the models of teaching from the methods course. This came as a result of a meeting with her supervisor who encouraged her, Amanda said, to "just try more interesting lesson plans and, you know, maybe try to use some of the models of some of the innovative stuff we did." However she felt it was difficult to go above and beyond the coverage approach especially when faced with seventeen-year-old students whom she viewed as neither caring nor having the ability to do history. More practical suggestions, she felt, came via her cooperating teacher.

So his suggestion was to give them a worksheet before they do notes or you can have them read the chapter and answer questions. He was like, "If you give them reading, give them a kind of guideline. But I have to tell you a lot of these kids don't do homework. They have jobs after school, so giving them class work like that is a good thing. And they will generally do it in class if you give them credit for it and you know that gives them some other exposure besides listening to lecture." And that has worked really well. So they have to look at the material first and they then have at least some idea or some background as to what they are writing down in their notes.

It was a format that Amanda saw as having potential. The worksheets in a sense served as a flotation device providing background or supporting knowledge to buoy the audiences' heads above the rising tide of content. "I try to pick worksheets that will either be used as a lead in to a lecture so they have something besides just our text to fall back on or to refer to what has been talked about that day." Such worksheets bridged the gap between how she remembered learning history—in classes made up of students who had developed the habits and abilities to take notes, provide correct answers to teacher-based questions, while appearing interested in the teacher talk—and teaching students whom she perceived quite differently. The worksheets also provided Amanda with access to various primary sources that were stressed within the method courses as so important in the activity of teaching history. The primary sources she suggests provided contemporary voices to support her telling of the tale of the past:

I am always giving them quotes or paragraphs you know. I give them stuff from John Jay, from Washington. Like I mean if it's just things like two to three sentence quotes during the lecture to just to give them things to think about.

Incorporating such ideas was an approach she had little experience with, or anticipated using. While she felt such ideas were successful, the time taken by independent student textbook or worksheet work remained the most uncomfortable part of her daily performance as history teacher. In her performances as history teacher, large sections of teaching time she felt were now missing as she stood silently waiting to present the details and content that she had previously (re)learned and organized in the notebook that lay on the desk in front of her. It was during such periods that she was left to rationalize whether she was really teaching history as she had remembered it being taught to her and subsequently envisioned it from the backstage regions of the methods classroom.

I wonder if I am not doing my job especially when I give them all these worksheets. Because I am not doing anything. I mean it's easier in my mind because I don't have to get up and talk and write stuff down. And I do think that if all I did was get up there and talk in a lecture a) it would be boring and b) I mean I think people learn better when they have different types of teaching going on. And I know that when I lecture too long or when I am up in front of the class too many days in a row doing that I can see the frustration on their faces. And when I give worksheets for the most part they stay on task and they do them—the main idea is written down in their notes but it's just strange waiting for them in order to move on.

Discussion

Crafting a final impression of these beginning teachers, who allowed me into their classrooms is a difficult step. To end with the participants facing and exploring the realities of the classroom does not produce a clean or tight Hollywood ending. For Helen, the historian and teacher of history, and Amanda, the history major who saw herself as teacher first and subject teacher second, closing the case studies here is awkward and uncomfortable because both their stories end where idealism and reality clash. Within the boundaries of these cases, it does however become possible to examine the interactional processes and contextual complexities of learning to become a teacher of history in two distinct and highly regulated educational settings. This in turn reveals that the teaching of history and preparation of future history teachers on both sides of the Atlantic will require breaking through the conceptual distinction of history as being either exclusively knowledge based or skills based if students, parents and administrators are going to see history as a relevant, meaningful and useful school subject.

For Helen, the activity of teaching history at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is designed with the goal of primarily fostering the development of students' historical skills by working with multiple source material. Helen's history classroom can be likened to a workshop, where Helen, the trained historian, took on the role of the master craftsperson while her students become apprentice historians who were to be shown various and often conflicting historical sources of an event, and then given room to practice the habits and skills of the historian. For Helen, successful teaching and learning is measured first, by how well the students ventriloquate the types of source analysis modeled by the teacher in light of the accompanying levels of attainment found within the National Curriculum and detailed in the departments schemes of work, and second, by success on the GCSE exam.

Amanda's approach to teaching history focused more on content coverage through the pedagogy of telling the tale of the past. Amanda viewed the history class at Haytown as a "foundation" for developing an understanding of the story of a nation's development, a single unified story, that James Wertsch has termed the "Quest for Freedom" narrative.⁴² For Amanda, successful teaching is dependent upon how well students take and keep the teacher provided structured notes. Notes that predominantly list "fragmented" pieces of knowledge and information distilled from the textbook that are all carefully numbered and then graded by the teacher.⁴³ Notes that in turn serve as the basis for what students will be tested on, via teacher based multiple-choice unit tests and the Commonwealth of Virginia end-of-course multiple-choice test, in order to determine whether students have the knowledge of American history to graduate high school.

This article reveals how, for these participants, developing pedagogical attachment to differing traditions of teaching history can best be understood by examining two continually interweaving

components: a) the interactional past, or “well remembered events,” and interactions associated with learning and teaching history that form a biographic conception of history and history teaching; and b) the interactional potential, or experiences and outcomes, of planning and teaching history. The study reveals both the significant roles one’s biography *with* and *in* history classrooms plays in a teacher’s understanding of, and disposition toward, teaching history. In tracing the provenance of the participants’ meanings and actions as they construct themselves as history teachers, the case studies reveal, “what one knows about teaching, and what one believes is possible and desirable in one’s teaching, all vary according to the context in which teaching is done. These contexts of teaching shape not only what teachers can do but also the knowledge and experiences that guide their teaching.”⁴⁴ In both cases, Helen’s and Amanda’s approaches to teaching history were deeply influenced by their own backlog of experiences or genealogical lens—the interactional past—which in turn were mediated and negotiated, at varying levels of influence, through the differing expectations of their respective curriculum, their cooperating teachers and departments, and, most significantly, their students—the interactional potential. What is striking is that the participants’ attachment to the same form of history teaching they had experienced in school was not merely reinforced by such external impositions as the curriculum, the resources available, the requirements of the department and cooperating teacher, and the physical layout of the classroom, but primarily because it was what Helen and Amanda hoped for and ideally wanted to provide for their students.

The limitation of their own experiences, over time and space, as products of the educational system to which they now returned in the role of teacher, however, proved to be problematic for the participants when faced with the responsibility of teaching history to a wide range of students. Simply having a good understanding of the discipline of history does not mean that a teacher will be able to effectively engage students in the practice of historical inquiry. Helen remained frustrated and rather helpless when trying to organize learning experiences that supported and fostered the teaching of historical skills and concepts. While she held clear ideas of what she wanted to teach, and recognized the importance of developing lessons designed to enthuse students, she struggled to engage particular classes of students in the doing of history. Her initial assessment that not all students would be either willing or able to successfully move through the various attainment levels of history and succeed at GCSE level came back to haunt her as she struggled to teach lower ability students to “develop their awareness of historians tentative conclusions about the past, and...to become more involved themselves in constructing their own versions and understanding of past events and way of life.”⁴⁵

Tied into the heavily regulated expectations of the National Curriculum, in terms of teaching and assessment, where “experienced history teachers and student teachers alike have the daunting task of familiarizing themselves with a vast amount of documentation relating to the teaching of history,” Helen found herself unable to develop opportunities for her students to see the relevance and importance of a subject whose singular focus appeared to be reduced to an indistinct series of simplified, and at times mystifying, activities that focused simply on the status of historical accounts.⁴⁶ Anna Pendry et al. suggest that such a “preoccupation with primary historical evidence underplays the importance of narrative structures, which provide the framework within which questions are posed and answers developed.”⁴⁷ For many of Helen’s students, history lessons, as laid out in the departmental schemes of work and assessed according to the National Curriculum’s Levels of Attainment, were based on the assumption that by “doing the various skills of history they would simply get better at them.”⁴⁸ An assumption that has left many pupils throughout England and Wales, who participate in the daily grind of source analysis and interpretation, ready to mentally drop out and rebel against a subject they see as boring, irrelevant, exceptionally dense and difficult.⁴⁹

Similarly, Amanda was left with a degree of discomfort and frustration at facing students whom she perceived as neither caring about history, in terms of making any connections to their lives, nor possessing any ability to do history. Despite her initial goals of making history relevant and engaging students in discussions of various perspectives, the bulk of her teaching focused on the transmission of specific historical content to her students. Her discussions took the form of questions designed to check for understanding and to elicit facts and details of what the students have already covered. Primary

sources, if used at all, came generally from the textbook or the Internet, and were chosen to flesh out the story being told. The problem, Christine Counsell suggests, with such a knowledge-based approach is that “pupils do not necessarily acquire knowledge by doing overviews.”⁵⁰ Rather, she contends, “pupils will switch off when they hit overload or fail to connect with abstract alienating detail.”⁵¹ In essence, historical content became a commodity, packaged for transmission first by the textbook, and then courtesy copied via Amanda’s lecture and notes. The final outcome is a history that exists as a unitary, fixed, neatly packaged, simplistic and context free stockpile of knowledge that is easily consumable and testable. As a result, history merely leads to a “rudely stamp’d” understanding of the past, in which the past

itself suffers harm: whole segments of it are forgotten, despised, and flow away in an uninterrupted colorless flood, and only individual embellished facts rise out of it like islands: the few personalities who are visible at all have something strange and unnatural about them.⁵²

McNeil’s research examining the consequences of highly centralized school systems helps move our understanding of these case studies beyond such arguments that this is simply “bad history teaching on both sides of the pond,” or beginning teachers who lack a sophisticated subject specific pedagogical content knowledge.⁵³ Rather, what is taught within highly regulated systemic educational systems is “shaped by the tension between the contradictory goals of educating students and of controlling and processing them.”⁵⁴ Both Amanda’s and Helen’s teaching, while embracing separate sides of the conceptual distinction between knowledge and skills in the teaching of history, utilized “defensive teaching strategies.”⁵⁵ In front of their respective students, both Helen and Amanda drifted into a form of teaching by exposure. In Helen’s case, teaching history underwent a process of defensive simplification/complexity reduction, in terms of promising her students that their next activity was not going to be difficult, and subsequently simplifying the processes of historical interpretation and analysis by encouraging her students, via some form of written response or depending on the level of the class a graphical representation/artwork, to mimic her front stage performance of source analysis. There appeared to be little room to actively engage her students in any form of historical inquiry, in terms of carefully exploring the nature of the source itself, contextualizing these remains of the past, and subsequently corroborating the evidence in order to craft a historical interpretation.

For Amanda, teaching history underwent a process of fragmentation, through which the topic of study was reduced to a series of outlines of disjointed pieces of information made up of lists and isolated facts that were to be copied down by her students. In both cases, their teaching of history continued to meet the requirements and expectations of their respective curriculum, cooperating teachers and supervisors. However, as a result of their teaching, the actual discipline of history itself was “flattened,” thus minimizing any opportunities for students to identify the relevance and significance of what was being taught.⁵⁶ As McNeil notes, “When teachers use these mechanisms they...maintain discipline through presentations of course content. They choose to simplify content and reduce demands on students, in return for classroom order and minimal student compliance on assignments.”⁵⁷ As they moved toward the end of their internships, both appeared limited in their ability to fully come to terms with how to create powerful, challenging, meaningful and accessible learning opportunities designed to accommodate and advance their students’ learning of history—whether the focus was content- or process-based. Within each of their respective classrooms, Helen and Amanda were left seeking those magical teaching moments where, for some reason or another, their students showed either flickers of enthusiasm, made connections to the past or demonstrated certain “approximations of more sophisticated understandings” in the doing of history.⁵⁸ It was not necessarily apparent to either Helen or Amanda why or how such magical moments occurred.

Conclusions

This article offers insights into how the nature of teaching history within two distinct systems reproduces itself not only through compliance with school, curriculum mandates and cooperating teacher expectation, but through an active desire from within to pass down, to recreate for others, what worked well for them. For both Helen and Amanda, concerns arose and initial beliefs about the import and effect

of their teaching were tempered when faced with the vast majority of students who appeared to struggle to see the relevancy of history as either simply a skills-based or a content-based discipline. It is only by initially focusing on the complexities of learning to become a teacher of history that we, as teacher educators and history teachers, can move forward to explore the implications of this study. At a minimum, this will require fostering and developing an open and positive educational climate for teachers, supported by teacher educators and policymakers, to develop a rationale for teaching history that takes into account and unpacks the interactional and contextual factors influencing teachers' conceptions of the nature and outcomes of teaching and learning history. This means going beyond clinging to the concept of pedagogical content knowledge toward a richer and deeper understanding of history teacher crafting knowledge. Such an exploration must include but will also require going beyond such questions as: What is history? Why are we teaching history? How do we define wise practices in the teaching of history? Toward identifying clear and powerful cases of history teachers in varying contexts, who demonstrate a high level of pedagogical authority with regard to: a) their understandings of the power and importance of learning history beyond the need to pass a test or know history for its own sake; b) their abilities to connect their knowledge about children's understandings of history to their own practice; and c) their abilities to show how the acquisition of historical knowledge is "both the servant and the result of enquiry."⁵⁹ An important outcome of such work must be the development of a more precise understanding of how knowledge and process percolate within and through each other to foster relevancy, significance and student learning. If no effort is made to examine the nature of current professional discourse and action that is reified into what is simply a conceptual distinction between history as knowledge and history as process, the future for history teachers, teacher educators and history students, on both sides of the Atlantic, appears bleak and, at best, static.⁶⁰ Phillips is correct and encouraging when he stresses that even within the current educational climate:

It is perfectly possible to use history to teach about heritage as well as diversity, to teach historical knowledge as well as transferable skills, and...to teach the past for the past's sake, as well as cultivating a sense of informed criticism.... All this, of course, puts an enormous onus on the history teacher, and policy makers sometimes forget the quality of the subject is only as good as those who teach it.⁶¹

Thanks to Keith Barton, John Lee, Alan McCully and Avner Segall for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article.

NOTES

1. See M. Downey and L. Levstik, "Teaching and Learning History," in *Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning*, ed. J. P. Shaver (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 400-10; G. Leinhardt, I. L. Beck, and C. Stainton, eds., *Teaching and Learning in History* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994); P. Stearns, P. Seixas, and S. Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History: National and International Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); S. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University, 2001).

2. R. Ashby, "Developing a Concept of Historical Evidence: Students' Ideas about Testing Singular Factual Claims" (paper presented at the conference of the History Educator International Research Network, St. Martins College Ambleside, United Kingdom, July 2004); R. Ashby, P. Lee, and A. Dickinson, "How Children Explain the 'Why' of History: The Chata Research Project on Teaching History," *Social Education*, 61 no.1 (1997): 17-21; K. Barton, "History—It Can be Elementary: An Overview of Elementary Students' Understanding of History," *Social Education*, 61 no. 1 (1997): 13-16; K. Barton, "You'd Be Wanting to Know about the Past": Social Contexts of Children's Historical Understanding in Northern Ireland and the U.S.A.," *Comparative Education*, 37 (2001): 89-106. K. Barton, "A Socio-cultural Perspective on Children's Understanding of Historical Change: Comparative Findings From Northern Ireland and the United States," *American Educational Research Journal*, 38 no. 4 (2001): 881-913; K. Barton and L. Levstik, "'It Wasn't a Good Part of History: National Identity and Students' Explanations of Historical Significance," *Teachers College Record*, 99 no. 3 (1998): 478-513; M. Booth, "Student's Historical Thinking and the National History Curriculum in England," *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 21 no. 2 (1993): 105-127; T. Epstein, "Sociocultural Approaches to Young People's Historical Understanding," *Social Education*, 61 no. 1 (1997): 28-31; S. Foster and E. Yeager, "'You've Got to Put Together the Pieces: English 12-

year-olds Encounter and Learn from Historical Evidence,” *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 14 (1999): 286-317; C. Husbands and A. Pendry, “Thinking and Feeling: Pupils’ Preconceptions about the Past and Historical Understanding,” in *Issues in History Teaching*, eds. J. Arthur and R. Phillips (London: Routledge, 2000), 125-34; L. Levstik and K. Barton, *Doing History: Investigating with Children in Elementary and Middle Schools*, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997); D. Shemilt, *History 13-16 Evaluation Study* (Edinburgh, UK: Holmes McDougal, 1980); B. Van Sledright, “Confronting History’s Interpretive Paradox While Teaching Fifth Graders to Investigate the Past” *American Educational Research Journal*, 39 no. 4 (2002): 1089-115; B. Van Sledright, *In Search of America’s Past: Learning to Read History in Elementary School* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2002).

3. L. Levstik, “Negotiating the History Landscape,” *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 24 (1996): 394.

4. R. Evans, “Teacher Conceptions of History,” *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 17 no.3 (1989): 210-40; S.G. Grant, *History Lessons: Teaching, Learning, and Testing in U.S. High School Classroom* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2003); S. Gudmundsdottir and L. Shulman, “Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Social Studies,” *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 31 no. 2 (1989): 59-70; C. Hartzel-Miller, “Making Sense of ‘Best Practice’ in Teaching History,” *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 29 no. 4 (2001): 672-95; C. Husbands, A. Kitson, and A. Pendry, *Understanding History Teaching: Teaching and Learning About the Past in Secondary Schools* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003); A. Pendry, C. Husbands, J. Arthur, and J. Davison, *History Teachers in the Making* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Open University Press, 1998); P. Seixas, “Student Teachers Thinking Historically,” *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 26 no. 3 (1998): 210-41; S. Wilson, “Parades of Facts, Stories of the Past: What Do Novice History Teachers Need to Know?” in *Teaching Academic Subjects to Diverse Learners*, ed. M. Kennedy (New York: Teachers College Press, 1991), 99-116; S. Wilson, and S. Wineburg, “Peering at History through Different Lenses: The Role of Disciplinary Perspectives in Teaching History,” *Teachers College Record*, 89 no. 4 (1988): 525-39.

5. S.G. Grant, “Locating Authority Over Content and Pedagogy: Cross Current Influences on Teachers’ Thinking and Practice,” *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 24 no. 3 (1996): 241-44.

6. D. Ravitch and C. Finn, *What Do Our 17-Year Olds Know? A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 194. See M. Baxter, R. Ferrell, and J. Wiltz, *The Teaching of American History in High Schools* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964); J. Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984); L. McNeil, *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1986); M. Whelan, “The Historical Subject Matter That Ultimately Matters Most,” *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 25, (1997): 506-509.

7. The project, begun in the mid-1970s, sought to redefine the nature of school history in English schools by stressing the teaching and learning of the skills of the discipline. As Chris Husbands notes, “in place of a justification for history organized solely around culture and content, the Project offered an explicitly constructivist model of learning history. Whilst history lacked the clear conceptual structure of mathematics or science, the Project nonetheless defined a curriculum rationale for school history based on organizing concepts and historical skills: pupils would learn history as historians did, by practicing, or constructing it in the classroom.” C. Husbands, *What Is History? Language, Ideas and Meaning in Learning about the Past* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Open University Press, 1996), 131.

8. P. Lee, “Making Sense of Historical Accounts,” *Canadian Social Studies*, 32, no 1 (1998): 52-54.

9. In the United States, the school curriculum is established by individual states. Students start school a year later than their counterparts in England. The school leaving age is 18 years (12th grade). In order to satisfy the standard graduation requirements in Virginia, students must earn twenty-two standard units of credit, this includes successfully completing the Virginia Standards of Learning for mathematics, English, science, and history and social science. At the high school level (grades 9-12) students are required to complete courses in World History and Geography (grades 9-10, ages 14-16), Virginia and United States History (grade 11, age 17) and Virginia and United States Government grade 12, age 18. See L. Fore, “Curriculum Control: Using Discourse and Structure to Manage Educational Reform,” *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 30, no.5 (1998): 559-76; G. Nash, C. Crabtree, and R. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Knopf, 1997).

10. Fore, “Curriculum Control,” 559-76.

11. Van Sledright, “Confronting History’s Interpretive Paradox,” 1089-115.

12. The five Key Elements are: chronological awareness; range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding; interpretation of history; historical enquiry; organization and communication provide the basis for planning, teaching and assessing the study units that make up the programmes of study at each key stage of the National Curriculum.

13. Barton, “A Socio-cultural Perspective on Children’s Understanding of Historical Change,” 900.

14. In England, in contrast to history (social studies) in the United States, history is a required subject for all children up to the age of 14. Pupils in England begin school one year earlier than their counterparts in the United States and the official school leaving age is 16. A child's educational career is broken down into Key Stages. Key Stage 1 refers to a pupil who is 5-7 years of age who forms part of year group 1 and 2. Key Stage 2 refers to a pupil who is 7-11 years of age who moves through year groups 3-6. Key Stage 3 refers to a pupil who is 11-14 years of age who moves through year groups 7-9. Key Stage 4 refers to year groups 10 and 11 for pupils who are 14-16 years old. History is not a statutory requirement at Key Stage 4; rather pupils may choose it as an option to study as a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) course. The two-year GCSE courses at Key Stage 4 mark the end of the official schooling experiences for many pupils. Students may continue their academic studies by taking two-year Advanced (A) Level courses in 6th form colleges, if they attain good GCSE results.

15. P. Harnett, "Curriculum Decision-Making in the Primary Schools: The Place of History," in *Issues in History Teaching*, eds. J. Arthur and R. Phillips (London: Routledge, 2000), 22.

16. See Barton, "You'd be Wanting to Know about the Past," 89-106.

17. See Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry, *Understanding History Teaching*.

18. R. Phillips, "Government Policies, the State and the Teaching of History," in *Issues in History Teaching*, eds. J. Arthur and R. Phillips (London: Routledge, 2000), 10-23.

19. McNeil, *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge*; L. McNeil, "Contradictions of Control. Part 1: Administrators and Teachers," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 69, no. 5 (1988): 333-39; L. McNeil, "Contradictions of Control. Part 2: Teachers, Students, and Curriculum," *Phi Delta Kappan*, 69, no. 6 (1988): 432-38.

20. C. Ragin and H. Becker, *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

21. R. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1989).

22. J. Feagin, A. Orum, and G. Sjoberg, *A Case for the Case Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

23. Both females were white and in their early twenties. Helen's parents were both educators, while Amanda's father was a teacher and her mother was a nurse.

24. S. Delamont, *Fieldwork in Educational Settings. Methods, Pitfalls and Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press, 1992); M. Hammersley, and P. Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1995); S. Kvale, *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1996).

25. A. Hargreaves, "Revisiting Voice," *Educational Researcher*, 25, no. 1 (1996), 12-19.

26. Data collection lasted one academic year. The PGCE course lasted thirty-six weeks beginning in September through June. The fifth year postgraduate licensure program begins in the spring/summer semester and runs through the next spring semester. I was based in the United States and shuttled between research sites. I began data collection in August (fall semester) in the United States. I began by conducting taped interviews/discussions, observing methods classes and subsequently following Amanda into her early field placement through the fall. During the fall semester I met with Amanda every two weeks to interview her about her ongoing experiences. This process was interrupted for four weeks when I traveled to England. I met Helen in mid September at the start of her course, and remained for four weeks. During this time I conducted the same initial interviews and discussions that focused on her biographical conceptions of history, teaching and learning history, and her experiences during her initial few weeks in the program. This included visits to her school. I returned to England in January for five weeks. This coincided with Helen's full time teaching internship. During this period I drove to her house and we drove to her placement school together (the tape recorder was turned on during the drives). During the five weeks I alternated between spending two and three consecutive days per week with her and another participant. I also attended seminars at the university. Upon returning to the United States., I observed the last week of methods classes before Amanda entered into her full time ten-week teaching internship. During this time I again drove with Amanda (tape recorder on) and alternated between one and two full days per week with another participant for ten weeks. I conducted an exit interview with Amanda in May and returned to England in June to conduct final interviews with Helen. In both cases I felt that a key limitation of the study was the time spent observing their respective university methods classrooms. I would like to have an increased amount of time in both; this would have been at the expense of time spent with them in the schools. As a result I felt it was important to conduct interviews regarding their perceptions of the methods classes. A strength of the study was the consistent time spent with the participant in schools—including traveling with the participant to and from school.

27. L. Berk, "Education in Lives: Biographic Narrative in the Study of Educational Outcomes," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 2, no. 2 (1980): 88-155.

28. It is important to note here that though a singular metaphor itself cannot capture the essence of the whole process being studied, its power and utility lies in the recognition that a metaphor provides a point of entry through which to approach and explore particular events and issues. This was a point that Goffman was clear about in the use of metaphors as scaffolds to study interactional processes. He notes, "Scaffolds after all, are to build other things with, and should be erected with an eye to taking them down." E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1959), 254.
29. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 26.
30. *Ibid.*, 24.
31. *Ibid.*, 22.
32. M. Milligan, "Interactional Past and Potential: The Social Construction of Place Attachment," *Symbolic Interaction*, 21, no. 1(1998): 1-33.
33. K. Carter and L. Gonzalez, "Beginning Teachers' Knowledge of Classroom Events," *Journal of Teacher Education*, 44, no. 3 (1993): 223-32.
34. D. Buckingham, ed., *Reading Audiences: Young People and the Media* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 13.
35. D. Lortie, *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1975). See Berk, "Education in Lives: Biographic Narrative in the Study of Educational Outcomes"; T. Slekar, "Epistemological Entanglements: Pre-service Elementary School Teachers' 'Apprenticeship of Observation' and the Teaching of History," *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 26, no. 4 (1998): 485-507.
36. D. Britzman, "Cultural Myths in the Making of a Teacher: Biography and Social Structure in Teacher Education," *Harvard Educational Review*, 56, no. 4 (1986): 442-56; R. Bullough, Jr., *First Year Teacher: A Case Study* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1989).
37. P. Grossman, *The Making of a Teacher: Teacher Knowledge and Teacher Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990).
38. Milligan, "Interactional Past and Potential," 1-33.
39. D. Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach* (Albany: State University of New York, 1991), 8.
40. D. La Capra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), 27.
41. P. Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); B. Rogoff, *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).
42. J. Wertsch, *Mind as Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 166.
43. McNeil, *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge*.
44. Hargreaves, "Revisiting Voice," 15.
45. Harnett, "Curriculum Decision-Making in the Primary Schools," 32.
46. Phillips, "Government Policies, the State and the Teaching of History," 12.
47. Pendry et al., *History Teachers in the Making*, 147.
48. C. Counsell, "Historical Knowledge and Historical Skills: A Distracting Dichotomy," in *Issues in History Teaching*, eds. J. Arthur and R. Phillips (London: Routledge, 2000), 55.
49. *Ibid.*, 54-71; M. Hunt, "Teaching Historical Significance," in *Issues in History Teaching*, eds. J. Arthur and R. Phillips (London: Routledge, 2000), 39-53.
50. Counsell, "Historical Knowledge and Historical Skills," 67.
51. *Ibid.*, 61.
52. F. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations/Frederich Nietzsche*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 71.
53. It is worth noting that both schools in which Helen and Amanda conducted their internship hired them as full time history teachers upon completing their respective licensure programs.
54. McNeil, "Contradictions of Control. Part 1: Administrators and Teachers," 334.
55. See McNeil *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge*.
56. McNeil, "Contradictions of Control. Part 2: Teachers, Students, and Curriculum," 433
57. McNeil, *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge*, 197.
58. Levstik and Barton, *Doing History*, 161.
59. Counsell, "Historical Knowledge and Historical Skills," 70. Both S.G. Grant's research in the United States and Husbands, Kitson and Pendry's research in the United Kingdom begin to build such powerful case studies. Their work reveals the complexity of teaching history in varying contexts and warns of the problems associated with prescriptive calls for how to teach history.

60. Counsell, "Historical Knowledge and Historical Skills," 54-71
61. Phillips, "Government Policies, the State and the Teaching of History," 22.