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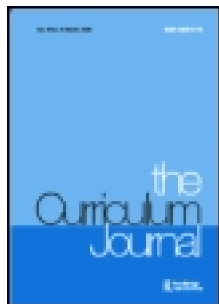

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Twenty years of history through drama

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Twenty years of history through drama

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ABSTRACT

In 1974, John Fines and Ray Verrier published *The Drama of History* which became a source of pedagogical inspiration for history teachers in the UK. This article begins by reviewing the influence of history through drama both as an approach to teaching and learning in classrooms and within the 'Living History' movement, which seeks to bring history alive on sites of historic interest. However, like Fines and Verrier, the author's principal interest is in work focused in the classroom which seeks to teach history by drawing on drama strategies wedded to active learning techniques. On the face of it, the introduction of a National Curriculum for history posed a serious threat to the continuation of such pedagogical practices; an overcrowded programme of study, increased emphasis on the acquisition of historical knowledge and pressure from the Right predicted a return to traditional teaching methods. Diminished local support arising from the partial collapse of local education authority structures also betokened the demise of history through drama. The evidence, however, suggests that although teaching style was constrained for a short time while teachers were coming to terms with the National Curriculum, they have held on to their commitment to a mode of pedagogic operation that they value highly. The data on which this observation is based were collected by interview from heads of history in ten state comprehensive schools in 1994. These demonstrated the extent to which history through drama is again being practised in their schools and justified its use in terms of a number of social and educational objectives. This indicates that history teachers have shown a willingness to mediate and interpret the new curriculum rather than be enslaved by it.

KEY WORDS

history teaching; drama strategies; pedagogy; National Curriculum; innovation; education policy.

It is now more than twenty years since John Fines and Ray Verrier published their delightfully written *The Drama of History* (1974). This text has been a

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source of inspiration and guidance to a generation of history teachers and has been the starting point for thought, experiment and research for those who, like myself, are eager to see the survival of radical liberating pedagogies in a climate of increasing government control of the curriculum. The National Curriculum and the partial collapse of local education authority support structures have, in some parts of the UK, dealt a double blow to hard-pressed history teachers who have struggled to implement an overloaded and centrally controlled syllabus in a context of diminishing local support. Yet the news from the chalk face is not all gloom and doom, for there is a reassuringly bulky and growing body of evidence to suggest that teachers have mediated the demands of the central curriculum planners and held on to those pedagogic practices whose value they believe transcends the vogue of central planners.

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HISTORY THROUGH DRAMA IN THE EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE

The Drama of History (Fines and Verrier, 1974) is a classic and should be read by everyone interested in active learning in history, though its child-centred philosophy sadly now seems dated. In Chapters 1 and 2 the authors set out their teaching philosophy and guide newcomers through some of the common initial worries of those who venture into this field. In particular they emphasize the importance of utilizing children's knowledge and 'valuing children's statements in our lessons more than our own' (1974: 11). They also reject the notion that content should determine a lesson in favour of an emphasis on gauging the mood, strengths, capacity and interests of the children; furthermore in a passage that may seem alien to readers imbued in National Curriculum newspeak, they stress that only beginnings should be planned for (18), so that the drama can take its own course and develop its unique momentum. We are also reminded how children learn through play (84) and that drama enables children to try adult roles out for size to gain understanding without the concerns and worries of the reality.

There are also chapters that deal with the teaching of specific concepts such as 'fear' and 'authority', 'power' and 'kingship', and which show how drama improvisation can be used to fill the gaps in the evidence. Thus in Chapter 6, when Pym flies from arrest by Charles I, drama is used to explore how a family might react when confronted by a fugitive from royal justice. The worries teachers may have about getting the facts wrong and the implications of untruthfulness are explored, though the practice of making up evidence (86) to show children how stories about the past are constructed might seem rather dubious to professional historians today. The National Curriculum has made historical content and knowledge a central focus in the teaching of history, so that using drama to teach history now requires more than just planning for

beginnings, and eyebrows might justifiably be raised if teachers allowed the wrong story to be told, as when Thomas More is saved by the children in Chapter 9.

The ground rules have certainly changed since the introduction of the National Curriculum but, for me, the lasting strength of the book lies in the way the educational benefits of history through drama are outlined. We learn, for example, how drama helps to slow down the action for children (12), which is often highly condensed in textbook form, so that they can see that history happens in the same kind of time as they experience in their own lives (91). The book also explores issues such as the centrality of drama to language development and discussion; the development of thinking and writing through drama (64); and the practical utility of drama in providing involvement through undemanding roles for quiet children while channelling the energies of potentially disruptive children (58–9). A central focus is also found for enquiry methods and historical objectives that enable the practitioner to cast the children in the role of historians (84–6).

Fines and Verrier located their work in the classroom, but much of the literature since then has focused on the 'Living History' movement which seeks to bring history alive on sites of historic interest through costume and drama. The most useful starting point for anyone researching teaching methods for a 'Living History' project is the Historical Association's pamphlet *History Through Drama* by Viv Wilson and Jayne Woodhouse (1990). This clear and erudite pamphlet pulls together some of their earlier work (e.g. Wilson and Woodhouse, 1987, 1988) to deal with issues such as drama and empathy, and making a project work through background research, establishing identities, costume and role-play. Much of the preparation takes place in the classroom but the focus and grand finale is the *History through drama day* which takes place on a site of historical interest, with the children in costume ready to perform their prepared roles. The pamphlet has a useful appendix by English Heritage's Mike Corbishley, many of whose uncluttered sites are ideal for such projects; the English Heritage journal *Remnants* is a perfect quarry for teachers seeking ideas for a 'Living History' project.

The 'Living History' movement has attracted the interest of many other talented practitioners. Fairclough and Redsell (1985), for example, describe elaborate on-site projects at Heveningham Hall and Orford Castle involving professional actors and costume for 9–13-year-olds, and justify the work in terms of pupil enjoyment, motivation for further classroom-based activities, the use of historical evidence, the development of social skills and an increased respect for heritage. More recently, English Heritage have published *History Through Role Play* (Fairclough, 1994) in their *Education on Site* series which provides useful practical guidance on planning and organizing 'Living History' projects together with five case-studies. However, such projects can become quite elaborate and costly, and some even rely on sponsorship: for example, the

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'Blickling 1698' project involved 'the collaboration of the National Trust, a theatre-in-education company, a group of teachers and the Museum Service – the whole project being underwritten by a major insurance firm' (Childs and Pond, 1990: 14). Another project depended on the author's placement with the Young National Trust Theatre as part of the DTI's exploration of economic awareness across the curriculum (Fleming, 1992).

'Living History' projects undoubtedly have a major impact on children's learning and frequently lead to exciting written and craft work in the classroom afterwards but, as May and Williams (1987: 11) point out, the sophistication of some of these projects may have the 'unwanted effect of discouraging teachers from making their own effort in the classroom'. This perceptive article points out that the huge amount of time and preparation invested in such projects may actually put many teachers off, particularly when, since much of the work in this area has been done by pairs of drama and history teachers, both secondary and primary teachers may feel they lack the necessary range of skills to use drama to teach history. Nevertheless, some writers such as Little (1983) and David (1989) have continued to promote classroom-based history through drama in the tradition of Fines and Verrier, as opposed to 'Living History' projects based on historic sites. A recent article by Tonge (1993) points out how drama can be used, like writing, as a means of communicating history to others.

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My own research with my colleague Lesley Hendy at Homerton College (Goalen and Hendy, 1993, 1995) has focused on the *classroom* use of drama to teach history, since we believe that modern educational drama as it has developed over the last twenty years has much of practical use to offer teachers delivering National Curriculum history in the classroom. We also believe that a range of drama strategies could be incorporated relatively easily into the teaching repertoires of many history teachers in secondary schools, who are already wedded to active learning techniques such as group work and role-play, and who therefore might welcome the enrichment offered by an introduction to a wider range of drama strategies.

Through our classroom-based research we have sought to demonstrate how using drama to teach history in the classroom without elaborate props or costume can help to develop children's historical thinking to a significant degree (Goalen and Hendy, 1993). Indeed we found that, given an appropriate context, Year 5 children were capable of operating between levels 6 and 8 of the National Curriculum attainment targets for history, levels more normally achieved by pupils in Year 10.[1]

Furthermore, we have sought to show how drama can be used to teach a wide range of historical skills beyond simple narrative or empathy, including work in source analysis and historical interpretation. With this in mind, we have developed a framework for using drama to teach history in the classroom which is derived from the work of Dorothy Heathcote, an eminent specialist in drama education, and adapted for the specific needs of teachers of history seeking a

model for their work which honours the two contributing disciplines of history and drama equally (Goalen and Hendy, 1994).

TEACHING NATIONAL CURRICULUM HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

On the face of it, the introduction of a National Curriculum for history posed a serious threat to child-centred teaching strategies. The *Times Educational Supplement* reported how a comparison of teaching styles in England and France supported the view that the National Curriculum would force schools to abandon child-centred approaches (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1990). It was widely reported that teachers of history at Key Stages 2 and 3 were concerned about the sheer volume of pre-specified content in the new syllabus. Phillips (1993), for example, reported that 90 per cent of Key Stage 3 teachers in his sample felt that lack of time constrained teaching in various ways and that one of the most common complaints was that the National Curriculum left insufficient time for more varied teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, the National Curriculum may, for a time, have been demotivating for some teachers, not just because of the new demands of planning, teaching, monitoring and reporting complex new Programmes of Study and detailed Statements of Attainment, but also because many teachers experienced a loss of autonomy with the introduction of the new centrally controlled curriculum. Phillips (1991: 22) reported that history teachers defined their job satisfaction in terms of control over syllabus construction and the professional judgement used to apply the syllabus in the classroom. The first area of control was clearly removed by the imposition of a centrally defined curriculum, but the teachers in his sample also feared that the pressures of implementation and shortages of time would effectively reduce their autonomy by constraining pedagogy too, and he quotes the following two teachers as making representative comments:

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> To cover the content there will have to be more teacher-led lessons. More didactic teaching will result unless the issue of time is addressed.

> My fear is that the amount of content will necessitate 'teacher-driven' delivery rather than pupil-centred tasks. (Phillips, 1991: 23)

Phillips's 1991 data were collected before the publication of the History Working Group's *Final Report* and his 1993 data were collected during the first year of implementation of the National Curriculum for history. Such fears were widespread during the first period of planning and consultation and will certainly have lingered on into the early stages of implementation as teachers grappled with new courses and, for some of them at least, a new focus for assessment. Their fears were, of course, being fed by the political campaign for the soul of the

History Working Group (HWG), the content of the *Final Report* and the eventual shape of the Statutory Orders for history. The key political battle, which was widely reported in the press, was over the extent to which *knowledge*, particularly of British history, should form a central focus for the National Curriculum for history, and the then Secretary of State for Education, John McGregor, wrote a letter to the HWG which was published with their *Interim Report* noting that they recommended 'less that 50 per cent of time to be given to British history' and asking them to 'increase this proportion' and to reconsider their decision not to include 'essential historical knowledge' in the attainment targets. His letter requested that the *Final Report* should contain detailed Programmes of Study 'spelling out the additional or more advanced content of knowledge – including dates, events and people – that must be taught' (DES, 1989).

This was not the end of the story. McGregor published his own *Proposals for History* (DES, 1990a) based on the HWG's *Final Report* (DES, 1990b) in which he changed AT1 from 'Understanding history in its setting' to 'Knowledge and understanding of history'. The result of this pressure was to place factual knowledge at the core of the National Curriculum for history, a task completed when the National Curriculum Council (NCC) confirmed that since 'Knowledge and understanding of history' was of 'greater substance' than the other two attainment targets, it should be given 50 per cent of the weighting for purposes of assessment (NCC, 1990: 15). This worried many history teachers, who resented the way the Right seemed to be exercising undue influence over the construction of the history curriculum, and their fears were confirmed and supported by leading academics. For instance, one commented:

> Tory hegemony requires the protection, and further inculcation, of traditional, British 'national' values that can be protected by a history syllabus centred on the 'facts' of the British past. Those 'facts', it is argued, can best be delivered by traditional teaching methods. The success or failure of students in knowing the facts can be tested by traditional means. (McKiernan, 1993: 50)

However, the wishful thinking of the Right and the gloomy prognostications of some academics that a National Curriculum for history with an emphasis on *knowledge* would result in a return to traditional teaching methods have not been borne out by events. In the first place, nowhere does the National Curriculum for history actually prescribe teaching methods which are didactic; on the contrary, the Non-Statutory Guidance for teachers suggests a wide range of teaching strategies, all eminently sensible and progressive: 'presentations by the teacher including story-telling; discussion and debate; question and answer; individual and group investigations; television, radio, tape, video and film; role-play and drama; fieldwork, visits to museums and historic sites' (NCC, 1991: C 14).

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Second, research has begun to show how teachers have learned to *interpret* the National Curriculum Orders for history, for the Order alone guarantees little; it is how it is interpreted that matters (Bage, 1994). Once teachers have become familiar with the requirements of the Order and overcome the sense of loss and pain associated with the implementation phase of the innovation (compared by Nias (1991) as being akin to bereavement), they can then begin to interpret the new curriculum and develop a sense of ownership over it. Indeed, it became clear during the interviewing reported on below that while many of the teachers had experienced loss and pain during the initial period of implementation, they nevertheless clung on to their inner core of beliefs concerning teaching styles and put these back into operation as soon as they felt they were in control of, and had internalized the new curriculum. My data, therefore, would support Phillips (1991, 1993) when he claimed that teaching style was constrained by the implementation of the National Curriculum, but *only* in the *short term*; for in the *medium or longer term* – and here I depart from Phillips – the signs are that teachers already convinced of the value of using drama to teach history are unlikely to abandon it, except perhaps as a temporary measure while they process the curriculum innovation.

Finally I would like to suggest that once *content overload* had become a widely recognized problem facing teachers implementing the National Curriculum, and once the Dearing review had been initiated to treat the ailment, teachers could begin to feel more relaxed with the new syllabus and freer again to experiment with pedagogy. Although Dearing had not reported at the time when data for this paper were gathered, the teachers interviewed expressed relief that the government was at last recognizing their difficulties in implementing an overcrowded syllabus. Furthermore, John Patten's widely reported speech 'Why British history matters' of 18 March 1994, with its thinly veiled threats to interfere with the profession's right to determine teaching style, does not appear to have alarmed my sample. Mr Patten was widely reported to have told Hampshire Tories that not only should British history form the bulk of the revised syllabus, but that it should be taught in a traditional manner:

> To strip *facts* and chronology out of the study of history is as crazy as stripping grammar out of the teaching of English. Unfortunately, there are some who seem to think that the learning of *facts* is not 'politically correct' and that children should move directly to the stage of *understanding* – through for example 'empathy' with certain historical figures. (*My italics.*) (Source: *Daily Telegraph*, 5 May 1994, p.1)

However, the teachers I interviewed were aware that teaching history through drama is an extremely efficient means of helping children to acquire factual knowledge as well as historical understanding, so perhaps they had little to fear from Mr Patten's intervention. In the event, the draft Orders sent to schools in

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November 1994 made no attempt to define pedagogy, thus leaving the process of teaching the revised syllabus firmly in the hands of the teaching profession.

THE DATA: SECONDARY HEADS OF HISTORY TALKING

Between March and June 1994 I interviewed the heads of history in ten state comprehensive schools, nearly a quarter of a shire county's forty-four grant maintained and LEA controlled secondary schools. The interviewees were not chosen at random, since I set out to locate departments where there was a known tradition of using drama to teach history; an opportunity sample was selected based on recommendations from a university's PGCE history tutor and the LEA inspector for history. The intention, therefore, was not to find evidence of new converts to child-centred approaches, but to discover whether a commitment to history through drama had survived the implementation of the National Curriculum, and whether or not that commitment was capable of realization in the new conditions. Data from these interviews suggest that the use of drama to teach history has not been squeezed out by the introduction of the National Curriculum and that teachers are likely to maintain their commitment to valued pedagogies despite the pressures that have accompanied the introduction of the new curriculum.

The secondary heads of history interviewed all claimed to be using drama teaching strategies in one form or another to deliver National Curriculum history, but most admitted that the introduction of the National Curriculum had constrained their practice to a degree during the first phase of implementation. As one head of department commented,

> Sometimes to do it (drama) well you need to build in a lot of time, and the pressure of content in the National Curriculum actually stops you. I think that's actually the reason why I haven't developed things like the medieval role-play for other units.

This view was supported by another head of department, who had recently experienced an OFSTED inspection: 'Our OFSTED inspectors said they felt our department was too much in task completion mode and we'd left behind process.' However, one head of department made it clear that he was prepared to drop some content, even if it meant breaking the spirit of the law as he understood it, in order to continue teaching as he saw fit, while another pointed out that the National Curriculum, although detailed in terms of prescribed content, did not define a statutory set of principles for teaching style. Another head of department admitted: 'To be honest we can't deliver the whole National Curriculum and we don't try.' Yet another reported that she had informed her

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governors: 'I cannot deliver all this and retain (effective) teaching and learning styles.'

Thus pressure of time caused by content overload in the National Curriculum for history was identified by most of the interviewees as a key constraint on the development of their pedagogy during the first year of implementation. However, one head of department identified some other major impediments to pedagogic development caused by the Conservative government's educational reforms:

> (It's) not so much the National Curriculum, but all the other changes in everything that has been going on. I mean with this sort of thing four years ago you'd have had the history teachers of the county meeting, doing it together and working things out. You just don't do it now ... you've got schools working on their own far more and, if things are going to slip, it's going to be things like this. And if you've got people training who've never done anything like it, they are not going to have the access to thinking about it. I mean I was lucky when I trained because I had people ... (like) John Fines: that was how he taught and so we did it ... what you need is to get teachers together and say, 'Well, this is the National Curriculum; how are we going to deliver it in the same exciting way as we always used to?' But if you've got teachers now working in isolation with a document in front of them, whether you like it or not they are going to be led by the ATs and all that sort of thing. Even though high-minded people would say 'No, you mustn't let it', I'm sure people are going to because they are worried about it.

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This head of department was experiencing the double blow of having witnessed the separation of inspection from advice within the county's support services, which had left a partial gap in the provision of advice for secondary history teachers,[2] plus the additional isolation from his colleagues in county LEA schools caused by his school having recently attained grant maintained status. Yet, despite the partial collapse of local support during the critical implementation phase of the National Curriculum for history, this head of department had tenaciously held on to his commitment to a mode of pedagogic operation which he and others like him valued highly. Why was this? What is it about using drama to teach history that this group of secondary heads of department found so valuable?

One reason why the pedagogy survived was simply that, after the first year of the implementation phase of the National Curriculum for history, the pressure on teachers began to lift as they became better acquainted with the new curriculum. One head of department, when asked whether he had at first been tempted to drop the use of drama when the National Curriculum for history was introduced, replied:

> We were tempted to drop the National Curriculum! (*Laughter from other members of his department.*) I think for a year we were much less adventurous because we didn't know how long it was going to take us; whether we'd get through it all; what we should cover; what depth we had to

> cover it in. We had to keep all these kinds of arguments swirling round. I suppose three years on we are more relaxed and we realize we can do the material justice and also teach the way we want to.

This head of department had clearly retained his commitment to teaching history through drama during the trauma of implementing the new curriculum, although he had, quite understandably, been less adventurous for the first year or so of teaching the new material. By the time I was interviewing, however, the department was in its third year of teaching the new curriculum material and the head of department was able to demonstrate to me the extent to which they were using drama. Indeed, about half of each thirty-minute interview with each head of department was devoted to exploring the range of topics where drama was then being used: this varied from two or three topics in Years 7 and 8, taught by one member of the department in one school, to at least one topic a term in Years 7, 8 and 9 for all classes plus some occasional use in Years 10 and 11 in another institution. One school was even experimenting with its use with their sixth form historians, as well as throughout Years 7–11, and two heads of department gave me a printed syllabus clearly identifying the topics where drama was used.

There is, of course, a difference between holding a commitment to a pedagogic operation and the realization of that operation in the classroom, yet all the heads of department interviewed were able to demonstrate to me how they were translating their policies into practice, and most interviewees dwelt at some length on the educational arguments for continuing to use drama to teach history. Perhaps, not surprisingly, *empathy* and *enjoyment* featured in several responses to questions that explored the motives for using drama, and these ideas were brought together in one response by this interviewee:

> But the reason for doing it doesn't change: I think it's a very good way of getting kids to learn; I think it's a very good way of getting them to understand the problems of the past. 'Empathy' is a word that is banded around and is in and out of favour, but I mean it does definitely aid understanding. The other thing is it can aid enjoyment and give a bit of variety. But I think the end results, a piece of work you can get them to do afterwards, the lesson following or whatever, I think is usually far better and far more spirited and informative than one where you have just taught it in the normal way.

Engagement was a key idea for two interviewees: 'it helps them concentrate on the history', while others felt that it was also a useful and efficient means of acquiring historical *knowledge*:

> I think it's important because students learn more from actually role-playing what they are learning than actually just reading about it. If they

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actually get up and do it, they will remember it, and I think that is proven from our department; even at 'A' level they remember it more.

This sort of comment is interesting in the light of alternative claims that an emphasis on historical *knowledge* in the history attainment targets would lead to more traditional teaching and learning styles, for this head of department was convinced of the effectiveness of using drama rather than traditional teaching methods in helping students acquire historical knowledge. One head of department went further and explained how drama could be used to deliver specific attainment targets:

I particularly think that the two things role-play is useful for is AT1c, which is essentially empathy and historical setting, and AT2 because that's about interpretation though this is more from the historiographic angle rather than from people at the time. What you might end up doing is asking them to role-play different historical interpretations rather than role-play different histories. With the rise to power of Hitler for instance next week, I have got four views of how Hitler got to power and essentially they are setting up the four hypotheses.

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Although several heads of department had mentioned *historical skills* as a reason for their work in drama, few were as focused on the attainment targets as the above interviewee. In my view this head of department had a highly developed sense of the potential of history through drama since both pupils and teachers have found AT2 a difficult one to implement and understand, yet here we have articulated the means of making different interpretations accessible to a class of children working towards GCSE. Finally, one interviewee viewed drama as a 'social tool' which enabled pupils 'to project a positive image of themselves', while another said how drama helped to develop the social objective of *equal opportunities*:

The work we have done on teaching and learning styles suggests we have to do this sort of thing to ensure the kids get a fair deal. So part of it is that it gives equality of opportunity in the classroom to kids of different abilities.

To sum up, the heads of department interviewed had retained their commitment to using drama to teach history through the torrid experience of implementing a centrally imposed curriculum, and demonstrated the extent to which it was being practised within their departments. Furthermore, they justified the use of this particular pedagogic operation in terms of the social and educational objectives which they believed drama helped to foster. The range of objectives which drama teaching strategies help to develop, according to my sample of heads of history, may be summarized as follows:

- the acquisition of historical knowledge;
- the development of historical skills, including empathy and interpretations of the past;

- the development of an appreciation of history through the high levels of enjoyment and engagement experienced through drama;
- the promotion of equal opportunities and the development of individual self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

In at least a quarter of the state secondary schools of one shire county, the history through drama movement has survived the implementation of the National Curriculum for history, though my data may also suggest that the increasing isolation of teachers due to factors such as LMS, opting out, diminishing LEA support structures and implementation fatigue may be inhibiting a healthy exchange of views and ideas or the sharing of expertise among practitioners. It would, of course, be unwise to generalize from this small sample to the educational system as a whole, but it should be noted that this conclusion, broadly speaking, supports the finding of Ball and Bowe (1992) and Vulliamy and Webb (1993).

Ball and Bowe have shown that the National Curriculum 'is not so much being "implemented" in schools as being "recreated", not so much "reproduced" as "produced"' (1992: 114). Their evidence suggests that the National Curriculum has in fact been mediated by subject departments in secondary schools, particularly in those departments where there is a strong tradition of innovation:

> We do have evidence that low capacity, low commitment and no history of innovation results in a high degree of reliance on policy texts, external direction and advice.... Equally we have evidence that high capacity, high commitment and a history of innovation may provide a basis for a greater sense of autonomy and *writerliness* with regard to policy texts, and a greater willingness to *interpret* texts in the light of previous practice. (Ball and Bowe, 1992: 112)

My evidence would support this conclusion if it is accepted that those schools who have staff who have previously practised history through drama are likely to belong to departments where there is a history of successful innovation; certainly my evidence shows a willingness among my interviewees to mediate and interpret the new curriculum rather than be enslaved by it. Yet my data do not merely confirm the conclusions of Ball and Bowe (1992); they advance the argument by suggesting that my sample of teachers were able to hold on to an inner core of belief and practice during the tricky period of adjustment to a centrally imposed curriculum, and that when they were ready, they could adapt and transform the imposed syllabus by reapplying the practices temporarily shelved during the trauma of the first phase of the implementation process. During the second mature phase of the implementation of the new curriculum,

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the commitment to the pedagogic operation which survived intact was translated into practice as the confidence born from experience with the new curriculum released the teachers from a preoccupation with content to a reconsideration of process. It is to be hoped that the Dearing review will accelerate this trend towards a reconsideration of process by reducing the burden of content which has been experienced throughout the new curriculum.

Furthermore, my evidence challenges the view of those who expected a *knowledge*-focused, centrally controlled curriculum to translate into a didactic, traditional form of delivery. Such authors have underestimated the complexity of the process of change in schools and the determination of teachers to retain the professional control over pedagogy which they have largely lost over syllabus construction. As Vulliamy and Webb have recently shown,

> in translating new initiatives into practice, teachers tend to interpret these wherever possible according to their own ideological stance. They then implement them based on a combination of what past experience has shown works and what they perceive will be of benefit to their pupils and an improvement in their approaches to teaching. (Vulliamy and Webb, 1993: 39)

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My evidence suggests that teachers have tenaciously held on to pedagogies that they value such as history through drama during the difficult process of introducing the National Curriculum for history into their schools, and that they have done so because they believe in the intrinsic educational merits of teaching history through drama.

NOTES

1 We were, of course, aware of the debate surrounding the history Statements of Attainment and the inadequacy of the age–stage framework for measuring children's historical thinking (see Goalen and Hendy, 1993).

2 This information was provided by the county inspector for history who added that, from September 1994, the situation should improve as the role of 'inspector' is redefined.

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