

DEVELOPING AN HISTORICAL GAZE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRE-SERVICE  
SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHERS WITH DIFFERENTIAL BACKGROUNDS IN SCHOOL  
HISTORY

---

KATHLEEN SIOBHAN GLANVILL (8340096)

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the  
Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Education

Johannesburg, 2014

## **ABSTRACT**

This research report investigates the opportunities and challenges pre-service social science educators with differential backgrounds in school history confront when developing both substantive and procedural historical knowledge for history teaching. It is particularly concerned to understand how differential backgrounds in school history affect the acquisition of an historical gaze.

The report employs qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups with nine pre-service educators who have diverse experiences of school history to ascertain whether choosing history as a matric subject enhances the development of an historical gaze or not. It also analyses evidence from two written examinations in order to investigate whether these pre-service educators are not only able to recognise but are also able to realise historical thinking concepts, as defined by the Canadian Historical Thinking Project, that imply sophisticated acquisition of an historical gaze.

At the moment the data suggests that the students' differential backgrounds in school history have not affected the acquisition of an historical gaze. There do not seem to be substantive differences except where students were exposed to school history that was taught as both substantive and procedural knowledge with opportunities to engage in the process of historical inquiry.

Key words:

**Pre-service Educators    history education    historical thinking concepts  
historical gaze**

## **Declaration**

**I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.**

-----

**Kathleen Siobhan Glanvill**

\_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2014

## **Acknowledgements:**

**I would like to thank Lynne Slonimsky my inspirational supervisor who encouraged me to engage and interrogate at every level of this research. I especially thank her for introducing me to the complexities of Bernstein and other sociologists that moved me beyond the confines of my own background in the discipline of history.**

**I would also like to thank my colleagues, especially Helen Ludlow, who did not allow me to give up and patiently listened to my grappling with the education theory.**

**My sincerest appreciation is extended to the nine Social Science students and many others who shared their time and their experiences with me.**

**Last, but not least, my family. Thank you Tim for giving me space to work and for listening to my rambling on about history education and especially for the help with formatting this project. Thanks to my sons, Baron and Matthew who encouraged me to keep going and helped me with my limited computer skills.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<b>Abstract</b>	i
<b>Declaration</b>	ii
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	iii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	iv
<b>Chapters</b>	
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Aims	7
1.3 Rationale	9
2. Literature Review and Conceptual Framework	13
2.1 A sociological lens to unpack what kind of knowledge the pre-service history and social science educators are expected to acquire	13
2.2 The Pedagogic Recontextualising of Historical Knowledge for Pre-Service Educators	20
2.3 The conceptual framework	35
3. Contextualizing the History Modules of the Social Science Courses offered At the Wits School of Education	39
3.1 What knowledge do pre-service history teachers need to acquire?	39
3.2 What were the expectations and assumptions of the history module of Social Science 1?	46
3.3 How was the historical knowledge (both substantive and procedural) presented to Social Science 1 history students?	46
3.4 What were Social Science 1 history students expected to achieve in order to meet the demands of the examination in November 2012?	49
3.5 How does the history module of Social Science 2 build on the previous learning of Social Science 1?	50
3.6 Using <i>Reading like a Historian</i> materials to foster historical thinking in Social Science 2	52
3.7 What historical knowledge were Social Science 2 students expected to demonstrate when answering their history examination questions in June 2013?	54
4. Research Methodology	55
4.1 Background to selection of sample	55
4.2 Research Sample	57
4.3 Data	59
4.4 Ethical Considerations	64

5. Analysis of Data – Part 1	65
5.1 The Informal survey / questionnaire	65
5.2 Analysing data from the semi-structured interviews with individual students	71
5.3 Analysis of data from the two Focus Groups	85
5.4 What does this data reveal?	96
6. Presenting the data from Social Science 1 Examination November 2012 and the Social Science 2 Examination June 2013	103
6.1 Analysing data from Social Science 1 History Examination November 2012	103
6.2 Analysis of data from Social Science 2 History Examination written in June 2013	116
6.3 Summary of key findings in the Social Science 1 and 2 examination papers. Is there evidence of acquiring or further developing an historical gaze?	129
7. Discussion of the implications of the data	
7.1 What historical knowledge did the Social Science 1 group have at the beginning of the History Module in July 2012?	134
7.2 To what extent does the data presented in chapters 5 and 6 suggest that the Social Science 2 students of 2013 have acquired the substantive and procedural knowledge that indicates developing historical thinking and acquiring an historical gaze?	135
<b>List of References</b>	<b>143</b>
Appendix A Social Science 1 History Course Outline 2012	150
Appendix B Wits School of Education Essay Marking Rubric	152
Appendix C Social Science 2 History Course Outline 2013	153
Appendix D Social Science 1 History Examination November 2012	155
Appendix E Social Science 2 History Examination June 2013	157
Appendix F Information letter to participants in this research	159
Appendix G Schedule of questions for semi-structured individual interviews	162
Appendix H Schedule of questions for focus group discussion	163

## **Chapter 1: Introduction, background and rationale**

**Topic: Developing an historical gaze: A comparative study of pre-service social science teachers with differential backgrounds in school history.**

**Research Question: Are there differences between pre-service social science educators who have differential backgrounds in school history in acquiring an historical gaze?**

### **1.1 Background:**

This study is situated in the field of curriculum studies and is focused on investigating the opportunities and challenges experienced by pre-service social science educators with differential backgrounds in school history in the acquisition of an historical gaze.

Social science is an academic major offered at the Wits School of Education and is a composite of geography and history. Students are expected to take both subjects for two years and are then given an opportunity to choose to major in either history or geography. The situation that this creates is that many of the students have very limited backgrounds in either geography or history as, at the secondary school level, they are able to choose not to take these subjects to matric after grade 9. This has implications for further study, especially in the case of pre-service teachers who could find themselves teaching social science to grades 4-9, where it would be expected that they had some understanding of both disciplines. This research is grounded in concerns about the particular affordances and challenges pre-service social science teachers experience in acquiring both specialised historical knowledge and historical thinking, the necessary *historical gaze* to enable good teaching practice.

The sociologist Basil Bernstein was particularly interested in the production, transmission and acquisition of specialised knowledge or *vertical discourse* as opposed to everyday knowledge *horizontal discourse* (1996). Within the vertical discourse (specialised knowledge), he described the natural sciences as hierarchical knowledge structures, where knowledge builds progressively and the social sciences or humanities as horizontal knowledge structures which Bernstein says “take the form of a series of specialised languages

with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 157).

The discipline of history can therefore be described as a *horizontal knowledge structure* within a vertical discourse. This research focuses on the way that the specialised knowledge of the discipline of history is presented in the Social Science 1 and 2 History modules at the Wits School of Education in order to facilitate the acquisition of a particular ‘gaze’. I will use Bernstein’s description of the concept of the *tacitly acquired gaze* as outlined below:

I have referred to the tacitly acquired ‘gaze’ of a *Horizontal Knowledge Structure* by means of which the acquirer learns how to recognise, regard, realise and evaluate legitimately the phenomena of concern. This ‘gaze’ is a consequence of the perspective created by the recontextualising principle constructing and positioning the set of languages of a particular *Horizontal Knowledge Structure*, or privileging a particular language in the set. This is a conscious process giving rise to a tacit acquisition... (Bernstein, 1996, pp. 170-171)

Bernstein used the terms “tacitly acquired” to suggest that this gaze would be transmitted in a similar way to a craft. He wrote that in the humanities “transmission tends to be more implicit. A ‘tacit’ transmission is one where showing or modelling precedes ‘doing’...” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 169). This suggests that students of history need to be engaged in the process of ‘doing history’ in order to access this historical gaze.

Bertram expanded on Bernstein’s concept to expand on how the concept of an *historical gaze* could empower teachers and learners of school history:

I suggest that having a clearer descriptive language for the domains of school history practice can support educators in making more conscious decisions about how best to move learners into the specialised domain where they begin to develop an historical gaze, and thus gain epistemological access to powerful knowledge structures. (Bertram, 2012, p. 429)

This research is interested in tracing how a group of nine Social Science 2 students, who began the history module in Social Science 1 with differential backgrounds in school history either strengthen or begin to acquire the “powerful knowledge structures” that would indicate the acquisition of an historical gaze.



## **The place of history in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?**

The status of the specialised knowledge of the discipline of history has been challenged by many critics, which I will expand on in the literature review. Society's emphasis on how a subject relates to the workplace has resulted in a diminishing interest in learning about the past at school level. Historians have had to work very hard to justify their profession and this has had an impact on how the subject has been viewed within schools and universities around the world. Common perceptions are that the subject as it is presented in schools is about dates and facts that need to be learnt rote fashion.

Parents often state that history is a learning subject and that they cannot understand why their children are not passing when it is just about learning a body of facts. This illustrates very little understanding of the discipline and that it is composed of two different kinds of knowledge, both meaningless without the other. These two components of historical knowledge have been defined as substantive and procedural or second order conceptual knowledge by Lee and Ashby:

Substantive history is the content of history, what history is 'about'... Concepts like historical *evidence*, *explanation*, *change*, and *accounts* are ideas that provide our understanding of history as a discipline or form of knowledge. They are not what history is 'about', but they shape the way we go about doing history. (2000, p. 199)

Lee and Ashby use these terms to explain changes in the English history curriculum that was moving away from seeing history as purely substantive knowledge (a body of facts) towards thinking about how students could access second order concepts or procedural knowledge. A similar situation can be identified in South African history curricula, especially in the 1990s in post-apartheid South Africa.

## **The place of history in South Africa:**

History as a school subject in South Africa during the apartheid era was associated with promoting a nationalist agenda that did not invite debate or discussion. In many ways it was as if the school subject had no connection to the academic discipline and the way that professional historians were engaging in historical inquiry.

Curriculum 2005 merged history and geography in the social science learning area. The emphasis was on generic skills that were not necessarily dependent on specific historical content. In a sense, this curriculum was perceived as being all about procedural knowledge, which was not necessarily the case but the assessments did suggest this was the case. The aim was to encourage critical thinking and reading skills but not necessarily an historical gaze, as Bertram's research revealed that "one finding was that the informal and formal assessment tasks required of learners were not always clearly specialised to history, that is to say that it was not always clear why such a task was located in a history classroom" (Bertram, 2008, as cited in Bertram, 2012, p. 429).

Apart from losing the importance of substantive knowledge, the merging of history and geography into one learning area had profound effects on the status of history in the schools. Sieborger outlined important reasons why the subject was not being selected as a subject for matric in an article written in 2008:

The arguments against taking history are usually one or more of the following: history isn't any use in getting a job; it's better to do more sciences; we need to look to the future not the past; South Africa's past is divisive - studying it makes white pupils defensive and black pupils bitter. (Sieborger, 2008, p. 9)

Thanks to the efforts of professional historians and history education specialists and especially the support of Kader Asmal (Minister of Education 1999-2004), the place of history was not allowed to disappear. A report compiled by the Working Group on Values in Education on "Values, Education and Democracy" emphasized the value of history in the schools:

The report noted the key importance of the value of teaching and the creative nurturing of historical consciousness and concluded that, 'the teaching of history is central to the promotion of human values, including that of tolerance. (Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, 2002. Values in Education Initiative. Preface to the Report of the History and Archaeology Panel)

The Report of the History and Archaeology Panel also acknowledged that "those who study the past may find their specialised knowledge is of little direct relevance as a way of meeting contemporary work needs" (Values in Education Initiative, 2002, p. 5), however, they

explained that the unique qualities of “rigorous constructions of historical knowledge” would be essential for a developing democratic society.

Moreover, the skills which history study imparts are essential to the growth of a society of informed and capable citizens. It requires and encourages a whole range of skills, not least those of analysis, synthesizing and communication... Unlike, for example, the hard sciences, the best kind of history study calls upon a reservoir of imagination and empathy, stimulated by an awareness that one is considering the tremendously complex behaviour of human beings in fields of action governed by values, morality, achievement and failure. (Values in Education Initiative, Report of the History and Archaeology Panel, 2002, p. 5)

The Report of the History and Archaeology Panel strongly recommended that history and geography be taught as separate disciplines within the social sciences. The report also recommended that, “The approach to understanding the past has to be informed by the notion of critical scholarship” (p. 5) and that this approach would be dependent on well trained history teachers.

This in turn depends on the formation of history teachers who are confident, well trained and well informed, and who not only have access to teaching material to continuously develop skills, but are repositories of *important factual historical knowledge*. (Values in Education Initiative, Report of the History and Archaeology Panel, 2002, p. 29)

Specific recommendations were devoted to “strengthening teacher training” where it was noted that it would be valuable to introduce a one-year historical literacy course for all prospective educators, especially language teachers (Values in Education Initiative, Report of the History and Archaeology Panel, 2002, p. 33). The re-establishment of history as a separate discipline with specific knowledge and a focus on why it was a valuable subject was very important and maintained in the introduction of the Curriculum and Policy Statements (CAPS) that replaced the National Curriculum Statement. This curriculum emphasizes substantive knowledge and expects that history and geography are taught and assessed as separate disciplines within the Social Sciences.

### **How has this affected the Pre-Service Training at the Wits School of Education?**

In response to these requirements the Wits School of Education introduced a new B Ed. programme in 2010 in response to a need to enhance subject knowledge of pre-service

educators. This is clearly illustrated in the following extract from the “Vision for a B Ed.” document that asked the question, “What kind of teachers for South Africa do we want to produce at Wits?”

Teachers with a high level of subject competence who

- Identify intellectually with a discipline(s) and/or learning area(s) in a particular phase(s) of schooling.
- Understand and identify with the intellectual practices of their discipline and/or learning areas and can induct learners into these practices.

(Ruznyak, 2013, p. 2)

In response to curriculum changes as outlined in the Curriculum and Policy Statements of 2010 and 2011, the Wits School of Education teaches geography and history as completely separate sections in the same year. The impact that this has had on the History in Education courses is that students are exposed to both subjects for six months per year in Social Science 1 and 2. Our policy is to develop a solid grounding in each discipline so that our graduates can be effective in the social science classrooms from grades 4-9. The previous approach assumed that teachers with geography or history could just teach either subject - a dangerous misconception. (Research done by past students in their 4<sup>th</sup> year projects suggests that the teacher focused on their major and just covered the prescribed work in the other subject.)

**Figure 1.1 Brief summary of how the Social Science 1 and 2 courses cover the disciplines of geography and history.**

Social Science 1: Geography. Semester 1 (February – June) July examination to assess first part of the geography course.	Social Science 1: History Semester 2 (July – October) November examination to assess first part of the history course.
Social Science 2: History Semester 1 (February – June) July examination to conclude the history module.	Social Science 2: Geography Semester 2 (July – October) November Examination to conclude the geography Module.

Once students finish Social Science 2, they can make an informed choice to major in geography or history. They then get two full years of the subject they have selected. An important part of changes implemented in the B Ed. programme in 2010, was the introduction

of more modules on methodology. Social Science 1 and 2 students planning to teach in the secondary schools do methodology courses in history or geography teaching when they are studying the academic subject. Here they are introduced to the specific pedagogical approaches each discipline requires.

One of the key issues is the scenario of students who have not taken geography or history as matric subjects and now find themselves having to adapt to the disciplinary structures and evaluation standards. An informal survey at the beginning of the 2012 Social Science 1 history module revealed that out of 75 students present in the first lecture, only 38 had taken history as a matric subject. Typically, history specialists complain about geography map work whilst geography specialists battle with the complexities of the history essay. (Comments made on course evaluations 2010, 2011 and 2012.) These comments have led me to investigate further the challenges these students face adapting to academic disciplines that they have not done as matric subjects and to enable us as lecturers to gain more insights into how we can improve our practice to support these students.

Realistically, these challenges could be equally faced by students who did take history as a matric subject, as some teachers might still be teaching with the old fashioned understanding that history is a body of knowledge that is not open to interpretation. (In other words, an emphasis on substantive knowledge as opposed to procedural knowledge.) It could also be a possibility that students with a school history background may now face different challenges adapting to history and history methodology as it is taught at university level with expectations that do not correlate to what they were expected to achieve at secondary school level. This investigation will be about interrogating these assumptions.

## **1.2 Aims:**

This research aims to find out what the experiences and assumptions are of the discipline of history these pre-service social science teachers have been exposed to, and to investigate the kinds of possibilities and challenges they confront in acquiring an historical gaze. The intention of this research is to track the development of this historical gaze and to find evidence that would clarify whether or not there are differences between those students who had secondary school history up to matric and those who would have done history as a part of

social science up until grade 9, or in the case of some students, have no memory of studying a subject called history at school.

In order to address the main question of this research which is:

**Are there differences between pre-service social science educators with differential backgrounds in school history in acquiring an historical gaze?**

The following sub-questions will guide and frame this qualitative empirical investigation:

- 1. What kinds of possibilities and constraints do pre-service social science educators face in acquiring historical knowledge that is both substantive and procedural?**
- 2. Is there evidence that these nine self-selected pre-service social science educators' historical knowledge is changing over time i.e. from the beginning of their first year of study to the end of their second year (July 2012-June 2013) and if so, how is it changing?**

A sociological lens based on Bernstein's Pedagogic Device will frame my approach to the literature and will inform the discussion and set up this study. In order to analyse and process the implications of the data collected for this research, I am going to work with a conceptual framework drawn from the field of history education. This conceptual framework is based on the work done by Seixas et al. on the Canadian Historical Thinking Project and relates to empirical research done by Wineburg et al. into how professional historians approach texts as opposed to novice history students. This will be explained in more detail in the literature review in chapter 2.

The ultimate aim of this research project is to gain a deeper understanding of what knowledge our pre-service educators bring with them from school and then to investigate whether or not they are further developing this knowledge as they are exposed to the history modules in the social science courses at the Wits School of Education. It is expected that the process of this investigation will have a positive impact on my own practice.

### 1.3 Rationale:

I have already introduced some reasons for my interest in this issue, another important reason behind my concern and interest in this particular group of students is that the new curriculum (CAPS) is much more focused on teacher knowledge and this is recognised in the latest document outlining minimum requirements for teacher qualifications. This policy replaces the Norms and Standards for Educators (2010) and based on research outlines key responsibilities and roles for all teacher education programmes:

This policy: requires all teacher education programmes to address the critical challenges facing education in South Africa today - *especially the poor content and conceptual knowledge found amongst teachers*, as well as the legacies of apartheid, by incorporating situational and contextual elements that assist teachers in developing competencies that enable them to deal with diversity and transformation... (Government Gazette, Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications, 2011, pp. 6-7)<sup>1</sup>

This emphasis on teacher's content and conceptual knowledge is important to note as we have assumed that our pre-service educators had some content and conceptual knowledge from taking the subject to matric. In recent years, with the Social Science 1 and 2 groups this is not the case and we have to somehow provide deep subject knowledge in twelve months over two years.

The emphasis placed on specific subject knowledge as opposed to generic skills or outcomes has been a response to the perception that Outcomes Based Education was letting learners down. The debate about skills versus content has been raging for many years and most agree that one without the other is not desirable. The Revised National Curriculum Statement did not advocate that content was irrelevant but this was how it was perceived by many educators. The grade 9 assessment tasks implied that history was not about specific content but was more of a comprehension test as learners just needed to analyse sources without really contextualizing their learning.

In many ways this approach was influenced by constructivist pedagogy and a global movement towards making school subjects relevant to the needs of the workplace. In South Africa's case it was also about moving away from a curriculum that was based on rote learning and memorizing pages of textbooks that generally fostered a particular political

---

<sup>1</sup>Note that emphasis is my own.

agenda and did not encourage any debate or critical reasoning. History was viewed as a ‘rote learning subject’ by teachers, parents and learners. Matric learners worked from government approved textbooks and learnt swathes of descriptive passages justifying white dominance, particularly the National Party’s right to rule, without any real understanding or interpretation. Although these government texts had content this bore no resemblance to what changing approaches to the discipline of history were about. It was as if South African history classrooms were stuck in the *positivist or Rankean*<sup>2</sup> thinking that history was about facts and that the historian was merely recording events as they found evidence in the archives.

Teachers did not really need any specific skills other than to perhaps explain more difficult concepts or to provide additional *facts* usually written in copious notes on blackboards or overhead projectors for learners to take down in a chronological fashion. Unfortunately, it does seem as if this continues in some classrooms today. Cynthia Kros, a history and history education specialist, explains how this legacy of Bantu Education still affects students in South Africa:

I have taught many students battling to overcome the treacherous legacy of apartheid... They have been so conditioned to rote learning and authoritarian styles of teaching, that at first, they can make no sense of a question that asks for critical evaluation or an argued response... Bantu education continues to exercise its brain-numbing potency, transmitted by new generations of hapless teachers. (Kros, 2010, p. xiii)

It is possible that some of our pre-service educators could have been taught history in this manner and although they may have passed the matric exam they have no real understanding of what it means to ‘do history’. This means that they are not equipped with the necessary tools to help their learners access the way that history is envisaged in the curriculum.

This extract from the Curriculum and Policy Statement Social Sciences Senior Phase emphasizes the way that history is expected to be taught:

History is about learning how to think about the past, and by implication the present, in a disciplined way. History is a process of enquiry and involves asking questions about the past: What happened? When did it happen? Why did it happen then? It is about how to think analytically about the stories people tell us about the past and how we internalise that information. (Department of Basic Education. 2010, *Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS). Social Sciences Senior Phase. Grades 4-9*, p. 10)

---

<sup>2</sup>Von Ranke was a German historian famous for writing in the 1830s that the Historian’s role was “simply to show how it really was” (wie es eigentlich gewesen.) (Thomson, 1972, p. 39)



This approach is very different to that of the rote learning described by Cynthia Kros and is in line with global perceptions of how the subject of history should be taught. For example, in Canada, the Benchmarks project led by Peter Seixas lists six benchmarks that should inform history pedagogy. These are all prefaced by verbs, suggesting an active process of engagement with historical knowledge; students should be able to establish historical significance; use primary source evidence; identify continuity and change; analyse cause and consequence; take historical perspectives and understand the moral and ethical dimensions of historical interpretations (Seixas, 2006). Seixas comments that, “these elements are not skills but rather a set of underlying concepts that guide and shape the practice of history” (2006, p. 2).

Similar thinking is evident in Australia as outlined in *Making History: A Guide for the teaching and learning of History in Australian Schools* published in 2003 by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training. The publication describes authentic learning experiences in history as:

Students who have the opportunity to analyse and interpret evidence, generate hypotheses and construct history - that is, engage with the processes of historical reasoning - develop a clearer understanding of the difference between learning content, and learning how to reason historically with content... Authentic learning in history is a disciplinary-based approach to understanding the past which challenges students to ‘do’ and ‘make’ history in a manner that resembles the historian’s craft. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003, p. 8)

Bertram explains how the work of Lee and Ashby (2000) seems to offer a way of linking the traditional approach of focussing on content with more alternative approaches. Lee and Ashby distinguish between the “substantive and procedural dimensions of history”:

Substantive history is the content of history, what history is ‘about’... procedural ideas about history ... concepts like historical evidence, explanation, change are ideas that provide our understanding of history as a discipline or form of knowledge. They are not what history is about but they shape the way we go about doing history. (Husbands et al., 2003, as quoted in Bertram, 2009, p. 108)

This is an important distinction to bear in mind when investigating the challenges faced by the Social Science 1 and 2 pre-service educators. In order for them to effectively access the

relevant knowledge and skills they will need in their own teaching they need to have a clear understanding of both “substantive and procedural knowledge”.

Husbands, Kitson and Pendry’s book entitled *Understanding History Teaching* also suggests a useful research model to investigate the complexities of teacher knowledge:

What our teachers show us is that it is an enterprise infused with highly developed and diverse types of knowledge that are relevant to the task at hand. Second, we believe our simple ‘model’ of teacher knowledge in terms of three principal components - knowledge of subject, of pupils, of resources and activities - is a helpful way of thinking about this knowledge. (Husbands et al., 2003, p. 82)

Husbands et al. acknowledge that there are other kinds of knowledge such as “knowledge of the curriculum” and “knowledge about the school context” but they have found this model most useful as a way of “thinking about teacher education programmes” (Husbands et al., 2003, p. 82).

This is an indication of the complexity of teaching as illustrated by Shulman (1986) in his research into Pedagogical Content Knowledge. Teaching is not merely a technical exercise; there are so many contexts that need to be considered. History teaching is not merely about imparting content and skills, the needs of the society, the school and the individual learners need to be considered. In post-apartheid South Africa there are many expectations placed upon the history curriculum and the history teacher is expected to play many roles, of which helping the learners to pass exams is only one.

In the next chapter I will present a literature review and conceptual framework and in the following chapter I will briefly introduce the history modules of the Social Science 1 and 2 courses at the Wits School of Education, in relation to the literature on history education. Chapter 4 will present the methodology that was used in this research. Chapters 5 and 6 will analyse the various data collected and chapter 7 will discuss the findings and implications of this research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

This chapter will set out thematically the major literature that has provided this research with a focus and direction.

### **2.1 A sociological lens to unpack what kind of knowledge the pre-service history and social science educators are expected to acquire**

Bernstein's concept of the Pedagogic Device offers a useful lens through which to discuss the literature which informs this research into the possible challenges pre-service educators could face when studying and learning to teach history without a background or matric level in the discipline of history (Bernstein, 1996). Briefly, the concept of the Pedagogic Device outlines a way of understanding how disciplinary knowledge constructed in the academic domain (which Bernstein refers to as the field of production) is transformed through state policy, bureaucratic officials and education experts and recontextualized into school subjects. For example, in terms of the discipline of history, knowledge is first constructed by specialists in the academy or Field of Production. It is then recontextualized into the Official Recontextualizing Field or The Pedagogic Recontextualizing Field (which will be discussed in depth in part 2 of this literature review) and ultimately transformed into history lessons in the Field of Reproduction or the individual teacher's classroom (Bernstein, 2000).

It is necessary to begin this review with the Field of Production to explore how the academic discipline of history is constructed by professional historians or academics as a distinct form of knowledge and then to investigate how this knowledge is transformed into the school subject of history. Bernstein proposes that any discipline is characterised by what he refers to as a vertical discourse. History as an academic discipline is situated within the category of a vertical discourse as opposed to a less formal, everyday horizontal discourse. In terms of its knowledge structure within the vertical discourse, it would most probably be defined as a horizontal knowledge structure: "A series of specialised languages, each with its own specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the construction and circulation of texts" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 161).

In contrast, the subject of geography is less easy to classify as this depends on whether the emphasis is on social geography or not. In some cases it is more similar to the natural sciences.

The idea that the humanities and the sciences could have different knowledge structures links to C.P. Snow's "Two Cultures Debate" first articulated in his 1959 Rede Lecture and then reworked for "A Second Look" in 1963. Snow observed that:

The intellectual life of the whole of western society is increasingly being split into two polar groups... (One pole literary intellectuals and the other pole the scientists)... Between the two a gulf of mutual incomprehension - sometimes (particularly among the young) hostility and dislike, but most of all lack of understanding. (Snow, 1959, as cited in Snow, 1963, pp. 3-4)

In 1963 Snow responded to criticism and acknowledged that two cultures was an oversimplification and that perhaps there should be at least three cultures (Snow, 1963). This idea was taken up and expanded on by Jerome Kagan where he described the three cultures as the Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and the Humanities. Kagan identified nine dimensions that are useful to compare the three cultures in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He proposed that the three cultures could be compared in terms of: *Primary interests; Primary Sources of Evidence; Primary Vocabulary; the Influence of Historical Conditions; Ethical Influences; Dependence on Outside Support; Work Conditions; Contribution to the National Economy and Criteria for Beauty* (Kagan, 2009, pp. 4-5).

What Kagan's nine dimensions clearly illustrated was that social scientists and humanists have more in common with each other than with natural scientists. Kagan commented that, "Social Scientists and humanists place less emphasis on biology and more on semantic networks" (Kagan, 2009, p. 3). He proposed that most intellectual endeavours comprise of three components, namely:

- A set of unquestioned premises that create preferences for particular questions and equally particular answers.
- A favoured collection of analytical tools for gathering evidence.
- A preferred set of concepts that are the core of explanations. (Kagan, 2009, p. 3)

It is useful to explore the perceived differences between the sciences and the humanities as many of the social science students at the Wits School of Education have backgrounds in geography and are more comfortable with the natural sciences approach.

Paul Hirst wrote about “forms of knowledge” and originally identified seven “logically distinct forms” which he envisaged as having three key elements that differentiated them from each other (Hirst, 1974, p. 84). These differences were to be found in “the concepts and the logical structure propositions employ, and the criteria for truth in terms of which they are assessed” (Hirst, 1974, p. 85). In his 1974 reassessment of his original thesis, Hirst admitted to some concerns about the subject of history and the social sciences. He proposed that there were elements of the physical and natural sciences as they are “concerned with truths that are matters of empirical observation and experiment” whilst at the same time he acknowledged that history and the social sciences were also very much concerned with “explanations of human behaviour in terms of intentions, will, hopes, beliefs etc.” (Hirst, 1974, p. 86). Hirst explained how this complexity meant that perhaps history and the social sciences did not fit his original categorization as “distinct forms of knowledge”. He commented in his 1974 chapter:

These pursuits like so many other so-called ‘subjects’ may well be concerned with truths of several different logical kinds and only detailed examination can show to what extent any example of such a subject is or is not logically complex and in what ways. The labels that I have used for distinct forms of knowledge are to be understood as being strictly labels for different classes of true propositions. In so far as these terms are used for parts of the curricula of Universities and schools, they may therefore cover very much more than an interest in one particular type of proposition. (Hirst, 1974, p. 87)

This has implications for the realities faced by the students in this research project that I am investigating. Is school history a ‘distinct form of knowledge’ or does it relate to other subjects studied at school?

Hirst defined geography as a “field of knowledge” rather than a distinct form of knowledge. He wrote that “geography as the study of man in relation to his environment is an example of a theoretical study of this kind, engineering an example of a practical nature” (Hirst, 1974, p. 260). Geography can be taught with a purely scientific approach or there can be discussion about the impact of environmental and political issues on human lives which is perhaps why Hirst described it as a field of knowledge. In the South African curriculum, the Social

Science Learning Area (Grades 4-9) is described as a combination of history and geography but geography falls under the Natural Sciences Learning Area as well (DBE, CAPS, 2010).

Having described some perceptions about differences between the so-called three cultures it is important to now move into the specific domain of academic history to briefly outline how professional historians construct the knowledge that is developed in what Bernstein would refer to as the Field of Production.

### **What kind of knowledge is produced in the Field of Production? What is History?**

Debates about what history is have raged within the academic community for over a century. Historians themselves do not agree, with some believing that “it is an account of an actual past”, and others who view it as “an entirely imagined or constructed past” (Values in Education Initiative, Report of the History and Archaeology Panel, 2002, p. 14).

Some historians speak about “History as event vs. History as account” (Stanford, 1994, pp. 17-18). Sturley wrote in 1969: “The word ‘history’ is in fact used to mean different things; not only past events but the methods that are used to discover what they were and what has been written about them” (Sturley, 1969, p. 1).

These different understandings of what history is have had profound effects on what Bernstein would describe as the official recontextualizing field, where policy and curricula are constructed from the field of production. This will be discussed in more detail in the second part of this literature review.

The Ancient Greek historian Herodotus, who is often referred to as the ‘father of history’, understood the role of the historian as “to narrate what was” (Ton eonta). For many early historians their purpose was to write or tell the stories of the past.

With the influence of the enlightenment and the move towards using scientific methods, positivist historians like the German Von Ranke believed that it was possible to write objectively about the past and that the truth was attainable through scientific methods. In the 1830s Ranke explained that the task of the Historian was “simply to show how it really was

(wie es eigentlich gewesen)“ (Carr, 1961, p. 8). This means that historical facts should be taken at face value without concerns about their validity as scientific methods had been used by meticulous gentlemen laboriously reading archival records of past events whose reputations alone guaranteed the truth.

The nineteenth century fetishism of facts was completed and justified by a fetishism of documents. The documents were the Ark of the Covenant in the temple of facts. The reverent historian approached them with bowed head and spoke of them in awed tones. If you find it in the documents, it is so. (Carr, 1961, p. 8)

The traditional approaches to history focussed on politics on a national and international scale. History became a record of the deeds of so-called great men. The stories of ordinary men and women were ignored and not deemed to be ‘real history’ (Burke, 1991). Burke compared traditional and ‘new history’ and explained how the Annales School challenged the traditional ideas by suggesting that everything has a history in the concept of ‘total history’ and that analysis was preferable to the ‘grand narrative’ approach. They moved away from the focus on great men to begin to include the views of ordinary men and women in the radical idea of ‘history from below’. In order to access these stories it was necessary to break away from the ‘fetishism of documents’ and to use other types of evidence or sources such as oral history, visual sources and statistics.

This ‘new history’ needed to ask a variety of questions in order to establish trends and patterns and started to encourage inter-disciplinary research rather than the narrow view that only professional historians, preferably men, could write about the past. They disagreed with the notion that history could be objective and without bias and suggested that it was impossible to avoid looking at the past from a particular point of view (Burke, 1991).

The idea that history was relative was taken up in great depth in the 1960s by E.H. Carr who described history as an “unending dialogue between the present and the past” (Carr, 1961, p. 30). For Carr, facts only became historical facts because historians chose to record them as significant. Therefore it was very important to know who was writing and for what purpose - the past was subjective. Carr wrote that, “By and large the historian will get the kind of facts that he wants. History means interpretation” (1961, p. 23).

E.H. Carr entered into the debate questioning history's status as a science or an art in the 1960s. He referred to C.P. Snow's 'two cultures' as he too expressed concern about a 'rift' between the Humanities and the Scientists. For Carr: "Historian and physical scientist are united in the fundamental purpose of seeking to explain, and in the fundamental procedure of question and answer. The historian, like any other scientist, is an animal who incessantly asks the question 'Why?'" (Carr, 1961, p. 86).

Ultimately for Carr, the key difference between the physical sciences and the study of history and the social sciences is that:

The sociologist, the economist, or the historian needs to penetrate into forms of human behaviour in which the will is active, to ascertain why the human beings who are the object of his study willed to act as they did. This sets up a relation, which is peculiar to history and the social sciences, between the observer and what is observed. The point of view of the historian enters irrevocably into every observation which he makes; history is shot through and through with relativity. (Carr, 1961, p. 70)

G.R. Elton refuted Carr's perception of history as being "shot through and through with relativity". He wrote the following:

The study of history is an intellectual pursuit, an activity of the reasoning mind, and, as one should expect, its main service lies in its essence. Like all sciences, history to be worthy of itself and beyond itself, must concentrate on one thing: the search for truth. Its real value as a social activity lies in the training it provides, the standards it sets, in this singularly human concern. (Elton, 1967, p. 68)

Elton accused those who claimed that history was nothing but subjective opinion as having no real understanding of what the practice of history entailed. He acknowledged that the historian "can never be the last word, but he can establish new footholds in the territory of truth" (Elton, 1967, p. 177).

This perception of history as "an intellectual pursuit" or "activity of the reasoning mind" has had a profound impact on how history is expected to be taught in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Justification for the place of history in the school curriculum often cites that it encourages critical thinking and is advocated by the "thinking like a historian" approach associated with Sam Wineburg's research. (Wineburg, 1991, 2001; Wineburg et al., 2011; Stanford History Education Group, 2010). This will be further explained in part 2 of this literature review



where I look more closely at Bernstein's concepts of the Official Field of Recontextualisation and the Pedagogic Field of Recontextualisation as part of his pedagogic device (Bernstein, 2000).

The question of the relativity of history was not resolved by Elton and Carr. The postmodernists such as Hayden White did not see much difference between historians and novelists. White commented that: "Historians do not build up knowledge others might use, they generate a discourse about the past" (Cited in Appleby et al., 1994, p. 245). The challenges posed by postmodernists motivated many historians to acknowledge that they did ask important questions, especially about language and the ability of the historian to ever truly know what words used in the past meant. Most historians now accept a 'qualified objectivity' but still see value in the process of enquiry. These New Realists "re-defined historical objectivity as an interactive relationship between an enquiring subject and external object" (Appleby et al., 1994, p. 259).

John Tosh, in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Pursuit of History*, devotes a whole chapter to defining what he calls historical awareness as opposed to social memory. For Tosh, social memory is based on popular knowledge and is often used by social groups to justify the present, "often at the cost of historical accuracy" (Tosh, 2010, p. 3). He describes how many professional historians of the 21<sup>st</sup> century look back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the German concept of 'historicism' advocated by Von Ranke, and they adapt the principles of a disciplined enquiry in the understanding that the past is not the same as the present in any way. The concept of historical awareness for these historians is centred on three main ideas: difference, context and process. A commitment to understanding the "otherness of the past" is essential (Tosh, 2010, p. 10).

Tosh acknowledges that there are areas of overlap between history and social memory but he does not accept the postmodern idea that there is no difference between them. He clearly explains that the process of historical enquiry is adhered to by most professionals in the discipline: "Professional historians insist on a lengthy immersion in the primary sources, a deliberate shedding of present-day assumptions and a rare degree of empathy and imagination" (Tosh, 2010, p. 13).

In contrast, Tosh outlines how popular historical knowledge or social memory can be distorted by tradition; nostalgia for a perceived better life and the concept that history was always about progress with change always being something good for society. He ultimately concludes that “Social memory is about belief not enquiry” (Tosh, 2010, p. 20). For Tosh, one of the key roles of the historian is “to challenge the socially motivated misrepresentations of the past” which is “not always welcomed by society” (Tosh, 2010, p. 20). Whilst historians accept that the scientific method or historicism or historical awareness does not guarantee the truth as claimed by 19<sup>th</sup> century positivists, they do believe that “historical research can be guided by the principles of the historicists - historical awareness should prevail over social need” (Tosh, 2010, p. 23).

It is important to note that this thinking is very influential in the writing of key specialists in history education such as Peter Seixas in his chapter on the place of postmodern history in schools. Seixas grapples with what history teachers should do with postmodern arguments and comments that history teachers can simply ignore them and concentrate on teaching history as ‘collective memory’ or with a ‘disciplinary approach’ but he writes:

To historicize history is to understand that today’s methods for establishing truth are no more than today’s methods. And yet, that is not to say that we have no way of establishing a complex, multiperspectival historical truth for our time. To deny students an education in those methods then, is to exclude them from full participation in contemporary culture. (Seixas & Peck, 2004, pp. 34-35)

Debates about the nature of the subject known as history and different approaches towards developing an understanding of the past are integral to the ‘field of production’ but as Bernstein’s model of the pedagogic device suggests, they are bound to filter into the ‘official field of recontextualization’ and the ‘pedagogic field of recontextualization’, ultimately influencing the individual teacher and the learning experience that unfolds in the classroom (Bernstein, 2000). Part 2 of this literature review will focus on how knowledge is recontextualized and made accessible to pre-service history educators.

## **2.2 The Pedagogic Recontextualising of Historical Knowledge for Pre-Service Educators**

The previous section discussed what constitutes the discipline of history and how this knowledge is produced and developed in what Bernstein calls the field of production usually

by professional historians and academics. The process of pedagogising this knowledge is described by Bernstein as the Pedagogic Device. Singh explains how Bernstein defines the Pedagogic Device as “the ordering and disordering principles of the pedagogising of knowledge” (Singh, 2002, p. 573).

As mentioned earlier, Bernstein identifies three main fields that are controlled by specific *agents or agencies* that control the ordering or disordering principles of the Pedagogic Device. These are the Field of Production where “new knowledge discourses and ideas are created and modified” (Bertram, 2012, p. 6) and as mentioned in the previous paragraph, is dominated by professional historians and academics in the tertiary institutions. The Field of Recontextualisation which can be divided into the Official Field of Recontextualisation where policy makers and experts select knowledge, pedagogy and assessment criteria that will become the official curriculum of the country, and the Pedagogic Field of Recontextualisation where textbook writers and teacher training facilitators interpret the official curriculum and in the light of the knowledge being constructed in the Field of Production to enable teachers to perform in the Field of Reproduction or the classroom.

In this research project, the main focus will be on the Pedagogic Field of Recontextualisation as this is where pre-service educators access the knowledge that will allow them to engage with the necessary disciplinary knowledge (as constructed in the Field of Production) and pedagogy to enable their learners to meet the evaluation criteria outlined in the official curriculum and the state controlled examinations. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the Official Field of Recontextualisation as it is here that the curriculum is developed and access to the way that knowledge has been constructed in the Field of Production will impact on the way that textbook writers and teacher training facilities like the Wits School of Education present the subject to the pre-service teachers.

A sociological perspective on how knowledge is created and then transferred from the Field of Production to the Field of Reproduction is useful as it reminds us that knowledge reflects the needs of the society. This is invaluable when tracing how history education has changed in post-apartheid South Africa and will continue to change to meet the needs of different generations. Changing historical interpretations constructed by professional historians do need to be made accessible to the public at large and this is best achieved through the school history curriculum. The role of the teacher training institution such as the History Department

at the Wits School of Education is to keep up with new trends in historical thinking and in pedagogy so that our pre-service teachers are best equipped to do justice to the subject of history in their own classrooms.

As previously mentioned, this research project is particularly concerned with the pre-service educators who have not taken history as a matric subject and last studied it as a part of social science when they were in grade 9, or in some cases have no memory of a subject called history at school. It is therefore important that we as teacher educators provide depth of subject knowledge and a sense of the process of historical investigation that is deemed necessary by the official curriculum documents. At the same time, how do we provide access to the broader issues and processes of inquiry that professional historians are investigating so that our pre-service educators are not just trained to teach one curriculum but have a more informed sense of the discipline as a whole? It is important to recognise that curricula change and teachers need to remain true to the core values of their discipline whilst adapting to meet new developments in pedagogy and particularly assessment.

Bernstein contrasts two major pedagogical recontextualising models of *competence* and *performance* which he regards as having an impact on both the official and the pedagogical recontextualising fields and ultimately on the practice of individual teachers.

Briefly, a performance model of pedagogic practice and context places the emphasis upon a specific output of the acquirer, upon a particular text the acquirer is expected to construct, and upon the specialised skills necessary to the production of this specific output, text or product. (Bernstein, 1996, p. 58)

This mode correlates with more traditional approaches to history teaching where history is taught as a “singular” which implies that it is a knowledge structure with its own specialised discourse, texts, practices and examinations. Bernstein writes that, “Singulars are on the whole, narcissistic, orientated to their own development, protected by strong boundaries and hierarchies” (1996, p. 65). This contrasts with the first post-apartheid curriculum that saw subjects as being part of learning areas with more weakly classified categories of space, time and discourse as in the competence model (Bernstein, 1996, p. 58).

It is important to note Bernstein's comment that: "Which discourse is appropriated depends more and more today upon the dominant ideology in the official recontextualizing field and upon the relative autonomy of the pedagogic, recontextualising field" (1996, p. 67).

Teacher training facilities need to have a clear understanding of the dominant influences in the official recontextualising field in order to help their students to critically analyse the curriculum they are working with. It is essential that the pre-service educators understand that both models have clear agendas influenced by the needs of the society they represent. The competency modes are generally viewed as "therapeutic" or "empowering" and the performance modes are generally seen as serving "economic goals" or as "instrumental" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 68). This explains why the first post-apartheid outcomes-based curriculum was more rooted in the competency model in an attempt to move away from the authoritarian focus of the apartheid curriculum. The aim of the outcomes-based approach was to focus on democratic principles and with an emphasis on the learner or acquirer of knowledge.

In the case of history this meant joining with geography to form the Social Science learning area with less emphasis on the individual knowledge structures of each discipline and more emphasis on generic skills. In the more recently introduced Curriculum and Policy Documents (Department of Education, 2010) there appears to be a return to a performance model with clearly defined boundaries for both history and geography.

The subject Social Sciences consists of History and Geography. Both History and Geography should be taught and assessed during every term of the school year. Although the two disciplines are kept separate, this curriculum is designed to complement the knowledge (content, skills and concepts) outlined in each. (DBE, CAPS, Social Sciences Senior Phase, 2010, p. 9)

The issue of teaching geography and history together has been contentious for many years, with some feeling strongly that they supplement each other beautifully and others feeling equally that they are so different and that history and English have more in common. It is not within the scope of this research to devote too much time to these debates but it is useful to know that the conception of the two subjects being taught together has been around for a long time. For instance in a review of British textbook writer, Mackinder's chapter, "The teaching of Geography and History" in 1914, Roxby states:

For the ordinary, intelligent citizen, history and geography are, or should be inseparable, jointly helping him to orient himself, his home and his country in time and space. It is therefore vital that the future citizen should win both 'perspective in space' and perspective in 'the stream of time.' Continuity, Mr Mackinder argues, is as much the fundamental conception of history as it is of the natural world. To visualize both, to feel oneself the product of the two forces in constant interaction is the condition of effective action and sane thought in our complex world. For the purpose of the specialist, aspects of history and aspects of geography can be isolated from the total 'complex' but for the ordinary citizen it is not so. (Mackinder cited in review by P.M. Roxby. 1914, p. 406)

Mackinder suggested that ordinary British citizens would benefit more from a broad sense of geography and history and that the specialists in each discipline could get to grips with the specific disciplinary issues. The Social Sciences curriculum does acknowledge that the subjects relate, but has moved away from the broad approach towards aiming at setting up a solid understanding of what each discipline entails instead of just leaving it to the 'specialists'. The basic concepts of both disciplines are set up in the Social Sciences and expanded on as the terminology becomes more sophisticated in the Further Education and training years of Grades 10-12, where history and geography are taught as separate disciplines.

So in the more recently introduced curriculum (CAPS) each subject is described independently with its own set of specific aims and skills. The specific aims and skills of history correlate with international history teaching that sees the subject as "doing history" rather than learning history. Geography is described as being an "integrated discipline" which correlates with Hirst's description of geography as a "field" rather than a "distinct form of knowledge" with central concepts, distinct logical structures like a historical explanation (Hirst, 1974, p. 260).

For example if we compare a sample of a couple of the Social Sciences (Grades 4-9) specific aims of history (Figure 2.1) with the FET (Grades 10-12) specific aims of history (Figure 2.2) we can see the different levels of sophistication that indicate progression:

**Figure 2.1: Extracts from Specific Aims and Skills of History CAPS for the Intermediate and Senior Phases (Grades 4-9). (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2010, p. 11)**

<b>The Specific Aims of History</b>	<b>Examples of the skills involved</b>
Finding a variety of kinds of information about the past	Being able to bring together information, for example, from text, visual material (including pictures, cartoons, television and movies), songs, poems and interviews with people; using more than one kind of written information (books, magazines, newspapers, websites).
Selecting relevant information	Being able to decide about what is important information to use. This might be choosing information for a particular history topic, or, more specifically, to answer a question that is asked. Some information that is found will not be relevant to the question, and some information, although relevant will not be as important or as useful as other information.

**Figure 2.2: Extracts from FET CAPS History (Grades 10-12) (Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2010, p. 12)**

<b>Skills</b>	<b>How Skills Can Be Achieved</b>
Understand the range of sources of information available for studying the past	By collecting information from different kinds of sources in order to provide a more complete picture.  By recognising that the kind of information from the various sources provides different perspectives on an event. For example, by finding as many of the following kinds of sources as possible: manuscripts (hand written diaries, letters and notebooks), printed text (books, newspapers and websites), video, film, photographs, drawings, paintings or cartoons, and oral sources (interviews, stories and songs).
Extract and interpret information from a number of sources	By selecting relevant information for the topic being investigated or from the question being answered.  By making sense of the information within its context.

What these two extracts in figures 2.1 and 2.2 reveal is that although history is taught with geography in grades 4-9, the learners are expected to develop the specific skills necessary to 'do history.' Learners in the intermediate and senior phases are expected to find a variety of sources and to select relevant information. These skills are then developed in the FET years (grades 10-12) where they are not only 'finding sources' but are required to demonstrate that they understand that the past can only be investigated by interrogating multiple types of evidence that need to be selected and then investigated within their context to answer specific historical questions.

Once again this relates to Paul Hirst's 'forms of knowledge' of 1965 that he revised and developed in 1974, where he acknowledged that it was not just about theoretical knowledge, but also about social practices.

The content of education must therefore be conceived as primarily initiation into substantive social practices ... They are complex interrelated packages of such elements as actions, knowledge, judgements, criteria of success, values, skills, dispositions, virtues, feelings ... Education in this capacity will necessarily involve the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the person. (Hirst, 1974, p. 195)

The CAPS document appears to support this approach where the learner is already being socialized into the practice of what professional historians do and being encouraged to be critical about these practices. Hirst commented that, "What then becomes crucial is directly introducing pupils to the kinds of practices each area involves and to critical reflection on these" (Hirst, 1974, p. 198).

The idea that education is about more than just acquiring theoretical knowledge relates to Bernstein's descriptions of vertical and horizontal discourses. In order for history teachers to enable their learners to access the specialised language used in the discipline of history, they need to understand that this vertical discourse is different to the everyday horizontal discourses the learners know. Bernstein further expanded his language of description to define hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures in the vertical discourses used by the specific disciplines. As mentioned above, hierarchical knowledge structures refer to scientific subjects that build on previous learning and become more abstract. Horizontal knowledge structures are focussed on specialised languages with their own "specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction of texts" (Bernstein, 2000, p. 160).



For Bernstein this implies that horizontal knowledge structures depend on developing or acquiring a *gaze*.

At the level of the acquirer this invisible perspective, the principle of recontextualisation structuring the transmission is expected to become how the acquirer reads, evaluates and creates texts. A ‘gaze’ has to be acquired, that is a particular mode of recognising what counts as an authentic sociological reality. (Bernstein, 1996, p. 164)

Bertram has worked extensively with Bernstein’s pedagogic device as a way of framing research she has done on curriculum change in history in South Africa (2009, 2012). However she proposes that the concepts of horizontal and vertical knowledge structures do not provide sufficient texture and depth needed to really unpack the complexities of history as a specialised discipline. In 2009 Bertram referred to work done by Muller (2006), who describes history as a subject in the schools as “midway along the vertical/horizontal continuum where sequence of content is less important, though conceptual progression remains critical” (Bertram, 2009, p. 102). This is illustrated in the comparison between Figures 2.1 and 2.2 where similar concepts or skills are described but the terminology and the sophistication of the application of these historical concepts develops in the FET CAPS requirements.

Bertram carefully analyses Bernstein’s concept of the disciplinary ‘gaze’ by referring to Dowling’s work on Mathematics: “Thus a disciplinary gaze is about knowing the recognition and disciplinary rules of that discipline ... We might say then that an historical gaze is about gaining mastery over both content and mode of expression” (Bertram, 2009, p. 105).

Karl Maton’s work on *Knowledge and Knower Structures* builds on Bernstein’s original ideas as Maton comments that, “Bernstein himself suggested that it was just ‘provisional mapping’ or ‘productive imperfection’” (Bernstein as cited in Maton, 2007, p. 87). Maton extends Bernstein’s work on the ‘pedagogic device’ to investigate what he calls ‘legitimation codes.’ According to Maton, “Legitimation codes provide a means of conceptualizing the structuring principles underlying intellectual fields; the epistemic device is the means whereby these codes (and so the form taken by intellectual fields) are created, maintained, reproduced, transformed and changed” (Maton, 2007, p. 88).

Maton describes the ‘epistemic device’ as complementing Bernstein’s ‘pedagogic device’ whereby “both devices form the basis for production, recontextualisation and reproduction of knowledge” (Maton, 2007, p. 88).

Maton finds the “Two Cultures” debate a useful way of illustrating what he understands as the concepts of knowledge-knower structures. C.P. Snow’s 1959 lecture focussed on the increasing gap between the sciences and the humanities. Maton writes that it is possible to see the differences between the two cultures in terms of ‘knowledge structures’ and ‘knower structures’ rather than the contemporary explanation given by the editor of *The Listener* in 1959 that, “Scientists and humanist intellectuals speak different languages” (Editorial, *The Listener*, 3 September 1959, p. 344 as cited in Maton, 2007, p. 89).

Maton’s work on knowledge structures particularly applies to Bernstein’s concept of vertical discourse whereby Maton suggests that the horizontal and hierarchical knowledge that Bernstein describes can be related to Snow’s “Two Cultures” in that horizontal knowledge structures relate to the humanist culture and hierarchical knowledge structures tend to relate to the scientific culture. Maton extends this further by describing what he identifies as ‘knower structures’ where the concept of ‘dispositions’ becomes important. Here he proposes that the humanist culture could be illustrated as a ‘hierarchical knower structure’ which:

Can be portrayed as a pyramid of knowers with, in the case of humanist culture, the ideal of the ‘English Gentleman’ at its pinnacle. The basis of the recontextualizing principle of humanist culture and its ruler (in both senses of measuring and dominating) was thus an idealised knower. (Maton, 2007, p. 91)

For Maton, the scientific culture is less about the personal and more about “knowledge or scientific procedures, regardless of biological or sociological background” (2007, p. 92). According to Maton: “In terms of their dispositions, scientists could represent a series of segmented knowers each strongly bounded from one another in terms of their (non-scientific) ‘gaze’ and capable of being based on very different, even opposed, assumptions (Maton, 2007, p. 92).

Ultimately for Maton, “the difference between intellectual fields may thus be less whether they are hierarchical or not and more where their hierarchizing principle lies” (2007, p. 92). For the humanities this is evident in the ‘knower structure’ whilst for the sciences their

recontextualizing principles are situated in their ‘knowledge structure’. This raises interesting questions for my research. Is access to the discipline of history dependent on dispositions or is it about knowledge? Ultimately is it possible to develop the necessary disposition or gaze necessary to teach learners the subject of history? Is there such a concept as the ‘ideal knower’ for the study of history?

This relates to the work done by Lee and Ashby (2000) who distinguish between the ‘substantive’ and the ‘procedural’ knowledge of history. History teachers themselves have to develop a clear understanding of the content of the particular period they are teaching as well as a sense of the ‘procedural knowledge’ or ‘mode of expression’. When recontextualising the curriculum and the professional discipline of history into pedagogical knowledge all these factors are important. Pre-service educators need access to both ‘substantive’ and ‘procedural’ knowledge if they are to develop the necessary ‘historical gaze’ which in turn will enable their learners to gain access to the skills and content needed to master school history and entrance to the academy.

Husbands et al. have developed their own model to investigate teacher knowledge in the history classrooms of Britain. They suggest three main components to think about history teaching which are: knowledge of subject, of pupils and of resources and activities (Husbands et al., 2003, p. 82). This correlates with the pedagogical recontextualising of knowledge described by Bernstein. It also is strongly influenced by Shulman and colleagues and their research into “Knowledge Growth in Teaching” which was initiated by a concern that subject matter knowledge or content was the “missing paradigm” (Shulman, 1986, p. 7).

Shulman was concerned that too much emphasis was being placed on pedagogy in the 1980s, without actually looking at how teachers prepared the subject matter they needed to help their learners gain access to. “What we miss are questions about the content of the lessons taught, the questions asked, and the explanations offered ... How does the teacher prepare to teach something never previously learned? How does learning *for* teaching occur?” (Shulman, 1986, p. 8).

Shulman’s research ultimately revealed three categories to describe ways of thinking about content knowledge in teaching. These were: Subject Matter Content Knowledge; Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Curricular Knowledge (Shulman, 1986, p. 9).

An understanding of these types of teacher knowledge is invaluable for thinking about recontextualizing knowledge for pre-service teachers. Teachers need adequate exposure to all three categories to enable them to have a deep sense of their role in the classroom. For Shulman the first category of Content Knowledge:

... requires going beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts of a domain. It requires understanding the structures of the subject matter ... The teacher need not only understand that something is so; the teacher must further understand why it is so. (Shulman, 1986, p. 9)

This relates to Bernstein's (1996) and Maton's (2007) descriptions of knowledge and knower structures, where the humanities are described as horizontal knower structures and the sciences as hierarchical knower structures. Future history teachers need exposure to the disciplinary approach to have an understanding of how historical knowledge is produced. It also links to Lee and Ashby's (2000) concepts of substantive and procedural knowledge in history.

For this research it is a central concern that the social science pre-service educators without a background in academic history will not necessarily have access to "going beyond knowledge of the facts or concepts" and need guidance in terms of understanding why history is more than just a record of past events. This suggests that it is necessary to expose pre-service educators to the Field of Production in that they have a chance to write history research essays which will engage them in investigating contested topics that they will respond to by developing logical and coherent arguments based on evidence from diverse secondary sources.

I also believe that experience with primary documents gives insight into the substantive and the procedural aspects of the study of history. For example, the Wits School of Education's collaboration with workshops provided by S.A.H.A. (South African Historical Archives), allows pre-service and practising educators the opportunity to work with the archive and to relate their experiences to the History classroom. These workshops provide pre-service and practising educators with archival resources that have been developed to suit the needs of the school curriculum and cover both substantive and procedural knowledge.

Shulman is most acknowledged for his description of the second category of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, which for Shulman means “going beyond knowledge of subject matter per se to the dimension of subject matter knowledge *for teaching*” (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). This category of knowledge implies that teachers develop highly specialised knowledge that does not always get the respect that it deserves from society in general. It is not enough to have subject matter knowledge, for Shulman it is also about understanding: “The most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations and demonstrations - in a word, the ways of representing and formulating the subject that makes it comprehensible to others” (Shulman, 1986, p. 9).

In Bernstein’s pedagogic device this would be described as recontextualizing knowledge that was produced in the Field Of Production to meet the needs of the classroom. The teacher would be influenced by materials developed in both the Official Recontextualizing Field (Policy and Curriculum) and the Pedagogic Recontextualizing Field.

This relates to debates within history education as to whether or not the purpose of teaching history at school level is to train future historians or to build some kind of ‘collective memory’ or ‘social memory’ that builds national identities and produces citizens able to make ‘informed’ political decisions based on a common past.

Deng suggests that Shulman and others involved in researching teacher knowledge have not really considered how powerful the curriculum is in defining what teachers’ options are in terms of their ‘pedagogical content knowledge’. Deng writes that: “Transformation is both a curricular and a psychological task, and that subject matter of a school subject - not the subject matter of an academic discipline - lies at the heart of classroom teaching” (Deng, 2007, p. 280).

This comment is important in thinking about the knowledge that pre-service history educators will need. Can one differentiate between history as an academic discipline and history as a school subject? Using Bernstein’s language of description, how is the Field of Production transformed by the official recontextualizing field (the policy and curriculum developers) and how does this impact on the pedagogic field of recontextualization where the training of history educators takes place?

The Canadian History Education specialist, Peter Seixas suggests that in modern history classrooms around the world, educators grapple with decisions based on three possible approaches towards teaching history at school level. These are described by Seixas as: “Collective memory, disciplinary and postmodern” (Seixas, 2000, p. 21). This debate has long raged in history education circles and has been influenced by educational theories about what young people can actually do in terms of analysing historical sources.

The historian Elton wrote that: “In a very real sense history is not a good subject to teach to children, or rather, the ‘real’ thing - academic history - is the wrong thing for them” (Elton, 1967, p. 182). For Elton, the subject of history required a maturity that he doubted even the average eighteen year old had. This maturity came from lived experiences and with the wisdom of age, historians were better able to study the past.

It is this perception of academic history being too complex for young children that was challenged by “the British Schools’ Council History (13-16) Project (SHP) ... 1972 to 1976” (Husbands, 1996, p. 10). The constructivist approach moved away from the ‘great tradition’ where history was regarded as a body of knowledge that pupils received and then proved they knew the facts in copious tests. The Schools’ Council Project, led by history educators like John Fines, advocated that “pupils would learn history as historians did, by practising or constructing it in the classroom” (Husbands, 1996, p. 131).

The impact of this approach was to lead to an emphasis on the skills of history and to move away from the idea that all children would have a specific body of knowledge when they left school. This constructivist approach was critiqued in the 1990s, with postmodernist attacks on the subject of history. The idea of school children acting as historians was considered to be unrealistic as historians would not: “... come to a set of historical sources with an empty or open mind ... it is naïve to believe that pupils can acquire access to the historical past by working on historical sources, by using the historical imagination” (Husbands, 1996, p. 132).

It is fascinating to read about reactions to the new history curriculum recently published in Britain. It appears as if there has been a strong influence from a conservative body to go back to the ‘great tradition’ approach and to teach ‘collective memory’ more than the disciplinary way. The historian Evans wrote a powerful critique of attempts to move away from a disciplinary approach back to ‘storytelling in the classroom’. He was particularly scathing

about the group called *Better History*, led by the historian Schama: “Gove, Schama and their allies are confusing history with memory. History is a critical academic discipline whose aims include precisely the interrogation of memory and the myths it generates” (Evans, 2011, p. 7).

The ‘Collective Memory’ approach was dominant in apartheid South Africa in that the ‘best story’ selected by the National Party was about justifying the social order of white supremacy and particularly the role of the white man in bringing *progress* and *civilization* to southern Africa. This idea of teaching history as a way to justify the political power of the present is something that history educators are very wary of. A South African journalist commented on the launch of the South African History Online student internship programme:

This leads me back to the words of our higher education minister. While he is correct in making the point that South African history needs to be re-examined caution must be heeded, that the type of re-examining of which he speaks is not the kind that simply replaces one dominant narrative with another. (Matheolane, *Mail & Guardian*. 31 October 2012, [mg.co.za/article/2012-10-31](http://mg.co.za/article/2012-10-31))

The Minister for the Public Service and Administration, Lindiwe Sisulu recently suggested that she would be pushing the African National Congress to institute history as a compulsory subject in all schools. She made this suggestion at the launch of a book honouring the late Nelson Mandela. She commented that: “What defines us as a people, is our history” (Smillie, 2013, p. 8). Whilst this support for the discipline is welcome, it also reinforces how important it is to teach history as an inquiry, to empower learners to read beyond official versions of the past.

The most recent history curriculum, otherwise known as CAPS (Curriculum and Policy Statements) has a renewed focus on subject matter knowledge. There is still an appreciation for the disciplinary approach in that learners are told that history is a process of enquiry. This is in line with international thinking as illustrated in the Canadian Benchmarks of Historical Thinking or Historical Thinking Project (Seixas, 2006; Seixas et al., 2012). It also relates to the Stanford History Education Group’s approach entitled, “Thinking like a historian” (<http://sheg.stanford.edu>) and “Reading like a Historian” (Wineburg et al., 2011).

What kind of teacher training is appropriate in the pedagogic field of recontextualization? How much emphasis should be placed on the official field of recontextualization when policy

and curricula change constantly to meet the needs of the society they represent? University departments responsible for training future teachers need to constantly update their own objectives to keep abreast of trends in the academic disciplines, policy and curricula and ultimately need to decide what will be in the best interests of the future teachers and their learners.

Deng outlines how the work of Bruner, Schwab and Dewey can illustrate processes that transform knowledge in the official field of recontextualization before teachers and teacher educators get access to what they are expected to teach. For Bruner the structure of the academic disciplines is essential.

Bruner (1996) holds that the task of conversion needs to be undertaken through the involvement of subject matter specialists and psychologists, instead of by an individual teacher ... Once formulated; classroom teachers are expected to work closely with these materials. (Deng, 2007, p. 284)

This approach suggests that teachers would have to work with pre-developed textbooks and worksheets that have been developed by educational psychologists and subject specialists. An example of this approach is clearly illustrated in the “Thinking like a historian” and “Reading like a Historian” materials developed by Wineburg et al. (1991-2011). The materials adopt the disciplinary approach to teaching history and guide teachers and learners through historical processes; for example, the historical investigation into the story of the rescue of John Smith by Pocahontas, where students are engaged in investigating different historical perspectives about the event. (See chapter 3 for more details.)

Deng points to the work done by Schwab on ‘translation’: “Like Bruner, Schwab (1973) construes translation as fundamentally a curricular concept ... Schwab emphasizes the understanding of the learner; instead of the subject matter of the academic discipline, as the essential starting point for transformation or translation” (Deng, 2007, p. 285).

Although Schwab acknowledges that it is important to think about who the teachers are and what they are likely to know, he too believes that teachers need to trust in the expertise of the material developers and work closely with them (Deng, 2007, p. 286).

The third influential educational psychologist that Deng describes is Dewey. For Dewey, the child should be the starting point for curricula design:



The development of this curriculum requires first and foremost psychologizing the subject matter; that is ‘re-instating’ or ‘restoring’ the subject matter of the academic discipline into a special form of experience for the learner ... Psychologizing the subject matter, in other words, concerns primarily the matter of transforming academic disciplines into school subjects. (Deng, 2007, pp. 287-288)

For Dewey, as explained by Deng, the teacher’s role in mediating the material in the curriculum to suit the needs of his/her specific learners is vital. The curriculum developed in the official field of recontextualization reflects power relationships in society and it is always up to the individual teacher to adapt and transform this knowledge through their own knowledge.

Once again this brings us back to the question of what knowledge should future history teachers have. We at the Wits School of Education believe that it needs to be a balance of academic subject matter, an understanding of how the subject is defined in the curriculum and pedagogical knowledge about how best to meet the individual needs of the learner. I will provide more details on what is presented to the Social Science 1 and 2 pre-service educators in chapter 3. This research hopes to expose areas where we need to enrich our pre-service student teachers’ knowledge in order to fulfil our obligations to the schools and the learners.

### **2.3 The conceptual framework**

How does one discern whether or not students of history are acquiring an historical gaze? In order to answer the question above I have used the work of Sam Wineburg and Peter Seixas and other researchers on the concept of *historical thinking*. Sam Wineburg’s ground breaking research into what he identified as the “unnatural act” of historical thinking provided an important starting point for this research. He commented that the traditional method of studying historical texts for evidence of how history was constructed was limited, he wrote that, “Historiography teaches us how to recognize skilled cognition but gives us scant advice for how to achieve it” (Wineburg, 2001, p. 52).

Wineburg, as an expert in cognitive studies in education, conducted an empirical investigation (using a think-aloud protocol) into how professional historians read texts and what this revealed about historical thinking:

In these vignettes, I try to show that historical thinking, in its deepest forms, is neither a natural process nor something that springs automatically from psychological development. Its achievement, I argue, actually goes against the grain of how we ordinarily think, one of the reasons why it is much easier to learn names, dates and stories than it is to grasp the meaning of the past. (Wineburg, 2001, p. 7)

Wineburg’s vignettes described how various individuals read historical texts. What Wineburg’s research revealed was that historical thinking was complex and that historians did not just read texts for information but used specific heuristics which he identified as: *sourcing*, *contextualization* and *corroboration*. Once the historian has thoroughly analysed who wrote the source, why they wrote it, when they wrote it and are there other sources that support this source, could they then begin to look at the actual words in the source - which would be *close reading*. These heuristics correlate to Lee and Ashby’s (2000) second-order or procedural knowledge.

**Figure 2.3 Table illustrating how Wineburg’s Heuristics or “ways of knowing” have been defined as “practices that can be taught to students at all levels.” (Wineburg et al., 2011, p. V).**

Historical Thinking Heuristic as identified by Sam Wineburg (2001)	Definition of practices as developed by Wineburg et al. (Stanford History Education Group, Historical Thinking Posters.)
Sourcing	Before reading the document: Who wrote this? What is the author’s perspective? Why was it written? When was it written? Where was it written? Is it reliable? Why? Why not?
Contextualization	When and where was the document created? What was different then? What was the same? How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?
Corroboration	What do other documents say? Do the documents agree? If not, why? What are other possible documents? What documents are most reliable?
Close reading	What claims does the author make? What evidence does the author use? What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document’s audience? How does the document’s language indicate the author’s perspective?

Wineburg's research emphasized that to develop an historical gaze would entail having an understanding that historical thinking is specific to the discipline and not just a question of reading a source with a critical stance:

This is why we call history a discipline, a word that carries two essential, but different, meanings. The first refers to the disciplines of the university: those bodies of knowledge that have accrued over generations, each with its own distinctive means of investigation and form of argument. But the second meaning of 'discipline' is no less important. This is the word's original meaning - the opposite of disorderly, slovenly, whimsical, and capricious. In this sense of discipline, history teaches us to resist first-draft thinking and the flimsy conclusions that are its fruits. This kind of history cultivates caution and teaches us we must engage in a sober accounting of what we do not know. Without this capacity we are destined to be history's victims rather than its students. (Wineburg, 2007, p. 11)

This research into the opportunities and challenges pre-service history educators with or without a background in school history could face, was underpinned by Wineburg's conception that historical thinking is not the same as critical literacy as there definitely is such a reality as a specific historical gaze.

Building on Wineburg's work on historical thinking, the American Historical Association outlined what they referred to as the *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking* (2006). These benchmarks were also influential in Canadian History education. Peter Seixas and Carla Peck and others involved in Canadian history education have refined the benchmarks to six key historical thinking concepts:

To think historically, students need to be able to:

- Establish historical *significance*
- Use *primary source evidence*
- Identify *continuity and change*
- Analyse *cause and consequence*
- Take *historical perspectives*, and
- Understand the *ethical dimension* of historical interpretations. (The Historical Thinking Project, 2012 AGM, Appendix v p. 28).

Seixas and Peck affirmed that historical thinking is different from generic critical thinking:

Thinking in social studies is too often defined in terms of generic 'critical thinking' or 'information processing' approaches. Following that line of reasoning leaves only 'the facts' about the past as anything specifically historical. The argument here is that historical thinking involves certain distinct problems that cannot be collapsed into a more generic 'critical thinking'. (Seixas & Peck, 2004, p. 116)

According to the Canadian Centre for the study of Historical Consciousness, a partner in The Historical Thinking Project, “historical literacy means gaining a deep understanding of historical events through active engagement with historical texts”, and most importantly: “Historical thinking only becomes possible in relation to substantive content. These concepts are not abstract ‘skills’. Rather, they provide the structure that shapes the practice of history” (Historicalthinking.ca/concepts 2/18/13). These benchmarks or key concepts directly relate to what Lee and Ashby defined as substantive and second order concepts or procedural knowledge (2000, p. 199).

In terms of this research project, the six historical thinking concepts as identified by The Historical Thinking Project provide a useful tool to identify the development of an historical gaze in the interviews and examination papers of the nine social science 2 students. See Figure 4.3 in the Methodology chapter for a summarized explanation of what Seixas has described as what students would be able to do at the most sophisticated level of the concept, which I will use to measure developing proficiency in historical thinking.

This chapter has used Bernstein’s concept of the Pedagogic Device as a generative lens through which to trace the acquisition of historical knowledge that pre-service educators would need in order to acquire an historical gaze. It has also explained why the work done by the Canadian Historical Thinking Project led by Peter Seixas (2000) will provide the conceptual framework and tools of analysis for this research project. In the next chapter I will extend the review with a more detailed analysis of history education to show how it has informed the design of the history modules of Social Science 1 and 2 at the Wits School of Education.

## **Chapter 3: Contextualizing the History Modules of the Social Science Courses offered at the Wits School of Education**

This chapter will situate the history modules of Social Science 1 and 2 in the context of the relevant literature on history education. It will also outline the course content and expectations of both history modules and explain what historical knowledge, both substantive and procedural, pre-service social science educators are presented with.

### **3.1 What knowledge do pre-service history teachers need to acquire?**

As I have discussed earlier, the knowledge that the pre-service history teachers need to acquire has been recontextualised from the field of production where the professional or academic historians construct historical texts. Pre-service history teachers need to acquire both “substantive and procedural knowledge” as defined by Lee and Ashby (2000, p. 199). This means that they have to have content knowledge, “what history is about,” and an awareness of the concepts and processes involved in “doing history” (Lee & Ashby, 2000, p. 199).

These students do not only need to have a solid understanding of the discipline of history but they also need to have a clear sense of what the official recontextualizing field or school policy and curriculum requires them to achieve with their learners. Teacher training facilities such as the Wits School of Education where this research is situated are then responsible for the pedagogical recontextualization of both the knowledge from the Field of Production and the Official Recontextualizing Field to enable the pre-service teachers to function in the classroom or Field of Reproduction (Bernstein, 2000).

In order to provide the pre-service teachers with grounding in the academic discipline of history, the Wits School of Education history department believes that it is very important to engage these students in historiographical debates and to make the students aware of the constantly changing nature of historical knowledge. With limited time allocated to history lectures, we strive to introduce the students to diverse perspectives about some of history’s key events. For example, changing perspectives about the “discovery” of the Americas and

the latest historical debates about the role of Shaka and the Zulu in the period of transformation known as the Mfecane.<sup>3</sup>

Students are required to read historical texts and to read them analytically. The research essays give the students a small insight into the task of the professional historian who is also driven by research questions to find evidence to substantiate and corroborate their claims. These insights into academic practices of professional historians are important as they will be valuable tools in the history classroom when these pre-service teachers are explaining historical processes to their own students.

Since the 1990s a body of literature specifically dealing with History in Education has been developing. Key individuals in this research come from diverse fields; Sam Wineburg is a Professor of Educational Psychology who has a particular interest in cognitive behaviours as experienced in historical thinking or historical consciousness. His research into what he calls “unnatural thinking” has helped me to conceptualize a way to investigate the development of historical consciousness in the social science pre-service teachers that I am concerned about in this research (Wineburg, 1999, 2000, 2007). The Canadian Historical Thinking Project’s use of Peter Seixas’s work on developing the benchmarks of historical thinking is helpful when thinking about differences or similarities between school history and the academic discipline of history (Seixas & Peck, 2004; Seixas, 2006; Seixas & Colyer, 2012).

Chris Husbands has also written extensively about what he describes as “What history teachers need to know”, where he has developed a framework that draws on the work done by Shulman on the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge. His definitive framework for “History Teacher’s Knowledge” which he illustrates in diagrammatic form has helped me to focus on what knowledge we need to recontextualize for our pre-service history and social science teachers (Husbands, 2011, p. 93).

Husbands illustrates “What History Teachers Need to Know”, as essentially “History teachers’ knowledge bases”, in the centre of the diagram, which are divided into three types of knowledge: “Knowledge about subject, knowledge about pupils and knowledge about

---

<sup>3</sup> Traditional historical accounts claimed that Shaka and the Zulu were responsible for devastating the interior of Southern Africa. This was radically challenged by Cobbing which opened up the debate, and is now contested by Wright. (2012, pp. 211-251 in *Cambridge History of Southern Africa*. Vol. 1)

classroom practices” (Husbands, 2011, p. 93). He further expands on the “knowledge about subject” into “concepts of the discipline, procedural knowledge and substantive content knowledge” (Husbands, 2011, p. 93). This differs slightly from Lee and Ashby, in that Husbands allocates “concepts of the discipline” its own category.

Experienced history educator Robert Bain’s research into “Using Research and Theory to Shape History Instruction” provides fascinating insights into the value of using knowledge and processes that professional or academic historians would use in the Field of Production, as a way to teach history effectively in schools. He writes in a chapter for “Knowing, Teaching and Learning History”:

This chapter supports a cognitive approach toward learning history, demanding that teachers understand the nature of historical knowledge, student thinking about history, and the context within which learning history occurs. It urges teachers to consider their classes within disciplinary frames, to design activities consistent with the generalizations, concepts, methods, and cognitive processes of the discipline of history itself. (Bain, 2000, p. 332)

He begins his research with his school students by ascertaining what their preliminary ideas are about the subject of history and using journals and other kinds of writing he traces developments in their thinking processes and understanding of the discipline of history. In this research project I too am interested in finding out more about the development of understanding that history as a discipline has “substantive and procedural” elements as defined by Lee and Ashby (2000, p. 199).

Lee and Ashby’s definition of these aspects of historical consciousness are integral to understanding what kind of knowledge history teachers need in order to teach the subject effectively. Chris Husbands adapts these definitions when he thinks about what history teachers need to know as illustrated in his diagram (Husbands, 2011). Husbands comments that history teachers’ knowledge about history is “not defined by their knowledge of the historical past alone” (2011, p. 86).

Husbands believes that successful history teachers have also developed more sophisticated understandings of the procedural concepts, such as “change over time” or “evidence”. He also identifies a third feature of history teachers’ subject knowledge which he says “relates to the notion of history as a discipline” (Husbands, 2011, pp. 87-88). He describes this feature

as: “Understandings of the nature of history as a framework and structure for knowledge” (Husbands, 2011, p. 87). Husbands comments that: “For many history teachers this has a particular prescience given the pressure on their subject in the curriculum” (2011, p. 88).

History teachers around the world are often fighting to keep their subject in curricula that want to move away from more traditional subjects towards subjects that are seen to have value in the workplace. This has had a profound effect on how many teachers develop a very real sense of making their subject relevant or justifying its place in terms of the unique kind of knowledge that history can provide, above and beyond the substantive or content knowledge.

Essential to any research on teaching has been the work done by Lee Shulman on the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge as explained in chapter 2.

Banks et al. have extended Shulman’s Pedagogic Content Knowledge as they feel that this concept implies that subject content is static and that teachers are seen as merely “representing and formulating the subject in order to make it comprehensible to others” (Banks, Leach & Moon, 2005, p. 333). They use Shulman as a starting point but believe that a teacher’s subject knowledge is more complex than suggested by Shulman and is based on a “teacher-centred pedagogy which focuses primarily on the skills and knowledge that the teacher possesses, rather than on the process of learning” (Banks et al., 2005, p. 333).

Banks et al., use Gardiner’s (1983) theory of multiple intelligences as well as research done by Verret (1975) and Chevillard (1991) who write about a concept called “didactic transposition, a process by which subject knowledge is transformed into school knowledge” (Banks et al., 2005, p. 334).

This research has led Banks et al. to develop a more complicated understanding of what they call teachers’ professional knowledge. They illustrate that this knowledge should be seen as beginning with the teacher’s *Personal Subject Construct* which they describe as:

... a complex amalgam of past knowledge, experiences of learning, a personal view of what constitutes ‘good’ teaching and belief in the purposes of the subject ... A student teacher needs to question his or her personal beliefs about his or her subject as he or she works out a rationale for classroom practice. (Banks et al., 2005, p. 336)



This is an important aspect of my own investigation as many of the student teachers in the Social Science history modules have very limited understanding of what they think the subject is about as they have not had much exposure themselves, with some stating that they did not have history at all at high school.

Banks et al. describe how this Personal Subject Construct is at the centre of three other kinds of knowledge, i.e. School Knowledge; Subject Knowledge and Pedagogic Knowledge. They comment that they have taken Shuman's concept of "subject content knowledge" and just call it subject knowledge using Gardiner as a focus:

In doing so we wish to emphasize the dynamic, process-driven nature of subject knowledge which encompasses essential questions, issues and phenomenon drawn from the natural and human world, methods of enquiry, networks of concepts, theoretical frameworks, techniques for acquiring and verifying findings...symbol systems, vocabularies and mental models (Gardiner, 1991, as cited in Banks et al., 2005, p. 335).

Banks et al. explain how they decided to emphasize that "school knowledge" was "an analytical category in its own right," as they describe it as "the transposition of the subject knowledge referred to above" (Banks et al., 2005, p. 335). In a diagrammatic representation of these types of teachers' knowledge they further define school knowledge as: "Related to the way subject knowledge is transformed for schools and including an understanding of the historical and ideological construction of that school knowledge" (Banks et al., 2005, Figure 1, p. 336).

The third type of knowledge, *Pedagogic Knowledge* is not just about, "a generic set of beliefs and practices that inform teaching and learning ... they are insufficient ... unless integrated into an understanding of the crucial relationship between subject knowledge and school knowledge" (Banks et al., 2005, p. 336). Ultimately for Banks et al., it is the way all these types of knowledge interact always in relation to the teacher's "personal subject construct" that defines and builds a teacher's professional knowledge (2005, p. 336).

This links with the diagram representation of "What History Teachers Need to Know" that Chris Husbands produced as a framework for understanding history teachers' knowledge. He too describes the complexities involved in history teachers' knowledge. For Husbands it is divided into the three types of knowledge:

- Knowledge about the subject - substantive content knowledge; Procedural Concepts and Conceptualizations of the discipline.
- Knowledge about the pupils - practical working theories of learning and knowledge about how pupils make progress in history.
- Knowledge about classroom practices - Knowledge about activities and pedagogic practices and knowledge about resources. (Husbands, 2011, p. 93)

Banks et al. share a diagram that was developed by a group of English teachers using their model of: “School knowledge, subject knowledge and pedagogic knowledge” all being influenced by the individual teacher’s “personal subject construct” (2005, p. 338). I have combined the ideas of Husbands and Banks to develop a similar diagram for History teachers. (See Figure 3.1)

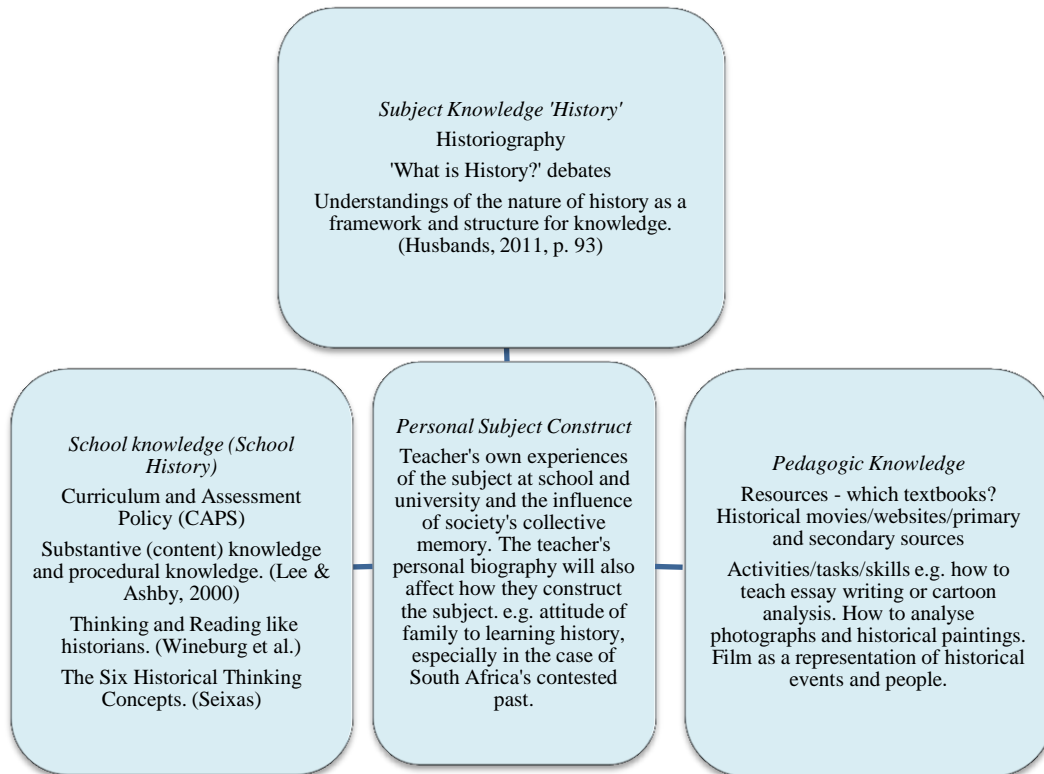
Banks et al. comment that:

The boundary between knowledge and school knowledge, however, is more than the framing of a national curriculum. It is part of the web and weave of a teacher’s daily work – whether the recollection of a metaphor or the building of a whole scheme of work, the transposition of knowledge is a continuous process. (2005, p. 338)

This reinforces the complexity of preparing pre-service educators to face the realities of the classroom. It is very important to acknowledge that there is much more to teaching a subject like history than just following a national curriculum.

In Figure 3.1. below, I have adapted the diagram that Banks et al. developed to include the ideas of Husbands and Lee and Ashby. In the case of pre-service history educators, I agree with Banks et al. that the “personal subject construct” should be considered when designing courses and tasks. Just as we would expect our pre-service educators to take into account their learners’ individual backgrounds, it is equally important that history lecturers have some insights into who their students are and what knowledge of history they have already.

**Figure 3.1 The kinds of knowledge pre-service history educators should be developing. Adaptation of diagram designed by Banks et al. (2005). I have incorporated the ideas of Husbands (2011) and Lee and Ashby (2000) in order to make the concepts applicable to pre-service history educators.**



For the purposes of this research project, I am particularly interested in the pre-service educators' "personal subject constructs" and how they affect their acquisition of the subject knowledge of history. What I am hoping to trace in this investigation is how effectively the History modules in the Social Science 1 and 2 courses are providing opportunities for these pre-service history teachers to develop their own historical gazes which will ultimately affect their school knowledge and pedagogic knowledge.

Having established the core ideas in history education literature, I am now going to outline the specific history courses that these Social Science pre-service educators have experienced as part of their training as future teachers in the discipline.

### **3.2 What were the expectations and assumptions of the history module of Social Science 1?**

In the Course outline handed out to all Social Science 1 history students in July 2012 we set out the following learning outcomes: (See Appendix A for full details)

By the end of the course students should demonstrate:

1. Knowledge
  - of key events, people and ideas in the period studied;
  - of the nature of history as a mode of enquiry.
2. Understanding of key historical concepts associated with the study of humans in society;
3. The ability
  - to read and analyse a variety of sources and academic texts;
  - to explain, describe and apply historical concepts;
  - to structure and write an analytical or interpretative history essay;
  - to engage with complex moral and ethical issues raised by their study of history and to reflect on the implications of this for a democratic society. (Wits School of Education. History Course Outline, Social Science 1, 2012, p. 1).

The understanding of knowledge in this document links to Ashby and Lee's description of substantive and procedural knowledge, in that history is about content - events, people and ideas but it is also about a mode of enquiry. It is evident that the focus is on acquiring knowledge of historical details but also about the nature of history as a discipline. For the purposes of this research I will focus on the topic of Ancient Egypt in Social Science 1, as this was when they were expected to write their first history essay and this has important implications for what the data in chapters 5 and 6 revealed about challenges experienced by Social Science pre-service teachers without a background in school history.

### **3.3 How was the historical knowledge (both substantive and procedural) presented to Social Science 1 history students?**

Social Science 1 history students were introduced to the topic of Ancient Egypt with a series of key questions that would be investigated as a way of helping the students to understand that history is a process of enquiry. The key questions focussed on important historical concepts that were specific to building up a substantive knowledge of Ancient Egypt as well

as the second order concepts that related to the procedural knowledge of history as a discipline such as the use of sources or evidence to construct the past.

**Figure 3.2 Key Questions used to guide Social Science 1 history students through the study of Ancient Egypt**

**KEY QUESTIONS:**

1. What is your understanding of ‘civilization’?
2. How have historians traditionally described the concept of ‘civilization’?
3. What favourable conditions led to the creation of a civilization?
4. What factors have caused the decline of civilizations?
5. Is the concept of ‘civilization’ still relevant today?
6. What sources/evidence help us to investigate the Egyptian civilization?
7. What do these sources tell us about the power relations and the social and economic situation in Ancient Egypt? (What were the experiences of women?)
8. How have modern technologies helped Egyptologists to solve mysteries? (i.e. The death of Tutankhamen and the identity of Queen Nefertiti?)
9. What are the current heritage debates around the heritage of Egypt? Political uses of the past?

The Social Science 1 history students were introduced to writing their first analytical or interpretative history essay based on selected readings where they were expected to develop a reasoned and coherent response to a particular historical question. In 2012 the essay question was:

“The building of the Great Pyramid was an undeniable triumph of organisation with first class planning and co-ordination on a scale that would be impressive even today.” (Tyldesley, J. 2000. *The Private Lives of Pharaohs*. p. 78)

Write an essay of approximately 1200 words in which you answer the following questions:

- a) What does the historian Joyce Tyldesley suggest about the building of the Great Pyramid and what it reveals about the nature of ancient Egyptian society?
- b) What archaeological and historical evidence supports her opinion?

(50 marks as per essay marking rubric. See Appendix B.)

Students were given a pack of readings with three compulsory chapters written by historians and archaeologists (approximately 30 pages of reading of varied levels of difficulty). They were also given additional suggestions that were placed on reserve in the library. The essay topic was unpacked and discussed in tutorials where students were asked to develop mind maps to help them understand exactly what the question was asking them to do. Specific help was given relating to referencing and structuring the essay. The lectures were centred on exploring the key issues in the question, such as the nature of ancient Egyptian society and how archaeological and historical evidence has been used to reconstruct Ancient Egypt. The purpose of the research essay was to introduce the students to the notion that history is a process of enquiry that begins with an investigative question and engages in reading a variety of texts to find evidence to build a logical and reasoned argument.

Students were expected to develop understanding of key historical concepts or procedural knowledge. In terms of Ashby and Lee's definition these would be the second order historical concepts like historical evidence, explanation, change and continuity. They do also correlate with The American Historical Association's benchmarks of professional development and with the Historical Thinking Project's recently refined six Historical Thinking concepts:

1. Historical Significance
2. Evidence
3. Continuity and change
4. Cause and Consequence
5. Historical Perspective-Taking
6. The ethical Dimension of History.

(Seixas & Colyer, 2012, Historical Thinking Project, AGM Report, Appendix v. p. 28)

These are the 'second order' historical concepts which Lee and Ashby would describe as "procedural knowledge" (2000, p. 199). Within each topic there are more specific or 'substantive' historical concepts and it is expected that these would be made explicit in the individual themes. For example in Ancient Egypt's more specific outline some of the key substantive historical concepts are: civilization; hierarchy in society and *maat* (ancient Egyptian word for the correct order of things as ordained by the gods). In the French Revolution: absolute monarchy, liberty, equality, fraternity and bourgeois vs. radical revolution and in the Industrial Revolution agrarian vs. industrial; rural vs. urban and handcrafted vs. mass production in the factory system.

Historical concepts are integral to developing historical literacy as some terms are used as everyday knowledge but within a particular historical context they have a specific meaning that will only be understood by studying that time period:

Historical knowledge includes an understanding of certain ideas and concepts. These are more than glossaries of historical terms; they are aids to categorising, organising, analysing and applying historical information. They can only be understood when they are used in a variety of different historical circumstances. ‘Revolution’ for example is a historical idea. But a simple definition does not help pupils to understand why the word is applied equally to events in France after 1789, in Russia in 1917, or to the history of industry in later eighteenth century England ... (HMI, 1985, p. 14 quoted in Haydn et al., 2008, p. 52)

Historical concepts could also have emotions attached to their meanings; for example the word ‘civilized’. This has a denotation or dictionary definition that is usually presented as a society that has ‘developed’ or ‘progressed’ to meet certain criteria. This was very popular during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the more scientific or positivist approach to history. The word also has very strong connotations that express value judgements about who is superior or inferior and is most associated with colonial prejudices. What we try to do in Social Science 1 is to use this concept as a way of showing that history is open to debate and that the very words we use can be politically motivated.

### **3.4 What were Social Science 1 history students expected to achieve in order to meet the demands of the examination in November 2012?**

The students were required to write two essay answers and one source-based answer in three hours. The essay questions were set on Ancient Egypt and the Industrial Revolution and the source-based question was set on the French Revolution. The students were given four possible options and had to select two essay questions to answer. The options for Ancient Egypt were about evidence and how historians and archaeologists use it to construct historical accounts about the people and their lives. The first Industrial Revolution option required the students to analyse visual evidence and relate the picture to the knowledge that they had about the particular context. The second possible question on the Industrial Revolution required a fairly sophisticated analysis of one of Karl Marx’s quotes and to relate his prediction to actual events. The source-based question on the French Revolution was compulsory and also tested the students’ abilities to ‘read’ pictures historically and relate

them to their own knowledge of events. The essays would be assessed globally with an equal emphasis on substantive knowledge (content) and procedural knowledge (skills). More details will be provided in Chapter 6 where I analyse the two examination papers.

### **3.5 How does the history module of Social Science 2 build on the previous learning of Social Science 1?**

The Social Science 2 students began the year in February 2013 with the second half of their history module. The learning outcomes presented in the Course Outline build on those set out in Social Science 1 and relate more specifically to the issues raised by the content of Social Science 2. (See Appendix C for full outline.)

By the end of this module students should begin to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of the nature of pre-colonial societies in southern Africa and pre-Columbian America and of the issues concerning ‘discovery’ and state formation.
2. An understanding
  - a) Of key historical terms and concepts;
  - b) Of history as a form of enquiry rather than as a set of fixed facts;
3. The ability
  - to research, analyse and interpret various types of evidence: primary and secondary forms of written and visual evidence;
  - to summarize and synthesize the various pieces of evidence and differing viewpoints and use them to answer questions posed;
  - to structure and express ideas, interpretations, and arguments in the form of a written essay;
  - to begin to engage with issues and problems related to studying and teaching South African history and controversial topics such as ‘discovery’;
  - to present their own point of view on issues. (Wits School of Education, 2013, Course Outline for History Social Science 2)

The Social Science 2 history module reinforces that history is both substantive and procedural knowledge. The substantive knowledge focuses on “America before and after Columbus” and “South Africa before and after Van Riebeeck”. The intention is to establish that both continents were inhabited before Europeans “discovered” them, as both continents have been dominated by a Eurocentric view of the past that basically implied that history only began in 1492 in the case of the Americas and in 1652 in the case of South Africa.

The key substantive concepts are:



- “Pre-colonial”
- “State formation”
- “Empire”
- “Discovery”
- “Conquest”
- “Colonisation”

All of these concepts are contested and open to diverse understandings depending on which perspective you are reading. It is hoped that these topics will encourage the students to engage and debate and to develop their own perspectives on these key historical issues. Social Science 2 history students are expected to build on the skills or procedural knowledge they were introduced to in Social Science 1. They are reminded that history is not a body of facts but is a process of inquiry. The focus is on developing an ability to work with historical evidence in much the same way as professional historians would. They would be using Wineburg’s heuristics of sourcing; contextualization; corroboration and close-reading and then constructing their own piece of historical writing in the form of an argumentative or interpretive research essay.

The essay question on “America before and after Columbus” 2013 was:

“The Spaniards brought more than conquest to the isolated civilizations of the ancient Americans; they also brought contact with the outside world, and this proved disastrous.” (J.N. Leonard. *Timelife*. 1975, p. 152)

Discuss whether or not this is an accurate statement about the impact of *discovery* and *conquest* on the way of life of the Inca as examples of ancient Americans. You must refer to the compulsory readings in the pack. Essay should be approximately 1500 words with a reference list attached at the end. Essays will be marked using the history department’s rubric. (See appendix B)

There were three compulsory readings beginning with the J.N. Leonard chapter from the *Time-life* book entitled: *Great Ages of Man: Ancient Americans* (1975) which was presented as a narrative of events written in language that was not too complicated. The second reading brought the students into the latest historical writing as written by the historians Tindall and Shi and also presented as a narrative history of events: Tindall and Shi. (2010). *America: A Narrative History*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. What was important to note was the fact that this was the 8<sup>th</sup> edition illustrating that history is constantly being rewritten.

The third compulsory reading challenged the students to read the work of Jared Diamond who is not an historian but has powerful theories about how the environment actually determines the nature of societies and it was access to resources that gave certain societies power over others not some biological superiority of the races. Students were introduced to Diamond's theory of "Guns, germs and steel" and his explanation of how they affected the Inca (Diamond, 1998, pp. 67-81). Once again tutorials were linked to the issues in the essay question with one tutorial solely devoted to unpacking Jared Diamond's theory.

Some Social Science 2 students experienced difficulty in relating to this topic as so many of them had no idea who these Native American people, Christopher Columbus and the Spanish Conquistadors were. Most students had not seen 'Cowboy and Indian' movies and had no prior knowledge of the ancient Americans of Central and South America. These topics are meant to be covered in the Grade 10 History curriculum, so perhaps those whose teachers did these themes would have been in a better position.

This opens up the question of how to teach substantive history about people and places that are very removed from the students' frame of reference living in 21<sup>st</sup> century South Africa. How does the lecturer or teacher provide access to understanding these events when the past is already a different place? My own perspective is that it is important to learn about other people's history as the students can engage in debates about similar issues without the emotions that their own history generates.

### **3.6 Using *Reading like a Historian* materials to foster historical thinking in Social Science 2**

In 2013, as a result of reading for this research project, I experimented with using material from *Reading like a Historian* developed by Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin and Chauncey Monte-Sano (2011). I wanted to illustrate that primary sources are not always completely reliable even when they are written by the person experiencing the historical encounter and I wanted the students to understand that films based on historical events can be misleading. I selected the chapter on the enquiry, "Did Pocahontas Rescue John Smith?" (Wineburg et al., 2011, pp. 7-16).

The chapter introduces students to the historiographical debates and specifically comments on the challenges of working with primary documents. Students are presented with two accounts written by John Smith at different times and for different purposes. What emerges is that these two accounts contradict each other which really emphasizes that primary sources have limitations. Students are encouraged to read the secondary sources constructed by various historians to analyse why Smith would write such contradictory descriptions of a life threatening event.

Often students privilege primary sources as reflections of historical truths and don't recognize the need to interrogate them ... Working with the secondary historical interpretations introduces students to more complexity and challenges the simplistic notion that primary sources teach us more than the interpretations of modern day historians. (Wineburg et al., 2011, p. 5)

What these materials also emphasized for the students was the fact that neither Pocahontas nor Powatan wrote their own account of this event and that our historical understanding is based largely on the perspective of John Smith. This bias towards John Smith's version of events is depicted in the Walt Disney version of the story called *Pocahontas* (1995). The *Reading like a Historian* materials encourage the students to challenge the way that Disney has represented the historical event:

In the 1995 movie, we learned that Pocahontas a svelte, free-spirited 19 year old, and John Smith, a dashing hunk of a colonist, fell in love flouting orders that there should be no contact between the Indians and the colonists. In the movie's dramatic climax, Pocahontas prevented Powatan, her father and chief of the tribe, from cudgelling Smith to death... It is a tidy story, complete with drama, romance and a moral lesson. But people, societies and their histories are rarely this tidy (let alone so attractive and musical). Did this rescue really happen? (Wineburg et al., 2011, p. 1)

The Social Science 2 students were given the chapter to read and were then tested in an open-book assignment, where they could bring in the readings to refer to as they answered the questions. The students' answers seemed to suggest that this approach was a powerful way to access what it means to read texts like historians would and that this could have had an impact on their acquisition of an historical gaze. I will need to investigate this further as an example of an opportunity for further research into understanding how students develop historical thinking and knowledge necessary to acquire an historical gaze.

### **3.7 What historical knowledge were Social Science 2 students expected to demonstrate when answering their history examination questions in June 2013?**

For many of the students this examination would be their final history examination at university level as they would not choose to major or sub-major in the discipline. The students were expected to answer two essay questions and one set of source-based short questions in three hours. Two of the possible essay questions would be focused on the “Discovery of the Americas” and the concept of the frontier and stereotypes of Native Americans as illustrated in films. The other two essay question options would be about using evidence to build an understanding of Khoisan and Bantu-speaking societies before the settlement of Europeans. A special emphasis would be on how historians have constructed historical accounts about the society of Mapungubwe based on physical evidence. The source-based question was based on changing interpretations of the role played by Shaka and the Zulus in the Mfecane.

The essay answers would be globally assessed on content and skills, with both seen as equally important. Once again this confirms that the history modules tried to present historical knowledge as both substantive and procedural. The way that the various topics would be assessed suggests that there are expectations that students should meet the requirements of the Six Historical Concepts as outlined by Seixas et al. (2012): *historical significance; evidence; continuity and change; cause and consequence; historical perspective-taking and an understanding of the ethical dimension of history.*

This chapter has provided a context with which to analyse the data that was collected for this research project. Chapter 4 will describe the methodology that was used to collect and analyse the various kinds of data.

## **Chapter Four: Methodology**

In this chapter I will outline what methods were used to collect relevant data and how this research was informed by work done by local and international research into understanding how historians think and what it means to develop an historical gaze. (Bernstein 1996; Bertram 2009, 2012; Wineburg 1991, 2001, 2007; Seixas 2006; Seixas & Colyer, 2012).

This research is qualitative as it is interested in meanings and interpretations of how people make sense of a particular experience. It aims to construct a narrative of how pre-service social science educators conceptualize their experiences of the subject of history as it was presented in the history modules of Social Science 1 and 2 using interviews and small focus groups, and to substantiate their conceptualizations with evidence from their examinations. It is mixed method research as it works with a number of data resources.

### **4.1 Background to selection of sample**

The Social Science courses present challenges to both geography and history lecturers at the Wits School of Education as it is very likely that we will have students who have no or limited backgrounds in either discipline. This situation came about when it was decided by the Wits School of Education that it would be compulsory to take both subjects for two years before majoring in either geography or history. As outlined in chapter 3, the history module of Social Science 1 began in the second semester of 2012 (July 2012), after the students had begun the year with an introductory course on geography map work.

I started the course with an informal questionnaire in order to ascertain who had matric history and who did not, to allow me to have some insights into which these students were, what these students might find difficult and to establish where I should pitch my lectures. The questionnaire asked the following simple questions as illustrated in figure 4.1. below:

**Figure 4.1 The informal questionnaire used at the beginning of Social Science 1 July 2012.**

NAME:
YEAR OF STUDY:
MATRIC HISTORY: YES/NO
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO STUDY HISTORY?

As mentioned earlier, this research project was initiated after reading the responses of the Social Science 1 students to this informal questionnaire at the beginning of the history module in July 2012. Prior to reading their responses, I did have some idea that not all of the students had chosen history as a matric subject and that they were only doing history because of a decision the Wits School of Education had made to insist on students doing both history and geography in Social Science. However, this questionnaire revealed that out of 75 students present in the first lecture in July 2012 only 38 students had chosen history as a matric subject. My initial concerns had been about differences between school history and what the university expected, but now I realised that it was possible that some students could not even remember ever doing a subject called history as they had done Social Science in Grade 9, and in many cases the teacher had not been a history specialist.

The questionnaire also revealed that the students generally offered simplistic and naïve responses to the question of “What does it mean to study history?” The answers were clichéd and seldom reflected any idea that history should be seen as a process of enquiry. This of course may be reflective of the fact that it was a brief questionnaire at the onset of a course. However there were subtle differences in some of the answers given by students who had a background in school history. This data provided a baseline from which I could subsequently trace any developments in the student teachers’ historical consciousness as a result of how they received the pedagogical recontextualization of knowledge (Bernstein, 2000) as envisaged in the history modules of Social Science 1 and 2. It ultimately set the scene for this investigation into how pre-service social science students build on or develop an historical gaze with such differential backgrounds in school history.

It was then necessary for me to apply for special clearance from the Ethics Committee to use the information on the informal questionnaire as a source of data. Permission was granted and I was now in a position to use the initial responses and biographical details if the student participants signed consent. The questionnaire provided me with student names, which is why I was able to match the data from the interviews and the exam papers with the student. This study relied on the voluntary participation of the nine Social Science students who subsequently gave permission for me to use their questionnaires, interviews and exam papers. This meant that the study was based on purposive samples after the students had self-selected themselves.

## **4.2 Research Sample**

After receiving ethical clearance to carry out this research, I approached the whole Social Science 2 group at the end of a geography lecture in August 2013. I felt that it was important to finish the history course so that I would not be directly interacting with the students whilst carrying out this investigation. I invited students to volunteer to participate and explained what would be expected from them. Information letters were handed out to those students who expressed interest in participating. (See ethical documents in Appendix F.) Nine students committed to participating and fortuitously, they represented a diverse sample of possible experiences. I decided to just work with these nine students as it meant that I could trace each student's developing historical thinking and understanding in depth, rather than working with a larger sample that would be more superficial.

**Figure 4.2 Table summarizing the differential backgrounds in school history of the nine pre-service Social Science educators who participated in this research.**

**NB: Please note that pseudonyms were used to comply with ethics requirements.**

<b>Students with Matric History</b>	<b>Students with Grade 9 History</b>	<b>Students with no memory of a subject called History at school.</b>
Martin attended a rural high school where history was regarded as “not for the intelligent students”. He had one great teacher but not in his matric year.	Lucy attended an urban high school and was so uninspired by the way history was taught at grade 9 level that she chose geography and tourism instead.	Naomi attended primary school and high school up to grade 9 in Swaziland where they did not offer history. Emphasis was placed on the sciences. She only attended an urban high school in Gauteng from grade 10.
Patrick attended school in Zimbabwe until grade 10 when he finished matric at an urban school in Gauteng.	Susan attended a suburban high school and did not choose history for matric. She did however have a wonderful experience of studying history in Ireland when her family lived there for her grade 10 year.	
Nina attended a private school with small classes and with an excellent history department. She wrote the Independent Examination Board (IEB) Matric.	Tracey attended an urban high school where she chose to focus on business subjects. She was the most outspoken in the focus group about why she dislikes history.	
Verity attended an urban high school in the 1980s. The matric exam that she wrote was very different to those written in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.		
Penny attended a suburban high school with an excellent reputation but her school experiences of history were not positive. She struggled to complete her matric.		



The advantages of working with a self-selecting sample were that they were committed to participating and co-operated fully by arriving on time for the interviews or focus groups and seemed to enjoy sharing their experiences with me. The disadvantages were that I did not access the opinions of those students who did not feel that the course supported their needs, as most of the participants had positive experiences to share.

As stated previously, I was fortunate to have access to a group of students with such diverse backgrounds which has enabled me to maximise the differences and describe three groups of student experiences: five with matric history; three with grade 9 history and one student with no memory of ever taking the subject at primary or high school. Within the group of five students who chose history as a matric subject there are diverse school experiences which complicates and enriches this comparative study. However, I do acknowledge that I can only make specific comments that might point to common challenges in terms of these nine students' experiences and that it is not possible to make generalisations about the whole group.

For the purposes of this research, where necessary, I will annotate the students' names with the following abbreviations to remind the reader what kind of school history backgrounds they have:

- Matric History = MH
- Some History (up to grade 9) = SH
- No History = NH.

### **4.3 Data**

In order to trace the students' developing historical consciousness from the initial questionnaires in July 2012 until the end of the history module in July 2013, I worked with the following instruments:

1. Informal Questionnaire
2. Semi-structured individual interviews
3. Small focus groups
4. November Examination at the end of the history module of Social Science 1 (2012)
5. July Examination at the end of the history module of Social Science 2 (2013)

I have already outlined the significance of the informal questionnaires to this research as because I had the informal questionnaires I had a baseline from which to start this research. The initial responses to the question: “What does it mean to study history?” provided me with some understanding of how the students perceived the subject. It is important to note that this questionnaire was completed in a lecture and that it did not really encourage the students to go into great detail about their experiences of school history. It really only has value in that it alerted me to the fact that out of 75 students present in the lecture only 38 had matric history and that it was possible that even those students did not have a sophisticated understanding of the disciplinary principles and processes of historical study. Because I only conducted the informal questionnaire in the first lecture Susan, one of the participants in this research, was not present and did not complete the questionnaire.

In order to explore in more detail what experiences of school history these nine participants had and to hear their perceptions of how they related to the history modules in Social Science 1 and 2, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with four of the students and two small focus groups with the other five students. These took place in my office on campus when the students had free time. This had value in that the interviews and discussions did not take up too much of the students’ time and transport issues were non-existent. The limitations were that sometimes the interviews were a little rushed and that perhaps the idea of being in the lecturer’s office discussing your views about the course might have had an impact on what the students said. In order to alleviate these concerns I deliberately only interviewed the students when they had finished the history module and were doing the geography part of the course so they would have no concerns about offending the lecturer who could be assessing their work.

The semi-structured interviews helped me to gain a deeper understanding of who these students were and what kinds of experiences they had of history as a discipline in their schools. I asked eleven open-ended questions that were designed to elicit the individual student’s opinions about the subject of history at school and their exposure to the history courses offered as a part of Social Science 1 and 2 at the Wits School of Education. (The questions I asked are illustrated in the interview schedule in Appendix G).

For the purposes of this research project, I decided not to focus on race as it appeared to be less salient than whether the student’s school was urban or rural or public or private, and

specifically whether or not the school offered history as a matric subject and if so how was the subject taught by the teachers they had. It has been a trend in some schools to not offer history as it has been seen as irrelevant to the needs of a modern society. This reflects a real lack of understanding that history as a discipline is not just about substantive knowledge, but that the conceptual or procedural knowledge has enormous value for a democratic society. It is unfortunately also related to what is happening in some history classrooms, where the stereotypical “boring, reading of lists of dates and facts from the textbook” is still prevalent.

Due to time constraints, the other five students found it easier to meet together to have small focus group discussions rather than individual interviews. I had intended to conduct larger focus groups but rather decided to concentrate on what these five students had to say and to link their responses to their written examinations in order to trace evidence of a developing historical gaze. As the groups were small they were able to discuss similar questions to those I asked in the individual interviews. (The focus group schedule of questions is attached in appendix H.)

The methodology of focus groups has particular value to this research as according to Kitzinger:

The method is particularly useful for exploring people’s knowledge and experiences and can be used to examine not only what people think but how they think and why they think that way ... The idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less accessible in a one to one interview. (1995, p. 299)

In both cases, the group felt comfortable with each other and because the groups were very small, each person had space and time to share their opinions. It might have been preferable to have had a facilitator who was not known to the students but I do feel that it was important for them to let me know what they had enjoyed and what they had found challenging. I as the researcher and one of the lecturers felt that these students really appreciated having this space to reflect on their experiences.

Kitzinger also suggests that small focus groups have real advantages for those individuals who feel intimidated by one to one interviews and also those who struggle to write meaningful responses to questionnaires and those who feel that “they have nothing to say ... engage in the discussion generated by other group members” (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 300). This

was especially the case in the focus group with Penny, Verity and Tracey (Focus Group 2. 03/10/2013).

It was also interesting to note that Nina and Susan saw the focus group as an opportunity to share real concerns about personal and contentious issues. I am not sure if they would have spoken so frankly if the group had been larger or if they were participating in a one to one interview (Focus Group 1. 03/10/2013).

I then worked with the nine students' Social Science 1 and 2 history examinations in order to ascertain if there was evidence that the students had acquired the historical way of analysing the past. These exam papers had value in that, unlike the interviews, the students were not asked specific questions about their understanding of history but their answers revealed interesting details about both their substantive (content) knowledge and their procedural (second order/skills) knowledge (Lee & Ashby, 2000).

The Social Science 1 history examination was written in November 2012 when the students had only completed twelve weeks of history (half the academic year). The Social Science 2 examination was written in July 2013 when the students had finished the history course (a full academic year). The value of the two examinations was that they provided evidence of developing historical consciousness which could help substantiate this research investigation into how pre-service history teachers gain access to an historical gaze.

The limitations of analysing examinations were that examination conditions do not always allow students to perform at their best. Time constraints played a role in some of the students' answers where it was obvious that they could have written more if they had less time pressure. Some students were not able to express themselves in exam conditions as well as they spoke in the interviews and focus groups whilst others were better at showing their historical understanding in writing. I did not analyse the exam papers until the examinations had been externally moderated and the marks finalised and my interest in the papers was more about finding evidence of acquisition of historical concepts than about the specific issues in the exam questions.

The exam papers were analysed using the Canadian Historical Thinking Project's "Six Historical Thinking Benchmarks" (Seixas, 2006; Seixas et al., 2012). I used the basic framework for assessment outlined by Seixas (2006), he describes what each concept means

and what students of history “at the most sophisticated level” should be able to achieve (pp.1-12). These six concepts helped me to develop a clear understanding of what kinds of historical thinking and literacy were evident in the examinations and the language used by the nine social science students to discuss the discipline of history.

**Figure 4.3 An adaptation of Seixas, P. & Peck, C. (2004). A Framework for Assessing Historical Thinking, pp. 3-12.**

<b>Historical Thinking Concept</b>	<b>At the most sophisticated level, students will be able to:</b>
Establish Historical Significance	Demonstrate how an event, person or development is significant either by showing how it is embedded in a larger, meaningful narrative OR by showing how it sheds light on an enduring or emerging issue. Explain how and why historical significance varies over time and from group to group.
Use Primary Sources as Evidence in Constructing Knowledge about the Past. (At University level students mostly work with secondary sources)	Use several primary sources to construct an original account of a historical event. <i>To meet the requirements of a university course: (Adapted to relate to Social Science 1 and 2 history students.)</i> Construct a coherent and logical argumentative essay using primary and secondary sources. Knowledge of historiographical trends.
Identify Continuity and Change	Explain how some things continue and others change, in any period of history. Identify changes over time in aspects of life that we ordinarily assume to be continuous; and to identify continuities in aspects of life we ordinarily assume to have changed over time. Understand that periodization and judgements of progress and decline can vary depending upon purpose and perspective.
Analyse Cause and Consequence	Identify the interplay of intentional human action, and constraints on human actions causing change. Identify various types of causes for a particular event, using one or more accounts of the event. Be able to construct counterfactuals (e.g., if Britain had not declared war on Germany in 1914, then...)
Take a Historical Perspective	Recognize presentism in historical accounts. Use evidence and understanding of the historical context to answer questions of why people acted the way they did (or thought what they did) even when their actions seem at first irrational or inexplicable or different from what <i>we</i> would have done or thought.
Understand the Moral or Ethical Dimension of Historical Interpretations	Make judgements about actions of people in the past, recognizing the historical context in which they were operating. Use historical narratives to inform judgements about moral and policy questions in the present.

It would have been ideal to use another rater to establish inter rater reliability however given the nature of this project and the time available it was not possible. I did however have the examiners' comments and the external examiner's report.

#### **4.4 Ethical Considerations:**

Permission was obtained from the Wits School of Education's Ethics Committee to conduct this research with the Social Science history students. (Protocol number: 2013ECE104M). The students were invited to participate voluntarily and were provided with an information leaflet where they were given options to give permission for audio recording and transcription of the interviews and focus groups and to allow me to analyse their examination papers and tests. (See Appendix F.)

The nine students who participated gave full permission for all of these tools of analysis to be used on condition that pseudonyms would be used. It is important to remember that my position as a researcher and a lecturer would have ethical implications. A potential ethical pitfall was that I taught this group of students and will teach them if they choose to major in History in 2014. I did however make every effort to ensure that they knew that their participation was voluntary and that this would not affect their assessments in any way.

I only conducted the interviews and focus groups once the Social Science 2 history module was completed and there were no more assignments or tests that I would have to mark. I assured the students that our discussions would in no way jeopardise their results. The two examinations were only used as data for this research once the external examiner had finished establishing their credibility. I do acknowledge that my involvement in the history course may also affect the validity of my observations but that it also has value in that I have insider knowledge about our expectations and assumptions.

This chapter has described the methodology used to collect the data necessary to carry out this qualitative investigation. Chapters 5 and 6 will now present the various data that was collected.

## Chapter 5: Analysis of Data - Part 1

Chapters 5 and 6 present the data that was captured in this research project. As mentioned in chapter 4, different instruments were used: informal questionnaires at the beginning of the history course in July 2012; semi-structured interviews with four of the students; two small focus groups with five of the students; the Social Science 1 Examination in November 2012 and the Social Science 2 Examination at the end of the history course in November 2013. The analysis of the data will be presented in two parts; chapter 5 will focus on the informal questionnaires and the interviews and focus groups and chapter 6 will analyse the examinations.

### 5.1 The informal survey / questionnaire:

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, I had already conducted this informal questionnaire at the beginning of the history module in July 2012. The students were asked to complete the questionnaire in the first lecture at the beginning of the history module in July 2012. They were asked to provide their names, year of study and whether or not they had matric history. Out of the 75 students who were present in the lecture only 38 had chosen history as a matric subject. A couple of the students wrote that they had no recollection of ever doing a subject called history, but most had memories of their grade 9 experiences. This questionnaire was instrumental in drawing my attention to the issue of pre-service history teachers who might not have had any exposure to the discipline of history at school. It also provided me with a baseline to establish some insights into how the Social Science 1 students perceived what it meant to study history in 2012 and to trace any evidence of a developing historical gaze.

Some general trends were noticed in terms of subtle differences between the answers provided by students who had matric history and those who did not. Generally the answers reflected naive and superficial understanding of what it meant to study history. The answers were very clichéd and could have been slogans on posters on history teachers' classroom walls. Very few of the answers showed any understanding of the "six historical thinking concepts" as outlined by Seixas et al. or the heuristics of *sourcing*, *contextualization* and *corroboration* as identified by Wineburg et al. In fact most answers reflected an

understanding of history as a story or body of knowledge about how the events of the past created their present world. There was very little evidence to suggest that the students saw history as a process of enquiry. The table below briefly illustrates some examples of the kinds of answers the students wrote.

**Figure 5.1 Table illustrating subtle differences in initial conceptions of what it meant to study history between students with or without matric History. From the informal questionnaire handed out in July 2012.** (These comments were written by the students who participated in this research, except for Susan who was not at the lecture when the questionnaires were completed).

<b>Matric History</b>	<b>No Matric History</b>
History means taking a mind back into the time - get a better understanding of the past events. To study history means you dig up the past and as history educator to pass it to the next generation. To study history means to be open minded and think in an abstract manner about things around. (Martin. MH. Interview)	For me history is studying about the past. I know history as events of the past full of dates! History is filled with theory and theory and I possibly could not imagine any practical activities with history. I did history up to grade 9 and I honestly felt so bored because we sat there so passively and just received information. I didn't like it and I'm still curious whether or not I will like it here at Wits. (Lucy. SH. Interview )
It means knowing the world I live in, knowing the people I live with, knowing what forms a society and finding my true identity. For me, studying history is more of finding where I come from and by doing that I think it helps me go forward. You cannot go anywhere if you don't know where you come from. (Patrick. MH. Interview)	It means to know more about the past and also be aware of what really happened in the past. Although I never did history in my life but I've realise that it is also make us aware of what is happening it means also I have to write essays which is new to me. (Naomi. NH. Interview )
To study history means to analyse and debate and look critically at the different views of the past. (Nina. MH. Focus Group 1)	To know the past events or incidents in order to understand the present. (Tracey. SH. Focus Group 2)
To study history means to look at the past and see how we have changed from then to now. (Penny. MH. Focus Group 2)	
It means to learn about the past in order to understand the present or to improve the present. (Verity. Focus Group 2)	



These questionnaires provide some insights into the students' initial perceptions of the study of history based on their school experiences of the discipline of history. There is some evidence of historical thinking but only on a superficial level. It is important to recognise that even if they could not remember ever doing a subject called history at school, as in the case of Naomi, they all have some understanding of what the subject is about. This relates to what Tosh calls social memories or as Seixas suggests "collective memory" (Tosh, 2009; Seixas, 2000). Seixas and Peck described three scenarios of "possible encounters with history outside of school" (Seixas & Peck, 2004, p. 109). These encounters include films that represent an historical event or character, historical novels and museums or other reconstructions of the past. It is therefore not appropriate to suggest that students have no historical understanding but this is not to say that they have a real sense of what makes the discipline of history so unique.

Drake and Nelson explain that historical thinking is more sophisticated than "personal memory". They relate historical thinking to historical consciousness:

Historical thinking involves historical consciousness, which requires thinking back and forth in time. It involves rational thinking about time and change and recognizing the interdependence, as well as the uniqueness, of the past, present, and future. Historical consciousness is more than 'personal memory'. It entails a willingness to look at the world through the 'memories of others'... Historical thinking is an antidote to self-centredness. (Drake & Nelson, 2009, p. 55)

The Canadian Historical Thinking Project led by Peter Seixas and originally known as the Benchmarks Project has provided a framework of six key historical thinking concepts which I used to identify possible evidence of historical thinking throughout this research project. The Six Historical Thinking Concepts are:

1. *Historical Significance*
2. *Evidence*
3. *Continuity and Change*
4. *Cause and Consequence*
5. *Historical Perspective-taking*
6. *Ethical Dimension of history* (Seixas & Colyer, 2012, Canadian Historical Thinking Project. 2012 AGM. Appendix v. p. 28).

The table in Figure 4.3 in the methodology chapter illustrates what Seixas has defined as having a sophisticated understanding of the particular historical thinking concept. These

descriptions will be the benchmarks which I will use to determine if there is evidence of these Social Science 2 students using the Six Historical Concepts.

(Note that I will use MH (Matric History), SH (Some History, usually up to Grade 9) and NH (No History) to denote what kind of school history background these students had.

### **5.1.1 Analysis of comments made by those students who chose history as a matric subject using the parameters established by the Canadian Historical Thinking Project and insights provided by Wineburg et al.'s research into historical thinking:**

Martin (MH) appeared to have some sense of the “temporal dimension” of history which could relate to *continuity and change*. He mentions “taking a mind back into the time to get a better understanding of the past events”, which would also intimate that he is aware that it is essential to see the past as different to the present - *historical perspective-taking*. Martin (MH) has a naive perception that the history educator passes historical knowledge to the next generation. This does not imply any sense of understanding the fact that history is constructed. He is however aware that to study history does encourage an open mind and thinking in an abstract manner.

Patrick's (MH) answer is particularly interesting when one understands that he comes from Zimbabwe and that he only arrived in South Africa towards the end of his school years. He sees history as a way to find connections between himself and his adopted country. History is about identity for Patrick (MH). He does have a sense of *continuity and change* but on a superficial level, as he suggests that understanding the past will help him go forward. His last comment is very clichéd and is typical of many of the comments made by students who had no background in school history. He once again shows that history is about understanding yourself as “You cannot go anywhere if you don't know where you come from”. This resonates with the lyrics of Bob Marley's song, “Buffalo Soldier”, “If you know your history then you will know where you're coming from” (Marley, recorded in 1980 but released posthumously in 1983). It is the kind of comment that belongs more to the “best story” approach rather than a disciplinary understanding.

Nina (MH) is one of the few students to write about the contested nature of the past and to acknowledge that history is about “looking critically at the different views”. Although her answer is brief it does contain evidence of *historical perspective-taking* and *cause and consequence*, in that she is aware that there are multiple causes and consequences in the different views. She specifically mentions that, “to study history means to analyse and debate” which is different from just knowing the past in order to understand the present. Nina’s (MH) answer provides evidence of a fairly sophisticated historical gaze and that her experience at school was not just about learning a body of knowledge but actually engaging in the process of *doing history*.

Penny’s (MH) answer once again provides very little evidence of having been exposed to a disciplinary approach to studying history. She does have a sense of *continuity and change* but this is expressed in a very naive manner where you “look at the past and see how we have changed...” There is no sense that you need to look critically at the past. There could be some sense of understanding that the past was different in that she writes that looking at the past can provide understanding of “how we have changed from then to now”. Penny’s (MH) answer does not really suggest that her experience at school has prepared her for the disciplinary approach to studying history. This answer is very similar to those students without a background in school history.

Verity’s (MH) response is very similar to Penny’s in that she only suggests a superficial understanding of the past as impacting on the present. She implies that all we need to do is to “learn about the past” and then we will “understand the present”. She also writes about using the past “to improve the present”. This is a very simplistic comment that relates to a time when history was always described as progress. This historical narrative was dominant in the schools where it was taught that humanity was progressing from a state of barbarism towards civilization thanks to technology and western domination of the globe. Verity’s (MH) experience of school history was in the 1980s, when South African history was very much taught in this way and no one was encouraged to question or debate. Verity’s (MH) answer only suggests some understanding of *continuity and change*.

### **5.1.2 Analysis of comments written by those students with a limited or no background in school history (SH or NH).**

(Note that Susan was not present in the lecture when the questionnaire was handed out.)

Lucy's (SH) comments really touched me when I first read them in July 2012, here was a challenge. This student had obviously had a negative experience of school history and was not happy about being forced to take the subject at university. Her answer reflects an understanding of history as being substantive and just "filled with theory and theory". She has had no exposure to the disciplinary approach as she "cannot imagine any practical activities with history". She reveals that her school experience in grade 9 was boring as "we sat there so passively and just received knowledge". Lucy's (SH) experience of studying history is just about a body of knowledge, "History as events of the past full of dates!" There is no real evidence of any historical gaze apart from the fact that she knows that events happened in the past within specific time frames. There is no sense of how history should be actively engaged with and contested.

Naomi's (NH) answer resonated with me for a different reason, as here was a student who was telling me that "I never did history in my life..." Although she had had no history at school, this student had a sense that history "makes us aware of what is happening", a common response amongst the students with no background in school history. This understanding of history must have come from other sources such as the family and community or film, novels or museums, as Seixas and Peck (2004) describe. Naomi (NH) expresses concern about the idea of writing history essays which she has never done before. The fact that she knows that history essays are "new" does imply that she is aware that there is something specific about studying history.

Tracey's (SH) response also reflects the same understanding that all you need is to "know the past" and then you will "understand the present". Here again, there is little evidence of a sense of history being constructed from sources from the past. There is a slight glimpse that history is about *continuity and change*.

In general these responses to the questionnaire do not suggest that these students are aware of how important evidence is to historians. Apart from Nina (MH), they do not really acknowledge that history is open to analysis and debate. Across the board they do have a

limited understanding that history reflects continuity and change. At this point, there is very little difference between those who chose history as a matric subject and those who did not, this was the general trend in all 75 Social Science 1 answers that I read. History is seen as a body of knowledge that is necessary to know in order to understand the present.

## **5.2 Analysing data from the semi-structured interviews with individual students:**

The purpose of these interviews was to establish:

- a) An understanding of where these students have come from in terms of their school backgrounds. (i.e. who had matric history, who only had grade 9 and then who had no memory of ever doing the subject at school).
- b) Why they chose Social Science and what their experiences were of doing both history and geography as compulsory components of the Social Science course.

I am especially interested whether having differential backgrounds in school history has made a significant difference in acquiring or developing an historical gaze.

I have used the Six Historical Concepts as defined by the Canadian Historical Thinking Project led by Peter Seixas as a useful indication of developing historical understanding. The Six Historical Concepts provided a broader perspective than Wineburg's heuristics of Sourcing, Contextualization and Corroboration as they particularly relate to how historians read documents. The Six Historical Concepts originated in the American Historical Association's Benchmarks for developing historical consciousness and have been refined to meet the needs of students of history from school to university (Seixas & Colyer, 2012, The Historical Thinking Project, AGM Report).

What is important to note is that the aim of developing historical thinking is not to say that content or substantive knowledge is irrelevant:

Competent historical thinkers understand both the vast differences that separate us from our ancestors and the ties that bind us to them; they can analyse historical artefacts and documents, which can give them some of the best understandings of times gone by; they can assess the validity and relevance of historical accounts, when they are used to support entry into a war, voting for a candidate, or any of the myriad decisions knowledgeable citizens in a democracy must make. All this requires 'knowing the facts' but 'knowing the facts' is not enough. Historical thinking does not replace historical knowledge: the two are related and interdependent. (Seixas & Colyer, 2012, The Historical Thinking Project, AGM Report, Introduction p. 3)

**5.2.1 Interviews with students who have a background in school history: Martin and Patrick. Note that I will use MH in brackets to show that they have Matric History.**

**Interview with Martin. (MH) (Social Science 2) 25/09/2013:**

This young man is 20 years old and matriculated in 2011 at a high School in Mpumalanga. He is now in his second year at Wits School of Education. Martin's matric subjects were: English; IsiZulu; Life Orientation; Maths Literacy; Tourism and History.

Martin's initial response to the informal questionnaire reflected some understanding of the value of the subject in terms of getting "a better understanding of the past events" and that "to study history means to be open-minded and think in an abstract manner." (Informal questionnaire. July 2012)

Although his school did offer history they were constantly trying to convince him to rather do science as history was not seen as a subject for the bright students. I asked him how many students were in his matric history class. He replied that:

There were 22 students. Where I come from they used to believe that if you are doing history you are not very intelligent ... They took me to Science in Grade 10 but I came back to History ... In South Africa we see Maths and Science as important. There was a proposal in my school if we don't get a high percentage they will close down history ... we managed to score like 80% so history is still there and being valued. (Interview with Martin. 25/09/2013)

Martin (MH) has developed a strong passion for the subject of history in spite of his school and in spite of a society that does not understand that history is more than a body of facts and dates. He explained how they had a great history teacher in Grades 10 and 11 but unfortunately he passed away when they were in Matric.

He was replaced by someone not interested in history who came to class and sat on top of the desk and just used to read the notes ... I think even now they never got another teacher ... they say history teachers are scarce... Now I try to go there and help, they ask me not to go back but I am still a student...the damage has already been done. You find learners with misconceptions they mix Steve Biko with this other guy...you can link but don't confuse... You have to sequence them. (Interview with Martin. 25/09/2013)

Martin's (MH) experiences of this uninterested teacher appears to have motivated him to teach history well. He plans to go back home and share his passion with students at his old school. He is most concerned about how the current teacher is mixing up historical events and

leaving the learners with misconceptions. This concern does reflect *historical perspective-taking* and *continuity and change* as, “You can link but don’t confuse... You have to sequence them” (Interview with Martin. 25/09/2013).

This young man has a strong sense of what it means to teach history and of the *historical significance* of what is taught. He is aware that you can link people and events but must keep in mind the correct context. He also appears to understand chronology and that a way to not confuse learners is to keep events and people in sequence. His main motivation for choosing history is to give back to his community in the memory of his one great teacher.

Martin (MH) feels positive about the combination of geography and history in Social Science 1 and 2 as is illustrated in his answer:

It is important. You have the history of maps ... It is good to be able to make a combination ... I don’t understand why they call them general subjects? Perhaps in South Africa there is this issue of terminology ... the way people see them ... They just call them general subjects. (Interview with Martin. 25/09/2013)

This answer suggests that Martin (MH) is very conscious that they are two separate disciplines that have their own specializations and are not ‘general subjects’. He again expresses genuine concern for the status of history in the schools and recounts his own experiences on teaching experience where his teacher said “I am more of a geographer than an historian so take any topic you want and teach it, because I don’t care about history.” (Interview with Martin. 25/09/2013).

This is a common experience in schools where one teacher is expected to teach both history and geography, very rarely will you get someone who is passionate about both. We are hoping that by combining the two subjects in Social Science at the Wits School of Education, more teachers will feel confident to teach both well.

When asked about ways that he could help students without a history background to cope with the history modules, he replied:

The tutorials were not enough ... maybe two a week, where learners sit and discuss. Don’t allow all historians to sit together, make them sit with others. The lectures we understood everything... Well, I could understand ... For someone who did not do history I think the content is too much ... You just bombard them with words ... maybe take some sections off ... more time? (Interview with Martin. 25/09/2013)

Once again this student has a clear understanding that history is a specific discipline that has particular challenges for those who have no background in the subject. He comments on the amount of content and particularly the words that they are bombarded with, that would usually be historical concepts that some students might be hearing and seeing for the first time.

**Interview with Patrick (MH) (Social Science 2) 25/09/2013:**

Patrick (MH) is a 21 year old second year student who matriculated in 2011 at a school in Dobsonville Soweto, Gauteng. His subjects were English, IsiZulu, Maths Literacy, Life Orientation, Geography and History. His story is particularly interesting in that he came to South Africa in 2008 from Zimbabwe and has vivid memories of his experiences of school history in Zimbabwe and has insightful comments about how they compare to his experiences in a South African history classroom. The fact that he has not always lived in South Africa may explain why he was so emphatic in his initial description of history as being essential to understanding your “true identity” and that “studying history is more of finding where I come from...” (Informal questionnaire. July 2012).

The experience of leaving his home country has left its mark on this young man as he does not quite feel that he belongs and sees history as a way to see connections between himself and his new country. Patrick’s (MH) description of how he was taught history in Zimbabwe highlights issues in literacy that are deeply embedded in the South African education system and suggests that there is a strong emphasis on teaching the discipline of history in Zimbabwe:

R: What was different about the history that you learnt in Zimbabwe?

Patrick: First we started at the bottom by making us understand what is history. What we actually do when we are talking about history. When I came to South Africa there was no introduction in Grade 10 and you’d think they are just continuing with the subject when actually they are just beginning so it was a big difference ... The other thing is the writing, in Zimbabwe we write a lot, writing essays is not too much of a challenge, they introduce you to skills when you start doing history ... In South Africa lots of students were struggling because they couldn’t write even a page of an essay. In Zimbabwe we didn’t have much resources so the only way you have to study history is by writing your own notes from the teacher and the chalkboard. (Interview with Patrick. 25/09/2013.)



From this description it is clear that the approach to teaching history is one that emphasizes the discipline. Seixas describes this as an “Exercise in disciplined knowledge: History as a way of knowing” as opposed to “The Best Story about the Past: History in the Schools to Shape Collective Memory” (Seixas, 2000, pp. 21-24). It is not surprising that this would be the dominant approach in Zimbabwe as their schooling is based on the English system and teaching history as a discipline has long been entrenched in British Schools (Schools Council History 13-16 Project, 1972).

Patrick (MH) was so affected by the idea of starting with “What is History” when he was at school that he comments that:

I remember going home in Zimbabwe, singing I learned today about what is history ... I have never heard a learner in South Africa say they learned what is history ... You cannot start something if you don't know what it is that you are studying. (Interview with Patrick. 25/09/2013)

This relates to Wineburg's research into the heuristics of history and why it is an “unnatural act” to think like a historian (Wineburg, 1991, 2001).

Patrick (MH) reiterated that he felt that the best thing we could do to help the Social Science 1 students would be to explain exactly what history is:

R: Is there anything you think we could do to help Social Science students?

Patrick: Ja, what is it that we are studying? What we discuss in history, our main aim and what we are looking forward to achieving ... When you start with Egypt, they don't understand why. I think give them the background of what is history.

Patrick's (MH) reference to “what is history” directly links to the British Schools Project that began by explicitly engaging the learners in a series of tasks designed to explore the nature of the discipline. Historians were likened to detectives working on solving difficult cases. Patrick's earlier experiences of school history in Zimbabwe would have introduced him to this disciplinary approach. Patrick's (MH) interview does suggest that he has acquired some elements of an historical gaze as he is very conscious of how important it is to be explicit about the unique qualities of history. This would imply that he has a sense of *historical significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence and historical perspective-taking*.

Patrick's (MH) observations about the lack of writing in South African schools is significant as there appears to be a widespread tendency in far too many South African schools to work from textbooks and workbooks, where the most that a student would have to write in grades 8 and 9 would be to fill in missing words or to perhaps write a paragraph. His point about students struggling because they could not even write a page of an essay is very relevant. It is no wonder then that students struggle in their first year to write essays that are expected to be about five pages long.

Patrick (MH) acknowledges that it was difficult for the teacher in his school in Zimbabwe to let the learners actually see examples of different sources. He also comments that in his rural school in Zimbabwe he was not encouraged to challenge the teacher about the possibility of having different views.

R: And if the teacher was writing everything on the chalkboard they must have struggled to teach you about different points of view or perspectives ... or did they manage somehow?

Patrick: I think the other challenge I faced about history in Zimbabwe was when you come to explain the different types of information. In Zimbabwe you just talk about them - classifying whether Primary or Secondary Sources, you can actually see them in South Africa, in Zimbabwe you just hear. In Zimbabwe you have to conform, you have to listen to the teacher ... learners don't have that much freedom to express their views. I grew up learning that whatever an older person tells you is true, you can't challenge you just have to accept ... In South Africa you must challenge the books, you find the books that are contradicting. We must allow the learners to see different perspectives. (Interview with Patrick. 25/09/2013)

This comment about not challenging older people is perhaps something that does not only apply to Zimbabwe, as many students come from homes still dominated by traditional authority.

Patrick is conscious of the need to challenge dominant narratives in the texts and feels that schools in South Africa appear to have the resources to do this. However, other students report different experiences whereby the teacher is so reliant on the textbook that the learners have not been exposed to other sources and alternate points of view. Many of the textbooks do try to include working with sources as learner activities but these do need teachers to guide the learners through the tasks. For example, the Oxford Grade 12 Textbook published in 2007, featured a cartoon showing the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) Buthelezi supposedly dipping his pen in an ink bottle that represented the blood of innocents caught up in the violence before the 1994 Elections in South Africa. The writers of the textbook had set

the task up as an exercise in identifying bias but there was a huge outcry from the IFP as they felt that there was no guarantee that the learners would see the task in that way or that teachers could not be relied on to draw the learners' attention to the bias. Consequently the cartoon was removed and the textbook republished without the offensive image (Bottaro et al., 2007, p. 200).

One of the challenges that students face when they write their first history essays is to work with more than one reading and to accommodate contradictory arguments. It is also very difficult to work with the readings and acknowledge the authors whilst developing your own voice. In setting up these essay questions we insist that the students use at least three of the compulsory readings in building up their response to the particular question. A common scenario in essay writing is to rely on one reading that is the most accessible and to ignore the other more challenging texts. It appears that most students favour texts that adopt the narrative approach and struggle with those that are less inclined to tell a story and rather engage in debates about historiography or historical concepts. (Field notes made in History Department Meeting July 2013 after marking the first Social Science 1 essays.)

This research reinforces that many students find the expectations of writing history essays very difficult as in most cases they have only written essays for English.

Patrick (MH) confirms this perception:

R: Do you like the combination of Geography and History?

Patrick: I think fine but for those who didn't do history I think it is a challenge - never exposed to writing history essays. In English you don't have to study ... history you have to study and understand the background. (Interview with Patrick. 25/09/2013).

Patrick (MH) sympathizes with students who "didn't do history," once again confirming his understanding that history is a specific discipline that requires different skills. He explains that history essay writing is not the same as writing English essays as you are expected to have a body of knowledge and to be able to contextualize this knowledge.

### **5.2.2 Interviews with students who did not choose history as a matric subject. Lucy and Naomi. (SH - Some History and NH - No History).**

#### **Interview with Lucy. (SH) 05/09/2013**

This second year student matriculated in 2010 and her subjects were Geography, Maths, Tourism, Economics, Information Technology, English, Afrikaans and Life Orientation. Lucy (SH) is an exceptional student who is determined to succeed and this is largely because of her own experiences as a learner at school. When I asked her why she had decided to teach she explained:

Okay I took teaching because of an experience that I had, I think it was during a teacher's strike the one year and we went to go and help out at a school, because they chose certain students to go and I was one of them ... I always wanted to teach but I thought of it more, sort of like a joke but after that experience and seeing that you can actually make a difference in a child's life ... that's when I decided that I would actually do teaching. (Interview with Lucy. 05/09/2013)

The school did not offer history as a matric option as according to this student the school asked if anyone was interested when they were in Grade 10 and only two learners out of a hundred said yes. For this student, the subject "was definitely boring ... so much about dates. In geography we did practical work and it was the practical work that pushed me to enjoy geography. In history we just sat and read ... okay you read the next paragraph ..."

(Interview with Lucy, 05/09/2013).

This comment relates to Lucy's (SH) original response to the questionnaire, where she commented that history was "events of the past full of dates!" (Informal questionnaire. July 2012). The approach of just reading paragraph after paragraph does not suggest any critical engagement with the texts which would not relate in any way to how Wineburg described the process of historical thinking or reading.

Lucy (SH) was so affected by her school experience of history that when she found out that she would have to take it as part of Social Science 1 and 2, she changed her major to English and even considered studying through UNISA, "where I could do geography on its own". For Lucy (SH), geography was a much more interesting option as it was practical in contrast to history which was about "theory and theory". (Informal questionnaire. 2012.) Lucy's (SH)

interview responses reinforced that her school experiences of history had been all about acquiring a body of knowledge with no exposure to the disciplinary approach or the procedural or conceptual knowledge of history.

I was interested to find out whether or not the subject of Tourism had provided any historical thinking about the sites that Lucy was expected to know about. I asked whether or not she could see any links with Tourism that she studied at school and history at Wits School of Education:

R: Were there aspects of History in Tourism?

Lucy: Heritage sites, Mapungubwe - we went there ... the other one, the Cradle ... I think that was historical as it related to stuff we did last year.

R: How did they test you? Did you write essays?

Lucy: No it was short questions ... we also had questions where you work out daylight saving or if you phone someone in America, you work out what time it was... (Interview with Lucy. 05/09/2013).

From the extracts above it is clear that Tourism, as Lucy experienced it at school was not really about engaging with the issues around commemorating the past and debates about who is remembered and why? It appears to focus on the more practical aspects of taking tours around South Africa and the logistics involved. In history, even at school level, the emphasis is on engaging in heritage debates and in looking at how our heroes and celebratory occasions have been constructed and are part of our collective memory.

For example, the Social Science 2 students analyse the way that Shaka has been constructed through time as a tyrannical leader and how his image is still very important to the Zulu Kingdom as witnessed in the outrage over the statue of Shaka the herd boy at the UShaka airport in Kwa Zulu Natal.<sup>4</sup> Lucy loved this section as she commented that it was partly responsible for her seeing history as a subject of value.

When I first came here I always thought that history was about the past ... But now I see that it's got to do with the present ... and especially the section on the Zulus ... I got to understand why the stereotypes are actually out there and before I didn't understand what was really going on ... (Interview with Lucy. 05/09/2013)

---

<sup>4</sup>On June 2, the statue of King Shaka... was removed because the Zulu royal family felt it portrayed the king less as a warrior than as a "herd boy" as he was accompanied by Nguni cattle and did not hold a spear or shield. ("The Shadow of Shaka," *The Natal Witness*. 26 August 2010.)

So for Lucy (SH), the fact that she can see the significance of the past today is starting to change her initial dislike of the subject. Here Lucy (SH) has started to illustrate an historical gaze as she is expressing how she is aware that the past affects the present and those historical representations of the Zulu need to be challenged as they have created stereotypes that affect perceptions of the Zulu in the present. (*Historical significance, continuity and change, historical perspective-taking and awareness of the ethical dimension of history.*)

When I asked her which subject she found more challenging in Social Science 1 and 2, this was her response:

R: If you think back which subject was most challenging, in Social Science 1 and 2?

Lucy: I would say that both has its challenges... With Geography you still have to know facts, things are still the way they are... With history I found it easier as your whole method of studying could change I didn't have to swot it off by heart, I just had to understand it. So what I used to do was summarize it, if I knew I could write it on my own then I knew I understood (Interview with Lucy. 05/09/2013).

For Lucy (SH), this was very different to her experiences at school in Grade 9, where they were told to learn dates and “basically just swotted the things that were in the books” (Interview with Lucy. 05/09/ 2013). This comment reveals an understanding that history is not just a body of information but that you need to “understand” what it is that you are studying, which could mean that she is employing many of the historical thinking concepts. (*Historical significance, historical perspective-taking, evidence, continuity and change, cause and consequence*). The examination papers might provide evidence that this is what has happened when Lucy has studied for content and for understanding.

Her comments about writing history essays are significant for this research as they reveal that History essays require a specialized knowledge that is different to that used when writing English or Economics essays.

R: What about the writing of essays in History, how did you find that?

Lucy: At first really difficult, really difficult...

R: Had you ever written essays for anything other than English?

Lucy: Um...for Economics...

R: How were those essays? Were they similar?

Lucy: I think it was different, I know with history there are certain criteria you follow that is different to English, also with economics, because it was more on the financial side of things... (Interview with Lucy. 05/09/2013)

(I acknowledge that I should have probed for further information about what exactly Lucy found difficult about writing history essays. When I further inquired about the criteria Lucy was speaking about in a follow up conversation, she said it was the marking rubric that we use in the history department that alerted her to the fact that history had special criteria for writing essays. See Appendix B).

Lucy first alerted me to the fact that the students have developed their own support mechanisms and have set up study groups to help each other with difficult readings.

R: Did the readings we provided enable you to write your essays?

Lucy: The readings were fine for me but not for lots of people because we usually have study groups and meet to discuss, because if we find that we don't know much about what's really going on we don't meet up ... what's the point?

R: How would you work through a difficult reading?

Lucy: What I usually do... I read it about three times - first time with a highlighter and see what I understand. I read again and usually have my i-pad to get meanings of words ... everyone ... (Here I established that this student speaks 3 languages at home: English, Afrikaans and a Malawian language as her dad is from Malawi.) ... The third time, even second time I write notes, I never come with a reading pack to the exams just my notes and I know that I understand ... I work with colours. If I understand, it's always pink because I love pink ... Green is a weird colour so that's if I don't understand ... I draw smiley faces or sad faces ... even at the end of a lecture or at the end of a section. (Interview with Lucy. 05/09/2013)

What this extract reveals is that Lucy has found a way to help her to access the complicated language used in the history readings. She has a method of using different colours to help her see where she is struggling. The challenges she describes are firstly about understanding the sophisticated vocabulary of the history readings and accessing a particular historical understanding of the way concepts are used. It is also about being able to think historically and to contextualize the words used in the texts. Wineburg et al.'s *Reading like a Historian* confirms that there is a specific way that historians read texts in order to develop an historical understanding. "Historians have developed powerful ways of reading that allow them to see patterns, make sense of contradictions, and formulate reasoned interpretations when others get lost in a forest of detail and throw up their hands in frustration (Wineburg et al., 2011, p. v).

Lucy (SH) is beginning to understand that there is more to reading an historical text than just understanding the difficult words. She is making notes in her own words, which suggests that

she is starting to engage with the text in an historical way. In order to establish whether or not she is using the heuristics of *sourcing, contextualization and corroboration*, as identified by Wineburg (2001), I would need to look at what Lucy has written in her notes. At this stage I can only surmise that she could be establishing patterns and picking up contradictions and corroborating what one author is saying with others.

Lucy's (SH) description of her challenges with reading historical texts reinforces that students need guidance and practice in developing historical literacy as an essential aspect of acquiring an historical gaze.

### **Interview with Naomi (NH) 10/10/2013**

Naomi (NH) is a 23 year old second year student who matriculated in 2010 at a school in the East Rand in Gauteng. She went to primary school in Swaziland where she loved the sciences and does not remember ever doing history as a subject at school. Her response to the informal questionnaire in 2012 really captured my attention as until then I had assumed that even if the students had not chosen history as a matric subject they would have at least done it until grade 9 as part of social science. Her response claimed that she had never done history before:

*It means to know more about the past and also be aware what really happened in the past. Although I never did history in my life but I've realise that it is also make us aware of what is happening it means also I have to write essays which is new to me.*

(Naomi's response to informal questionnaire - "What does it mean to study history?"- July 2012)

When I asked Naomi (NH) how it was possible that she had not done history before, she commented that in Swaziland she only did the sciences, even in primary school and in grades 8 and 9 history was not offered at the school she attended. Naomi's matric subjects were: Geography; Maths Literacy; Consumer Studies; Biology, IsiZulu, English and Life Orientation. The school she attended on the East Rand from grade 10, did offer history as an option but she "did not see the usefulness of all those numbers" (numbers apparently meaning dates) and therefore did not choose the subject for matric.



She remembered vividly how her class mates reacted when they knew they had history lessons:

For most of my friends they would say, “I am going to history now, it’s boring, gonna sleep...” (Interview with Naomi. 10/10/2013)

Naomi (NH) was not very happy when she discovered that she would have to do history if she wanted to major in geography:

I didn’t know that geography was linked with history, I was shocked, I didn’t want anything to do with history... I was like, what can I do now and they were saying you have to continue, you can choose geography as a major in your third year... (Interview with Naomi. 10/10/2013)

What is interesting to note is that in this interview, it appears that Naomi (NH) has changed her mind completely and had some intriguing comments to make about links between geography and history:

R: So, how do you feel about this combination now? Does it make sense for us to put the subjects together?

Naomi: Ja, I think it does make sense because each and every subject have its own history, because there is a huge link between geography and history. For example, when we are studying urban settlement or the transport system - so before they introduce the lesson the lecturer would start with the history of Joburg and how it was and how it changed... I have seen the link; I think you can’t separate the two. History is very important. I have learnt about history. Because I didn’t know about the evidence ... for me it was for court stuff or the police. I was ignoring the primary sources, I didn’t know but now I know ... It can help me in the future ... Now I am a critical thinker, I just don’t take everything people say, I question everything now ... Why you want me to do that? Before I was okay you want me to do that ... Now I am having a strong backbone ... Now I question everything ... opened our minds. (Interview with Naomi. 10/10/2013)

As is evident in Naomi’s (NH) answer, she is excited about what she has learned in social science and has fully embraced the relevance of history in her life. She has realised that the two subjects can enrich each other and that history is about evidence and questioning everything. Her comment about ignoring the primary sources is charming as she really had not ever had exposure to the concept of working with sources as evidence - as she stated, her perception of evidence was that “it was for court stuff or the police”. Naomi’s (NH) description of the value of the subject suggests that she has a rudimentary grasp of most of the six historical thinking concepts. She is one of the few students who explicitly mention the historical use of *evidence*. Her description of the geography lecture beginning with the history

of Johannesburg implies a sophisticated understanding of *historical significance*. It is fascinating to hear how quickly Naomi has appropriated the language of the historian; she is definitely starting to look at the world with an “historical gaze” (Bernstein, 1996; Bertram, 2009, 2012).

When I asked Naomi (NH) which subject she had found more challenging her answer again surprised me with the sophistication of her reflection about her own experiences of both subjects:

To be honest history is not that challenging for me but the most difficult or problematic thing is writing those argumentative essays ... because like I don't have that background of writing essays ... but with history if you read the information is there. If you want to do well in history you have to read a lot. Geography is more like factual, in the exams or tests they only want specific answers, with history you can be able to justify or express yourself and you will get some marks. With Geography if you don't know what is a map, you will get it wrong. With history I like the fact that you are analysing sources or pictures so like it develops my mind. If I see anything in a picture, I know there's a meaning behind. If they draw Mandela like this, I know there's a meaning behind ... (Interview with Naomi. 10/10/2013)

Naomi (NH) reiterates and emphasizes the difficulties that most social science students face with writing history essays and especially argumentative ones that require students to engage with at least three different readings and then develop a logical and coherent argument in response to a particular question. She does understand that reading is significant to doing well in history and that you can get marks for justifying or expressing your answer well. Her observation that geography expects specific answers and is more factual is something that every student has noted in my interviews and focus groups. Naomi (NH) is especially interested in the idea that history encourages analysis of visual representations and that there is always “a meaning behind”. When I asked her which topics she enjoyed she specifically mentions the visuals:

With history, I love the story of Pocahontas, especially I love the cartoons, and I love the fact that you are analysing pictures, because it helps you to become a critical thinker as it provokes your thinking... You become a type of person who does not take things for granted ... when walking down the street you see other peoples' statues and you think there's a reason why they made this statue ... you learn this thing of bias... (Interview with Naomi. 10/10/2013)

It is almost as if studying history for the first time as part of Social Science 1 and 2 has really transformed Naomi's way of seeing the world. The fact that she specifically mentions the story of Pocahontas is interesting, as here is a student who had no prior exposure to the story

and yet she loves it. I think that the activity based on the *Reading like a Historian* approach has opened Naomi's mind to the historical use of evidence and especially primary sources. (See brief explanation of the rescue of John Smith by Pocahontas in Chapter 3. Wineburg et al., 2011). She spoke about becoming "a type of person who does not take things for granted" (Naomi. 10/10/2013). She has embraced the identity of the historian and the relevant disposition that reflects some understanding of all six historical thinking concepts. (*Historical significance, evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, historical perspective-taking and ethical dimension of history.*)

The National Curriculum Statement states that history should help to achieve the goals of the Constitution of South Africa by producing informed and critical citizens. Naomi's comments suggest that this is possible if the subject is taught as a process of enquiry and learners are constantly encouraged to challenge the official texts.

### **5.3 Analysis of data from the two Focus Groups:**

These two focus groups were not formally planned but came about because these students had limited time and felt more comfortable to be interviewed together. The data that emerged from these small group discussions has enriched this research as it was fascinating to see how the students listened to each other and felt enabled and empowered to challenge and to build on each other's opinions. Research done by Gilflores and Alonso on the value of using focus groups in educational research resonates with my experiences with these two groups:

The dialogue activates participants' memories and experiences, confronts points of view, allows participants to be conscious of latent opinions, obliges them to question themes ignored until that moment, and involves looking for arguments to support an unreasoned perception or feeling ... The obtained information is not limited by the researcher's previous conceptions as can happen in the use of questionnaires or structured interviews. (Gilflores & Alonso, 1995, p. 99)

#### **5.3.1 Focus Group 1 Social Science 2**

Focus Group 1 only consisted of two second year students who are great friends and share a real passion for the subject. Nina is 20 years old and matriculated at an independent school in 2010. She excelled at school history and took it as a matric subject. Susan is also 20 years old and matriculated at a highly respected government school in 2010. She did not take history as

a matric subject for reasons she elaborates on in our discussion. Nina (MH) had a very positive experience of the subject at school and her initial response to the informal questionnaire suggests that she already had an understanding of history as a process of enquiry.

*To study history means to analyse and debate and look critically at the different views of the past.* (Informal questionnaire. Social Science 1. Nina. July 2012)

When I asked the two students in Focus Group 1 to briefly explain “off the top of their heads” what they thought history was and to further think about what we should learn in the subject of history, Nina (MH) confirmed my initial interpretation that she had a real sense of doing history as opposed to learning a body of facts:

So, I think that it is a study of what has happened in past and current events - One of the things that I found most useful how to argue and write essays and to debate and think critically and I also think it teaches you life skills like humanity... (Nina. Focus Group 1. 03/10/2013)

The use of verbs like “argue, write essays, debate and think critically” confirm that this student’s experience of school history was not passively received knowledge but that she was encouraged to develop disciplinary thinking and this has left her with a genuine appreciation for the value of the subject. It is also interesting that she believes that history is the place to learn life skills “like humanity”. This suggests that her lessons were not just about cognitive skills and historical knowledge but also about using the past as a lens to look at human behaviour.

Susan (SH), was unfortunately not present in the lecture when I conducted the 2012 informal questionnaire but her story is interesting in that she spent some time attending school in Ireland before coming back to complete her matric in 2010. Her understanding of the subject is quite sophisticated but tends to focus on the substantive knowledge rather than the procedural knowledge.

For me, obviously looking into the past, not just one thing - archaeology, physical factors, social factors, economic... basically how world has evolved... Opportunity to see the mistakes we’ve made - what we have and haven’t learnt from those mistakes. (Susan. Focus Group 1. 03/10/2013)

Susan (SH) has some idea of the complexity of the subject and the interdisciplinary approach that historians need to develop a big picture of the past. She appears to see history as progress

but concedes that we do not always learn the lessons of the past. Susan's (SH) experiences of history teaching in Ireland provide fascinating insights and emphasize the power of the subject to enforce stereotypes and to keep bitter memories alive:

I think it is important it gives us an opportunity to learn from the past ... The Incas, it was interesting to look at a culture that thought that it was right to take over South America and now we look at it in hindsight and say what about human rights. Interesting to compare. I agree it does teach compassion. I lived in Ireland for three years by the end I was ready to take up arms for Dublin and the South ... I realize that it was taught in a very biased way ... I wasn't very compassionate towards the English and in the meantime they also have their views. I even said to my teacher that I shouldn't be thinking in this biased way and she just smiled...

R: When you say it was taught in a biased way... Was that through the textbooks? Teachers? People you were in the classroom with?

Susan: My class was oh no not again ... I was, Oh my word I can't believe that you were so wronged ... but I was ready to take up arms for the IRA... (Susan. Focus Group 1. 03/10/2013)

Susan (SH) makes a very interesting point about judging the Incas using hindsight and modern understandings of human rights. This touches on postmodern thinking about history and whether or not we can ever truly understand the people of another time as we are products of our own time. This student is unusual in that she appears to be able to recognise that we cannot judge the past without accepting that we have the benefits of hindsight. She is very mature in that she reflects on her experience of history in Ireland and can recognize the bias in the accounts that she was exposed to. This sophisticated historical understanding relates to one of the "powerful understanding" of the sixth historical thinking concept identified by the Canadian Historical Thinking Project as *The Ethical Dimension of History*: "Makes reasoned ethical judgements about actions of people of the past, recognizing the historical context in which they were operating (Seixas & Colyer, 2012 AGM Report, Appendix v. p. 28).

I find it intriguing that the Irish children feel similar emotions to those in South Africa and to the many children whose families were affected by the Holocaust. It is sometimes referred to as 'Holocaust Fatigue' or 'Apartheid Fatigue' - whereby present generations feel burdened by the past as it either makes them feel guilty or bitter and they do not want to feel that way. The issue of teaching and learning about apartheid comes through strongly in this focus group. Perhaps because it is only the two of them they feel safe to speak about their concerns about teaching this emotive topic in the light of their own experiences at school and at university?

R: Your Irish experience relates to research I did for my Honours in History where I interviewed history teachers about whether or not they thought history had the potential to help heal the divisions of the past...

It is the way it is taught ... us white students from middle income, you sit there and you feel that everybody is judging you, we are made to feel guilty and I think if it was me I don't think I would have been like that ... (But I do have to say I loved the way we approached it in Education) ... When I was at school I even said to our teacher can we fast forward the apartheid stuff ... because we know it, so over it ... but I really enjoyed this... (Nina. 03/10/2013)

Susan (SH) commented at this stage:

When I first heard we had to do apartheid I was like man this blows ... I don't have the view that we should fluff up apartheid, oh my word people were really wronged ... My dad was in the army, he wanted nothing more than to not be in the army ... It is taught in a one-sided way ... instead of being still victims in the new decade ... rather to see that we are free ... sounds so cheezy but it is the truth... (Susan. 03/10/2013)

This intimate discussion reminded me that while there are cognitive issues related to developing historical knowledge and skills there are also very definite emotions involved in teaching a difficult and violent past. These fears of being judged and made to feel guilty are common amongst white South Africans and have to do with the fact that these young people come from homes where they are very often exposed to contradictory views. They come into the history classrooms with “indirect knowledge” as “second generation memories” which basically means that they were not there but they hear about the past through their families and communities and often take on the emotions of the past (Jansen, 2009). Both Nina (MH) and Susan (SH) are exhibiting a mature understanding of historical perspective-taking and the moral or ethical dimension of historical interpretation.

Nina's (MH) positive attitude towards history is largely due to her school experiences, in contrast to other students who did not choose the subject at school because they saw it as boring and passive and just about dates and notes that you had to learn by rote.

R: When you learnt history at school, what did you enjoy? What did you dislike? Was the experience worthwhile?

Nina: I enjoyed my actual classroom, only 12 of us took history, all became good friends, my friendship group was my history class. I enjoyed the topics, our history teacher set aside time at the end of the year to do topics we were interested in - like Greek Mythology. It was the first subject that I did very well in and that gave me confidence in my other subjects as well ... essay writing skills helped me, critical thinking, I enjoyed learning about politics ... I didn't enjoy the apartheid sections, I wish we had done more European history...

R: Why didn't you choose history Susan?

Susan: So when we moved back to South Africa not sure of what I was going to be studying when I matriculated - age old thing, everyone telling me to take Science. To be honest I also had a negative mind set - just going to be African history - didn't seem appealing. I wish I had taken it. I had done three years in Ireland, it was really enjoyable and taught well there, but from my Primary school experience in South Africa, it was horrible...

R: So what was it about that that was so negative?

Susan: To be frank my teacher was very discouraging negative, racist teacher, she was white by the way ... Oh no I don't want to go down that road again... (Focus Group Discussion. Susan and Nina. 03/10/2013)

This discussion elicits some interesting comments about the importance of the social interactions in the process of learning history, it also emphasises how the history classroom can be a 'safe place' for teenagers or it could be an uncomfortable environment, with so much depending on the teacher. Both girls express a lack of desire to learn more about Africa or apartheid and yet find European or Irish history fascinating. What does this suggest about the role history plays in developing a sense of belonging to a nation? Why do these white girls feel so isolated from their own past?

Unfortunately Nina (MH) has been forced to major in geography next year as she desperately needs the Funza Lushaka bursary established to encourage young people to become teachers of subjects where there are perceived shortages and it does not recognize history as being a subject that is experiencing a shortage of teachers. This relates to the general lack of respect for the subject of history in post-apartheid South African schools and society as a whole. She is devastated and has organised to take history as an extra subject. This is of real concern as Nina (MH) is the top history student in Social Science 2 and it is tragic to think that her passion for the subject may go to waste as she could be forced to teach geography. This is very evident in her response to how she feels about teaching history one day:

R: What do you think it means to teach history? What worries you? What are you excited about?

Looking forward to the content, excited to be teaching the subject that was revolutionary for me ... the first subject I did really well in and when I started to get As it made me believe I could do it in other subjects ... I think it is a valuable subject for everyday life ... really excited to share this... (Focus group. Nina. 03/10/2013)

When I asked these students whether they found geography or history more challenging at university their answers again reflected that geography is more focused on the scientific approach and there is a body of knowledge that needs to be learnt off by heart.

R: If I were to ask you honestly, which subject have you found more challenging?

Nina: Geography, especially astronomy, map work, the contour lines, rocks...

Susan: Also Geography, map work ... Honestly, I think that I have a mental block towards Geography since moving back to South Africa, when I lived in Ireland I loved it ... But map work really is a mental challenge...

R: Did you have any experiences in Social Science 1 and 2 that fascinated or interested you?

Susan: The French Revolution ... That's my favourite subject ... it was a place to engage and to think that that happened then, we maybe don't have the bourgeoisie but who do we have? Also South America as I thought it was a very emotional topic, we had so many discussions about how those people were wronged, just living their lives and then came the Spanish. We also spoke about the Portuguese and the Spanish and discussed whether or not they really intended to destroy those civilizations... They were convinced they were doing God's work...

Nina: The fact that it could be genocide was shocking... (Gasps). The tut groups gave me a space to voice my opinions and I especially enjoyed my first year tutor as we did a lot of activities like the revolver activity...<sup>5</sup> (Focus Group Discussion. Nina and Susan. 03/10/2013)

It does seem as if these two students loved to be engaged in the human experiences that history offered them and that they did not only see the topics as readings or notes but actively discussed the events and people of the past trying to formulate their own opinions. Susan (SH) is particularly perceptive about seeing the links between the past and the present and yet is very conscious that they are not the same. She thinks beyond the narrative and makes every effort to explore the different views. (Evidence of *historical perspective-taking* and *understanding the ethical dimension of historical interpretation*.) This is interesting as Susan (SH) did not choose the subject for matric, but yet the way that she understands history suggests that she has a well-developed historical gaze. Nina (MH) reinforces the importance of tutorials in providing a smaller group or a more intimate space in which to explore and debate historical topics.

Whilst these positive comments about the history modules in Social Science 1 and 2 are very pleasant to hear, I am also conscious of the fact that these two students volunteered to participate in this research because they care about the subject and that their previous experiences have given them an advantage over those students who did not have positive school experiences at all.

---

<sup>5</sup>The revolver activity was developed by Philosophy for Kids as a way to stimulate reasoned arguments. The group is encouraged to begin arguing a certain way and then to move to the other side. At the end of the discussion they choose the most valid argument depending on who provided the best reasons. (Murriss, 2009, *Thinking Moves*.p.16).



### 5.3.2 Focus Group 2: Social Science 2

This small group consisted of three friends, two who are passionate about the subject of history and one who remains unconvinced. For the purposes of this research they have been given the following pseudonyms, Penny (MH), Tracey (SH) and Verity (MH) and they are all second year students. Penny is 23 years old and matriculated in 2008 at a school in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Tracey is 23 years old and matriculated in 2008 at a township school in Gauteng and Verity is forty six years old and matriculated in 1985 at a township school in Gauteng.

These students all matriculated with diverse subjects, Penny and Verity both have matric history. Tracey's matric subjects were very business orientated, in that she studied Accounting, Business Studies and Hospitality and explains why she gets frustrated with the amount of reading she needs to do for history at the Wits School of Education. She chose not to continue with history after grade 9.

We began the discussion by exploring what the students understood the subject of history was and what they thought we should learn about in history.

R: I know that this is not a simple question but what is history? What does it mean to study it? What do you think we should learn about in History?

Penny: I would say that history is all about the past ... all about it and it is important for us to know about history so that we learn about people of the past and issues that affected them ... because everything that happened in the past does affect us in the future... What we do now will affect the future so I think it is very important that we study it so that we understand the relationships...

R: Tracey what do you think?

Tracey: Is not for me, it is boring...

R: Don't worry you don't have to say what you think I want to hear, it is important that I hear your side too...

Tracey: Though I think it is important to learn about the past in one way or the other there are connections and the past does shape the present, that's why I see the relevance...

R: Can I ask you why it is boring?

Tracey: The notes and the books are not exciting, not visually exciting ... so black and white, so dull, no colour... I did not do history at school, I was working with numbers, now that I have to read dull black and white, and it makes it very boring. Even the language at times it makes it very difficult, you need to read the notes with a dictionary...

R: Thank you for your honesty ... this is important, you are the voice I need to hear. So glad you came. Verity?

Verity: Okay, I understand history to be keeping records of what happened in the past ... Looking at the past to compare the past and the present. We today are forming history ... I find history exciting ... I don't understand Tracey ... Like at the museum we saw how the Khoisan made skirts out of ostrich shells ... can't find anybody doing this today. What I like most, I love language... (Laughter from Tracey). I am quite the opposite of Tracey ... I like travelling, since I can't afford, I think history just quenches the thirst a little bit... I am interested in different cultures... I am very passionate about history. (Focus Group 2 Discussion. 03/10/2013)

This discussion is fascinating as what is clearly evident is that all three students see the significance of understanding the past and its relevance to the present. (*Historical significance*.) Even Tracey (SH), who does not share Penny (MH) and Verity's (MH) passion for history, comments that "actually I do think that it's relevant ... I think it is interesting though to know how things were done in the past and how does the past affect the way we live today" (Tracey. Focus Group discussion. 03/10/2013).

Tracey (SH) appears to be stuck and unable to move beyond the notes, she feels out of her comfort zone, which is working with numbers and seems to be overwhelmed by the readings in that she focuses on how black and white they are and that she needs to use a dictionary to read the notes.

Verity (MH) appears to have a traditional understanding of history as "keeping records of the past." E.H. Carr called this approach chronicling the past as opposed to the disciplinary process of historical enquiry (Carr, 1961). The historian Evans describes how E.H. Carr compared the two ideas about history: "History was an attempt to understand and interpret the past, to explain the causes and origins of things in intelligible terms. Chronicle on the other hand, was the mere cataloguing of events without any attempt to make connections" (Evans, 2002, p. 1).

Although Verity (MH) sees history as "keeping records of the past", she does also see connections when she states: "Looking at the past to compare the past and the present". She was fascinated by the physical evidence or primary source of the Khoisan skirt in the Origins Centre and believes that this skill is not to be found today (Focus Group. Verity. 03/10/2013). Verity (MH) has a particular passion for language and loves the challenge of engaging with the readings to find out more about other cultures and places she would love to visit. She

commented that she found “history exciting” and did not understand why Tracey (SH) did not. Penny (MH) and Verity (MH) both appreciate the fact that history involves learning about people and their issues whilst Tracey (SH) finds comfort in numbers.

The next question I asked this small group was to think about the relevance of history to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What was interesting to see was how Tracey revealed why she had such a negative perception of history but that she did see how the subject could have personal value.

R: The next question ties into the previous one. Why should we study history? Is it a relevant and useful subject in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Penny: To be honest I am not sure, but I feel that we should use technology like you guys do with the power points as it makes it interesting. We should use technology to bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I did history at school and didn't pass, I never liked history it was only when I got here that I became interested in history and in knowing what I did wrong at school, learning how to write essays and I've been doing great here at Wits. My history teacher just used to read from her notes or hand out and we just used to take notes and if we were lucky we had an overhead projector and we'd take notes from there. I didn't even have an image of Adolf Hitler until I taught the rise of Nazi Germany at Bryanston this year ... I had to google things and make a power point.

R: So sad to say that this is such a typical experience, even today and your school had the facilities ... really just the teacher. Tracey? Remember you are welcome to your own opinions...

Tracey: Actually I do think that it's relevant because actually at the end of the day, it's the teacher who sells the subject. When I was in Grade 9 looking at the Grade 10s doing history, they just had a pile of photocopies every day, the teacher was so lazy, not passionate about the subject, you just have this pile, you don't even know how to sequence them ... I thought, you know what I won't do this. I think it is interesting though to know about how things were done in the past and how does the past affect the way we live today... Especially in my culture, women don't wear trousers, so it helps to understand and make sense of the world we live in ... it helps in understanding but it should be brought to life...

Verity: I like what Tracey is saying about culture, I always associate history with culture... If we say that history is not relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I think we are throwing away something that is a building block towards this century, I think the past builds or shapes the present and the present shapes the future ... History was also taught to me like Tracey and Penny, the only difference was my teacher in Grade 11 used to give us sub-topics to go and research for homework, to present. I lived far away from a library, to access a library for me was a mission, in my school the library only had novels, very few materials that you can research. What would happen, you would ask around and in my neighbourhood there were not many people who were educated. I lived in Soweto, in my street my Dad seemed to be the only person with his matric and the neighbour's children would come and be helped out. He was my only source of information. Most of the information would be sketchy as he was an accounting person, a businessman, so I would depend on the textbook itself and the dictionary to find meanings of words. Today we must concentrate on technology - exciting and full of information but some values and cultural connotations that technology cannot provide to the children. The content is also relevant, I see we take recent South African history but I find even ancient history shapes recent history. I think they should take it right back from its roots but I don't know how big our syllabus would be... (Focus Group Discussion. Penny, Tracey and Verity. 03/10/2013)

All three of these students speak about school history and particularly focus on the pedagogy they experienced and contrast these experiences to the history they have studied in Social Science 1 and 2 at the Wits School of Education. What emerges strongly from this discussion is that for school history to be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the teacher needs to work with modern technology. All three students describe lessons that barely used visuals and that their memories of school history are very much about piles of notes. Penny's (MH) experience suggests that even in a school that has audio visual resources it is ultimately up to the individual teacher to use them effectively.

What also becomes apparent is the impact of home backgrounds on access to resources that can help learners and students meet the demands of a subject like history. Some children go home to parents or grandparents who have a wealth of information to share whilst others might find that their families are disinterested in the past and in reading about it. To a certain extent it may be related to socio-economic factors but as Verity (MH) suggests:

I was fortunate because my Dad was a reader, so he would buy a newspaper every day and let me see what was going on. So for me it was easier than my other classmates because I had access to a little information at home. (Focus Group discussion. Verity. 03/10/2013)

In contrast, Tracey's (SH) background at school and at home and lack of interest in reading, has presented her with additional challenges in that she had never heard about the "Great Pyramids of Giza" before:

No but Ma'am, in history and geography my brain just heats up ... they talk about the Great Pyramids of Giza, Pizzaro ... What's going on? ... The mummies? But now when I watch movies I can recognize the Great Pyramids, maybe three months after the exams, I am like oh so this is what they meant. (Focus Group discussion. Tracey. 03/10/2013)

We make assumptions that all the students have at least heard about the pyramids, and consequently set tasks that challenge traditional perceptions that we assume the students have. Tracey's self-deprecating and nonchalant answer actually reveals a different story. These students see that technology could provide learners with information and particularly visual representations of characters and events that have shaped our world. They have all had experiences of teaching history with technology and have found it to really have a powerful impact on their lessons:

R: What do you think it actually means to teach history?

Verity: I think my aim is to unlock that passion within the learners themselves ... I am happy doing history here at Varsity because I've learnt different ways of teaching history from the way I was taught...

R: So, like what? Can you give me an example of something different you learnt here that you would use in your classroom?

Verity: There were no movies, no power points - those schools in Soweto during apartheid days, when our teachers only had the board and chalk and our teachers were not inventive in bringing in pictures... So for me, using technology as today we have access to information, you can travel within the classroom using technology, so I think today history is very exciting. It's up to the teacher and the PCK, the way you present that knowledge that is very powerful.

R: Thanks Verity that was very helpful ... and you Tracey have you had any chances to teach history?

Tracey: I did, actually the thing is, I liked that I brought new ideas. Their teacher was so boring so when I came with the overhead and the learners were excited to see the colour, it was great. So because of the attitude of the learners it was exciting but maybe if I was given a different group of learners I would have been like that teacher... (Focus Group 2 Discussion. 03/10/2013)

Verity (MH) is developing a sophisticated understanding of the significance of pedagogy to teaching history. She mentions that a successful lesson will be "up to the teacher and the PCK, the way you present knowledge that is very powerful". Her brief explanation of PCK (Pedagogical content knowledge) (Shulman, 1986) as the way you present knowledge suggests that she recognizes that the history teacher needs to think carefully about how they "present knowledge" to transform it into knowledge that is "very powerful". The fact that she uses the term appropriately does imply that Verity (MH) is making connections between her methodology course and what will be effective in the classroom.

Although Tracey (MH) has declared her lack of passion for history, she gets animated when she speaks about her experience in the classroom and how the attitude of the learners, in that they "were excited to see the colour", suggests that she will remember her own experiences at school and try to do better. This appears to be a common trend in this research, pre-service teachers are seldom aiming to be just like inspirational teachers they had, they are most often aiming to do better.

As Penny (MH) stated very matter-of-factly about her teaching experience at a Johannesburg school:

I don't know why the teacher doesn't do anything ... these kids bunk all the time ... Asking questions is also so important. These guys push you to give them the best. (Focus Group 2. 03/10/2013).

It is a shocking comment on the state of some of our schools that the only lessons our pre-service teachers are learning, is what not to do.

This focus group also confirmed that they found it very helpful to form small study groups and work together on history readings and exam preparation. Tracey (SH) went as far as saying that she would choose her major depending on if she could rely on her friendship group to help her:

Tracey: Yes I was even asking Verity, if she would help me if I take history ... So I am weighing my options ... I need to know who will help me ... If I take history I have people who will help me. I am still asking around though...

Penny: We do this, we work in a group ... we consider who is going to help me? Our majors play a role, sometimes I battle with English and Ma Verity helps by reading my essays...

Verity: They will be surprised though how much it helps me to help them, the more you explain ... and sometimes they bring up facts ... we are just a ring of helping each other. (Focus Group 2. 03/10/2013)

This “ring of helping each other” is the hidden world beyond the lectures and lecturers and is a coping mechanism that many of our students have already developed in the schools to make up for lack of resources and poor teaching.

#### **5.4 What does this data (informal questionnaires, semi-structured individual interviews and the focus groups) reveal?**

Although officially not part of this research, the informal questionnaires did however provide some insights into the students' preliminary understandings of what it meant to study history. They were of course very important in drawing my attention to the situation that out of the 75 students present in the first lecture, only 38 had chosen history as a matric subject. The questionnaires also made me aware that it was possible that some of the students had no memory of ever studying a subject called history. This information established my three groups: Matric History; Some History (usually up to grade 9) and No History.

Out of the five Social Science 2 students who chose history as a matric subject, Nina was the only one who wrote about the contested and analytical nature of history. Martin, Patrick, Penny and Verity wrote very superficial and clichéd responses, that were not that different to the answers written by those who did not choose history as a matric subject. It was useful to compare the initial responses in the questionnaire with the interviews and focus groups.

The semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups provided important biographical details that contextualised the diverse experiences each student had of school history. What emerged very powerfully was that it is not possible to assume that all students who have Matric history have acquired historical gazes (Bernstein, 1996; Bertram, 2009, 2012). Nina (MH) appeared to be the only student who had experienced school history in a disciplinary manner. Many of these students' experiences were of reading from the textbook or the teachers' notes, with very little sense of how historians read texts in a specific way (Wineburg, 2001).

A 4<sup>th</sup> year B.Ed. student presented a research project comparing his rural school experience of history teaching with that of other students. His findings contextualize and corroborate the experiences of Martin and others who wrote matric history but did not necessarily acquire historical gazes:

The first history test that I wrote gave me the wrong impression of history as I got high marks because I learnt the essay that our teacher wrote for us by heart. This helped me get high marks but I did not know what it takes to compose an essay that responds well to an essay question that I needed to answer ... My history teacher never taught us how to work out information from cartoons and sources and we were never trained to be critical when writing essays because what we were doing was to simply memorize the essay, as a result we missed the most important skills that history learners need to have. (With permission. Ranala, 2013, p. 10)

This student's experience of school history illustrates the kind of challenges that pre-service teachers could have to overcome in order to cope with the demands of history at university that expects both substantive and procedural knowledge. It suggests that many students come from school environments where the emphasis is still on learning a body of knowledge. Patrick's (MH) comments about not being encouraged to question or challenge the elders in his community are echoed in research done by the same 4<sup>th</sup> year B.Ed. student mentioned above:

In the community it is unacceptable for the youngsters to argue with the elders. The same cultural practice is taken by most learners to school... I was not used to interact with my teachers so it was a big problem for my lecturers because they expected everyone to engage, again for me to disagree with the information from a textbook was impossible. (With permission, Ranala, 2013, p. 12)

This is the opposite experience to Nina's (MH) experience where the history classroom was her special place and her classmates were her "friendship group". Nina (MH) remarks that through writing essays she developed "critical thinking". The importance of the history teacher and the history classroom in aiding the acquisition of an historical gaze is significant. It is not possible to understand that history is contested and constructed knowledge if there is no active engagement with challenging evidence and exploring other possibilities through debate and discussion. The description of history teachers reading notes or textbooks or the class reading paragraphs does not suggest that there have been many opportunities for developing this historical gaze. Bernstein suggests that the gaze is acquired "tacitly", which would imply that students would have to be involved in the process of inquiry.

Susan's (SH) experiences in Ireland provide an interesting perspective. Her accounts of the way that her emotions were evoked by the passionate teaching of the time of fighting for independence from British rule (The Troubles), is mirrored in her and Nina's concerns about how apartheid would be taught. Jonathan Jansen's work on "indirect knowledge" is useful here, as he explains how young people come into South African classrooms with knowledge about the past that is not their own, yet they feel as if they were there (Jansen, 2009). When Nina and Susan speak about being made to feel guilty as white, middle-class youth, this explains why so many young people are advised not to take the subject at school. This relates to Sieborger's comments about perceptions of studying South Africa's history making "white students defensive and black students bitter" (Sieborger, 2008, p. 9).

It is very important for young people to understand historical perspectives as a way of distancing themselves from contested and emotive pasts. It is also important to note that South Africa is not the only nation struggling to deal with its past, as experienced by Susan in Northern Ireland. Barsalou and Cole write extensively on post conflict pedagogy and particularly note the expectations placed on the history classroom to help societies heal: "History teachers are under enormous pressure in post-conflict societies to play too many roles - from psychologist and guidance counsellor to conflict resolution expert and mediator" (Cole & Barsalou, 2006, p. 11).



Susan's (SH) Irish experiences relate to an article written by Kitson and McCully entitled: "You hear about it for real at school..." (2005, pp. 32-37). The title is taken from a comment made by a Year 10 student in Northern Ireland about expecting school to give the "real story" of an emotive and controversial past: "People tell you their views but sometimes they don't know what they are talking about and then you hear about it for real at school" (Amy, Year 10, cited in Kitson & McCully, 2005, p. 32).

Kitson and McCully's research into teaching history in Northern Ireland describes how teachers choose to deal with such difficult emotive history and also explains how powerful the influence of the communities and the homes are in terms of collective memory. They believe that the history teacher should provide a space for 'neutral' discussion as this is what the students appear to need (Amy's comment above). It seems as if Susan's experiences were quite emotive and perhaps not as neutral as they should have been.

These concerns all relate to the sixth historical concept described as "the ethical dimension of history". This concept engages students in understanding that if we are going to make judgements about the actions of people in the past, we must recognize the historical context of their time and place. This also links with "taking historical perspectives", where students of history should not impose present attitudes on the evidence of the past, "even when their actions seem at first irrational or inexplicable or different from what *we* would have done or thought" (Seixas & Peck, 2004, pp. 3-12). I believe that it is important to remember that history is not just about acquiring knowledge but that there are often strong emotions linked to particular topics, especially in post-conflict societies trying to find ways of dealing with the past.

The role that the individual history teacher plays is vital. Those students who did not choose history as a matric subject were mainly making the decision based on their grade 9 experiences and the experiences of other students. The overall impression is one of boring classes with meaningless tasks and lots of dates and details to read and study, the opposite of what the post-apartheid curricula advocate. This would suggest that there is more to acquiring an historical gaze than being acquainted with the curriculum. It does not seem possible for students to 'tacitly acquire' an historical gaze if they are taught history as a body of knowledge that comes from the pages of a textbook or the teacher's notes.

The volume of reading and the difficulty of understanding historical concepts in historical texts is a particular challenge to those students who have not had any background in history. The specific skills that history essays require are not replicated in any other school subject. These two comments made by Social Science 1 (2013) students on the Course Evaluation emphasize their concerns are similar:

1. The readings given to us are sometimes difficult to understand. A simple summary of the topic would be useful.
2. Have some direct readings instead of a bunch where one is forced to select what they think is relevant to the assignment. (Course evaluation comments. Social Science 1, 2013)

Although these two comments are from a different year, they do encapsulate what Tracey, Lucy, Naomi, Martin and Patrick were saying. They also indicate that it is entirely possible to get to the end of the first half of the history module of Social Science with a very naive understanding of what the purpose of writing a history essay is. These students are looking for a body of knowledge to explain an historical event; they want “direct readings” and “a simple summary”.

It is important to note that all disciplines expect a critical gaze at university level and that reading and understanding sophisticated texts are challenging to most students. Research carried out with first year students analysing their writing in economics emphasizes the challenges all students face moving from school literacies to the academic literacies expected by universities: “However as Bourdieu, Passeron and de Saint Martin point out, ‘Academic language is no one’s mother tongue, not even that of the children of the cultivated classes’ (1984:8)” (Cited in Paxton, 2007, p. 47).

Paxton’s research uses the work of Gee (1996) to explain how academic literacy should be viewed as a “secondary discourse” as opposed to the “primary discourse” that people acquire in their family homes. Paxton describes how according to Gee, “the secondary discourses are those acquired from social institutions outside the family home, for example, the church, the school and the office. Academic discourse is thus often referred to as a secondary discourse” (Paxton, 2007, p. 46).

Paxton’s explanation of the different discourses relates to Bernstein’s horizontal and vertical discourses. All students arrive at university with horizontal (everyday) discourse and then

have to acquire the vertical discourse of the discipline they have chosen to specialise in. In some cases, their homes and schools have tried to prepare them for the difficulties of academic literacy but in many cases the gap is still vast.

The data in this chapter suggests that acquiring an historical gaze is about access to the “secondary discourse” or “vertical discourse” of history as a discipline at university. In most cases the homes and school experiences have not given these students many advantages. Paxton describes these challenges of moving from the primary discourse to the secondary discourse as particularly challenging for students from “different cultural and linguistic backgrounds” studying at universities where: “The Institutional culture, symbols and patterns of behaviour are unfamiliar and the gaps between familiar yet marginalised discourses and the privileged discourses of the academy are much greater than for students from more middle class backgrounds” (Paxton, 2007, p. 47).

Tracey and Verity’s stories are interesting in this context. Although Verity matriculated in 1985, when apartheid policies defined where her family could live and what kind of education she could access, she still gains access to privileged discourses through her father’s better education and his insistence that she reads the newspaper. She was encouraged to see the value of reading and has a love of travelling, which she recognizes as something that books can provide her with. Her home background has enabled Verity to cope with the discrepancies between her school and the university.

Tracey and many other students, who have not been encouraged to experience the joys of reading and the fascination of learning about people other than themselves, are bound to find the discipline of history more challenging. As Drake and Nelson state, “Historical thinking is an antidote to self-centredness” (2009, p. 55).

Ultimately, what this data revealed about the possibilities and constraints faced by these Social Science pre-service educators with differential backgrounds in school history, is the significance of disposition. Maton’s (2007) concept of “the ideal knower” seems to apply when looking at the acquisition of an historical gaze. Although Naomi (NH) has had no previous experiences of the discipline of history, in her interview she is conscious that history is about evidence, historical significance, historical perspective-taking, causes and

consequences and continuity and change (Seixas et al., 2012). This would suggest that Naomi (NH) has acquired the disposition of the “ideal knower” for the discipline of history.

Lucy (SH) is also speaking about the discipline of history with a more mature understanding that the subject is not just about the past as it has helped her to understand the stereotypes of the Zulu in present South Africa. (*Historical perspective-taking.*) Susan’s (SH) recognition of the value of judging past events in the context of the time, illustrates a sophisticated level of understanding *the ethical dimension of historical interpretations*. In spite of Tracey’s (SH) lack of interest in reading the dull, black and white pages of history, she too is suggesting that the subject does have relevance for today and that perhaps it is more about how you teach the subject than the subject itself.

Martin, Patrick, Penny, Verity and Nina have all had the advantage of school history until Matric, and yet it is not obvious at this stage that this has enabled them all to cope well with history at the Wits School of Education. It seems that, apart from Nina, their school experiences focused on the substantive knowledge and ignored the procedural knowledge necessary to acquire and develop an historical gaze.

It appears as if too many of our students have not had school experiences that would prepare them for the expectations of history at university and yet they work together to help each other and use the tools that we provide (such as the essay rubric, consulting with lecturers and making the most of tutorial experiences). The description provided by Focus Group 2 of “the ring of helping each other” is a powerful way of explaining how some of these pre-service educators have developed ways to overcome challenges that could prevent them from achieving their goals. They acknowledge that they have difficulties and then set about finding ways to help each other.

The next chapter will present evidence from the Social Science 1 and 2 examinations that will substantiate whether or not these nine students are able to “realise and evaluate legitimately” what it is that they are recognizing and regarding about the discipline of history (Bernstein, 1996, p. 170).

## **Chapter 6: Presenting the data from the Social Science 1 Examination November 2012 and the Social Science 2 Examination June 2013**

What was the purpose of analysing data from the two examinations? To ascertain whether the pre-service history teachers use their theoretical understanding of historical thinking when constructing their own understanding of events. (Evidence of realisation to support the recognition in the interviews and focus groups.) And if so, how? To trace evidence of a developing historical gaze in the Social Science 1 Examination November 2012 and the Social Science 2 Examination in June 2013, in terms of increasing evidence of more sophisticated understanding of the Six Historical Concepts: *historical significance; evidence; continuity and change; cause and consequence; historical perspective-taking and the ethical dimension of historical interpretations*. (Seixas et al., 2012)

### **6.1 Analysing data from the Social Science 1 History Examination November 2012**

This examination was written half way through the Social Science 1 history course, when the students had only started history in July 2012. They had effectively had 11½ weeks of lectures with two research essays and two tests. The students were expected to answer three questions in three hours. Two of the answers were short essays and one was shorter questions based on a variety of historical sources. (See Appendix D for a brief summary of the exam questions.)

For the purposes of this research I will analyse the answers of the students who chose history as a matric subject first and then the answers of those who only have Grade 9 or no school history background.

#### **6.1.1 Analysis of answers of students with Matric History. (Martin, Patrick, Nina, Verity and Penny)**

Martin (MH) apparently did not cope very well with his first university level examination. His essay answers reflect a lack of depth in the details he provides to support his arguments and he struggled to develop logical and coherent arguments that answer the particular questions posed in the examination. His answer to question 1.1 suggests that he has a limited

understanding of the question as he appeared to misinterpret the question to mean that we know more about Egyptians than other ordinary people, rather than we know more about the wealthy Egyptians than ordinary Egyptians.

The Great Pyramids left too many questions on the historians and Egyptologists as to why the ancient people decided to build such structures and how they were built. Which is why the Egyptians are known than the ordinary people because historians are debating about them trying to find answers to their questions, so therefore they become popular. (Martin. Social Science 1 History Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

Despite the fact that Martin (MH) has misunderstood the overall question, his answer reflects an understanding that we know so much about the ancient Egyptians because of the physical evidence they left behind and that historians are constantly debating new questions.

Throughout the essay Martin (MH) does show that he has a fairly good grasp of what we do know about the ancient Egyptians, evidence of substantive knowledge and that this is due to analysis done by historians and Egyptologists.

The Ancient Egyptians were mostly the artist, craftsmen and scribes. This is taken from the evidences provided by the Egyptologists... (Martin. Social Science 1 History Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

Martin's (MH) essay answer to 2.1 (The Industrial Revolution) also reveals an apparent problem with not grasping the demands of the specific question. Here he is not able to discern that the image of the women in the factory does not fit the stereotype of exploitation of women and children.

Moreover the factory system brought into place the exploitation of children ... Just like women children were preferred because they provided cheap labour ... (Martin. Social Science 1 History Examination. Question. 2.1)

Martin (MH) has not noticed that the image was produced in 1851 after the Reform Acts that made it illegal to use child labour. His description of the picture is very limited and he tries to fit a particular interpretation into his answer without critically analysing the picture.

According to Wineburg's research this type of answer would not be how historians would think about the picture, in fact he would describe Martin's answer as "thinking *ahistorically*" (Wineburg, 2007, p. 7).

The examiner's comment about Martin's (MH) answer reinforces that there is very little evidence of the six historical concepts (Seixas et al., 2012): "*Not recognising change* -

*standard reasons - is just relating points to the picture.*” (Examiner’s comment. Martin. Question 2.1. November 2012.)

The same pattern is detected in Martin’s (MH) answers to the source-based questions. He completely misreads the extract from the memoirs about the King’s attitude towards the Third Estate and again tries to fit his own understanding of the King into the answer without noticing that this source is actually challenging the traditional interpretation.

In the light of Martin’s (MH) school experiences as he described in his interview, it is not surprising that his answers are more focused on substantive knowledge than procedural and conceptual knowledge. He described his teacher as reading from the notes with no discussion or any guidance about how to analyse historical texts critically.

Patrick’s (MH) essay answers are generally well answered. He is able to express his argument clearly and is able to integrate relevant details to support his answer. His emphasis in the Egyptian essay is on how little is known about the achievements of ordinary Egyptians as historians are still investigating possible theories. For example he mentions the mysteries of who built the pyramids.

The mystery of how and why the Great Pyramids were built still causes tension between people. Christians believe that the pyramids were built by slaves under the leadership of pharaohs, which is historically wrong. Many theories have suggested that the pyramids were built by ordinary people such as the farmers and they were paid for their labour. Moreover, the evidence to prove this statement is not fully discovered. (Patrick. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

Patrick’s (MH) answer suggests that he has a good sense of the challenges historians face when writing about ancient societies. This is an indication of an understanding of *historical perspective-taking* and *using primary sources as evidence*.

Patrick (MH) is able to show that he understands that conditions in the factories changed after the Reform Acts in his response to question 2.1. However, he too tries to fit his perception of the factories into the picture by describing the conditions of children who are not actually in the scene.

Young children were also employed at this factory and it looks like they were doing the same job as their mothers. (Patrick. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

A similar situation is noted in some of Patrick's (MH) answers to the source-based questions. The source depicts an alternative view that according to nobility at Versailles, the King was considered to be supportive of the Third Estate. When asked to describe the King's attitude towards the Third Estate in this particular passage, Patrick (MH) just writes the traditional response, without showing that he has picked up that this passage says something different.

The king did not consider the voice of the Third Estate. The people of the Third Estate did not have rights over the other two estates and therefore their demands were not listened to... (Patrick. Social Science 1. November 2012. Question 3.3 c)

These answers could indicate a failure to read the questions properly but it is most likely that Patrick (MH) did not get enough practice at school level with source-based questions. He is a capable student who does understand that history is constructed from different types of evidence but still does not read texts in the analytical way that historians do.

Nina's (MH) answers to this examination are very good. Her essay answer to the Egyptian question is full of excellent details that support a logical and coherent argument. She has a very good understanding of the demands of this particular question.

It has recently come to light that the manual labourers (for example those who built the pyramids) were not slaves, as was previously believed but were rather paid. The homes they stayed in were simple structures and it is believed that many of the people were not in excellent health - for example had arthritis - based on studies done on skeletons. These however seems to be the extent that working class/ordinary people are mentioned. (Nina. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

This response reinforces that Nina (MH) has a sound background in historical thinking. Her answer refers to recent historical analysis that differs from what 'was previously believed'. (*Historical perspective-taking; evidence; cause and consequence.*) Nina (MH) builds an argument by using relevant historical evidence to support her statements for example when she explains that the workers may not have been in good health with many skeletons displaying signs of arthritis. She links all her points to the question showing that she is engaged in a process of inquiry. (Uses *evidence* to construct knowledge.)

Nina (MH) handles the question on the picture of the factory well as she picks up that 'the image of factories that the artist is portraying is a positive one'. She is one of the few students who do not try to impose their own understanding of factory conditions on the picture but rather works with what it actually illustrates.



Although there appears to be mainly women working, they look decently dressed and in good health. There are no young children depicted. The room seems filled with light... (Nina. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012)

This is a clear indication of mature historical thinking, in that Nina (MH) is reading the picture and working with it as historical evidence rather than an illustration. (*Using primary sources as evidence.*)

Nina (MH) does exceptionally well in answering the source-based questions on the French Revolution. This is especially the case with Nina's (MH) answer to 3.1 d that required historical empathy to write to construct a revolutionary pamphlet using the source as well as their substantive knowledge about the events of the time. Her ability to put herself into the shoes of a revolutionary is extraordinary and suggests that Nina (MH) has had many opportunities to do this kind of writing.

It would appear fellow comrades, that those in 'high places' believe that we should not be allowed a role in the government – that we should not be allowed choice in how we are ruled! However despite the opinion of the Queen and her minions, the King seems to think we should have a say- that there is a chance that we are actually right... (Nina. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 3.1 d)

Nina's (MH) ability to write as a member of the Third Estate using relevant evidence once again indicates a sophisticated level of historical thinking. (*Using evidence to construct an original account of a historical event; Taking historical perspectives and understanding the ethical dimensions of historical interpretations.*)

Verity's (MH) examination answers reflected evidence of solid preparation with a good sense of what the demands of each question were. Her answer to the Egyptian question illustrates a good understanding of how historians rely on evidence in order to construct the past and the challenges that they face when what remains is mainly focused on the wealthy and powerful.

Even though all the beauty and splendour of ancient Egypt appears to have been created to show the lives of the wealthy and noble Egyptians, the producers or workforce was made up of ordinary people. The size of the pyramids, sphinxes and obelisks, the art as well as the wealth of the society gives us an idea of the characteristics of the ordinary ancient Egyptians. (Verity. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

This conclusion written by Verity (MH) draws together her argument that historians can use the same evidence to draw conclusions about the characteristics of ordinary ancient

Egyptians. It suggests a sophisticated understanding of how historians use evidence and that historical perceptions change over time. It also indicates that Verity (MH) is aware of the speculative nature of much historical writing.

Verity's (MH) answer to the question on the representation of the factory in the 1851 picture of a factory is good and shows that she is reading the picture critically and not just writing what she knows about factories.

The artist is portraying the working conditions at factories in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century after the government have set up commissions to investigate the factories ... There are no children working there ... The workers do not look tired because the working hours have been reduced. (Verity. Social Science 1 Examination November 2012. Question 2.1)

Verity (MH) has worked with this visual source in much the same manner as professional historians would, according to Wineburg et al. She has used the heuristics of *sourcing* and *contextualization* in a very sophisticated manner. When she addresses the question of the accuracy of this picture's portrayal of the factory in 1851, Verity (MH) is able to *corroborate* (compare this with the general trend as depicted in other sources).

There are no children in this picture which proves that it is not fair because even after the amendment of the factory laws, children still worked but they had to be at least 10 years old. (Verity. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

Verity's (MH) ability to critically analyse this picture in the light of her own substantive knowledge based on other historical readings illustrates sophisticated levels of *historical perspective-taking* and *identification of continuity and change*.

Verity (MH) is also able to cope with the demands of the source-based question in that she identifies that this passage suggests that the King was 'sympathetic to the Third Estate and calls them his children'. She is also very good at reading the artist's depiction of Danton.

The artist is on Danton's side because he depicts him as a proud and majestic person. He made him (Danton) look taller than all the people in the picture including those wearing hats... (Verity. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 3.2. d)

Considering that Verity (MH) finished school in 1985 when very little time was devoted to analysing sources in history classrooms, Verity is definitely showing signs of an historical gaze.

Penny (MH) tries to develop a sophisticated argument about what is known about the ancient Egyptians, she focuses on the fact that very little is known about the role of women even a woman like Hatshepsut who ruled as a pharaoh. She also comments on the fact that historians cannot really know much about ancient Egypt, even with the evidence about the wealthy and powerful. Although her statements are not always well substantiated, this is an indication that Penny (MH) is realizing how complicated the discipline of history is. (*Using evidence, historical perspective-taking and historical significance.*)

Yes, nothing is said about the women of Egypt, I mean ordinary women not goddesses... This does affect the work of historians because out of common sense we know that ordinary women existed... Were they housewives? Did they contribute to the building of the pyramids? ... And if they are not mentioned in history it is as if they are not important and will be forgotten. (Penny. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

Penny's (MH) answer to the depiction of the factory in the picture for question 2.1 is quite good but she still tries to include what she knows to be the typical story of the factory.

Factories were dirty - we can see from the picture that the factory has a lot of dust. Factory owners did not care about their workers - the factory is dusty, yet the workers do not wear masks to cover their mouths. (Penny. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

The rest of the answer illustrates that Penny (MH) has looked carefully at how the factory is being shown but this extract makes no sense as in fact the picture shows a spotlessly clean, light and airy factory.

Penny (MH) comments on the fact that this picture is not a fair representation of general factory conditions, illustrating an understanding of *historical perspective-taking* and an ability to use *evidence* in an historical way.

No this is not a fair representation of the factories. In fact conditions were far worse than what is depicted in this image ... If workers were seen standing around like as shown in this picture with the two ladies talking and taking time off their duties, they would be fined or beaten by the supervisor who was always present. (Penny. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

Although Penny (MH) chose history as a matric subject she was one of the few students who presented her answer to question 2.1. as a list of points not a coherent essay answer. This could have been about running out of time but definitely not something that a matric student would be encouraged to do. Her substantive knowledge was relevant and accurate which was in her favour.

Penny (MH) did not cope so well with the source-based questions on the French Revolution. She particularly misunderstood the empathy question that required the students to construct a revolutionary pamphlet as a supporter of the Third Estate using the source. Her answer was superficial with very little evidence used from the source. Penny did however answer the last question on the artist's depiction of Danton well.

I think the artist liked Danton because if he did not he would have portrayed him negatively – shirt hanging, dirty. Also the cartoonist probably respected Danton for the work he has done, because he portrayed him with his chest upright and everybody looking at him... (Penny. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 3.2 d)

Penny's answer indicates a fairly sophisticated level of historical thinking about why the artist has drawn Danton in that way. It suggests an understanding that sources are designed or drawn with particular purposes in mind. (*Historical perspective-taking, using evidence in an historical way.*)

### **6.1.2 Analysis of data from Social Science 1 Examination November 2012 - Students without matric history. (Lucy, Naomi, Susan and Tracey)**

Lucy's (SH) essay answer to the question on what we know about the ancient Egyptians was excellent. Her understanding of the demands of the question was clearly focused and substantiated by superb details that even incorporated some comments about particular historians. This answer was a testament to the effort that Lucy (SH) put into preparing for the examination and I think that it has a lot to do with her method of reading texts with different colours and making sure that she understands difficult concepts. Her answer reflects a sophisticated level of historical thinking.

The more we know about one part of a society immediately affects the work one produces and that is why I will also look at how that has affected the work of historians when trying to write ancient Egyptian history.( Lucy. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1.0)

This extract from Lucy's (SH) answer reveals a very good understanding of how historical perceptions are affected if they only know about 'one part of society'. This is an example of understanding the challenges of using primary evidence and taking historical perspectives. Lucy (SH) observed that:

There is not much discussion about how the ordinary people prepared for the after- life. Chandler discussed in his article that they all took charge of their own after life and their children's. Whereas we know that a lot of time was spent to prepare the afterlife of the wealthy part of society. (Lucy. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

This kind of answer that refers to the work of another historian is exceptional at this level. It illustrates that Lucy (SH) understands in a historical way the readings she worked on for her research essay and that she can apply this knowledge in examination questions. She also refers to an article that was discussed in the lectures about how ancient Egyptians have been depicted in children's books:

If historians only focus on one class/group of people, the hard work of the Egyptian nation will not be seen as a whole in children's eyes. The texts produced by those writing Egypt's history will be biased. (Lucy. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

Lucy's (SH) answer to question 1.1 clearly illustrates an advanced level of historical thinking about *using evidence, historical perspective-taking and establishing historical significance*. This is definite evidence of an historical gaze.

Although Lucy (SH) expressed concerns about writing historical essays in her interview, she has produced logical and coherent arguments that are well focused on the specific questions asked in the examination. She is able to identify that the picture of the factories in question 2.1 'shows a much more positive reflection of the working conditions'. Throughout the essay she takes specific details from the picture and discusses whether or not they are a fair representation or not:

This is not a fair representation of the factories since the women are not hard at work in this particular factory but it was not the case in all of them. It was just a few factories like New Lanark which tried to treat their workers fairly, so this could have been one of them. (Lucy. Social Science 1. November 2012. Question 2.1)

Here too is evidence that Lucy (SH) is conscious of how complicated history is, in that there are exceptions and it is important to acknowledge that some factories were decent places to work. This illustrates that Lucy (SH) has a solid understanding of the substantive knowledge that allows her to compare and contrast what she sees in the picture with examples from the course readings. (Evidence of *historical perspective-taking; using evidence in an historical way; identifying continuity and change*.)

Unfortunately Lucy's (SH) answers to the source-based questions on the French Revolution were not so good. This could be as a result of time constraints or an indication that she needs to have her readings beforehand to work with them. These sources would be unseen and therefore she would not have the time to use her method of multiple readings. Lucy's (SH) answer to the question about the King's attitude towards the Third Estate as in the passage, is very muddled.

The King's attitude towards the Third Estate was harsh and unethical ... He did not see anything wrong in giving the Third Estate an opportunity to vote. (Lucy. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 3.1 c)

As is evident in the extract from Lucy's (SH) answer, she contradicts herself by first going with what she believes the King to be like and then realising that the source says something different. This is an example of *ahistorical thinking*.

Her revolutionary pamphlet is written in an *ahistorical* manner where she just expresses strong points of view but does not base any of them on evidence in the passage and refers to 'the Great Fear' which is from a different period.

Naomi (NH) did not cope with the Social Science 1 examination, her historical understanding really only seems to have developed in Social Science 2. Her essay answers were muddled with a few scattered details and the source-based answers were marred by some serious misunderstandings.

The essay on ancient Egypt is full of presentism where she makes judgements about why so little is known about the ordinary Egyptians based on present day values:

I agree with Jaromir Malek that we know more about the wealthy people of Egypt as we know that most people take you for granted if you are poor ... The fact that some pyramids were destroyed because the wealthy people wanted maybe to start businesses, so then historians struggle to get accurate information. (Naomi. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

Naomi (NH) misinterprets the question on whether or not the picture of the factory was a fair representation, as asking about justice rather than accuracy. She launches into an attack against the factory system:

Another thing which is very unfair was that they were underpaid through their hard work. Also employing many women who end up doing men's work was really unfair for the women because they end up getting crippled ... it was unfair because the owner only stands and stares at them... (Naomi. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

The question was asking the students to think historically and to compare the depiction of the factory in the 1851 picture with the information that they had read about factory conditions in general. Naomi (NH) at this stage did not appear to be able to think in this way. Her answer to the question on the artist's attitude towards Danton is also not well done. Naomi (NH) completely misreads the way that Danton has been represented:

The artist shows very well that he hates Danton ... With standing as if he wants to run and drawing people in front of him it shows how the artist wanted to prove that Danton can run away but because there are people he cannot ... The artist is also angry with him as we can see how he made the face of him. (Naomi. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 3.2 d)

At this stage it is very difficult to ascertain any historical thinking in Naomi's (NH) writing in the examination. She has a few relevant details here and there but appears to be really struggling to provide historical answers or to read the sources accurately. It is important to note that her interview in 2013 contrasts with this first examination as she definitely recognizes the rules of the discipline in the way that she speaks about her experiences.

Susan (SH) presents some very good answers in the Social Science 1 examination. Her essays are well structured and provide evidence of a solid grasp of both substantive and procedural knowledge. In her essay answer on the ancient Egyptians, Susan (SH) keeps focussed on the question and builds her argument around rational debate:

We know that the poorer ancient Egyptians didn't use stone, but mud-brick to build their houses. We therefore know that the ordinary people came from humble beginnings as they possibly could not afford to build their houses out of stone, like the wealthier pharaohs and royal members of society, who intended for their monuments to last for centuries. (Susan. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

This extract from Susan's (SH) answer illustrates that she has the capacity to work with historical evidence and relate this evidence to her argument in a logical and coherent manner. (*Using evidence to construct an original account.*)

Susan's (SH) analysis of the difficulties faced by historians without access to all the information about ancient Egypt is well developed. She ultimately concludes that this incomplete picture has left historians with more questions.

This biased account adds to the unclear picture, and leaves historians with questions like these, 'how did society function as a whole?' and so on, largely unanswered. (Susan. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

This kind of answer would make professional historians proud, as this is clear evidence of understanding the challenges of ‘knowing the past’ and that history is constantly being reassessed as new evidence emerges and new questions are revealed. (*Historical perspective-taking, continuity and change, cause and consequence and using evidence.*) So it appears that Susan’s (SH) choice not to take Matric history in South Africa has not necessarily hindered her progress at this stage of the Social Science course.

Susan (SH) is able to establish that the picture of the factory in question 2.1 is contrary to the typical idea of a factory during the time of the Industrial Revolution. She does however not pick up on the date of the picture and therefore does not take the Reform Acts into account:

Another reason why this is not a fair portrayal of factories in general during the Industrial Revolution, is because there is no sign of the dangerous activities which may have occurred. ... Furthermore, this image does not show the crippling effects the workers experienced, entering the factory system as young and well-abled, and becoming crippled. (Susan. Social Science 1 examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

This does however indicate that Susan (SH) still needs to adopt the historical way of first looking at who drew the picture, why did they draw it and ultimately when was it drawn? This is the heuristic of *contextualization* that Wineburg identified as one of the distinguishing traits of historical thinking.

The mistake that Susan (SH) made in the Industrial Revolution essay was not repeated in her source-based answers where she was clearly thinking like a historian and presented some very good answers. Her analysis of the alternative view of the King’s attitude to the Third Estate is excellent.

According to the passage, the King’s attitude towards the Third Estate was positive and sympathetic. It was also responsible. This can be seen when he says, ‘is the Third Estate not also my children?’ (Susan, Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

This suggests a mature understanding of how historians use evidence to build up historical interpretations and that it is essential to not impose a standard interpretation on a source but to rather read it as it is and acknowledge that it could provide an alternate perspective. (*Using evidence, understanding historical perspective-taking.*)

Tracey (SH) did really well in her essay answers, especially the one on the Industrial Revolution. Her answers were well constructed and supported by valid evidence. In the



Egyptian essay Tracey tries to integrate the ideas of particular historians which suggests that she spent time preparing for this examination by thoroughly reading her history notes. (A task that she mentioned was not her favourite thing to do.)

Chandler further states that the people who built the pyramids were highly skilled labourers. They built those pyramids with determination and evidence also shows that they were paid labourers. (Tracey. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 1.1)

For a student with a limited exposure to history, this is a fairly sophisticated response and to be commended. Unfortunately, Tracey's (SH) answer then becomes vague and in parts irrelevant details are just incorporated into the argument, perhaps an indication of grappling for evidence to write.

Tracey (SH) does exceptionally well in the question on the depiction of the factory in the picture from 1851.

This artist is portraying that in 1851 the factory conditions were not as bad and by what is portrayed in this picture it seems like the factory was a pleasant place to work in... (Tracey. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

Tracey (SH) is one of a handful of students to immediately notice that the picture was drawn in 1851, a true indication of historical thinking. (Using *evidence, identifying continuity and change*).

When answering the question about how fair the portrayal of the factory system in general was, Tracey (SH) explained that this was because in 1851 laws had changed:

It is fair to say that the artist has portrayed a fair picture of the factory system. This is because this factory picture was drawn in 1851 and that was after the Second Factory Act was passed. (Tracey. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 2.1)

Tracey's (SH) attention to the significance of the date of the picture is an indication of a good grasp of *contextualization*. This signifies that she has acquired some level of an historical gaze.

Unfortunately, Tracey's (SH) answers to the source-based questions on the French Revolution are not so well answered. She writes the revolutionary pamphlet without using evidence from the source and completely misinterprets the artist's attitude towards Danton:

The artist seems as if he/she did not favour Danton because he is portrayed as helpless and begging for forgiveness from Robespierre... (Tracey. Social Science 1 Examination. November 2012. Question 3.4 d)

This mistaken reading of the image of Danton could be about running out of time as this question is the last of the examination.

## **6.2 Analysis of the Social Science 2 Examination written in June 2013**

The Social Science 2 Exam written in June 2013 could possibly be the last history examination that some students will write as they might choose to major in geography rather than history. It could be a good indication if the history modules in the Social Science Courses had facilitated some kind of acquisition of an historical gaze. Students were asked to write three answers in three hours. The first two questions expected a short essay response and the third question was based on a chapter that was given to them before the exam to read in order to answer shorter questions based on what Wineburg et al. would define as sourcing, contextualization and corroboration and close-reading.

I will present some examples from each of the nine Social Science 2 students' papers to illustrate whether or not they were able to realize the rules of the discipline in terms of providing evidence of meeting the requirements of the six benchmarks of historical thinking as adapted by the Historical Thinking Project (Seixas & Colyer, 2012).

For the purposes of this research, I have chosen to focus on the answers to the first question on the colonisation of the Americas, as all nine students answered this question, with some references to the general challenges these nine students faced in the other two questions. (See Appendix E for a summary of the examination paper.)

The fact that all nine Social Science 2 students answered question 1(a) was indicative of the general trend of the whole group of Social Science 2 students. It could be because they had a similar question to work on as a long essay research question or it could be that Question 1(b) deals with concepts that they may not be confident with as well as the need to reference specific films that not all students had access to in terms of previous knowledge about film

and history. This is evident in the interviews where only Nina (MH) and Susan (SH) did not mention that their teachers had limited resources. Penny (MH), Verity (MH) and Tracey (SH) described scenarios where they did not know what Adolf Hitler looked like and that their teachers relied on notes or textbooks without using any visual aids.

Question 1(a) lends itself to an analysis of the significance of *discovery and conquest* and to a deep discussion of why historical perceptions have changed. The students were expected to have substantive knowledge in terms of the details of the ‘discovery’ and the events that unfolded that enabled the Spanish to defeat the Inca Empire. They were also asked to illustrate a clear understanding that history is constructed and that there are different perspectives. Here they were specifically asked to engage with the argument put forward by Jared Diamond that posits that new perceptions of the evidence about the Spanish conquest of the Inca was actually just about “Guns, Germs and Steel” (Diamond, 1998).

The following examples from each of the nine Social Science 2 students that I interviewed provide evidence of developing historical understanding and thinking.

**Examples from Penny’s Paper. (History to matric but according to the interview she did not do well and her school experience was generally dull and boring.)**

Penny’s (MH) essay is well developed and illustrates that she had put a lot of effort into studying the relevant details. She links the events and the changing perceptions to the present by explaining that the Native Americans see their *discovery* very differently to the traditional historical perceptions:

The natives do not feel that the discovery of the New World was a good thing, because with this discovery they lost their families, way of life, culture and religion. Hence they feel no need to celebrate Columbus Day. (Penny. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

This is a good example of a student who understands that the events of the past have *significance* for today and that perceptions about what is significant depend on whose *historical perspective* is taken into account. This answer also addresses the *ethical dimension* of history as she is attempting to understand the *consequences* of past actions on Native Americans today.

Penny (MH) also tries to use Jared Diamond’s argument to explain why there are different perceptions and that Diamond has a new way of looking at the evidence about the conquest of the Inca:

Jared Diamond argues that they were a few things that enabled the New World to be conquered. He identifies these as Guns, Germs and Steel... (Penny. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Penny (MH) describes in great detail what Diamond is arguing and that there are different ways of looking at the evidence of the destruction of the Inca. She mentions that illiteracy was one cause that had severe consequences:

Though Pizarro himself was illiterate he came from a community that was literate. The Spaniards read a lot about other civilizations and their character, therefore it was easy for him to hear about how Cortez conquered the Aztecs, then he thought he would go for the Inca. (Penny. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

She is careful to look at weaknesses within the Inca’s way of life that would have made their conquest easier for the Spanish conquistadors led by Pizarro, and to also acknowledge technological advantages that the Spanish brought with them:

The Native Americans believed so much in their religion and prophecies, an example of this seen when the Aztec leader mistakes Cortez for a god...

The steel, though there were many more Incas than Spaniards... The Spaniards had sharp lances, swords and daggers, they also had steel armour... Spanish also had horses which could easily over run the Inca. (Penny. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Generally Penny’s response to this essay question does provide evidence that she is starting to meet the standards of the six historical thinking concepts as outlined by the Historical Thinking Project. (*Historical significance, evidence, continuity and change, historical perspective-taking, cause and consequences and the ethical dimension of history.*) The examiner’s comment confirms this: “*A thorough explanation. A lot of effort has been put into relating the narrative to the question.*” (Examiner’s comment. Question 1a. June 2013)

General comments made about Penny’s other two answers suggest that although she had found school history difficult, Penny has made progress since starting the history module of the Social Science course in July 2012. “*Provides a good sense of Mapungubwe as a state, though little on the process of state formation. Makes some use of evidence. Addresses significance, but some gaps.*” (Examiner’s comment. Question 2b. June 2013)

The comments made by the examiner on the short answer question on Shaka, suggest that this is an area that Penny needs to work on. There are some comments about “misunderstanding the question” and “lacking details to substantiate the answers.” However the overall comment states that, “*You have a sense of the issues.*” (Examiner’s comments. Question 3. June 2013)

**Examples from Verity’s paper. (Did take history as a matric subject, she matriculated in 1985, also experienced history as learning facts from the textbook.)**

Verity (MH) wrote an essay that reflected a solid understanding of the issues. She provided a detailed explanation of Jared Diamond’s argument but did not devote too much time to changing *perceptions*. Her introduction and conclusion do suggest that she has a sense of the *changing significance* of the events depending on which point of view you are reading:

The ‘New World’ what is it that makes the world ‘new’? It is the idea that the European nations had about the world that they did not know before. The fact that they have not yet come across that part of the world does not mean that it did not have people or civilization before their arrival...

The historical perception about the discovery and the conquest of the New World was that with just a few European armies the natives of America were conquered. Guns, Germs and Steel shows that number was not an important issue here but psychological warfare was employed. (Verity. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Verity (MH) analyses Diamond’s argument thoroughly illustrating an awareness of *causes and consequences* and she does not just make statements without substantiating her points with relevant *evidence*:

The kind of diseases that the Spaniards brought along did more damage than the physical weapons that they used on them. Some of the diseases that were spread was the yellow fever, small pox and flu. These diseases devastated mostly the Incas because their immune systems were not familiar with these kind of germs. (Verity. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

The examiner’s comments for Question 1a suggest that Verity coped well with the demands of the question: “*Good understanding of the main issues. Careful explanation of Diamond’s argument.*” (Examiner. Question 1a. June 2013.)

The comments on Question 2 also commended Verity for her understanding of the issues: “*Understands the main issues and does deal with the evidence. But there are some gaps in the discussion. Some aspects of significance dealt with.*” (Examiner. Question 2b. June 2013)

Verity's third answer is her weakest but this could be that it is near the end of the examination and time to find the evidence in the extract and write in more detail is scarce. This is a common problem with the short questions. She still appears to have "*some sense of the issues.*" (Examiner. Question 3. June 2013.)

**Example from Tracey's paper. (Did not choose history as a matric subject. Generally does not find the subject interesting, boring black and white notes, too much difficult reading...)**

Although Tracey's (SH) weak grammatical expression makes the argument difficult to follow and she muddles details, it is interesting to see that she has a sense of *the significance* of the 'discovery' and that Native Americans do not feel that this is something to celebrate today: (*changing historical perspectives, continuity and change*)

Hence Jared Diamond states that it is the Guns, germs and steels. And hence the Natives, the Indians felt very offended when Columbus day is celebrated because to them it is a reminder of bloodshed their cultures being lost and their lands being taken over by the Spaniards. (Tracey. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Tracey (SH) tries to explain Jared Diamond's argument but unfortunately mixes up Cortez and Pizzaro, in spite of muddled details she manages to communicate that the defeat of the Inca was not due to a single cause and attempts to look at what advantages the Spanish had and to see what flaws actually existed within the Inca society that enabled their defeat: (*causes and consequences, continuity and change*)

When the Spaniards arrived in the Inca society they came in with guns, germs, steel armours, steel helmets and horses. It was the first time the Inca had seen anything like this and even the language was a barrier because they did not understand each other when they talked ... The Inca society was an autocratic leadership that the king makes all the decisions and if something goes wrong it affects everyone in one way or the other. (Tracey. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a.)

The examiner's comment at the end of Tracey's essay does see past the muddled details and weak language: "*Weak grammatical expression but there is understanding and an argument is based on relevant details.*" (Examiner. Question 1a. June 2013)

Comments made about Tracey's essay answer to the second question do highlight significant weaknesses: "*You have not dealt with the evidence; you have rather described how they*

*lived... ” “Not focused on the question. No discussion on the development of Mapungubwe and the importance of the location.” (Examiner. Question 2a. June 2013)*

The third question is also very superficially answered with comments like: *“Say more... You aren’t quite answering the question.” (Examiner. Question 3. June 2013)*

Ultimately, Tracey did not pass this exam. How much of this is due to not having a background in school history beyond Grade 9, or difficulties with reading, understanding the demands of the questions and writing coherently is not conclusive.

**Example from Susan’s paper. (Did not choose history as a matric subject but did have a good experience in Ireland, especially aware of the significance of the past to the Irish.)**

Susan’s (SH) essay is coherent and logical and well substantiated by relevant and accurate details. (Clearly understands the role of *evidence* in historical arguments.) She has a clear grasp of why this historical event would be *significant* and illustrates a sophisticated understanding of key concepts:

Historical perceptions about the discovery and conquest of the New World have changed because if one looks at the barbaric encounter between the Spanish and the Inca (where it was the Spanish who were actually the barbarians), one can see that this was no achievement or victory in terms of discovery, but rather an unfair situation where the Europeans walked in and took what wasn’t theirs and won because of their technological and military advantages. (Susan. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Susan (SH) explores all facets of the *discovery and conquest* and illustrates a sophisticated grasp of the historiography debates and changing ways of describing the events that began in 1492: (*historical perspective-taking, continuity and change*)

Lastly one can consider ‘the great biological exchange’, and the impact of it had on the ecology of South America. Horses enabled faster hunting which endangered species, as well as disrupted grazing, and land was damaged. A positive was the exchange of food substances which benefited both Europeans and Native Americans. (Susan. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013)

Susan’s (SH) overall examiner comments on each question reveal that although she did not take History as a matric subject at school in South Africa, she has a very good grasp of what the discipline entails: *“Good analysis of the issues. Well explained.” (Examiner’s comment. June 2013. Question 1a) “A very thorough answer.” (Examiner’s comment. June 2013. Question 2a)*

Her answers to the short questions in Question 3 were good but some areas were not included in the last question for 20 marks - this could have been an issue of time running out: “*You have a sense of the debates but the specific areas around trade (ivory, slaves - or not) need inclusion.* (Examiner’s comment. June 2013. Question 3.4)

There are numerous examples in Susan’s (SH) answers that support her comments made in the interview. She does have a very clear conception of the use of evidence and that there are different kinds of evidence available to historians:

Evidence of these hunter-gatherers can be found in the primary sources of the traders and explorers who kept journals ... Therefore both physical primary evidence and written primary evidence have been used to build our understanding of both Khoisan and Bantu-speaking societies that lived in southern Africa before the permanent settlement of Europeans. (Susan. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013)

**Example from Nina’s paper. (Did choose history for matric. According to the interview appears to have had the best experience of all nine students at school. She is the top Social Science 2 history student, 2013.)**

Nina (MH) engages in the historiographical debate and outlines why and how historical perceptions changed to challenge the different views about why the *discovery and conquest* were so *significant*:

The myth of discovery is an idea that aims to look at discovery from more than one point of view. It is commonly said that Christopher Columbus discovered the New World. However as there were already people there, it is evident that crediting Columbus with discovering the place is a very Eurocentric point of view. This perception was first challenged when the Native Americans began protesting about the celebration of ‘Columbus Day’. They began to call for the world to look more objectively at the events that took place from the time they were ‘discovered’. The movement led to a more critical analysis of the motives of the Spanish. (Nina. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Nina’s (MH) use of relevant and accurate *evidence* to support her sophisticated arguments is very well done:

The romantic idea of conquest is radically altered when we considered that it was “Germs” which killed up to 95% of the Inca Empire. Smallpox brought in by the Spanish was a disease that the Native Americans had no immunity to.

Similarly the idea of conquest seems a much smaller achievement considering that the weapons that the Spanish used were far superior to those used by the Inca. (Nina. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)



The examiner's comments for all three questions commend Nina (MH) for her coherent arguments and very good use of relevant evidence: "*Very good argument. Relevant and accurate details. Very good focus on the issues.*" (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 1a). "*Very good, clear discussion with relevant use of evidence.*" (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 2a)

Nina's (MH) first answers to question 3 appear to be better than the answer to 3.4 which required more depth. Again, I think that this was more about time running out than not knowing the details: "*Broad idea right – not much very specific and accurate information, though. Earlier answers are good.*" (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 3)

Nina (MH) is one of the few Social Science students who are able to make the connections between the Mfecane and the 'great man' view of history that question 3.3 demands:

The connection between the idea of Shaka as a 'great man' and of the Mfecane is huge. Many have blamed the Mfecane - a series of violent clashes and migrations in the South Eastern coast of Africa - on Shaka. This shows how people believe that one man can have so much power. This is seen as an important period in history because it is assumed that it led to the rise of the Zulu nation and the establishment of many great leaders. (Nina. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013)

Ultimately Nina (MH) achieved the highest mark for the History module of Social Science 2. Her positive experience of school history has definitely empowered her to excel in this course. Her answers reflect what Seixas has described as the most sophisticated understanding of the six historical concepts. (See table in Methodology chapter.)

**Example from Lucy's paper. (Lucy did not take history as a matric subject. She expressed deep concerns about history being theory and passive, just learning dates but did indicate that her opinion had changed in the interview.)**

Lucy's (SH) essay was a little untidy in its organisation of ideas but there was a clear sense that she understood the key issues of the question. Her grasp of *the significance* of the way that historians have written about *discovery and conquest* and that they are "problematic" and "controversial" is good: (*Historical perspective-taking, ethical dimension of history*)

Christopher Columbus's so-called discovery of a 'new world' was originally seen as a great achievement. He was glorified and honoured for having found a new piece of land which was never 'apparently' known about before. But current historians challenge that idea of 'discovery' and see it as problematic ... Some of the Native Americans even go to the extent of saying no Columbus was lost and they discovered him. He is not seen as heroic by them and therefore all the controversial issues around celebrating Columbus Day. (Lucy. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Lucy (SH) does particularly well when answering the short questions in question 3 on understanding Shaka and the Mfecane. This could correlate with her comments that she made in the interview about really enjoying this section as it helped her to understand why stereotypes about the Zulus existed in South Africa today. There is no denying that interest and enjoyment would play a part in a student's achievement. The answer Lucy (SH) wrote for question 3.2a clearly indicates engagement with the topic and a deep understanding that primary sources such as diary entries can be problematic as historical evidence:

Roberts detects from Fynn that all that he has in his diary now is from memory because the original was lost. The memory was from many years back which cannot be relied on. (Lucy. Social Science Examination. June 2013. Question 3.2a)

The overall comments written by the individual examiners suggest that Lucy's initial concerns about not passing history are unfounded: "*A little untidy but does have a good sense of what the question was about. Relevant details.*" (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 1a)

Lucy's (SH) understanding of the significance of Mapungubwe as a heritage site is perhaps enhanced by her experience of visiting the site when she did tourism as a Matric subject at school:

Mapungubwe showed the power of a state, the growth to becoming better and it is this civilization that has placed us where we are today. The decorated pottery, gold rhino and all other evidence found symbolizes this heritage site as of great significance. (Lucy. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 2b)

At the same time, the generalised and uncomplicated way that tourist pamphlets narrate the past could also explain why the examiner felt that Lucy's answer was generalised and vague in parts. "*Quite a generalised account with some gaps. While evidence is discussed, its links to the activities in Mapungubwe are not always made clear. A fairly good sense of significance.*" (Examiner's comment June 2013. Question 2b)

It is interesting to note that Lucy's (SH) initial opinion of history changes by the end of Social Science 2 and it had a lot to do with praise she received from the examiner who marked the Shaka question: "Well done. You understand the issues." (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 3)

Nina commented in her interview that doing well in history had given her confidence to succeed in other subjects. Lucy's determination to struggle through difficult readings and to change her mind-set towards the subject of history had positive consequences for her.

**Example from Martin's paper. (Martin did take history as a matric subject but did not have a good teacher in his matric year. His respect for his teacher who sadly passed away in Grade 11 made Martin work hard to keep history alive in his school.)**

Martin's (MH) essay did not really engage with the question of changing historical perceptions. He tended to focus on reasons for the defeat of the Inca (cause and consequence) and tried to use Jared Diamond's argument. However he has a sense of the *significance of discovery and conquest* for the Inca:

As a result of the conquest the Incas lost their king who was an absolute monarch, the culture was also lost, many of the Native Americans were forced to convert to Christianity. Furthermore the conquest proved to be a disaster to the Native Americans because many of them were killed by the disease that was spreading.

Lastly the conquest was the worst thing to happen to the native Americans because many of them were taken to be slaves and some were badly exploited and their resources which is gold was taken from them. (Martin. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a.)

Martin's (MH) school experience does not really appear to have given him many advantages. Whilst he is passionate about the place of history as a subject in the schools, there are real gaps in his procedural or second order concepts. He struggles to develop a logical and coherent argument and uses *historical evidence* very superficially:

The second reason why the conquest of the Inca took place is that the Spaniards were advanced with weapons, the Spaniards had guns and swords which the Inca did not have therefore it was easy for them to secure an ultimate victory. (Martin. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a.)

In order to see whether or not this is a general problem for Martin (MH) and not just about being unfamiliar with the context of the Spanish and the Inca, another example from question

2 on Mapungubwe, also reveals that Martin (MH) has understanding but is not really substantiating his claims and making links with the evidence:

The seeds, sorghum and food surplus that were found in Mapungubwe this suggest that the site had a well workman force who were able to produce surplus therefore that why the site deserve recognition. (Martin. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 2b)

Martin's answers to the short questions on Shaka were especially weak, which leads me to conclude that whilst he might have some sense of historical knowledge or content, he did not receive much support at school in terms of developing historical skills. His description in our interview, of his Matric teacher sitting on a desk and reading from a textbook, would explain this situation. "*Not a great grasp of issues or ability to give evidence to support views.*" (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 3.)

Sadly, Martin did not pass this Social Science 2 examination which confirms that even though he values the subject, he has significant gaps in his historical thinking and has yet to acquire the necessary historical gaze.

**Example from Patrick's paper. (Patrick did take history as a matric subject. His early experiences of history in Zimbabwe introduced him to the disciplinary approach.)**

Patrick (MH) tries very hard in his introduction and first paragraph to understand why Columbus was considered to be 'a great achiever'. He has a good sense of the time that Columbus lived in and why people would honour him (*continuity and change*). He engages in a sophisticated analysis of how historians are products of their own times and make judgements based on their own worlds: (*historical perspective-taking, ethical dimension of history*)

Firstly, I would like to argue that historical perceptions would differ depending on the side that one supports. On the side of the Europeans, one's perception would or might be that Christopher was indeed a great achiever. Thus for Columbus, as an adventurer, curious to know the world better and have new experiences got the reward.

Many would argue about the fact that Columbus found people who occupied the New World for a long time. Perhaps this would best be explained when comparing the two different worlds ... For some historians I think this might not make sense for they might judge Columbus according to their society's norms and values. (Patrick. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a.)

In the interview that I conducted with Patrick (MH) he spoke quite passionately about the importance of empathy and not judging people by today's standards but rather looking at their contexts:

R: Why did you choose Social Science?

Patrick: I have been interested as doesn't limit me in my thinking ... Geography and History make me think but we also need to look at environmental factors ... For instance colonisation, a lot of people do blame colonisers ... I ask what would I have done? I think it was the beginning of competition ... everything we do we have choices ... history makes me aware, what is it that influenced them to do this ... you come to realise can't always blame ... we control anger in different ways ... Those people if they could have sat down and tried to understand... (Interview with Patrick. 25/09/2013)

In terms of Historical Thinking Concepts, this is a very strong indication of understanding the *ethical dimensions of history* as well as a solid understanding of *historical perspective-taking*. Patrick's (MH) answer on the significance of Mapungubwe and how evidence found at the site has contributed to our understanding of the formation of the first Southern African State, was good. He is able to use the relevant *evidence* to develop a solid response:

As the trade increased and the population grew, beads and gold were now kept by the elite people, mainly the royal family. Also the status of being elite was kept by having many cattle which also contributed to the royal family to continue ruling the kingdom and become more powerful. This king began to control the trade and controlled the people (soldiers) of the kingdom. The commoners submitted to the King and thus the state was built. (Patrick. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 2b)

Examiners' comments about Patrick's (MH) answers suggest that he has understanding but does not always develop his answers properly, leaving out some important details:

*"Disjointed, scattered argument. Some relevant details. Some understanding."* (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 1a) *"Quite a good grasp of the content, but needs stronger links to significance."* (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 2b)

His answers to question 3 do not support the comments that Patrick (MH) made in the interview about the nature of the discipline of history but do correlate with his comments about a lack of resources to analyse source material in Zimbabwe. His answers are vague and generalized and do not really work with the extract given to the students before the exam. For example in the extract below he mentions details about Shaka that are not in the extract, hence he is not answering the question that asks the candidates to comment on how the Roberts extract described Shaka's achievements:

He showed no sympathy towards his soldiers and he changed the way of fighting the enemies. He introduced the use of short spears which soldiers have to use them instead of throwing to the enemy. (Patrick. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 3)

These details are not incorrect but the question was testing how students are able to read the source for information in order to analyse how Roberts was constructing Shaka as a significant historical character.

Patrick (MH) passes this exam but not as well as one would expect when hearing his mature insights into the subject of history as expressed in his interview.

**Examples from Naomi's paper. (Naomi does not really remember ever doing history at school. In Swaziland she focussed on the sciences and only heard negative things about history from her peers at school in Gauteng. Her interview suggested that she had really embraced doing history and loved the idea of critically analysing the past and the present.)**

Naomi (NH) gets very involved in the changing historical perceptions in her essay but does not really explain Jared Diamond's argument and what actually happened to the Inca. Her discussion on changing perceptions is excellent as she illustrates that she has understood that some historians have written different accounts depending on what political agendas were encouraged and is one of the only students to remember to include the reason why Columbus Day was first declared in 1892: (*Historical perspective-taking, continuity and change, causes and consequences.*)

Benjamin Harrison, the president of the United States of America, declared that Friday October 1892, on the four hundred anniversary of the people of the United States as a holiday. In this day he stated very clear that people must not work as they have to devote themselves to honour and appreciate the day of the discovery of the New World, which was Columbus. Benjamin did this because he wanted to win the election. (Naomi. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a.)

Naomi's (NH) essay answers are very good for someone who had no background in history and really struggled to understand what was expected from a history essay. She illustrates that she has a strong sense of the historical concept of *discovery* and how historians construct different versions of the same events:

Some historians perception was that Christopher Columbus misrepresent the word discover as he used it to unveil or make known, while to discover is to find something you are searching for. One of the major thing was that Columbus going to the Indies to discover gold not to discover a new world that's why they concluded by saying that Columbus was an explorer who got lucky. (Naomi. Social Science 2 Examination. June 2013. Question 1a)

Although Naomi's (NH) answer is not always grammatically correct, there is a real sense that she understands the role that historians play in constructing historical accounts and that concepts such as discovery do not have the same meaning for different times in history. (*Historical perspective-taking, continuity and change, evidence.*)

Unfortunately what happens with Naomi's answer to Question 1a is that she gets carried away with describing changing historical perceptions and barely mentions what actually happened to the Inca and how Jared Diamond explains the conquest: "*Good detail on changing perceptions but very brief on the Inca and Jared Diamond's theory.*" (Examiner's comment. June 2013. Question 1a)

In terms of developing historical thinking, it means that Naomi (NH) is focused on the second order concepts or procedural knowledge but needs to now remember that substantive knowledge is essential. It is an interesting scenario as it is normally the other way round with students knowing facts but not really understanding how the knowledge has been constructed.

### **6.3 Summary of key findings in the Social Science 1 and 2 examination papers. Is there evidence of acquiring or further developing an historical gaze?**

I will use a table format to briefly summarise how each participant in this research performed in the examinations. The table will provide evidence of the pre-service Social Science students' use of both substantive and procedural historical knowledge and the Six Historical Thinking Concepts, as a way of identifying the acquisition of an increasingly sophisticated historical gaze.

**Figure 6.3.1 Table summarising evidence from the Social Science 1 and 2 Examinations**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Social Science 1 Examination November 2012</b>	<b>Social Science 2 Examination June 2013</b>
Martin (MH)	Struggles to relate substantive knowledge to the specific exam questions. Appears to have particular problems with analysing visual sources. Little evidence of historical thinking.	Does not really engage with changing historical perceptions. Argument difficult to discern in essay answers. <i>Evidence superficially</i> used. Does not use the source to provide evidence to substantiate the Shaka question. Here again, substantive knowledge but very little evidence of historical thinking.
Patrick (MH)	Essays well answered. Does provide <i>evidence</i> and understands complexities of <i>historical perspective-taking</i> . Source questions not so well handled. Tries to fit traditional understanding of the King’s role into answer. Does not pick up that source challenges this view.	Essays illustrate sophisticated understanding of <i>historical perspective-taking</i> and especially tries to contextualize Columbus in his time. Superb grasp of the ethical <i>dimension of historical interpretation</i> . Good use of <i>evidence</i> in essays. Source questions suggest a lack of practice with working with multiple texts. Short question answers too generalised.
Nina (MH)	Excellent answers. Evidence of examination skills, i.e. focuses on the question and structures logical and coherent responses. Very good analysis of <i>historical perspectives</i> . Source-based questions excellent use of relevant <i>evidence</i> . Empathy question on French Revolution illustrates a sophisticated understanding of <i>understanding the ethical dimension of historical interpretations</i> . Generally mature historical thinking.	Evidence of increasing levels of sophisticated use of historical concepts. i.e. ‘Eurocentric views’. Really engages with the Shaka debates, showing an understanding that this is part of a larger historiographical issue, namely ‘The Great Man Theory’. Evidence of using all historical thinking concepts at a sophisticated level.
Penny (MH)	Mixed answers, some good, others very simplistic or naïve. Answers the one essay in point form. Most source questions not well answered, but good awareness of how Danton has been constructed by the artist. Slight glimpses of historical thinking starting to take shape.	Lots of effort put into exam preparation. Good understanding of changing <i>historical interpretations, historical significance, continuity and change and causes and consequences</i> . She also tries to contextualize the <i>ethical dimensions of historical interpretations</i> . Some problems with short questions, but generally much improvement in the structure and logic of the answers.



Student	Social Science 1 Examination November 2012	Social Science 2 Examination June 2013
Verity (MH)	Solid exam preparation. Good essay answers. Uses <i>evidence</i> at a sophisticated level to develop a coherent answer to the exam question. Reading sources critically with an historical gaze. Evidence of substantive and procedural knowledge.	Good use of relevant and accurate historical <i>evidence</i> . Very good awareness of <i>historical significance</i> . Engages in a sophisticated analysis of the historical issues. Source question on Shaka not as well developed as essays. Generally there is evidence of historical thinking.
Lucy (SH)	Excellent answer on the ancient Egyptians. Even included some of the historiographical debates from the readings. Sophisticated analysis and use of relevant <i>evidence</i> to build an argument. Short questions not as well answered; perhaps unseen passages and time did not allow Lucy to use her method of reading. Empathy question not thinking historically - strong emotions not supported with evidence.	Structure of essays a little scattered and untidy but there is understanding of <i>historical perspective-taking</i> and an awareness of the issues involved in making judgements about the past. ( <i>Ethical dimensions of historical interpretations</i> ). Very good source-based answers on Shaka, engages with the historiographical debates. Evidence of sophisticated historical thinking.
Susan (SH)	Very good essay answers, both substantive and procedural knowledge. Sophisticated understanding of the challenges of historical inquiry. Evidence of all six historical concepts.	Coherent and logical responses to exam questions. Excellent understanding of the role of <i>evidence</i> in constructing historical accounts. Engages with <i>historical perspectives</i> and the broader historiographical debates.
Tracey (SH)	Evidence that she did spend time reading those dull, black and white history notes. Even mentions the specific historians responsible for specific theories. Very good awareness of the fact that the picture of the factory represents a specific time. Good analysis. French Revolution not as well answered. Empathy exercise lacks evidence. Generally some evidence of historical thinking.	In Tracey's case, she performed better in the Social Science 1 exam. She commented on the challenges she experienced with history readings in the focus group, which could explain why she struggled. Her answers were muddled and marred by weak expression that detracted from any argument. She muddled substantive details, such as Pizarro was called Cortez. The second essay question was purely descriptive without substantiating her answers with relevant evidence about Mapungubwe. This exam suggests that Tracey has yet to acquire an historical gaze.

Student	Social Science 1 Examination November 2012	Social Science 2 Examination June 2013
Naomi (NH)	Naomi struggled to write essay answers in this exam. She did not seem to understand the demands of the questions. The essay on the ancient Egyptians was full of presentist comments, with little sense of the historical context. Muddling historical concepts. She misread the artist's depiction of Danton. Generally, very little evidence of historical thinking.	The most remarkable improvement was noted in Naomi's paper. Her focus and insights into <i>historical perceptions</i> were superb. Her answers illustrated a very good understanding of the contested nature of historical interpretations. She was one of the few students who tried to explain why Columbus Day was introduced in 1892. She used historical concepts well. Generally, her procedural knowledge indicated a mature level of historical thinking but there were gaps in her substantive knowledge.

Generally the data obtained from these two examination papers provides evidence that in most cases the pre-service educators are beginning to acquire or further develop historical gazes. The comparison of the two papers depicted in the table above suggests that there were notable improvements in the students' answers in the Social Science 2 papers, with the exception of Martin and Tracey. This implies that more exposure to historical ways of working with texts and constructing historical arguments has enabled the students to not only recognise but realise the rules of the discipline of history.

Of course not all students have attained the sophisticated levels of understanding the Six Historical Concepts, as established by Seixas (2000) and presented in figure 4.3 in chapter 4 of this research. It is also important to note that the examinations did not always provide opportunities for the students to demonstrate their understanding of all six concepts.

The data revealed that there were particular challenges faced by students with limited opportunities to practice writing historical essays in examination conditions. Many of the students struggled to write logical and coherent arguments that addressed the specific questions asked in the two examination papers. There was evidence of substantive knowledge but they experienced difficulties in selecting relevant evidence to substantiate their arguments. In some cases, sophisticated arguments were developed and supported by valid and accurate use of relevant evidence. What is interesting to note is that the students who grasped the intricacies of writing historical arguments do not necessarily have a background in school history up to matric level.

A similar situation was noted in the source-based answers where, apart from Nina, those students with matric history did not excel. Nina's school experience of engaging in the process of doing history has clearly provided her with an advantage at university; however Martin, Patrick, Penny and Verity struggle to use the evidence in the sources to develop their answers. This all correlates with the data in chapter 5 about school experiences of history that focussed on substantive knowledge and ignored procedural and conceptual knowledge.

Many of the students experienced difficulty in analysing the visual sources as historical interpretations. There was a general trend to impose traditional perspectives and not to work with the interpretation at hand. Comments made by Penny and Verity and Tracey in the focus group discussion explain that they did not analyse visual evidence such as photographs, paintings and cartoons at school, in spite of the fact that these have been used in the matric examinations for many years. History teachers do not always understand that learners need to be taught how to read pictures in much the same way as we teach them how to read texts. This has implications for how we prepare our future educators at the Wits School of Education.

Ultimately what the data from the two examinations revealed was that differential backgrounds in school history do not necessarily affect the acquisition of an historical gaze at university. The two examination papers suggest that it is possible to develop increasing levels of sophisticated historical thinking by adopting an enquiry approach to the discipline of history that encourages students to use both substantive and procedural knowledge.

What I have done in chapters 5 and 6 is to present an analysis of data from the interviews and focus groups and the two examination papers. At the end of chapter 5, I provided a brief summary of the key findings in terms of how the students spoke about their own experiences of the possibilities and constraints in acquiring an historical gaze. At the end of this chapter, I briefly summarized key findings that provided evidence that these students were indeed acquiring an historical gaze, albeit at different levels of sophistication. In the next chapter I discuss these findings in more depth in order to answer my overall research question: What are the opportunities and challenges pre-service educators with differential backgrounds in school history experience in acquiring an historical gaze?

## **Chapter 7: Discussion of the implications of the data**

This chapter will discuss the implications and findings of the data as described in chapters 5 and 6. In terms of this research project, I am particularly interested in what constraints and possibilities the Social Science 1 and 2 students experienced from the recontextualized knowledge developed to introduce them to the discipline of history and to the pedagogical content knowledge necessary to becoming Social Science and History educators who approach the subject with an appropriate historical gaze.

### **7.1 What historical knowledge did the Social Science 1 group have at the beginning of the History Module in July 2012?**

This research topic became important to me as a result of an informal questionnaire that I set up in order to get a sense of which students had chosen history as a matric subject in order to have some understanding of the group. What came out of this questionnaire astounded me as I realised that the number of students without school history was quite significant in that out of 75 students only 38 had matric history.

What it also revealed was that most of the students had a very simplistic, naïve understanding of what the subject of history was about. It also suggested that even if the students had no school history they did have some idea that the subject involved facts and dates and that it might be boring but it did have relevance to understanding the present. Many students wrote generalised stereotypical answers that could have come from posters in history teachers' classrooms or from songs such as Bob Marley's, "If you know your history, then you know where you coming from..." (Bob Marley, Buffalo Soldier lyrics, 1983). Very few wrote anything about evidence or different perspectives or that history is constructed and can change as new evidence emerges.

This data supported Tosh's description of social memory versus the discipline of history and also related to what Seixas described as "The best story about the past ... to shape collective memory" as opposed to "Disciplined knowledge or history as a way of knowing" (Seixas, 2000, pp. 21-24). Seixas and Peck describe three possible scenarios where young people may

encounter history outside of school, these are historical films such as *Pearl Harbour*, museums and historical novels (Seixas & Peck, 2004, p. 109). They explain that the role of school history has “a different objective” and that:

While these genres aim to sweep students in, school history should provide students with the ability to approach historical narratives critically - precisely not to be ‘swept in’. That is a good history curriculum would prompt students to ask of cinematic and fictional accounts of the past, as well as their textbooks’ and teachers’ accounts, who constructed this account and why? What sources did they use? What other accounts are there of the same events or lives? How and why do they differ? Which should we believe? (Seixas & Peck, 2004, p. 109)

From the answers written by the Social Science 1 students in July 2012, it appeared as if most had an understanding of history as a story about the past with very few writing about history as a way of knowing the past. There was very little evidence of the six historical concepts as outlined by Seixas and the Canadian Historical Thinking Project (2006, 2012) or the heuristics that Wineburg (1991, 2001) identified as the ‘unnatural way of thinking historically’.

I do acknowledge that this questionnaire just provides a glimpse into the students’ initial thinking about history and that it would have been more useful to have set up a more comprehensive test that asked the students to work with evidence and other historical thinking concepts. However these statements about what the Social Science 1 history students thought about history and whether or not they chose history as a matric subject provided a baseline for this research.

## **7.2 To what extent does the data presented in chapters 5 and 6 suggest that the Social Science 2 students of 2013 have acquired the substantive and procedural knowledge that indicates developing historical thinking and acquiring an historical gaze?**

In order to address this question I decided to work with the framework of the Historical Thinking Project’s (2012) adaptation of the Benchmarks of Historical Thinking first developed by the American Historical Association. I take each Social Science 2 student that I interviewed or who was part of a small focus group discussion and summarize in table format how their written responses to the Social Science 1 and 2 history examinations reveal evidence of their developing historical thinking.

The evidence comparing their initial questionnaires and interviews suggested that there was growth in understanding that history was more complicated than ‘events of the past’. Most of them appeared to have a real sense that history was not just about content but about actively engaging with the way that the past has been constructed by historians.

The students who had taken history as a matric subject at school did not necessarily feel that they had an advantage. They expressed frustration with some of their teachers who had just read from the textbook. Nina was an exception as she felt that her history teacher had exposed her to the discipline in an engaging and meaningful way. Lucy, Tracey and Susan had not chosen the subject at school as they had hated the experience in grade 9, seeing it as passive and boring or, in the case of Susan, less useful in terms of future career options. Martin, Penny and Verity had mixed experiences and so much had depended on their teachers.

This research has particularly emphasized the role of the grade 9 history teacher; ironically this is the place that these social science pre-service educators could find themselves, even if they do not choose to major in history. Some schools will expect a teacher to teach both components of Social Science, i.e. geography and history. Many of the pre-service educators described their junior history classes as boring and just about reading the textbook as a whole class, or working with the teacher’s notes. It appears as if they were not encouraged to engage in class discussions or to work on historical inquiries. In Lucy’s words, ‘theory and theory’, in contrast to geography which was viewed as a practical subject. It is also important to note how many of the pre-service educators heard about the history lessons from other students and were not impressed by their descriptions.

In my opinion, history teachers themselves are responsible for creating this negative impression of passive learners waiting for the bell to go. Most of the pre-service educators participating in this research describe how they had not been exposed to a variety of sources and that history had mainly been about learning content and that the teacher had relied on the textbook. Patrick had enjoyed his earlier experiences of history in Zimbabwe where he had been introduced to the basics of ‘what is history?’ but he too did not feel that he had had much opportunity to work with diverse perspectives. Naomi’s complete lack of exposure to history in her junior years did not inspire her to see the value of the subject but she appears to

have fully embraced the ideas of ‘doing history’ as indicated in her enthusiastic responses in the interview.

In order to discern evidence of acquiring an historical gaze, it is necessary to return to Bernstein’s description:

I have referred to the tacitly acquired ‘gaze’ of a *horizontal knowledge structure* by means of which the acquirer learns how to recognise, regard, realise and evaluate legitimately the phenomena of concern. (Bernstein, 1996, p. 169).

In the interviews and focus groups the pre-service educators appear to be able to ‘recognise and regard’ the historical concepts. Their understandings differ in terms of sophistication but they seem to have some sense of what it means to think in a historical way and that history is more than a body of facts. The two examinations provide evidence of whether they are then able to ‘realise and evaluate’ in a historical manner.

In some cases, the language and understanding expressed in the interviews and focus groups correlates with the examination answers. This is particularly the case with Nina and Susan, whose sophisticated discussion about the nature of the substantive and procedural knowledge of history, is mirrored in their examination papers. Nina’s school experience of engaging with the discipline of history suggests that she already had an historical gaze and her experiences at university have just further developed her acquisition to a more sophisticated level. She is now learning to think about how to develop this same experience for her own learners.

Although Susan did not take history as a matric subject, her experience in Northern Ireland and her interest in the issues invoked by the topics she has studied in Social Science 1 and 2 has resulted in her quickly acquiring a mature level of historical thinking.

Martin and Patrick were able to recognise the value of historical thinking but the evidence from their examinations suggests that they need more practice in order to better ‘realise and evaluate’ the historical way of thinking. Patrick’s ability to ‘understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations’ is indicative that he understands that the past is complex; he just needs more practice with working with sources or evidence to build up his procedural knowledge.

Verity and Penny have put their school experiences behind them and are both approaching history at university with enthusiasm and hard work. Although they both had matric history, they did not appear to have many opportunities to develop historical gazes at school. Their examinations reveal that in spite of their school experiences they are both acquiring the necessary historical thinking and knowledge that will hopefully inform their practice as history teachers.

Tracey is complex, her honesty in the focus group suggested that she did not enjoy history and particularly did not like the readings. Her first examination was interesting in that there was evidence of a fairly sophisticated level that she was engaging with the questions and supporting her answers with relevant and valid substantive knowledge. The final paper written in June 2013 provided very little evidence of historical thinking. It is difficult to understand why and points to the limitation of using examinations as evidence. It is possible that she just had a bad examination and that if she wrote on another day might produce something very different.

What it is possible to suggest, is that in contrast to Lucy and Susan who also only have grade 9 history, Tracey seems to not see that history is a process of inquiry. She still seems to feel that it is about a body of knowledge that needs to be read and this reading is particularly challenging.

Another element that could have affected Tracey's performance is her own admission that she did not know who 'Pizarro' was, in the same way that she struggled to conceptualize what 'mummies' were in ancient Egypt. The content of the history module of Social Science 2 appears to have been particularly complex for Tracey to imagine in her own frame of reference. It appears to be difficult for students who do not enjoy reading and have not come from homes where they were encouraged to be curious about the past and other parts of the world to conceptualize such societies as the Inca or the Aztecs. It also relates to adapting to more sophisticated vocabulary and foreign names and places. For some, the challenge of lectures and notes in English is challenging enough without complicating matters further by bringing in names written in other languages.

Lucy's perseverance and determination to succeed have helped her to overcome the challenges of historical reading and writing essays. She has a more positive attitude towards



history as a result of experiencing that it is not just ‘theory’ and that it is relevant and engaging. She appears to recognise and realise what it means to see the past historically.

Naomi’s interview indicated a mature understanding of the process of historical inquiry; she explained how she was transformed by her introduction to historical analysis at university and believed that she was now a critical thinker who took nothing for granted. It is important to note that the interviews took place after the Social Science 2 examination was written and this would explain why in Naomi’s Social Science 1 examination her performance does not correlate with what she is recognising and regarding in the interview. In Naomi’s case, I believe that the *Reading like a historian* activity on the ‘rescue’ of John Smith by Pocahontas, (Wineburg et al., 2011, See chapter 3 of this research) had a profound effect on her historical thinking. This is evident in the following answer that Naomi wrote when completing this task:

As I didn’t do history before this reading revealed that history is a subject which requires full evidence in order for a story to be trustworthy. I have also noticed that if you write a story about history you must not be bias or stereotype about your story. Another important thing that I have noticed is that John Smith was bias in the story as he didn’t include Pocahontas. So this tells me that history requires writers or reporters to be critical thinkers when telling their story as most people don’t accept any story they read without seeing clear evidence. (An extract from Naomi’s task on the rescue of John Smith based on Wineburg et al., 2011, pp. 1-16)

Even though Naomi’s answers are a little naive there are definite indications that this ‘story’ has made her conscious of the fact that history is complex. This approach to introducing young people to historical thinking needs more research and I will certainly be incorporating more of these kinds of activities into the Social Science 1 and 2 history courses.

### **Conclusion and recommendations for further research:**

This research revealed that differential backgrounds in school history had the potential to affect the acquisition of an historical gaze, but in most cases the school’s approach to teaching and learning history did not provide opportunities for developing historical thinking. The emphasis was more on substantive knowledge with limited chances to engage in historical inquiry. As Bertram suggests, acquiring an historical gaze “is about gaining mastery over both history content and mode of expression, which includes the procedural work of historians” (Bertram, 2009, p. 105).

The pre-service educators who appear to have acquired historical gazes have made the most of the opportunities to experience doing history at the Wits School of Education; they did not necessarily choose history as a matric subject at school. At this stage the data implies that differential backgrounds in school history have not affected the pre-service educators' acquisition of historical gazes. There do not seem to be substantive differences except where students were exposed to school history that engaged the learners in historical enquiry and taught both substantive and procedural knowledge of the discipline of history.

Another element of this research revealed the significance of individual dispositions as suggested by Maton (2007), the evidence suggests that there is such a concept as an "ideal knower" in the discipline of history. An article in *Teaching History* (2012) provides an interesting checklist of the common characteristics of historians as compiled by Sixth Form students in Britain:

Historians:

- 1) Are content to be uncertain;
- 2) Are interested in time;
- 3) Are keen to understand the roles played by people and factors in making things happen;
- 4) Like weighing up evidence;
- 5) Are always saying "yes, but..."
- 6) Are happy to reach more than one conclusion. (Laffin, 2012, p. 24)

This checklist correlates with the Six Historical Thinking Concepts as developed by Seixas et al. in the Canadian Historical Thinking Project (2012). They also relate to Wineburg's (2001) description of the 'unnatural process of historical thinking'. The 'ideal knower' of history does not develop when only exposed to substantive knowledge, it is very important to engage these students in the complexities of procedural and conceptual knowledge if they are to acquire an historical gaze.

Levesque explains why the use of the Six Historical Thinking Concepts is transforming Canadian history education at all levels:

Historically the assumption has been that knowing history implies gradually accumulating more content knowledge. Yet, without the intervention of a formal and critical sense of how historical knowledge is developed, manipulated or conveyed, students are left naively apprehending what is presented to them by authorities, be they political leaders, movie producers, parents or teachers... Outlining history as both substantive and procedural knowledge can help students make sense of the analytic process of analysing the past. (Levesque, 2011, p. 134)

There is much to learn from research into history education around the world that can be incorporated into developing pre-service educators' historical knowledge. This research has made me conscious of the need to model historical enquiry processes in order to enable our students to replicate this methodology in their own teaching. It is also essential to introduce the students to the work of Wineburg and Seixas, so that they can understand that historical thinking is not just something you either have or don't, but actually can be taught if it is made explicit and that opportunities are provided to engage with multiple texts and not just read from the textbook.

The approach of the Stanford History Education Group in their *Reading like a Historian* materials is one of "cognitive apprenticeship" whereby lessons are designed to "explicitly model historical reading skills such as sourcing, contextualization, corroboration and close reading... The theory suggests that cognitive skills must be made visible for students to learn how to practice them." (<http://sheg.stanford.edu>)

In terms of the history courses of Social Science 1 and 2 at the Wits School of Education, I am more convinced than ever that small group tutorials are valuable spaces for these pre-service teachers to engage in reasoned debates about historical issues. This research has revealed that not all students come from schools where they had opportunities for whole class discussions and we need to provide these experiences so that they will use them in their own classrooms. Here again the Stanford History Education Group explains why whole class discussions are important tools in history teaching:

Only in whole class discussion can students see that history is open to multiple interpretations, and that the same piece of evidence can support conflicting claims. Students often find this activity foreign and uncomfortable at first, but through practice can gain an understanding of their role as knowledge-makers in the history classrooms. (<http://sheg.stanford.edu>)

As this research implies that school history does not necessarily equip pre-service educators with the necessary knowledge to teach history using a disciplinary approach, it is imperative that the School of Education acknowledges the challenges these students face and provides opportunities to access this powerful knowledge. It is a daunting task to achieve in such a short period of time but this research suggests that it can be done, perhaps not all students will have sophisticated understandings of all Six Historical Thinking Concepts, but they will at least know that there is more to the discipline than a body of facts.

At the end of Social Science 2, these pre-service teachers will choose to major in history or geography and it will be interesting to see which subject these participating students select. A real concern is that due to financial constraints, students who are passionate about teaching history could be forced to meet bursary requirements and major in geography. This is a matter of urgency for all those who care about history education in South African schools and something that I will be addressing with professional bodies like the South African Society for History Teachers. It is important that leaders of schools and government policy makers have an understanding that history is a specialised discipline that cannot just be taught by anyone who can read a textbook. The discipline of history has so much potential to develop a nation of critical thinkers capable of making informed and reasoned decisions if the educators have acquired historical gazes.

This investigation has left me with many questions and opportunities for further research. I also feel empowered to introduce more activities that engage our students in historical inquiry and to be more specific about relating these activities to the heuristics of historical thinking and the Six Historical Thinking Concepts. An important follow up to this research would be to investigate how these pre-service educators are able to take the knowledge that they have acquired and use it to provide opportunities for their own students to develop historical gazes in the field of reproduction, or history classroom.

## Reference List

Appleby, J., Hunt, L. & Jacob, M. (1994) *Telling the Truth about History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Bain, R. (2000). Into the Breach. Using Research and Theory to Shape History Instruction. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History*. (pp. 331-352). New York: New York University Press.

Banks, F., Leach, J. & Moon, B. (2005). Extract from New understandings of teachers' pedagogic knowledge. *The Curriculum Journal*, 16(3), 331-340.

Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: theory, research, critique*. London: Taylor and Francis.

Bernstein, B. (2000). *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity (Revised Edition)*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.

Bertram, C. (2008). Exploring the concept of a 'historical gaze'. *Yesterday & Today* (3). South African Society for History Teachers.

Bertram, C. (2009). *Curriculum Recontextualization: A Case Study of the South African High School History Curriculum*. (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Kwa Zulu Natal.)

Bertram, C. (2012). Exploring an historical gaze: A language of description for the practice of school history. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44(3), 429-442.

Bottaro, J., Visser, P. & Worden, N. (2007). *In Search of History. Grade 12*. Cape Town: Oxford.

Burke, P. (Ed.). (1991). *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Carr, E.H. (1961). *What is History?* London: Macmillan.

Clark, P. (Ed.). (2011). *New Possibilities for the Past. Shaping History Education in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

Cole, E. & Barsalou, J. (June 1, 2006) Unite or Divide? The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies Emerging from Violent Conflict. *Special Report United Institute of Peace*. United States Institute of Peace.

Commonwealth of Australia. (2003). *Making History: A Guide for the teaching and learning of History in Australian Schools*. Carlton, South Victoria: Curriculum Corporation.

Deng, Z. (2007). Transforming the Subject Matter: Examining the Intellectual Roots of Pedagogical Content Knowledge. *The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto Curriculum Enquiry*. 37(3), Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Diamond, J. (1998). *Guns, Germs and Steel - A short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years*. London: Vintage.

Drake, F. & Nelson, L. (2009). *Engagement in Teaching History: Theory and practices for Middle and Secondary Teachers*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New Jersey: Merrill, Pearson.

Elton, G.R. (1967). *The Practice of History*. London: Collins, Fontana.

Evans, R.J. (2002). Prologue: What is History? – Now. In D. Cannadine (Ed.), *What is History Now*. pp. 1-18. New York, Palgrave MacMillan.

Evans, R.J. (2011). The Wonderfulness of Us (The Tory Interpretation of History). *The London Review of Books*, 33(6), 9-12.

Gilflores, J. & Alonso, C. (1995). Using Focus Groups in Educational Research. Exploring Teachers' Perspectives on Educational Change. *Evaluation Review* 19(1), 84-101.

Haydn, T., Arthur, J., Hunt, M. & Stephen, A. (Eds.). (2008). *Learning to Teach History in the Secondary School. A Companion to School Experience*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London: Routledge.

Hirst, P. & Peters, R. (1970). *The Logic of Education*. London: Routledge.

Hirst, P. (1974). *Knowledge and the Curriculum*. London: Routledge.

Husbands, C. (1996). *What is History Teaching? Language, Ideas and Meaning in Learning about the Past*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Husbands, C., Kitson, A. & Pendry, A. (2003). *Understanding History Teaching*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Husbands, C. (2011). What do history teachers (need to) know? A framework for understanding and developing practice. In I. Davies (Ed.), *Debates in History Teaching*. (pp. 84-95). London: Routledge.

Jansen, J. (2009). *Knowledge in the Blood*. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Kagan, J. (2009). *The Three Cultures, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and the Humanities*. New York: Cambridge.

Kitson, A. & McCully, A. (2005). You Hear About it for Real at School: Avoiding, containing and risk-taking in the history classroom. *Teaching History 120*. The Historical Association. 32-37.

Kitzinger, J. (1995). Introducing Focus Groups. *BMJ Vol. 311*. 299-302.

Kros, C. (2010). *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Laffin, D. (2012). Marr: magpie or marsh harrier. *Teaching History*. p. 24. British Historical Association.

Lee, P. & Ashby, R. (2000). Progression in Historical Understanding among Students Ages 7-14. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas. & S. Wineburg. *Knowing, Learning and Teaching History*. (pp. 199-222). New York: New York University Press.

Leonard, J.N. (1975). *Great Ages of Man. Ancient Americans*. Nederland: Time-Life International.

Levesque, S. (2011). What It Means to Think Historically. In P. Clark, (Ed.) *New Possibilities for the Past*. (pp.115-138). Vancouver, Toronto: UBC Press.

Ludlow, E.H. (2006). *Apprenticing Undergraduate History Students into Interpretive Practice through Local History*. (Unpublished Master's Research Report, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg).

Matheolane, M.N. (2012, October 31). History, a wise but ignored teacher. *Mail & Guardian*. [mg.co.za/article/2012-10-31](http://mg.co.za/article/2012-10-31).

Maton, K. (2007). Knowledge-Knower Structures in Intellectual and Educational Fields. In F. Christie & J.R. Martin (Eds.). *Language, Knowledge and Pedagogy. Functional Linguistic and Sociological Perspectives*. (pp. 87-108). London: Continuum.

McMillan, J. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) New Jersey: Pearson.

Paxton, M. (2007). Students' Interim Literacies as a Dynamic Resource for Teaching and Transformation. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 25(1), 45-55.

Roxby, P.M. (1914). Mr Mackinder's Books on the Teaching of Geography and History. (A Review). *The Geographical Teacher*, 7(6), 404-407.

Ruznyak, L. (2013). *Vision for a B Ed*. Staff Workshop Booklet, Wits School of Education.

Seixas, P. (1996). Conceptualizing the Growth of Historical Understanding. In D. Olson & N. Torrance (Eds.), *The Handbook of Education and Human Development* (pp. 765-783). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Seixas, P. (2000). Schweigen! Die Kinder! Or Does Postmodern History Have a Place in the Schools? In P. Stearns, P. Seixas & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History* (pp. 19-37). New York: New York University Press.



Seixas, P. & Peck, C. (2004). Teaching historical thinking. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges and Prospects for Canadian Social Studies* (pp. 109-117). Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.

Seixas, P. (2006). *Benchmarks of Historical Thinking: A Framework for Assessment in Canada*. Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness. Toronto: University of British Columbia.

Seixas, P. & Colyer, J. (2012). Assessment of Historical Thinking. A Report on the National Meeting of the Historical Thinking Project. Toronto: University of British Columbia.

Seixas, P. & Colyer, J. (2013). Linking Historical Thinking Concepts, Content and Competencies. A Report on the National Meeting of the Historical Thinking Project. Toronto: University of British Columbia.

Shulman, L. (1986). Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching. *Educational Researcher* 15(2), 4-14.

Sieborger, R. (2008, June 12). Don't deprive pupils of chance to study history. *Cape Times*. p. 9.

Singh, P. (2002). Pedagogising Knowledge: Bernstein's theory of the pedagogic device. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(4), 571-582.

Smillie, S. (2013, December 24). History ensures we remember who we are. *The Star*. p. 8.

Snow, C.P. (1963). *The Two Cultures: and a Second Look*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Stanford History Education Group. (<http://sheg.stanford.edu>) (2010). *Reading and Thinking Like a Historian Curriculum and Posters*.

Stanford, M. (1994). *A Companion to the Study of History*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Stearns, P., Barton, K., Bruce, C., Drake, F., Fischer, F., ... Frankel, N. (2006). *Benchmarks for Historical Thinking*. Washington DC: American Historical Association.

Stearns, P., Barton, K., Bruce, C., Drake, F., Fischer, F., ... Frankel, N. (2008). *Benchmarks for Professional Development in Teaching of History as a Discipline*. Washington DC: American Historical Association.

Sturley, D.M. (1969). *The Study of History*. London: Longmans.

Taylor, T. & Young, C. (2003). *Making History. A Guide for the Teaching and Learning of History in Australian Schools*. Commonwealth of Australia.

Thomson, D. (1972). *The Aims of History*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Tindall, G. & Shi, D. (2010). *America: A Narrative History*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Tosh, J. (1991). *The pursuit of History*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). London: Longman.

Tosh, J. (2010). *The Pursuit of History*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed). Harlow, England: Pearson Education.

Tyldesley, J. (2010). *The Private Lives of Pharaohs*. London: Macmillan.

Wilson, S. & Wineburg, S. (1998). Peering at History through Different Lenses: The Role of Disciplinary Perspectives in Teaching History. *Teachers College Record*. 89(4), 525-539.

Wineburg, S. (1991) On the Reading of Historical Texts: Notes on the Breach Between School and Academy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28(3), 495-519.

Wineburg, S. (1999). Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 80(7), 488-499.

Wineburg, S. (2000). Making Historical Sense. In P. Stearns, P. Seixas & S. Wineburg (Eds.), *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History*. (pp. 306-325). New York: New York University Press.

Wineburg, S. (2001). *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts. Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Wineburg, S. (2007). Unnatural and Essential: the Nature of Historical Thinking. *Teaching History*. 129. The Historical Association.

Wineburg, S., Martin, D. & Monte-Sano, C. (2011). *Reading like A Historian*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Wits School of Education. (2013). Course Outline for History Social Science 2.

Wright, J. (2012). Turbulent times: Political Transformations in the North and East, 1760s - 1830s. In Hamilton, C., Mbenga, B. & Ross, R. (Eds.) *The Cambridge History of South Africa*. (Vol. 1, pp. 211-251). Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

### **Policy Documents:**

Department of Basic Education. (2010). *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Social Science, Intermediate and Senior Phase (G.E.T.)*. Pretoria.

Department of Basic Education. (2010). *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). History. Grades 10-12.(F.E.T.)*. Pretoria.

*Government Gazette*, 15 July 2011. *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications*. No. 34467.

Values in Education Initiative. (Update 2002). *Report of the History and Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education*. Pretoria.

**APPENDIX A: Summarized version of Wits School of Education Social Science 1  
History Course Outline July 2012.**

**Course Outline Social Science 1 History 2012**

By the end of the course students should demonstrate:

1. **Knowledge**
  - Of key events, people and ideas in the period studied;
  - Of the nature of history as a mode of enquiry.
2. **Understanding** of key historical concepts associated with the study of humans in society;
3. The **ability**
  - To read and analyse a variety of sources and academic texts;
  - To explain, describe and apply historical concepts;
  - To structure and write an analytical or interpretative history essay;
  - To engage with complex moral and ethical issues raised by their study of history and to reflect on the implications of this for a democratic society.

**Structure of the history Module:**

1. Ancient Egypt: An African civilization. (4 weeks)
2. The French Revolution. (3 weeks)
3. The Industrial Revolution. (4 weeks)

**Assessment:**

TEST on Using Evidence. (Ancient Egypt)

RESEARCH ESSAY on Ancient Egypt.

TEST on the French Revolution.

RESEARCH ESSAY on the Industrial Revolution.

Various forms of assessment are used to assess the course outcomes. All assignments, tutorials and tests done during a module will contribute to the course mark. Each module will be assessed as a unit. 50% of the mark will come from course work and 50% from the exam at the end of the module.

The **Methodology** component of the course will be integrated with the academic components and as a result, students should demonstrate:

4. An **understanding** of the implications of the nature of history for the teacher;
5. A **critical knowledge** of the main features of the CAPS (Curriculum and Policy Statements. Department of Basic Education) as they apply to teaching the history themes in Senior Primary and Secondary Social Sciences and History.
6. The **ability** to construct, collect and use a variety of history teaching resources and strategies appropriate to the learners and their context.

## APPENDIX B: Wits School of Education History Essay Marking Rubric.

ESSAY ANALYSIS SHEET: (g = good, f = fair, I = inadequate) Developed by Dr E.H. Ludlow.

Content /20	Skill /25	Presentation /5
<b>Facts appropriate</b> – Selects relevant information and covers all aspects of the question, not just isolated ones.	<b>Issues well defined in introduction</b> - Doesn't simply rephrase the question but identifies the issues and direction of the essay. Usually sets the scene.	<b>Appearance of work</b> – General appearance. Typed 1 ½ spacing, font 11-12.
<b>Evidence of reading beyond lecture and tutorial material</b> - The goal is substantial reading of academic texts. At this stage, a minimum of THREE chapters or articles from the stipulated reading list. No unsourced internet material or reliance on only one or two sources.	<b>Problem understood</b> – With analysis, this refers to a grasp of the issues dealt with.  <b>Use of appropriate quotations</b> – Neither too many nor too few. Cites specific views and insights but not common knowledge.	<b>Bibliography</b> – Has one, and it is correctly and fully set out in accordance with the library guide. Includes city: publisher.
<b>Chronology</b> – Does not collapse periods and gives dates to mark periods and processes of change.	<b>Synthesis of material</b> - Avoids cut and paste history, with each paragraph from a different author. Builds essay around key points and integrates material relevant to this.	<b>Quotations correctly acknowledged</b> – Author, date, page.
<b>Written in own words i.e. not plagiarized. Yes/No.</b>	<b>Analysis of major points</b> - Links all information to the question being asked. Evidence of thinking for self.	<b>Use of language</b> - Consistent use of past tense; has spell-checked. Reader is able to follow argument.
	Logical Development of argument - Essay has clear structure; doesn't hop around.	
	<b>Conclusion</b> – Sums up argument clearly, not just 'so we can see that...'	

NOTE: The mark out of 50 is then multiplied by 2 and presented as a percentage. (/100).

## **APPENDIX C: Summarized version of Wits School of Education Social Science 2 History Course Outline 2013**

### **Course Outline for Social Science 2 2013**

**Note that this course is allocated 11 weeks which is shared** between two lecturers.

Students attended four hours of lectures and then had a one hour tutorial each week.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this module students should begin to demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of the nature of pre-colonial societies in southern Africa and pre-Columbian America and of issues concerning 'discovery' and state formation.
2. An **understanding**
  - a) Of key historical terms and concepts;
  - b) Of history as a form of enquiry rather than as a set of fixed facts.
3. The **ability**
  - To research, analyse and interpret various types of evidence: primary and secondary forms of written and visual evidence;
  - To summarize and synthesize the various pieces of evidence and differing viewpoints and use them to answer questions posed;
  - To structure and express ideas, interpretations and arguments in the form of a written essay;
  - To begin to engage with issues and problems related to studying and teaching South African history and controversial topics such as 'discovery'.
  - To present their own point of view on issues.

### **Structure of the History Module:**

1. **America before and after Columbus. ( 5 ½ weeks)**
2. **South Africa before and after Van Riebeeck (5 ½ weeks)**

**Assessment:**

RESEARCH ESSAY on “Discovery of America”.

TEST on the settlement and colonisation of North America.

RESEARCH ESSAY on Mapungubwe.

TEST on Shaka.

NOTE: These 4 marks make up the Coursework component which counts 50% which is added to the June Exam that also counts 50%.



**APPENDIX D: Summarized version of Wits School of Education Social Science 1  
History Examination November 2012**

Social Science 1 History Module November 2012

Answer TWO essay questions. ONE from Question 1 and ONE from Question 2.

Question 1: Egypt

Either 1.1

“We know much more about the wealthy people of Egypt than we do about the ordinary people.”  
(Malek, J. 2006)

Discuss whether or not you agree with Jaromir Malek and explain how this affects the work of historians trying to write ancient Egyptian history. (50)

OR

1.2

From the discovery of King Tutankhamen’s tomb in 1922, there has been much debate about how the young king died. Explain how the use of new technologies has changed the story from 1968 until the most recent results released in 2010. (50)

Question 2: The Industrial Revolution

Either 2.1

Examine this picture of a British cotton mill in 1851 (Picture of women working the looms with a male overseer - no children, clean open spaces, opposite of the traditional image.)

- a) What image of factory conditions is the artist portraying? Give reasons for your answer. (10)
- b) Use what you have learnt about the emergence of factories in Britain during the Industrial Revolution and working conditions in them. Explain whether or not this is a fair representation of factories in general, giving reasons for your answer. (40) (50)

OR

1.2. “Sooner or later - Marx said - the confrontation [between capitalist and worker] has got to turn deadly, and the working class will arrive at revolution. (Rius, 1990. *Marx for beginners*, p. 139.)

- a) What is Marx predicting for Britain?
- b) In an essay on political change in Britain, explain why his predictions did not come true. (50)

### Question 3: The French Revolution (Compulsory)

#### 3.1. The Estates-General

Read the passage below (an extract from the memoirs of a Comtesse (written in 1836) who was present at Versailles when the King accepted the idea of the National Assembly - quite favourable about how the King was actually supportive of the third estate), and then answer these questions:

- a) What were the Estates-General? (2)
- b) Why was the Estates-General called in May 1789? (4)
- c) What is the King's attitude towards the Third Estate as revealed in this passage? (4)
- d) Imagine that these conversations in the royal circle were leaked to members of the Third Estate in 1789. How would you, a supporter of the Third Estate, reply? Write an anonymous pamphlet attacking the king and the royal circle, which includes evidence from the passage as well as your knowledge of the French Revolution. (20)

#### 3.2. The Reign of Terror

Study the following picture (Danton going to his death during the Reign of Terror), then answer the questions that follow:

- a) i) What was used as a means of executing many people during the Reign of Terror? (The picture only shows the stairs leading to this machine) (2)  
ii) How was this machine a product of revolutionary thinking? (3)
- b) What role did Danton play during the French Revolution? In your answer explain his role in one of the Parisian clubs and during the Reign of Terror. (6)
- c) On his way to his execution, Danton supposedly said, "My only regret is that I am going before that rat Robespierre."
  - i) Who was Robespierre? (2)
  - ii) Why did Danton say these words? (3)
- d) What is the artist's attitude to Danton? Comment on how Danton is portrayed in this picture to support your answer. (4)

(Total 50)

**APPENDIX E: Summarized version of Wits School of Education Social Science 2 History Examination June 2013.**

Wits School of Education: Educ 2207 June 2013. (150 marks = 3 Questions in 3 Hours)

**Question 1:**

Either Question 1(a):

Christopher Columbus's *discovery* of the so-called New World was initially seen as a great achievement. By contrast Jared Diamond wrote in 1998 that the conquest of this New World was really about "Guns, Germs and Steel". Explain how and why historical perceptions about the discovery and the conquest of the New World have changed, with specific reference to the Inca. (50)

Or Question 1 (b):

Novels and films of the American *frontier* often reinforce stereotypes of it as the border between the civilized and uncivilized. The *savagery* of the Native Americans is contrasted with the "rugged individualism" of the European settler.

Discuss the statement above. (50)

**Question 2:**

Either 2(a):

- a) What kind of evidence has been used to build our understanding of both Khoisan and Bantu-speaking societies that lived in southern Africa before the permanent settlement of Europeans? (15)
- b) Use examples from this evidence to outline the rise of Mapungubwe at the confluence of the Shashi and Limpopo Rivers by the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. (35)

Or Question 2(b):

You are asked to explain to the recipients of the Order of Mapungubwe the significance of this 13<sup>th</sup> Century African state. What would you tell them? Support your answer with sound historical evidence. (50)

**Question 3:** Required the students to read an extract from a secondary account adapted from *The Zulu Kings* written by Brian Roberts in 1974. The Social Science 2 students were given the extract two weeks before the exam as it was 2 ½ pages long.

The questions were:

3.1. According to Roberts in this extract, what did Shaka achieve in his lifetime, and by what means did he supposedly accomplish this? (10)

3.2. a) What kinds of dishonest or distorted reporting does Roberts detect in the accounts of Shaka provided by British traders, King, Isaacs and Fynn? (6)

b) What influence does Roberts regard the traders' accounts to have had on the image of Shaka which outsiders had and have? (6)

3.3. Why would Roberts' assessment of Shaka be seen as an example of a 'great man' view of Zulu history? (3)

3.4. a) What is the connection between this 'great man' interpretation of Shaka and a traditional explanation of the 'Mfecane' as an important period in southern African history?

b) How and why do many modern historians challenge, or at least modify, this kind of explanation of the role of Shaka and the Mfecane in the history of southern Africa? (20)

(50 marks)

## **APPENDIX F: Ethics Document: Information letter to participants in this research**

### **STUDENTS' INFORMATION LEAFLET AND INFORMED CONSENT**

## **UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, JOHANNESBURG**

May/ June 2013

Dear Student

My name is Ms Siobhan Glanvill, a lecturer in the History in Education Department of the University of the Witwatersrand School of Education. I am conducting this research project in order to achieve a Master's in Education and would like to take this opportunity to invite you as a Social Science/ History student to participate in my Masters Research project.

**I am investigating the possible challenges pre-service student educators could face at the Wits School of Education as they study to become History and Social Science teachers without a specific background in the discipline of History.**

My aims are to gain a deeper understanding of the levels of subject knowledge that Social Science student educators bring to the course and to investigate the possible challenges these student educators face when they encounter the history components of the two year course that we share with Geography. Of particular concern are the student educators who did not choose History as a matric subject and perhaps last studied history in Grade 9. This research is partly in response to comments made on course evaluations by Social Science students that they were concerned that the history department did not always recognize that they did not have a background in the discipline of history. I am hoping that your participation in this research project will give us some insights into these challenges.

My investigation involves conducting semi-structured interviews where I would ask questions about your own experiences in relation to school history and then how these experiences have impacted on your study of history at the Wits School of Education. These interviews should take no more than one hour of your time at a time of your convenience and will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. You will be guaranteed anonymity throughout the research and in the later writing up of the research as pseudonyms will be used.

I would also like to set up focus groups of four or five students, where I would like you to discuss with each other your experiences of the Social Science History courses. Please note that these will be informal and in no way will you be expected to prepare for them. I would ensure that these group discussions would be convened at a time suitable to all involved and again would not expect more than an hour of your time. These conversations will also be audio-recorded and then transcribed. Here too your confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms.

In the case of Social Science 1 and 2 students, I would refer to the informal questionnaires that I asked right at the beginning of the History Module in July 2012. This questionnaire first alerted me to the fact that there were a large number of students who had not chosen History as a Matric

subject and perhaps could face particular challenges. The main purpose of looking at the questionnaire will be to establish initial perceptions of what it means to study History. No names or student numbers will be used.

Another form of data I would ask your permission to use is the Social Science 2 test on investigating the story of John Smith and Pocahontas. This will not be used to single out individuals but rather to trace a possible development in understanding the complexity of historical enquiry.

I would also like to look at Social Science 1 and 2 History exam papers just to establish patterns and trends in historical thinking. I will ask a neutral observer to allocate me papers where names and numbers have been removed. No student will be advantaged or disadvantaged by my research. Here too, anonymity is guaranteed.

In all cases, written and electronic data will be stored safely in a storeroom in the School of Education and will be destroyed between 3-5 years after I have completed my research.

If you are interested you are most welcome to meet with me to discuss what this research has revealed.

Your participation is completely voluntary and in no way will it have any bearing on your marks and evaluation of course work. You are welcome to withdraw at any time without any fear of jeopardising your experience in the Social Science or History Courses.

I look forward to working together to gain more insights into understanding the patterns in experiences of people who have a background in History as compared to those who don't in order to better our understanding of preparing teachers to teach Social Science and History.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. My office is Campus Centre 209.

Thank you

Siobhan Glanvill (Lecturer in History Education) [Siobhan.glanvill@wits.ac.za](mailto:Siobhan.glanvill@wits.ac.za)

**Please complete the consent form on the next page if you are willing to help me.**

**PARTICIPANTS' INFORMED CONSENT**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,  
JOHANNESBURG**

**Research Topic: Investigating the possible challenges pre-service student educators face at the Wits School of Education as they study to become History and Social Science teachers without a specific background in the discipline of History.**

I.....

**(FIRST NAME AND SURNAME)**

**Agree / disagree to participate in this research project. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without negative consequences. I am aware that any information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and respect through the use of pseudonyms and that in no way will I be penalised or advantaged for my participation.**

**I agree to participate in the following: (Please circle the one you select. Note some are only applicable to Social Science 2)**

**INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW (with Siobhan Glanvill) YES / NO**

**FOCUS GROUPS (with other students) YES / NO**

**I agree to the audio-recording of these interviews or focus groups YES / NO**

**I agree to allow the researcher to use the questionnaire from July 2012 YES/ NO**

**I agree to allow the researcher to analyse the test on investigating the story of Pocahontas and John Smith written in April 2013 to investigate understanding of the process of historical enquiry.**

**YES/NO**

**I agree to allow the researcher to refer to my Social Science 1 and 2 exam papers in order to establish patterns and trends and not to categorize individual students.**

**YES / NO**

**I agree to allow the researcher to use this data to present at conferences or in journal articles in the future on condition that anonymity is retained.**

**YES / NO**

**SIGNED.....**

**DATE.....**

**APPENDIX G: Schedule of questions for semi-structured individual interviews.**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS**

Protocol number: 2013ECE104M

<b>Main Question</b>	<b>Possible Probe Questions</b>	<b>Reason for asking</b>
<b>1. Biographical background</b>	<b>Name (will use pseudonyms) Age and year of study.</b>	<b>To establish a sense of the individual student's background.</b>
<b>2. Educational background</b>	<b>Year matriculated? Which school? Did you write an Outcomes Based Matric Exam?</b>	<b>To get some understanding of the curriculum this student was exposed to.</b>
<b>3. What subjects did you choose as Matric subjects?</b>	<b>If yes why? If no why? Did the school offer history to Matric?</b>	<b>To establish this student's specific academic background in the discipline of history.</b>
<b>4. What do you remember about school history?</b>	<b>What did you enjoy? What did you dislike?</b>	<b>To get some insight into how this student feels about the subject as a result of their school experiences?</b>
<b>5. What made you decide to teach?</b>	<b>Did you want to teach History? What are your other subjects and how similar or different are they to History?</b>	<b>To establish some context as to why the student is teaching and how history relates to their other subjects.</b>
<b>6. Why did you choose social science at Wits School of Education?</b>	<b>Was this your first choice? (This could be extended to ask 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years why they have chosen History as a major...)</b>	<b>To get an understanding of reasons for choosing Social Science.</b>
<b>7. How do you feel about the combination of Geography and History?</b>	<b>Which subject is your strongest? Does the idea of doing both make sense to you?</b>	<b>To get insights into the way that this student feels about the enforced combination of subjects.</b>
<b>8. What challenges have you faced in Social Science 1 and 2?</b>	<b>Which subject is most challenging for you? Explain why?</b>	<b>To get some idea of areas of difficulty that this student might have faced in their experiences of Social Science 1 and 2.</b>
<b>9. What have you enjoyed about Social Science 1 and 2?</b>	<b>Which topics? Tasks? Etc...</b>	<b>To get some feedback from this student on what topics or tasks they found interesting.</b>
<b>10. How do you feel about teaching history?</b>	<b>What are you looking forward to? What are you worried about?</b>	<b>To get some insights into this student's perceptions of teaching history.</b>
<b>11. What could we do at the Wits School of Education to help future Social Science students?</b>	<b>My particular concern is what we could do in the history module.</b>	<b>To get some feedback from this student based on their own experience of what we could do to improve the Social Science /history experience?</b>



## APPENDIX H: Schedule of questions for focus group discussions

Interview Schedule for Social Science and History Focus Groups 2013

Protocol No: 2013ECE104M

Biographical data will be elicited when the students introduce themselves to each other. Although they have been in the same lectures it is possible that they will not know each other's names. They will be reminded that the focus group discussion is confidential and that their names will not be used in writing up this research.

Main Question	Possible Probe Questions	Reason for asking
1. Why should we study History?	Is it relevant? What does it offer to young people? How does this differ from or relate to other subjects you have studied?	To get some discussion going about the place of History in the school curriculum. To get some sense of the groups' attitudes towards the subject.
2. There are some universities that require students to do both History and Geography in order to teach Social Science, whereas others don't. What are your views?	Does it make sense to insist on this combination? Does it work? What are the challenges and what are the benefits? What have you enjoyed about the course? What needs to be improved?	To initiate discussion about the Social Science course offered at the Wits School of Education. To get some insights from the students' own experiences.
3. What have you found challenging, rewarding, interesting or surprising about teaching History?	Discuss some experiences you have had teaching History. Are there particular concerns you have about teaching the subject?	To get some feedback on the groups' teaching experiences.
4. If you had to choose any topics to teach in the History classroom, which ones would you choose and why?	Which ones would you rather avoid? Why? Which topics do you regard as being difficult to teach? Why?	To get a discussion going on particular topics the students enjoyed and to see if we do include their interests where possible? To gain some insights into topics the students might find challenging.