

**Test the use of role play as a tool for
the engagement with source analysis
skills within history**

Mark Rayner

“History is, strictly speaking, the study of questions; the study of answers belongs to anthropology and sociology”

(W.H. Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, 1962)

“[sources are]... an epic parade of characters and utterances ... each sounding a particular note in the historical score”

(Simon Schama, *Forward in Cohen and Major, History in Quotations*, 2004)

Thank you to

Catherine Cole for trying out my weird new lessons and for helping me to deconstruct the method I was attempting to achieve.

Diana Laffin for her support and enthusiasm towards the project. It is rare thing to find a curriculum dept that is so willing to embrace new ideas and try things that might not work.

David Godfrey for his continued support.

The students of **S10hsm.11** whose creative minds enabled the activities to come to life.

INTRODUCTION

The new AS specification for History has given me concerns with specific areas of the course and skills required. The first module is essential to the **success, enjoyment and confidence** of the students throughout their study of History. Many students have preconceptions of history as a series of events or facts which actually happened around which they answer questions, but if we are to believe “There is no history, only historians”[anon], and as the students are historians, they have to appreciate that the way in which historians construct history is through a range of source material.

Role-play as a teaching method often suffers from a range of misconceptions (see appendix 1) and is often referred to as a “fun extra” or that teachers avoid because they do “not having enough time” (Dawson&Banham;2002;pp12), implying that it holds no intrinsic value. The other problem is that “there is an unfortunate confusion between role-play and acting” (Van Ments; 1983;pp20), and as such I want to set out from the start that I see these are two very separate skills and that my take on role-play does not involve dressing up or writing scripts. Any performance the students give comes from their own experience of ideas and concepts. Therefore it is important to recognise that History is a subject that relies on a range of abstract theories and concepts (a student cannot see, touch, taste or hear Communism, for example) and as such it is my belief that role-play can facilitate the students ability to interact with such concepts.

1. Tutor loses control over what is learnt and the order in which it is learnt.
2. Simplifications can mislead.
3. Uses a large amount of time.
4. Uses other resources – people, space, special items.
5. Depends on the quality of tutor and student.
6. Impact may trigger off withdrawal or defence symptoms.
7. May be seen as too entertaining or frivolous.
8. May dominate learning to the exclusion of solid theory and facts.
9. May depend on what students already know.

Fig. 1

Disadvantages of role-play

[Van Ments;1983;pp27]

My approach to role play in this project is also influenced by the work of Penny Bundy in her thesis *Using Drama in the Counselling Processes* (2006) in which she explicitly demonstrates the effective use of dramatic role-play to empower the victims of child abuse. She suggests that role play can enable “self-confidence ... rid them of self-doubt ... learn not to care what others think ... [and] gain a sense of achievement through either doing it myself or helping others do it”. (Bundy,2006,pp7). In this sense, I intend to tackle the students self confidence and self awareness as well as developing a safe environment for the students to develop a form of kinaesthetic vocabulary, ie: their responses to Historical material do not always have to be expressed within an academic framework.

My concerns regarding the students confidence was very much in line with the work of Carol S Dweck in which she discusses the mind-set that many students have which is that “Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you cannot change very much” (Dweck:12:2006) and that “You are a certain type of person, and there is not much that can be done to really change that”(13:2006). In many senses, that is the mindset that many students approach written work with. My concept was that role-play is a way of stepping out of yourself and a way of creating a new form of dialogue, a new language in some senses.

The concept is to challenge what role play is and what can be achieved through its use, both in terms of its suitability and flexibility - extending the boundaries of what role-play can achieve whilst also addressing its limitations. (see appendix 11 for initial enquiry questions)

METHODS USED

I want to be clear in my own practice what role-play can actually offer and through a series of minimal and maximal activities I will be assessing the impact the activities have on the student's ability to use sources and integrate them into their work. Specifically, I want to look at how natural instinctual skills of analysing information can be harnessed to encourage confidence when handling and critiquing sources. i.e: get the students playing games which are fun and they won't even realise they are using sources – then when they come to do the real thing the skills will be second nature and transferable to a range of different forms.

My key objective was to address the concerns of **success, enjoyment and confidence**. To this end I planned four sessions I would use as case-studies, each informed by the findings and reflections on my previous activity(see Fig. 2).

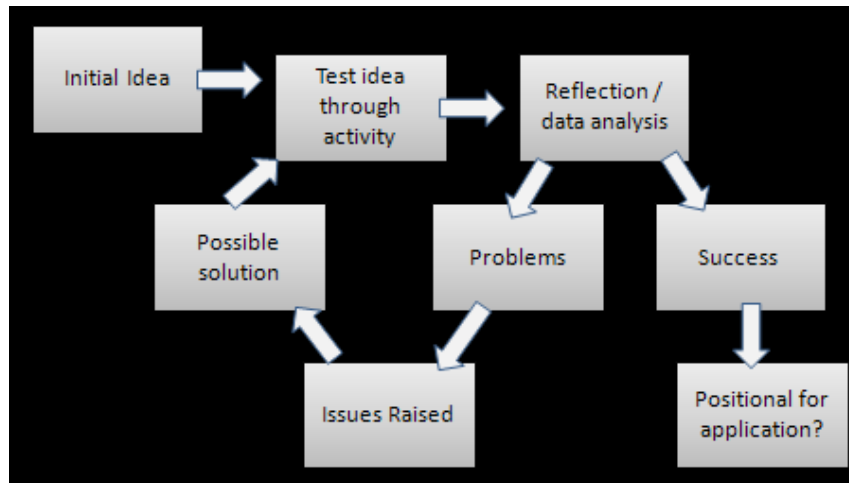


Fig. 2

This led me to incorporate a murder-mystery, filming a documentary, experimenting with mock exams and running revision workshops. (See appendix 5-8 for rationale of each activity and my initial observations – along with exemplar resources.)

FINDINGS

Findings - Activity 1

The murder mystery was followed by a questionnaire (see appendix 1) asking the students to rate their experience.

The questionnaire also ask the students about their *preferred learning styles* which was done in conjunction with the multiple/emotional intelligence surveys completed by the students with the tutorial program. Comparing the students learning styles to their responses to the Murder Mystery element creates some interesting issues, which I initially thought to be contradictions, but have since reflected that they perhaps hold the key to a number of issues I wanted to tackle. Those that identified kinaesthetic learning, role-plays, debates, active learning, do not seem to have valued the murder mystery far less than those who are on the opposite side of the spectrum, preferring mathematical problems, quite reading/listening, logic and patterns, research. This leads me to a suggested hypothesis which is that the role-play activity itself is a way for the students who are not naturally kinaesthetic to engage in a kinaesthetic way which allows them to escape their preferred (which to some extent they have become accustomed to) learning styles: this is something different for them, which is not intimidating or over the top in an acting/performing manner, but, they are taking on a role which they can do as quietly as they choose, internally acting/performing without the need of an audience. On the other hand the naturally kinaesthetic learners who appear to have been turned off by the task, perhaps because as a role-play it does not do what they expect of it: they are not getting out of their seats, they are not acting and physically inhabiting the roles they have been asked to embrace. Clearly this highlights that with role-play activities should be in-built choices for those that want to take the “show” role and for those who prefer to internalise their experience.

In addressing the issue of confidence I feel that in some ways I have opened a can of worms in that there are deep rooted problems(which led me to devise Activity 3) for the students adjusting to the expectations of A-Level from GCSE:

- Students feedback showed high levels of confidence of dealing with sources (this appears to be misplaced – especially in light of some work later submitted) – this does prove to be a stumbling block in terms of the over confident students willingness to engage with the role-play activities - The students come in with such ridged ideas about their own ability that it is very hard to shift them away from that and, in effect, un-teach them.
- Where-as there were those who were far more open minded who were happy to accept that they had not mastered it were more accepting of the new directions they had to/could take.

Findings - Activity 2

The Documentary was prompted by students suggestions of activities they would like to undertake following the multiple intelligence review after activity 1. This was followed by a questionnaire (see appendix 2)

One of the overriding aspects that came out of this was how much the students enjoyed taking part in this activity, for example; in response to the questionnaire ***Comment on how well you worked as a group*** they gave the following;

“Yes, we got on well and had fun too”

“Having fun at the same time”

“we really enjoyed this, everyone worked well together”

“Excellent... everyone got to participate”.

These comments clearly show that the students engaged with the task and took great satisfaction in the collaborative task.

A positive outcome to the activity is found in the questionnaire responses to **How did you incorporate your own knowledge?** In which most indicated that their own knowledge helped to give context to the sources, for example;

“We used our knowledge of the issues to put these sources into the scene to give a realistic feel”

“We used stories or royal scandal to help set the scene”,

“We used the events we learnt about to help us make our points”.

One student even responded to the question **What did you learn by making the documentary?**

“How all the sources linked together to create a clear picture of the decline in deference”.

HINT TO TEACHERS: As with all role-play activities the students always comment about **What would you like to be done differently next time?** is that “We needed more time” “More time to prepare” (Despite the fact that my questionnaire clearly stated that this was not an option), however, from my perspective I judge that they really would not have benefited from more time. It was the fact that the students had to do the documentary fast and under pressure and had to respond straight away that forced them to make instinctive judgements and roll with an idea or a concept. More time would have been a disadvantage and it would have become over elaborate and mechanical and perhaps failed to really address the enquiry.

Findings - Activity 3

My findings for this activity relied purely on my own classroom observations and discussions with students. Through the process of enacting a top grade student some of them did somethings they know they should have been doing but instinctively wouldn't. One student [candidate-role] responded with:

“I knew what I was supposed to be doing, but wanted to do it my way. By doing the experiment I realised that it was better that I did them rather than stick to my old ways”

Whilst a student [scientist-role] who had initially been sceptical about the process claimed:

"I saw ***** doing it [the exam] differently. Most of what he did seemed wrong, which made me think about why I did it the way I did. But the way he organised his sources seemed quicker, so I'll try that next time."

As a product of this observation the students had learnt a lot about each other's process and encouraged them to enter into this debate.

How successful this role-play was, I have mixed feelings, but I certainly feel that it was challenging to the students and it did enthuse them to consider that they were not limited by their own mind-set. In referring back to the point about mind-set, "You are a certain type of person", this forced them to **be** somebody different and consider the limitations of their own attitudes.

Findings - Activity 4

The workshop was followed up with a quick questionnaire (see appendix 3) which the students were asked to complete in their own time (with a 1/3 take up) which was also designed to help the students to reflect on the metacognition processes which we undertook and the applicable outcomes in terms of improving their own performance. What was most pleasing was that I asked the students to indicate confidence using sources before (when most indicated they were not confident) and after the session when all expressed a huge improvement and believed that a lot of "pennies-dropped". The student comments also indicated that significant learning had taken place;

"Depending on a certain date a major event may have occurred, altering the persons view within the source and that you need to pay particular attention to"

"Different people have different motives within a source"

"The way a person understands a source can tell you about their view at the time the source was written and why they may have that outlook"

"It is important to compare provenance along with the actual body of the text so that you can compare the actual motives behind the source"

What is particularly pleasing about the workshop is that the students clearly have gained in their confidence when dealing with sources, but even more clearly they have grasped the manner in which this must be applied to a specific historical enquiry. In my view, and that of the lesson observer, this was a very successful session and I believe demonstrated what can be achieved through role-play.

DISCUSSION

Throughout the process I have been acutely aware that identifying What is role-play? Varies from person to person, but I believe that I have, in so far as my own practice goes, [re]defined role-playas:

Through a range of stimulus material the students immerse themselves in a role which allows them to undertake tasks which are informed by a specific filtered view of the world. Role-play should facilitate free choice as the students express their “role” self.

One of my initial concerns was whether to inform the students of the process they were undertaking or just to allow them to enjoy the mystery game (Activity 1). In short term it was positive: enjoyment was clearly high (most indicated strong responses) and in response to the question ***The Murder Mystery helped me gain an understanding of Britain in the 1940's?*** Almost every single student ticked this as being strongly agreed. Clearly Britain in 1945 had become a real character in the story of the Murder Mystery. On talking to the students they reflected that they felt as if they had “lived it”, and the value of that cannot be underestimated as they often referred back to the atmospheric feel of the period. In the long term; once I had opened the process up to the students and explained the purpose of the Action Research I found we moved into a symbiotic relationship, ie; students undertook a self reflective approach that fed into my research directly. Thus, I would suggest that a natural instinctual response creates a more honest reaction, but this is only valid if the activity is then “opened up” to allow the students to debrief and assess those reactions.

However, what was problematic about some of these tasks was that the role-play should have been translated into a written piece of work – this I see as a failing of this activity as was undertaken this year (of course, on reflection I will amend this). The students had created and embraced their roles, we broke them down and discussed the structure and the links with the sources. The culmination of this process should then have been for the students to translate their in-role arguments into a written argument – and this should have been fairly straight forward and would have worked towards more depth and long term learning. The function and purpose of the task, as I see it, is not fully served without that final element to bring it together.

“Safe-guards” is an essential issue that must be addressed because the students are placing themselves in a potential vulnerable position by role-playing because there is an expectation that they bring a part of themselves to the role to allow themselves the fully engage, and for many the idea of acting a part is intimidating. Thus, ensuring that the students feel protected and trust their environment is vital.

The notion of “show” or showing-off roles within these type of activities can be very dangerous – this is not intended as a platform for the students ego or performing arts skills – there must therefore be clear mechanisms in place that ensure the theoretical aspect is tackled before the “show” begins. This is not to say that a student with a wild performing nature cannot offer real insight; the ability to flesh out a character and run with it (improvise) can create a fantastic classroom atmosphere and physical inhabiting of roles – just so long as this does not become a point that causes others in the class to withdraw from the experience or feel intimidated. Therefore, going back to my previous point, it is essential that there are clearly inbuilt choices and in effect “safe-guards” for the students.

“Safe-guards” is also an essential issue that must be addressed because the students are placing themselves in a potential vulnerable position by role-playing because there is an expectation that they bring a part of themselves to the role to allow themselves the fully engage, and for many the idea of

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In my attempts to address a more generic approach to role-play, I always had in the back of my mind the issue of minimal and maximal activities;

- Do the benefits justify maximal activities?
- Can role-play be expanded to enable students to self reflect?

What I have seen is that maximal activities enable a fuller immersion into a world created by stimulus material (in this case sources). This is a valid exercise at the beginning of the course, but later in the course this would be over indulgent and the method would detract from the learning. Minimal activities have a greater impact once the students have gained confidence and a “safe” relationship has been established and the students must have an explicit understanding of the metacognition that is taking place.

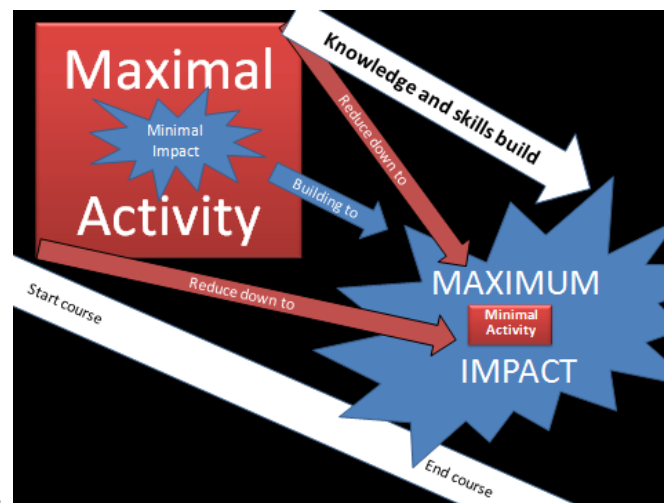


Fig. 3

CONCLUSION

The action research projects has raised more questions than it has answered, but this, I feel, is the nature of self-reflective professional methodology. Following *Action Research Day* presentation of my findings to delegates from across Hampshire I was asked during a Questions and Answers session (see Appendix 12 for full log of Q&A) I was asked; *What improvements do you intend to make?* As I enter the second cycle of my research and applying what I have already learnt, the following outlines a few directions I will be taking:

- Embedding role-play (in the sense that I have [re]defined it) into all lessons. As per my initial proposal, I want the students to respond instinctively to sources – not thinking of it in mechanical formulaic terms, but through human, empathetic and critical filters (and understanding what those filters are).
- The relationship between role-play and written work must be clearly defined – one should flow into the other – not be the scary leap that so many see it as.
- Debriefing is core to role-play success – student deconstruction of metacognition enables their empowerment.

On this issue of student confidence, I have concluded that they do need guidance on their own confidence and capacity to assess their own progress and ability when dealing with sources. Role-play is just one tool that enables the students to reflect on this in a “safe” manner that does not threaten them, but instead, it encourages exploration.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Name				
Preferred learning style 1:	Activities?			
Preferred learning style 2:	Activities?			
Question	Strong agree	agree	disagree	Strong disagree
I have used sources before				
I felt confident using sources when I started the course				
The Murder Mystery showed me how important sources can be.				
The Murder Mystery helped my confidence of using sources				
The Murder Mystery showed me that sources' reliability depends on the question being asked.				
The Murder Mystery taught me something new about source skills				
The Murder Mystery helped me gain an understanding of Britain in 1940's				
I feel confident making notes in class				
I feel confident using P.E.E				
I feel confident reading and highlighting for homework				
I feel confident making mind-maps				
I feel confident when undertaking independent research				
I feel confident of how to revise				
I have already started my revision for this subject				
I have / will be using upgrade this term				

APPENDIX 2

Name: _____

(circle) FOR or AGAINST

Comment on how well you worked as a group.	
How did you manage to include sources as evidence?	
How did you incorporate knowledge as examples?	
What if anything did you learn from making the documentary?	
Do you think your documentary managed to clearly present an argument that could be followed?	
What would you do next time to improve your documentary?	
What suggestions would you have for making the task better if we did it again? (NB: having more time is not an option)	

APPENDIX 3

Hello, and thank you for attending last week's British workshop on Multi-cultural Britain.

I hope that the role play activities were useful last week. I think that it is really important that you reflect on what you learnt from the session.

If you would be kind enough to fill out the questionnaire below and email it back to me it will help me to continue improving the course and will be an ideal opportunity for you to clearly reflect on what you did.

How confident did you feel (before) when considering provenance?	Very	Good	Okay	not
What worries did you have about use of provenance?				
What did you learn about the understanding the motives in a source?				
What did you learn about the importance of understanding individual points of view?				
What did you learn about understanding the time/place / method of the sources creation?				
What did you learn about comparing sources?				
Do you feel more confident about using provenance after the work shop.	very	good	Okay	not

If you are unsure of the answer to these questions, then let me know so that we can discuss further.

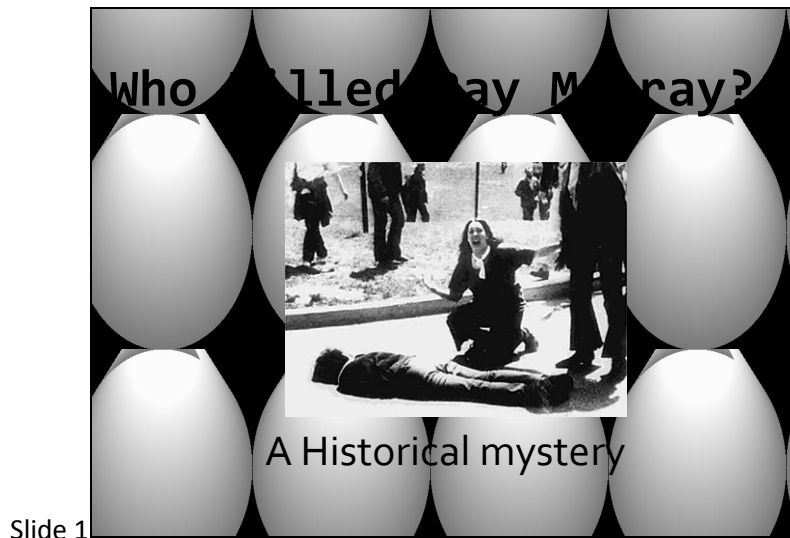
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APPENDIX 4

Activity 1 *The Murder Mystery* (September 2009)



Rationale

The first activity was a maximal Murder Mystery game (2 lessons) that introduced the students to AS History in order that the students are enabled to engage with the whole world of the sources they are presented with, and immerse themselves into that experience. The students were called upon to solve a 60 year old mystery as if they were the detectives of the time: Police officers have to go through very similar processes to historians, which are; to collect, to evaluate sources, and also to reject some sources and thereby begin making choices and judgements which is ultimately what this module requires of the students.

The idea therefore is that the students begin to live 1945 and through the sources it is made real, with lots of contemporary detail and historical features that rely on human interpretation. Through the sources I have woven many links which superficially are not obvious, but as the students begin to take on their roles and investigate, discuss and extract information, they themselves instinctively begin to make links, draw their own conclusions, and then they look for information and opinions that will back it up. They must also gain a feeling for rejecting sources as irrelevant to their enquiry. The conclusions drawn must come from the sources, therefore there must be judgements and inference made about the source material and from that world in which they have immersed themselves.

The sessions were followed by a questionnaire (see appendix 2)

In Practice

- Students begin to discuss validity of source evidence.
- Role-play forum gives confidence to make instinctive decisions or follow a “hunch”.
- Preparation time for this activity was significant – certainly prohibitive for some (25hrs+)
- Inject human element.

I have included, below, a number of exemplar sources used by the students. This range is included to highlight the diversity of provenance and the mix of authentic historical detail and fiction.

Murder on the Docks

Workman in the rain.

Yesterday the body of dockworker Ray Murray, 27, was discovered on the London dock front outside of the Eagle pub, the victim of a brutal stabbing.

As the whistle blew for the change of shift the docks passer-by and workers stood by side watching the police officers come off the street.

The torrential rain washed away any hope of finger print evidence or other clues. The vicious crime took place in the shadow of the docks which are currently undergoing renovation.

Police are set to release the details of the suspects and have appealed for further witnesses. They have not ruled out links to Gangland crime.

Murray, described by his family as "an honest and hardworking Christian" was pronounced dead at the scene.

(Daily Herald, January 1947)

SOURCE A

Items found on Ray's body

- 5 betting tickets – all losers.
- A pocket knife.
- Tickets for the Hackney Empire (some old, some not used yet)
- Half a packet of cigarettes.
- A trade union membership card.
- A wallet full of bus tickets to Hackney (written on the back of some of them were addresses in) and Soho.
- A photograph of Ray
- A ration card
- A key (to flat)
- A cinema ticket stub for the film Spellbound
- A copy of the Daily Mirror

Official Police record



SOURCE B

V. E. Day



Pictures from Daily Mail archive

- Victory in Europe day (7-8 May 1945) was celebrated across the country. Germany had surrendered and a war which had claimed tens of millions was now at an end. Despite war time rationing still being in place people drank and ate food they had saved throughout the war. Crowds massed in Trafalgar Square and outside Buckingham Palace to see Winston Churchill (the Prime Minister) and King George VI.

SOURCE C

Transcript of letter from Claire Murray (Ray's sister) to Ray. Written May 1945

Dear Ray,

Lovely to hear from you. I have passed on the news of your safe return to everyone. Sounds like you had a wonderful time celebrating in Trafalgar Square. I didn't mention the beer drinking to Mum.

Hope you manage to find Jane soon. I'm sure she can't wait to see you.

Best of wishes from everyone.

Claire

SOURCE D

Labour Wins the 1945 General Election

The result of the election came as a major shock to the Conservatives, given the heroic status of Winston Churchill, but reflected the voters' belief that the Labour Party were better able to rebuild the country following the war.

The French called the occupying Germans "the grey lice". This is precisely how I regard the occupying army of English Socialist [Labour] government.
[The Diary of Evelyn Waugh (1978) – Waugh was a novelist and a great supporter of Churchill and the conservative government]

We know the organisers of this are our friends. For the rest, it doesn't matter. It's their cuss.
[Emanuel Shinwell, Minister for Fuel and Power, Trade Union conference, 1946. Shinwell was well known for his extreme views and support of the working class. He wrote the Labour Manifesto on which they had come to power.]

This is a sign that at last the people of this country will have a chance to govern themselves.
[Ray Murray in a letter to his sister Claire]

SOURCE E

Extract from Ray's Armed Service Discharge (Nov 1945)

... Served with honour in France ...


... Suffering severe dysentery* – evacuated to England for treatment ...

... Discharged with clean bill of health.

[Official Ministry of Defence document]

* Symptoms of dysentery include frequent passage of feces and, in some cases, vomiting of blood. The frequency of urges to defecate, the volume of feces passed, and the presence of mucus and/or blood depends on the parasite that is causing the disease. Once recovery starts, early refeeding is advocated, avoiding foods containing lactose due to temporary lactose intolerance, which can persist for years.

SOURCE H



Report extract from Tom Brice, a Foreman in London Docks. He would use the Diary book to note down employees whom he considered may be troublesome. Brice was not a Trade Unionist and was often suspected of those that were Communism.

Ray Murray.
 (Feb '46) Hard working and a skilled welder ... keeps to himself ... only talks to the other skilled artisans ...
 (April '46) witnessed his verbal abuse of the coloured* labourers and lightermen - he doesn't seem to like them.
 (May '46) Talking heatedly with Union men. He seemed angry, but they just nodded.

* Term used to describe any dark skinned ethnic minority. There had been many Africans working in the Docks before the war - many of whom were highly skilled workers - these numbers grew considerably in the decade after the war.

Slide 16

SOURCE I

Newspaper Article

... with large sections of dockland devastated by the bombing of London. Unskilled workers find themselves joining the ranks of the unemployed. Many are at a pub and hoping to get lucky.

[Darren Hannon, a freelance reporter for the London Provincial, writes in his article. Due to a shortage of paper in wartime the Newspaper was only four pages but with very small type. Local newspapers were in decline as more and more people bought National papers.

When writing the article Hannon met Ray and the following is a transcript of Ray's response:

The Labour Government was supposed to be about securing the future for the people who fought in the war. All I can see is Nationalisation after nationalisation. What are we? Communism and now they want to start taking hand outs from the taxpayers - the money to make the minds who's ... they are on.

Hannon later notes:

His politics seemed confused. It was as if he expected Britain to be a perfect place to return to after the war. He hated the idea of foreign intervention.

Hannon did not include Ray's interview in his article.

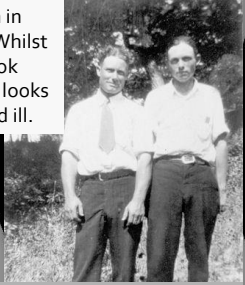
Slide 20

SOURCE M



Jerry Pritchard

Photo taken in late 1945 – Whilst Pritchard look healthy Ray looks very thin and ill.



Jerry was a good friend to Ray and shared his flat with him after the war. Jerry had been working in a number of casinos in Soho. His account, given to the police, of the time after the war with Ray is as follows:

“Ray stayed at my place, sure, but most of the time he was out – working down the dock, long hours, or with those Union guys. I met them a few times and they were serious people – you wouldn’t want to cross them. They had their own ideas on how the country should be run. Me, I like to keep out of trouble – the war is over, its about time we had some fun.”

“Ray came over to Soho some nights, he liked the casinos, and he liked the girls. But he was always looking for that special one – Jane – he figured she still lived around Hackney or Bethnal. He got crazy when an old friend of Janey said she had gone of with some American G.I.”

Slide 27

SOURCE T

An official government poster.



Rationing means a fair share for all of us



- Many people expected rationing to be lifted as soon as peace was declared. It was nine years until the last ration book was issued. In the interim period between 1945 and 1954, there was a gradual change as people adapted to a new and more exciting way of eating.
- Tinned foods brought to Britain by troops from overseas (notably the USA) were popular with ordinary people who insisted that supplies of these foods continue. Tinned fruit, fish and meat were particularly in demand as they provided 'fast food' for busy families.

APPENDIX 5

Activity 2 *The Documentary* (November 2009)

Rationale

For many of the students they approach the transition from understanding a source to using a source with a great deal of trepidation. From interview with the 2008-09 cohorts this was one of the key points that could potentially damage their confidence (and enjoyment) within the subject.

The second activity had at its core, once again, a historical enquiry, which in this case was "*The media has driven the decline in deference in Britain*" *Do you agree with this?* so the students have a very specific focus and outcome to tackle. In this case they did it in the form of making a documentary, because if you look at any documentary, such as *Panorama*, it does follow as very strict formula; it begins with a question, it then sets out how it will answer it – taking one theme at a time, it then presents a range of information/sources/perspectives, then there is some form of analysis or debate, and finally concluding with a summary or conclusion. The intention here was that the students went through the same process, which ties in with the way in which we want the students to answer essay questions; Point/Evidence/Explain.

In Practice

Clear, specific and uncomplicated instructions had to be issued regarding the use of technology (see slide 6, below) to ensure that the mechanical process does not take over from the organically evolving process of the essay preparation.

One of the innovative ways in which the students managed to incorporate "analysis" into the documentary was to stop students around the college and ask their opinions – this reinforced the fact that opinion (which were very varied) were forming part of the debate. The students also used an editorial-journalist approach in which one of them gave a clear and concise judgement at the end, weighing up the body of evidence.

I have included, below, a number of exemplar resources used by the students.

TIME-LINE FOR LESSON

- (10:45 – 10:50) 5 mins to explain the task
- (10:50- 11:25) Preparing for the Documentary
- (11:25 – 12:05) Make the documentary
- (12:05) 10 mins before end of lesson you must be back and ready to show footage.
- If you are late back we will struggle to see what you have done.

Preparing the Documentary

- Class to be split in to 2 groups (one camera each)
- You will be allocated either FOR or AGAINST the following statement;
 - “The Media has Driven the Decline in Deference”
Do you agree?
- You must back this up through a range of examples;
 - What sources from the pack can you use to support your argument? Try to use at least one source from the (b) question at the back of the pack.
 - What wider knowledge can you bring to this? Perhaps use the Monarchy article from Mondays lesson to give you ideas.

Making the Documentary

- Have one main presenter who outlines the key argument being presented.
- Act out people speaking the sources you want to use (as if you are the author)
- Act out footage .
- You could act out people giving their opinions.
- You can have reporters giving summaries.
- Jack – if you want to sing and dance you can (so long as it helps answer the question)

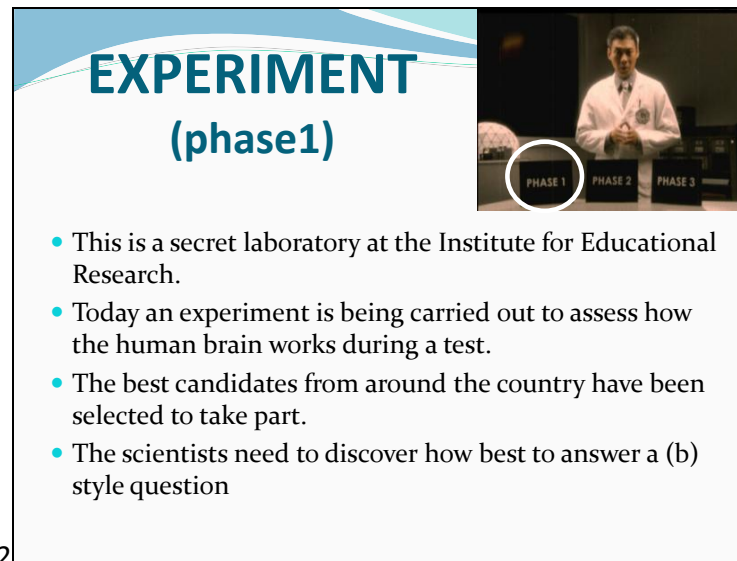
- Work out what you are going to say before you say it!

Technology

- Flip-video is nice and easy – point it at what you want to film and then press the red button to record and again to stop it.
- Please try to make the film **“in-camera”**:
 - It is not so easy trimming down you shots in edit so please try only film what you need.
 - To help with editing can you try to film it in the order that you want it. If you muck it up, trash the scene.
 - If you want a scene narrated you will have to do the voice-over from behind the camera while a scene is being acted out.

 - ** Respect the other group – don't walk across their shots or make noise when they are filming **
- You may leave the class room to do the filming, BUT respect the fact that there are other lessons going on!!!!

Activity 3 *The Experiment* (January 2010)



EXPERIMENT
(phase1)

- This is a secret laboratory at the Institute for Educational Research.
- Today an experiment is being carried out to assess how the human brain works during a test.
- The best candidates from around the country have been selected to take part.
- The scientists need to discover how best to answer a (b) style question

Slide 2

Rationale

The third activity is what I have phrased as “The Experiment” which has come from the fact that even in the later stages of the course there is a real lack of confidence with some of the students when it comes to writing essay work (especially in exam conditions) and for some a problem of unrealistic and ridged confidence (as mentioned before). “The Experiment” was a chance for the students to role-play an exam and tackle their issues of confidence and enacting being a confident student who is able to achieve top grades at AS level. What I hoped to test was whether the students were prepared to go with this idea and undertake a mock exam in role.

IN PRACTICE

The lesson is set up like a mock exam from the start, the students enter the room and the desks have been separated and there is a question paper on the desks. The class is divided up into two halves;

- A. the very best history students from around the country, the cream of the crop who are undertaking the course we are studying
- B. scientists who have been brought in to test how these top grade students perform in exam conditions.

The Student roles are then given the mock exam and are asked to answer it.

What is emphasised in the activity is that the scientists will be testing their emotional responses to the question; how do they react to problems, what are the key problem areas, when does panic affect their ability to perform. A record of the emotional high points is acted out so that come the real exam they have already identified what they are and can attempt to deploy coping tactics (which are discussed in the debriefing session at the end).

EXPERIMENT

(phase2)



- Work in pairs. One of you will be the *candidate* answering the question – the other will be the *scientist* recording the candidates every thought and feeling.
- The candidate will be given a (b) question they have done before. The candidate will begin to answer the question (as if it were a new question) and will explain to the scientist what they are doing and how they are feeling.
- The scientist will record the activities and emotions of the candidate and ask questions if they feel the candidate is not telling them everything.

Slide 3

APPENDIX 7

Activity 4 *The Workshop* (April 2010)

Rationale

The workshops followed a process of self analysis, assessment of the data of the module and the post-exam review (see appendix 9). In light of the conclusions I had drawn I began a series of workshops for the students who had decided to undertake the re-sit. This was made up, for the most part, of students I had not taught before and this particular session is on the theme of Multi-Cultural Britain. Because I had not taught the students before, this was an opportunity for me to test how effective the minimal activities could be and how many of these activities I could fit into a 40 minute session, whilst still maintaining that “safe” environment in which the students feel safe to experiment and let themselves embody other ideas and perspectives.

In Practice

(See Appendix 8 for full Diary Log entry)

- The first activity serves to motivate the students out of the mindset of being passive recipients of their education; they have to be creative and interact with it.
- The imagined character had to come from the students themselves (rather than being given this information), which I considered to be important because I wanted them to gain a sense of ownership of this person/role.
- It is vital that through the first task I have gained their trust and that I am not throwing them into this or that they will be embarrassed by it – this is something we are all doing together – because the activity simply does not work if the students detach themselves from the character.
- What is emphasised to the students is that sources would not be an academic response that is considered and measured, it would be emotional one.
 - The students all responded instinctively in character, expression anger, rejection, frustration, disappointment, resentment, support, etc.
 - Some of the characters responded with ill-informed judgements or only replied from a very self orientated perspectives.
 - The students, in role, are all viewing the same question with very different filters because they have all approached it from their imagined character within the world of 1968.
 - This also encourages the students to understand (and enact) the fact that many people will view the world from selfish and self orientated perspective (as is human nature – it could be argued). What is explicit seen by the students is that everybody sees the world through their set of filters.

APPENDIX 8

Diary Log Following Workshop and debrief with lesson observer

The first activity was “What’s the question?” , in which I turned the usual approach of working out the relevance of provenance on its head, and asked the students to speculate on what the provenance (context) of a source might be – as such the students had to image the real person saying their quote and what might have prompted that response. The students soon realise that the quote could relate to pretty much anything they chose: this is a light touch role-play activity, but it does engage the student’s imagination and demonstrates to them that they are in a “safe” environment to try out new ideas. This also serves to show, because of the range of imagined provenance, just how important the provenance is to ground and tie in the context with the content. This activity also serves to motivate the students out of the mindset of being passive recipients of their education, but that they have to be creative and interact with it. Also, following on from that I saw as the short fall of some of the earlier activities, I wanted to quickly and precisely reinforce the learning in a written form – as such the students were asked to respond to the question *Why is the question important when looking at sources?* This forced to the students to evaluate their own learning outcomes.

RELEVANCE OF PROVENANCE

“Viv Anderson* was brilliant”

In a written report by his Football Association.

Spoken by a white fan on the terrace

The dying words of his sworn enemy

Carved into a tree by Mrs Anderson after sex

Viv Anderson was the first black player to be selected to play for England in 1978

Slide 5

The next activity was called “Who am I?” in which the students imagined that they were a person living in 1968 – this could be anyone they wanted – imagining all of the elements that make up that character; race, back ground, their politics, outlook on society, age, appearance, clothing, where they live. All of this had to come from the students themselves (rather than being given this information), which I considered to be important because I wanted them to gain a sense of ownership of this person/role. I followed this up with what I have often termed as “Time Travelling” in which the students close their eyes and begin to imagine they are in a certain time period as I talk them through visualising their world: in their minds-eye they can see this imaginary character as they leave the house in the morning, walking past a shop window and seeing their own reflection, seeing the merchandise in the shop window, looking around at the other people on the street. The students do find this strange to begin with as they do have to close their eyes and use their imagination – and as such it is vital that through the first task I have gained their trust and that I am not throwing them into this or that they will be embarrassed by it – this is something we are all doing together.

In pairs the students, whilst still in character, have a discussion with the person sat next to them: trying to find things they have in common and things that are different. If as the teacher I over hear a student saying “My character is....” I correct them and get them to say “I would....” or “I think that ...” – the activity simply does not work if the students detach themselves from the character. The more confident students

are even able to conduct the conversation with their eyes closed because they don't need to see the other person other than in their own minds eye – the conversation can take place within the imagined world they have created [NB: the students will have a good functioning knowledge of the period – which is must be informed by – this is obviously not a work of fantasy].

WHO AM I? – PT3

✘ In pairs (and in character) discuss the following question:

“Enoch Powell’s speech made a lot of sense”
Do you agree?

(how do you respond emotionally to the question?)

Slide 8

The final Part of this “Who am I?” task is that all the character are presented with a question, in this case a controversial one; “Enoch Powell’s Rivers of Blood speech made a lot of sense” Do you agree? , and of course the different characters will react very differently to such a question. What is emphasised to the students is that this would not be an academic response that is considered and measured, it would be emotional one. What came back from the students was fantastic because they all responded instinctively in character, expression anger, rejection, frustration, disappointment, resentment, support, etc. Some of the characters responded with ill-informed judgements or only replied from a very self orientated perspectives. The students, in role, are all viewing that same question with very different filters because they have all approached it from their imagined character within the world of 1968.

The third activity in the work shop was the “Door-step role-play” which is very similar to the often used idea of “hot-seating”. Eight people are given a card on which is the name of somebody to do with our particular topic (plus a bit of background information) and the students issued with the cards have to think quickly Who am I? The characters are then presented with a question, in this case; “Is Britain are harmonious multi-cultural society?”. What becomes essential with this is the dates of the provenance (which each card gives) take on significance because the events and changes within Britain (1945-2000) inform the views that the characters will offer. Two characters that are very similar in some respects, but talking in 1949 and 2009, will react very differently, in the same way that two people from very different backgrounds talking at the same time will have conflicting outlooks. This also encourages the students to understand (and enact) the fact that many people will view the world from selfish and self orientated perspective (as is human nature – it could be argued). What is explicit seen by the students is that everybody sees the world through their set of filters.

Again, I have attempted to reinforce this by pinpointing the learning through a series of quick written responses (students should always do these on their own within a short time frame) to:

- a) **Why are some answers different?**
- b) **Why are some answers the same?**

In the discussion between the two characters in the “Who am I?” activity they will have found traits in common as well as points of difference (either big or small). The question then is, which of these similarities/differences influence the perspectives that are offered in the role-play (which can be translated to source material).

The final activity in the workshop is that the students are given a newspaper article on the reaction to the Stephen Lawrence enquiry in which a number of people comment on the outcome (Lawrence’s Parents, Jack Staw (then Home Secretary) and Sir Paul Condon (Metropolitan Police Chief)) all from a certain agenda and from an emotional standpoint. The students are asked to annotate the source and then write an explanation for the filter from which the individuals have expressed their reaction to the same event.

LOOKING FOR OPINIONS

- ✘ Read the article.
- ✘ Underline what was said.
- ✘ Imagine each person at the time they were saying it. What emotions would they feel.
- ✘ From your knowledge and from the article annotate why you think they have said what they have said.

Slide 11

The screenshot shows a BBC News article from 2007. The main headline is "Justice failed Stephen Lawrence". The sub-headline reads: "The report into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence has labelled London's police force 'institutionally racist' and condemned officers for 'fundamental errors'".

Key text from the article includes:

- Home Secretary Jack Straw welcomed the long-awaited findings and promised a new era and sweeping judicial reforms - but he said Metropolitan Police chief Sir Paul Condon should stay.
- Stephen's mother Doreen Lawrence said the report only "scratched the surface".
- She added: "Black people are still dying on the streets and in the back of police vans."
- Sir Paul admitted the report had brought "shame" on his force - but he refused to resign.
- He said he now accepted the definition of "institutional racism" in the report.
- It defines the term as "the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin".
- Sir Paul said he would respond to the report by bringing in random testing for racism, a rapid response murder inquiry force and a research programme looking at how to improve the police.
- The chief commissioner said: "By the time I leave the Met next January I expect us to have demonstrated significant progress on all fronts."

Slide 12

APPENDIX 9

POST EXAMINATION ANALYSIS (March 2010)

(see appendix 10)

The following is a personal account of my reflections on the January Exam results and subsequent feedback. This has significant contextual value for Activity 4.

The January exam results for this module were very disappointing for all staff teaching this module with 1/3 of students opting to re-sit. I began the follow up to this by issue all students undertaking the re-sit with a questionnaire to analyse the major areas of concern, and certainly the results were very varied and depended on the students aspiration (and minimum predicted grade (MEG)) [whilst encouraging the students not to think of themselves as a certain type – here I have to consider this in order to evaluate their feedback] :

- High level MEG near misses: timings, organisation
- Mid Level MEG near misses: timing, planning and wider knowledge + some concern over source analysis.
- High level MEG far misses: applying source skills to answer, relevance of provenance.
- Mid Level MEG far misses: knowledge, reading and annotating, understanding of source skills, purpose of provenance.

In this formula I am ignoring the students who have admitted that they didn't revise properly.

One of the key things that came back from the *High level MEG far misses* group was that they appeared fairly happy that they had been answering the focus of the questions – however, most sample scripts (especially from this group) indicated that answering the question was in fact the major problem – as such this tended to be the main focus of the workshops and it does indicate to me that the issues with source analysis skills are not the only reason the students are struggling – however, what I would suggest is that the students become so wrapped up in processes and formulae that they forget to do the basic things like planning their essays. Therefore, there is still a large area of concern in source skills areas, but the results at this stage have not been taken to indicate a failure of my project.

APPENDIX 10

British Rest – Review

Name _____ History Teacher _____

Grade in January _____ Personal Target _____

	Very	Good	Okay	Not
How confident did you feel before the exam?				
Did you feel you had revised enough?				
How well did you think the exam had gone before you got your result?				
What part of the exam do you think went well (and therefore, by definition, which did not)?				
a) Question (a)				
b) Question (b)				
c) Timings?				
d) Read and understanding the sources?				
e) Annotating the sources?				
f) Planning the essay?				
g) Thinking of your Big-Points?				
h) Understanding and using the provenance?				
i) Understanding and answering specifics of the question?				
j) Own knowledge?				
How Confident did you feel on each of these topics?				
1. Class and Consumerism				
2. Multi-cultural Britain				
3. Gender and family				
4. Americanisation				
5. Technology				
6. Decline in Deference				
7. Questioning authority				
8. Youth Culture				
9. Age of Television				

Any other comments

APPENDIX 11

At the outset of the project I set myself the following questions:

- What actually constitutes role-play?
- Do the benefits justify maximal activities?
- Can role-play be expanded to enable students to self reflect?
- How small can minimal activities be and still be considered role-play?
- Should the students understand the learning outcomes before they begin a role-play – ie, is a natural instinctual response perhaps more honest and therefore more useful?
- How can multiple intelligence / emotional intelligence be incorporated?
- Can the knowledge core be introduced through role-play?

APPENDIX 12

Questions & Answers following the presentation on Action research day:

- How do you get the students to participate?
 - Don't force the students into taking on role-play – the idea is that they are making free choices – it damages the integrity to demand they roleplay.
 - Forcing the students into performance contradicts the nature of “safe environment”.
 - Creating a safe environment helps/encourages the students to participate – this can only be done by carefully building the activities up and showing that there is an atmosphere of trust.
- Were the groups too big? (documentary)
 - Once again, the tight time scale is a key factor – no one could afford to stand back – everyone had a role – even if not in front of the camera – although all did take a role in front of camera.
 - The structuring and preparing of sources was such an essential part of the process that while some were filming others were involved in sorting out sources for the next short – this is again heightened by the fact that everything had to be filmed in sequence.
- Do you allocate hypothesis in Murder Mystery?
 - NO. The students must discover their own hypothesis. Role-play is about making rationalised human judgements – if I was to artificially impose these on the students it would not be role-play (or at least not as successful)
 - However, by giving different groups different pieces of information they often adopted different hypothesis – but only through their own choices – at that in itself becomes a point of debate later when we discuss why one piece of evidence so significantly changed their perspectives – should 1 out of 30 sources have such a disproportionately significant impact on outcome.
- What was relative value of minimal to maximal activities?
 - Early in the course the values were different – the Maximal activities / minimal role-play helped to build confidence, set the scene (enable emersion) and create that safe environment.
 - Later in the course the minimal activities/maximal role-play allowed the students to more directly tackle the specifics of higher order source skills.
 - Throughout the course it moved more towards minimal activities/maximal role-play combination.
 - Less maximal activities meant less prep time – more responsibility on the students shoulders.
- What did the role-play activities add to the students learning (bearing in mind exam results did not improve)?
 - Difficult question.
 - Initially, and foolishly, I had set this as my key criteria for testing success. So I could assess the activities as being a failure to add anything.
 - In end of module questionnaire and course forums it was found that
 1. the students really enjoyed the course – far more than last year
 2. The students claimed to have gained confidence when using sources and understanding provenance.
 3. As per previous analysis [re-sit questionnaire] the students identified a wide range of hindrances – supported by reviewing exam scripts.

- Long term benefits – students understanding sources more deeply – will benefit the source analysis element in 2nd yr – platform to build up.
- However, have to acknowledge that not always successful – some of learning was short term and needed more consistent use in all lessons. This is an issue addressed in later stages of the course – asking the students to time travel whenever we looked at sources.
- What improvements do you intend to make?
 - Value of debriefing - make learning outcomes clearer to the students in debriefing sessions – and reinforcing this through written tasks.
 - Embed role-play (in the sense that I have defined it) into all lesson – as per my initial proposal, I want the students to respond instinctively to sources – not thinking of it in mechanical formulaic ways, but through human, empathetic and critical filters (and understanding what those filters are).
 - The relationship between role-play and written work must be more clearly defined – one should flow into the other – not be the scary leap that so many see it as.
- What do you see as the most significant successes?
 - That through role-play a “safe environment” is created and the students began to feel confident and comfortable expressing their own ideas and taking on roles.
 - Role-play created a forum for debate and discussion.
 - Role-play is not the preserve of the extrovert or performer, role-play can be an inner dialogue that takes place. Once this has been achieved in a safe environment, the “role” can be tried out in an environment that allows for expression, diversity and even conflict.
 - Student confidence should be viewed in a number of ways
 1. Students self confidence in the class room environment to express their views and opinions.
 2. Students perception of their own ability, whether;
 - i. Accurate
 - ii. Under valued
 - iii. Overvalued (this being the most dangerous)
 3. Student confidence analysing sources
 4. Student confidence applying their understanding of sources
 - Role-play has a valid role in addressing all of these views on confidence.
 - The ambiguous nature of History is addressed. The students get a clear sense that History is about asking questions and not about finding definitive answers.