Exploring teachers' curriculum decision making: insights from history education

Article

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Appendix A

Coding framework for Schemes of Work to determine the extent to which a disciplinary approach is adopted

Characteristics of a disciplinary focus ⟷	**Characteristics of a substantive knowledge focus**
Use of enquiry questions – with a clear conceptual and/or procedural focus, e.g. how far did …. change?	Topic headings, e.g. medieval religion or enquiry questions used but with a descriptive focus, e.g. what was life like in …?
Learning objectives specify a conceptual/procedural focus	Learning objectives identify substantive knowledge that is to be developed
Lesson activities used to develop conceptual/procedural thinking e.g. card sorts that allow pupils to categorise/prioritise causes	Lesson activities refer to acquisition of substantive knowledge, e.g. sequencing events
Assessment/outcome focused on concepts/processes	Assessment/outcome focused on presenting knowledge

Examples of application of characteristics to determine disciplinary/substantive knowledge focus

Enquiry question/topic focus	Leaning objectives identify concept/process	Learning objectives identify substantive knowledge	Main activities	Assessment	

The Riccall mystery: whose head is it?	Sourcework		Use small number of sources to create a hypothesis. Use further sources to test the hypothesis.	Process by which claims are constructed. The degree of (un)certainty that underpins claims.	Strong disciplinary focus
Why did William win the battle of Hastings?	Causation & sourcework		Use sources to identify causes and to judge value of different sources.	Essay to argue why William won, and to assess the reliability of sources.	Strong disciplinary focus
How did castles help William control England?		Definition of key terms	Annotate diagram of a motte and bailey castle.	Letter from William explaining to barons why to build a castle.	Largely substantive knowledge focus

Table 1 - Comparison of two schools' approaches

Apple School			Lemon School		
Enquiry question/topic focus	Concept/process	Key features	Enquiry question/topic focus	Concept/process	Key features
Who should be king in 1066?		Knowledge of individuals	Contenders to the throne		Knowledge of individuals
The Riccall mystery: whose head is it?	Sourcework		Battle of Stamford Bridge		Key events
What happened at the battle of Hastings?		Key events	Battle of Hastings		Key events
Why did William win the battle of Hastings?	Causation & evidence		Why did William win the battle of Hastings?	Causation	
Why did it matter that William won the battle of Hastings?	Consequences, change & continuity	Key features	The Bayeaux Tapestry		Knowledge

How did Becket die?	Sourcework	
Who was to blame for the death of becket	Causation	
Did King John deserve the Magna Carta?	Sourcework	Key events
Why did people go on crusade?	Causation	
Why was the black death so terrifying in 1348?	Sourcework	
What were the Wars of the Roses and why did they happen?	Causation	Key events
Why were medieval people obedient to the Church?	Causation	Key features

Change and continuity in Norman England	Change & continuity	
How did William control England?		Key features
The Domesday Book		Knowledge
Was Richard I that great? Was Saladin greater?		Knowledge of individuals
Islamic medicine		Key features
Magna Carta		Key events
Medieval towns		Key features
Medieval villages		Key features
Causes of the Black Death	Causation	
Cures for the Black Death		Key features
Consequences of the Black Death		Key features
Witchcraft and medicine		Key features
The Peasants' Revolt		Key events

Table 2 – Different disciplinary emphases in Plum School

Unit of work on Anglo-Saxon Britain			Unit of work on Medieval Britain		
Enquiry question/topic focus	**Concept/process**	**Key features**	**Enquiry question/topic focus**	**Concept/process**	**Key features**
The big story of movement & settlement	Chronology, change & continuity, causation		Who should be king in 1066?		Knowledge of individuals
How can Sutton Hoo help us learn about the Saxons?	Sourcework		How did events unravel in 1066?		Key events
How can we use artefacts to investigate Saxon Southampton?	Sourcework		Why did men risk their lives in 1066?	Causation	
Should St Mary's stadium have been built?	Sourcework		How did the battle of Hastings happen?	Causation	Key events
How did England change 500BC-410AD?	Change & continuity		Why did a Frenchman become king of England?	Causation	
			How did Harold die?	Sourcework	
			Who told the truth about Hastings?	Sourcework	
			How significant was Hastings?	Significance	
			Why is the king being whipped?	Causation	
			How do historians investigate murder?	Sourcework	
			What was a medieval king supposed to do?		Features of monarchy

Why were the barons angry at John?	Causation	
How have interpretations of John changed over time?	Interpretations	
How has the power of the monarchy changed 1066-1649?	Change & continuity	
How can we find out what medieval villages really looked like?	Sourcework	
How can we show change and continuity in the middle ages?	Change & continuity	
How different was life in Baghdad?	Similarity & difference	

Table 3 – The number of times topics appeared in schemes of work

Medieval British topics		Tudor and Stuart Britain topics (only 9 schools provided a scheme of work for this topic)	
Battle of Hastings/Norman Conquest	10	Tudor monarchs – who they were/overview	5
Power of the medieval Church	10	Renaissance	4
Death of Thomas Becket	10	Henry VIII and the English Reformation	9
King John/Magna Carta	9	Edward VI	1
The Black Death	8	Mary Tudor	3
The Peasants' Revolt	7	Elizabeth I – portraits	1

Islam/Crusades	6	Elizabeth I – religious settlement	3
Medieval towns	5	Elizabeth I – Spanish Armada	6
Medieval villages	5	Elizabeth I – Mary, Queen of Scots	3
Provisions of Oxford	1	Elizabeth I – America	1
100 Years War	2	Gunpowder Plot	4
Castles	7	Witchcraft	1
Wars of the Roses	2	The English Civil War	9
Crime and punishment	2	Cromwell	7
Relations between England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland	2	The Restoration	6
Entertainment	1	Great Fire of London	3
Health	2	Christopher Wren	1
Technology	1	Role of women	1
		Exploration	1
		The Glorious Revolution	3
		Scientific Revolution	2

Table 4 – Comparison of main approaches adopted in the history departments

	Chronological/episodic vs thematic	*Overview vs depth*	*Enquiry (disciplinary)vs topic*
Lemon School	Largely chronological – medicine through time provides a continuing theme	Largely depth, few explicit overviews	Largely topic focused
Oak School	Largely chronological (expect for theme of oppression & resistance)	Largely depth, few explicit overviews	Largely enquiry based
Elm School	Largely chronological, but each year focused round a theme	Largely depth, some overviews	Mix of topic based and enquiry based
Cherry School[1]	Largely chronological	Largely depth	Largely enquiry based
Apple School	Largely chronological	Largely depth, some overviews	Largely enquiry based
Ash School	Largely chronological	Largely depth	Largely enquiry based
Pear School	Largely chronological, although medieval history is 'chunked'	Largely depth	Mix of topic based and enquiry based
Orange School	Thematic, but taught in chronological sweeps	Largely overviews, with some depth	Largely topic focused
Chestnut School	Largely chronological	Largely depth	Mix of topic based and enquiry based

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[1] NB this department's schemes of work only went up to C17th at the time of this study

Plum School	Each unit built around a theme, but then taught largely chronologically	Even mix of overview and depth	Enquiry based