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Rethinking formative assessment from a sociocultural perspective : a practitioner investigation in a history classroom

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Rethinking Formative Assessment from a

Sociocultural Perspective: A Practitioner Investigation
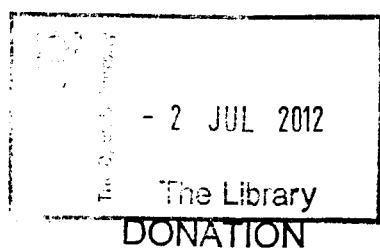
in a History Classroom

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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I would like to dedicate this work to my lovely children Natasha and William, who will be entering school soon. And also to all the children to whom I have had and will have the privilege of teaching such a wonderful subject.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates and analyses the practice of formative assessment, or assessment for learning (AfL) in a secondary school context. It is oriented from a personal account of my practice, both as a researcher and a teacher and charts the challenging journey of change in both. Assessment for learning (AfL) as it was presented in staff training at my school did not engage pupils in my history classes. This experience defied the recommendations of those who claimed that greater learner autonomy and better results could be achieved using it (Black et al 2003; Black and Wiliam, 2006a). My department linked AfL to summative test performance so that faults by individual students could be identified and targeted. This was a view of formative assessment that ran counter to what many researchers working in AfL intended. Lesson observations, interviews with staff and pupils in the Drama Department, which the school held up as a model of best AfL practice, revealed that this was a common approach which produced similar results.

Nevertheless, observations of practice in drama did reveal a more spontaneous and emergent form of formative assessment embedded in pupils' and teachers' interactions and dialogue. It appeared much more purposeful in terms of pupils' learning but it remained unrecognised by teachers and school leaders. The thesis explores this conundrum by establishing what is problematic with the enactment of the practices advocated at institutional level and seeks to understand formative assessment based on sociocultural learning theories, which view learning as situated and social. It uses tenets distilled from the theories and observed practice to inform how similar conditions could be created that would enable a formative assessment dialogue that engages pupils in their learning to emerge in the subject of history. The main study employs a sociocultural action research design taking account of Rogoff's three planes of analysis and foregrounding the interactions in the history settings to explore the intervention in my practice to generate a formative learning discourse. Detailed analysis of interactions and dialogue within classroom settings and interviews with pupils focused on the impact of changes and lessons learned.

The findings from this investigation suggest that the embedded version of formative assessment that stresses its use during engagement in learning tasks rather than after them emerges spontaneously given certain pedagogical shifts in orientation and practice. These shifts comprise, firstly, viewing subject disciplines as sets of ways of thinking rather than as collections of knowledge items. Secondly, that the teacher pupil relationship needs to be one where the pupils are treated as competent and knowledgeable rather than one which emphasises the teacher as the source of all knowledge. Thirdly, that the view of knowledge interchange within classroom interaction needs to be widened so that the traditionally privileged individual explicit version of knowledge is balanced by recognition of the importance of tacit individual as well as explicit and tacit collective knowledge (Cook and Brown, 1999). Finally the thesis documents the extent of change and challenge teachers face to develop practice in which 'moments of contingency' are capitalised for the formative benefit of both teachers and pupils.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The emergence of formative assessment in educational policy

Interest in formative assessment has increased considerably since the 1980s and has become associated with the 'Assessment for Learning' initiative in the last decade. Formative assessment is concerned with providing the insights needed by pupils and teachers to guide and enable learning in the future. Summative assessment, by contrast, concentrates on producing a measurement of a learner's capability at a particular time. It is common for it to be assumed that if formative assessment enhances learning, then this improvement will become evident in improved performances in summative tests. This relationship between formative assessment and improved levels of achievement and therefore summative assessment outcomes can be traced to 1988, when the government's Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT) reported that 'the basis of the national assessment system should be essentially formative' (DES/WO, 1988, para. 27). At the time the priority for the assessment system was to ensure that the government's agenda of raising standards was achieved and this focussed attention on summative testing to measure the system outputs which were then made public in league tables. Whilst the recommendation by the Task Group led to a system of teacher assessment and national key stage testing there was very little rationale or guidance, let alone a theoretical explanation, of how formative assessment could be used to obtain improved summative results. The recommendation was that to realise the formative purpose of the national assessment system 'pupil [summative] results in a subject should be presented as an attainment profile' (1988, para. 33) based on the successes of the graded assessment movement which it was argued 'point to the educational value of detailed feedback to pupils' (1988, para. 37). A profile allowed for feedback to pupils and feed forward to the next teacher or institution to inform teaching strategies which was not possible with a single score. In practice this recommendation was not realised and pupils' results were published in terms of an overall level

indicating the emphasis placed on the need for school accountability measures. Instead, if one's capability were to be measured in a summative test, and teachers were to be held accountable for their results, it may have been difficult to conceive formative assessment as anything other than preparatory test practice leading to diagnostic action for improved future performance.

At the same time, in 1989, a voluntary group of researchers under the auspices of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) formed the Assessment Policy Task Group to look at the implications of changes in British education and to consider their effect on assessment, including formative assessment. This group later became known as the Assessment Reform Group (ARG), funded by the Nuffield Foundation, which commissioned in 1996 a review of international formative assessment literature. The reviewers included the chair of the TGAT, Paul Black. The review found that many teachers and pupils in primary and secondary education were not practising formative assessment and that formative assessment when practised appropriately raised educational achievement (Black and Wiliam, 1998). The authors recommended that more attention be paid to the impact of assessment feedback on pupil self-esteem and motivation and changes to classroom practice to enhance such feedback.

Following this review, further funding was granted from the Nuffield Foundation for a two-year research and development project led by Black and Wiliam that included schools and Local Education Authority staff from Oxfordshire and Medway and explored the implementation of effective formative assessment in an English context. This project, the King's Medway Oxfordshire Formative Assessment Project (KMOFAP) was completed in 2001. The Assessment Reform Group used the findings of the report to release a pamphlet entitled *Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles*, which conferred the term 'Assessment for Learning' on to formative assessment. In this the following definition for 'Assessment for Learning' (AfL) was put forward.

Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and

interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers

to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they

need to go and how best to get there.

(ARG, 2002, pp. 2–3)

This has become the definition enshrined in policy documentation. The more detailed findings of the KMOFAP along with further research into maths and science were reported in several publications, in collaboration with Chris Harrison, Bethan Marshall and Claire Lee. The project team recommended the use of the following techniques for effective formative assessment.

- Questioning techniques, including greater wait-time, designed to elicit pupils' thinking rather than eliciting 'right' answers.

- Comment-only marking, for it was shown that grading tended to emphasise competition with others rather than how to improve.

- Making assessment criteria explicit and understandable to pupils.

- Peer and self-assessment tasks which would help pupils understand learning objectives and assessment criteria and use them to evaluate their work.

- 'Traffic lighting' topics, or marking for themselves those topics they knew well green, knew somewhat amber or did not know at all red.

- Formative use of summative tests which involved pupils setting their own exams and creating their own assessment criteria.

(Black et al., 2003)

This was the first time a series of formative practices that teachers could readily understand was identified. These offered a much broader conception of formative assessment than the formative use of summative assessment recommended by TGAT. Based on the research they also claimed that for the vast majority of science and maths teachers who used the AfL techniques, a reliable percentage gain could be demonstrated in the performance of pupils in

summative tests (2003, pp. 27–29). However, the authors did not articulate any rationale for the learning benefits of AfL beyond the evidence that it improved results. This encouraged the view at policy level that the AfL techniques could be used by teachers without needing to engage with the theoretical considerations behind them because it could be deployed to complement, the external exam requirements.

AfL was adopted at policy level in England and was included among the whole-school initiatives rolled out as part of the Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11–14) National Strategy (DFES, 2004). The roll out included provision for one of the legislated training days within the 2004–05 school year to be devoted to AfL training. A year later, the government changed the remit of the strategy to the Secondary National Strategy in order to encompass Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 (pupils aged 11–19). While there remained support for AfL in the new strategy, it was also clear that it was only one initiative in a whole raft of reforms meant to exact school improvement (DFES, 2005). Since this time, AfL has remained a strand on the government's reform agenda, but at the same time, the government has not changed its approach to summative assessment and public accountability as a means of raising standards. Since 2000 and the gradual introduction of modular examinations for the external assessment of pupils at ages 16, 17 and 18, the system of public summative examination has grown significantly. Teachers therefore have to reconcile in their practice a focus on AfL with a commitment to strategies to develop summative assessment examination performance. More recently Black et al. (2006a) caution that teachers can feel constrained from experimenting with new techniques with classes who are being prepared for high-stakes summative examinations.

As a consequence of these policy developments there is some disenchantment with the wider implementation of AfL among some of those who pioneered earlier research. Paul Black, for example criticised the way some have misunderstood AfL as merely a by-word for more frequent testing. He partly blames this on the recent assessment initiative rolled out to schools which links formative assessment with the Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) initiative (Black,

2009, p. 5). APP requires schools to report termly (or more frequently) the attainment grades of pupils in all subjects to parents in order to make sure they are making progress toward their target levels. Other writers have commented that AfL has often got submerged into a 'tick-box' culture in response to the flood of educational reforms initiated in the last two decades, where AfL is only one policy box among many others (Harrison, 2009, p. 9).

1.2 AfL in the context of my school

The link between AfL and the agenda of raising attainment was reinforced in my context both at the local and school level. In my school, a large secondary comprehensive in Merseyside, the AfL initiative was introduced at two in-service training days. The first one, in January 2005, involved other secondary schools in the local area and was provided by an external consultancy commissioned by the local authority.

The focus at this training event was very much on AfL as a process of improving grades by regularly measuring attainment, identifying targets for improving it and moving forward to achieve them. Thus the recommended AfL techniques of self- and peer-assessment were emphasised rather than those concerned with the process of learning (Black et al., 2003). As a head of department, it was my responsibility to introduce this into our department and we agreed a new system of assessment that seemed in keeping with these demands. We designed a series of 6 assessments, each involving pupils completing work in exam conditions, through Key Stage 3. Additionally, we made provision for pupils to self-assess their own work using a series of answers that constituted achievement at levels 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 before the teachers would assess the answers themselves and provide a level. These levels are national curriculum levels and are descriptions of performance that are given to each school, through national curriculum documentation for each subject. They constitute a descriptive ladder of ever-increasing capability and provide a holistic representation of achievement combining different knowledge and process criteria rather than the profile approach recommended

by TGAT. In history they are written as a series of paragraphs which describe the quality of knowledge and understanding that Key Stage 3 pupils of history are expected to exemplify. We felt at the time that the meaning of these levels was best communicated to pupils using examples of work at each of the levels rather than only using the descriptions themselves. Pupils would be given the opportunity to look at their own work against these examples so that they could identify where theirs might fit and so be able to estimate a level of performance. In addition to this, we felt there was an important opportunity for pupils to study the examples given at higher levels so that they could distil what it was that made those answers better into a personal target for next time. These targets, nevertheless, had to be very general for the assessment tasks we were creating were not identical to each other in terms of content, context or knowledge demands and did not assess the same aspects of history learning. We grouped assessments into two types; essay assignments and source question assignments of which there would be three of each throughout the key stage. We believed targets distilled from one type of assignment would feed into performance in the same type of assignment later. (See Appendix 1 for an example.)

We were in the middle of developing this framework when the Drama Department, which is a high-profile department because of the school's 'Performing Arts College' status, were given the opportunity to share their AfL practice with the whole school during the second in-service training day in September 2005. After consultation with the LEA, the department produced an AfL booklet which was to be distributed to all the pupils in Key Stage 3. This booklet was presented to staff as a model of best practice. Copies of some of the pages in this booklet are reproduced in Appendix 2.

A brief analysis of the booklet shows that, as in our departmental approach, not all the AfL techniques recommended by Black et al. were being used. While there are references to 'peer' and 'self' assessment, and formative use of summative assessments in the form of target setting, there is very little mention of investigating pupils' thinking through questioning, or allowing pupils to create their own evaluative criteria and no reference to comment-only marking.

Additionally, the focus seemed very pupil-centred. Feedback from the assessments was geared to helping them achieve a higher grade and it is unclear how far performance in any assessment may be informing the teachers about their practice to help individuals.

Even while I was being presented with this model of best practice, I felt myself torn between supporting and criticising it. I felt that the emphasis between what Drama were recommending and the original intent of Black et al. were diverging and that Drama were no longer advocating a system of AfL that concentrated on learning processes. Instead this version of AfL had become focussed on outcomes and performance. This generates two questions; firstly how far are the pupils able to understand their learning in terms of these outcome labels? Level descriptions like those in National Curriculum documentation can seem very vague when isolated from the performances in which they are embedded or hard to recognise when embedded as in the exemplars the History Department used. The assumption that a single meaning could be transmitted to all pupils in such abstract and generalised statements seemed unlikely.

Secondly, does being able to articulate what constitutes a higher level of performance than one had achieved make it any easier to achieve it? In other words, does the identification of outcome targets help pupils in understanding how to get there? I felt that the 'how to get there' aspect that concentrated on learning processes was being neglected in the model being suggested in the drama booklets.

This emphasis on outcomes was further reflected in the whole school decision made at the same time, in 2005, to give pupils target grades, or as they were called target minimum grades (TMGs) in order to improve the school's results and its position in league tables. These are individual pupil's target grades predicted for them in forthcoming summative tests and calculated both from their performance in past externally marked exams and from their socio-economic background. They represented the minimum grade pupils should expect to get at the next round of external summative tests whether they were

national tests at age 13–14, (SATs), national examinations for 16 year olds (GCSEs) or national examinations for 17 and 18 year olds (AS/A2 levels). These grades were to be given out at a convenient time in lessons to all pupils. The teachers and pupils had no say in deciding what the targets were as they were worked out by an external agency contracted by the Local Authority which had been given access to pupils' data called the Fischer Family Trust.

Within this system of performativity and accountability, the History Department agreed to produce a pupil AfL booklet which were issued in 2005–6 and 2006–7 to all our Key Stage 3 pupils. We followed the model the Drama Department had provided and included a great deal of equivalent information about the history course including key words, level descriptions, and assessment data and target setting pages (see Appendix 3). The belief was that this would enable pupils to engage with the criteria by which their learning was judged and give them direct insights into their future learning goals. The emphasis was very much on achieving higher levels and getting pupils to understand 'where' they were and should be rather than dealing with 'how' to get there.

When I used the booklets in my lessons in the way intended, I felt that there was a less than satisfactory outcome. After assessments, I asked pupils to look at the sample answers, grade their answers against them, look at the next level of sample answers and then use the description for that level in order to write down a target for next time. Pupils found this very difficult and it proved to be confusing organisationally as their desks became cluttered with several different pieces of paper, which they had to refer to regularly. More fundamentally, however, I had not equipped the pupils with the tools to be able to make sense of the sample answers against the descriptions of the levels. The following sample answers at level 5 and 6 respectively in answer to question 6 of the Gunpowder plot assessment in Appendix 1, which asked whether two sources gave the real reason for the failure of the plot exemplify this problem.

Level 5:

6) No, I don't think they do because the main reason the plot failed was that Guy Fawkes was found in the cellar before he set off the gunpowder.

Level 6:

6) The sources give reasons why the plot might not have succeeded but do not say why it did not succeed. I think the real reason for the failure of the plot was that after he received the Monteagle letter, Cecil and James remained calm and did not take any measures for several days. The reason they waited until the last minute to search the cellar was to make sure that there was a plotter there to be caught.
(Appendix 1)

Pupils who graded themselves at level 5 were asked to explain why the level 6 response is better so that they could then aim to achieve it next time. It is actually very difficult to explain why level 6 is better than level 5 beyond that it shows more knowledge, gives more detail, and is a longer answer, which is what many pupils wrote. However this does not really specify the type of knowledge or the deployment of skills that would have been required to get a level 6 and furthermore, does not guarantee that these specific skills or knowledge will be needed for a level 6 at the next source-work assignment. I assumed that because pupils had completed the assignment and were familiar with the gunpowder plot, they would be able to recognize the ingredients of high quality answers even if they had not produced them themselves. Moreover, applying the modified 'child-friendly' descriptions of levels from 3 to 8 in the history booklets to the above examples and to their own answers was very demanding for pupils. (See Appendix 3 for an example of the 'child-friendly' descriptions for levels 5 and 6).

I was perturbed by this activity and troubled that pupils struggled with it. It seemed that they were unsure of the purpose of what they were doing and were mainly guessing, consulting each other and asking me which level their answers were. This suggested that the abstract, descriptive ladder made no

sense to them and the sample answers did not help them either. Furthermore, after encouragements from me that the pupils should keep on trying and write *something* down they began to estimate their levels on their perception of how competent they felt at history. This led to new and unhelpful meanings about the levels being generated: those who felt they were no good at history were giving themselves levels 3s and 4s and this was informing those who felt they were better than them to give themselves 5s and 6s. In this way, the activity generated a subtle 'norm-referencing' of each other's capabilities (where they were judging themselves as above or below standard) but without reference to criteria or future learning goals being made explicit or encouraging them to engage in any understanding of the reason for doing this.

By September 2007 department staff agreed that the booklets looked like a good idea at first but that despite having made some modifications to it in 2006, they were not really relevant to helping pupils progress in history. Instead staff seemed to recognise it more as an effort to 'show' we were doing something AfL-related for the purposes of school-level and Ofsted accountability. While I, along with my team, had lost faith in this kind of formative assessment practice, I had not lost faith in the potential capacity for AfL to improve pupil performance and interest. My research question at the beginning of my doctoral study was therefore to understand how AfL practices could be deployed effectively i.e. to engage pupils in understanding their learning and being able to take more responsibility for it with my guidance. In turn I hoped to better understand my practice in order to shape it more effectively and structure learning opportunities for my pupils. Through this understanding I hoped to work with colleagues to extend the effective use of AfL practices.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The thesis is presented in seven chapters. This Introduction (Chapter 1) is followed by a discussion of the literature that informed my initial study in Chapter 2 which also includes a rationale for the initial study, the main findings

and how these influenced the direction of the research. Chapter 3 is the extended literature review which was informed by the insights derived from the initial study. The refined research questions are presented at the end of this chapter. In Chapter 4 the methodological stance and the design frame for the research are discussed and related to the sociocultural approach adopted. The type and nature of the data required to address the research questions is examined and the methods that were selected, the approach to the analysis and the research design complete this chapter. In Chapter 5, I discuss stage 1 findings where I evaluated my practice and then the intervention (stage 2) is described and justified with reference to the earlier literature review in chapter 6. The main findings from the intervention are then presented and discussed. The final chapter highlights the main findings and the contribution to knowledge that the thesis represents. The limitations of the research along with future research plans follow and as part of this I discuss the implications and recommendations based on the research findings for my future practice as a teacher and as a departmental head and for others who may want to change their practice to embrace the 'spirit' of AfL.

Chapter 2: Investigating 'Good' Practice at an Institutional Level

2.1 Theoretical assumptions behind AfL practice

Underlying the failure in our attempts to introduce effective AfL practices into the History Department was the apparent divergence between what was being recommended at in-service training sessions based on policy directives and what had been recommended by the research. Essentially, AfL was conceived by those leading the in-service training as a set of procedures addressed at achievement outcomes couched in generalized terms. Furthermore, we were told that if we deployed them then it would enhance learning just as a catalyst would hasten a chemical reaction. In other words it could be simply bolted on to pre-existing practice and improve learning. There was nothing that indicated that a fundamental shift in practice on the part of the teachers involved was needed. Yet this was precisely what was claimed had happened and needed to happen for AfL to be effective from the Black and Wiliam research. They reported that some teachers found that they needed to fundamentally alter their approach to teaching and learning (Black and Wiliam, 2006a, p. 23). Furthermore, it was claimed that any school wishing to develop its AfL agenda needs a 'sustained commitment over at least two years ... [involving] strong support from colleagues and school leaders' (Black and Wiliam, 2006a, pp. 23–24). Needless to say, any fundamental shift in pedagogy was not achieved in our department, nor did I feel there was a strong interest or much support from colleagues or school leaders in helping me to achieve it.

If a fundamental shift in teaching and learning practices was required in order to practice successful AfL, then consideration needs to be given to the purpose and meaning of formative assessment and the values and theories about learners and learning that emerge from the ways it is enacted. Such a discussion of theoretical considerations was absent both from the in-service

training and from much of the research literature about AfL up to 2006 when I began this research. In fact, in some of the research literature, contradictory impressions emerge about what the fundamental values behind successful AfL actually are. For example one of the feedback techniques recommended is 'comment-only marking' (Black et al., 2003, p. 23) specifically in order to reduce the pressures resulting from grade-chasing and to turn the emphasis away from outcomes and toward the process of learning. It is, however, the case that the research literature argues for formative assessment because of its success in improving pupils' summative achievement on measures such as examinations and national tests (Black, et.al., 2003, p. 9). Another example of conflicting positions is evident in the way that the researchers criticise the external summative assessment system in England for exerting a constraining influence on teachers' and pupils' engagement in the process of learning (Black & Wiliam, 2006a, p.13, 16, 18, 19 and 23), and question the reliability of these summative assessments in providing valid measurements of pupils' learning (Black & Wiliam, 2006c, pp. 119–133). Yet these test outcomes are used as measures of the effectiveness of the formative assesment they advocate. Thus there are paradoxes in the literature which allow quite different readings of what role formative assessment should play and therefore what form and meaning it has.

At the same time that national policy was requiring the rollout of AfL in schools, further research to build on AfL to promote 'Learning how to learn' and learner autonomy, central concepts within AfL, was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council as part of the Teaching and Learning Research Project which ran from 2001–2005. This research included an investigation into the way AfL was implemented in schools and how schools reconciled the performance demands of the external summative testing regime with the aims and purposes of 'Learning how to learn' (James, et al., 2007). Black and Wiliam were involved in this research along with other key members of ARG. It seems that within this research project there was a deliberate policy of avoiding discussions about the theory and values underpinning formative assessment up to 2006 according to those involved. They claimed that there was no foregrounding of any consequent or pre-requisite change in, or

discussion of, teachers' theoretical beliefs and that the materials presented for the introduction of AfL were 'value-neutral' (Marshall et al., 2007, p. 46). Possibly as a justification for this, Marshall et al. (2007) expressed a hope that the formative assessment practices by themselves would enable teachers to change their underlying beliefs about teaching and learning. They refer to the metaphor of these practices as a Trojan Horse that will, given time, result in teachers eventually being converted to the theoretical principles that underlie learning how to learn and AfL, whatever they may be. This suggests that the implementation of practices is not mediated by teachers' beliefs and histories of practice, which I would contest. Consequently without the thinking behind the practices advocated, rather than fostering change in the beliefs of those who deploy them they might undermine the intent of the practices and consolidate the beliefs that were intended to be challenged. It certainly did not seem to have changed the beliefs or the practice of the History Department at all. Nor was there an expectation that it would on the part of those conducting the in-service training. However, the idea of the Trojan horse does nevertheless reveal assumptions held by these writers about the nature of learning as being something that people, i.e. teachers in this case, will simply receive and then make sense of later. It seems to conform partly on the one hand to a theory of learning based on a view of mind as a passive receiver of information which aligns with computational or symbol-processing views of mind where learning is a matter of organising received symbols which mirror reality (Bruner, 1996; Bredo, 1999). On the other hand, it also partly conforms to constructivism, whereby the process of development whilst happening inside someone's head involves people in actively constructing a model of the outside world, suggesting some confusion between the rhetoric of AfL and its practice.

Certainly there do seem to be compatibilities between constructivism and the AfL ideas that the research advocates. Firstly, constructivism, in contrast to a symbol-processing view which Bredo (1999) argues is the dominant view of mind and pedagogy in education, does not accept that learners' minds are passive and that learning is the receiving of information without needing to make sense of it. Rather, mind is viewed as active and agentive, or capable of

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taking action to construct a cognitive picture or model of the outside world based on interactions with it (von Glasersfeld, 1987).

This resonates with the considerable importance attached, in much of the AfL research literature, to interactions amongst both individual pupils and their teachers in order to achieve improvement. This interaction involves feedback and this is seen to play a pivotal part in enhancing learning (Black and Wiliam, 2006b, pp. 88–90). The concept of formative assessment within constructivism is synonymous with pupils' construction of and modification to their cognitive models of the world. The teacher's role is therefore to model pupils' ways of thinking about subjects and arrange learning resources so that pupils encounter incompatibilities between their models of the world and new material. The History Department failed, however, to encounter any such incompatibility over their beliefs and values as a result of the in-service training and it is worthwhile to speculate why.

The in-service training sessions we attended did not recommend all the practices the research had advocated, particularly with regard to enabling dialogue and comment-only marking and also in the activities involving formative use of summative tests, which seemed to be limited only to target setting from summative tests. Furthermore, the teachers involved in the KMOFAP were given substantial support and the professional development process was iterative too, whereby teachers were allowed to try things out in school, report back and then modify their practice in the light of discussions with others. This is not a Trojan horse approach as it relies on learning from practice through guided reflection where expertise about learning and assessment was made available. However, in my situation, where only two in-service training days were given after which it fell from the radar of the senior management team, it seems that we were merely deploying a set of surface procedures. These two distinctly different approaches to the implementation of AfL techniques were also noted in the TLRP research which focussed on the implementation of AfL as it was rolled out to schools.

Marshall et al. acknowledge that in the lessons they observed a fundamental difference emerged between teachers who deployed 'the letter' as opposed to the 'spirit' of AfL (2007, p. 48). They describe the 'letter' of assessment for learning (AfL) as being the deployment of techniques labelled as 'AfL techniques' with little or no consideration for their purpose beyond the merely superficial. The 'spirit' of AfL was exemplified in classes where the core beliefs and values the researchers associate with AfL had been understood, often without always using many of the associated techniques. It was in this same research that an attempt was made to establish pupils' and teachers' beliefs and attitudes to learning and to investigate any change in them. Beliefs about learning and learners were associated with particular pedagogic practices which it was argued distinguish the 'letter' from the 'spirit 'of AfL.

A questionnaire was distributed to teachers in 2003 and again in 2004 so that changes in their beliefs over time could be captured. The responses were then analysed and three factors identified which the researchers claimed governed teachers' values. The three factors were 'making learning explicit', 'developing learner autonomy' and 'performance orientation' (Black et al.,2007, pp. 204–5). 'Making learning explicit' and 'promoting learner autonomy', were factors associated with practices intended to involve pupils such as 'playing with ideas', 'applying general principles to new contexts', 'asking interesting questions', and 'criticising ideas'(Black et al., 2007, pp. 204–5). These practices position pupils as active participants capable of agency compatible with constructivist explanations of learning. The practices associated with a 'performance orientation' would suggest a computational or symbol-processing view of mind and of learning. These are, for example, 'to recall specific information in the context in which it was taught', 'to give the right answer', 'to [avoid] criticising ideas'. The dominance of these practices reflect a view of learning as a process of receiving and storing information and teaching as an exercise of transmitting information. Success is recognized by learners' ability to recall 'correct' answers. This view of learning and teaching aligns with practice described as the 'letter' of AfL and the antithesis of what the research advocates. From these analyses of pedagogical practices the theoretical roots behind formative assessment are beginning to emerge. However, how accessible these theories

are to teachers, remains questionable. For example, these two divergent practices are not presented as belonging to different theoretical traditions—the words 'constructivism', 'cognitivism', 'symbol-processing' or 'behaviourism' are never used—instead they are offered as alternative practices that co-exist, rather than opposed orientations.

These insights from TLRP informed my research and initial study but not the practice in my school which followed national policy and tied AfL to improvement in summative achievement making it orientated to performance rather than learning. Nor did the AfL procedures selected comprehensively represent the techniques Black and Wiliam advocated in 2003 as they focussed on the pupils' use of peer and self-assessment, measurement and understanding the language of assessment criteria reflecting the focus on outcomes. In my practice pupils found it very difficult to draw out from their work and the specified assessment outcomes targets for improvement. Other members of staff in the department agreed that the self and peer-assessment system was not engaging the pupils.

To gain a better understanding of formative assessment practice and to understand how to change practice to achieve its purported benefits, I sought answers to the following questions:

1. What constitutes 'good practice' in my institution according to the practices and goals of AfL in Drama?
2. Can the 'spirit' of AfL be enacted within the institutional framing that links formative assessment to summative goals?
3. To what extent do these practices enhance learning when accompanied by the institutional practices that focus on progression in terms of national curriculum levels and how do pupils experience them?

The first two sub-sections deal with these questions respectively. The third sub-section discusses how my observations and findings from the initial study shaped my understanding of formative assessment.

2.2 Exploring 'good' practice within the Drama Department

The initial study involved observation of four drama classes taught by two teachers; Sophie and Anna, where the booklets were used with pupils aged 13 to 15. The classes were audio recorded and field notes were also taken. The recordings were then transcribed as fully as possible but sometimes were incoherent because of the high level of noise from other groups during the group work activities. In addition to this two members of the Drama Department, Anna and Jane were interviewed along with nine randomly selected Key Stage 3 pupils. Each of the interviews was approximately half an hour in duration and was transcribed. The teachers and pupils were given pseudonyms. The interviews were semi-structured and the outline of prompts and questions are given in Appendix 6.[1]

What constitutes good practice in my institution?

Answering the first question requires looking at the AfL booklet in some detail as these are the pivotal resource drama teachers use to deploy formative assessment at Key Stage 3. In terms of their appearance they are very impressive documents. Each booklet costs in the region of £2 to produce and providing one for every pupil at Key Stage 3 represents a departmental outlay of over £1500 over three years, which indicates the importance the department attaches to them.

Considerable effort has been made to present the material in the booklets to ensure pupils feel they own it, like a personal diary. Each consists of twenty A4 pages grouped into different colours corresponding to the focus of the pages. So, for example, the blue pages have information about the drama curriculum in Years 7 through to 9; the red pages have a tick-box list of skills

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[1] Citations from the Drama interview data refer to the document into which they were placed which was named by the date on which the transcriptions were completed.

and drama 'conventions' (i.e. freeze-frames, asides, still images, internal monologue) that pupils will be expected to use. The yellow pages are 'self-assessment' and 'peer-assessment' sheets and contain broken down focus questions which pupils can use to analyse their own and others' performances; and the green pages at the back refer to the drama attainment level descriptions written in 'pupil-friendly' language (see Appendix 2). At the front of the booklet is a plastic cover under which pupils are encouraged to place a photograph of themselves and to write down their names and form. The whole document is bound in a plastic spine that enables other sheets to be added if needed.

In spite of the attempt to make them personal documents, pupils are not allowed to take the booklets home, reflecting to some extent the cost of their production and the risks of the pupils losing them. Not being allowed to take the booklets home would not necessarily prevent the pupils from familiarising themselves with them if they were used regularly in class. This was something one of the drama teachers, Anna, during an interview claimed took place in her classes:

> Int: How often do you use the booklets?
> Anna: We're not as structured at Key Stage 3 so we are
> allowed to create our own.
> Int: So is that every lesson then?
> Anna: Yes every lesson.

5

> (9.03.08, p.2)

Another drama teacher, Jane, however claimed to use them once every six or seven weeks: Nevertheless, as she says this was still using them 'regularly'.

> Int: How often do you use them personally as a teacher?

5   Jane: Personally well I use them regularly. I do a scheme of
work with them [the pupils] for a maximum of six to seven
weeks and on the last week I will assess them and get the
booklets out.

(9.03.08, p.16)

Whilst different teachers may well use the booklets more or less regularly, it
seems that in Jane's case, the booklets were used only at the end of a scheme
of work, when it was time to summatively assess what the pupils had learnt in
the unit. This suggested that for this teacher AfL is not used in the process of
learning but only in the process of testing in accordance with how AfL was
represented in the in-service provision.

The AfL activities incorporated in the booklets are focussed on improving
levels based on consideration and appraisals of final performances in
assessment tasks throughout the year. There is room in the booklets for the
outcomes of two assessments to be recorded each year and the progress sheet
at the back of the booklets assumes pupils are expected to progress by four
sub-levels in any one year (see Appendix 2).

Jane's emphasis on summative performance in her use of the booklets was also
evident in her explanation of how peer-assessment activities are used to engage
pupils in assessing each other's final performances.

5   Each group would have had a topic or theme to investigate
in the seven-week scheme leading up to a performance
which they will then perform in front of the others. The
others will have their booklets in front of them and there is a
list of questions in those booklets and they will answer them
and watch at the same time. They will watch one member of

the team and peer-assess them as they watch. And they'll

10   make notes about that person.

(9.03.08, p. 16)

In the lessons I observed pupils rarely engaged in writing about what the other groups had performed irrespective of the class they were in and instead used their recollection of the performance to answer the teacher's questions in dialogue. Even when the focus was self-assessment pupils remain reluctant to write in the booklets as Anna another drama teacher explained.

They don't like the written work. They say can't we self-

assess just by telling you miss? But of course you got to

have something written down. So they don't like doing that

5   but I think most of it [the booklet] was accessible.

(9.03.08, p.2)

Anna believes writing down appraisals and targets is self-evidently important because the practice is reified in the booklets.

Writing down targets and evaluations twice a year in key stage 3 is a central aspect of the booklets and leaves a paper trail of evidence of progress that can be easily referred to when reporting to parents or to show to inspectors. The booklets provide for pupils to be assessed twice a year in Key Stage 3 (although there are opportunities indicated for additional assessment to take place). At the end of each assessment performance, other groups are invited to comment on it using their peer-assessment pages and this is meant to inform what the individual members of the group then write down about their own performance in the self-assessment pages of the booklet. A reflective sheet is provided where pupils are asked to consider their target (distilled from the last formal assessment) and what they have done to achieve it, this time using the

skills and conventions list, focus questions and attainment target descriptors to support them (Appendix 2).

All teachers had to ensure that assessment target sheets are filled out after each assessment throughout Key Stage 3 so that by the end of Year 9 each pupil had a record of the progress they made along the ladder of levels defined within the drama booklet. This process assumes that the reflection required to distil targets that feed into the next assessed performance enhances individual learning.

According to the pupil interviews whilst some claimed to have never seen them at all, most suggested that the booklets were used infrequently. This does raise the question that if the booklets are used so infrequently, how can pupils become acquainted with their contents and purpose especially if they are prohibited from taking them home. Similarly, if they are to be used as a tool to help formative assessment, they need to be used to inform ongoing learning, which in these cases appears not to be happening.

Progress itself is defined unproblematically in the booklets and takes the whole school policy approach which reflects the national policy recommendations for progress as clear straight lines through the levels based on normative assumptions. The purpose of this was made clear by Anna:

> what we ... have here which is the student self-assessment
> form and then the level tally. So that they know where they
> are going so that when we mentor them and target set—it's
> 5 not that much work once you know what you're doing and
> the kids will come to you and go I know what my target is
> but I want to go on to the next one. I know I'm a level 4
> but I want to move on to a level 5 so that I can get a 6a at
> the end of Key Stage 3. And there are all these 6as and 5s.
> 10 But they all understand it, which is part and parcel of AfL
> because they know what it is they've got to do in order to
> achieve that level 6c.

(9.03.08, p.1)

'Good' practice from the school's perspective involves:

- Making the AfL resources attractive and encouraging a sense of pupil ownership.

- Regular assessed activities, where 'regular' is two assessments from which targets are identified per year that will inform future assessments.

- Pupil input into the assessment judgements of final performances through peer and self-assessment though the teacher's judgement is the final one.

- Written targets and written records of pupil reflections on progress after each formally assessed performance.

- Progress in terms of levels of attainment and a clear trajectory designed to inform students of what they can feasibly aim for at the end of the key stage based on current performance.

Several additional assumptions emerge about the staff's view of assessment activities and AfL when analysing these activities. Firstly, formative assessment from Jane's point of view is something of a discrete outcome-orientated activity where there are clear points in time in classes where appraisal of final performances is carried out and feedback from this assessment serves to inform individual target setting. This makes assessment a conscious and deliberate activity, separate from learning which contrasts with the research view of formative assessment which is intended to be within learning and for learning. However, there were also examples of criteria that were based more in terms of the tools of drama practice and the conventions that were used within the role-plays.

In each case, moreover, the unit of analysis in the assessments is the individual pupil. This corresponds with a constructivist perspective on AfL which sees

learning as an individual process. However, all of the role-play performances that were assessed were created and performed in groups. Individual contributions to the groups are therefore isolated from the group dynamic and are then used as the focus for assessment.

Can the 'spirit' of AfL be enacted within the institutional framing that links formative assessment to summative goals?

A different approach observed was to use the booklets throughout teaching and to engage pupils in a discourse about the practices of drama that they were expected to use and understand to enhance their performance. This approach was closer to using the booklet activities in a formative way and was clear from interactions within Sophie's class in particular, in contrast to Jane's understanding of peer-assessment. The following discussion took place just after a group of pupils in Year 8 had performed their role-play and Sophie was leading a discussion based on the questions posed in the booklet about the other group's performance.

Sophie: Looking back at the criteria, who can spot two conventions used in the role-play?

Ben: Flashback!

5   Sophie: Yes flashback

Ben: Still image!

Sophie: When did they use still image?

Ben: When Stacey was reading the thing out and

Sophie:... You noticed what was happening in the

10   background. Good! So we definitely have at least two conventions.

Kyle: And they did a monologue.

Sophie: Yes they did have a monologue so they combined monologue and still image in the background, yeah!

15   ...

Sophie: Did they have a really clear structure?

Three pupils: Yeah

[Girl asked about what structure is]

Sophie: what we mean by structure is how a piece of work

20   is put together...

Kyle: Miss, they had direct address as well.

Sophie: That piece of work had a clear beginning, middle

and end. So If I asked what the middle was, what would you

say?

25   Amy: The middle bit was when the student went for his...

Sophie: Does anyone else think that?

[Another pupil explains where he thinks the beginning

middle and end were]

Sophie: Good so we can pinpoint exactly where the

30   beginning, middle and end are exactly.

(08.12.08, pp. 1–2)

In this interaction Sophie is supporting pupils to develop a discourse using some of the tools of drama such as conventions and structural features and the excerpt demonstrates pupils' understanding and use of these. The booklets support this discourse as the criteria for learning and for assessment are couched in these terms. The pupils were discussing another group's performance and using the peer-assessment sheet in the booklet to help them, which includes questions like 'how many conventions did the group use?' This was a formative event as it focussed on the criteria for learning and assessment and provided the feedback needed to inform action and it engaged pupils in practices that were associated with the 'spirit' of AfL enabling learner autonomy and making subject learning explicit. This contrasted with the approach in the history booklets which did not emphasise subject-related tools or conventions at all. Instead the focus was purely on measurement and outcome.

The observations and interviews revealed two different approaches to the use of the booklets but whilst the pupils did engage in a discussion with Sophie about aspects of the performance of other groups, later in the same lesson the pupils were unsure of how to move from these discussions to formulate targets

in their booklets couched in level terms. This occurred even though Sophie had written down prompts on a slide and explained what the pupils should be doing at length. Disengagement is reflected in the high level of chat during this activity in which pupils made the following comments sometimes to me.

Steven: Do you just copy that out, sir? [pointing to the prompts and exemplars of targets written on the powerpoint slide]

5   Roy: Miss do we write all of that down?

Sophie: Yes. This is your framework for writing. Your writing should look like that. This is to avoid you writing down one sentence that just means nothing.

...

10   Sophie: I am going to change the slide soon so get down what you need.

Sarah: Do we have to copy all of that down?

(12.01.09, p. 3)

The interviews also indicated that some pupils did not feel writing down targets was a useful activity.

Int: So when it says at the end here what I need to do to make improvements. Did you not understand what to do or

5   what to write? Did you fill it out in order to get the job done or to make improvements

Tom (Year 9): To make improvements.

Int: And did it work?

Tom: No

10   Int: I'm interested in why not?

Tom: You didn't really refer to it and you often forgot what your target was.

(9.03.08 p.7)

Here the restricted access the pupils have makes it difficult for the booklets to serve a formative purpose:

Int: Do you find it helpful to write things down?

Grace (Year 9): Don't know?!

5   Int: Why do you think the teachers want you to write it down?

Grace: So that you can look back and just if you forget something you can look it up.

Int: Is that what happened?

10   Grace: No

(18.07.08, p.9)

Int: How do you assess yourselves using these booklets

Melda (Year 7): After the test we get the books and write

15   how we think we could do and what improvements we could make to our performance

Int: Do you find that easy?

Melda: It is quite difficult when you can't think of that much stuff to criticise yourself about.

20

(18.07.08, p.23)

Int: Do you know what the purposes of the [target setting] sheets were?

25   Adam (Year 9): I suppose to help us understand what we were doing?

Int: Did it?

Adam: I don't think it did. We knew what we did and I just

wrote it down. But thought there were other [ways] we

30   could have done it I suppose.

Int: So why didn't you think it helped?

Adam: Because we're just writing it down. It's not really

learning anything new or evaluating our work better.

35   (9.03.08, p. 5)

In these excerpts the pupils' comments suggest that they do not have a sense
of where their learning should be moving towards i.e. what competence they
are striving for next. This indicates that the use of the booklets in order to
encourage formative assessment is questionable. In particular, it indicates that
the use of levels to express their learning is something pupils find difficult to
gain meaning from. If pupils struggle to abstract from their activities to targets
and then from targets back to their situated learning experiences, the activities
in the booklet lack meaning and hence become a matter of ritual. So I did see
the Drama Department using the booklets and having similar outcomes to
those I experienced in history.

However, while the booklets constituted the 'official' manifestation of
formative assessment practice in drama, there were other instances where
through peer feedback and self-assessment in interactions rather than as
designated teacher-led activities, pupils understood how to improve their
performance and extend their learning.

Formative assessment emerging from classroom dialogue

Observing the way pupils went about creating their role-plays in their groups
after the teacher had explained the focus and the drama conventions that the
groups should try and include was particularly interesting. This was true of the

groups of both teachers observed. The groups practised their role-plays with each other while engaging at the same time in a kind of self-regulating conversation with the other participants. This resulted in constant interruptions to their practice performances and dozens of asides by the participants where they came out of role and asked for affirmation from the others, or requested judgement from them, or explained why they are doing it this way. For an observer, it was very difficult to monitor precisely the occasions when the participants were in or out of character, for occasionally these asides were incredibly brief—under a second long. Whereas on other occasions, the asides merged so seamlessly with their utterances while in role, that it was difficult for me to be clear whether they were performing or talking about their performance. The other participants, however, as they were participating in producing the whole performance knew exactly what was happening, even when the rehearsals were punctuated by many such interruptions.

For an observer, these interruptions made the rehearsals incoherent and impossible to follow—and there were instances when members of groups actually became rather frustrated by the constant stopping and starting and urged in hectoring tones their peers to get on with it. However, without question the exchanges that were happening between group participants at this stage were very useful and formative in that it accompanied the process by which the role-play was produced rather than being separated from it. Additionally, the interactions between the group participants provided the dynamic around which what the group deemed acceptable or good in performance terms emerged.

An example of the kind of things the pupils would comment on were: "Should I move over to the side before I say 'But you wouldn't understand' or should I go while saying it?"; "I feel really stupid just standing here, can I do something?"; "I don't know how I am going to say that without laughing." A further example from the same Year 8 class that Sophie taught involved the following conversation leading to their assessed performance. It was not

possible to transcribe all the utterances here as many were inaudible and unclear – these passages are indicated in brackets.

Mark: No but I've got to read this first!

Trevor: Marky Marky!

Emma: Are we starting from the beginning or are we...

Samuel (blurting in): I've got an idea—when we go to the

5   flashback of the first time Stacey ever takes drugs ... can

concentrate on the mates' house .... And then he went off

the rails!

Mark: Wait let's go from the beginning

[several inaudible exchanges]

10   Samuel: I need Lucy!

Karen: Emma—you were that person

Emma: Where do I go?

Karen: And what do I do with the cigarette?

Samuel [responding to Karen]: Put it in the bin!

15   Karen: That would start a fire

[several inaudible exchanges]

Mark: when Samuel goes past he can just hide his face

Samuel: Or he could just walk past like that [demonstrating]

20   Mark: That's what I mean!

Trevor Hey Kid Lad!!

(laughing)

Mark: Come on Trevor !!

Trevor: Oh we've got a test!

25   Mark: Come on!

Trevor: We could come back with AK47s!

Teacher: Wait is that it?

Mark: Don't know!

Trevor: But on the way home you could see him and it

30   would be like...

There are examples of pupils trying to encourage the others to get on with things as in lines 3, 9, 23 and 25. Furthermore there are instances of engagement among the pupils about what would seem or look better within the performance (lines 12–15 and lines 18–20). Most of this discussion took place very quickly and was over within an instant. The groups were given over ten minutes to produce a role-play and the end product was impressive for many groups. For this particular group, they performed a role-play from which the following transcription is an extract:

Mark: Stacey why are you crying?

Trevor: It's you

Mark: What do you mean. I haven't done anything.

5   Samuel: Why have you made her cry you idiot!

Mark: I didn't do anything

Karen [Playing Stacey]: Dad, Where's Mum gone?

Trevor: We've had a little argument. And she's gone for a

10   walk

Karen: Hate you! You always do that!

Stacey looks for her Aunt

15   Mark: (playing her Aunt): Get away from me!

Trevor: (playing Aunt's partner): Yes, go away! And don't

ever come here again!

Stacey out on the street again

20   Trevor: Hey, try this (Signifying some drugs)

Karen What is it?

Trevor : You'll like it.

Karen : Got any ciggies? Ooh! My dad I'd better go

38

Trevor : No stay here

25   [Stacey takes the drugs and lights up]

Karen: I've really got to go——see you tomorrow!

Home:

Mark (playing Stacey's father): Where've you been. You

30   were meant to be back hours ago!

Karen: I was with my friends

Mark: Go to bed!

[Pause]

Mark: Stacey, you got to get up you got to go to school

35   now.

Karen: Oh God

Mark: It's half past seven already! Come on! All your

friends are here look!

Karen: Bye!

40

Trevor: Hey I've got some money. Do you want to come

to the park and bag us some drink?

Karen: I'm so upset. I don't have any friends now and all

my real friends hate me and my new friends don't like me.

45   My old ones had trusted me and I wish I could get back to

my old life and have a childhood to remember not one like

this one.

(8.12.08)

Sadler (1989, p. 121) pinpoints a very significant feature of formative assessment which the drama AfL booklets do not reveal but which is evident from the discussions the group engaged in to create this role-play. He says pupils should be able to 'monitor continuously the quality of what is being produced *during the act of production itself*' (original italics, p. 121). This places

39

much greater emphasis on the process of production and engaging with that process rather than evaluating the end product. The level of engagement seen in this activity in the drama classes was very high and this contrasted with the subdued way the pupils attempted to write down their targets in the booklets after their performances.

From the initial study of drama practice several points emerge. The target-setting and written feedback activities were the ones pupils had most trouble with and these tended to be used infrequently or at the most, every six weeks. Furthermore, as the targets for progression are through levels of capability represented by written definitions, this was a task abstracted and separated from the performances they were to identify targets from. It therefore seems that the impact of these activities was similar to the impact of performance in a summative assessment and conformed to the problems the History Department experienced.

However, this was not the only way in which the booklets were used. In all the lessons observed, it was also evident that pupils had in many cases a very good understanding of the conventions and tools for making progress in drama. These conventions are listed in the first few pages of the drama booklet (Appendix 2). While the booklets themselves were not used in many lessons, the conventions and tools were referred to continually. In Sophie's class, pupils were able to determine conventions and tools for becoming more competent performers, yet they still struggled with relating these to the targets described in outcome measures. One drama teacher suggested this was because the pupils disliked writing things down, whereas the pupils revealed that they could not see a purpose in doing so. Certainly in history, I was similarly unsure to what end I had tried to get pupils to write down targets based on outcome descriptions and whether being able to articulate a higher level of performance than one's own actually enables one to achieve it.

I was very interested in the tools and conventions that had engaged pupils in drama and to what extent equivalent tools and conventions were being used or could be used in history too. Interactions between pupils in drama showed

that they were engaged in a discourse of learning and were able to use tools and conventions they were familiar with from drama lessons to learn and make progress. If formative assessment occurs 'during the act of production itself' (Sadler ,1989), the question for me was how can AfL be introduced within the act of production in history and what are the pedagogical implications of this?

It was these issues and questions that triggered an exploration of the underlying values and theory that underpins teaching and learning, and which eventually pointed me toward sociocultural theories. However, as Bredo (1994) says, the dominant view of professional discourse within education is the symbol-processing or computational view of mind and knowledge. This is also the view of mind and knowledge that is implicit within much summative assessment. This assumes that knowledge can be represented objectively and then need only be internalised by an individual. The individual capacity for this internalisation can be measured by testing and the results determine the individual's ability. Performance is therefore linked to ability and learning. Within this paradigm, it is unclear how useful AfL strategies that presume the mind to be agentive and active could be. This view of mind is redolent of constructivist or cognitivist views of knowledge as subjective because it is individually constructed and derived from experience. However, neither symbol-processing nor constructivism take account very adequately of groups of pupils engaged in the process of completing activity together or co-construction. Moreover, the observations in drama lessons of pupils talking to each other, accepting, rejecting, proposing, trying, failing, and succeeding all at the same time produced a dynamic in which the criteria by which pupils were making judgements were constantly evolving and emergent. It was also clear that through this learning discourse or formative dialogue generalised criteria developed meaning for the pupils. The situated dialogue around the role-play allowed them to understand the meaning of the conventions in the here and now. This is revealed in the way the group incorporated into their role-plays some of the conventions that had been made available to them like 'still image', 'flashback' and 'direct address' (see Appendix 2). This seems to resonate with what Wenger (1998, p. 83) referred to as a 'discourse' within a community of practice, or more specifically the resource repertoire of communities. By this

he meant 'routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions or concepts that a community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice'. Pupils were drawing from this shared repertoire of drama conventions, and incorporating them into their role-plays. They had therefore demonstrated a consciousness of 'quality' and its ambiguity evident from the discussion the group engaged in to produce their role-plays which required regular judgement, affirmation and explanation among its members. This therefore was truly embedded formative assessment which emerged in the process of producing a performance or the 'act of production'.

During the interviews many pupils seemed to show knowledge of some of the conventions in terms of how they related to improving the quality of their performances. The older Year 9 pupils seem to have familiarised themselves well with them, whereas some of the younger ones, understandably, are just beginning the process of reifying the conventions and are not acquainted with them so specifically.

Adam (Year 9): Use more drama conventions like the still images and the music and stuff like that.

(09.03.08, p. 5)

Tom (Year 9): Like 'sustained role'.

(09.03.08, p. 7)

Grace (Year 9): Like teaching of skills, to face the audience and not scrape the chairs when you pick them up.

(18.07.08, p. 9)

Claire (Year 7): Just expression I don't know (floundering)

(18.07.08, p. 13)

Melda (Year 7): Things like we've got to improve the
amount of speech in it because sometimes we don't put that
much speech in it was mainly action and also when some of
our group sometimes need to stay in character because they
start laughing...

(18.07.08, p. 26)

There were also a few responses that emphasise the social aspect to performing
and creating performances.

Int: So what do you reckon you need to work on then?
Jake: (Year 8) I need to work on—like, working with people.
Int: OK
Jake: So like when we get into groups, I am often one of the
last people to choose or get picked. So I am put in any
random group usually.
Int: What can you do to help that?
Jake: Don't know.

(12.01.09, p. 1)

This collective aspect of the group work was a further reason for me to take a
more sceptical stance toward the individualistic notions inherent to
constructivism. This group activity did not appear to me to be a group of
individuals who each had compatible models of the activity they were engaged
in and were conducting their activity on the basis of that individual
interpretation. Instead each participant was engaging with each other in
negotiating a space for their self-expression that was meaningful to their own
identities and to the group as a whole, while having to mediate these to the
specific requirements of the activity and to a shared view of quality.

These initial insights demonstrated a dichotomy of practice in formative assessment in the Drama Department. On the one hand the 'official' version of formative assessment constituted a paper-based target-setting approach which was detached and separated from day-to-day drama class activities and which was imposed on to the curriculum. On the other hand, the pupils showed considerable ability to organise themselves, engage with each other, negotiate criteria and use a shared repertoire of conventions while they were producing a role-play that was to be performed. Pupils were becoming actors because they were enriching their participation in authentic drama-related practices.

My concerns at this point were to reject aspects of the school's practice particularly the focus on AfL in its role to support summative assessment. This meant a shift in orientation from targets as levels to consider ways of describing how participation in authentic history-related practice might look. Secondly to confront the discrepancy between the formative dialogues I observed in the role-plays and the problems pupils' experienced in understanding their progress. My interest was therefore to better understand formative assessment as an aspect of learning through participation and central to this is the notion of dialogue and the development of meaning through it. So to frame the main study I needed to consider theories that help to explain more satisfactorily what I saw develop among pupils in drama and attempt to explore ways in which the same could be generated in history. In order to do this I needed to consult theories that helped to explain dialogic interaction and communication as a learning tool. This requires revisiting in more detail the theoretical tenets of constructivist, symbol-processing and socioculturalist ideas.

Chapter 3: Exploring formative dialogue within sociocultural theory

At this point I want to look at the literature for a number of reasons; firstly, to argue that the underlying theories of learning within which AfL was assumed to work in my school exposed several contradictions. These centred on opposing views of mind and knowledge between the dominant symbol-processing view evident in my school and the more constructivist tenets of AfL. Additionally, to argue that the constructivist assumptions of many writers associated with AfL, while they raise valid objections to the symbol-processing view, do not themselves adequately explain the emergent formative dialogues that were observed in the drama classes. One of the key issues of difference is again in the nature of knowledge from outcomes specified as knowledge commodity, which remains the emphasis of AfL, to knowing as evolving competence and transformation of identity. This points to the need for a theory that can explain the process within which pupils developed their competence through dialogue, as observed in drama. I argue that a sociocultural view of mind and knowledge can do this and, furthermore, can imply how I should be teaching history to enable the same process. This places much more emphasis on emergent in-the-moment formative interaction as part of what is considered important and as linked to the more generalised notions of what evolving competence in history means.

The sociocultural view of learning does not see, as constructivism and symbol-processing theories do, the individual or the environment as separate entities but stresses one as part of the other. When taken together as a whole both form, according to the theory, a network of communities engaged in cultural practices. Learning takes place when an individual increases his or her level of participation in the sociocultural practices of one or more communities. It is acknowledged that this will involve changes to the community as well as changes to the individual. The community will learn from different perspectives of its members, and an individual's identity within a community will undergo changes as he or she moves toward more participation. This

makes learning a fundamentally social process. Bredo (1999, p. 39) summed up the social implications of this when he wrote 'one cannot independently define individual learning as separate from change in one's social role or identity. Any meaningful social action [...] becomes oriented to the actions of others'. He further explains that 'being properly taught to participate in an activity does not involve just performing one's own task in isolation. In a well-functioning division of labor, one's contribution is modulated and coordinated in terms of the whole activity it helps to construct, along with the contribution of others'. According to James (2006, p. 59) assessment and formative assessment is, 'weakly conceptualised' within this paradigm and one of the purposes of this research study is to attempt to address this.

3.1 The constructivist challenge to symbol-processing views of learning and assessment through AfL

The descriptions offered here of symbol-processing and constructivist theories are perhaps extreme ones. However, the purpose of this is to highlight fundamental tensions between the aims of many in the research community, who adopt constructivist beliefs, and the default, orthodox symbol-processing beliefs that pervade schooling and in particular my school. The tensions between these views offer a good explanation for the problems observed in drama and history of enabling pupils to access outcome level descriptions and targets in the self- and peer-assessment activities they attempted.

Symbol-processing theory conceives the mind as inside individuals' heads and isolated from any social, collective or group dynamic. Cognition is therefore considered to take place inside the head only. Mind is also viewed as passive for if it is to learn something then it has to be fed information from the outside (Bredo, 1999, p. 30). This information is fed in and accumulates there as symbols, which can then be 'processed' using 'specifiable rules or procedures that govern what to do' (Bruner, 1996, p. 5). Two important assumptions behind this are that the symbols which convey information from the outside to

the inside can truly reflect reality—a contention many criticise (Kuhn, 1962; 1996). The second assumption is that 'understanding something' becomes synonymous with ability to undertake the required procedure and follow the rules. This again has attracted criticism for it suggests that a 'mindless robot (or bureaucrat) who simply went by the rulebook without exercising judgement as to a rule's applicability or usefulness in the situation at hand' should be judged successful at having learned something (Bredo, 1999, p. 29).

Discussions about learning that take place with no overt reference to values, beliefs or theory tend to make assumptions that lead to a tacit acceptance of this orthodoxy. It is reasonable to suggest that this is encouraged by the regime of external, high-stakes public examinations in Britain and the accountability pressures that exist on teachers to maximise outcomes from these exams (see 1.1). As James (2006, p. 49) says, 'teachers' assessment practice is inevitably influenced by external assessments [...and...] teachers may find themselves subscribing, uncritically or unwittingly, to the theories of learning on which they are based'.

The main reason for associating the regime of exams with a symbol-processing view of mind and knowledge is the assumption of 'task stability'. This is the belief recognisable in any formal examination environment, that individuals know and can understand the tasks they are asked to complete in the exam in the same way that teachers, examiners and researchers know them (Bredo, 1999). This assumption means that it is possible to make judgements about pupils' intelligence, problem-solving skills, and learning from their ability to undertake the tasks given to them in exams. Successive improvements in those tasks by the same pupil over a period would therefore constitute learning and progress. Conversely, limited success or a static (or decreasing) level of performance over a period of time can only be explained by two possibilities: either it shows a mind that is working at full capacity and cannot therefore learn any more or it indicates faults in the information input by teachers. This latter possibility is of particular concern to teachers and schools. (See Appendix 4, for an example of a specific instruction to teachers to avoid reporting decreasing levels of performance in APP reports.) This indicates a

belief in symbol-processing ideas and a desire to avoid accusations that teachers had not done their job properly.

This notion of task stability has been criticised for it takes no account of different interpretations of the task leading to different outcomes (Bredo, 1999, p. 31). This makes the validity of test scores questionable as true reflections of capability. Some studies have shown that pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds will respond to test items differently as a result of different levels of exposure to the appropriate discourse for judging what is relevant and what is not in answering test questions (Cooper & Dunne, 2000). Messick (1999, p. 160) defines the extent to which tests and assessments are easier for some and harder for others in ways that are irrelevant to what is being tested *construct-irrelevant variance*.[2]

Much formative assessment literature rejects these symbol-processing values and instead adopts constructivist beliefs about mind and knowledge. Von Glasersfeld (1987) argues within constructivism that knowledge cannot ever represent correctly what is 'out there' as there is no way of verifying that it is correct except by using the same knowledge. Alternatively, he argues that 'viability' decides the value of knowledge and he defines viability as the success with which conceptual models of the world fit with individuals' experience. If an individual's conceptual model is exposed as false as a result of an independent experience then the individual has to modify that model and this constitutes learning. This differs from symbol-processing in many ways. Firstly, as von Glasersfeld says it shifts 'the emphasis from the pupil's "correct" replication of what the teacher does, to the pupil's successful organisation of his or her *own* experience' (von Glasersfeld, 1987, p. 7). Furthermore, it emphasises the agency of the individual and his or her necessarily active mind, in contrast to the passive symbol-processing conception of mind.

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[2] For a useful discussion of authenticity in public exams in the USA and the consequences for pupils from low income families see Lee (2008, pp. 157–159).

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Sadler's (1989) seminal article about formative assessment does not offer an explicit alignment with a theory of learning but a constructivist view of mind and learning emerges. Firstly, his view requires learners to 'take action', which suggests activity rather than passivity. Similarly, the distinction made (1989, p. 122) between 'external' feedback about pupils' work and 'internal' self-regulation of it implies recognition of the external/internal dualism, which is inherent to constructivist views of mind and learning. In this way, the meaning of feedback statements must be individually interpreted and then acted upon, making it a constructive activity.

Sadler distances himself from any symbol-processing theory when he challenges representations of progress within school disciplines as a simple ladder or taxonomy of competence arguing that learning is 'multidimensional rather than sequential, and pre-requisite learning cannot be conceptualised as neatly packaged units of skills or knowledge. Growth takes place on many interrelated fronts at once and is continuous rather than lock-step' (1989, p. 123). This conflicts with the view of progress which defines it unproblematically as whatever is specified in the curriculum. Furthermore, it offers an explanation for the difficulty pupils felt in accessing curriculum specifications of progress, even when written in language designed to be understood by them, for it acknowledges that progress takes place outside the confines of summative assessment, especially when those summative assessments take place infrequently. Sadler then goes on to explain that diagnostic tools and actions to be taken for improvement should not be seen therefore as computational formulae or recipes for improvement, which need only be internalised by learners (1989, p. 139). Learners will each have unique interpretations of what to do and unique insights into the progress they make—again fitting into a constructivist paradigm and agreeing with the objections to assuming task-stability mentioned earlier.

Theoretical tensions also give rise to the incoherence in the ideas propagated by other prominent writers on formative assessment. For example, Black and Wiliam recognise the agency of the individual involved in activity to improve

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their capacity to learn (2006a). Interactions amongst both individual pupils and their teachers are seen as key to achieving improvement, and such interaction usually will involve feedback and generally come from activities like peer- and teacher-assessment where learners have responsibility for their learning (Black and Wiliam, 2006b). Accepting the importance of these two aspects of a teaching and learning scenario seems to run counter to any symbol-processing approach. Furthermore, like Sadler, Black and Wiliam also separate the external as the source of feedback and the internal individual mind as the source of cognition, again redolent of constructivism (2009) However, it is problematic to attempt to justify AfL techniques on the basis of measurable improvements in summative tests (Black et al., 2003) while criticising the external summative assessment system for its lack of validity and for exerting a constraining influence on teachers and pupils' engagement in the process of learning (Black & Wiliam 2006a). The point is underlined when they attack the reliability of these summative assessments in providing accurate measurements of pupils' learning though it is not clear they do so on the grounds of task instability but rather domain representation (Black and Wiliam, 2006c).

There are tensions, then, between the implicit theories underpinning summative and formative assessment practices and tensions within the theorising about AfL in the research literature.

3.2 The limitations of constructivism in explaining emergent formative dialogue

The tenets of constructivism are far from universally accepted. Small (2003) criticises extreme versions of constructivism for their emphasis on individuals immersed in their own solipsistic private worlds, unable to verify that their meanings are the same as those of others. Fox (2001), criticises the acceptance of constructivism for being either common sense or for providing incomplete explanations of human cognition leading to questionable classroom practices. Discussions of this nature within the local arena have never taken place. This

may be because of a common belief that theories have limited practical application (Kent, 2010; Torrance and Pryor, 2001). Additionally it may be because constructivism is only tacitly what underpins the formative assessment literature and there is rarely ever any explicit use of the term or explicit alignment with its ideas by associated writers. In my school this has resulted in symbol-processing ideas of task stability co-existing with constructivist ideas of learner agency within formative assessment and tacitly represented as complementary and consistent.

Nevertheless, the drama classes did reveal a far more engaging and relevant version of formative assessment for pupils. This took place from observing groups of pupils practicing and rehearsing with each other *before* an assessed performance, i.e. what I refer to as a formative dialogue. This involved pupils discussing, arguing, accepting, rejecting, ignoring, modifying, judging, affirming and acting out ideas from themselves and from each other within the task of producing a role-play that was to be assessed. The end-product from this was coherent, clear and competent. Group activity from a constructivist perspective provides opportunities for individuals to access alternative viewpoints to modify their internal models of the world. However, my observations suggested a collaborative act where intersubjectivity, reflecting collective, negotiated views was the source of individual learning.

This led me to explore sociocultural theories and the insights they might provide about the nature of group cognition and the nature of language and communication as a tool to enable it. A further question raised by the formative dialogues that socioculturalism might also inform is the properties of the knowledge observed within this collective cognition.

Language as a tool for collective cognition

Within the symbol-processing paradigm, language is the medium through which information is transmitted from one person to another person. This gives language a representational status whereby the words are seen as accurately representing the object or concept they refer to (Bredo, 1999). However, this is not an idea of language that constructivists consider plausible.

Constructivists would say that words should not be seen as units of representation but as 'tools' which help to construct the situations and realities necessary for human interaction. Kuhn, although not usually associated with constructivism, seems to assume this when he rejects the possibility of having a neutral observational language with which to describe scientific phenomena (Kuhn, 1962; 1996). This partly explains why it would be so difficult to conduct an impartial discussion about different scientific paradigms, for each paradigm comes with its own set of agreed, socially constructed, meanings. Von Glasersfeld (1987, p. 8), writing within a constructivist ideology, agrees with this when he talks about words not being 'containers..[of] meaning'. But whereas Dewey said 'the use of language to convey and acquire ideas is an extension and refinement of the principle that things gain meaning by being used in a shared experience or joint action' (quoted in Bredo, 1999, p. 35), von Glasersfeld, as do most constructivists, seems to rely on an explanation of meaning-making on the basis of individual, cognitive operations. He therefore says that meaning is 'subjective in origin and resides in a subject's head, not in the word that, because of an association, has the power to call up, in each of us, our own subjective representation' (1987, p. 9). Words, when uttered by another, are not therefore invitations for interaction from which new meanings and activities may be derived but 'should be considered instructions to select particular meanings from a [cognitive] list' inside one's head (von Glasersfeld, 1989, p. 132). This invites the question how can individuals generate the same lists of meanings that can be looked up with words in this way? Von Glasersfeld reverts to the idea of 'fit' rather than match to explain this; as long as our cognitive lists of meanings are at least compatible with others, then this will enable communication (von Glasersfeld, 1987, p. 9).

Bauersfeld focusses on a more socially constructed version of meaning-making and emphasises the importance of intersubjectivity within a classroom 'microculture'. Generating this happens on two levels. Firstly, on an unconscious level where 'communication is a process of often implicit negotiations in which subtle shifts and slides of meaning occur outside the participants' awareness' (Cobb, 1994, p. 138). Secondly, on a more overt, conscious level, where 'teachers open the floor for an intensive negotiation of meaning, for an exchange of individually different meanings' (Bauersfeld, 1992, p. 474). The consequences of not engaging in this intersubjective, social generation of meaning with pupils are either pupils producing work that is more of an 'imitation of the surface structures of the overt, observable activities without much understanding or flexibility' (Bauersfeld, 1992, p. 480). Or it results in teachers and pupils working at cross-purposes, with likely consequent confrontations (Bauersfeld, 1980). Nevertheless, Bauersfeld is still working on an individual level and maintains that meaning-making among groups of individuals during social interaction still results in individually constructed meanings.

Rogoff (1990, p. 81), working within sociocultural theory, challenges this view when she says 'to understand how individuals are embedded in the social world, it is necessary to grant that meaning is more than a construction by individuals'. The formative dialogue within drama classes revealed that individuals were using language as a means for collective cognition, with individuals contributing to and influencing the collective group and not just the cognitive models inside their heads.

A useful example of how the use of language can be conceived in terms such as these is through Austin's speech-act theory (1975). Speech-act theory serves to show how verbal interactions can change the relational dynamic between people and not just within them. Austin (1975, pp. 5–6) identified utterances, he called 'explicit performatives', which 'do not "describe" or "report" or constate anything at all; are not "true or false"; and... the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as "just", saying something'. He provides several

examples of these 'speech-acts' such as saying 'I do' at a wedding ceremony; 'I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*'; 'I give and bequeath my watch to my brother'; and 'I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow' (Austin, 1975, p. 5). Austin says that these words in no way represent any actions but they are *themselves* the actions and they change the environment and the relationship between those involved whether one is the speaker, hearer or bystander.

While these explicit performatives serve to show language changing the social dynamic in obvious ways, it is true that these are comparatively rare. Much more common are Austin's classifications of 'illocutionary' and 'perlocutionary' acts whose effect on social activity are more subtle (1975, pp. 55–108). The former relates to speech-acts involving the speaker *doing* something through his or her utterances as, for example, giving warnings, issuing requests or demands, explaining and so on. The latter refers to action brought about as a result of utterances and could include, for example, convincing, surprising, deterring, worrying and the like. As these verbal actions require other people's recognition if they are to have any meaning, then they will also change the social dynamic itself, and not just the constructions of the environment inside people's heads. Sfard (2008) researching children's engagement in mathematical tasks argues that what is learnt becomes individualised when thinking becomes influenced by the discourse resulting from activity—a process she dubs 'commognition'. Individual utterances are only meaningful within the context of the discourse in which individuals are interacting; using the discourse is therefore essential for progress.

These examples show how the use of words is often of itself an action that involves individuals but also involves changes to the environment and sets meaning not so much inside people's heads but amongst social groups. These are characteristics of change and development happening as a consequence of social interaction, where the change is as much of the collective involved in the endeavour as it is of their individual cognitive models. To see such processes purely within the confines of constructivist notions of individual cognition results in over-complicated and unconvincing views about communication itself. Black and Wiliam strive to provide models for teachers of interpreting

pupils' responses and remain limited to the constructivist notion of viability between what, independently, pupils mean when they say something and what others interpret them to mean as all that can be achieved (2009, p. 18).

In drama pupils were not trying to interpret 'correctly' or 'viably' each other's individual conception of the task and their role in it. Nor were they trying to interpret correctly what others meant by their utterances. Instead pupils made contributions which affected the behaviour of the group as a whole. Similarly, individuals made contributions about their own or others' involvement in the role-play and this was affected by the matters the group were focussed on at particular times. There is little sense of overt resolution of issues confronting the group as its attention was shifting onto different issues all the time. Furthermore, it was unclear that each member of the group achieved 'intersubjective viability' either. Group members negotiated a role for their self-expression that seemed to satisfy themselves and others while developing an awareness of their own capacities and working toward a good role-play in drama. However, this was situated in the context of the dialogue. Interactions involving feedback were therefore relevant to the specific conditions of the dynamics at the time and would not necessarily be relevant at other times or across contexts.

The development of knowledge within participation and dialogue

A related question raised by the formative dialogues observed in drama reveals limitations within the constructivist and symbol-processing account of the use of knowledge among those involved. Sfard (1998) uses the acquisition metaphor to characterise constructivist and symbol-processing theories of knowledge as knowledge is acquired through the use of an individual's sensory inputs and must be stored in the mind somewhere. She contrasts this with the participation metaphor which is a view that focuses on participation and activity itself as a form of knowledge or 'knowing'.

Rogoff (1995, p. 142) calls learning within participation 'participatory appropriation' and says that it 'is a process of becoming, rather than

acquisition'. She uses the analogy of the development of a child's leg to clarify the distinction between 'internalisation' and 'appropriation' and to explore the different temporal dimensions of the two metaphors. In this, she argues that it is absurd to talk about the growth and developing strength of a child's leg as 'accumulating [there as] units of growth or of exercise' that have been somehow 'stored' in the past. Much more coherent is the view that the leg develops as a 'function of the growth and use that is continually occurring' (Rogoff, 1995, p. 155). She also refers to the interactive process by which learners can develop as 'guided participation' (1995, pp. 146–150). This emphasises the inter-personal exchanges involved in linking individual activities to those of a collective. So, the participation metaphor refers to the activities one undertakes as a form of knowing that builds capacity and competence rather than as actions that can only be done once pre-requisite units of knowledge have been internalised. Hence, within participation, overlaps occur between past, present and future during 'ongoing development as people participate in events and thus handle subsequent events in ways based on their involvement in previous events' (1995, p. 156). This is, she claims, different to acquisitional notions of previously accumulated detachable pieces of knowledge somehow filtered and brought to bear on present circumstances in order to achieve a future goal.

Cook and Brown (1999) offer a model of the use of knowledge that is even more refined. They argue, in line with the participation metaphor of knowledge, that this 'knowing' is affected and influenced by the interaction between, on the one hand, individual and collective knowledge and, on the other, between explicit and tacit knowledge of those involved in the activity. This creates four categorisations for this pre-existing knowledge: individual explicit; individual tacit; collective explicit and collective tacit knowledge and it is worth explaining what they mean here briefly before relating it to and emphasising its importance for formative assessment and dialogue.

Individual explicit knowledge refers to facts or rules of thumb, or formulae that can be written down. It could be concepts, the application of rules, how to make sense of new situations or how to report findings. They argue that

within many organisations, including schools and education systems, individual explicit knowledge has been traditionally privileged over the other three categories (1999, p. 383). This type of knowledge has much in common with the units of knowledge that symbol-processors and constructivists argue need to be internalised within the acquisition metaphor. However, Cook and Brown see individual tacit knowledge as an important additional type of knowledge and one that is often misrepresented as knowledge that is 'hidden' or 'veiled' (1999, p. 384). Instead they move to suggest that tacit knowledge refers to the knowing of what to do and how, when it is not *possible* to put into words or to make explicit. A good example of this that they borrow from Michael Polanyi is knowing how to ride a bicycle (1999, p. 385). This can only be learned by doing it for it is not possible to make the whole process of riding a bicycle explicit in words or learned by reference to manuals, though focussed aspects of it can be. Collective explicit knowledge refers in their argument to the 'war stories' and folk-lore that tend to accumulate within a collective (1999, p. 386). It is also the body of knowledge held in common by a group, when it is not expected for any individual member of the group to know it all. Finally, collective tacit knowledge refers to the 'cultural genres' which determine acceptable ways of communicating and assumptions made about the other categories of knowledge. Cook and Brown say that this is the hardest of the categories to define but they suggest that it provides a frame within which communication can take on particular meanings. For example, 'a message from a co-worker can signal one thing if it arrives as a handwritten note, but quite another if it is a printed memo or a formal letter' (1999, p. 391). In this way, therefore, meaning can be read or misread not because the words are misinterpreted but because they are communicated using different 'genres'.

So, in the doing of activity, groups and individuals will draw from each of these four types of knowledge in achieving the goals of activity. Furthermore, through activity, interactions do not only involve exchanges of pre-existing knowledge but they will 'dynamically afford' the creation of new knowledge within what they call a 'generative dance' (Cook and Brown, 1999, pp. 389–391). This development of new knowledge will subsequently be appropriated by individuals and groups in both explicit and tacit form.

Cook and Brown's (1999) ideas offer a way of exploring how the participation metaphor of knowledge might change notions of formative assessment away from individual cognitive modification to negotiations that happen in the moment of the 'generative dance'. The dialogues drama pupils engaged in seemed to me to indicate just such a generative dance as they participated in activity.

Some of the transcriptions Black et al. supply to demonstrate effective use of questioning and wait time, an AfL strategy, exemplify what this generative dance might look like. The excerpt comes from a science lesson on photosynthesis in which a teacher invites the class to come up with ideas that explain why two plants may have grown at different rates (each had been placed in different lighting conditions). The pupils were given an opportunity to discuss ideas with each other, and were then invited to share their ideas with the class. From two initial ideas the pupils gave (the location of the plants near windows; and the light the plants had 'eaten up'), the teacher then invited others to join up the three ideas 'windows, light and plants'. Another idea was offered about plant food consumption having something to do with it, but this made others want to contribute their ideas more because they perceived the food idea to be a red herring. Eventually someone says the word 'photosynthesis', which the teacher emphasises and on the basis of the pupils' ideas about 'windows; light; plant' he/she invites them to create a definition (Black et al., 2003, pp. 38–9).

Cook and Brown's four categories of knowledge can be used to analyse this interaction and to exemplify the dynamic affordances within it. Firstly, many pupils had already come across the term 'photosynthesis' as they raised their hands when asked if they had heard it before. So knowledge of the term was pre-existing collective, explicit knowledge, which was shared in the interaction and dynamically afforded those unaware of the term opportunity to develop further understanding of it. This dynamic affordance bridged collective explicit with individual explicit knowledge. Through the questioning and the initial hypothesising, pupils were invited to share their individual explicit

knowledge to connect 'plant', 'light', 'window' and 'photosynthesis' to dynamically afford the creation of a collective definition of 'photosynthesis'. Tacit knowledge was involved too both individually and as a group. For example one individual's tacit connection between light and food dynamically afforded the utterance he subsequently made that 'the big'un had eaten up more light'. Similarly on a group level, tacit knowledge is revealed in the way the group behaves during a discussion involving not shouting out and putting hands up. Moreover, many hands were raised with enthusiasm when participants perceived that someone's contribution was wide of the mark revealing the ways in which groups can give tacit feedback to each other about their ideas.

This brief analysis suggests that Cook and Brown's (1999) model might be a useful tool to identify formative moments of interaction between classifications of knowledge that produce new knowledge and move participants on. These moments resonate strongly with what was observed as a formative dialogue in drama. Words and interaction in activity became tools for meaning-making and utterances, as well as other communicative methods, changed the relational dynamic between participants. Learning and progress occur in the moment and through on-going activity and central to this is the dialectic that occurs between participants.

Black et al. (2003) did not analyse this classroom interaction in this way. Instead they focussed on the pedagogic strategies; the teacher's questioning techniques with increased 'wait time' for responses from pupils being labelled 'good practice' without establishing why. Black and Wiliam attempted to address this in 2006 by providing a theory of formative assessment through a discussion of the impact of feedback and interaction drawn from the KMOFAP research (2006b). In this there were two interesting claims. Firstly, that teachers involved in KMOFAP had begun to change their views of learning and their practice as a result of their involvement in the project (2006b). Such changes partly justified the researchers' view outlined earlier (see Chapter 2.1) that deploying AfL practice was enough to bring about similar changes for all teachers willing to try. However, this disregards the

iterative process and the time given to the teachers in the project to discuss their approaches and share ideas which would not be available to most other teachers. Black and Wiliam also suggest that the change teachers experienced altered the 'whole basis of "interactive regulation"' within their classes (2006b, p. 87).

Whilst Black and Wiliam (2006b), pay some attention to a model of sociocultural activity theory that places the classroom as the context for this interactive regulation their analysis confines the process of feedback and interaction to one of individual interpretation and acquisition by pupils and teachers. They attempt to define what teachers need to look out for in diagnosing learners' needs by suggesting they pay attention to the maturing aspects of the pupil's intellectual development, when there is as yet no model of this development, so that teacher's interventions can be tailored specifically to each pupil (2006b, p. 90). This seems redolent of constructivist notions of individuals immersed in private worlds acquiring knowledge gained from feedback with the outside, than with a sociocultural standpoint. Their more recent attempt to build a theory of formative assessment abandoned sociocultural activity theory in favour of more emphasis on pupils' individual cognitive operations. Rather than bring us closer to how dialogue can be understood within these, they call for more formative assessment research into classroom dialogue (Black and Wiliam, 2009, p. 25).

Seeing language as a tool for collective thinking which in turn reflects a participatory view of knowledge brings sociocultural theories to the fore and offers conceptual tools for understanding and developing practice.

3.3 Exploring changing practice through sociocultural theory

Attempts to put forward a conception of formative assessment through sociocultural theory have been few and far between. Black and Wiliam's 2006 article made a rhetorical reference to sociocultural theory but as has been argued their perspective was implicitly more constructivist especially in their 2009 work (2006b, 2009). Gipps (1999) highlighted several interesting features of assessment when viewed from a sociocultural perspective but her focus is summative assessment.

An article by Pryor and Crossouard (2008) attempted to formulate a sociocultural theory of formative assessment by building on Black and Wiliam's work (2006b) and on earlier work by Torrance and Pryor (1998, 2001). They use classifications of assessment practice as either 'divergent' or 'convergent'. The former relates to classroom practice which aims to help the teacher explore the pupils' own thinking and what they know and can do, whereas the latter aims to establish *whether* the pupils know or can do something in particular. They argue that teachers need to use both so that they can model and interpret the pupils' own ways of thinking in order to plan for their learning of new material. This is partially relevant here as an analytic tool. The formative dialogues in drama involved the pupils exploring their pre-existing knowledge (divergent) and then using it to produce a role-play (convergent). However, this falls short of explaining why or how the pupils were able to deploy their pre-existing knowledge in this way. Cook and Brown's (1999) concept of 'dynamic affordance' is more compelling, certainly in terms of explaining how pupils use their pre-existing knowledge.

Pryor and Crossouard (2008) also underline the social implications of formative assessment when viewed from a sociocultural perspective. They argue that the identities of the actors involved in assessment are important and suggest as a useful activity that pupils and teachers become explicit about their identities during completion of a task (2008, pp. 11–14). The identities they refer to from the teacher's perspective are their roles as teachers or experts in their field; as assessors or evaluators of performance; and as learners in terms of coming to know how pupils are thinking about the material. This highlights important aspects of teachers' roles in formative assessment more generally,

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and perhaps particularly formative assessment that might follow the completion of a task. However, within a formative dialogue, it is important to recognise that these roles will be changing continually, emerging and merging into each other according to social dynamics in on-going activity. Being explicit about these role changes, in the way Pryor and Crossouard propose, risks artificially separating them from the practices they are meant to be supporting. Furthermore, it is important to recognise roles are not the same as identities in sociocultural theorising.

Identity is of crucial importance to any view of learning within sociocultural theory. Wenger (1998) refers to identity as more than just labels e.g. roles, self-image or how others consider you, it is an on-going negotiation of one's place within a community. Learning involves a deepening sense of belonging within a community and an evolution of one's identity as a competent practitioner. The challenge for teachers in a classroom is to foster a sense of belonging, and in my case, to develop pupils' identities as history learners. However, as Wenger (1998, p. 164) says identity and participation have a reciprocal relationship; participation develops one's identity but at the same time one's identity will determine whether and how one participates. This is complex because pupils at school are not developing their participation and evolving competence in merely one practice or subject discipline but in many others. This entails a 'nexus of multi-membership' and a potential multitude of identities that pupils have to resolve and that may conflict (1998, p. 159). Several studies show the importance of considering social identity in classroom settings and the complexity of pupils having to resolve several conflicting identities available to them through participation (Murphy, 1999; Ivinson and Murphy, 2003).

Where social constructivists like Bauersfeld (1980, 1992) refer to social factors as contingently related to learning and assessment, socioculturalists, like Wenger (1998), argue that it is impossible to eliminate them. He attempts to clarify the meaning of 'social dimensions' by suggesting that all human endeavour is related inextricably to society. Even an individual learning on his or her own in isolation will consider how others may respond to his or her

progress; similarly the 'seclusion of a monk' or 'solitary confinement' are given meaning by the place and purpose of these activities in society (1998, p. 57). However, suggesting that social dimensions underlie all activity risks being overly vague, and is open to the objection that it leaves the particular social factors unspecified. This difficulty is mitigated, though, by the appeal to the two factors noted in the drama example; namely, first, to participation, interaction in learning and secondly to the uses of language to negotiate meaning in that context.

I discuss these two factors next and how to structure and improve teaching and assessment to facilitate them to throw light on the history case.

Participation and the development of disciplinary ways of thinking

Wenger (1998, pp. 55–62) uses the term 'participation' not just to allude to activity but also in terms of connection or membership to communities of practice. This entails viewing subjects or disciplines as sets of social practices undertaken by the members of their respective communities rather than as abstract canons of knowledge. Learners become more central members of a community of subject learners if they can deepen their participation in the practices of that community. Participation is therefore an important source of identity for individuals as it indicates belonging or membership in these social practice communities and movement toward greater participation is how learning is conceived in a sociocultural view (Wenger, 1998).

Wenger (1998) is sceptical about classrooms as offering meaningful or authentic manifestations of such disciplinary practice for two reasons. First because of a tendency for school to over-emphasise the transfer of detached, abstracted knowledge and second because they tend to insist on uniformity as to extinguish the emergence of meaningful identities associated with membership in subject communities. This is not to say that classrooms cannot be used as settings for participation in disciplinary practice but that it requires considerable changes to practice and beliefs as well as changes to the relationship between teacher and pupil. As Parker says (2002, p. 384)

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'disciplinary processes are both the object of study and the means for studying them'. The implications of a participative view of knowledge on classroom teaching are profound. Disciplinary participation in a school setting would, through Rogoff's (1995) concept of 'guided participation' inculcate in pupils disciplinary methods of thought or habits of mind from which new knowledge, both explicit and tacit as well as individual and collective, can be generated.

Anderson and Hounsell (2007, pp. 473–475) identify four factors university teachers of history should address in designing their undergraduate courses to encourage participation. This involves careful modelling by teachers of disciplinary practices, allowing students space to participate and experiment with them, aligning course materials so as to encourage authentic practices and an interactive, dialogic model of feedback throughout. These features were present in the example of the formative dialogue in drama too. Pupils were given freedom to exercise their agency in interactions with peers in the production of role-plays. Furthermore, the teacher became involved in a negotiation with the pupils, after their performance, of specific 'conventions' or ways of doing drama, which emerged from the role-plays. Pupils seemed able to understand them and seemed aware of the conventions' capacity for building competence and participation in drama role-plays as evidenced in some of the interview data (see Chapter 2.2).

Wenger (1998, pp. 82–84) refers to conventions like these as a 'shared repertoire' of subject related resources and can include 'routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts'. They are of considerable importance because they afford individuals opportunities for deepening participation in discipline-related ways of thinking. Wenger (1998, p. 272) calls for curricula to resemble 'itineraries of transformative experiences of participation' rather than as lists of subject material to internalise. To some extent the lists of conventions that appear in the drama AfL booklet conform to such a view as these conventions provide the focus for teaching and learning activity.

Within history, therefore, there needs to be some identification of the conventions that historians use, as these will signal how classroom activities and tasks need to be set up to allow participation in authentic historical practices. Anderson and Day (2005, p. 330) comment on the difficulties and challenges of doing this when they say that there is no 'foundational' or 'bedrock' knowledge for the discipline. The contested nature of history as a school subject is also amply demonstrated by Burn (2007). Nevertheless, it would be difficult to disagree with Anderson and Day (2005) when they identify the use of sources of evidence in providing a contingent and uncertain window into the past as a focal aspect of historical practice. This requires developing pupils' awareness of the likelihood of contradiction within different sources, an awareness of the motivations and intentions of those who created them and an appreciation of the different 'world view' behind those who created the sources that have survived (2005, p. 330). Anderson and Hounsell (2007) in a related article agree with this and propose a more comprehensive list of the central tools of historians. They do not expect these ways of thinking to be agreed by all, for they necessarily accept that practices are mediated by those who enact them whether they are lecturers, teachers or pupils. However they regard these as capturing some of the key elements of the distinctiveness of history craft knowledge and as providing a framework within which historians practice their subject.

Appreciation of history as socially constructed and contested.

Skilled interpretation/synthesis/evaluation of historical evidence, [and] topics.

Placing particular events/ topics within broader contexts.

Alertness to interconnections among phenomena.

Sensitivity to the 'strangeness of the past'.

Ability to view events and issues from different perspectives.

Readiness to separate out one's own preconceptions.

Communicating representations of subject matter in appropriate forms of expression and argument.

(2007, p. 466)

This list of ways of thinking in history provides a useful summary of the collective endeavour of historians. A vital additional aspect of deepening participation in them involves two complementary concepts from sociocultural theory, namely reifications and negotiating meanings. Reification involves the production or codification of more concrete forms of understanding (Wenger, 1998, p. 59). This can be achieved in a number of ways including the creation of records, the designing of tools, the invention of a concept or word, the making of a map, the writing of notes and so on but all involve language and communication. They are projections of meaning derived from specific moments of participation. The above list is a reification of historical ways of thinking. However, in accepting an account of language and communication that rejects the idea that words or representational items contain meanings or reflect some independent reality, it is necessary to take a similar view of reifications. As Wenger (1998, p. 59) says, a reification cannot capture 'in its form the practices in the context of which it contributes to an experience of meaning'. So handing over reifications produced by one group of participants to another will not entail a transfer of meanings from the former to the latter. Instead, reifications have to be negotiated anew and will inevitably bring about new meanings appropriate to them. So the above list of historical ways of thinking will not mean much to pupils unless they are given an opportunity to negotiate their meanings. In a similar way, level descriptions when given to pupils will lack meaning unless there is some process of negotiation.

Wenger (1998) defines the process of negotiating meanings in a number of ways. It could be specific interactions, overt discussions about definitions and connotations as well as the more general process summed up here by Wenger.

> The negotiation of meaning is a process that is shaped by
> multiple elements and that affects these elements. As a
> result, this negotiation constantly changes the situations to
> which it gives meaning and affects all the participants. In
> this process, negotiating meaning entails both interpretation

and action. In fact, this perspective does not imply a
fundamental distinction between interpreting and acting,
doing and thinking, or understanding and responding.

(1998, p. 54)

An important attribute of this definition is the acknowledgement given to the
dynamic nature of meaning and the situations within which it emerges. This
was noted earlier in terms of Austin's (1970) speech act theory where
interaction and inter-relationships between participants are expressed in
speech-act forms relating to the literal content of utterances. Additionally,
though, is the opposition apparent in this view to any notion of a fixity of
meanings and their associated reification. Communication rests on a prior
understanding of concepts which relate to reifications perhaps negotiated
earlier or elsewhere. This underlines the need for continuous negotiation and
reification within activity that can enable deepening participation.

These points bring to light some of the inadequate assumptions I (and others)
had made in thinking about, and practising teaching. First since I had been
unaware of these concepts before, and was subject to considerable pressure to
deliver examination-based prescriptions of subject material, I was encouraged
to rely too much on the transmission of reifications without opportunities for
pupils to negotiate their meaning. Within a participatory view of knowledge, it
is clear why this was unproductive. A related issue that emerges in the light of
developing pupils' participation is in challenging the assumption that
disciplinary ways of thinking identified in history should be 'delivered' to pupils
as reifications that only need to be internalised. Instead pupils need to be
involved in negotiating their meaning and in reifying them through the
activities they undertake in classes. So Anderson and Hounsell's (2007)
recommendation that course tutors need to align course materials to specific
disciplinary ways of thinking would entail negotiations of meaning and
reifications of the tools enabling pupils to do so.

Developing the focus for investigation

For a teacher like myself who had been unaware of theoretical values underpinning pedagogy and practice, this discussion indicates a fundamental change. Engagement with the theoretical principles of learning, mind and knowledge have resulted in a theoretical rationale that I argue is useful for informing classroom teaching. This was a necessary first step to bringing about a fundamental shift in practice too. The pupils' engagement in formative dialogues in drama had emerged spontaneously and seemingly without effort or difficulty. The dialogues themselves were not only a demonstration of competence but they developed the competence of the participants and therefore were formative. Bringing this into a history context is not a question of simply designing a task for pupils which demand that they interact with each other and exchange ideas while completing it. This requires a very significant change in pedagogy from one that focuses on the delivery or exchange and then acquisition of discrete knowledge items and processes to one that aims to generate authentic participation using relevant subject-related tools that reflect 'a history of mutual engagement' (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). It necessitates a change in the teacher/ pupil relationship from one where the teacher is giver of knowledge or arbiter of valued knowledge and the pupils are individual entities separated somehow from the collective to one where the teacher is both model and mediation of disciplinary practice and pupils are invited to identify themselves with authentic disciplinary practice within a community of learners. Finally, the conception of domain knowledge inherent to a sociocultural view also necessitates a change from one that sees disciplines, like history, as abstract collections of knowledge to one that conceives them as sets of social practices. These changes will challenge current models of assessment and will necessitate a re-evaluation of what is formative. This raises the scope and breadth of the main study for this thesis and provides a theoretical justification for the practical shift it would entail.

The lack of success I experienced with my classes over the use of the history AfL booklets represented what other writers have called the 'letter' as opposed to the 'spirit' of AfL (Marshall et al, 2007). If the process of personal change

and development in my practice is to be traced as a trajectory of transformational experiences from the 'letter' to the 'spirit' of AfL then some investigation is required of my practices before any conscious change took place. If the goal is to engage pupils in formative dialogues that deepen participation in history-related practice, then some evaluation of the extent my practice enabled this kind of engagement already, needed to happen. Following this, is a requirement for an exploration of the specific underlying pedagogical changes that needed to take place along with an investigation of how this was implemented; whether they achieved what they were supposed to and how this was experienced by pupils. These concerns are distilled into the following research questions:

1. In what ways does my current practice position learners in the ways intended by assessment for learning research and rhetoric i.e. the spirit of AfL?

2. Does my changing practice enable a formative dialogue and what further changes might be indicated?

3. In the changed practice what is observed to be formative for pupils and how does it relate to assessment for learning?

4. What is the impact of this on learners?

There are several studies which have reported the capacity for engagement in formative assessment to change practitioner beliefs and practice (James and Pedder, 2006; Torrance and Pryor, 2001; Pryor and Crossouard, 2008; Black, Swann, and Wiliam, 2007). A practical shift like the one that needs to be explored by answering these research questions was going to be difficult for two reasons. The first is that symbol-processing ideas pervade my school and although it was not obvious to me at first that these were guiding my teaching, once I had established the extent to which they were, meant that I would not only be struggling against my own pre-existing rationale for practice but also

the assumptions that are accepted at the institutional level. Secondly, there are very few practitioner-based research studies on formative assessment that focus on teachers, like me, engaged in the process of change. Paul Spenceley's case study appearing in Harrison (2009, pp. 7–10) is an exception but he was one of the teachers involved in KMOFAP and so the process of change he had embarked on had been facilitated by a sympathetic institutional stance as well as regular contact with the academic research team. The '8 schools action research project' commissioned and overseen by the DFES between 2005 and 2006 contains some reflections by teachers involved (2007, pp. 46–51) but there is little indication of the difficulties experienced in the process of change. Earlier work with teachers by Torrance and Pryor (2001) also involved significant guidance and contact between the teacher researchers and the academic researchers involved in the project. Marshall et al. (2007) call for more research by practitioners and greater engagement with teachers' beliefs too. This research has taken place within an indifferent institutional context and although it is informed by literature and the wider debate about formative assessment, it is largely an account of personal change as a result of working alone. In the next chapter I outline some of the methods used to collect data from my teaching practice in order to exemplify some of the aspects noted in this chapter and to indicate the changes in that practice which the discussion had suggested to me.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Methodological paradigm

A research paradigm is a broad term that is defined as a 'worldview, complete with the assumptions that are associated with that view' (Merten, 2003, p. 139). A paradigm therefore connects the ontological and epistemological debates discussed in chapter 3 with the methodological debates that are considered here. The intention is to identify a methodology that is a part of a paradigm congruent with my sociocultural stance. A methodological approach involves a theory on how research questions should be analysed including design preferences, data collection and analytical strategies and the guidelines for making inferences and these are discussed in the chapter.

In social research the paradigm referred to as positivism has several links to symbol-processing assumptions about the nature of reality. It is founded on the assumption that natural scientific laws govern human behaviour. It is therefore possible, or even necessary, to adopt the same approaches and methods used to study scientific phenomena to study humans and social behaviour. The purpose of such research is to discover these laws and use methods like experimentation and statistical analysis to establish them. Robert Thouless, an educational psychologist from Cambridge who was commissioned in 1964 to produce a survey of British educational research summed up the positivist mind-set when he said "a primary concern of educational research is to increase educational efficiency ... to ask what are the experiments necessary to settle a controversial problem is a necessary preliminary [and once the problem is solved] there is no further room for argument on that problem. Opinion will have been replaced by knowledge" (Thouless, quoted in Richardson, 2002, p. 24).

More recently, Howe (2009) argues that a tacit form of positivism pervades the recent codifications of 'educational science' practice by the National Research

Council in their 2002 publication Scientific Research in Education and in the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) 2006 publication Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA publications. He claims that in these publications, statistical surveys and analyses (i.e. quantitative research) are subtly privileged over the smaller-scale but more penetrating in-depth inquiries (or qualitative research). Lather (2004, p. 764) notices a similar privileging of 'scientific' studies over 'other kinds of research' which she associates with the Federal US government's active education policy from 2001.

In my school, scores from external summative tests are considered the most important measure of pupils' learning. And with statistical analysis and breakdowns of scores against members of staff teaching particular groups then it is not difficult to establish which teachers, according to these assumptions, teach most effectively. Certainly, computer technology has significantly facilitated difficult statistical procedures (De Landsheere, 1993). Furthermore, randomised controlled trials (RCTs) in educational research where those under investigation are randomly placed into two groups; one which will be exposed to an innovation and the other which will not, so allowing outcomes to be compared between them, have many advocates in the UK (Gorard, 2006).[3] These types of research yield data which is presumed to be reliable, or verifiable according to an independent reality and involve techniques that are claimed to be replicable in establishing causal relationships between input and output factors given certain conditions. Such a view of knowledge therefore does not locate it within the specific contexts of time, place and people involved and this corresponds to an abstracted, objectified view redolent of symbol-processing beliefs. This is not an approach to research that is compatible with sociocultural theorising. The process of manipulating data and establishing causal effects simplifies the complexity of social life and does not consider the negotiations and interpretations that are necessarily implicated by those involved.

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[3] A useful critique of RCTs called Randomized Field Trials in the American context appears in Lather (2004, pp. 763–767).

The interpretivist paradigm on the other hand, emerged in reaction to the positivist orthodoxy during the 1960s, although its antecedents go back a long time before this. Fundamentally, interpretivism emphasises the development of cultural insights and understanding through investigations of natural settings. It rejects the notion that research techniques considered effective in natural science can simply be transferred to the social realm for in the latter there are too many variables and complexities involved for such studies to be accurate. Furthermore in this paradigm the researcher is not separable from what he or she is researching and so 'objective' studies, free from personal bias, are not achievable (Eisner, 1993). As Eisner (2005, p. 74) noted, interpretive approaches to research 'are less concerned with the discovery of truth than with the creation of meaning ... the creation of images that people will find meaningful and from which their fallible and tentative views of the world can be altered, rejected or made more secure'. Consequently, interpetivists reject as their purpose the development of scientific laws and instead seek to find cultural patterns and to understand the phenomena under investigation more deeply. While the differences in theoretical beliefs inherent to the two research traditions suggest a quantitative—qualitative divide, it is nevertheless possible to challenge strict associations between paradigm and methods (Hammersley, 1991). However, although this standpoint does not prohibit quantitative statistical surveys, it nevertheless tends to involve close and careful observation of practice, where the researcher is either embedded in the practices being observed or is an active practitioner involved in them. In educational research, this has been associated with teachers doing their own research in their classrooms and of their practice (Stenhouse, 1975).

This thesis argues that deeper and more sophisticated understanding of formative assessment which is intended to alter pupils' understanding in the process of production (Sadler, 1989) can be achieved through sociocultural theory with its essential focus on activity as the unit of analysis. In a sociocultural perspective what is formative is what is experienced by the pupil and this can lead to unintended and intended learning and also learning that

remains tacit and not explicit and that can be a property of a group as well as an individual (Cook and Brown, 1999).

Thus what teachers need to understand to guide learning for individuals is much more complex than current theorising suggests and therefore much more challenging to achieve. It puts forward the view that what is formative emerges and is situated within activity. It therefore seeks to explore how pupils can be enabled to engage in a discourse within practice to inform on-going activities by 'engaging focussing and shifting attention, bringing about coordination etc., on the one hand and supporting communal forms of memory and reflection as well signaling membership on the other' (Lave and Wenger, 1999a, p. 30). Thus it not only challenges what is formative but also the goals for learning and therefore what is productive dialogue. Its aim is to investigate the process and the means by which pupils can access this deeper participation in history.

Quantitative data distances the researcher from the research and also loses the dynamic context essential in a sociocultural approach i.e. that which emerges between people which is crucial to this study. Whitehead (2010) talks of how 'educational' research can be argued to be more general than 'education' research based on positivist quantitative data analysis because of what is excluded from the latter approach. More importantly for this study his view of 'living educational theory' which reflects the broader assumptions of intepretivist paradigms does not treat time as discontinuous. He argues that 'we can make sense of the living practice through understanding the relationship between the account of the past and the vision of the future. Hence educational theory is [...] a living theory in that the explanation contains evidence of an evaluation of the past practice, evidence of an intention to produce something not yet in existence and evidence of present practice through which the intention is being realised' (Whitehead, quoted in Whitehead, 2010, p. 26). This summarises the intentions expressed in the research questions and corresponds with the sociocultural view that 'the present extends through the past and future and cannot be separated from them' (Rogoff, 1995, p. 155).

4.2 The design frame

Taking a sociocultural methodological perspective makes it more difficult to
identify a typical design frame (Thomas, 2009). At first, for example, during
the investigation of drama's formative assessment practice, the nature of the
investigation seemed to be compatible with a case-study approach. The
reasons urging me in this direction were that I was studying a single
phenomenon (i.e. formative assessment); the study was taking place within a
real-life context (i.e. the school in which I work); thirdly it would result in rich
data applicable only to my context or case but that hopefully would resonate
with other people in other institutions (Bassey, 1999; 2008).

However, the second research question required that I analyse a change in my
practice informed by the research itself. This necessitated an intervention in
my practice that was more akin to an action research design frame than case-
study. The term 'action research' was coined by Kurt Lewin in 1944, and he
described this method of research as a cycle of evidence gathering, taking
action, and further data collection about one's practice in order to develop
'deeper insights into the laws that govern social life' (Lewin quoted in Kemmis,
1993, p. 179).

More recent writers on action research have denied Lewin's originally positivist
expectation that it would yield scientific laws. Kemmis for example, associated
with the resurgence of action research in the 1980s, put forward several
conditions for any educational science with the first being a rejection of
'positivist notions of rationality, objectivity and truth' (Kemmis, 1993, p. 179).
Action research necessarily accepts the role of practitioner research and
individual agency which suggests that it is far more suitably situated within an
interpretivist paradigm and suits the preoccupations of this thesis.
Furthermore, other aspects of action research are very relevant to this thesis.
For example, some suggest that the approach of action research can be

conceived as a kind of 'dialogue' between the researcher and their reflection on evidence in order to enable practitioners to enact change (McNiff et al., 2003). This mirrors the dialogues that pupils engaged in that deepened their participation in drama and poses the challenge of emulating this in history. Similarly, the impetus for research should come from an individual or group of researchers and demonstrate not only an interest in moving forward but a commitment to change (Thomas, 2009). These aspects of action research clearly resonate with this thesis.

Others have used an action research design frame to investigate formative assessment. Torrance and Pryor (2001, p. 629) for example, argue that formative assessment as a process in which teachers make sense of pupils' approaches to problems and plan future lessons on that basis mirrors an action research approach. Furthermore, like this research, their study attempted to explore links between the theory and practice of formative assessment (2001, p. 626). This was an iterative process whereby the teacher researchers were provided with theoretical frameworks and tools—among them the 'convergent' versus 'divergent' assessment classifications—in order to monitor their own practice, leading to a deepening examination of their tacit theories of learning. Engagement with theory was then used to develop new classroom techniques that were a 'more self-consciously theorised way of approaching formative assessment' (2001, p. 626).

There are important differences however between that study and this action research. Firstly, this research is oriented from an investigation of my own practice placing me in the role of insider researcher, rather than involving a collaborative approach between teacher researchers and university researchers. Whilst wider insight can be brought to bear on the phenomena under investigation if research is undertaken by a team, especially from different backgrounds, time constraints, and fluctuating levels of interest among colleagues made any long term collaboration impossible. In addition, my theoretical position on learning and knowledge was not shared by others and it was this perspective that I wished to explore in relation to my practice.

There are some advantages of an insider research role, notably the knowledge of the context and familiarity with aspects of the culture, which can provide insight that outsiders may miss. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge Erickson's (1984, p. 62) appeal to ethnographic research studies that a process of 'making the familiar strange' should aim to divest the insider researcher of tacit assumptions inherent to the context. The change brought about in my own beliefs and the acceptance of the principles of socioculturalism, have entailed a very thorough re-evaluation of my practice, context and subject. This has been a fascinating but sometimes brutal shift that has as a result corroded many of the assumptions I had about teaching and learning. The theoretical and practical changes I have undertaken have therefore entailed 'making the familiar strange' and as other writers say of socioculturalism, has allowed important aspects of what appeared to be obvious to become visible (Rogoff, 1995; Bruner, 1996).

There are additional factors to outline about the orientation of action research from a sociocultural view. First is the rejection of the traditionally accepted dualism between individual and society instead each is understood as part of the other mutually constituted in on-going activity (Bredo, 1999). The subject being researched is therefore as dynamic and changing as its context. Furthermore the subject(s)being researched are affected deeply by their conditional experience of the context. Lave (1988) clarifies the notion of context here by distinguishing two interconnected layers of all contexts, namely 'arena' and 'settings'. The arena, for Lave (1988, p. 151), is the backdrop which provides 'a higher order institutional framework' within which individuals are immersed. While it may well help perpetuate certain 'ways of doing things' and the social relations that emerge, the arena is simply too large (and individual purposes within it are too selective) for any individual to have anything beyond a filtered, personal but shared experience of it. So when individuals interact with the arena in some way, this provides the 'setting'—as Lave (1988, p. 150) says setting is a '*relation* between acting persons and the arenas in relation with which they act'.

Edwards points out (2000, p. 196), that action research of the 1980s tended to assume that individual agency existed independently of cultural and institutional contexts. However, she underlines Lave's point by suggesting that individual agency is located and constructed within the cultural arena and therefore action research is 'culturally embedded knowledge construction' (2000, p. 197). The focus for action research is therefore less the isolated practitioner on his or her own, but on the settings within which he or she interacts. This situates his or her role within both the history and goals of the institution as well as the on-going activity he or she is participating in. Personal change therefore becomes necessarily linked to institutional change and the location of change is both between participants interacting within activity but also between the personal and institutional level.

This reflects the processes involved in conducting this research and provides a useful way of conceiving the process of change that took place as part of it. As an insider action researcher, I am interested in problematising my own practice and investigating its effects while seeking to improve it in ways that could provide insights for others. However, there is more than merely this. My beliefs and values were subject to change as a result of my interactions with various aspects of the arena in which I work; with firstly the leadership and management AfL agenda, secondly with the pupils' experience of the ways I enacted this agenda in the History Department; and thirdly with my interactions in the Drama Department. This situates my personal change within these institutional settings and it is important to recognise this positionality in the next phase of the research too.

This will involve observing current teaching and learning in history settings; in the light of the sociocultural issues highlighted by the drama example and by the arguments put forward in Chapter 3. These provide analytical tools for observing practice and a theoretical rationale for the intervention. But this process is not confined to personal change, for the effects of it will have an impact at the level of the institutional arena too, for any changes enacted will be mediated by those who experience them and who may or may not accept them. Despite not drawing attention to wider processes of institutional change

in their action research study, Torrance and Pryor do nevertheless point out that the changes brought about by the teacher researchers were only 'comfortable and sustainable… depending on the degree to which this change was acceptable to others within the school' (2001, pp. 626–7).

This brings relations of power into the process of change which can affect identity change profoundly. Wenger (1998, p. 196) suggests that anyone who aligns their practice to those of a wider institution or set of beliefs will through their allegiance (or submission) change their identities. This happens because doing so involves an 'investment of the self' and an identification of oneself by others in the work of a larger context but it also reveals the extent to which those involved experience power or a lack of it (1998, p. 196). This, according to Wenger, results in a subtle mix of participation and non-participation. This was apparent in my reaction to the school version of AfL practice because I felt it was ineffective (non-participation), yet I also felt committed to finding a way of making it effective (participation). Exercising agency to change the conception and practice of formative assessment in my local settings challenges what is deemed by authority in the local arena to be 'best practice', and raises many methodological issues. Lather notes (1993, p. 685) for example the capacity for research that develops what she calls 'counter-practices of authority' to have emancipatory and political impact. However, in line with the current resurgence of positivism in educational research pointed out earlier her more recent work (2004) indicates pessimism about the way such research would be received given the current system of performativity in the UK.

The authorities in my local arena approved my undertaking this research, and wanted to accommodate and encourage me in the process. However, the extent that they are willing to engage in the findings is questionable. This has made it very important for me to be careful and considerate in the approach to the research so as not to be seen to 'rock the boat' beyond what would be tolerated. In this way, personal and institutional practice should not be regarded as separate but rather should be considered as mediating influences

on each other and points to the need to recognise change and knowledge generation as a consequence of this interaction (Edwards, 2000).

4.3 What kind of data is required?

Rogoff (1995) offers three planes for observing and analysing situated activity through a sociocultural lens. The three levels correspond to firstly, a focus on the community and more global aspects of a practice, which Rogoff calls the 'apprenticeship plane'; secondly a focus on the way people are interacting within an activity or the 'interpersonal plane' and thirdly, the 'participatory appropriation' of knowledge that happens to individuals as they engage in an activity (1995). Whilst this perspective may help to disentangle the confusions that arise in observing activity, it should be emphasised that these 'planes' or layers of analysis have heavily intersecting elements and that it would be wrong to conceive of them as operating independently.

This model of observation and analysis is important because it corresponds with the research need to focus on the embedded nature of settings as instances of interaction between the individual and the wider arena (Lave, 1988). An emphasis on such interactions follows Rogoff's interpersonal plane of analysis. While interactions do not only mean face to face dialogues (Rogoff, 1995, p. 142), a focus on classroom dialogue is highly relevant. This will require observations of how the teacher organises settings within the classroom, while being aware of the wider arena within which these settings emerge. Classroom interaction and the learning discourse that emerges are therefore key sources of data.

To investigate the impact of these interactions on individuals, data will need to be collected from the intra-personal plane too (Rogoff, 1995). This was an aspect of Torrance and Pryor's action research project that they felt would be particularly interesting and necessary in future research (2001). This will necessitate exploring what pupils have appropriated from settings through samples of work, and interview responses.

Design of research and methods of data collection

Figures 1 and 2, show when data collection took place, in what classes and via what method. The first stage (Stage 1) of data collection involved audio recording and transcribing lessons with no conscious change from what I would have done normally. I recorded a series of eight Year 7 classes, one Year 8 and three Year 9 classes between 23rd February and 6th July 2009. They were recorded using a hand-held digital audio recorder, which I normally placed at the front of the class and these were all transcribed.

The transcriptions and interactions were then analysed using conceptual tools which focussed on three aspects of each setting: first, the uses of language on and in participation; second, moments of 'dynamic affordance' where new knowledge was generated through participation; and third, passages that reveal the emergence of an authentic discourse about doing history.

On the basis of the findings from these lessons, I began to work on Stage 2 of the research. This involved designing a different approach to teaching for a Year 7 class just beginning their secondary school experience. I chose a Year 7 class because the Year 7 classes I recorded during Stage 1 had indicated more aspects of deepening participation than other year groups. A Year 7 class would be more appropriate than a class already used to the school culture, who might view innovations from the conflicting perspective of what they were used to. Significant time restrictions also made it unfeasible to plan and record an intervention with another class.

The intervention lessons were planned to develop the capacity for pupils to engage in formative dialogues with each other through participation. Particular attention was given to providing opportunities to develop a repertoire of historical tools to support historical ways of thinking using the twin processes of negotiating meaning and reification. Participation was to be enabled in a number of ways by collecting resources from the local area; engaging pupils in the process of reification and ensuring that pupils felt able to negotiate and

engage in collaborative research. The unit of work centred on the way William the Conqueror made himself powerful as a ruler of England. It incorporated the Domesday survey of land ownership and manorial property William commissioned during his reign as the main source of evidence for the investigation.

The lessons aimed to structure and develop tools for pupils to access content from Domesday entries across the country. This involved negotiating the meaning of specific words and concepts within the discourse of Domesday and Medieval England; developing tools that enable collation and comparison of different areas inspected by the Domesday commissioners; and using other sources, knowledge, and tools to develop interpretations of this collated information, while exploring its limitations. The final three lessons in this unit involved a consolidation exercise in which pupils in small groups were asked to put together a brief class presentation on a series of questions relating to those set out above. Pupils were given an opportunity to use and develop the tools from earlier lessons in a new series of translated excerpts from the actual Domesday survey.

The Domesday lessons (a total of 9) ran from 18th January to 29th March 2010. Figure 2 shows how the process of data collection became wider and more sophisticated for these lessons compared with Stage 1. The recordings included the use of a digital video camera as well as the digital audio recorder. The activities the pupils were doing dictated the mode of recording that was chosen. For example on six occasions, the digital audio device was left on a table by a small group of pupils so that it could record their interactions with each other. This was because group work involving interaction had been planned for those classes. On these occasions the rest of the class was recorded by means of the video camera. For six of the classes, a teacher support assistant was present to support an English as a second language (ESL) pupil called Mike. I was not able to rely on her presence for every class due to timetabling constraints. All of these recordings were transcribed and saved in a file named by the date on which the lesson took place. Citations to the transcription data refer to these files and dates.

Following this, attention moved to the intra-personal plane. 10 pupils (five girls and five boys) were interviewed about the Domesday lessons. The interviews focussed on how the pupils had experienced the lessons and their impressions of the subject in general and how far they related their practice to what history is all about. The ten pupils were chosen on the basis of my perception of their participation in the activity. Some seemed to find it difficult to participate and I wanted to know whether and why, this was the case. Others seemed to have participated well and I wanted to know whether they agreed and why. The question schedule for each interview is in Appendix 6.

The interviews were conducted informally and pupils were reassured about anonymity and asked to be as honest as possible. The interview setting itself could affect what pupils felt was appropriate to mention. I tried to work against this by avoiding leading questions and in trying to reassure pupils by making them feel comfortable and assuring them they could say anything they liked. Responses in interview were then cross-referenced against those individual's participation in the classes and examples of their work in order to gain insights into their experience.

One important constraint was time. I undertook the transcription of the lessons which meant that I could not access the data very quickly after the lessons had taken place. In some cases the transcriptions took place months after the lessons happened. This limited the extent to which I could use this data to inform planning for the forthcoming lessons and placed more reliance on the field notes.

Secondly, I needed to add a lesson at the last minute to the Domesday scheme. The lesson was added on the 8th March 2010 in order to widen and deepen the pupils' understanding of a specific aspect of Domesday evidence. This in itself was not a problem but it did have the unfortunate effect of limiting the lessons available for the subsequent presentation activity. I had planned for four lessons to be spent on the presentations; two for preparation activities and two

for a focussed opportunity for peer and group assessment on the basis of the presentations themselves. Because of the extra lesson there were only three lessons for the presentations before the Easter holiday. This also meant that the time available for interviewing pupils was reduced and it was only possible to interview two pupils before the break.

Schedule of research and analysis:

Fig. 1. Overview of research activities

DATE:	RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:	
2008		
JANUARY		
FEBRUARY		
MARCH	INTERVIEWS WITH DRAMA STAFF	DRAMA INITIAL STUDY
APRIL	DRAMA LESSON OBSERVATIONS	
MAY		
JUNE	INTERVIEWS WITH DRAMA STUDENTS	
JULY		
AUGUST		
SEPTEMBER		
OCTOBER		
NOVEMBER		
DECEMBER	DRAMA LESSON OBSERVATIONS	
2009		
JANUARY		
FEBRUARY	INITIAL HISTORY LESSON RECORDINGS	STAGE 1 HISTORY
MARCH		
APRIL		
MAY		
JUNE		
JULY		
AUGUST		
SEPTEMBER		
OCTOBER	PLANNING INTERVENTION LESSONS	STAGE 2 HISTORY
NOVEMBER		
DECEMBER	INTERVENTION LESSON TRIALS	
2010		
JANUARY	DOMESDAY LESSONS BEGIN	
FEBRUARY		
MARCH	DOMESDAY LESSONS END	
APRIL	INTERVIEWS WITH HISTORY STUDENTS	
MAY		
JUNE		
JULY		
AUGUST		
SEPTEMBER		
OCTOBER		
NOVEMBER		
DECEMBER		

Fig. 2. Lesson observation schedule with data collection details.

Date	Class	Whole class audio taped (carried by observer)	Whole class digitally videoed	Whole class digitally audio recorded (device left at front of class)	Whole class audio recorded with device left to record a small group of pupils	TA present	Work collected	Student teacher present	Fully transcribed	Field Notes
Initial study: Drama - Anna and Sophie										
3.6.08	9A1	X								X
10.6.08	9A1	X								X
1.12.08	8E2			X					X	X
8.12.08	8E2			X					X	X
Stage 1: History practice evaluation										
23.2.09	9P5			X					X	X
	7T6			X					X	X
2.3.09	9P5			X					X	X
	7T6			X					X	X
9.3.09	7T6			X					X	X
16.3.09	9P5			X					X	X
	7T6			X					X	X
23.3.09	7T6			X					X	X
1.6.09	7T6			X					X	X
15.6.09	7T6			X					X	X
22.6.09	7T6			X					X	X
6.7.09	8C3			X					X	X
Stage 2: History intervention										
30.11.09	7K2			X			X		X	X
7.12.09	7K2			X			X		X	X
11.1.10	7K2			X			X		X	X
18.1.10	7K2				X	X			X	X
25.1.10	7K2		X		X	X	X		X	X
1.2.10	7K2		X		X	X	X		X	X
8.2.10	7K2			X		X	X		X	X
1.3.10	7K2		X		X	X	X		X	X
8.3.10	7K2			X					X	X
15.3.10	7K2		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
22.3.10	7K2		X		X		X		X	X
29.3.10	7K2		X				X		X	X

Ethical Principles

Validity

In order to uphold the validity of the research and the process involved, there needs to be a research procedure that has the confidence of others in terms of the openness and transparency in the ideology, choice of evidence and the findings from it. Similarly, as the thesis raises questions about my own and colleagues' practice and its effects on pupils, appropriate protections need to be built into it that recognises the imbalance in power between teacher as researcher and pupils whose participation is predicated on necessarily different terms. The thesis is focused on enacting a change that transforms the identities of pupils and develops new practice and therefore central to the ethical principles of the research is the claim to establish 'catalytic validity' (Lather, 1986) which is discussed below.

I have taken an openly sociocultural position to this research and this potentially runs the risk of what has been called 'conceptual over-determinism' (Lather, 1986). In other words, I have designed an intervention in classroom teaching informed by sociocultural theory and then used principles from that same theory in order to analyse the data from that intervention. My data and its interpretation could therefore be seen as predetermined. In response to this, firstly, Lather (1986, p. 64) points out that the apparent neutrality of other research methodologies, including positivism, is a myth and that all research in social science is 'inherently ideological'. Perhaps there is a greater danger in not being open about one's theoretical standpoint in research too. For example, as shown in Chapter 3, many writers in AfL research did not associate their work with any developed theoretical or value-based rationale. This allowed tacit acceptance of AfL's compatibility with prevailing underlying symbol-processing assumptions.

Secondly, being open about theoretical standpoint in research fulfils what de Luca (2010) claims is now a broad consensus of expectation for reflexivity

among interpretive researchers. Reflexivity requires openness about one's assumptions and through doing this allows for an interrogation of these assumptions to be built into the research design. This research is exploratory and adopts a sociocultural methodology as an analytical approach to explore the theory and its implications for practice rather than to 'prove' this theory is correct.

Fundamentally too, the intervention in my teaching is intended to encourage participation in history practice and, through this, participation in the process of collective knowing and knowledge creation. It is therefore transformative not only of me but also the pupils I teach and aims to enable individual agency by opening up new practice to pupils (Wenger, 1998). The pupils are not therefore the subjects being researched rather the purpose of the research is to foster their rights to have their agency and their experiences embraced and extended through the research. This provides what Lather (1986, p. 67) calls 'catalytic validity' which refers to a research process that recognises the 'reality-altering impact of the research process itself, but also [...] the need to consciously channel this impact so that respondents gain self-understanding and, ideally, self-determination through research participation'. In relation to the interrogation of assumptions needed for reflexivity this agency would enable the pupils to participate in the on-going dialogue that would allow their diverse understandings of history but also of history activity to interact. This is where an interrogation of history practices and the assumptions underlying them can take place. The roles of insider researcher and teacher therefore become mutually inter-dependent and it is important to observe and conduct teaching on the basis of how pupils experience it and how they learn. In this way, research and practice in on-going activity would build a 'living theory' of the kind Whitehead (2010) refers to. This particular thesis represents only a start of the process of transformation and the beginning of the process of research to inform it.

As part of the ethical principles and validity of the research it is also important to declare the reasons for the choice of data to report. There is no possibility for entire lesson transcriptions to be reported here and careful selection of data

is required. For reasons of time and word length, it is important to strive for some economy in terms of reporting the data but also to avoid obscuring too much in that process. It is therefore appropriate that some of the data that reinforces and extends understanding of a particular finding reported in the thesis appears in appendices rather than the main body (see Appendices 7 and 8). The data selected has to achieve the purpose of providing examples of both successful or affirming insights as evidence of formative understanding and action as well as examples of interactions or tasks that did not work in the way intended i.e. enabled a movement deeper into practice. However, it is not the success of what happened that is important but the value of sociocultural analytical tools in providing insights into *why* what was intended did or did not happen. These same tools are also the cultural tools that I argue from the literature better represent what becoming a student of history means in terms of evolving competence and transformation of identity. Hence the arguments put forward from the literature in Chapter 3 are central to understanding validity in relation to this study and the understanding of what constitutes an ethical principle.

For these reasons making a choice about which transcripts from lessons to report for the thesis was a difficult task. This choice had to be informed by the considerations noted above but also had to take account of the following principles. Firstly, any transcript of an event or exchange in a classroom represents a 'moment' in which the understandings of those involved are exposed. However, for any formative development or deepening participation to be evident, a series of these 'moments' along a trajectory of increasing competence both in individual and collective understanding needed to be included. Consequently, it was necessary for transcripts to be chosen at varying intervals from each other that reveal this trajectory with particular clarity. To a large extent this consideration determined the structure chosen in reporting the data from Stage 2 of the research where pupils were involved in negotiating meanings of specific and relevant terminology at a point near the beginning of the unit, moving on later to practicing more detailed data collection techniques that would toward the end of the unit enable them to analyse the generated data for historical meaning. I include more detail of this

selection structure on pp.114-115. Additionally, and in line with the focus of the thesis, it was important to focus on examples of progression and movement in the here and now too. To this end, it was necessary to identify moments of dynamic affordances that bridged different types of knowledge between collective and individual as well as between explicit and tacit. Similarly, it was important to identify speech acts that had an effect on participation and how the specific historical discourse was being made available through dialogue. I discuss these in greater depth in the section on analysing the data in chapter 4.4.

The concept of reliability is unfeasible in this type of interpretive sociocultural research. If 'reliable' is defined to be 'as close to truth as possible' even without acknowledging the difficulty of this term within a sociocultural view how can we ever be sure that any findings correspond to the truth, especially when 'the truth' is only ever verifiable by those same findings? Similarly, reliability can sometimes be defined as the extent to which a piece of research is replicable (Thomas, 2009). However, this notion really belongs within positivist studies that involve research instruments designed to measure phenomena yielding results that can be repeated. Lave's setting is an emergent phenomenon as 'priority, perspective and value are continuously and inescapably generated in activity' (1988, p. 181). As activities and participants change so do the settings and the practice that emerges. Lave's (1988, p. 151) account of settings highlights the issue that 'reality', and 'experience', is directly affected by actors' identities, goals, accessibility and interactions. The pupils as actors allow me insights into practice as instantiated and experienced in settings. This raises the importance of my own position in relation to the pupils and with regard to the research. The pupils are not conducting the research but there is a responsibility to ensure they are empowered by it as well as a responsibility to ensure that they can opt out if they choose. Empowerment can be achieved as an effect of deepening participation and as stated in Chapter 3 requires recognising their agency and negotiating meanings. It is also important to recognise the differences between actors within the investigation and according to each particular point in time in which one

happens to be collecting data. From this view replicability of the data is not expected.

This raises questions about the value of triangulation in this research where data about 'the same' phenomenon is sought from different sources to enhance the dependability of the findings. However, in a sociocultural methodology actors or participants are expected to differ in the meanings they create as individual experience is unique. The aim is rather to consider possible meanings in order to reach some shared understanding, the intersubjectivity discussed in Chapter 3. The recording of interactions gives me access to the pupils' feedback and to that of the classroom assistant and this is extended through the interviews and the reference to pupils' presentations where they reify their learning. My field notes reflect my interpretations 'in the moment' which serve as another source against which to make sense of the observational data. The ability to interrogate this rich data is the source of the dependability of what is claimed though the claims are intended to illuminate rather than explicate. The collection of data will focus on the interpersonal plane (Rogoff,1995) as this is where, it has been argued, formative insights will emerge but interviews will focus on intrapersonal experiences too. Some account of the community plane has already been given in the introduction where contextual features of assessment for learning both within my arena and the constitutive order have been given and these serve as an important interpretive background in understanding my practice and pupils' responses to it.

Finally, the evidence itself, as it is largely from transcriptions of lesson interactions, is rich and multi-faceted. The sheer complexity of social interactions cannot be exhaustively committed to any research analysis, and different readers will see different things from the evidence of the interactions provided here. Nevertheless, within the confines of the analytical tools, and with careful use of the theoretical framework provided, I argue that the interpretation offered here is valid and consistent with the ethical principles identified and does provide conclusions of interest to education and further research.

Ethical Procedures

Some of the practical issues derived from the principles above were covered in the thesis with permissions (from parents and colleagues) and with anonymity for pupils, teachers and institutions. The school sends a letter to every new parent explaining that occasionally staff may wish to photograph, record or video pupils for legitimate school purposes, which would include research. Parents are given the opportunity to opt out of this by filling out a reply slip to that effect. Consequently, the letter (Appendix 5) I sent assumed that they were giving their consent unless they opted out by writing to me or informing me that they did not wish their son or daughter to be involved. The letter was distributed to all key stage three classes I taught in the three years 2007/8, 2008/9 and 2009/10. This also included the classes and pupils I observed and interviewed as part of the drama stage of the research. The letter gave reassurances about the anonymity of pupils who may appear on the recordings and about the confidentiality and security of the data. I did not receive any refusals to participate.

The raw recordings from the lessons were copied only once on to a hard drive, to ensure there was a back-up copy. Both the original recordings and the back-up recordings were held on a computer system that was not part of a network, but that had good and up to date anti-hacking software installed. They were password protected too. There exists only one hard copy of the complete anonymised transcriptions and these are securely kept in a filing cabinet and locked whenever I am not present. This complies with the ethical guidance provided by the Open University.

I gave the pupils a choice about whether they wished to take part in interviews orally. I reassured them that if they wanted to end the interview at any time then they could. However, I did not receive any refusals to take part and no pupil decided to end the interview early.

I gave staff who were interviewed a different letter which told them of the
project in outline and gave specific undertakings about anonymity and security
of data. Again these letters were of the 'opt-out' nature but staff who were
asked to be interviewed were keen to do so.

4.4 Analysis

The first two research questions focus on the inter-personal plane and so will
involve analysis of classroom interactions both before and during the
intervention lessons.

Littleton et al. (2005) draw from earlier studies in identifying three types of
classroom talk; disputational, cumulative and exploratory. The first refers to
interactions in which speakers tend to assume fixed positions resulting in
confrontational exchanges which is, they claim, of little help in developing
practice. Cumulative talk refers to exchanges between speakers in which the
claims of each are unchallenged by one another resulting in an unquestioning
acceptance of virtually anything that is said. Exploratory talk, however, is
where speakers use each other's utterances in order to collaborate productively
in activity and will involve acceptance, questioning and rejection of each
others' ideas. This provides a broad framework within which to categorise
exchanges.

However, Wegerif (2008, p. 356) points out that during this research, the team
were also familiar with a fourth type; 'playful' talk, or talk that showed
spontaneity, frivolity and triviality. This category was rejected from the 2005
analysis as the team deemed it educationally irrelevant, which seems to signify
an evaluative assumption that only matters deemed educationally valuable by
the research team were worthy of analysis. However, such playful exchanges
may make an important contribution to children's sense of identity and

belonging. Consequently Wegerif (2008) calls for more investigation of this kind of talk.

While these categories are helpful in some cases in determining the nature of the exchange, I would contest the view that only 'exploratory' talk is of educational value. Firstly, 'disputational' talk arises in the moment of exchange and while the positions of those involved may well be fixed during it, this does not mean that these positions become fixed forever. Indeed, it would only be through an analysis of the intra-personal plane that researchers would be able to determine how far a participant's point of view arose in and out of the moment and that afterwards, given some reflection, those points of view may well have loosened. Similarly, cumulative talk may imply a lack of questioning by individuals, but this does not mean that outside the immediacy of the exchange itself, questioning does not subsequently take place. With the suggested provisos these four types of talk can be useful in thinking about categorising inter-communication between participants and reference will be made to them in the analysis. They will not serve as the unqualified basis for analysis as it is important to consider types of talk or interaction which signify participation and evolving competence. These are categorised into the following three types.

Examples of language and communication which change the relational dynamic between participants

If learning is fundamentally a process of identity transformation, and a participant's identity is an aspect of on-going negotiation among actors and practices associated with him or her, then it will be important to focus on how this process works in interactions during lessons. It will be worthwhile studying the transcriptions to highlight examples of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts (Austin, 1975). This is relevant because illocutionary speech-acts reveal important aspects of activity in terms of speakers' intentions. This focuses attention on what speakers are doing through their utterances and could involve, for example, putting forward a point of view,

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explaining, instructing, dictating, requesting, proposing, speculating and so on. Perlocutionary acts involve how the utterances of others are received, and could include accepting, rejecting, ignoring, convincing, surprising and so on. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this will have significance for the relational dynamic of the group and could enable or constrain access to historical practices because of the associations between identity and competence that become evident through such speech-acts. It will be important to investigate teacher –pupil talk and pupil - pupil talk and whether, how, and in which practices pupils bid for identification as competent through their speech-acts and the way these are received. Examples from the transcriptions of classroom activity will be selected and filtered, to establish when these speech-acts happen and how they affect participation.

Interactions which 'dynamically afford' the creation of new knowledge

Cook and Brown (1999) categorise pre-existing knowledge into four types: individual, collective, explicit and tacit and view participants' actions as a kind of 'knowing', which through their concept of 'dynamic affordance' interacts with the four types of knowledge to create new knowledge. Examples of interaction will be collected which involve participants using pre-existing knowledge resources in order to generate thinking and therefore make progress. Particular attention would need to be made to thinking that is becoming influenced by the discourse resulting from activity (Sfard, 2008).

Additionally, it will be important to look for particular examples of knowledge that has been appropriated from one interaction and later used in a new one. This develops a sense that participants are moving along a trajectory of evolving competence and are not static.

Evidence of an emerging discourse aligned to the social practices of history

When a dynamic affordance is made that enables individuals to deepen their participation in history-related practice, then progress has been made. This

also will extend identities of competence to individuals who follow this process. The discussion about historical 'ways of thinking' in Chapter 3.3 identified as important several practices associated with historians (Anderson and Hounsell, 2007). It is very difficult to narrow down the practices of history to certain focal activities without over-simplifying them and it is important to recognise the dangers inherent in reifying these in any facile way. However, there are three fundamental aspects of historical practice relating to those outlined by Anderson and Hounsell that are pertinent to the Domesday investigation:

- Generating familiarity and negotiating the meaning of the relevant terminology on the level of verbal and conceptual meanings at first—for example, 'Hide', 'Plough', 'Peasant' (and the sub-categories of 'Freemen', 'Villeins', 'Smallholder' and 'Slave', as well as place names and people's names contained within Domesday entries. Developing familiarity with the terminology of Domesday will afford the development of new questions and these should be encouraged as a key process within the negotiation of meaning.

- Developing tools to enable pupils to collate, filter and select relevant pieces of evidence from the Domesday entries to render the Domesday evidence meaningful and to align that meaning to specific forms of historical practice. Such tools will take the form of grids and tables that allow comparison between specific locations and wider regions making potential meanings more visible. How far pupils are able to do this through participation with peers will be of interest and how far these tools are being extended in the process of activity will be evident through interactions.

- Developing tools for making links to the historical interpretation of Medieval England in order to generate questions of historical interest This would be evident in interactions as a result of the problems and challenges the pupils faced.

The analysis of the intra-personal plane will focus firstly on what pupils report they appropriated from the intervention lesson activities and how this corresponds with their goals and the insights produced from the inter-personal plane. Secondly interviews will probe individuals for their emerging identity positions with regard to history to explore how far the meaning the pupils had appropriated from their overall experience of history in Year 7 was aligned to the accepted practices of historians. The emphasis on intrapersonal analysis is not for the purpose of corroboration. The aim is rather to understand different personal interpretations and the changes that may be happening on the individual level as a result of activity.

Chapter 5: Stage 1 – Analysis of current practice

5.1 Stage 1 lesson observations

The recordings of the nine lessons involving three Year 9 classes, one Year 8 class and five Year 7 classes for Stage 1 took place from February 23rd to 6th July 2009. The purpose of stage 1 was to investigate my practice to inform any intervention. These are therefore instances of lessons I had been teaching for some time and had planned before embarking on this research.

Marshall et al. (2007) define the spirit of AfL as genuinely promoting learner autonomy by encouraging engagement in the processes of and criteria for completing work. This resonates with the argument put forward in Chapter 3 that from a sociocultural viewpoint pupils learn by applying authentic subject-related tools in ongoing activity that reflect a history of mutual engagement (Wenger, 1998). I argue that the pedagogical underpinnings of the 'spirit' of AfL relies on and becomes evident through the presence of speech-acts which position pupils as agentive learners (Austin, 1970); acknowledgement of the four dimensions of knowledge (explicit, individual, tacit, and collective) and the dynamic affordance of new knowledge within the interchange between them (Cook and Brown 1999); and the emergence of an authentic subject-related discourse.

Marshall et al. (2007) describe the 'letter of AfL' as evident in lessons where the procedural activities associated with AfL (like peer and self-assessment or questioning) are used but mainly to determine 'right' answers or the 'right' ways of doing things often with a specific and explicit focus on performance rather than learning. The pedagogical underpinnings of this approach to AfL would approximate to speech acts which position pupils as passive and the teacher as arbiter of knowledge; an interchange of knowledge which is confined mainly to transfer or exchange of explicit individual knowledge and thus limits the scope and capacity for dynamic affordances; and the emergence

of a discourse that is detached from authentic subject-related practice and that focuses on internalised, episodic knowledge items whose relation to each other and meaning remains tacit.

The outcome of this stage of the research was likely to reveal a mixed picture of instances where the evident pedagogical underpinnings of activity exhibit features of both the 'spirit' and the 'letter' of AfL. However, the classification of 'spirit' and 'letter' of AfL as well as the pedagogical principles that underlie them were unknown to me at the time the lessons were planned. This analysis of stage 1 therefore represents an important dynamic affordance of knowledge for me as it has enabled the bridging of tacit aspects of both theory and practice into explicit knowledge, from which an intervention that changes practice can be devised (Cook and Brown, 1999).

I analysed and evaluated the recorded lessons to develop a view of my current practice. I can only offer here some examples that reflected aspects of my pedagogy that emerged with some consistency. For the purposes of balance and transparency I report examples where both the 'spirit' and the 'letter' of AfL seem evident within pedagogy during stage 1 but focus more on particular aspects of practice that my analysis revealed needed to change. I report these in the two forthcoming vignettes. There are additional instances of practice in two further vignettes provided in Appendices 7 and 8 which yielded findings that the examples reported here do too but provide greater detail and subtlety as well as transparency to the findings.

Vignette 1: Year 9, 23rd February 2009

This Year 9 class, were learning about the Home Front in Britain during World War 1. The following excerpt comes from a lesson where the focus for learning was the Defence of the Realm Act, a 1914 Act of Parliament giving the British government emergency powers to introduce new laws by decree. Among these new laws were the introduction of British Summer Time, strict opening hours for licensed premises and many other prohibitions. I gave the

pupils a sheet with a dozen of these laws listed and wanted them to categorise each law into 'stupid' or 'sensible' categories in terms of the laws' effectiveness in helping the war effort. My goals for learning in this task were to give pupils some idea of the scale and breadth of government control during the war. These were not made explicit or discussed and they were not connected to prior learning. This contrasts with my approach in the vignette discussed in Appendix 7 where I began the lesson by reviewing pupils' use of a technique in this case for crafting a good paragraph. I then modelled the technique again and consolidated prior learning which positioned the pupils as knowledgeable and competent. No such approach was evident in this activity which was done in writing and individually without any discussion. Before I set them the task, I attempted a discussion about some of the laws to help them to decide which category to put them in.

Teacher: Now let's have a look at this first list of things. There are 3 lists on the sheet. The first list of laws were all introduced to help us to win the war. So the first one is British Summer Time was
5   introduced to help us to win the war. In other words the clocks were turned forward one hour in March—which will happen next month. What possible reason is there for introducing this to help us to win the war? ... Can anyone make a link? [pause] Craig?

Craig: It gives us an extra hour to get ready

10   Teacher: It gives us an extra hour to get ready—interesting... Sheila?

Sheila: To make us used to it being earlier than the Germans imagined so that we could attack while they were still asleep.

Teacher: OK To mess with the German timings so that if the Germans got hold of secret battle plans which might say to commence
15   battle at 6am, we would actually launch it at 5! Another interesting idea. But not exactly no.

Teacher: It was basically and I think Craig was closer there, to make more use of daylight hours. Because if you are in the summertime daylight starts at about 5am. And sundown is usually about 8 or 9 pm.
20   And you have these really long days so why don't we shift the day back a little bit. So let's say instead of 5, daylight starts at 6—alright. This means it's more comfortable for us to get up and there is more time in the evening when we don't need to keep our factory lights on. The

more we keep our artificial factory lights on the more we burn up fuel
and electricity and that fuel and electricity could be used in the war
effort instead of lighting factories. That's really why they introduced
British Summer Time and they haven't withdrawn it either! It's still
there even though WW1 and WW2 are over! Ok. Have a look at the
next 3 because they are all connected. They are all to do with pubs and
alcohol. See if you can think why these were introduced to help us win
the war. So pub opening hours were introduced so that they had to
close at 11pm. Beer was watered down.

John: What does that mean sir?

Teacher: It means the beer was diluted with water to make it weaker.
You were also not allowed to buy rounds of drinks in pubs—so you
weren't allowed to go up to the bar and say 'Right I'll have 10 pints for
my mates over there' You could only buy for yourself and that was
one at a time. So why would this help us to win the war? Any ideas …
[silence]

(13 second pause)

What about you Harry?

Harry: Don't know

Teacher: OK,—what about John?

John: —In case they get called up to the front?

Teacher: Right close. They don't want people who are going to be
called up to fight to be wastrels and drunks ok? That's true but there is
something else? Sheila?

Sheila: If you're drunk and stuff you might start saying stuff about the
attacks and fighting and Germans might be listening.

Teacher: Right. Good. So if you get drunk in a pub you might start
mouthing off about something you know about the war—something
secret—and a German spy might well be in the vicinity listening.
That's true—there is something else too. Anyone remember how many
shells were fired at the Germans in the first week of the Battle of the
Somme?

John: It was about half a million.

Teacher: Good. It was one and a half million shells. Those shells are
going to have to be produced somewhere. Remember those factories
that we did right at the beginning of the year? Those clothing

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60   factories? And all those horrible horrible weaving looms and stuff like that. Well, those kinds of factories were changed during WW1 so that they produced ammunition and bullets, and shells and guns. But a lot of the men who had worked in them had gone off to fight so many of the factories now had to be run by women for the first time ever. And

65   to make sure those women did not turn up to work with a splitting hangover, they introduced these restrictions on alcohol.

(23.02.09, pp.1-2)

This interaction reveals a lot of incompatibility between the 'spirit' of AfL and the way I am positioning pupils. Firstly, ascribing speech-acts to these utterances would reveal that most of the time I am explaining things—lines 13–32; 34–38; 50–55 and 61–66). I occasionally ask questions (lines 10, 41 and 43 and 54–55) and judge responses as incorrect (lines 10 and 15–16) while other responses I do not judge as incorrect but pass them over as they are not what I am looking for (lines 46–47 and 53–55).

This reveals a very authoritarian teacher position. I act as the source of all information and the pupils' contributions are either deemed correct or not by me. The few pupils who were venturing to suggest answers to my questions are engaging in the activity of guessing what is in my head rather than deepening their participation in history (lines 9; 11–12; 44; 48–49 and 56). Furthermore, some pupils were disengaged with the activity too (e.g. Harry in line 42). There is a static dynamic which positions pupils into roles where they are not enabled to identify themselves with the practices of historians. The vignette discussed in Appendix 8 provides further evidence of these characteristics of my practice as I again assume meanings can be given and that rather than engage pupils in dialogue to explore ideas I engage them in establishing the 'right' answers.

Year 9s are considered to be a difficult year group in terms of class and behaviour management in the school. Wenger (1998, p. 276) points out that teachers' roles as managers of large classrooms often get in the way of deepening authentic participation. My response here marginalises some pupils.

This is revealing for it indicates beliefs about how to deal with difficult classroom behaviour that are likely to perpetuate it.

There are no examples of dynamic affordances and the creation of new knowledge in this excerpt; though some pupils may be able to make connections these are not explored. Instead there are cues and prompts for what I want the pupils to say. The excerpt is very information-heavy and the emphasis is on transmitting information. There is little in the way of modelling tools or developing tools to make sense of the information—rather the approach is on identifying the rationales behind the passage of certain laws during World War One through guesswork. In this excerpt the balance is in favour of reifications rather than in negotiating the meaning of them and pupils are simply expected to make sense of them on the basis of the clarity of my explanations and the meanings that I project. However, the explanation of British Summer Time in lines 18–27 is very difficult to follow and it would not be surprising if pupils did not understand. Pupils are therefore being denied the mutuality that is the right to be and the feeling of being able to negotiate the meaning of the task.

Unquestionably, this was a disappointing and rather shocking start for me. And the approach clear in this lesson was apparent in several others. However, there were other lessons, which suggest a little more in the way of pupil participation and greater compatibility with the spirit of AfL and these seemed to be particularly focussed on Year 7 and 8 classes.

Vignette 2: Year 7 15th June 2009

This Year 7 class was engaged in a cross-curricular project with the Drama Department, set up as a consequence of the 2008 National Curriculum reform that required collaborative activities across departments. This particular exercise was about the mystery of the disappearance of the two princes, Richard and Edward in 1483. The History Department began the study with a card sorting activity designed to familiarise the pupils with some of the

evidence surrounding the disappearance and likely murder of the two young princes. From this discussion of the evidence, the pupils produced lists of main suspects and cited evidence that may implicate or absolve them. The pupils would continue the investigation in drama lessons by using their suspects list and evidence as a resource for constructing a role-play of an imaginary trial involving a judge, a jury, prosecuting and defence lawyers and the suspects themselves. The choice of task was meant to allow pupils to exercise their agency and did give them an opportunity to negotiate what constituted evidence. This will have provided opportunities for intersubjectivity to emerge and potentially for mutuality to be experienced. The goals for learning were again not made explicit nor was the evidence generated by the pupils, however, the task seemed to be experienced by pupils as authentic and personally meaningful. The following excerpt is from the discussion that ensued during the history class after which the pupils had looked at the evidence and attempted to note down evidence for and against the main suspects. The discussion focuses on whether Henry VII or Richard III is the main suspect.

> John: Richard was the man behind it.
>
> Teacher: You think Richard was the man behind it?
>
> John: [Mentions something about Richard's servant].
>
> Teacher: Right, ok—what about the rest of you? Do you think Richard was the guilty man? I don't want to impose this view on to you.
>
> Dane: If he thought [Henry] was more powerful than him [Richard], isn't it weird that he like done a battle with him?
>
> Teacher: Well except that there was a war going on at the time.
>
> Dane: He must have known that he was more powerful so...
>
> Alan: I've got another theory...
>
> Teacher: He probably fancied himself—that's true—to win it. Yeah?
>
> Alan: Maybe Henry framed him, so he'd get put in prison so no-one was a King so he kind of took over?

15   Teacher: How about Henry framing Richard III to make him look like the guy responsible for it?

Harry: Yeah but maybe Henry Tudor wanted the kids to be [dead?] because they were the only ones standing in his way.

Alan: Yes but he wanted to be King.

20   Harry/Dane: Yeah!

Alan: If he framed him then he would get rid of both [princes and Richard?]

Dane: But if he had that battle with that other lad...

Alan and others: [laughing] LAD!?

25   Dane: ... then he knows he is more powerful so he knows he is going to become King [after the victory]

Alan: Yes but if he framed him then he wouldn't have to go through the trouble of battle.

Dane: I am not saying that he ... Oh My God!

30   Teacher: If, I think, yours is an interesting point. If Henry fancied himself to win the battle that he knew was going to come up [...] then what would really help in winning that battle would be to win it and then say well look how evil and horrible Richard was ....

Tim: I was thinking that there is more evidence to point to Richard
35   because if Henry wanted to get power he probably would have gone for Richard because he probably had many opportunities to do so because if he could get to the kids he could have got to Richard too.

Teacher: So you're saying Richard had more opportunity because he was closer to the kids.

40   Tim: Yeah. Also like wasn't the battle a fair bit after?

Teacher: It was

Tim: ...Henry probably wouldn't have wanted to wait that long to do anything. If he did have the [opportunity] he would have just done it and...

45   Teacher: And covered his trail up really too. Erm Jenni...

Jenni: About like the framing thing. Henry Tudor knew that he could get away with it because he knew that people would point the finger at

Richard cos Richard's closer to the kids. And people would have thought well how could Henry Tudor get to the kids? Without getting past Richard—so they would have thought Richard did it because he is always with the kids.

50

Teacher: Right well it would be easy to say that, because how can Henry get closer to the kids—there is no relation between them. But Richard could so clearly the opportunity might show a motive too.

(15.06.09, pp.4-5)

This contrasts with vignette 1 in many ways. Looking at the social dynamic through analysis of speech-acts reveals that there is a different emerging relationship between myself and the pupils. My utterances in lines 2, 4, 12, 15, 38–39, 45 and 52–54 show that I am valuing the pupils' ideas more and that I am repeating them here for the class making them available for their learning rather than pronouncing them to be correct or incorrect. In this way I am recognising the pupils' competence and making available their know-how as legitimate resources for learning. This allows pupils autonomy to take charge of directing the discussion often commenting on or building from each other's ideas (lines 15-26, 38, 44-48). Further evidence of this change towards guided participation is given in Appendix 7 where the discussion about how to present a historical argument facilitates dialogue about the positive and negative results of the Black Death.

For the most part the discussion here was collaborative although there is some antagonism between Harry, Alan and Dane in their exchanges between lines 13 and 30. This seems to emerge as a result of a failure of each of them to follow what the other is saying. Alan proposes the framing theory in line 13, which Harry does not contradict in line17 but his utterance may signal contradiction because of his use of 'Yeah but maybe...' at the beginning of his response. Furthermore, Harry has probably misunderstood Alan's theory as suggesting that if Henry had framed Richard then this would not have necessitated the death of the two children, which clearly it has to. The exchange in lines 19 to 29 is disputational and reveals Alan defending his

theory (lines 21 and 24) against what he sees is an attack on it, which threatens his identity as competent in history.

Alan is quick to pounce on Dane's use of the word 'lad' to represent King Richard III (line 24) as inappropriate. Alan instinctively mocks it and is therefore disassociating himself from discourse which to him is recognisably inappropriate in a history discussion. This casts a subtle judgement over Dane's competence irrespective of what he is trying to say. This is perhaps the reason for Dane's frustration soon after in line 29. Actually, Dane's point is a good one; he seems to be trying to clarify why it is useful to think that Henry had framed Richard III when he is to have a battle with him anyway and is very confident that he will win it. Dane does not articulate this very clearly and perhaps because his interpretation is not understood by Alan's responses, begins to get frustrated. I then intervene myself with how I see the purpose of the discussion.

This is an example of how social dynamics in a classroom can have a significant impact on what is learnt. While it is good that Alan and Dane are engaged in the joint endeavour of getting to the bottom of the mystery, their exchange engenders threats to each other's competence and is 'disputational', a form of discussion involving rejection of each participants' point of view without reference to what they are saying (Littleton, et al. 2005). However, this would be a simplification in this case because Dane's point has merit and does raise a question about Alan's theory, his difficulty is being unable to express himself clearly. This points to where a teacher's intervention may have defused the tension and supported the negotiation of meaning, and made Dane's insights available to Alan and others hence creating an affordance for new knowledge construction.

Analysing the exchange from the point of view of dynamic affordances also reveals some important formative moments. Firstly, referring again to Dane's use of the word 'lad' to describe Richard III and the reaction of Alan and others to that utterance reveals a particular moment where the collective tacit knowledge of the genre of historical discussion was used to dynamically afford making collectively explicit the knowledge that such a term is inappropriate. In

this way, the historical discourse that is deemed appropriate is being constructed by participants and this is revealed when there is a perturbation to this tacit acceptance of the discourse.

There are additional examples of such dynamic affordances. Alan's theory (lines 13–14) that Henry may have framed Richard is a new and original observation within the class discussion which affects how others are seeing the mystery. For example, in the immediate aftermath of that utterance, there is the exchange with Dane and Harry mentioned above, but later, and perhaps partly as a result of the way the tension of that discussion focussed attention onto it, others seem to offer additional comments about that theory. This is best demonstrated by Tim's thought in lines 40 and 42–43 that the battle between Richard and Henry could not have been within Henry's 'framing' plan as it was too long after the disappearance of the two princes. Additionally, Jenni's view (lines 46–51) that Henry would not have found it difficult to frame Richard because Richard was so close and proximate to the princes and assuming Henry could have found a way to murder them then Richard would always have been a suspect.

These are examples of how participants' way of seeing something was affected by the utterance of someone else. Jenni and Tim had therefore appropriated Alan's theory and brought it within their own thinking while making it available for others to comment on. This would not have been possible without Alan's original statement and so participation has consequently become deeper. This is an, albeit brief, example of a judgement being made by participants that alters how they are seeing things and this is crucially what makes this formative. Again, I could have intervened to reify these ideas for others in the room by writing them on the board and maybe asking others to share what they think. Similarly, and this is perhaps the biggest missed opportunity here would have been an intervention that relates these ideas to what evidence itself might suggest about them.

Doing this would have made the discussion more focussed and aligned to the historical practice of debate and discussion about the evidence. The entire

excerpt above shows a rather 'playful' discussion or what Wiske might have characterized as the 'messing about' stage along her taxonomy of performance (1999, p. 239). In other words, the discussion itself is only really speculative as there is little actual reference to evidence. The pupils' ideas provide opportunities for questions to be put to the evidence. For example, if Henry had framed Richard what evidence would suggest this and what would we need to look up? Similarly, in relation to the battle between Henry and Richard, what was the sequence of events that led to this battle and does it suggest a plot to frame Richard on Henry's part or a chance encounter?

This discussion took place after the pupils had consulted the evidence but without them being told how to or being offered any tools for doing so. This led to many of the pupils perusing the evidence superficially without relating it to any emerging view of what happened in the mystery. This is demonstrated by the lack of reference to evidence in the discussion. It would have helped if some of the reifications were made available to pupils and then used as resources or tools for a further consultation of the evidence. This did not take place and so pupils' participation was constrained. This led to the role-plays evolving with increasingly little association to the evidence itself. This further constrained the pupils' participation in history practices.

This excerpt showed signs of an emerging history-related discourse that involved moments of dynamic affordance and speech-acts positioning pupils as more competent than in vignette 1. These were embedded within the activities pupils were doing and were very much in the moment of engagement. My role may have helped in terms of the autonomy afforded by contrast to the earlier excerpt. However, I continue to assume the pupils are able to see what I can see in the evidence by merely allowing them time to read it rather than allowing time and opportunities for them to develop tools to aid interpretation.

There is also a further observation that emerges from both vignettes about my attitude to the subject of history. In the former excerpt I am the arbiter of what is right and wrong, and history is represented in my practice as a quest for what is right. This second excerpt shows tolerance for a wide variety of

differing viewpoints which are not all compatible with each other, suggesting that history is more of a discussion about different interpretations. I am reflecting a different view of the subject in each class. Partly, as mentioned before, this was because I felt unable to give the same level of autonomy to Year 9s than I did Year 7s in the belief that Year 9 pupils would become restive. But also it is a reflection of the type of topic being taught. The murder of the two princes is a well-documented mystery and nobody can be sure (or probably will ever be sure) what exactly took place—there is therefore no 'correct' view. Whereas the Defence of the Realm Act is not a mystery and there are well-documented reasons for the laws. However an investigation to decide which ones may have had an impact on which people at the time and what can this tell us not only about the laws and their impact but also about society too allows space for pupils' ideas and speculation, as well as offering a forum for discussion about evidence rather than an exercise in gleaning what I think about them. This therefore signals a view of the subject that needs to emerge more clearly in my practice, whatever the topic may be about.

5.2 How does my practice have to change?

These two vignettes and those in Appendices 7 and 8 reveal a disparity between the assumptions inherent to the 'spirit' of AfL and those underlying my practice and a corresponding disparity between the theoretical stance espoused in Chapters 3 and 4 and the values reflected in my practice.

To summarise, it appears, certainly from vignette 1 that notions of 'correctness' dominate many of the lesson discussions. This tends to produce a regime of competence that emphasises contributions as 'right' or 'wrong' and history itself as a quest for truth. My propensity to encourage this is shown in both the choice of topic emphasis (in vignette 1) and in the way pupils tend to be positioned as having to guess my line of thinking. Implicit to this is a subtle claim I make to being a 'guardian of truth', when it is merely my opinion that I am attempting to get the pupils to reflect back to me. Given this propensity it is not surprising that when pupils do make speculative contributions in

discussions (like Dane's in vignette 2), they tend to be regarded as either 'right' or 'wrong' by other pupils too and so an aspect of collective tacit 'genre' of classroom discourse within my subject becomes apparent (Cook and Brown, 1999). Consequently, pupils' competence comes under threat with potential damage to participation. The notion of 'truth', or symbols matching reality fits within symbol-processing theory and so deploying AfL techniques within such a regime could only result in the 'letter' of AfL. However, there is evidence from vignettes 3 and 4 in Appendices 7 and 8 of how my practice allows negotiation of meaning which engages pupils in the process of reification and this relates to the types of questions I pose and my willingness to give value to pupils' answers. I also started to engage the pupils in recording their emerging questions reinforcing again how evidence can be interrogated and how important individual meaning-making is. Consideration, for example, of the issue of property demolitions during the Great Fire of London (Appendix 8) dynamically afforded connections the pupils could make to imagining losing their own homes. This inspired a heated discussion and a genuine negotiation of the meaning of the reifications the pupils were considering. This contrasts with the approach in vignette 1 in which meanings were assumed to be contained within the reifications themselves and value was not given to any negotiation of them.

Another observation is the lack of development of historical tools or ways of thinking. This key feature of deepening participation in subject practices was underlined in Chapter 3 and has been emphasised in literature (Anderson and Hounsell, 2007; Wenger, 1998). These ways of thinking or subject-related tools emerge through participation and pupils and teachers need to identify them as they emerge so that they can be reified and become part of the subject-related discourse. Pupils in each vignette engage with evidence in ways that remain tacit and discussions on the basis of this engagement do not reify tools with which pupils can be enabled to re-engage with evidence more deeply. Whilst this does seem to affect engagement in vignette 1, it does not in vignettes 2, 3 or 4 so much. However, in the latter, the discussions tend to be grounded only superficially in evidence, even if there are negotiations of

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meaning that develop engagement in other aspects of interest. As a result, it is difficult to argue that these discussions deepened authentic historical practice in the ways they could have done, i.e. by reifying thinking from the discussions and using it as a way to renegotiate the meaning of the evidence.

This is linked to the observation that many of the lessons in stage 1 seemed detached from one another even when they were in sequence. And the pupils' experience of them were likely to be the same because of the consistent lack of sharing learning goals. For example, the Year 9 lesson on the Defence of the Realm Act of 1914 on 2nd March 2009, was followed by a study of conscientious objectors in World War One a week later and an investigation of the end of the war a week after that. This was not confined to Year 9 but in the Year 7 lessons too there was an interruption on 23rd March 2009 which caused the lessons to jump from analysing the causes of the Peasants Revolt to looking at Irish dancing. This observation allowed me to see how disjointed my programme of study had become. Without any emphasis on the development of shared subject related tools through which such a movement through these diverse topics might bring about deepening participation, it is difficult to see how this could have generated very profound experiences of meaning (Wenger, 1998).

There are also related issues concerning the research itself at this point that needed addressing ahead of stage 2. If deepening participation within ongoing activity along a trajectory is to be the focus for investigation then it is not suitable to record lessons from different classes at different times, and neither is it advisable for the lessons to be detached from one another in the way exhibited in stage 1. It also appeared necessary to extend the data collection to include examples of work and to record smaller groups as they interacted with each other.

Aside from these changes to the data collection techniques the following pedagogical changes were identified to develop the 'spirit' of AfL in my practice.

- Pupils need to be positioned as competent in history. I need to change my propensity to elicit from pupils how I might be thinking and explore the pupils' thinking instead. This will position pupils as agentive and will reduce the perceived requirement of 'pleasing the teacher' or guessing what the teacher thinks. Questioning in class is very important to achieve this and links to the practices recommended by Black et al. (2003). However, in line with the findings from particularly vignette 4 (Appendix 8), questioning should not merely be seen as a teacher activity but as something which pupils should engage in as a necessary part of the process of negotiating meaning.

- My interventions in lessons could be more fruitful if I acted to offer individual meanings to the collective then I would actively be enabling the epistemic work across the categories of knowledge that Cook and Brown (1999) identify. In so doing I would make available from the 'generative dance' reifications from which others can be enabled to comment and evaluate, connecting to and enhancing group and individual know-how. In this way, evaluation of contributions is less focussed on what I see as important but more negotiated with pupils from what they see as important too. This signifies a shift from a teaching to a learning curriculum that Lave and Wenger (1991) advocate.

- My approach to history needs to be focussed less on the activities that aim to determine factual correctness, or an illusion of it deriving from what I consider to be right, and more on activities which provoke debate and uncertainty. This will enable pupils to participate in authentic historical practices of debate and discussion and use of evidence—rather than in developing knowledge of my values.

- The timing of activities and the sequence of lessons needs to change. It seems I set up activities that allow pupils to cursorily peruse evidence and follow this up with a general discussion about the issues raised

before moving on to a different activity or topic. These are both important stages of acquainting pupils with evidence but if the activities are limited only to this, then pupils are not enabled to conduct a deeper examination of the evidence. The discussion after the initial look at the evidence and the 'messing about' or 'playful' stage should concentrate on developing tools that can be used to further interrogate the evidence more closely.

Chapter 6: Stage 2: The Intervention and Findings

The focus of this chapter is on the final three research questions:

- Does my changed practice enable a formative dialogue and what further changes might be indicated?

- In the changed practice what is observed to be formative and how does it relate to assessment for learning?

- What is the impact of this on learners?

The analysis of the intervention presented is not intended to represent success but a small movement forward into becoming a more effective practitioner. The thesis therefore represents both an exploratory study of theory as well as the beginning of the changes necessary to enact change in practice from it.

The intervention focussed on the 'interpretation, evaluation and synthesis of evidence' as a starting point as this was absent from the stage 1 lessons (Anderson and Hounsell, 2007, p. 466). The selected Year 7 class were studying England at the time of the Norman Conquest and William I's reign. I planned a series of lessons that focussed on the aftermath of William's victory and the steps he took to enhance his power throughout the kingdom. I wanted the pupils to engage with the Domesday survey as the focal piece of evidence for their investigations. I therefore planned a unit, whose aim was to model some cultural tools for investigating Domesday evidence leading to an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate them independently. The programme of study for this unit would concentrate on the following topics related to Domesday.

- An initial investigation of basic questions emerging from Domesday, i.e. who wrote it, why, when, and what is it and what do the words in it mean? (11th January to 25th January 2010)

- An investigation of how the information was collected. (1st February 2010)

- What it tells us about the pattern of land ownership throughout England after the Conquest. (8ᵗʰ February 2010)

- What the land values can tell us about England at this time and how William treated the English . (1ˢᵗ–8ᵗʰ March 2010)

- What it tells us about how William maximised his power throughout the land. (15ᵗʰ–29ᵗʰ March 2010)

In the final part of the topic groups of pupils were given a selection of information from Domesday and had to create and enact a presentation for the class to demonstrate what they had learnt.

The pattern to this plan was to some extent informed by the teaching for understanding ideas put forward by Wiske (1999). In this research, she adopts a participative view of knowledge when she argues understanding should be defined as a 'performance' rather than 'a state of mind' (1999, p. 237), and involves 'going beyond the information given' (1999, p. 238). I hoped that the tools modelled and used by the pupils during the tasks would provide the opportunities and understanding needed to allow formative dialogues to emerge.

The change in conception of learning which sees it as deepening participation in the practices and activity of doing history informed the unit design. The analysis sought to exemplify that change had occurred; that it enabled emergent formative moments and helped to characterise them; and highlighted those features of my current practice that mediated my intentions and the pupils' experiences and learning opportunities in unintended ways. The analysis zooms in at four points along the planned trajectory of movement through understanding of the Domesday evidence and foregrounds the interpersonal plane. The first point is when practices involved pupils in negotiating the meaning and becoming familiar with the terminology of the Domesday text. The second involved data collection practices (principally the collation of grids and maps from Domesday entries) to interrogate and facilitate interpretation of the Domesday data. The third point was where

pupils worked together to identify ways to analyse the data, and use additional sources to make available to the collective their understanding of Domesday. The final point focused on pupils' independent activity and performances of understanding. The focussing on practices emphasised at these four points is not to suggest that the use of and understanding of the practices occurs only at those points they evolve throughout and in some cases the practices and learning made available were taking place simultaneously. However, for the purposes of presenting the findings of the research, these points are treated in turn focussing on examples of formative moments, when participation, practice and understanding seems to have moved forward through interaction.

Overview

The extent of the pupils' engagement in a serious and difficult source of evidence was impressive and much deeper than had been achieved in any stage 1 class. Formative dialogues of the kind I observed in Drama began to emerge within the stage 2 classes and this was very encouraging. However, given the transient nature of these interactions it was difficult for me to identify them as they were happening and often they only became apparent after reflecting on the transcripts. I also tended to judge stage 2 lessons unfavourably too hastily when they appeared to be haphazard and noisy. This was often unjustified after analysing the transcripts and suggests I had not jettisoned many assumptions inherent in my prior practice. Yet a typical field note entry in a stage 1 lesson (16th March) says that despite there being some engagement there was 'very little in the way of building tools, dialogue or negotiation of meaning.' In stage 2 a typical comment (7th December) was 'deepening participation is evident here and an emerging discourse too as students evolve their competence. Feeling immediately after the class was that it had gone horribly wrong. However,... the transcribing of the lesson was encouraging and stimulating. Dynamic affordances were common. This class had been a success despite my initial feelings'.

6.1 Negotiating Domesday terminology and concepts

The first point along the trajectory was at the beginning of the Domesday unit when pupils as a group were asked to identify the key questions that as historians needed to be considered about the source.

> Teacher: What are the questions that we need to ask about this Domesday survey? [pause]
>
> Girl [unidentified]: When was it written?
>
> Girl [unidentified]: Who wrote it?
>
> 5   Boy [unidentified]: How old is it?
>
> Boy [unidentified] What is it written about?
>
> Boy [unidentified] Why was it written?
>
> Paul: Why is it called Domesday?
>
> Mike: How are you going to read it?
>
> 10   Teacher: These are all brilliant questions.
>
> (11.01.10, pp. 1–2)

After this I encouraged pupils individually to identify questions they each had about the book and its entries. I was quite surprised by some of these. I deliberately chose entries about the local area in Wirral. However many pupils did not know the names of many of the places despite that. Sam for example asked what 'Thurstaston' meant and Jack wanted to know the meaning of 'Caldy' when these are the names of places within only a few miles of the school (11.01.10, p. 3). Many other questions were raised about the words used in the Domesday entries like 'hide', 'wapentake', 'waste', 'rider' and 'smallholders'. Further questions raised other issues. Deborah asked 'Why are the common places underlined?' and Samantha asked 'What does the Domesday Book have to do with the Wirral?' Interestingly Deborah seems to have guessed what the Domesday entries were about as one of her additional questions asked, 'Is it a whole book of everyone's taxes?'

Through these questions pupils are telling me what they need to know to make sense of the Domesday resource. I am therefore coming to know the level of pupils' understanding. AfL in the school focussed entirely on change in the pupils and not on change in understanding of the teacher. Here I was getting formative feedback and without it I would have assumed that pupils recognised names like 'Thurstaston' and 'Caldy' from knowledge of their own locality. Their questions provided insights to modify my current plans and inform the focus of our future enquiry too as they are aligned to historical practice and constitute opportunities for deepening participation.

The following is an extract from Domesday for the town of Wallasey.

> Robert [of Rhuddlan] also holds WALLASEY. Uhtred held it; he was a
> free man. 1 1/2 hides paying tax. Land for 4 ploughs. 1 villager and 1
> smallholder with 1/2 plough; 1 Frenchman has 1 plough with 2
> ploughmen; 1 rider and 1 smallholder. Value before 1066, 5s; now in
> 1086 7s
> [3 Robert of Rhuddlan holds from Earl Hugh]

Pupils were given a glossary in which definitions and meanings for several Domesday words were given alongside pictorial representations. One of these was the definition of a 'hide', which at the time of Domesday was a representation of an area of land roughly equivalent to 120 acres, which was shown as 60 football pitches. Pupils then negotiated the meaning of this in relation to comparing land areas between the above entry and others in the vicinity.

.

> TA: Right so the first question is 'is there more land in Thurstaston
> than in Wallasey'? So it has 2 hides so how many acres was that?
>
> Mike: 360.
>
> TA: What's a hide? How much land is a hide?

5   Mike: 120 and a half

           TA: No that was Wallasey—Who's got more?

           Sam: Wallasey

           TA: That's only got 1 ½. You've got 2. We decided that 1 ½ hides
           was 180 but if you got 2 hides then it's …

10   Mike: 240

           TA: So who has the greater land?

           Mike: William Duke of Normandy?

           Sam: Thurstaston.

           (18.1.10, p. 5)

Pupils are a little insecure about the meaning of 'hide' which was to be
expected. There was also some misunderstanding about whether in line 2 of
the Wallasey entry the '11/2 hides' referred to '11 hides' or '1 ½ hides'
(18.1.10, p. 7). Issues such as this were clarified in interactions about other
words until pupils felt secure about the meanings of the terms. Following this,
pupils were given an entry each and asked to compare land area, value, number
of ploughs, and smallholders with each other's entry.

           TA: [reading out Wallasey and asking for pupils to compare theirs with
           Wallasey] How many hides have you got

           Alex: I've got 1 ½ hides

           TA: How many have you got Mike

5   Mike: I've got 1 hide

           TA: Has anyone got 4 ploughs?

           Sam: I've got 10 ploughs

           Others: Oh come on! [disbelieving]

           TA: How many have you got?

10	Bryony: 2
	TA: How many have you got? Look 4 ploughs.
	[Others react with surprise]
	Sam: I've got 12 ploughs in total
	TA: How many villagers have you got?
15	Mike: 4
	Sam: I've got 5
	Steve: I've got 3!
	[Mumbled reaction]
	TA Have you? Right so how many villagers have you got?
20	Kate Erm 2!
	TA: Alex?
	Bryony Erm
	Jack Same as me 5 I mean 4
	Bryony : I've got 4
25	TA: Anybody got a smallholder?
	Bryony : I've got 2
	(18.1.10, pp. 8–9)

In this excerpt, the pupils are using Domesday discourse fairly confidently because of the simplicity of the task. There is an element of 'playful' as well as 'exploratory' discussion here involving simple comparisons which enable pupils to get used to the terminology. This was a lesson early on in the unit using a demanding resource with pupils relatively new to secondary level history and it was important for pupils to familiarise themselves with the conceptual understanding necessary for a deeper analysis of the content later on. Furthermore, Domesday is a clerical document set out as a list. Its presentation does not conduce to a deep analysis of its historical meaning

without some conceptual tools to enable this, which the pupils were beginning to develop here.

If links and connections are to be made between Domesday evidence and other more general historical concepts (Anderson and Hounsell, 2007, p. 466), it is important that these concepts are also negotiated at some point. This is an example of the negotiation pupils engaged in to make sense of rebellion and the forms it could have taken in medieval England against William.

Tom: Refuse to work.

Teacher: What's that called?

Girl [unidentified]: Standing up to them.

5   Teacher: Good. Refusing to work. Standing up to your leaders. What is that called?

Boy [unidentified]: Strike.

Teacher: Yes strike there is another word for it though? Beginning with R—means kind of the same thing but with a bit more violence
10   involved?

Boy [unidentified]: Revolt.

Teacher: Excellent—yes a revolt or rebellion. What does that mean? What could peasants do if they went on a rebellion. Some Norman knights turn up you are thrown off your land you are fed up with that
15   what can you do?

Steve: Plan an assassination.

Teacher: Yes plan to murder him or assassinate him. Yes.

Paul: You could try and find out who feels the same way and raise some sort of an army.

20   Teacher: Ok Good. Mike, pay attention what are we talking about?

Mike: We are talking about what peasants might do if they lose their land.

Teacher: And what specifically are we saying now about what they can do?

25   Mike: They could go on a rebellion?

Teacher: Right good! Well done. Anything else peasants might be able to do?

Chloe: They could stop working?

Teacher: They could stop working. And of course people might
30   starve, Martha?

Martha: You know cos Paul said [line 18–19] like have all the peasants together. But they like grow their own food and like…

Teacher: True so what are you trying to say?

Martha: If they stopped working then the peasants wouldn't have food
35   for themselves.

Teacher: Oh I see. They can't really stop working otherwise they are going to starve so they are in a bit of a bind there aren't they.

Steve: Couldn't they just poison the food because they all eat from the food the peasants make and they could just poison it?

(1.3.10, pp. 2– 3)

Pupils' dialogue allows meanings to be projected and made available for others to interpret and make connections to their own understandings. For example, Martha is able to connect an earlier utterance from Paul (line 18–19) about the peasants banding together and launching an insurrection with her own knowledge of peasants' role in society which is of producing food for themselves and for others to propose a major difficulty they would have in launching such a rebellion (lines 31–32 and 34–35). This in turn dynamically affords Steve's suggestion about poison in lines 37–38, which could have raised questions about availability, and knowledge of poison in medieval England. This dialogue has formative implications, as pupils are using their emerging interpretations of Medieval society from Domesday evidence to negotiate the meaning of rebellion and hypothesise about its possible guises.

My speech acts in lines 29 and 33 are revealing because the former shows my tendency to think for the pupils in a way characteristic of stage 1. The latter suggests that I am trying to explore pupils thinking more, by asking them to

clarify and follow up what they mean. On this occasion it allowed Martha to articulate why not working and starvation were linked thus renegotiating a projected meaning. This indicates that I am positioning pupils as more knowledgeable and competent but finding it difficult to cast aside past practices.

My challenges to Mike (lines 20 and 23) are speech acts which cast doubt on his engagement and competence. His responses prove me to be wrong and his institutional label as a pupil with English as a second language may have influenced how I interpreted his participation as disengagement. My challenge was a threat to his competence, which, because he was able to answer the questions, became an opportunity for him to demonstrate it. Nevertheless, this potentially afforded a collective tacit regime of competence determined by how far students are following what I think is right or should be done. This suggests that further changes in my practice are needed.

6.2 Developing practices for data collection

Two data collection practices to help analysis were developed in lessons. The first used grids to enable data comparison of many entries. The second involved mapping the location of Domesday entries on a map of England.

One use of the grid tools was in a comparison task in which pupils had an opportunity to use their understanding of Domesday terminology to collate information about number of hides, number of ploughs, number of peasants, and their value in 1066 and twenty years on in1086 for seven Domesday manors. Figure 3 is an example of a completed grid.

Fig. 3. A filled-out grid enabling comparison.

Using a Table for Domesday Information

Name of Village or Manor	Number of Hides	Number of Ploughs	Number of Peasants (don't forget smallholders, cottagers, villagers, freemen, frenchman, riders, slaves all count as peasants)	Value in 1066	Value in 1086	
BlACON	2 hides	4 ploughs	18	145	40's	
NESS	1 ½	2	10	10	16's	
Puddington	2½	3	10	wast	20's	
Neston	1 hide	3 ploughs	7 peasants	135's	25's	
CALDY	1	3	5	5's	10 s	
Sutton	1	3	4	40's	10's	
Poulton	2	1	6	25's	25's	

Through this activity pupils drew from their knowledge of the terminology and became more confident and inquisitive about some of the data they were collecting.

> Paul: Were there priests?
>
> Liam: Priest wasn't a peasant
>
> Paul: No were there priests?
>
> Liam: No

5

Paul: You've got something that's worth nothing in 1086!

Liam: It used to be waste. It was waste. Have you got Poulton, Paul?

Paul: Yes

Liam: How many hides?

10   Paul: 2 hides

Liam: Number of ploughs?

Paul: 4

Liam: Oh 4. How many peasants?

Paul: 6

15   Liam: What was it worth in 1066?

Paul: My God there were no peasants in that place!? But it is worth 46 shillings??!

Liam: So in 1066 it was 25 shillings.

(25.1.10, p. 2)

Pupils moved around the room exchanging data from their entries with each other in order to fill out their grids. These two pupils happened to look at each other's entries and the process of filling in the grid allowed further questions about the data to emerge (lines 2, 6 and 16). This demonstrates that some pupils are beginning to engage in a formative dialogue in history. The pupils' speech acts show them to be asking questions, judging, expressing surprise and speculating on the basis of the evidence they are gathering in the on-going activity. Paul is making judgements about Liam's manors in his expressions of surprise in lines 6 and 16. Liam is also making a judgement about Paul's initial question when he clarifies that priests were not peasants (line 2). This is different to the occasions in stage 1 when pupils were also asking questions and speculating because these were happening in the moment of gathering and initially scrutinising the evidence. Most of the stage 1 examples follow only cursory glances at the evidence. A deeper and more penetrating history-related discourse is emerging where pupils are beginning to negotiate the meaning of not only the evidence that they are gathering but they are connecting this to each other's prior knowledge of concepts and having to adjust these concepts as a result.

The second data collection practice was mapping the location of manors whose values increased or decreased during the period 1066 to 1086. This was intended to help them observe patterns emerging in different regions. This involved pupils colouring in manors across the country in three different colours according to whether they retained their value, or gained or lost value. The mechanics of the information gathering proved to be challenging for the pupils for a number of reasons. Pupils were given the same map of manors under investigation but they were each given a different set of manors to colour in. Once they had coloured in their selection of manors, they then had to find pupils in the class who had different manors in order to complete the colouring in of their maps. Some pupils did not follow this. The fact that different pupils coloured in the manors in different colours meant that it was not always clear to other pupils whether their manors had gained or lost value.

Fig. 4. An example of a coloured-in map in greyscale.
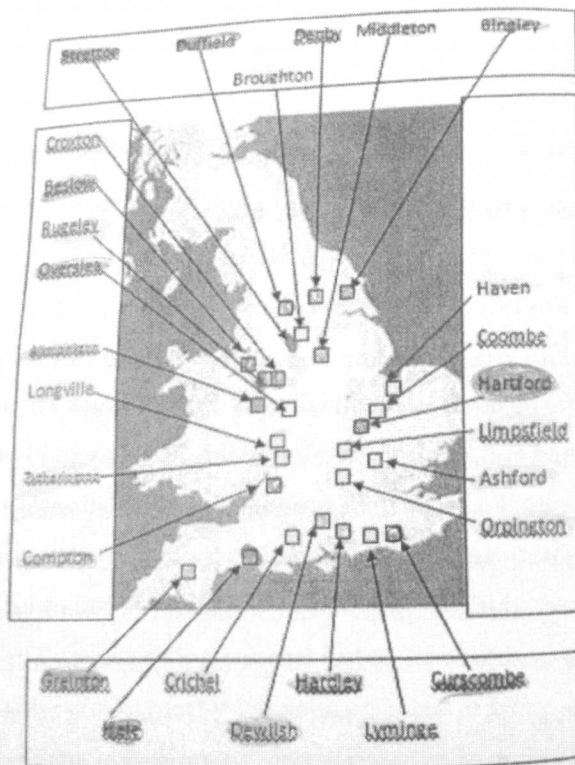
The following transcript seems to epitomize the difficulties some of the pupils were having, while also showing the efforts of others to explain it to them.

Mike: How did you get that there?

Deborah: Let me show you

Mike: Waste waste

5   Deborah: Look what's the first one. Look it's that (pointing to manor on bottom left hand side—Greinton)

Mike : But I don't really get it.

Deborah: But here [pointing to the Domesday excerpt] it says, and Kate showed me how to do this, value is and was 50s. So it hasn't
10   changed. So it's green for you.

Mike: For where? There?

Deborah: No! No! That one is red because

Mike: But which one is which?

Deborah: But look at that it means 'value formerly 20s now it is 10s'
15   So it's gone down.

Mike: And have those stayed the same?

Deborah: Those places Dewlish and Hardley are green

Mike : They are green.

(1.3.10, pp. 4–5)

Previous lessons had involved considerable discussion about money values and units of currency in medieval England, and I thought the task would be easy for the majority of pupils. Deborah understood it and the relationship between her and Mike was such that it was possible for a discussion about what to do to take place, which was potentially formative for Mike and affirming for Deborah in consolidating her sense of competence. The AfL rhetoric of 'closing the gap' has taken attention away from noting what pupils do well and need to do more of to focusing only on improvements that need to be made. Affirmation too is central to what is formative from a sociocultural perspective. Identity as a history learner emerges as pupils

evaluate their 'efficacy in bringing off what [they] hoped for or were asked to do' (Bruner 1996, p. 37). Bruner refers to this mix of agentive efficacy and self evaluation as self esteem which 'combines our sense of what we believe ourselves to be capable of and what we fear is beyond us.'

These last two excerpts were examples of pupils engaging in self- and peer-regulation. This was the spontaneous formative assessment I had observed in the drama lessons and which I wanted to capture by enabling a discourse about learning. In the second excerpt, Deborah has made the judgement that Mike needs help and offers him that help. It is clear to Deborah from Mike's utterances that despite that help he is still confused from his utterances in lines 6, 10 and 12. This regulation of learning involves no judgement about any end-product against criteria but is very much in the process of production of acting and part of the dynamic (Sadler, 1989). Moreover, this was not part of a planned activity separate from the learning process when pupils were instructed to consciously 'self-' or 'peer-assess' but emerged as the pupils made sense of and negotiated meaning in the activity.

Many of the formative moments which emerged emphasise aspects of deepening participation. For example many of them are associated with affirming or clarifying what to do and what something is, as in the interactions involved in trying to understand the terminology of the Domesday entries. In this process the meaning of terms and the status and role of peasants became available for making sense of more general concepts such as rebellion. In the grid and mapping activities, pupils sought to clarify either with each other or with the teacher what to do and how to do it. More specifically the use of the grids and maps made visible how value was attributed in relation to land, possessions and peasants and functioned as shared objects to support pupils' dialogue and their developing conceptual understanding. Other formative moments show pupils in some way becoming used to or making something second nature—which is an important feature of individual appropriation.

6.3 Analysing Domesday data for historical meaning

The third aspect of practice involved the questions, analysis and discussion that the material gathered in earlier activity raised. There are two selections of data that are presented to show how this became manifested within the Domesday lessons. The first example involved the discussion that was raised as a result of the collation of data about land ownership across several different manors. As pupils had engaged in the practice of using grids to collate information, they had very little difficulty in collating information about land ownership from a set of different manors, all in the local area. Domesday is useful because it contains information about who owned the land in 1066 on the eve of invasion, who owned it in 1086 overall as well as the local manor landlord who leased manors from the overall owner. Pupils had to collate information about 17 manors on a grid and then begin to engage in some questions about what this meant specifically about William's power. Discussions had already taken place about the 'oath of homage' or the loyalty oath that subjects had to make in return for grants of land from the King and the differences between nobles and commoners in medieval society.

Fig. 5. Mike's landownership grid.

Name of Manor	Name of Overall Landowner (Baron)	Name of Local Landowner (Knight)	Name of Landowner before 1066 Conquest
WHITLEY	Earl's	William Malbank	Leofnoth
PUDDINGTON	Earls Hugh	Hamo	Wulfric
ECCLESTON	Earl Hugh	Gilbert	Edwin
ROSTHERNE	Earl Hugh	Gilbert	Wulfgeat
NEWTON	Earl Hugh	Jocelyn	Gruffydd
SUTTON	Earl Hugh	Robert	Toki
STAPLEFORD	Earl Hugh	Ralph	Wulfsi
GRESFORD	Earl Hugh	Reginald	Thored
WAVERTON	Earl Hugh	Ilbert	Ernwin
OULTON	Earl Hugh	Nigel	Dunning
BUTLEY	Earl Hugh	Wulfric	Earl Hugh
BROUGHTON	Earl Hugh	Robert	Leofnoth
CLAYTON	Earl Hugh	William Malbank	Ravenkel
MARLSTON	Earl Hugh	William	Ami
EASTHAM	Earl Edwin	Earls	Edwin
MOLLINGTON	Earl Hugh	Robert	Earl Hugh

130

This grid was completed successfully by Mike, who had not understood the mapping activity but who seemed to understand this in the main. He did get the wrong 1066 landowner in Butley and has misread the 1066 landowner in Mollington. Nevertheless Mike has managed to do the grid almost totally accurately—sufficiently for me to be unconcerned about his understanding of the practice.

In the discussion that took place with the class about what happened to land ownership and what this tells us about William's power, collectively new understandings were emerging—specifically that English landowners had been replaced by Norman ones and that this enabled some exploration of the implications this had for William's power.

Teacher: Right they appear more uncommon like Wulfric and Leofnoth. What would you say those names are? What are those people where are they from?

Girl1: English

5   Teacher: Right they're originally English. Or Anglo-Saxons. What about the names of the local landowners in 1086? If they are more familiar what does that mean?

Hannah: [inaudible preamble] Norway?

Teacher: Not Norway but...

10   Hannah: Normandy.

Teacher: Normandy right, so what has William done in terms of land ownership? He's won the Battle of Hastings and taken control of England and what has he done with all the land?

[20 seconds]

15   Alicia: He's given it all to Earl Hugh.

Teacher: Yes but look at the local landowners and what does that mean he's done?

Jack: He's took over the land from the English.

Teacher: He has taken over ownership of all the land. All the old
20   English landowners he has either killed or evicted and is there one

English landowner who has remained after the conquest that you can spot?

Girl 1: Leofnoth?

Teacher: That wasn't the one I thought it was but maybe, Jade?

25   Jade: Wulfric?

Teacher: Would anyone like to guess why William decided not to kill or evict Wulfric? What do you think Wulfric might have done?

Girl 1: Could he have been related?

Teacher: It's possible but what else might he have done?

30   Steve: Maybe he helped William in some way?

(8.2.10, p. 5)

In this discussion, there is evidence of pupils' emerging understanding of the significance of land ownership changes after the Conquest. They see that the land has changed hands and they see that it is now owned by Normans. Some have also noticed that one English local landowner remained and after prompting were able to suggest reasons for this exception to the rule (lines 28 and 30). One of the pupils, Steve, had noticed before this discussion that the type of names between 1086 and 1066 differed with 1066 names sounding 'Viking-like' (8.2.10, p. 3). By the end of the discussion above (line 30), he was beginning to realise that the ability of William to allocate land to others as a reward was a very important source of William's power.

The idea of being related (line 28) however raises questions about this girl's understanding. There are two implications of the statement here. Firstly, it is possible that she has not understood the significance of the names in terms of the likely blood relations or familial relations between conquerors and conquered peoples. However, the difficulty also is that it is by no means unheard of for Medieval Kings to father illegitimate children who later grow up to have no inkling of their connections and who find themselves within positions of some provincial importance. In this particular instance there is no evidence at all of any blood relation between William and Wulfric and it is

therefore very unlikely to have been one. This should have been a cue for an intervention that explains this and perhaps may have cleared up questions that others in the class may have had about this.

Other discussions suggest that other pupils were making sense of the implications of the land redistribution in terms of William's power too. In relation to Alicia's comment in the above extract in line 15, because the manors the pupils were collating information about were all in the local area, the overall landowner of all the manors was the same person, Earl Hugh. Alicia had therefore thought that Earl Hugh had been given every piece of land throughout England. Again this should have signalled a need to explain to her that there were 18,000 manors throughout England and the overall landowners throughout the country numbered in the 100s. For her, there were also questions raised about why William had given Earl Hugh all this land. There was some discussion about this.

Teacher: Exactly In other words, Earl Hugh has got down on his hands and knees in front of King William and he has sworn to be loyal to King William in return what does Earl Hugh get? He gets all of this land. Immense wealth. If Earl Hugh does something that is against

5   William's wishes, what do you think William can now do to Earl Hugh?

Jade: Kill him?

Teacher: He could kill him, but he might want to do something a little softer than that but nevertheless very harmful to him?

...Connect it to the oath[of homage] and the land?

10   Steve: He could take away all of his land.

Teacher: Exactly. He could lose all of his land. That is what gives William his power. Why do you think he has chosen Earl Hugh? What might he have about him that made William choose him to win all of these lands?

15   Lucy: Because he is one of the important people.

Teacher: Right yes. Yes he is very important. Is there another possible reason?

Paul: He could be very very clever and...

Teacher: You mean William?

20   Paul: No Earl Hugh

Teacher: Right it could be because Earl Hugh is very clever. What do you mean by that exactly?

Paul: If he's clever like he would be able to be put in charge of responsibilities and … could conspire against him.

25   Teacher: Right yes good! Earl Hugh—if he was not a close friend of William and one day thought of murdering William and becoming King himself—this is probably going to put him off a little bit. What if he tries to kill William and it doesn't work?

Boy 1: He loses everything

(8.2.10, p. 4)

Some pupils are engaging with the meaning of the land redistribution in terms of William's power both in controlling the newly conquered English and also his own ambitious nobles. Their understandings through this dialogue are now available to others to appropriate if they make sense to them. This was complicated for some pupils, however the follow-up work showed that many understood this.

My speech acts still position pupils to guessing my line of thinking and this is shown in the cueing and prompting in lines 3–5; 7–9; 16–17 and 25–28. As discussed earlier, this can be harmful to pupils' emerging identities of competence as it implies that their thinking is less valuable than that of the teacher's. On the other hand, and consistent with the earlier excerpt it is also evident that some aspects of my speech acts are changing too. The interaction, for example, from lines 16 between me, Paul and an unidentified boy shows that I am asking Paul to clarify his thoughts (lines 19 and 21–22). Furthermore, from line 25, I am giving him feedback about his idea and in the process elaborate and validate it. Pupils came to use these ideas as a resource in the later presentation activity and in the follow-up written pieces of work, so some pupils had understood this. This was perhaps best demonstrated by Martha's comment during the preparation toward the presentation activity that

'Barons get the land in return for loyalty to the king but then they make the peasants work on it.' Samantha in the same group then commented that this was totally unfair while Jack made the connection that this was because all the English had become peasants except for a few who were rewarded for good service (15.3.10, p. 9). While these speech acts still show me to be dictating somewhat to the pupils, there are signs that I am beginning to investigate the pupils' knowledge more carefully too.

This next discussion about what else the Domesday evidence could tell us followed from contemplating how peasants may have felt about the land redistribution and the rebellions they may have undertaken as a result. In this transcript the pupils and teacher are discussing William's possible response.

Hannah: He could destroy the land

Teacher: Good and utterly too. Absolutely ruin the land so the peasants do starve to death. What else could he do?

Girl 1: He could kill all the cattle.

5   Teacher: Yes.

Boy 1: He could lock them in like a dungeon for years.

Teacher: Yes he could imprison them

Tom: Threaten to kill them?

Teacher: Yes. He could do all sorts of stuff

10   And these are all the kinds of things he did do. Any slight whiff of rebellion and he came down on those manors like a ton of bricks. My next question relates to Domesday. Is there anything in the Domesday book that could tell us whether a rebellion took place in that manor or not?

15   [wait time—30s]

Liam: Wouldn't it be the value if it fell down?

Teacher: Very good. If you concentrate your attention on the value of the land, you might get a clue. What's happened to the value of the land in this case?

20   Boy 2: It's gone up

          Teacher: Yes it's nearly doubled in value. Does that suggest that this
          land has been destroyed?

          Several pupils together: No

          Teacher: No. What do you think has happened here. Has there been
25   a rebellion?

          Several pupils together: No

          Teacher: No but let's say the value was only waste or very small by
          1086. What would that suggest to you?

          Boy 2: That there was a rebellion there.

30   Teacher: Quite. Good, very good.

          (1.3.10, pp. 3–4)

What followed from this was the mapping exercise referred to earlier, which
pupils were rather confused about. This extract suggests pupils were beginning
to understand the significance of Domesday as a source of evidence and were
beginning to see its potential in telling us about things that happened
throughout William's reign. Liam's answer showed not only his understanding
of Domesday evidence and how it could be used to show rebellions but he
also made this available for others to appropriate. Some others do so from
their responses to my questioning in lines 20, 23, 26 and 29. The questioning
itself from me in lines 19, 21–22, 24–25 and 28 also do not so much channel
the pupils to my way of thinking as much as scaffold for the pupils how to
connect the analysis of land values to events that may have taken place in those
locations. In summary therefore, this was formative because Liam's initial
response dynamically afforded his personal knowledge to be shared among the
collective which in turn allowed me to move the collective know-how on by
reifying through their participation the connection between land values and
rebellions.

However, it was also important to stress the limitations involved in the above suggestion. What followed from this lesson exploring land values was another discussion about other reasons that could have influenced land values. This was an opportunity for pupils to consider the reasons why property values today go up or down and connect it to events beyond human control.

Teacher: So what might be another reason why values go down?

Jack: The land might have got wrecked.

Teacher: How? Have you got a clear idea of what might have happened to wreck it?

5   Jack: I don't know the wind or something?

Teacher: Yes maybe if we had hurricane like winds—occasionally this would have caused wreckage. But what I like about your answer is the fact that you are thinking about natural occurrences. Does anyone know of other natural occurrences that we do get often that might
10   have had an impact?

Paul: Earthquakes?

Teacher: Do we get those much here?

Paul: Not really.

Teacher: We get the odd little tremor but it usually does not destroy
15   very much.

Deborah: What about rain?

Teacher: Rain? Causing what?

Bryony: Floods.

Teacher: Flooding, good. Where are places located that are vulnerable
20   to flooding?

Girl 1: the Lake District

Teacher: Yes but more generally?

Steve: Sheffield?

Teacher: Yes there are particular places that are liable to flooding but
25   what about general locations. If you are thinking about buying a house where would you not buy one if you are afraid of floods?

Maria: Places by the sea.

Teacher: Near the coast.

Girl 2: Rivers

30   Teacher: Yes indeed because rivers can burst their banks. So if you do Domesday research and you see a manor that has lost value it could be one of those two things. How could you find out which one it is?

Boy 1: Read the Domesday

Teacher: It's not going to tell you in the Domesday survey though. Say
35   you had a manor like Broxton; value in 1066 £2 and it in 1086 it is waste. How could you find out what happened there?

Tom: Go over there and visit?

Teacher: Yes you might be able to see some signs by visiting it but alternatively how else could you find out?

40   Boy 2: Look at a map

Teacher: And what would you see?

Girl 2: Rivers or the sea?

Teacher: Rivers or the sea. If it's not then you could eliminate that. Another reason why the manor values went down?

45   Tom: But there could have been a rebellion AND a flooding there though couldn't they?

Teacher: Too true. It could be both! And it would be quite difficult to figure out for sure which one it might be.

(8.3.10, pp. 1–2)

There were several other ideas offered about why values may have increased or decreased. Some of the written work from this lesson indicated this. However this extract is revealing as it focuses pupils on the problem of Domesday and land values as evidence of what happened. Not only were pupils engaging in speculating and hypothesizing about reasons most likely to have reduced land values in England, but they were also suggesting how they might find out. The suggestion that looking at a map is a sensible one but Tom's contribution in line 45 is important too and suggests some quite deep historical participation

and know-how made available to the group. Again my speech acts and feedback here is less concerned with getting them to my line of thinking and more about trying to open out and deepen participation by positioning the pupils as agents in the process. Feedback is given to Jack in lines 6–10 which hints at natural phenomena as a reason for change in land values and this dynamically affords other responses from pupils' individual tacit knowledge of natural occurrences that afflict England regularly and that may affect land values—the prompting questions in lines 17, 20 and 25–6 do not close down the discussion but try to elicit the pupils' thinking behind their responses or clarify for the group how their thinking is informed. Not only are pupils thinking about what may have happened and relating this to a balance of probability about the kinds of natural disasters that happen regularly in England, but they are also considering on a collective tacit level at least what Domesday evidence and in fact additional evidence can really establish.

These analyses of practice and pupil and teacher dialogue suggest pupils are deepening their participation in history-related practices. Not only are they developing a shared repertoire of tools for evidence analysis including historical concepts like power, feudal society, peasants, barons and loyalty but they are beginning to ask their own questions, speculate and use these speculations as possible avenues for future enquiry. While my interventions may still channel pupils too much to what I think, there are signs that the intervention is changing my practice as I make available for the class more oral feedback and try to investigate pupils' thinking through questioning. I still could recognise more moments when the pupils are feeding back to me particularly in relation to responses that reveal misunderstanding or lack of knowledge; my tendency is still to pass these responses over. Pupils are for the most part engaged in the excerpts provided here and this is a general and faithful reflection of their engagement through the whole unit. I argue that they are being positioned as competent in history more than in the previous classes and that this along with their engagement with real evidence gathering and interpretion is enabling the history discourse to emerge within activity. Pupils made considerable progress in making sense of Domesday as a source of evidence and relating it to aspects of William's reign and power. It was an

impressive accomplishment for them to have been able to read and make some meaning from it.

6.4 Performing Understanding

I wanted to see how far pupils could do the investigations modelled in the lessons in a new Domesday-related investigation. The pupils were placed in groups and each group's task was to produce a presentation about:

- What the entries given to them tell us about land ownership in those areas.
- What William did to those areas.
- How far pupils were able to investigate for themselves and seek additional sources that might clarify or raise more questions about it.

Pupils were left to organise themselves and make decisions about how to explore the materials and use their shared resources. However there were some problems with the exercise.

Time was a serious constraint on the activity. I intended to give each group a different set of Domesday entries to research and explore, but time simply made this an impossible task so I put together the same selection of entries for each group. The number of lessons planned had to be reduced from four to three (see Chapter 4). The questions and outlining of the task could have been clearer and greater guidance could have been made available for pupils. The focus questions to help the pupils were not well designed – and do not mention 'power' as a key focus for investigation.

- What do your entries tell you about who owned the land between 1066 and 1086?
- What do your entries tell you about the values of the land?
- What can you guess may have happened in your area?

This oversight meant that some groups did not focus on this or see it as relevant to their presentations.

Emerging relations within the setting

One important observation during the pupils' preparation for their presentations was the apparent change in the relationship between staff and the pupils. This allowed a more horizontal experience of expertise and this influenced pupils' interactions with adult participants in the class. Deborah's group included a teaching assistant (TA) to support Mike - a group member. There is evidence in the next excerpt that pupils felt able to negotiate meanings and affirm themselves as knowledgeable and competent.

> TA: You should then go on to Northallerton
>
> Deborah: But what about these?
>
> TA: I'm not sure you need to do that because it doesn't say who owned Claxton before the King. So move on to ...
>
> 5   Deborah: Yes it does! Gospatric and Argoedd
>
> TA: Oh yes well done. Gospatric and Argoedd held it.
>
> (15.3.10, p. 3)

> TA: Right let's look at this one—Yarm. Who held it?
>
> 10   Mike: Havarthing
>
> TA: Havarthur—what a name?! They don't half have some funny names.
>
> Mike: But that's the English one.
>
> TA: No it isn't.
>
> 15   Deborah: The Norman names are normal names
>
> TA: Is it?!

Mike: Gilbert is a Norman name.

(15.3.10, p. 7)

Deborah's utterance in line 2 is exploratory, whereas the TA's utterances in lines 3–4 and 14 are disputational. In both cases they move activity on and generate knowledge, particularly in the TA's case about the Norman or old English names. The teaching assistant is only available for this class every other lesson. She had therefore missed several lessons and had not known the differences between the names. However, her speech-act (line 14) reveals that she was rejecting Mike's contribution and considered the possibility that she was wrong (line 16) only when Deborah validated Mike (line 15). The TA's role is to support Mike who is on the special needs register as an ESL pupil. This label appears to influence her view of his competency in history. However, she is a familiar and friendly figure to the class and the pupils felt able to offer their knowledge for her to decide whether to accept their authority.

This is contrasted by Paul's group which included a student teacher who was helping them prepare their presentations. She was not involved in the previous lessons and did not understand that Domesday only gave comparative information about land values and land owners between 1066 and 1086. However, she was trying to encourage the pupils to compile a list of differences in numbers of peasants in manors between 1066 and 1086. Maria, Rebecca and Paul who understood the comparative nature of the data would not participate as they could see that it would not work, yet they did not know the student teacher and felt unable to tell her. Paul made some speech acts under his breath highlighting what he saw as problematic e.g. the focus on 'differences' (line 7) and later interjecting 'Change it!' (line 16) which suggested some remonstration. This was interesting because the student teacher may have interpreted the pupils' behaviour as them not understanding the task and being a little rude. However to be properly informed formatively about the next steps for these pupils requires knowledge of the interaction and the social dynamic including the prior history of engagement in the unit. The student teacher took an authority position and assumed her knowledge was

more valuable than the pupils disallowing mutual engagement and the negotiation of meaning

Reifying learning

The final presentations were very interesting nevertheless. They showed that the pupils were able to collate Domesday information and could participate in the specific discourse of Domesday history. Lucy's group, was

Fig. 6. One of Lucy's grids for her Domesday presentation.

In Yorkshire

Name of manor	Who holds it	Who held it	Landowner in 1066	Number of hides	Value before 1066	Value in 1086	Number of peasants
Pickering	King William	King William	Morcar	37	£88	20s 4d	20
Claxton	King William	King William	Gospatric and Arngeirr	3	10s	8s	2
Northallerton	King William	King William	Earl Edwin	44	£80	WASTE	66
Gilling	Count Alan	Count Alan	Earl Edwin	4	100s	WASTE	7
Wrelton	King William	King William	Gospatric	1 1/2	10s	6s 8d	7
Yarm	King William	King William	Havarthr	3	4s	4s	(1) plough
Swinton	King William	King William	Knutr and Gamoll	11	10s	WASTE	(1) plough
Falsgrave and Northfield farm	King William	King William	Tostig	15	£56	30s	5

typical of many of the groups doing the presentation. Her group had collated the information from the Domesday entries successfully and she had put together and then typed for her homework and for her group's presentation three comprehensive grids; one for each region Yorkshire, Wirral and the South Coast near Hastings. See Fig. 6 for the grid she put together for Yorkshire. She asked me whether, because Gospatric of Wrelton, had been evicted from his land after 1066, she should count him as a peasant for that manor in 1086 (15.03.10, p. 9). This shows that Lucy had appropriated the issue of English evictions after 1066 discussed earlier in the unit. It is impossible to tell from the seven households listed in Wrelton in 1086 that one of them may have been Gospatric's. Lucy's use of the grid tool is therefore

dynamically affording new questions, which in terms of the collective explicit knowledge of historians constitute the limit of what can be known. Lucy's group, who ended up delivering the presentation as a dialogue of questions and answers between her and Ian, her group partner, gave the following extract as an account of what they had used the grids to tell them.

> Lucy: What do the entries tell me about who owned the land in 1086 and in 1066? The people who owned the land in 1066 were English and these [tend to have] names that we have never heard of before. In 1086, King William swapped most of the English landowners so that
5 > his Normans could own the land.

> Ian: What do your entries tell you about the value of the land? It depends how big the manors were but most of the time the values go up. But sometimes the values go down and this may show where a
10 > rebellion took place.
> (29.03.10, p. 1)

This was typical of other groups' presentations too, focussing on what the grids tell us without explaining what this reveals about William's power. Knowing how to make judgements about the significance and meaning of evidence requires prior and cumulative work over a lengthy period of time. This class is only a Year 7 class and while Lucy has made impressive progress in her ability to read, apply tools to and make sense of a very difficult text, these appropriations require time and further practice before the evidence can be conceptualised to provide answers to these much bigger questions. Lucy's apparent conceptualisation of the evidence above suggests that she is working at the level of explaining the evidence itself, rather than interpreting it, hence whether Gospatric became a peasant, died or was killed by 1086 seems more meaningful than what this might be telling her of William's power.

If other groups had not investigated what their Domesday entries told them about William's power, this suggests that the activity itself had not been set up to enable this, rather than that pupils could not do it. The original questions

posed for the presentation activity did not ask for any insights on William's power so it is hardly surprising there were so few references to it. This was partly a reflection of the time constraints which meant that the questions were not considered with as much thought about what the pupils had achieved as they could have been. Power featured explicitly in earlier parts of the unit but the absence of explicit reference to it in this task created problems. It also suggests that I need to improve the discussion about learning goals and the connections to prior learning that were absences in my practice in stage 1. More helpful and focussed questions in the presentation may have been the following.

- What happened to English landowners in these areas between 1066 and 1086 and what does this tell us about William's power?
- What do the values of the manors suggest may have happened in these areas?
- Can you find evidence that any of your ideas for question 2 did happen?

Liam, Chloe and Steve's group produced a PowerPoint presentation of their findings including the research their members had conducted. The PowerPoint focussed on the reasons why manor values may have increased or decreased and contained the following claim, 'the only way for a village to increase its value was to have no rebellions, lightning, natural fires, storms, or floods' (22.3.10, p. 1). This finding reflects the earlier discussion about the reasons for land value fluctuations. This shows the ability of members in this group to generalise from the sources of evidence they have come across from Domesday. Some pupils in this group carried out their own research for in one of their slides they claimed that there were 100 rebellions and that William would make a village waste if there were more than ten people ever involved in a rebellion of any sort (29.3.10, p. 1). This shows them taking responsibility for their learning, a sign of increased competency, and acting as historians in connecting to new sources. It would have been useful to ask them where they

got this information and whether they considered this a reliable source, had there been time.

Paul, Maria, Rebecca and Floella's group also managed to produce a superb presentation despite earlier difficulties they had experienced. Not only had Maria and Rebecca worked well on producing the grids for their talk, but Paul used the evidence from the grids to conduct focussed research on what happened in Yorkshire where he discovered evidence of the Harrying of the North, where William famously burned out dozens of rebelling villages. He gave the following talk without notes:

> I found out the answer to the question… I was supposed to find out
> what happened in Yorkshire. All of the manors in Yorkshire went
> down [in value] because most of them rebelled against King William
> and tried to take back York. But the Normans burnt York to the
> ground before the peasants reached it. William then had all the tools
> and all the houses and all the crops and domesticated animals from
> York to a place called Durham burnt to the ground and if there were
> any villages in between those places they were burnt to the ground as
> well. In the winter that followed an estimated 100,000 people died.

(29.3.10, p. 1)

This research coincided with a question the group as a whole could not answer which was why William took personal ownership of all the land that had been burnt out? Another group also recorded a similar question to this one in their preparatory notes leading up to the presentation 'Why did William own all the land?' (Kate and Catherine). King William's personal ownership of the land in Yorkshire is evident from Lucy's grid above. A discussion with Paul, Kate and Catherine, along with the whole class should have taken place about two things. Firstly, how could we find out? What evidence would we need to find out? What would we look for? And secondly, in terms of Paul's successful investigation of Yorkshire, how did Paul find out? Where did he go and what did he use? A discussion such as this would have dynamically afforded these

individual pupils' know-how and made it available to the whole group. This would have focussed on moving deeper into practice by generating the tools for gathering evidence from other sources as well as how that evidence can be used.

Each presentation could, and should, have been succeeded by some peer-assessment and AfL strategies could have played a role here. They could have used the collective learning that had taken place to appropriate new understandings and perhaps together created a further reification that represented this collective learning. This would have provided an opportunity for extending collective explicit understanding and dynamically afforded deeper considerations of William's power. AfL peer- and self-assessment is not articulated in these terms and I remained concerned that AfL within the school was too target-based and focussed on attainment levels consequently attempting a session of peer-assessment might have shifted the emphasis from learning and on to attainment.

This is not to say that AfL has no role in developing this kind of formative assessment. On the contrary, there are two points that need to be made here. Firstly, that throughout the excerpts given and in many of the others which I have not included, I have attempted to highlight formative moments when either pupils were moved on by a discovery they had made themselves, or an observation made by others or when they could have been moved on had resources been made available to them at specific points in time. However, all of these formative moments were speech acts involving some form of judgement and therefore constituted a kind of peer- or self-assessment. However, this self- or peer-assessment was not linked to any abstract ladder of attainment descriptions nor would it have been useful to take out these speech acts from the settings in which they emerged and create a target from them which can be applied to future activity. Instead, the kind of peer- and self-assessment that is evident from many of the above interactions is one that follows the situated and emergent understandings. In this way AfL strategies can play a role.

Similarly, several of the excerpts show my developing capacity for speech-acts that position the pupils as knowledgeable and reveal that my tendency to impose my thinking is decreasing. While the discussions that ensue as part of the completion of a task do incorporate some related AfL techniques (like self and peer assessment and good questioning), it would seem that these often emerge spontaneously as a result of learners needing to have a question answered or a problem discussed. These moments emerge as a result of whatever the group is engaged in at the time and it is unclear how these may be relevant across contexts and settings in any generalised form. The presentations themselves could have been used as resources to inform a discussion about the tools that groups had used. Many groups found the grids useful in determining land values and land ownership across different manors and regions. However, it was sometimes unclear what additional tools the pupils had to consult the evidence as there had not been an opportunity to discuss them partly for reasons of timing.

Reflecting on the learning

By concentrating on developing a shared repertoire of resources, on authentic tasks that are designed to encourage deeper participation, the role of interaction in meaning-making can flourish. Of course there are still disruptions that inhibit the process, like the absences of key pupils during the presentation activity and flawed execution of some of the tasks that had been designed like the mapping task and partly the presentation activity. Nevertheless, pupils by the end of the unit were able to read and make sense of text from a thousand year old legal and administrative document. They had an understanding of society, the Middle Ages and King William. I had taught the Domesday survey of 1086 in previous years. However, I had normally spent no more than two lessons on it and most of those followed textbook tasks which made the pupils repeat information they had read in texts without any real necessity to understand it. Through the activities leading to the culminating performance, pupils developed a much deeper understanding of the topic, the evidence and the difficulties it presents, the tools to enable the pupils to make sense of it and the links that can be made between the evidence

and a notion of what took place from it. It is not possible to claim this of any of the topics that were dealt with in stage 1, and this is partly because of the time devoted to the Domesday unit, where many of the units in stage 1 were either single lessons or at most, three in a series.

I argue that there were forms of formative assessment in operation in stage 1, especially where it was obvious that the pupils had a sense of mutual engagement (mainly vignette 2). This embedded and spontaneous formative assessment was not geared to furthering the pupils' consultation of evidence but rather was focussed on developing the pupils' capacity to speculate from a cursory treatment of some evidence. In stage 2 an embedded form of formative assessment emerged on many occasions. It is the experience of meaning-making that will equip the pupils for similar activity in the future, even if the content focus may well be on different pieces of evidence and in different eras and locations. These align with authentic historical practices and by looking at the intra-personal plane it may be possible to claim that some pupils felt a sense of belonging within the community of history learners.

6.5 What is the impact of this on learners?

Rogoff's intrapersonal plane of analysis involves looking at the process of individual change throughout the unit under investigation. To an extent the formative moments have indicated some of this and the intrapersonal plane of analysis allows for further insights into this though this relies on what can be explicitly stated by pupils verbally or in writing just as typical AfL practices do and which underestimate the learning at the tacit individual and group level and the explicit group level to which individuals contribute. Data about individual learning was collected from some written work pupils had completed, and from a series of interviews conducted with ten pupils. The questions pupils asked at the beginning of the Domesday topic are worth considering here too (p. 118).

Toward the end of the unit pupils were using the terminology of Domesday almost as though it was second nature. Liam commented about this during the interviews when he said 'I found that like as we were reading them [Domesday entries] it was easier and easier to understand them every time you read them' (IT, p. 2).[4] Lucy said something similar when she was asked whether she had found the topic difficult. 'Yeah, some parts of it. Yes when we like read the extracts at first but then it got easier' (IT, p. 12).

Similarly, it is evident that some pupils could answer their initial questions by the end of the unit from their responses to the question at interview 'What is Domesday?

5   Lucy: It's like a book of all the money William can get. A book of

           taxes. (p. 11)

           Liam: William wanted the taxes so he could know how much land you

           had the more money you had to pay. (p. 1)

           Paul: The Domesday Book is a recording of the value of all the

10   manors of England. (p. 4)

           Mike: It tells us who Earl Hugh was who held a lot of places like

           Wallasey. He had farmers and freemen and ploughmen and he had

           hides like 1 ½ hides. (p. 7)

           Tom: There is more than 1 book. It was all written in Latin—and the

15   cities were crossed out in red. It said how many peasants there were in

           each city. (p.16)

           Rebecca: Like it's old and very valuable and...(p. 18)

           (IT)

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[4] Citations to interview data refer to source document entitled 'Interview Transcriptions'. Hereafter citations from this source will be written as an acronym 'IT' with a page reference.

It would be no surprise to see that individuals had different things to say in answer to this question and suggests that this was what the book meant to them or represented to them. The different responses also relate well to Rogoff's (1995) concept of appropriation. It is important for teachers to anticipate that what pupils notice in what is made available in settings is affected by their personal histories of learning and their experiences across and beyond school. This is why attention to developing collective learning is so important and something that had been absent in my prior teaching. I had not appreciated the value of the collective as a source for the individual and individual sense making as a source for the collective. Some concepts were developed in this way. One of these most principally was in the meaning and understanding of William's power and how he managed to extend it.

Two writing tasks looked at this concept. The first was a summary of what the collated information in the landowner grid can tell us about what William did and how this would have affected his power. The second task asked pupils to imagine how barons, knights and peasants would have reacted to the introduction of the Feudal system.

Lucy, who made very few oral contributions to the class discussions wrote the following summary using her collated landowner grid in answer to the question; how did William make himself more powerful?

> William made himself more powerful by getting all the landowners and making them peasants and giving them [land] to his Normans. He trusted one earl, Earl Hugh to own a lot of manors. William could tax the landowners to get money. Also he has kept one English landowner because of loyalty. He is rewarding loyalty.
> (Lucy 22.2.10)

This response was typical of most others and shows that she has appropriated aspects of the dialogue and discussion between Steve, Jade, Alicia and me on

pp. 131 - 132. Her response to the second task reveals understanding of the
ties and obligations incumbent upon owning land from the King.

> We are the barons. We think the Feudal system is brilliant because we
> get to give the land out and get the taxes to give to the King.
> [The knights think the system is] exciting because we fight for the
5   barons, abbots, earls, lords and bishops. Also the peasants do all the
> work for us.
> [The peasants think the system is] ok because we do get some land but
> it is only to work on. Also none of the higher people do any work and
> that is not good.
10   (Lucy 22.2.10)

The understanding of the redistribution of land that took place after the
Conquest and its consequences for the peasants allowed for the discussions
about rebellions that took place in the subsequent lessons (see pp. 1122 - 123).

These examples show that these pupils understood the relationship between
the Feudal system, William's power, the land redistribution to Norman nobles,
and the desire for some English peasantry to rebel.

One interview question asked pupils about who was 'good' at history. Mike
said in his interview 'Deborah is good at working and Hannah as well. And
you get to know them as they work' (IT, p.8). This is probably because
Deborah helped Mike not only during the preparation for the presentations
but during the mapping activity. Deborah at interview proposed Paul and
Martha as people who are good at history. A tacit form of self- and peer-
assessment has taken place and been derived from pupils' perceptions of
others' participation. Not all pupils were considered good, however.

Paul when asked why his group's presentation had been so good replied that it
was because of the 'effort some of us had put into it'. When pressed about his
use of the word 'some', he was reluctant to go much further than 'They could
have put in a bit more effort and that is all I have to say' (IT, p.8). He was

talking about Floella and Rebecca's rather lacklustre contribution to the group's presentation. Rebecca, though, explained that she did not get on with Floella very well and that just before that lesson when they were working toward the presentation the two had had an argument. Both Floella and Rebecca had been frequently absent throughout the term and they had not participated in much of the Domesday work as a result. Rebecca explained that the reason why her presentation was not very good was because she 'didn't really get on with the person [Floella]' and said that she was 'a bit narky and moody' (IT, p. 19). Her knowledge about the Domesday survey was patchy too, for although she knew some aspects of the book—'like it's old and very valuable'—and she knew that a peasant was 'like a slave' (IT, p. 18), she was unable to say what Domesday could tell us about William or about what happened to English peasants. I probed her about the reasons for her lack of engagement and the following replies seem to indicate a low self-esteem and an identity of incompetence.

Int: Do you think you can get better at it [history]?

Rebecca: Yeah

Int: What do you need to do?

Rebecca: Stop talking. Don't get distracted easily?

5   Int: Are you worried about getting things wrong?

Rebecca: A bit

Int: Are you worried about me telling you you've got something wrong?

Rebecca: There's a few teachers cos like I don't, I'm not very good.

10   Int: Is it different when a pupil reads your work than when a teacher reads it?

Rebecca: Yeah Cos if I read me own work I would feel a bit nervous because I might have done something wrong.

Int: And you would feel more nervous when a fellow pupil read your
15   work than if I read it

Rebecca: Because they wouldn't read my writing or something.

(IT, p. 19)

Rebecca appears very conscious of what she perceives as her limited capabilities and lack of knowledge, positioning herself generally as 'not very good'. In her experience any peer-assessment would be considered a threat if it discloses her incompetence to peers. Her contribution to the presentation was to produce a map of the manors in the information her group had been given. This could have been a useful exercise for her as it would have enabled her group to spot patterns between different regions where manor values had either risen or fallen. However, it became apparent that this had not been her reasoning for doing the map, instead it had been something she did to make it look like she was doing something useful. In this way, the presentation activity had confirmed her identity of incompetence and others' expectations that she could not contribute anything worthwhile. This signals to me that some action should have been taken before she was put in this position. Obviously her absences throughout the term will not have helped her to participate in the specialist discourse the group had developed by the end of the Unit. This in turn raises two questions, firstly what had been done to help her to catch up the time missed? Secondly, had those absences partly been a result of disaffection from school generally?

There were other responses that suggest that being able to collaborate was a problem in the presentation activity. Lucy was very critical of Ian. 'I don't really mean to be mean but Ian just did sit there. And when we set the homework, I asked him to do stuff like find out more about this but he didn't do it. I thought it [our presentation] was alright even though we just had the grids and what the …answer the questions' (IT, p. 13). Whilst these are judgements of others they still have an influence on the intrapersonal plane because they suggest certain identities are being extended to individuals as they participate, or not, in the activity. Actually, this is a rather harsh judgement on Ian who successfully collated a lot of information into a well-constructed grid. He also asked questions about the value of manors when they were not clear to him from the information in Domesday (15.03.10, p. 9). Ian did have some difficulty thinking about what the grids were telling him and it did not occur to

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him to investigate what it told him about William's power. However, this was not a fault only of Ian, for Lucy also did not think of doing this.

Another example of labelling happened with Mike, who claims that what holds him back is his concentration and that when he is 'naughty he cannot get into it [the work]' (IT, p. 7). Mike has been labelled a naughty pupil and has taken on that identity, which has in turn affected the attitudes shown to him in settings – see pp. 122 - 123 and pp .141 - 142. These show that activities and settings do not exist in isolation from the arena and that earlier encounters in different settings may well affect the identities and expectations of participants in new ones.

Of particular interest is that despite these issues, pupils still preferred group work to individual work. This is surprising considering that so many pupils were absent on the day of the presentation because it was so close to the end of the Easter term and their peers were relying on their contribution. Below are some of the interview responses about this:

> Lucy: I enjoyed the groups as well cos its like you might get more information from like another person. (p. 12)

> Samantha: You definitely know you are going to get a say in partners. I thought it was quite good because in some of them [groups] you were
5 with your friends and in others you weren't and it was like a good mixture of, so even if you weren't like full of knowledge you could all like add bits of knowledge to it. (p. 23)

> Tom: if it was like write a whole story about something then I would like to learn from someone else. [because I can get ideas from them].
10 (p. 17)

> Liam: I quite liked it like when we did our presentation…and where we had to work in groups and produce the presentation…because usually we are like on our own doing work and this was like different. (p. 1)

However other pupils were more reserved. Mike for example said 'but you can speak about other things instead of what you are concentrating on. And if there is 10 in a group and one person starts a story before you have finished'

(p. 8). Considerations about pupils' experiences of classroom organisation are very important for a teacher and have formative value. Indeed if the dynamic of the group does produce threats to participants' competence then pupils may feel marginalised and disempowered which undermines their self-esteem (Bruner, 1996). As a teacher it is important to legitimise pupils' participation in history and this will necessitate challenging my own perceptions of some pupils that might be labelled as weak, or naughty by institutional practices or by peers. Such labelling will extend identities of incompetence to pupils and limit their sense of 'belonging' in the community of schooled history learners.

I was interested in how pupils perceived the subject of history and whether they identified with the history they were learning at secondary school and how this compared to the history they were taught at primary school. The four who were asked the question whether they felt they were better historians now than they were answered in the affirmative. Some also gave a justification for this that they knew more than they did in primary school (Lucy, IT, pp. 11-12). Others seemed to say so because history was not often taught in primary school (Tom, IT, p. 18). In investigating what it was that they thought was different between primary school history and its counterpart in secondary school some of the pupils had some quite definite ideas.

> Liam: I feel better because we do it in more detail in different subjects we do more detail than we do in primary school. (p. 3)

> Paul: Well when we had to look through all the [Domesday] entries. It was quite different looking through all of them. (p. 8)

> Paul: They [activities] are more interesting in secondary school. (p. 9)

> Lucy In primary school we were just doing what times and dates there were and what type of people were in it but like in secondary school we are like doing all details and proper history ... Cos we were only like young and we don't really know much. And it would be very difficult for us to understand like all that we're learning now cos say like I went up to a Year 6 now and they'd be like 'what are you talking about?' So in primary school we would be doing stuff like the 2nd world war and we did the 2nd World War in primary school and the First World War. We just like learnt about who was Hitler, the English and whoever else

was in it and who like, what time and year everything is... We learn more about it and we just get into lots of detail but in primary school you just hit the edges. (p. 13)

The comments reveal that more detail, more knowledge and more interesting activities are the main perceived differences between primary and secondary history but in Lucy's case, her comments show her associations between history for novices at primary school and 'proper' history at secondary. She also traces a brief history of her learning in which she describes herself and her peers at primary school as 'very young' and how 'we don't really know very much'. She is associating herself with an identity of competence and has begun to recognise herself as having made progress in history.

The interview data is limited but it is impressive that some students seem able to articulate differences between primary and secondary history. This may in part reflect the changes I made in my practice which for these pupils would have provided a very different experience of history study.

6.6 Discussion

Comparisons of the practice apparent in stage 1 with that from stage 2 are limited by the data collection techniques in stage 1, particularly in terms of how pupils experienced lessons. Nevertheless, some comparison can be made of the inter-personal plane as well as aspects of planning and structuring the programme of study.

In terms of the relationship between teacher and pupil, there are both similarities and differences between stage 1 and 2. One important similarity was evident in examples of me maintaining some hold over the subject and being an arbiter of knowledge. This was often exemplified in stage 1 questioning activities where I tend to prompt and cue for responses I deem 'correct'. In stage 2, there were still examples of this too, particularly in the discussion about the meaning of rebellion. This represents the difficulty involved in breaking the inevitable legacies of previous practice. However, in stage 2, there are indications that a transition to a more exploratory style is

being made. This is evident in the classroom discussion over the interpretation of declining manor values not necessarily indicating that William destroyed the area (pp. 135 - 36).

However the issue is wider than merely questioning technique because valuing the pupils' voice and exploring their thinking represents a different orientation toward the pupils (positioning them as knowledgeable) and the subject from one that sees it as a collection of abstract knowledge to one that sees it as sets of social practices. Questioning can determine the extent of pupils' participation in these practices but there are other ways too.

The quality of participation becomes evident through the way pupils work together. There were occasions in stage 1 when pupils worked in pairs or groups (Vignette 2 shows this). This occasionally did build competence as shown in the several dynamic affordances that pupils appropriated from each other in doing those tasks. Stage 2 also enabled far more opportunities for dialogue that was a lot closer in nature to that which I observed in drama. Partly this was a result of the continuity between learning objectives reflected in the sequence of the stage 2 lessons, continuity that stage 1 lacked. Partly it arose from the changing relationship between me and the students where learning became a more shared responsibility encouraging pupils to experience themselves as agentive. The presentation activity also focused specifically on the pupils talking about and sharing their learning. There were no tasks in stage 1 that allowed such 'performance of understanding'. Presentation activities were not common in my previous schemes of work which suggests that the stage 2 tasks were by themselves evidence of change. However, forms of formative assessment in dialogue were not confined to the preparation for the presentations. Examples of dynamic affordances and pupils extended participation were evident on many occasions some of which have been presented and discussed. So while the dialogues on 15th March (pp. 141 - 142) in preparation for the presentations were close to those in drama, elements of formative dialogue were also evident in the small group discussions reported on 25th January (pp. 125 - 6) and 8th March (pp. 137 - 8)

These formative dialogues distinguished themselves from the group interactions reported in the vignettes from stage 1 in several ways. On two of those occasions (25th January and 15th March) pupils were filling in grids by collating, selecting and filtering evidence from Domesday text and this process dynamically afforded new questions which arose through the comparisons the grids enabled. Crucially, what makes this formative and what distinguishes it from stage 1 lessons is that it allowed a deeper and more authentic history discourse to emerge between the pupils. Furthermore, this discourse was focussed on, and fixed to evidence in the way that few of the tasks in stage 1 had been. Additionally, it emerged in the process of activity and deepened participation too aligning the pupils' participation with the practices of historians.

In some instances, however, plans to encourage formative dialogue through the use of tools did not always work in stage 2. This was in retrospect because what was intended as a 'tool' served as a barrier to participation. The way the mapping tool was enacted is an example of this. The intention was to enable pupils to see patterns of rising and falling land values across regions on the 1st March (pp. 120 - 1). However, the mapping tool was imposed on pupils rather than opportunities created to explore with them how a tool could be created that could help explore patterns of land value across regions. The pupils were not engaged in the process of reification. While pupils did support each other in working out what to do, it is also clear that some did not understand why they were doing this activity.

Successes and failures are only to be expected in efforts to change and challenge one's practice. It is the case and the evidence from the lessons appear to confirm this, that my theory changed more than my practice. Several field notes from the stage 2 lessons register concerns about the overall success of the lessons, yet a more considered appraisal of transcript evidence revealed that these judgements were premature. This implies that my initial evaluations as well as some of my speech-acts in the stage 2 transcripts were often still informed by assumptions prevalent in my prior practice. The value-practice gap between the ideas supported in Chapter 3 and stage 1 of the main study is

wider than that with stage 2 however. And the process of continuing to narrow this gap is on-going.

Implications for defining formative assessment

I argue that formative assessment happens in the moment and within on-going activity. I also argue that implementing this kind of formative assessment meaningfully requires a radical change in the pedagogical underpinning of classroom activity informed by sociocultural theory. This necessitates acknowledgement of learners' different backgrounds, perspectives and histories of learning which can be used as resources for enriching the collective and individual knowledge of group members both tacitly and explicitly. With the use and development of tools and a sense of mutual endeavour, activity becomes a setting in which the collective coordinates and negotiates new meanings from their diverse understanding. This tends to happen as a series of moments in which utterances or interactions of some sort change or affirm the way learners think or conceive of the problem which might in turn dynamically afford new ideas.

To an extent this agrees with Black and Wiliam's (2009, p. 10) recent identification of 'moments of contingency' that need to be used by teachers and learners in order to implement formative assessment. They refer to their use as involving making decisions on the basis of evidence that are likely to be 'better or better founded' than if those decisions had been made in the absence of the evidence (2009, p. 9). This implies that formative assessment when viewed as a series of opportunities for learning within these moments of contingency can either be squandered or capitalised upon and that there is more chance that they might be squandered if participants do not make use of evidence to inform their contributions. There were missed opportunities for learning within many of the interactions reported in stage 1 and stage 2. However, I am not convinced it is feasible for teachers and learners to make use of every possible opportunity for moving learning on. From a sociocultural view, knowledge interchange will depend on the participation and engagement of actors whose individual sense-making can be used to enhance

collective knowledge. This means that the decision about which moments of contingency are used and which are not will be guided by the participation of all those involved. The main issue is not so much the investigation of evidence upon which decisions can be made in activity more firmly (though this of course plays a role) but it is the changing pedagogy and practice that has been described here that promotes participation, agency and the competence to make those decisions.

I argue that this changed pedagogy is vital because it allows formative assessment to emerge more meaningfully and spontaneously while embedded within participants' activity. Furthermore, I had a far better understanding of the pupils' learning, what they had understood easily, what they had had difficulties with and this enabled me to make important judgements about their progress and about my teaching. If this is what Black and Wiliam mean by using evidence to make decisions about moving learning on, then it is an important aspect of formative assessment. However, it is by no means the only one and recognition is needed of the wider pedagogical and epistemological implications of enacting effective formative assessment.

Chapter 7: Summary

7.1 Main Findings

Question 1: In what ways does my current practice position learners in the ways intended by assessment for learning research and rhetoric i.e. the spirit of AfL?

Institutional practices, following policy recommendations required targets for pupils to be related to, and described, in the same way as summative representations of progress. This undermined the use of AfL strategies aimed at enabling pupils a more direct role in determining their learning trajectories. Pupils could not connect their experience of participation in learning tasks to the abstract goals reified in curriculum levels of attainment. Observations of practice revealed emergent and purposeful versions of formative assessment within drama practice though this had largely gone unrecognised by staff. Consequently, teachers whose practice enabled pupils to engage in the specialist discourse of their subject such as in Sophie's class were unaware of the difficulties pupils experienced in making this translation. Other teachers understood formative assessment only in relation to its role in improving summative assessment achievement. That is, they understood it focussed on outcomes and not on the learning processes embedded in ongoing activity (Lave, 1988).

Several studies report similar findings. Harrison points out that the rather bureaucratic box-ticking version of AfL has tended to dominate in schools (Harrison, 2009; Marshall et al, 2007, pp. 61–62). Similarly, MacBeath et al. (2007) identify many teachers' practices as corresponding to a 'performance orientation', which they define as a 'concern to help pupils comply with

performance goals prescribed by the curriculum' (2007, p. 67), although they acknowledge that teachers' values seem to suggest distaste for this approach (2007, p. 70). This conformed to the 'letter' of AfL and not the 'spirit' and consequently for many teachers and pupils, it had little impact (Marshall et al. , 2007).

I was critical of the model of mind and of learners and learning underpinning the AfL practices in the school but stage 1 analysis revealed I shared this perspective in some important respects. These included promoting a hierarchical view of the teacher-pupil relationship; a lack of continuity between lessons encouraging an emphasis on the transmission of abstract episodic knowledge items as well as a superficial engagement with an evidence-based history discourse; and a lack of opportunity to negotiate the meaning of reifications. Furthermore, the focus on the individual pupils and their knowledge and explicit representations of achievements only allowed certain formative opportunities to emerge. This focused attention away from the acts of production and on the essential relationships that pupils need to forge to access know-how and knowledge from each other, which Edwards refers to as relational agency (Edwards, 2005). What went unrecognised were the moments of contingency (Black and Wiliam, 2009) when pupils made connections to collective know-how and to their own tacit understandings to move deeper into practice. This in turn revealed why pupils struggled to move from this tacit position where different forms of knowledge were drawn on in ongoing activity to disembed what they had learned and connect to generalised statements of attainment such as those in the booklets (Appendix 3).

Question 2: Does my changing practice enable a formative dialogue and what further changes might be indicated?

Analysis of practice to understand how to enact settings that changed the teacher-pupil relationship to create a learning discourse revealed that fundamental changes in the goals for learning and what was valued as

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knowledge were needed. To achieve this learning resources and tasks had also to change to allow pupils to engage in the social practices associated with doing history (Anderson and Hounsell, 2007). The Domesday unit was designed in order to enable a more sustained engagement in a rich but challenging source of evidence than had been achieved in stage 1. Through dialogic negotiations of meaning, initial conceptual tools were developed allowing the pupils to understand the entries in the survey and widen collective understanding of medieval society (e.g. Peasant, Baron, Knight, rebellion). Other tools were developed through data collection practices like the grids and the maps which were designed to enhance comparisons between entries and deepen the historical discourse. The research captured several examples of a formative dialogue in which pupils interacted with each other to deepen their participation through dynamic affordances. Sometimes it was difficult for me to avoid some of the tendencies exhibited in stage 1 particularly with the imposition of meanings but at the same time there were examples of students exercising their agency and competence which in some cases was challenging for others such as the teacher assistant.

Question 3: In the changed practice what is observed to be formative for pupils and how does it relate to assessment for learning?

The analysis of the two stages of the investigation revealed that changes in my practice toward the conditions necessary for formative dialogues were beginning to take place. To reduce these to a list of practices misses the point as it was in the interaction of changes made in my emerging theoretical outlook and with how the pupils experienced them where the key to more profound change had taken place. One important way my practice changed, in line with AfL literature, was in how pupils were involved and questioning tactics were fundamental in this. However what represented a good question to evoke productive dialogue depended on what was now understood to be valued knowledge. This challenge to knowledge is not discussed in the AfL literature. The focus on collective communication as the source of individual thinking is a

central tenet of a sociocultural approach (Sfard, 2008) and this entailed making this collective thinking available by offering reifications that projected aspects of it. Making these judgements was central to my formative assessment practice as was recognising when individuals had made a significant movement that could inform the collective. Identifying these moments was affirmative, and, therefore, formative for the pupil whilst also offering formative opportunities for others. This move however informed my practice as it meant that attention had to be paid to the interactions among pupil groupings, and what was made available to learn as a consequence, in judging what guidance would be most productive. This in turn brought the pupil and what they bring to settings to the fore and how their participation is mediated by the identities they take up and are extended to them.

Question 4: What is the impact of this on learners?

The data collection allowed me to see impact on learners in only certain ways. For example there was more evidence in stage 2 of deeper levels of engagement through the links that pupils were making within the emerging discourse. This prompted a greater curiosity from pupils than was evident in stage 1 and stimulated questioning from pupils much more. Liam and Paul's surprise that a manor had become waste by 1086 suggests a perturbation which later had developed Paul's (and others') understanding of William's brutal treatment of some manors as a retribution for rebellion. It also enabled some pupils to step outside of extended identities to reveal their achievements and potential such as the ESL pupil, Mike.

The analysis of the intrapersonal plane, limited though this was, suggested that pupils did identify themselves with having made progress in history and the practices of history. Pupils were able to articulate their interpretations of the Domesday Survey and the increasing complexity they perceived in the subject from primary to secondary level. Pupils were less good at representing their own progression beyond ascribing problems within the social groupings in the run-up to the presentations. While this highlights the importance of seeing

individual participation as a social phenomenon within settings, it also underlines the difficulties in making progression more explicit for pupils. In Drama pupils had succeeded in identifying conventions and tools that could be used to enhance participation in activity. In the Domesday unit, some tools were made explicit, like the mapping and the grid tools but these were not always negotiated with pupils adequately. Other tools (like conceptual understandings), while they were negotiated, were not always made explicit. This limited the capacity for pupils to reify their own participation and progression and points to a priority for my future planning.

7.2 Contribution to Knowledge

Formative assessment redefined

I argue that sociocultural theory provides useful tools for understanding and analysing what is formative from both pupils' and teachers' perspectives and how to enact it. It enables a re-evaluation of the symbol-processing and constructivist assumptions behind many who work in schools and in AfL research and redefines teachers' and pupils' roles, concepts of domain knowledge and notions of progress. This emphasises the development of a shared subject-related discourse or repertoire enabling pupils to participate in historical activity (Wenger, 1998). This entails acknowledging the power of knowing in participation through recognition of the generative dance between Cook and Brown's (1999) four categories of knowledge. It also required recognition of the power of utterances to change the relational dynamic between participants and to position pupils as agentive (Austin, 1975). James (2006, p. 57) calls for more research into sociocultural assessment frameworks when she says that it is currently 'weakly conceptualised'. This research has developed a sociocultural conceptualisation of formative assessment further. This has involved adopting Sadler's (1989, p.121) view of formative assessment as taking place during activity as an important substitute to the institutional practices exemplified in the AfL booklets, where formative assessment followed performance in a summative test. There are important pedagogical

requirements to achieve this embedded formative assessment. Pupils must be engaged and teachers must recognise their agency. This is not new and many others have highlighted this need (Black et. al. 2003; Black and Wiliam 2006a; Pryor and Crossouard 2008). However it is just as important to recognise the interaction of the collective within which individual agency can be exercised or constrained. Ensuring the central processes of negotiating meaning through engagement in the process of reification allow for 'guided participation' to emerge in on-going activity (Rogoff, 1995). Whilst these ideas are not new within sociocultural research, they have not been overtly related to formative assessment. The participative view of knowledge I argue provides valuable and new insights into the nature of on-going activity and what is formative in that. It changes how learning goals are described in terms of affordances. Cook and Brown's (1999) four categories of knowledge used within it provide a tool for recognising its dimensions and critiquing the narrowness of many current assessment techniques, which focus mainly on individual explicit knowledge only.

Pupils engaged spontaneously in assessment of some form during many of the interactions recorded as part of this research—whether it be querying, convincing, affirming, rejecting, accepting, tolerating or ignoring. The challenge of generating more effective formative assessment then became not only the adoption of the 'spirit' over the 'letter' of AfL but also the gearing of pupils' spontaneous capacity for judgement and self-evaluation to be aligned to subject practices. In this way, Cook and Brown's (1999) category of collective tacit knowledge is of particular importance because its appropriation by participants will determine pupils' capacity for judging that alignment. It was clear from the presentations and the preparation for it that not all pupils did have this, but stage 2 can only be regarded as the beginning of changing practice.

Methodological contribution

Teachers most of the time, will have to struggle against institutional manifestations of AfL policy that rely on tick-boxes and procedure (Harrison,

2009). Most of the time, and unlike me[5], teachers will not have access to academic researcher expertise such as a 'research team' of the kind available to the teachers in Torrance and Pryor's research (2001) or for KMOFAP (Black et. al., 2003). The levels of support given to teachers in those projects facilitate the process of change—yet I show in this research that it is possible to do it alone, even within an institutional arena that is indifferent, albeit with the help of an academic supervisor. This research therefore does begin to give an impression of the immense challenges that teachers face in making a similar transition, unaided. The thesis itself also represents the beginning of the transition and an early attempt to enact such change.

Additionally, I argue that the sociocultural approach to action research used here orientates the investigation differently from more conventional action research. This has been achieved in three ways. Firstly, in terms of the need to see activity as situated within a cultural theatre and that individual members reproduce and change it as they interact with each other in on-going activity. This necessitates looking at the process of change as a phenomenon that occurs between individuals within interaction first rather than purely within individuals. Rogoff's (1995) three planes for analysing sociocultural activity necessitate an investigation not only of the interactive plane (or 'interpersonal plane') but also the community and individual plane. The data collection for the individual plane was limited but it represented a beginning.

Contribution to history education

The notion that the subject can be conceived as a set of social practices is not new and how these relate directly to ways of thinking in the subject and to dialogic feedback in assessment has also been researched (Anderson and Day, 2005; Anderson and Hounsell, 2007). However these articles are mainly focussed on the practice of history at higher education rather than secondary

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[5] I refer here to the invaluable and inspirational conversations and advice I received from my supervisor, Patricia Murphy. But this was available to me only by undertaking the EdD, most teachers will not want to do this, and academic researcher contact will not be available to them.

school. Exemplifying practice that represents this epistemological perspective at secondary school level is therefore a significant contribution. The Report and Recommendations to the Secretary of State about history at secondary school published by the Historical Association in 2005 highlight several issues surrounding assessment in history, for example that GCSE, AS and A-Level 'bears very little direct relation to actual historical practice' and that AS and A-Level were 'highly unsatisfactory' (HA, 2005, p. 47). However, while it criticises these high stakes examinations, there is no mention of formative assessment and how it could be deployed in the subject. Freeman and Philpott (2009, pp. 4–13) make a recommendation about how the 'Assessing Pupil Progress' initiative can be used within school history and while it does not recommend regular testing, it also does not seem compatible with a sociocultural view.

So the main contribution to history education in this thesis is in focussing on the development and analysis of disciplinary practices within a classroom setting. As Parker (2002, p. 384) says 'disciplinary processes are both the object of study and the means for studying them'. This thesis demonstrates how this can be begun and the uses of dialogue within it.

7.3 Future Issues

Research limitations

The lack of symmetry of data collection between stages 1 and 2 was problematic. This limited the comparison to what I was doing in class and my practice and could not be widened to include students' experience. The reason for this was my developing knowledge as a researcher as well as the growing sociocultural preoccupations that were informing the research which led to the wider data collected in stage 2.

The collection of data at the intrapersonal plane was limited both in numbers and in the questions asked so there was limited evidence of explicit individual learning.

Attempting a change on this scale and then critically researching it in the full knowledge that this was against what had been recommended as best practice by the school was at times very personally challenging. Moments of self-doubt and loss of resolve littered the research process. This led to great caution in terms of planning the intervention lessons and perhaps in terms of the analysis of the data too. Having been through this process and continuing to extend the changes in practice would lead me to being much braver and bolder about the research.

One constraint was the time lag between data collection and transcription and analysis to inform a change or modification in my planning. It did not allow changes to be enacted soon after the need for them had been identified. The time issue intervened as well to limit the effectiveness of the interviews. However change is ongoing and my practice continues to evolve.

Recommendations and future research

I would like to consolidate what I have learned by planning and constructing new units of work for different year groups. This would enable me to refine the theoretical underpinnings still further and address some of the weaknesses already pointed out in the research design like for example more time for interviewing or setting up other situations where pupils talking about their learning can be legitimised.

I would in future research work with departmental colleagues and perhaps examine video recordings to gain insights more quickly to inform practice. In bringing these ideas to year groups involved in doing public exams, a valuable future research project to inform practitioners would be to provide more examples of the emergent and more embedded form of formative

assessment and to research practices which enable pupils to see affordances across tasks within historical activity and how these connect to generalised descriptions of progression. This could be used in redefining the relationship between a system of summative testing and target setting and formative assessment practice. This would be particularly relevant given the recent introduction of Assessing Pupil Progress initiative, requiring schools to report national curriculum levels in every subject at least every term.

Embarking on this research project was very hard and a huge challenge. Many AfL writers who allude to conceptual shifts and changes of practice that teachers underwent to become successful practitioners of the 'spirit' of AfL do not give an adequate account of the difficulties involved (Torrance and Pryor, 2001; Black et. al, 2003; Black and Wiliam 2006a; DFES, 2007; Harrison, 2009), although some state that the difficulty is derived from inadequate training that does not engage in teacher's beliefs and values (Marshal, et al., 2007). While this may be understandable given their concern to ensure uptake, it is also problematic because it runs the risk of trivialising the process. Teachers cannot be expected to change their practice if professional development with that intention is delivered in 'drive-by' INSET sessions where the hard efforts of others are reduced to a set of shallow practices. Only now, in a recent newspaper interview, is Dylan Wiliam admitting that 'we were naïve about how hard it is to change things in classrooms' (Wilby, 2011, p.2). He adds that the government at the time chose to regard AfL as meaning 'simply that teachers should keep more records and track children's progress more carefully' which he described as 'nothing like what we intended'. Similarly, when asked whether what happened after the AfL initiative was taken up by the government was worse than before, he says 'yes, yes' (Wilby, 2011, p. 2).

This raises an important question if teachers can ensure they fulfil the requirements of external accountability, what is the value in making a potentially hazardous and challenging shift in their practice? I would respond to this in the light of Leitch et al.'s appeal that pupils be given a voice by virtue of their fundamental human rights and their voice must be 'listened to' and

'given due weight' (TLRP, 2008, p. 2). It would not be enough to impose assessment practices on to the pupils and then allow them a token 'say' or no say at all, as befits an alignment with the 'letter' of AfL. Similarly, I reiterate Lather's (1986) point about catalytic validity and its relevance in research like this that aims to empower pupils and extend their competence. Perhaps the question is better asked the other way round; what would the educational value be of denying pupils' competence and participation and imposing assessment judgements on to them that they have very little 'say' in? It is worth pointing out Bruner's observations (1996) that schools are often hard on young people and can disaffect large sections of the population. Harlen (2006a) goes further by investigating how damaging assessment systems can be to motivation and self-esteem. In the light of this I claim that research like this is worthwhile because it attempts to enable and equip the pupils to participate in the world more meaningfully.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

An example of a Year 8 history assessment created after attending the January 2005 in-service training.

History Assessment for Year 8

GUNPOWDER PLOT SOURCEWORK

Source A:

The plotters were a group of unhappy Catholics. They thought that, if they could get rid of the king, his two sons, most of the House of Lords and many of the House of Commons, it would be possible for them to take power and allow Catholics to worship again. Their long-term aim was probably to declare England a Catholic country.

Ronald Hutton – Channel 4 programme researcher

Source B:

We cannot hope to have good government while large numbers of people (Catholics) go around obeying foreign rulers (the Pope)

Robert Cecil – James I's Chief Minister in 1602

Source C:

Gun-Powder Treason.

Engraving of 1605 showing God warning the Protestant English of the Catholic gunpowder plot.

Source D:

The plot would have failed anyway, because by November, Fawkes' gunpowder would have 'decayed' from having been left too long. It would not have exploded.

Bruce Robinson – Journalist and Historian 1999

Source E:

The plotters' plan did not make sense. If they were going to kill the King, they needed the support of important Catholics like the Earl of Northumberland (Thomas Percy's Landlord). Yet no attempt to warn Northumberland of the explosion had been made so he would have died in it. Also, once the King was killed, a new Catholic government would need Spanish soldiers and money from the Pope. But the plotters asked for no help from either Spain or the Pope. The plot would never have succeeded even if it had not been discovered.

Robert Hood - a Historian writing in 2002

Source F:

Gunpowder was not something that could be easily obtained. The government kept its stock under tight lock and key in the Tower of London. The only man with the authority to get powder from there was Robert Cecil.

www.spartacus.net (1998)

Source G:

The 36 barrels of gunpowder were placed in a cellar next to Parliament. This cellar was owned by John Whynniard, a royal official and close friend to Sir Robert Cecil.

G Huggins - www.schoolhistory.co.uk (1996)

1) Study **Source A**. What were the aims of the plotters according to this source?

2) What does **source B** suggest about Robert Cecil's attitude to Catholics?

3) According to **sources F and G**, who would the Catholic plotters have needed on their side to get gunpowder?

4) The Catholic plotters did get 36 barrels of gunpowder. What might this suggest about Robert Cecil's role in the plot? Explain fully.

5) How are **sources D and E** different about why the plot was unlikely to succeed?

6) Do **sources D and E** provide the main reasons for the failure of the plot? Or are there other reasons for its failure?

7) Why do you think King James I wanted to show the picture in **source C** to Protestant people in England after the plot? What did he want them to think?

Sample answers given at National curriculum levels 3 to 7 to the above questions which would be provided for pupils to self-assess their answers and create a target for next time from.

Sample Answers for Gunpowder Assessment

Level 3:

1) The plotters wanted to kill the king.

2) He hates Catholics.

3) Robert Cecil.

Remaining answers show little detail or supporting evidence.

Level 4:

1) The plotters wanted to kill the king and take over for themselves.

2) He does not like Catholics because they do not obey the King.

3) Robert Cecil.

4) Robert Cecil helped the plotters.

5) D says that the gunpowder would not have blown up and E says that the plotters would not get the support of important Catholics.

6) Yes, they do provide the main reasons for the failure of the plot.

7) It shows God warning the Protestants about the plot.

Level 5:

1) The plotters wanted to kill the King and take over. They wanted England to be Catholic again.

2) He does not like Catholics because they do not obey the King, they obey the Pope.

3) Robert Cecil.

4) This suggests Cecil helped them to find the cellar they placed the gunpowder in, which indicates he is helping the Catholics with their plot. But this may be because he could be setting the Catholics up to be caught.

5) Source D says the gunpowder would not have exploded. Source E says they needed important Catholics on their side who were not warned of the explosion and would have died in it. Also without Spanish soldiers, a new Catholic government would not have succeeded.

6) No, I don't think they do because the main reason the plot failed was that Guy Fawkes was found in the cellar before he set off the gunpowder.

7) James wanted to show source C to ordinary English people because it suggests that God is on their side not the Catholics.

Level 6

1, 2, 3 and 5 as level 5

4) This suggests Cecil had something to do with the planning and preparation of the plot but not because he liked them but because he may have wanted to frame them so that they look bad. At least Cecil may have given a bit of help to the plotters so that he could find out who exactly they were.

6) The sources give reasons why the plot might not have succeeded but do not say why it did not succeed. I think the real

reason for the failure of the plot was that after he received the Monteagle letter, Cecil and James remained calm and did not take any measures for several days. The reason they waited until the last minute to search the cellar was to make sure that there was a plotter there to be caught.

7) James I wanted to show this picture to people because it would suggest to them that God is on the Protestant side and not the Catholic side. But also it reveals that God is on James I's side, which is exactly what he wanted people to think at this time after a hundred years of struggle between the Catholic and Protestants in England.

Level 7:

As with level 6 but with even more subject knowledge included within the answers, especially to 3, 5 and 6.

Appendix 2:

Copies of the pages within the drama AfL booklet produced in 2005. The opening page which focuses on drama conventions and skills to be visited in Year 7.

What is this book for?

This book will be used throughout the whole of Key Stage three. You will use this book for:

- Self assessment
- Target Setting
- Peer Assessment
- Work in the lesson
- Creative Ideas
- And anything else to do with the drama you are exploring.

What will I be assessed on?

You will be assessed on the use of different Drama skills and conventions throughout the Year as well as how you work in groups, how you concentrate and commit yourself to Drama.

In year seven you will study the following Skills and conventions:

- Improvisation
- Taking on a role
- Status
- Still image
- Mime
- Dramatic tension
- Plot
- Character
- Role-on-the-wall
- Content/form
- Hot seating
- Writing-in-role
- Forum Theatre
- Role play
- Narrator
- Writing-in-role
- Flash back
- Voices off
- Thoughts in the head
- Naturalistic and non naturalistic

The drama conventions and skills to be visited in Years 8 and 9.

In year eight you will study and be assessed on the following Skills and conventions as well as those in year seven:

- Improvisation
- Thoughts in the Head
- Monologue
- Flash Back
- Re-Enactment
- Defining space
- News reports
- Character
- Direct address
- Brainstorming
- Text
- Still image
- Writing-in-role
- Character Building
- Audience
- The use of ICT
- Content/form
- Plot
- Scene
- Structure
- Dramatic Aims
- Issue
- Space
- Tension
- Character development
- Naturalistic and non naturalistic forms and conventions

In year Nine you will study and be assessed on the following Skills and conventions as well as those in year seven and eight:

- Structure
- Character
- Performance
- Context
- Dialogue
- Re-enactment
- Dramatic Pause
- Form
- Convention
- Mask
- SFX
- Music
- Dramatic purpose
- Theatrical elements
- Research
- Rehearsal
- Poetry
- Creative writing
- Naturalism and non naturalism

An example of a self-assessment sheet which was part of the drama AfL notebook. Pupils in observed lessons were asked to consider these questions of their own work but not write anything down.

Self Assessment

What character did you play in your performance?

What Drama skills did you use to help you develop your character?

Do you think you were successful in your performance and why?

What could you improve on, give two reasons and why?

Why do you think it is important to work as team in drama?

What have you enjoyed most about this topic and why? Give at least two examples?

What do you think you have improved on the most in this unit?

An example of a peer-assessment sheet used to enhance discussion about another group's performance. These were not used to write anything down but were meant to encourage a discussion about the attributes and weaknesses of each role-plays from the audience's point of view.

Peer Assessment

Answer the following questions. They are based on the performance of one of the groups in the class.

1. Who was in the group?

2. Describe part of the play that you enjoyed most and say why?

3. Do you think the group were convincing as their characters?

4. What do you think that they were most convincing at?

5. What could they improve on?

An example of drama assessment levels 3 and 4 (National Curriculum
equivalent Levels 3 and 4) and the criteria established for each level. Sub-levels
a, b, and c are defined in the statements at the bottom. Drama is not a
National Curriculum subject and so these level descriptions have not been
given to the school in any national policy documentation. Instead, the levels
have been agreed after staff in the department consulted local authority advice.
Staff also worked closely with the National Curriculum levels provided for
English to ensure that they described equivalent levels of difficulty or
competence.

St Mary's Catholic College — Drama Department

Assessment Level 3 (a,b,c)

Making, Performing and *Responding* to drama in imaginative ways...

To reach this assessment level you will need to:

Develop and adapt roles for a specific purpose. **Plan**, **structure** and rehearse a piece of drama using a combination of **conventions**.

If you are working at level 3 in drama you will be able to do **some of** or **all** of the following:

- Cooperate and work sensibly with others – boys and girls- to create drama's
- Participate in physical activities to develop character
- Participate in mental activities to develop character
- Begin to sustain a role for a reasonable period of time
- Evaluate your own work and the work of others prompted by key questions using key drama words and phrases
- Use a range of drama conventions when instructed and show knowledge of these in discussion
- Create short improvisations and make decisions about conventions
- Perform improvisations in front of each other
- Discuss ways in which we can improve our improvisations
- Discuss positive aspects of performance and begin to use drama terms when doing so
- Understand a range of drama conventions and be able to illustrate this through performance and/or discussion
- Structure improvisations with careful consideration to use of set and space and how we work within it

3a   I can do ALL of these
3b   I can do Most of these
3c   I can do Some of these

St Mary's Catholic College — Drama Department

Assessment Level 4 (a,b,c)

Making, Performing and *Responding* to drama in imaginative ways...

To reach this assessment level you will need to:

Communicate and Develop a character for a specific situation. **Plan**, **structure** and rehearse a piece of drama using a combination of conventions.

If you are working at level 4 in drama you will be able to do **some of** or **all** of the following:

- Cooperate and work sensibly with others – boys and girls- to create drama's
- Participate in physical and mental activities to develop character
- Begin to respond to given stimuli independently
- Sustain a role for a reasonable period of time
- Evaluate your own work and the work of others prompted by key questions using key drama words and phrases
- Select and use a range of drama conventions and show knowledge of these in discussion
- Create improvisations in groups
- Perform improvisations in front of each other
- Begin to explore script and communicate ideas confidently
- Discuss ways in which we can improve our drama's
- Discuss positive aspects of performance and confidently use drama terms when doing so
- Rehearse drama independently with peer evaluation for improvement
- Structure improvisations with careful consideration to use of set and space and how we work within it

4a   I can do ALL of these
4b   I can do Most of these
4c   I can do Some of these

A self-assessment sheet provided for pupils to write in their comments and rate their own progress toward their target level. The teacher's comment only incorporates the levelling of the assignment. There are six sheets like this in the booklet and one for each assessment.

████████████████████ Department of Drama

STUDENT SELF ASSESSMENT

Assessment 1 :	Target:

Student self assessment:

Teacher Comment & Level	Working towards expected KS3 Level ☐
	Working below expected KS3 Level ☐

The target pages and assessment record page defining what appropriate progress is and linking this to a written record of pupil's assessments throughout the key stage.

KS3 Target Levels

Below is a chart that will tell you which level you are aiming for at the end of Key stage three.

You are formally assessed twice a year and the * represent the informal assessments.

If you gained a level 1A in the very first assessment you are aiming for a level 5C.

You are assessed twice a year. Year 7A1 = assessment 1

7A1	7A2	8A3	8A4	9A5	9A6
1c *	1a *	2b *	3c *	3a *	4b
1b *	2c *	2a *	3b *	4c *	4a
1a *	2b *	3c *	3a *	4b *	5c
2c *	2a *	3b *	4c *	4a *	5b
2b *	3c *	3a *	4b *	5c *	5a
2a *	3b *	4c *	4a *	5b *	6C
3c *	4a *	4b *	5c *	5a *	6b
3b *	4c *	5c *	5b *	6c *	6a
3a *	4b *	5a *	6B *	6a *	7c

DRAMA ASSESSMENT RECORD

NAME:
FORM:
TEACHER
YEAR 7:   YEAR 8:   YEAR 9:

Assessment
Attainment Grade
Effort Grade
Drama assessment level
Target

Estimated end of Ks3 target level

KS3 level Achieved

Year 7   Year 8   Year 9

Appendix 3: Examples of pages from the History AfL Booklet created in 2005

The first page showing topic content from Year 7 to 8.

History Key Stage Three Course Booklet

This belongs to: Form:

This booklet contains very important information for you. DO NOT LOSE it because it will serve as both a personal record of your progress in the subject and give you useful advice about how to do better.

Topic Lists

YEAR 7

Topic	Subtopics	Exam?	How well do I understand the topic?		
			Well	Reasonably	Not at all
Chronology	AD/BC Dates	Y			
1066 and all that	Contenders/Battles	Y			
William in power	Feudal System/Domesday/Castles	Y			
The Church's Power	Becket/Crusades/plague	Y			
Life in Manors	Conditions/Peasants' Revolt	Y			
Life in Towns	Trades/markets/Black Death	Y			
England, Wales and Scotland	Edward I and II, Welsh Castles, Robert Bruce	Y			
Bad King John?	Magna Carta	Y			
The 100 Years War	Causes and battles	Y			
History of Christendom	Rome to Byzantium	N			
Native Americans	Different tribes and customs	N			

YEAR 8

Topic	Subtopic	Exam?	How well do I understand the topic?		
			Well	Reasonably	Not at all
Henry VIII's Break with Rome	Henry's wives, dissolution of monasteries	Y			
Religious Rollercoaster	Protestssm, Edward VI, Mary Tudor, Elizabeth I	Y			
Catholic Invasions and Plots	Mary Queen of Scots, Armada, Gunpowder Plot	Y			
The Stuarts and Parliament	James I and parliament	Y			
Causes of English Civil War	Charles I and parliament	Y			
Events of Civil War	Battles of English Civil War, Marston Moor, Naseby	Y			
Trial and Execution of Charles I	Cromwell and the trial, Events of execution	Y			
Oliver Cromwell	Cromwell as 'leader', Puritans	Y			
Restoration	Charles II, Plague, Fire	Y			
Industrial Revolution	Inventions, Machinery, Factory system	N			
Conditions	Factories and towns	N			

This page showing topic content for Year 9, a target sticker box and the first of the asessment record sheets.

YEAR 9

How well do I understand the topic?

Topic	Subtopic	Exam?	Well	Reasonably	Not at all
The British Empire	Extent of Empire	Y			
Slavery	Triangle, Conditions	Y			
Power in Europe	Alliances, Naval race, Empire	Y			
Causes of World War One	Austria and Archduke, Assassination	Y			
Events of the war	Trench warfare, Somme, Home Front	Y			
End of the War	1918, armistice, Versailles	Y			
Interwar years	Instability, Communism	Y			
Rise of Hitler	Depression, propaganda, Nazis	Y			
Nazi Persecution	Holocaust, Concentration camps	Y			
Causes of World War Two	Hitler's aggression, allies appeasement	Y			
Events of the war	Dunkirk, Battle of Britain, Home Front, Russia, D-day, Japan	Y			

While you study these topics you will be given 2 assessments in each year to see how you are doing and how you can make more progress. You can record how you do in these assessments on the following pages – You will also be given an end of key stage target level in April of year 7. The idea is that you achieve or exceed the target given to you by the end of Year 9.

My end of key stage 3 target is:

A sticker will be placed here in April of year 7. If you are in year 8, 9 or have lost the original sticker, ask your teacher what it is and write it in here:

Year 7 Assessments:

Task	Pupil predicted level	How I could improve for next time	Teacher assigned level
Thomas Becket Sourcework			
Bannockburn Essay			

Year 7 Exam Mark: _____ How could the mark be improved next time?_____
_____
_____
_____ 4

Assessment record sheets for Years 8 and 9

Task	Pupil predicted level	How I could improve for next time	Teacher assigned level
Gunpowder Plot Sourcework			
Oliver Cromwell Essay			

Year 8 Exam Mark: _____ How could the mark be improved next time?_____
_____
_____

Task	Pupil predicted level	How I could improve for next time	Teacher assigned level
Causes of World War One Sourcework			
Hitler's Rise to Power Essay			

Year 9 Exam Mark: _____ How could the mark be improved next time?_____
_____
_____

National Curriculum levels for the sourcework and essay questions. These are taken from National Curriculum documentation and written in 'child-friendly' language so as to be more understandable:

How To Get Your Target Level

Each of the assessments are levelled according to the National Curriculum. There are 8 levels and at the beginning of key stage 3 you should be performing somewhere between level 2 and 6. By the end of the key stage, you should be performing somewhere between level 4 and 8. Here are some guidelines of advice about how to attain each level in the assessments:

Sourcework Assessments – How to get a...

Level 4:
- Read and understand the sources you are asked about.
- Summarise them simply in your answers.
- Provide answers that are at least two/three sentences long.
- Know that sources say different things.
- Refer to parts of the source that support your point.
- Support some of your points with one piece of evidence.

Level 5:
- Read and understand the sources you are asked about.
- Be able to explain the sources fully.
- Know one or two general reasons why some sources say different things.
- Provide one or two simple reasons which explain why some sources are more accurate than others.
- Support all points you make with a small piece of evidence from a source or your own knowledge.

Continuing the level descriptions for sourcework and essay questions:

Level 6:
- Read and understand the sources you are asked about.
- Be able to explain the sources fully.
- Provide answers that are at least three to four sentences long.
- Provide more than one specific reason why some sources say different things using information from sources and own knowledge.
- Provide at least two specific reasons which explain why some sources are more accurate than others. These reasons must include your own knowledge.
- Understand the purpose of some sources using your own knowledge of the period.
- Use more than one specific piece of evidence from the sources and/or your own knowledge to support the points you make.

Level 7:
- As with level 6 but also...
- Show that you have researched some aspects of the topic yourself and reached your own conclusions based on this.
- Show that you are able to use more complicated words correctly in your answers (See history word list at back)

Level 8:
- As with level 7 but also...
- Provide longer answers.
- Provide at least 3 specific reasons why some sources say different things using information from sources and own knowledge.
- Provide at least 3 specific reasons which explain why some sources are more accurate than others. These reasons must include your own knowledge and independent research.
- Have mastered many of the more complicated words and phrases in your answers (See history word list at back)

<u>Essay Assessments - How to get a .</u>

Level 4:
- Provide at least five different and relevant points.
- At least 3 will be in paragraphs.
- Provide supporting evidence for at least 3 of your points
- Write coherent spelling and grammar.

Level 5:
- Provide at least six different and relevant points.
- Write all six in structured paragraphs - each one at least three sentences long.
- Provide 1 piece of supporting evidence for each of them.
- Write using appropriate spelling, grammar and language.

Level 6:
- Provide at least six different and relevant points.
- Write each in a clearly structured paragraph - each one more than four sentences long.
- Either provide between 2 and 3 different pieces of evidence OR 1 very detailed piece of evidence to support EACH point.
- Write using correct spelling and grammar as well as mature and clear language.

Level 7:
- Provide more than six different and relevant points. Make sure at least two of them are the result of your own independent research.
- Write in clearly structured paragraphs - each one at least four sentences.
- Either provide between 2 and 3 different pieces of evidence OR 1 very detailed piece of evidence to support EACH point. 12

Appendix 4:

An example of an instruction by the school's senior management to fill in Key Stage 3 APP (Assessing Pupil Progress) levels and progress scores making sure that they do not give a lower grade than had been given in a previous report. "As a rule students do not make negative progress".

Documents
- Shared Documents

Lists
- Calendar
- Tasks

Discussions
- Team Discussion

Sites

People and Groups

Teacher Site
- My Account Page
- School Details Page
- Attendance Registers Page
- MarkSheet Page
- Profiles Page
- Student Search Page
- Staff Search Page

Announcements

Y7 & Y9 marksheets - please read the email or the note in your pigeon hole regarding the removal of the autocalc button for judging if a student will exceed, meet or fail to meet their end of Y7 or Y9 targets. by ████████████	16/11/2010 09:22
KS3 Y8 & Y9 marksheets - please check that you are not giving levels on the December marksheets that are lower than those achieved last summer - as a rule students do not make negative progress! by ████████████	09/11/2010 16:25
BTEC Quality documents can now be found in the BTEC Quality docs folder in the shared docs folder (click on the teachers Tab) by ████████████	02/11/2010 17:38
Documentation for PM, lesson obs etc can be found in the Teaching&Learning folder in the shared docs area by ████████████	01/10/2010 10:41
Documents for absence, visists etc can now be found in the Absence & Visits folder in the shared docs area. by ████████████	01/10/2010 10:40

(More Announcements...)

Calendar

There are currently no upcoming events.

Appendix 5:

A copy of the letter I sent to parents informing them of the research project and inviting them to contact me if they wished their son or daughter not to be involved:

<div align="right">
Mike Bird
History and Politics
27th June 2008
</div>

Dear Parent,

<u>Perceptions of Formative Assessment Among Key Stage 3 Pupils</u>

I have been involved with the Open University in conducting educational research on the above topic since May 2007. The project is a major three-year research survey which will lead to the award of a higher degree and hopefully will contribute to wider professional knowledge and good practice in formative assessment.

I would like to research formative assessment with the class in which your son or daughter is a member. The research process will involve trying out new methods of teaching and learning and evaluating the results. To this end, it will be important to audio, and occasionally video record the classes as well as conduct interviews with pupils. These recordings will be transcribed and I can guarantee that the anonymity of your son or daughter will be maintained at all times if they appear on them. I can also guarantee that the recordings will be held securely until the end of the research project after which they will be destroyed. Only the anonymised transcriptions will remain in existence from this point, although it is possible that excerpts from these transcriptions may appear in published form later on. I am under ethical obligation to inform you of this and to give you the opportunity to refuse to allow your son or daughter to participate in this research and to be recorded. Please write to me or contact me via your son or daughter if you would not like your son or daughter, for any reason, to participate in this.

Thank you for reading the letter and considering the proposal.

Best wishes,

M Bird

Appendix 6:

Drama Interview Questions and Prompts:

PUPIL INTERVIEW:

1. [With the AfL booklet in front] How do you use the booklet?

2. How often do you use it? Is it just in class?

3. Tell me about a performance in drama that you got feedback from?

4. Did you have difficulty understanding the feedback?

5. If yes did the booklet help you or do they go to a teacher or to a friend?

6. Tell me about what you are good at and what you are not so good at?

7. Do you know what to do to improve?

8. Do you think peer-assessment is a good thing and if yes why ?

9. When you are assessing someone else's work do you feel confident you know what is good about it and what needs improving?

10. Why is that and what helps you to feel confident?

11. Do you discuss what you think about someone's work with other pupils why is that?

12. Do you discuss what you are thinking about the work with the person whose work it is? Why is that?

13. How do you feel when another pupil is looking at your work and commenting on it? Do you find it helpful?

14. Why is that? Is it more helpful than the teacher's comments or less helpful? Why do you think that is?

15. When the teacher discusses your work with you how do you feel?
16. (Probe on embarrassment here and whether they prefer grades)

17. Does it help you to understand?

18. Who is good at drama in your group who is not so good how do you know this?

19. Are there other subjects where you work like this?

Interviews with Drama teachers

1. What caused you to produce the booklets?

2. Which strategies did you find the most difficult to get children to use and why was this in your view? Which strategies work well and again why do you think that?

3. Do all pupils find it useful? Which ones and why is that? Why do you think some don't?

4. Do you have any worries that some pupils find it difficult to deal with negative feedback?

5. What do you do to try and overcome this? Are other pupils fair and sensitive? How did you develop this approach to assessment with the pupils?

6. How often are the booklets used?

7. Do the pupils use them in groups?

8. How do you make sure pupils understand your feedback?

9. How do you make your learning goals understandable?
10. Why do you value AfL? How does it help you to teach more effectively?

11. How do you decide whether the pupils have learned something?

12. What are the pupils motivated by?

13. Why do you value group work?

14. IS AfL in your view useful in building collaborative group work?

15. How can you make pupils understand what is good and not so good?

History pupil interview questions:

1. Can you tell me what the Domesday survey is?

2. How did the lessons on Domesday go?

3. Which activity did you particularly enjoy throughout them and why?

4. What activity didn't you enjoy very much?

5. Have you ever done anything like that type of work before?

6. What was it that was different from your perspective?

7. How good was your group's Domesday presentation?

8. What could your group have done better?

9. What was your contribution to the presentation?

10. Overall, what would you say it was that stopped you from doing better in the presentation?

11. All in all what did you learn?

12. What does Domesday tell you about what William did?

13. What is history really about?

14. What motivates you to understand and know more in history?

15. Is there anything you don't understand or haven't understood?

16. How does the history that you've been doing now differ from the history you did at primary school?

17. Do you feel that you are better historians now?

18. Do you feel you are more able to find out about things that happened in the past now?

Appendix 7: Vignette 3, Year 7, 02/03/2009

This vignette is from a lesson that focussed on whether the results of the Black Death were all bad. In this excerpt there is clear emphasis on developing tools for writing a structured historical account that focused on the paragraph writing tool. This is the only 'tool-based' lesson that was recorded from the 9 recordings from stage 1.

The class was investigating the question 'Were the effects of the Black Death all bad?' and I wanted the pupils to use a series of sources from a textbook to evaluate the effects and then use the paragraph writing tool to write three paragraphs explaining the effects of the Black Death, with at least one suggesting a beneficial effect. The paragraph tool that was used here was the convention that has become common in many English and History classrooms of adopting a 'Point, Evidence, Explain' paragraph structure. The first minutes of this class were spent reviewing the previous occasion when they had used this technique, which had been in October 2008. This was important as it served to show some continuity in the use of tools. I then asked them what makes a good paragraph. I did have some specific answers that I was hoping for h but I was willing to accept any sensible suggestions. The pupils came up with several points:

> Andrew: Interesting and original words.
> Alice: Having a good reason for saying and like backing it up.
> Girl: You've got to think about what you are writing.
> Dane: A beginning, a middle and an end just to round it all up.
> Girl: Correct punctuation?
> Boy: Don't put two points into one paragraph.

(02.03.09 p.1)

Dane's contribution was the one I had in mind although the others are at least equally important. I nevertheless narrowed down the criteria and concentrated on writing paragraphs with a beginning, a middle and an end. This isn't to say that I rejected the others but that the main focus would be on writing

structured paragraphs. With this 3-part paragraph structure in mind I conducted a discussion with the pupils about the potentially negative or positive effects of the Black Death. This is an excerpt from this:

Tim: It might be good because people may have had a hard time feeding families and so with fewer people to feed it may have been easier.

5

Teacher: Right yes good. Well thought out. If the peasants have a hard time feeding their families then one or two dying—which of course is not a good thing—but it may have made it easier to feed their families.

10

Alice: If the peasants own land and once some of them die then the others can get more land.

Teacher: Right interesting. Very good. If you've got 20 people

15

living in Wallasey manor back then, and only 12 people are remaining then those 12 people can take control of the land that all 20 had owned before, which means more land for them—which might mean more work for them of course, but it might mean more food too. Right good.

20

Jenni: If the Black Death hadn't happened back then and if the rats hadn't come then we wouldn't have known about it.

Teacher: The knowledge of the black death and the plague

25

itself has allowed us to learn about it and later on prepare ourselves for it and maybe even do some research on it too. These are all great results!

Dane: If you believe in God then it might make you think it

30

was God's new slate of people.

Teacher: Like a fresh start or turning over a new leaf for human society.

35

Dane: Yeah

Teacher: Right so if you believed in God then you might think at the end of it that the bad people are gone and only the good ones are left—and that's going to perhaps make you feel better

40

about things, right.

Steve: Medical breakthroughs by overcoming the black death.

Teacher: Right medical breakthroughs by overcoming the

45

black death. Yes but they would have to wait a long time for

that. But it would take a long time for us to crack the problem of bacterial disease—and that is of course anti-biotics which wasn't discovered until earlier in the 20th century.

50   Alice: Would a bad reason be that there would be less people to work for you and they'd have to get paid more money, Teacher: Good, good!

(02.03.09, p. 2)

This questioning allowed the pupils to explore each others' thinking. There are examples here of dynamic affordances aplenty. However, the pupils are not yet writing up the paragraphs. They are at this point putting forward ideas that could be put into paragraphs.

The following is an excerpt of the later modelling phase of the paragraph writing process.

Teacher: How do you begin a paragraph that is meant to respond to that question ["Were the results of the Black death all bad?"] How would you kick it off and get the ball rolling? Look at how you started them off in the 22nd of October
5   activity. Go on!

Stacey: Like using the question in the first sentence.

Teacher: YES! Use the question. Use the wording of the question in your first sentence. Can somebody example that. Can somebody give me specifically how would you do that?
10   How would you use the words in the title to start off your paragraph? Oscar?

Oscar: 'The reason why the Black Death was bad...'

Teacher: One reason the Black Death was bad—and then what do you do. You can't just finish the sentence like that. You've
15   got to add something on don't you, Harry, what do you think?

Harry: Give a reason why.

Teacher: Ok you've got to briefly mention the reason—this isn't where you make your point this is where you introduce it—so somebody name me a point that you could add on to the
20   end of this sentence. Yes?

Steve: A third of them will die?

194

Teacher: Alright so one reason the BD was bad—now this is important what's the word here?

Dane Because.

25 Teacher: 'Was because'—you know 'was because' isn't great style—the better style is 'was *that*'—is better than 'was because'. It's simpler too. So one reason the BD was bad was that one third of people died.

Dane: We got closest to extinction yes?

30 Teacher: In the last 1000 years it was. Now the middle of the paragraph, what have you got to do here. It's got to have a beginning, middle and an end. What do you do next? What should the middle of the paragraph contain?

Lisa: Like your reason and the points in it.

35 Teacher: Right so in other words it's got to explain this in more detail. 'A third of people dying' is not more detail. What kind of detail am I talking about?

Jenni: Use quotes?

Teacher: Yes you could quote but without having to do that,
40 what sort of detail could you give to give more detail than 'a third of people dying'.

Aliyah: You could like give a number?

Teacher: Right, give a number, is there anything on that page that could give you information on this? Can you wake up? A
45 little more targeted information on this.

Oscar: Percentages

Teacher: How would you turn that into a sentence?

Oscar: Like add them all up

Teacher: No, I mean do it! Turn it into a sentence that's what
50 I am saying. Can anyone?

John: Like 50% of Exeter?

Teacher: OK so was that a third of the people died. So 'for example—a good way to start this off—in Exeter 50% of people died' what else?

55 Girl—inaudible

Teacher: In Winchester is that?

Girl Yes.

Teacher: So 49% of people died

Boy: it was actually priests

60 Teacher: So you might want to check your facts and make sure you know that this refers to just priests. So in Winchester 49% of priests died. So you could keep going and on like this. What else could you say to add more to this?

Tim You could say how the disease was spread like from town
65 to town.

Teacher: Right and how would you say that?

Tim You could say this happened because the plague was spread in town

Teacher: Right so this happened because plague was very
70 infectious, yeah? OK So this would be a good middle bit [writing in on board]. Third bit, the end. What do you have to do at the end?

Two pupils: Sum it up

Teacher: Sum it up? Yes Jenni?

75 Jenni: Make a conclusion

Teacher: Make a brief conclusion yes. In other words come to why this was a bad reason or result rather. Why was this a bad result? Why is that bad? What's it going to do, Andrew?

Andrew: People can't get their sins forgiven

80 Teacher: Right so this is going to be bad because it means people can't go to church (42:00)

Boy: Consequently

Teacher:: Consequently—good word that

Boy: Consequently, erm something about hell. Erm
85 Consequently, not being able to forgive their sins or something.

Teacher: Yeah, this is bad because people cannot go to church and consequently they cannot get forgiven, I think is what you're trying to say. Anything else that we would say?

Dane: You don't want to do too much.

90 (02.03.09, p. 5–6)

This shows active engagement and understanding of the practices of history as there was considerable pupil involvement in the discussion. The pupils show considerable knowledge in terms of talking about what to do to structure paragraphs (lines 11, 25, 28, 31 and 36). Furthermore, two pupils intervened to offer corrections—or improvements—to what was being proposed should be put in the paragraph, which shows that they were independently assessing the paragraph with their own criteria, irrespective of mine (lines 45 and 67). Finally, some of the historical understanding shown in the responses was quite advanced, particularly the comments toward the end about priests not being around to forgive people their sins being a serious consideration for medieval people (lines 63–64).

It seems very clear that history practices in this instance are heavily mediated by my practice. As an expert (of sorts) I may have greater knowledge and experience than my pupils, but this is not to say that I still have an impartial perspective on history subject practices. This is shown by my propensity to put words into the pupils' mouths before I really explore their ideas (line 29–30, 52–3, 57–8). I use their ideas as a vehicle for pronouncing my own.

I am yet again in the role of 'arbiter' and 'fount' of knowledge. Maybe the pupils could have worked together in groups to produce sample paragraphs and then shared them with the rest of the class during a feedback session at the end. This may have been particularly appropriate as so many appeared to know what was involved in writing a structured paragraph.

Appendix 8: Vignette 4, Year 8, 06/07/ 2009

This vignette was from the class's final lesson of the year and I wanted to look at the Fire of London in 1666. Similar to the Princes in the Tower (Vignette 2) mystery I used a card sorting activity with the cards containing pieces of information and evidence about the Fire of London. I then, after a brief explanatory introduction, foregrounded three questions for the pupils to investigate; Why did the fire spread so much? Why did the fire eventually stop? What were the results of the fire? The goals for learning and connections to prior knowledge were again not made available through discussion.

The class worked through the pieces of evidence in pairs, sorting the cards into relevant or irrelevant piles for each of the questions. There was some disengagement among some pairs. Once the class had looked at the evidence for about 20 minutes, I attempted to reify the ideas some pairs had come up with for the rest of the class. Most pairs managed to appropriate what was available for them at face value from the evidence. For example, in answer to the question why did the fire spread so rapidly, pupils managed to suggest the wind, the long hot dry summer, the lack of available fire fighting equipment and the profusion of flammable materials along the quayside—all information that appeared on the cards. However, some groups had managed to make connections between factors mentioned in some cards that seemed to have relevance but that also raised a question. One pair, Joseph and Colin said 'This is curious, only the poorer areas of town were badly affected. It seemed to stop by the time it reached the richer areas of town' (06.07.10, p.3). Later on, during the whole class activity, this pair seemed to have worked out a reason for this as Colin states 'The poor people's houses were dead close together' (06.07.10, p.4). The following excerpt continues from this point.

> Teacher: Right. Colin said that the poor houses were very close
> together. Did anyone get the little bit of evidence that suggested that
> the fire did not reach the richer parts of town. Why might that be?
> OK Why might that be? What do you think? David?

5   David: The fire people would like want to stop all the rich people's
           houses but not bother about the poorer people's ones.

           Teacher: Possibly, I can see that yes. There is a lot more to lose in rich
           people's houses isn't there? Is there another reason. Think about what
           Kate said about building materials and what Colin said about houses
10   being bunched up, right? What might be the situation in the richer
           areas of town?

           Boy [unidentified]: There is a wall all around it so it couldn't get
           through.

           Teacher: Yes there was a wall all the way round London but if you
15   look carefully, some areas of course or some parts of the fire did go
           through it, so it wasn't just because of the wall was it? So it wasn't the
           wall that contained the fire but the richer areas of town, so what might
           we assume about the richer areas? Paul?

           Paul: The houses weren't made out of wood?

20   Teacher: Right the houses weren't made out of wood. What would
           have been a much more expensive building material?

           Boy [unidentified]: Stone.

           (06.07.10, p. 5)

Pupils are engaged here and are developing ideas based on prior understanding.
However, it seems that the emphasis on my part is again upon helping the
pupils discover the 'right' answer rather than explore ideas. David's utterance
in lines 5–6 is a very interesting observation that would have been based on his
own experience which he then reflects back on to the past. This again could
have been explored more and by passing over it in the way I did in lines 7–8
immediately suggests that I am only interested in getting the pupils to my line
of thinking. Nevertheless, this excerpt shows that David's comment has been
dynamically afforded by the earlier observation about richer houses being
unaffected.

A further example of this is a discussion that ensued over the statement in one
of the cards that the Lord Mayor took too long to order the demolition of
houses as a reason for the spread of the fire. Not all groups understood that
this was a reason for the fire spreading as they did not know the concept of a

fire-break. However once this was explained a heated discussion ensued over the implications dynamically afforded by consideration of the issue of demolition.

Teacher: Why does the Lord Mayor have to give an order for these houses to be demolished? Why can't people just demolish them there and then?

Gregory: Because you might need the materials to do it to fight the fire?

5

Teacher: Because you might need the materials? Is there another reason?

Paula: Cos he would have to pay for them all to be rebuilt?

Teacher: Right we're getting closer...

10   Josh: Because it's against the law!

Teacher: Right, you can't just demolish anybody's house can you? It is vandalism isn't it? So you can't just go around blowing up people's houses unless someone in authority says it's ok. What do you think David?

15   David: Why can't you just demolish your own house?

Teacher: Would you like to do that?

David: Well, if it is going to be set on fire anyway...

Others: I wouldn't...

Teacher: Well... That's an interesting point David. Maybe if you were
20   thinking of other people and you were prepared to make that sacrifice then that would be very brave of you.

Paula: But what's the point of knocking it down if it is going to get burned?

Teacher: Well that would be what other people would think isn't it?

25   [heated discussion here]

TA [Teaching Assistant]: What do you think the neighbours would think if they knocked their house down and yours was going to be safe now?

Josh: That would be funny!

30   Teacher: Exactly, why don't you suggest to your neighbours that they
          knock theirs down in order to keep yours safe?

          David: Why don't they just knock down anybody's house?

          [more heated discussion]

          Teacher: Why didn't they just knock down anybody's house?

35   Other [unidentified]: Yeah cos if it is going to get set on fire anyway…

          Teacher: The problem is that if you did that—without the Lord Mayor
          saying it is ok to do that—you could get clapped up in jail…

          [heated discussion and inaudible objections]

          Teacher: Is everyone in London… Is the first thing in their mind
40   knocking their houses down?

          Clara: No the first thing in your mind would be to get everybody and
          the family out of the house.

          Teacher: Did anyone get from the evidence what a lot of Londoners
          were doing at this time?

45   Boys [all at once]: Tackling the fire.

          Teacher: No I think they were doing something else. What were they
          doing Clara?

          Clara: Putting all their stuff in wheelbarrows

          Teacher: Exactly. They were getting the hell out of there. Putting all
50   their stuff into wheelbarrows and carts and getting out. Would that be
          a reason why the fire spread?

          (06.07.09, pp.7–8)

Contemplation of the issue of demolition animated a lot of the discussion
and. While it is possible to view these exchanges as dynamically affording
participants' imagination, or maybe in some cases knowledge, of what it might
be like to lose one's home, what also makes this formative is that it is a
negotiation of meaning. Wenger (1998, p. 52) refers to negotiation of meaning
as the necessary interaction between participation and reification required for
learning. In this case, it is valuable because through the discussion, the process
of negotiating meaning becomes visible and as it involves many participants

has a clear impact. Some of the previous excerpts (vignette 1) were notable for the absence of any opportunities for pupils to negotiate the meaning of things they encounter. However, when a process of negotiation allows pupils to appropriate meanings of concepts or tools that relate directly to their experience or imagination, this in turn seems to help generate relations of mutual engagement necessary for participation (Wenger, 1998). The sense of disengagement in vignette 1 is in stark contrast to this and it appeared to emerge from the lack of opportunities pupils had for negotiating meanings and being able therefore to participate in the activity.

Questioning plays a role here. My initial questions from lines 8 to 19 encourage the pupils to explore the idea of demolishing houses and the results of such a decision. However, further questioning from the teaching assistant in line 21 and David in line 26 enables the discussion to continue. By line 33, the discussion had exhausted itself (notice the identical comments in lines 13 and 29). I then attempt to move the focus on to the fact that most Londoners were fleeing and not fighting the fire. Had this negotiation not taken place then pupils would not have been able to make sense of the complicated issues surrounding demolition of one's property. Such negotiations of meaning are formative in the way that they deepen shared conceptual understandings and can be used as resources in later discussions too. However, looking purely within the discourse of history practice itself, this discussion is relevant to the history of the Fire of London, but rather in keeping with virtually all the lessons recorded and transcribed at this stage, there was no reification of historical tools to develop means of considering the evidence.

By this time I was beginning to be influenced by the ideas emerging from this research and although this lesson was not a deliberate intervention, there are elements in the planning which seem to have been influenced by these ideas. One of these was a decision I had made to encourage the pupils to record emerging questions the evidence may present to them. These questions would be useful in a plenary session to promote class discussion. Furthermore, a list of questions emerging as part of the process of doing activity could be a useful resource both for me to trace how pupils may be thinking about the activity and any conceptual issues that may be constraining their participation.

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It would be useful for the pupil too as it constitutes a brief history of engagement or a reification of the journey through the task. At the end of the lesson, there was time to look at two questions from two pupils. This is the transcript of the treatment of one of them:

> Teacher: Did anybody write down a question that occurred to them on the basis of reading the sheets? This is a good opportunity for us to tackle some of them now. Right Kevin?
>
> Kevin: Was it accidental?
>
> 5   Teacher: Would someone like to tell me why this is a very difficult question to ask?
>
> Josh: We've got no proof.
>
> Teacher: Well how would we prove that it was?
>
> Claire: If someone was there when it happened.
>
> 10   Teacher: If someone was there when it happened and witnessed it and said this is what happened. Is there anything you know already that suggests that it was an accident?
>
> Kevin: It was in a baker's.
>
> Teacher: Yes. If it was a deliberate fire, where might they go?
>
> 15   Boy: Baker?
>
> David: Coal factory or something?
>
> Teacher: Right where was a lot of flammable material kept?
>
> Boy: By the boats
>
> (06.07.09, pp. 10–11)

This seemed a worthwhile activity giving the opportunity to share these questions enabled collective explicit knowledge to be used to answer them. In addition, a perusal of such questions by teachers would enable them to see the problems pupils had and adjust teaching to address them making the activity formative for the teacher. In the case above, the questioning of the teacher guides the pupils to make a speculative answer but what is interesting is that there is reference this time to evidence—or at least to the kind of evidence that might answer Kevin's query (lines 5 and 10–12). This idea suggested a possible focus for the design of the intervention scheme of work.

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