The Emergence of Historical Inquiry as Curriculum: Reconsidering the British Schools Council History Project

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Abstract

Concerns over the quality of history education in the United Kingdom led to the Schools History Project 13-16 in 1972. The project proved to be the first large-scale Western curricula designed to engage students in historical inquiry. In this article, I shall offer an elucidation of the philosophy of the British Schools History Project, a narration of the British and North American influences on the project, and a discussion of the project's impact.

Concerns over the quality of history education in the United Kingdom led the government to fund a curriculum project, sponsored by the Schools Council (an organization of teachers, local educational leaders, and the Department of Education and Science, formed in 1964 to develop and to assist curricular reforms) at the University of Leeds (now based at Trinity and All Saints' College near Leeds) in 1972. The British Schools History Project 13-16 (SHP for 14 to 16 year-olds) developed curricula focused on the needs of the adolescent learner and the nature of disciplinary history (Rosenzweig 1984). The project proved to be the first large-scale Western curricula designed to teach procedural knowledge (the methods used in research by historians) and to engage students in historical inquiry. The project emphasized the nature of historical knowledge, the need for active student involvement, and the analysis of multiple primary sources (Booth 1993 1994). The SHP represented a dramatic shift from traditional, politically-centered, lecture-driven curricula, to a new ideology espousing "history as time, history as [human] motive, and history as enquiry" (Fines 1980, Forward).

During the mid-1960s in the United Kingdom, history education came under severe attack as a subject lacking purpose for adolescents in a rising technological age. Leading historians such as G.R. Elton, supporters of Piaget's theories, and interested government officials bemoaned the traditional lackluster instructional methods and claimed history failed to interest adolescents, who proved unable to access the advanced material (Rosenzweig 1984). As a result, a counter-reformation of concerned educators responded to those charges leading to the formation in 1969 of a new journal, *Teaching History* by the British Historical Association, dedicated to publishing articles regarding innovative methods of instruction. The journal's landmark publication by Mary Price (1968) "History in Danger" proved widely influential through Price's charge to restore history's place in the British schools and to revitalize teaching methods. Martin Booth's (1969) *History Betrayed* (supporting Price's claims) soon followed-- thus, leading to a whirlwind response by concerned educators (Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry 2003; Rosenzweig 1984).

The formation of the SHP in 1972, led by David Sylvester, emerged as part of this counter-reformation; the SHP's founding, overarching purpose consisted of reaffirming history's value for adolescents in the secondary schools. At the project's inception, the founding leaders did not begin with an entrenched philosophy—other than

the obvious commitment to history's value—or with a pre-specified curriculum. Instead, the experimental nature of the project enabled the founders to explore the role history played in the development of adolescents (Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry 2003; Schools Council 1976). In 1976, the Schools Council issued their publication *A New Look at History* outlining the SHP's curriculum and rationale. In 1980, the Schools Council also published the *Evaluation Study* outlining the philosophy, purposes, and effectiveness of the project.

The project changed the nature of history education in the UK and ultimately inspired researchers of history education (in both the United Kingdom and North America) discover historical inquiry as a form of curriculum. The movement led to the adoption of new terms, such as historical thinking (the nature of cognition in history) and historical empathy (the ability to perceive history from the perspectives of people from the past)—terms distinguishing Bloom's functions and the objectives of cognition and affectivity in history as unique and separate from other disciplines. In this article, I shall offer an elucidation of the philosophy of the British Schools History Project 13-16, a narration of the British and North American influences on the project, and a discussion of the impact of the project to history education. I hope to increase awareness of the project's aims, the circumstances surrounding its inception, and its influence—thereby inviting educators and researchers to discover and to consider what can be learned from the undertaking.

The Philosophy of the Schools Council History Project

Denis Shemilt , a team member (1972 to 1974), evaluator (1974 to 1977), and director (1978) of the SHP, figuratively compared the deficiencies in history education to Tolstoy's Russian peasant who believed locomotives actually received their powers of movement through the fire of hell's flames. The peasant adopted a metaphysical, mythical rather than a scientific understanding of the motion of locomotives. In comparison, students of history often espoused faulty assumptions about the past, and these errors of reasoning resulted from a curriculum that failed to teach the fundamental structure of disciplinary history. Shemilt explains:

> A view [for the peasant] inside the locomotive's boiler and firebox would not enlighten; on the contrary, it would be a vision of hell. Adolescents rarely construe history in a Tolstoyan fashion, but many of the assumptions they make about the subject are equally inappropriate. Listening to a history lesson in ignorance of the logic, perspectives, and methods of the subject is akin to watching a locomotive without an understanding of physics, factories, and economics. (1983, 1)

According to Shemilt, the elusive nature of the peasant's understanding of locomotives compares to the obscure, and even inaccurate, assumptions about history held by adolescents. The philosophy of the SHP rested upon the acceptance of history as a form of knowledge: the concepts defining human experience, the ways of relating and articulating these concepts, the ways of empathizing and reconstructing historical truths, and the means of conducting investigations (Hirst 1965, 1975; Shemilt 1980, 1983). The authors of the SHP assumed the task of teaching students disciplinary history--namely, the defining concepts, and the methods of inquiry; thus, by enabling students to grasp "the logic, perspectives, and methods," the authors sought to deepen students' historical understandings.

In advancing a new curriculum, the SHP sought to explore the sort of history most appropriate for adolescents in the UK and as a result determined two fundamental purposes for their rationale: first, relevance to the personal and social needs of adolescents (Schools Council 1976), and second, grounding in reason, or the logic and methods of the discipline (Shemilt 1980). Regarding the sort of history, they justified history as a subject through five useful purposes for adolescents:

> (a) as a means of acquiring and developing such cognitive skills as those of analysis, synthesis, and judgment; (b) as a source of leisure interests; (c) as a vehicle for analyzing the contemporary world and their place within it; (d) as a means for developing understanding of the forces underlying social change and evolution; (e) as an avenue to self-knowledge and awareness of what it means to be human. (Shemilt 1980, 2)

Lackluster instructional approaches failed to stimulate adolescents' leisure interests, to prepare them for contemporary life, to develop cognitive skills, to understand historical change, and to facilitate contemplations about the nature of being human. Considering the developmental needs of youth, the founders formulated a curriculum intended to foster meaningful identities for the adolescent through the "widening and measuring of his own experience against that of others" (Schools Council 1976, 9), and "the part history can play in this should not be underestimated, for in history, the adolescent has to access the vast pool of human experience" (School Council 1976, 10).

The SHP founders theoretically rejected the application of Piaget's stages of development to thinking in history; instead, they optimistically assumed children as young as fifteen could begin to interpret and analyze historical evidence (Schools Council, 1976). For the project team, "Bruner's dictum that, *at some level*, any worthwhile concept can be taught with integrity to school-age children" (Shemilt 1980, 8) foundationally underlined their philosophy. Of this, Shemilt explained:

> In short, is the 'form of knowledge' approach to history too academic for CSE [certified school education] children? Surprisingly, the answer is a categorical 'No!' All adolescents seem able to develop and refine their understanding of historical causation, their awareness of History's relevance, their construction of how we find out and explain things that happened in the past, and so on. (1980, 8)

The authors encouraged adolescents to engage in the formal operations as applied to history through inquiry, analysis, and judgment. Furthermore, the structural differences between history and natural science proved problematic in translating Piaget's theories (based upon scientific thinking) to historical cognition (Schools Council 1976). To illustrate, "the scientist postulates a single and coherent universe in which laws operating in one part also operate in all other parts, both observed and unobserved," but "the historian assumes the contrary" (Shemilt 1980, 44). Thus, the historian "posits actuality as a special case of possibility" and by evaluating and reconstructing evidence considers "logically possible worlds" (Shemilt 1980, 44).

The students engaged in high-level cognitive skills based upon Bloom's (1956) taxonomy. Receiving their inspiration from Coltham and Fines' 1971 publication of *Educational Objectives for the Study of History: A Suggested Framework* (outlining how Bloom's cognitive and affective domains transferred to the

objectives of history education), the SHP founders applied those ideas to a curriculum centered on the research methods used by historians. For cognition in history, those objectives focused on inquiry processes involving hypothesis formation, evidentiary sources, and historical reconstruction. Major areas for investigation included notions such as the role of human motivation in causation, the nature of continuity and change over time, and the connectedness of the past to the present (Schools Council 1976; Shemilt 1980). For the affective domain in history, the project founders incorporated the objectives outlined by Coltham and Fines (1971): attending, responding, and imagining. Those objectives addressed the founders' perceptions of how history education should foster adolescent development through fundamental goals: the deepening awareness of humanity, the analysis of contemporary world, and the understanding of the forces of social change.

Notably, the founders chose to focus on the people of the past as central to the curriculum. The direct emphasis on history as motive hearkened back to the work of Collingwood (1962), whose philosophy of history included his concept of the historical imagination (Schools Council 1976). For Collingwood, historical reconstruction required in-depth digging and analysis of artifacts and documents. Ultimately, the loss of past artifacts (both living and dead) necessitated imaginative thinking, in order to dramatically re-enact (much like a theatrical performance) the most probable events of history. Coltham and Fines also integrated Collingwood's ideas into the affective and cognitive objectives of history:

> Since the material of history consists principally of human beings' activities in the past, study of this area of knowledge demands conative effort on the part of the learner to enter, as it were, 'the shoes' or 'the skins' of people met only through evidence...historical imagination requires something more. (1971, 7)

By "something more," Coltham and Fines meant sympathy, or "the power of entering another's feelings or mind" and empathy, or "the power entering another's personality and imaginatively experiencing his experience" (1971, 7-8). The authors of the SHP applied Collingwood's (1962) theory of historical re-enactment to the project by employing new terminology--*empathetic reconstruction* and eventually *historical empathy* (P. Lee, personal communication September 14, 2005; Shemilt 1980). For the SHP, historical explanation became articulated "in the form of casual analysis and the delineation of motives" (Shemilt 1980, 5); thus, all of the course segments required students "to evaluate evidence and empathize with their forebears" (8).

Regarding the logic and methods of the discipline, the SHP curriculum established three underlying premises regarding history:

> (a) as a form of knowledge, having its own logic, methods, and perspectives; (b) as a model for enquiry-based, problem solving pedagogy; (c) as a humane study concerned with *people*, their *actions*, and *perceptions of events*. (Shemilt 1980, 5)

The logic and methods of the discipline assumed premises based upon Carr's (1961) well-known book, *What is History?,* and upon Carr's argument for historical relativism. According to Carr (1961), the past is a foreign country, lost to the present; therefore, historical truths can only be uncovered through available documents, facts,

artifacts, and oral testimonies. By examining the evidence, historians recreate the answers to the questions raised and postulate the most probable version of the past. Carr was not the only thinker on the subject, but his work directly influenced the authors of the SHP to shape their curriculum according to the theories he articulated (Booth 1994). The leaders of SHP also drew upon parallel British scholars, such as Paul Hirst's (1965), who, like Schwab and Bruner, advocated disciplinary focused instruction; and other historians, such as G.S.R. Kitson Clark (1967), J.H. Hextor (1971), G.R. Elton (1968), whose primers of the historical method provided disciplinary grounding.

The authors of the SHP assumed a mature understanding of history would entail connections:

> (a) the freeing of ideation from the constraints imposed by observed reality (actuality treated as a case of possibility); (b) the ability to systematically generate and test hypotheses (hypothetic-deductive reasoning); and (c) the capacity to think in purely propositional terms (the ability to see the validity of an argument is independent of the truth of the terms or existence of the objects with which the argument deals). (Shemilt 1980, 44)

In summary, the *SHP* built their pedagogical philosophy upon three main criteria: (a) the need for teaching practices to elicit Bloom's higher levels of cognition instead of lower-ordered recall; (b) the need for Brunerian disciplinary structure (also supported by Hirst) to improve historical understanding; and (c) the need to teach—as Bruner advocated—disciplinary content in some reasonable form at all ages (Booth 1994; L. Levstik personal communication October 24, 2005; Schools Council 1976).

Implementation of the Schools History Project 13-16

Offering a new model for teaching and learning in history, the SHP curriculum consisted of a 3 year program with five segments: *What is History?* (procedural knowledge in history), *History Around Us* (local history), *Enquiry in Depth* (historical inquiry/ British and U.S. history), *Modern World Studies* (historical inquiry/world history and contemporary issues), *Study in Development* (history of medicine) (Schools Council 1976; Shemilt 1980). Before embarking on focused inquiries, the authors first supposed that students needed to explore the purposes for studying history and the nature of the discipline. The *What is History?* segment foundationally rooted students in historical inquiry and engaged them in discussions about the value of learning history:

> The pupil is introduced to the idea of *reconstructing from evidence*, to the reality *of different sorts of evidence* which have been used in different ways and from which different sorts of things can be adduced, and to the *problems of reconstruction* in the face of biased, incomplete contradictory evidence. (Shemilt 1980, 5)

In concurrence with instruction on the nature of historical reconstruction, the course specifically addressed the notion of historical explanation, the impact of human motives on historical outcomes, and detective work in historical inquiry (Schools Council 1976).

The subsequent segment, *History Around Us,* enabled the students to apply what they learned in the previous course to their local communities and natural surroundings. The second course served the function of generating

history-related leisure interests through in-depth field work designed to "afford pupils practice in handling evidence of various kinds, in reconstructing daily life and physical settings, and in explaining change and particular departures from general archetypes and trends" (Shemilt 1980, 5). The content and structure of the first two courses clearly delineate the need for students first to be schooled in historical inquiry as a form of knowledge and for students to then practice those skills in more familiar, local settings. After establishing a firm foundation in historical inquiry, the students undertook to study British, U.S, and world history. The final course, *Study in Development*, was designed to connect the past to the present through the examination of change and continuity over centuries of time. By emphasizing how history impacts the present, the course demonstrated progress and development, patterns and deviations, and intended and unintended consequences of human actions and avoided "falling into naïve historicism or mechanical determinism" (Shemilt 1980, 6). Thus, the course served as a means for students' to understand their place in the modern world and for understanding social change and evolution over time (Schools Council 1976).

The Context for Schools History Project

The authors of the SHP relied upon the intellectual theories of philosophers, educational psychologists, and historians in both the United Kingdom and North America. The political changes in both nations also impacted the shift in thinking from the traditional focus on nation states in history to a more rigorous exploration of social forces and people. A discussion of the new social studies in the United States and the new history in the United Kingdom offer a look at the influences inspiring the creation of the SHP.

Inquiry and Social Studies in the United States

In the United States in the early twentieth century, concerns over industrialization, standardization, and mechanization, led progressive educators such as John Dewey to advocate educational practices centered on the pragmatic needs of the child--the freedom of expression, the facilitation of creativity, and the development of civic responsibility (Dalton 2002). Regarding inquiry, Dewey's hallmark publication *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938) offered a culminating perspective of his views on the subject. For Dewey (1938), inquiry is defined as follows:

> Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole. (104)

From this definition, inquiry ultimately leads to the discovery of pragmatic solutions and the formation of meaningful relationships of ideas (Campbell 1995; Dewey 1938). Notably, Dewey (1938) categorized social inquiry as an extension of the natural sciences and "as so backward in comparison with physical and biological inquiry" (487). His chapter entitled "Social Inquiry" consisted of the probable comparisons between the social and scientific sciences and culminates with a discussion of the purposes of social inquiry—to address and to solve social problems.

Influenced by the work of Dewey and other progressives, Harold Rugg postulated more direct ideas about the importance of inquiry in the social sciences. In 1921, Rugg published a piece in *Historical Outlook* articulating the need for problem-based social studies curricula designed to prompt investigations on contemporary

problems. Although he claimed his ideas stemmed from scientific methods, his approach really borrowed from activity analysis procedures used by scholars in the field of curriculum (Evans 2007). Certainly, Rugg espoused a belief in a unified social studies curriculum as preferred over studying isolated disciplines and as enabling pertinent focuses on current challenges and modes of living. Like Dewey, his vision of progressive curricula intended to prepare students for democratic life through careful analysis of social issues. Earlier progressives helped prepare a ripe climate for Rugg's efforts to create social studies textbooks for curricular reform in the 1920s and 1930s (Boyle-Baise and Goodman 2009). In the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Rugg textbooks became censured by conservative business and patriotic groups, concerned over children questioning contemporary American life and capitalism (Evans, 2007). Despite the startling, heightened attacks, the Rugg textbooks helped set the stage for future ideas about inquiry and the social disciplines.

Benjamin Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956), in part, inspired new directions towards social studies teaching in the 1960s. The National Defense Education Act of 1958, a response to the Russian launching of *Sputnik* in 1957 and the subsequent educational concerns spawned by this event, resulted in $500 million (spent throughout the next two decades) in funding by the National Science Foundation (NSF) toward curriculum projects. Amid this climate, Jerome Bruner (who worked with the NSF) published his classic work *The Process of Education* in 1961 (later reprinted in 1965), thus forging a critical link between disciplinary knowledge and developmental psychology (Dow 1992). Bloom's cognitive levels of thinking (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) provided pedagogical support for Jerome Bruner's educational theories (Fitzgerald 1983).

Bruner emphasized disciplinary structure as the cognitive framework for thinking. Instruction should pattern the natural structure of the discipline through the *spiral curriculum*, or the early establishment of disciplinary building blocks and the gradual return (through review and the addition of new knowledge) to these foundational elements. This spiral curriculum assumes disciplinary content can be presented in some respectable form to children of any age, given sufficient time and structured learning. Inquiry functions as an essential component of creative thinking and developmental learning (Bruner 1965). Bruner's focus on disciplinary structure built upon earlier discussions such Joseph J. Schwab's work on the structure of the disciplines. In the 1962 publication in the *Educational Record*, Schwab advocated disciplinary structure as essential for organizing the frameworks of curriculum planning, specifically relative to knowledge *and experimental techniques*. Although Schwab focused primarily on the sciences, the idea of experimental techniques equated to the Brunerian concept of inquiry.

As part of the reform efforts, Bruner and Peter Dow (education professor from Harvard) developed in 1961 a new innovative sixth-grade curriculum, *Man: A Course of Study* (MACOS). The curriculum subsumed the social science disciplines (history, geography, political science, anthropology, sociology, and economics) under a study of what it means to be human. The curriculum did emphasize the inquiry as a fundamental approach to learning in the social sciences for children (Bruner 1969; Fitzgerald 1983; Symcox 2002). The development and introduction of MACOS later led to the 1967 seminal publication *The New Social Studies,*

representing the collaborative efforts of Edwin Fenton and Bruner. The Bruner-Fenton new social studies of the 1960s embraced the broader field of social studies through three overarching objectives: the development of inquiry skills, the development of attitudes and values, and the acquisition of knowledge (Fenton 1967a, 1967b; Fitzgerald 1983). The curriculum approach advocated the use of primary document resources and artifacts as appropriate materials for inquiry lessons in the social sciences (Allen 1969; Bowes 1969; Rogers 1969 Schneider, 1969).

By the mid-1970s, however, the efforts of the new social studies became stagnated due to public concerns over poverty, racism, and the Vietnam War and due to increased attacks from conservative political and social groups (Gardner 2001). As a result, the September 1975 report of the Committee on the Status of History in Schools, comprised of representatives from the Organization of American Historians (*OAH)* and the American Historical Association (*AHA*), declared the loss of interest and confidence in history (occurring in only a few short years by students, teachers, administrators, and politicians) as a problem steeped in presentism, or the lack of a historical orientation to the past (Kirkendall 1975). According to Kirkendall (1975), students and teachers both suffered from "textbook orientation, straight chronological treatment, emphasis on dates, unimaginative presentation eschewing meaningful innovation and rational experimentation" (562-563). The Committee on the Status of History in Schools advocated a need for enlightened hindsight (Fitzgerald 1983):

> It seems unlikely that historians can destroy the influence of presentism, but they can reduce the anti-historical consequences of it by demonstrating the value of historical perspective and historical comparisons and the importance of a sense of time and space. (Kirkendall 1975, 570)

Thus, in 1975, Fenton designed his new objectives for social studies—positive attitudes, self-esteem, learning/inquiry skills, knowledge acquisition, and valuing—after Bloom's (1956) affective and cognitive domains. The need for revision of the new social studies prompted Sleeper (1975) to argue in behalf of curricula acknowledging the psychological dispositions of adolescents—meaning the nature of the interaction between the student and the past (Fitzgerald 1983). Sleeper advocated the creation of a new developmental framework, representing the "stages of historical thinking" as "connected to the broader stages of cognitive and psychological development" (105).

The New History in the United Kingdom

Prior to the twentieth century, history in the UK functioned as a subsidiary subject to the "English subjects" of literature, modern languages, and geography. In 1857 and 1858, the Oxford and Cambridge examinations—designed to assess through the quality of education in secondary schools through the testing students in the major disciplines—became the dominate influence on history education (Rosenzweig 1984). The Education Act of 1902 extended central control of the British government over the elementary curriculum; secondary education functioned to prepare students for the university, in part, through the passage of the examinations. Although history remained a minor subject, the number of candidates seeking to take the history examinations proliferated, thereby expanding despite the subject's low status. The purposes for history education evolved around the transmission of an implied unifying political culture, especially emphasizing the Whig influences on a

progressive democracy (Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry 2003). In 1944 when the government instituted mandatory, compulsory secondary education, history classes naturally increased in enrollment, eventually allowing the subject to take a more dominate role (Rosenzweig 1984).

By the late 1960s, critics, including university professors and educational leaders in the government began criticizing history for its lackluster instructional practices and the overemphasis on British/ European political history, at the exclusion of social history and alternative world perspectives (Rosenzweig 1984). The growing dissatisfaction stemmed from three contributing factors: (a) British nationalism became suspect during the post-World War II years; (b) British historians began eschewing broad diplomatic, political, or military narratives and deferred to other social disciplines (a response to the practice of "total history"--meaning focusing on history in the round versus a linear story communicating one theme--from the *Annales* school in France); and (c) the launching of Sputnik in 1957 turned attention toward science and technical education (Booth 1994). The efforts of social historians challenged traditional history and proved largely influential in shifting public opinion to acceptance other histories (social and world) beyond the political narrative of Britain (Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry, 2003).

Research by E. A. Peel (1967a, 1967b), former president of the British Psychological Society and distinguished educational psychology professor at the University of Birmingham, raised questions about the value of history education in the secondary schools. Acknowledging the assumed conceptual and inferential difficulties experienced by students, Peel (1967a, 1967b, 1972) attempted to extend Piaget's experiments with scientific and mathematical reasoning to children's textual reasoning in English and history (Booth 1987; Wineburg 2001).

The thrust of research, however, came from Peel's student Roy N. Hallam and his research with one-hundred British high school students. In his experiments, Hallam asked adolescents (ages 11 to 17) to read three textbook passages from British history and to respond to a series of questions. From his experiements, Hallam determined that formal operational reasoning in history occurred much later than in math and in science (Hallam 1967, 1970, 1971, 1978; Wineburg 2001). The wide promulgation of Hallam's research, however, heightened national concerns in the late 1960s (Booth 1994; Dickinson and Lee 1978) about whether or not history should be taught in the secondary schools. Notably, Hallam's research may have lacked validity for the following reasons: (a) the questions asked of the students failed to connect with the material studied in class; (b) the students expressed confusion over the meaning of the questions; and (c) Hallam's questions involved historical, moral, and religious considerations (Hallam 1967; Lee 1998; Shemilt 1980; Wineburg 2001).

Criticisms of the dominance of British political history in the curriculum heightened fears among conservative politicians of an iconoclast neglect of British history teaching (Lee 1995). Response to this crisis began with individual teachers independently attempting to adopt new approaches. The crisis eventually prompted new reforms as educational leaders began calling for a new history adapted to the needs of a modern school (Ballard 1970; Booth 1994). As a result, the Schools Council formed in 1963 to address these growing concerns through the formation of projects designed to challenge 'the great tradition' (Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry 2003). Their landmark 1968 publication

Schools Council Enquiry One affirmed these complaints through deliberation of the overwhelming public opinion that history teaching lacked usefulness and interest for students and their parents (Lee 1995). As mentioned previously, the widely influential publication "History in Danger" (Price, 1968) set the stage for the Schools Council to initiate a shift--from history as rote learning to history as a form of knowledge—through the creation of the SHP.

Reconsidering the Schools Council History Project

The project influenced teaching in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland; by 1994, approximately 30 percent of all secondary schools in grades 10 and 11 followed the SHP curriculum (Booth 1994). The project prompted the HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors, an executive agency, charged to examine educational quality) in 1977 to support historical thinking as a viable component of curriculum (Fitzgerald 1983). The 1988 Educational Reform Act in the U.K. introduced the National History Curriculum for England. The majority of schools in the United Kingdom adopted some aspect of the SHP into their curricula, and the project furthered an appreciation for active learning and for the examination of primary source material (Booth 1993).

Prior to and in response to the 1988 Educational Reform Act, the right-wing conservatives heavily criticized the SHP for the narrow focus on inquiry and expressed concerns of the loss of British citizenship education. The authors of the SHP found themselves in the midst of a political struggle, with progressive minded child-centered teaching emerging from the left and subject centered, traditional citizenry instruction emerging from the right (Husbands, Kitson, and Pendry 2003; Lee 1995). The National History Curriculum specified learner outcomes and attainment targets to be measured by standardized tests, a concerning aspect of the program due to the faulty nature of the examinations (Lee, 1995). Knight (1996) indicated that the National History Curriculum disappointingly returned to the Piagetian view of children and thinking and therefore structured students' opportunities for historical inquiry around this framework. According to Lee (1995), the national curriculum did not squelch the ideology of the SHP because individual teachers in local schools chose to advocate for the principles of the SHP by integrating aspects of the curriculum into their own methods.

As Peter Lee explained (personal communication September 14, 2005), the SHP brought recognition in the UK of the term historical empathy. The adoption of historical empathy as the purpose of SHP spawned a flurry of confusion over the precise meaning and implication of the term (Lee and Ashby 2001; Stockley 1983). As both Lee (1995) and Booth (1994) affirmed, the resulting mechanistic curriculum and the emphasis on standardized testing regrettably clouded the SHP's founders intents regarding empathy as an educational goal (Booth 1994; Lee 1995). The National History Curriculum did encourage a limited focus on people in the past and their perspectives, but overall, the curriculum still remained primarily political rather than social in nature.

In the early 1980s, North American researchers began responding to British initiatives by exploring historical empathy (Stockley 1983), procedural knowledge, and disciplined inquiry (Fitzgerald, 1983). The work by Howard Gardner on thinking, cognition, and multiple intelligences and his leading publications *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) and *The*

Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution (1985) energized researchers and practitioners toward new considerations of thinking (S. Wineburg personal communication October 24, 2005). In this intellectual environment, the 1983 special issue on the philosophy of history teaching in *History and Theory* (published at Wesleyan University), outlining Peter Lee's and Denis Shemilt's theory of historical empathy and their efforts with the Schools Council History Project, proved instrumental in spawning a wave of research—slowly building in the 1980s and increasing in the 1990s—relative to disciplined inquiry, learning theory, and procedural knowledge in history. Although "the exact pond crossing" (L. Levstik personal communication October 24, 2005) from Great Britain to the United States remains unclear, this issue proved influential in generating a new group of North American researchers, including Sam Wineburg (personal communication October 24, 2005), and by directing the attention on thinking and cognition toward a specific focus on disciplinary history.

The Schools Council History Project impacted curriculum theory in history education in both the United Kingdom and North America through its emphasis on history as a form of knowledge and on history as inquiry. The project primarily challenged the Piaget-Hallam ideology by encouraging teachers to directly emphasize historical thinking skills. The project's contributions to history education include the fundamental issues of:

(a) the illumination of new cognitive and developmental possibilities for adolescents

(b) the acknowledgment of history as a form of knowledge through a reliance on the structure of the discipline and the teaching of the historian's craft

(c) the development of historical inquiry as curriculum, with an emphasis on history as motive and history as time, and with an emphasis on social history and people

(d) the encouragement of the active teaching of history

(e) the adoption of historical empathy (the careful consideration of an historical view of the past *from the perspective of the agents involved*) as a noteworthy aim

(f) the fueling of research on the nature of cognition in history (historical thinking)

(g) the lucid highlighting of a pragmatic—yet philosophically based--theory of teaching and learning in history

The project, however, did suffer from limitations. Shemilt (2000) recently re-examined the project and discovered two main problems. First, the repeated emphasis on the mastery of facts and concepts proved problematic because the students acquired only isolated bits of information. As a result, the history curriculum failed to foster interconnected meanings. Second, the partial inclusion of narrative history often led to students' confusions regarding the relationship to and the difference between focused micro histories and grand linear histories. This apparent gap handicapped students' ability to either postulate any probable causation for event-

making or to couch causation in terms of imaginative rather than logical possibilities.

Despite these limitations, the SHP merits attention from those currently interested in history education, and more specifically historical inquiry, historical thinking, and historical empathy. The project team developed the first large-scale Western curriculum founded upon the premise of history as inquiry. John Fines enumerated the contributions of the Denis Shemilt and the Schools Council History Project: "He has cast new light upon the nature of discipline in school, clarifying the meaning in terms of History as enquiry, History as time, and History as motive" (Fines, 1980, Forward). The Schools Council History Project challenged Piagetian assumptions of adolescents by highlighting "how badly we underestimate children as thinkers and children as learners," (Fines, 1980, Forward) and "if we ask good questions and really listen, we can actually hear children thinking and learning" (Fines, 1980, Forward). Reconsidering the aims of SHP remind scholars and teachers of the importance of offering children the opportunity to explore the past, to develop complex understandings, and to articulate rich historical perspectives.

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