

## **Recovering Education: History in the Post-Pandemic Classroom**

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With the cancellation of exams in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the fiasco in the award of qualifications, not just in Scotland but across the UK. The announcement that National 5 exams would not go ahead in 2021 and teacher assessment will once again form the basis of qualifications provides the opportunity to propose a different approach to the curriculum in schools. The COVID-19 Education Recovery Group set up by the Scottish Government is tasked with ensuring excellence and equity in education as well as providing leadership and coping strategies for the recovery of the education system during and beyond the pandemic. Furthermore, the Group is to be a forum for discussion on proposed improvements and will consider changes to education strategy (Scottish Government, 2020). Now is the time, therefore, to critically review our education system, particularly the number of exams young people sit and the purpose they serve. As teachers of history, we should aim to influence the discussion and propose changes that benefit our subject and the young people that sit in our classrooms. The suggested way forward here is the permanent removal of the National 5 exam which may be considered a radical move but one that would transform the learning and teaching experience of history for us and our pupils.

### **Why remove the National 5 exam?**

Before considering what History could look like in the classroom without the National 5 exam, it is important to briefly make the case for its removal. The most important exams for many young people are Highers because those are the level needed for most university courses and some college courses; the academic route. National 5 is usually the route to taking the Higher and as their teachers, we know our pupils and their abilities best, therefore, we would be able to determine which pupils should continue to Higher History. Indeed, teacher estimates having been used this year to award fair grades to all provides a precedent for the judgement of teachers to be recognised as the key to pupil assessment and recommendations for the next phase: academic or vocational. This will require further thinking about the structure of our education system: removing the National 5 exam could change the structure of schools to extend the Broad General Education (BGE) into S4 and the senior phase to become a two-year programme of exams or vocational studies

delivered through a combination of schools, colleges and work experience/apprenticeships (Philp, 2018).

A benefit of no exam for all in S4 is that the classroom could once again become a place of equality and equity, where pupils are not divided by their ability to sit an exam or not, where Nationals 3 and 4 are too easy, thus demotivating, for so many and where individuals get the required resources based on need. The gap between National 4 and National 5 has been a wide one from the outset but this has become wider as the National 5 exam has become more challenging. Exams are valued as the test of ability, mainly because parents/carers, employers and other stakeholders understand what they are supposed to do and they have strict marking schemes, while Nationals 3 and 4, awarded by assessments not bound by time or recalled knowledge (so-called 'open book'), are valued less, even by the young people doing them. Furthermore, in many classrooms, pupils follow National 5 courses with a lot of content they do not need or are given resources and told to work their way through these while the National 5 course is taught. This is understandable because we are judged primarily on exam results and the future of our subject (and jobs) depend on a successful pass rate as a means of encouraging uptake. Take away the National 5 exam and all pupils become equal and we can ensure equity by giving everyone in our classes the time and resources they need to raise attainment.

The concern whenever change is proposed is that there has been too much change already, we have just got used to the new system, National 5 continues to be updated so we're still getting to grips with all of that and so on. However, why not change something that needs to be improved? Sandra Leaton Gray undertook a research project about schools across the European Union which demonstrated that 'the UK is the only European country to have high-stakes testing at 16, with others adopting a more enlightened approach... Instead, the schools have teacher-moderated assessment and relatively low-stakes internal exams, mainly as a progress check to ensure pupils are on track' (Leaton Gray 2018). She observed that these schools, 'provide a spectacularly broad and balanced education of the kind most UK parents can only dream of' (Leaton Gray 2018). Yet some of our young people have been sitting National 5 exams at the age of 15.

It could be argued that the National 5 exam is driven by the ability to remember things; firstly, the content of the topics, secondly, the rigid processes by which to answer the questions. As O'Hanlon says this has led to the teaching of topics to be driven by practising exam questions over and over again which, although it 'can improve exam technique, it is unlikely to result in pupils getting better at history' (O'Hanlon, 2018). We have been constrained by inflexible marking schemes which allow very little scope for professional judgement, examining the reliability of answering questions over the validity of how young people handle historical material. The fact that we are judged on exam results, that SQA marking schemes are so prescriptive and we operate within time constraints means that we often 'teach to the test'. This can lead to valuing what is measured rather than measuring what is valuable. Yet 'passing an exam and being good at history are two entirely separate objectives'. It is increasing the historical understanding of pupils that will increase their ability to perform at a higher level (O'Hanlon, 2018).

There is general consensus that teaching generic skills does not make for good history education. Learning skills through repeated practice and repeating the same types of questions does not lead to pupils grasping concepts (Lee, 2010). Counsell goes further in saying that an obsession with assessments that are skills based and adherence to strict marking schemes takes the joy out of learning history and is not effective in history education (Counsell, 2018). Wineburg's view supports this: 'relying on generic skills ... offers precious little about students' ability to read and think historically' (quoted in Lévesque and Clark, 2018).

### **Developing a revised curriculum**

If we are to remove the National 5 exam, then something has to replace it in terms of what we teach, how we teach it and how we assess learning. Nationals 3 and 4 would also be removed so that all young people would have the opportunities to achieve individual potential through the same route of progression.

Assessment in the BGE from S1 through to S4 should be meaningful whether a school takes the approach of all pupils studying the subject into S4 or retaining an element of choice after S2 or S3. From S1 pupils would be working towards gaining a History credit on their education certificate. If they do not opt for History after S2 or S3 (depending on your school's arrangements) then they can be credited with whatever they have achieved by that stage. In that way, everything they do from S1 counts towards their certificate. Those that choose History into S4 will continue to work towards achieving the best level they can and demonstrate suitability for Higher as appropriate.

Extending the BGE into S4 means we could look again at what we teach. The replacement of strict exam content by a system where teachers and pupils can have flexibility in the choice of topics to be studied would allow teachers to 'be creative, design lessons appropriate to the young people they have in the classroom and not be constrained by exam syllabi' (Philp, 2018).

The structure of the BGE decided in schools, however, may retain existing issues in terms of subject choice and history as part of social subjects. Worldwide history has become part of 'social studies' or 'social subjects' (Lévesque and Clark, 2018) and Lee, among others, has commented that this has made it easy for history to 'lose its sense of purpose' (Lee, 2010). Smith makes the point that 'we must understand the 'unique disciplinary contribution' of history. While social subjects have much in common history has a distinct identity that those who lived in the past can no longer speak for themselves' (Smith, 2016). Whether history regains its place as a discrete subject or retains a role within social subjects we must take this opportunity to design a history curriculum that reflects the uniqueness of the subject and even have the word 'history' replacing 'People, Past Events and Societies'; recognising the discipline that is history.

The most important thing is what we teach and making it meaningful. This goes to the heart of what history education is about and why we teach the subject in schools in the first place. There is an opportunity to create courses that sit coherently within social studies, if that remained the case, while demonstrating the unique value that only history brings: the framework of the past to make sense of the present and make decisions about the future, which is discussed in more depth below. The BGE should have two key aims: providing a framework for young people who do not continue with history to view the world and preparing those who

choose to study history further with a rigorous set of tools to do so. The focus needs to be enabling young people to get better at history, allowing scope for progression.

### **Progression via extending the BGE using the Experiences and Outcomes**

One approach would be to extend what we are already doing in terms of the Experiences and Outcomes (E&Os) and associated benchmarks. The BGE already gives us the freedom to adapt our courses as circumstances and needs change, supposedly designed to allow for achievement of different levels at different stages. 'Learning is usually not linear and learners may progress along different routes and pathways through the experiences and outcomes. It will take time to progress from secure learning within one level to the next' (Education Scotland, 2011). In terms of assessment the benchmarks could be a starting point given that we are supposed to use them to 'plan periodic, holistic assessment of children's and young people's learning' while avoiding 'undue focus on individual Benchmarks which may result in over-assessing or recording of learners' progress' (Education Scotland, 2020).

However, this is fraught with difficulty and does not make for meaningful assessment. Smith clearly outlines some of the problems with the E&Os including the use of 'I can' statements, the scope for misunderstanding terminology such as identity, empathy, evidence, the inherent tick box approach to progression and the confusion between substantive knowledge and second order concepts (which are given a low status) (Smith, 2016). Smith's conclusion is that the E&Os are at the same time overly simplistic and overly complex. Although the E&Os were not intended to be progressive in a linear way, they have tended to be adopted as such in practice, for example, where some schools have instructed that pupils could not have 'achieved' beyond a certain level by the end of S1 to allow for recording of progression at the end of S2. The benchmarks were supposed to clarify the issue of the broadness of the E&Os, to provide a framework for assessment, yet they adopt an exam style numerical approach which does not necessarily mean that pupils are getting better at history.

### **Progression focused on procedural knowledge**

Getting history education 'right' in schools is vital not just because a lot of children give up history at the end of S2 after an average of only an hour per week but also because learning does not stop in school. We learn outside of school as children and continue to do so as adults. History is available from various media, parents/carers, friends and so on and Lee asserts that 'awareness of the past and the claims we make about it come in many forms', and is used by some for their own purposes. Therefore, history education in schools should ensure young people are 'better able to understand the past than they could otherwise have done' (Lee, 2010).

Stearns opines that 'a well-trained student of history' learns how to assess evidence and conflicting interpretations as well as gain 'an essential skill in what we are regularly told is our 'ever-changing world' (Stearns, 1998). This is a view that remains relevant and shared by others. Lévesque and Clark discuss history education as a means to transform 'the way pupils see the world' (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Lee agrees that seeing the world through history is important but that

it is more than about recalled knowledge, there must be understanding and learning of new concepts. History 'must make a difference to intellectual behaviour'. He discusses the importance of producing the 'best possible arguments' that have validity, truth, respect for evidence, acceptance of different stories, respect for people in the past, and link the past to the present and the future (Lee, 2010). Historical consciousness is the 'interpretation of the past that allows an understanding of the present and the consideration of the future' Duquette (2015, p. 53). Historical thinking and historical consciousness are different pedagogical traditions in historical education but both express the importance for history to be usable in the present and both distinguish between substantive knowledge (content) and second order concepts or procedural knowledge which underpins and transcends content.

As a course of study, a curriculum should have 'content structured as a narrative' where 'every bit of content has a function'. Counsell talks about the idea of a 'hinterland' of knowledge which supports 'core' knowledge. The hinterland might include vocabulary and terminology which become locked in long term memory that is accessed whenever pupils come across it. She refers to layers of knowledge and prior knowledge which pupils build up over time and which they draw on to make progress in a subject (Counsell, 2018). Clearly knowledge is important, yet, according to Lévesque and Clark (2018), 'few teachers consider knowledge when planning'. Smith did a survey of twenty-one schools where he asked the reasons for the content chosen to teach the BGE. Popular reasons included the selection of topics which pupils might find exciting in order to encourage uptake because uptake equals job security. Even where integrated social subjects were taught successfully in S1, the competition for options, and resulting rivalry for recruits, became apparent in S2. Another common reason was preparation for the senior phase (Smith, 2019). All of these reasons we recognise and are understandable, but, when we consider the importance of historical education, they are not good enough. Choosing content should go hand in hand with facilitating pupils becoming better at history and emphasising the uniqueness of our subject. That also involves moving away from the 'generic skills' approach discussed above.

### **Substantive knowledge**

First, there has to be substantive knowledge, the content. This should paint a picture of the past and be usable (Lee, 2010). It is the core knowledge which is to be recalled (Counsell, 2018) and what history is about. More than any other subject, knowledge selection is a dilemma in history given its vastness. How do we decide what to teach? No wonder we resort to 'what will they find engaging to make sure we have the numbers next year'. We could focus on substantive concepts such as 'empire', 'nation', 'factory', 'colonialism', 'Reformation', 'industrialisation'. Then we have to consider what time periods we cover in the time available. Do we go for a broad sweep, or an in-depth study? No wonder that the BGE is often watered-down versions of exam syllabi (Smith, 2019). Referring to the research of Kate Hammond in 2014, whatever the topic, pupils with 'good knowledge' should be able to use knowledge to demonstrate understanding such as referring to the broader context of an event, be able to work with layers of knowledge: previous learning that brings deeper understanding to what is being

currently studied and be able to 'switch between historical frames when appropriate' (Ford, accessed 2020).

Whatever content we decide should go hand in hand with second order concepts, also referred to as procedural knowledge. Pupils can learn content but it is procedural knowledge that leads to progression in history and that progression can be demonstrated and recorded (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Ford comments on Counsell's research that 'to deepen their understanding of history there needs to be interplay of historical knowledge and conceptual understanding' (Ford, accessed 2020).

## **Content**

Without the constraints of exam syllabi topics could be chosen by the teacher or in discussion with pupils. A list could be compiled through consultation because it would remain important to include breadth of topics in keeping with Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) principles and share resources. Again, we can start from what we already teach in the BGE and for the Nationals; we just don't need to be constrained by the SQA topics nor teach every bit of a topic. Current topics may well remain as optional elements in whole or parts, for example, a comparison of the impact of the First World War in Scotland and Russia, a comparison of the 1930s in Germany, Russia and the USA reflecting differing political systems and the response of each country to the Great Depression. Both of these examples could adapt existing resources from current courses. Furthermore, there would be flexibility to make history responsive to current events, for example, with regards to the Black Lives Matter campaign, we could focus attention on the history of civil rights in Scotland and the UK. Or maybe adapt the Atlantic Slave Trade unit to focus less on the benefits brought to Britain by the trade and more on the consequences of the trade with reference to racism, the debate over statues and so on. Such an approach would also fit with social subjects, for example, linking political systems to Modern Studies, the study of the geography of the Holocaust, both human and landscape. At the same time, young people are learning substantive history and the procedures involved in studying evidence.

Keeping current topics and agreeing any new ones would make sense in terms of using the resources we already have especially if money has been spent on textbooks and publishers requiring to know what we teach in order to produce textbooks to make profits. That said, the pandemic led to publishers making textbooks available online and it may be that how we access books could change in line with technology such as books being available online by chapter. The important thing would be for publishers to ensure that any textbook gets it right this time: when the Nationals were implemented most were written as National 4/5 textbooks which missed the point that these are different courses.

## **Procedural knowledge**

Procedural knowledge is essential to understanding history (Lee, 2010). Where substantive knowledge is the 'know what', procedural knowledge is to 'know how'. It is about assessing the validity of accounts of the past and being able to produce accounts that are more valid. It is about providing a framework for critical analysis and understanding how knowledge of history is put together (Smith,

2016). Procedural knowledge shapes the way historians ‘do’ history and must not be confused with skills (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Smith opines that children can be inducted and develop procedural concepts (Smith, 2016) while O’Hanlon concludes that pupils rarely improve written responses without the understanding of procedural concepts. It leads them to perform better in exams by increasing their awareness of what they have been asked to do (O’Hanlon, 2018). Given the evidence, it makes sense that we use procedural knowledge as the basis for assessing progression in history.

*The Historical Association* (accessed 2020) organises procedural knowledge into the headings that follow.

### *Cause and consequence*

The ability to identify short- and long-term causes of events and the resulting impacts which might take years to be felt. The need to establish ‘layers of cause’ and the ‘ripples afterwards’ so that we can reach understandings useful to the present, look for lessons to learn from and consider how historical narratives can be used in society (Lévesque and Clark, 2018).

There are a number of ‘key strands’ which need to be understood; there are multiple causes of events that can lead to varying consequences, that causes should be prioritised in terms of how much of an influence each one had, that there are underlying causes: the conditions that affect what people do and that there can be unintended consequences because people cannot predict the consequences of their actions (Ford, accessed 2020).

### *Continuity and change*

Lévesque and Clark identify continuity and change as one of the benchmarks established by Seixas in 2006, the ‘problem’ being how changes and continuities are interwoven (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Lee argues that ‘assumptions about change can make history either unintelligible or useless’, citing the responses of two pupils to the question, ‘would history help in deciding how to deal with race relations?’. One said yes, the other no. The pupil who said no interpreted changes as localised events or actions over a short period of time while the pupil who said yes understood that change is a process, therefore being able to see ‘the present as the moving face of the past’. Change should relate the past to the present and is part of the ‘conceptual apparatus’ needed to understand history (Lee, 2010).

The process of continuity and change should enable, for example, the understanding that past societies are not fixed, that chronologies can be used to show how they are interwoven over time, that change can vary over time in terms of flow, pace, extent and turning points, that change and continuity are not a single process (Ford, accessed 2020).

### *Similarity & difference*

Ford refers to this as ‘historical perspectives’ to reflect that what is essential is to try to ‘see the past on its own terms’. History should not be interpreted through the prism of present-day values and concepts; it is important to think about the thoughts and feelings of people in the past and not imagine the past based on modern world views (Ford accessed 2020). The Historical Association cites that

the concept of similarity and difference is ‘to move beyond stereotypical assumptions about people in the past, to recognise and analyse the diversity of past experience...between different sorts of people – and between people within the same group’ (The Historical Association, accessed 2020). Ford also recognises the diversity of experiences of people in the past and concludes that ‘understanding diversity is key to understanding history’ (Ford accessed 2020).

There is also the notion of historical empathy, ‘understanding why people in the past thought and acted as they did’ and empathy as caring, ‘the emotional connections and interests necessary to care about and for history’ (Lévesque and Clark, 2018).

### *Significance*

When we select the topics to teach, we are already deciding what is significant. When we do so, we might think about the narrative, the historical questions: what is worth learning about? The decision to select certain events over others might include profundity, quantity, durability, relevance, intimate interest, symbolic significance, contemporary relevance or identification (the association with specific people and events in history) (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Ford talks about significance as provisional because it can vary over time and criteria are needed to judge it (Ford, accessed 2020). As procedural knowledge, pupils should be able to explain why a certain event or person from history is significant at any given time. They might consider, for example, what was new about an event in the past, apply its significance to the present, think about why certain events are remembered and the impact of an event (History Skills, accessed 2020).

Lévesque and Clark raise the ethical dimension: how can we judge people in the past? When and how do crimes and sacrifices bear consequence today? What obligations do we have? Our moral response can be directed to a variety of ends such as remembrance, condemnation, admiration, activism (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). This affects not only decisions on what is significant to teach but also what is considered significant beyond the school subject that is history.

### *Evidence*

‘Without evidence, there is of course no history to speak of, only speculation’ (Ford, accessed 2020). Working with evidence is complex and it is crucial to get it right. The strands identified by Ford include drawing inferences from primary sources to create interpretations, that evidence must be cross-referenced, that the utility of evidence depends on the question, that author, audience and purpose should be considered before the source is read and it must be understood within the context of the time. Lévesque and Clark refer to these as the problem of evidence: how do we know things and use evidence to support claims? Looking at source type, the context of sources, comparing sources is needed as well as asking meaningful questions, evaluating and reaching conclusions (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Lee draws attention to the need to respect evidence and that it is disastrous to consider such as bias or reliability as fixed attributes (Lee, 2010). There must be competent and ethical use of source material yet CfE does not currently appreciate the distinction between ‘source’ and ‘evidence’ (Smith, 2016).



## *Interpretations*

'Every piece of historical writing is an interpretation of some sort. The past is not fixed but constructed through interpretations' (Ford, accessed 2020). However, these interpretations can differ; historians can work on the same issue at different times and places yet reach different conclusions which are equally valid (Lipscomb, 2016). Lévesque and Clark relate interpretations to providing insight into our own lives, giving guidance to contemporary actions, forming perspectives and displaying information about the past (Lévesque and Clark, 2018).

Interpretations are constructs of the past which should go beyond labelling as primary or secondary sources, a notion that is open to confusion. Just because someone was alive when an event occurred does not make them an eyewitness to it and does not make an interpretation more 'useful'. Too often pupils say that secondary sources are not useful because the author was not there. This does not reflect the complexity of interpretations. The Historical Association (2019) proposes that secondary sources require a different set of questions and a special kind of attention. The related article and Card cite the work of McAleavy who 'emphasised the value of looking at real interpretations, chronologically distant from the period under study, so that pupils could see how an event and its significance are refracted through the shifting values and priorities of time' (Card, 2004).

The Historical Association (2019) further explains that interpretations are always created for a reason and in a particular context. There needs to be a clear sense of who created (the) interpretation, in what circumstances, and for what purpose. A common mistake is to ask pupils to only reach a judgement about accuracy or truthfulness. Furthermore, it is not enough to briefly summarise the argument of the chosen historian or other interpreter. Pupils should build knowledge about the interpretation itself, the period of the interpreter and the period being interpreted. They should be introduced to the sheer range of interpretations. If they see how interpretations or particular types of interpretation change over time, they start to understand more of the complexity of factors that can shape interpretations. History should give pupils the opportunity to study the interpretations of others, which is what it is, and to construct their own interpretations of the past.

## **Progression**

Counsell suggests that procedural knowledge makes substantive knowledge possible (Counsell, 2016). Progression, therefore, must be based on procedural knowledge. As teachers of history, we know about procedural knowledge yet have found ourselves in a system driven by content and generic skills which might enable pupils to do exams but have not made them better at history. The BGE has often focused on how we engage pupils to want to take our subject rather than providing the tools to view the world should they not do so. Yet it is clear that to have layers of substantive knowledge built up over time underpinned by procedural knowledge provides the foundation and framework not only for progression in history but also for future learning outside of the history classroom and successful exam performance within it.

Progression models can be constructed for some procedural knowledge and Ford has done a piece of research which brings together the work of Scott (1990), Morton and Seixas (2012), Blow (2011), Foster (2013), Lee and Shemilt (2003, 2004), Wineburg (1999, 2007), Counsell (2004), Phillips (2002) to suggest models of progression (Ford, accessed 2020). Byrom also did research on this related to the 2014 National Curriculum in England (accessed 2020).

It is important to note that progression in different aspects of procedural knowledge will happen at different rates. They do not increase in tandem with each other (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). Progression is also not linked to age; research conducted by the Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches 7-14 (CHATA) project revealed the notion of the 'seven-year gap'; some seven-year olds thought like fourteen-year olds and vice versa (Lévesque and Clark, 2018). O'Hanlon's reading has shown that teaching is essential to historical understanding, and not age (O'Hanlon, 2018).

Note also that 'progression' is different to 'progress'. Pupils can make progress in, for example, note-taking, essay writing, giving presentations and recalling information. This relates to 'the aggregationist assumptions that seem to be implicit in examinations, widespread among curriculum managers in schools and enshrined in classroom practice'. Progression, on the other hand, is about 'the way in which pupils' ideas – about history and about the past – develop' and has to 'show some structure in the way children's ideas change' (Lee and Shemilt, 2003). Working on procedural knowledge does not simply add to information about the past but enables understanding of the discipline of history. For example, a progression model for cause and consequence may begin with the idea that there is a single cause for what has happened in the past. That things in the past happened because of the actions/plans of a particular person or group and that consequences were unintended. Progression through various stages may lead to understanding that there are multiple short-term and long-term causes of events to be assessed. Relationships between causes are recognised and historical change is explained through the interplay of actions and underlying as social, political, economic, religious or military conditions. A differentiation is made between the intended and unintended consequences of actions (Ford, accessed 2020).

Taking into account various draft models and research (as discussed above), progression in cause and consequence may look something like this:

## Progression in ideas about Cause and Consequence

### **Sole Reasons**

Pupils believe there is a single cause for what has happened in the past. Things in the past happened because of the actions/plans of a particular person or group. Consequences were unintended.

### **Multiple Reasons**

Pupils recognise that there are multiple causes for what happened in the past. Why things happened might be questioned and explanations offered. Consequences were incidental.

### **Motivations**

Pupils recognise why people did certain things and that consequences may have been intended. They identify the causes and results of historical events, situations or changes.

### **Impacts**

Pupils recognise that actions and events have an impact on the lives of people at the time and on the lives of people after the time. These may be planned or unintended. Effects can be immediate, short term or long term.

### **Prioritisation**

Reasons for historical events are discussed in terms of relative importance. Different causes are ranked by their influence. The consequences at the time of an event and after the time of an event are assessed in terms of importance.

### **Cause and Consequence in Contexts**

Multiple short-term and long-term causes of events are assessed. Relationships between causes are recognised. Historical change is explained through the interplay of actions and the underlying conditions, for example, social, political, economic, religious or military conditions. A differentiation is made between the intended and unintended consequences of actions.

More detailed examples of progression in ideas about evidence and progression in ideas about historical accounts have been provided by Lee and Shemilt (2003, 2004), the former briefly summarised below:

<b>Progression in ideas about evidence</b>
<b>Pictures of the past</b> The past is viewed as the present. Stories are just stories.
<b>Information</b> The past is fixed. Sources provide information that is either correct or incorrect.
<b>Testimony</b> The past is reported by people living at the time; this is done well or badly. History has a methodology for testing statements. Notions of bias, exaggeration and missing information supplement the idea of truth or lies. Conflicts in potential evidence are decided by which report is best.
<b>Scissors and paste</b> We can put together a version of the past by picking out true statements from different reports and putting them together, taking account of whether the reporter is in a position to know.
<b>Evidence in isolation</b> Statements about the past can be inferred from sources of evidence. Historians may work out historical facts even if no testimony survives. The weight we give any piece of evidence depends on the questions we ask of it.
<b>Evidence in context</b> A source only provides evidence when understood in its historical context. This includes provisional acceptance of much historical work as established fact. A sense of period is important.

### Recording and reporting attainment

There remains the issue of recording progress and attainment. That usually means being able to allocate some form of mark, level or grade so that we can provide evidence for our decisions and provide reports for senior management, parents/carers and other stakeholders.

The progression models suggested are research based and would be used to ‘pick out the main features of progression over the long term’. Essentially, they could provide the comments in our reports to reflect that Pupil A has made a secure transition to (whatever level) in understanding evidence but understanding of cause remains at (whatever level). These would sit alongside the methods of assessment we use for units of work where shorter-term achievable objectives are needed (Lee and Shemilt, 2003).

### Conclusion

The removal of the National 5 exam in 2020 and 2021 provides us with the opportunity to discuss and influence the teaching and learning of history in our classrooms in the future. It is suggested that the National 5 exam be removed permanently and replaced with a system that provides equality and equity for all young people in our classrooms. We would focus more on procedural knowledge which is essential to understanding history rather than being overly focused on teaching to an exam. Progression in procedural knowledge concepts recognises

the uniqueness of our subject and leads to pupils becoming 'better' at the discipline of history. This, in turn, will provide them with the tools to study history at a higher level during their school career, at university, or in the future should they return as adult learners. Understanding procedural knowledge also provides a prism for those who do not study history after the BGE phase to formulate informed views about the past rather than accepting ideas that can be presented through a variety of media and influencers.

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