What does it mean to decolonise the curriculum?

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MSc in Learning and Teaching, 2021

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Abstract

The events of the summer of 2020, with the murder of George Floyd and the toppling of the statue of Edward Colston, reignited calls for curriculum change in the UK. Activists voiced the need for a more racially diverse, decolonised curriculum, particularly in school history. With the ambiguity surrounding the contested term, decolonisation, this paper explores what it may mean in practice. It considers why decolonisation is important and relevant in education before scrutinising the history curriculum more specifically. The centrality of engaged pedagogy in service of decolonisation is also emphasised. Borne out of collaboration with local history organisation, *Uncomfortable Oxford*, this paper examines the impact of a series of nine lessons jointly planned on local history, taught to one year seven class. These lessons aimed to provide answers to three research questions: what might be the impact of local history in decolonising the curriculum?; how does a focus on construction of history impact on students historical thinking?; and lastly, how does a pedagogy built around praxis, voice and usefulness support decolonisation? A mixed methods approach, consisting of an initial iterative questionnaire, field notes, and second questionnaire, was employed to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings suggest that pupils may not initially realise the range of places history can be located, their own ability to participate in the discipline, or the importance of the topic taught (in this case, local history). But, when taught with a focus on decolonisation, revealing the processes that have constructed historical narratives, considering alternative histories, emphasising praxis and student voice, the importance, meaning and power of the discipline can be unlocked.

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Introduction

It felt especially pertinent to explore decolonising the school curriculum, particularly the history curriculum, in the year 2020. Whilst a global pandemic loomed large, the murder of yet another Black man, George Floyd, by a white police officer, sparked protests across the United States. America's 'racial reckoning' travelled across the Atlantic and caught hold. Black Lives Matter protests swept major cities in the UK, the statue of slave-trader Edward Colston was pulled down in Bristol, and chants of 'Take it down' and 'Shame on you' (Cvorak, 2020) engulfed the statue of Cecil Rhodes in central Oxford, fewer than two miles from where I teach. The singular sense that history was very much alive in these political events was inescapable; imperial history was casting its shadow over the present whilst events that may one day come to hold great historical significance were in the making. In Stuart Hall's (ca. 1973 in Bennett, 2016: 284) words, we had arrived at a conjuncture, defined as, 'both a moment of danger and one of opportunity; it was something to intervene in, a configuration whose components were to be rearranged through practice. It was a call to action—intellectual, social, cultural, political'. Haitian anthropologist, Trouillot (1995: 11), offers a way of interpreting these events, 'At some stage, for reasons that are themselves historical, most often spurred by controversy, collectivities experience the need to impose a test of credibility on certain events or narratives because it matters to them whether these events are true or false, whether these stories are fact or fiction.' Applying Trouillot's analysis, Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 tested the credibility of popular historical narratives about imperialism, slavery and 'race'. These tests appeared in various places: the aforementioned contentions around statues; the National Trust released a report detailing their property's links to colonialism and slavery (Huxtable et al., 2020); and campaigners renewed calls for changes to the school history curriculum to better reflect

Black history (Weale et al., 2020). All of these debates interrogate the nature of popular narratives surrounding histories and legacies of slavery and colonialism. The conflagration following the horrific murder of Floyd made action and deliberation imperative; I felt duty bound to honour the conjuncture, to learn and take action where I could.

As indicated above credibility questions were asked across a range of places, and schools soon became a site of contestation with campaigners renewing historic calls for changes to the school history curriculum to better reflect Black history (Weale et al., 2020). Diversifying the history curriculum had been an enduring interest of mine since becoming a teacher in 2016, but in the summer of 2020 debates on the relationship between Empire, 'race' and the history curriculum became more fervent and frequent. That the history curriculum became a site of conflict was almost inevitable, as evidenced by historical precedence. Taylor and Guyver (2014), offer a global perspective on 'history wars', provocatively describing the politicisation of the history curriculum in various countries. In the UK, for example, Gove's (2010) history curriculum called upon school history to, 'reinvigorate a sense of shared values and to halt the perception of spiralling national decline' (Taylor and Guyver, 2014: xviii). Ahonen (2010) focuses on political motivations shaping history curricula in Estonia and East Germany following the Soviet Union's collapse. Evidently, stakeholders with varying political motivations seek to construct the curriculum in their image, in the hope of shaping future generations and society (see for example, Wilkinson, 2014; Kitson and Huber 2020; Alexander and Weekes-Bernard, 2016; Hawkey and Prior, 2011).

History's centrality is confirmed by Wineburg (in Stearns et al. 2000: 307) in his exploration of young people's historical consciousness, 'I write these words at a time when the scent of blood rises from the fields of Kosovo. When sixteen- and seventeen-year-old adversaries lay waste to each other's villages and shell each other into oblivion, they do so as *historical* beings, as representatives of struggles each side has inherited and made its own.' Yet, the ubiquity and usefulness of history for civic participation is not always realised by pupils (van Straaten et al. 2015). Calls for diversifying the curriculum by including more Black history, whilst important, seemed to fall short of addressing this. Trouillot (1995) implicates the discipline of history itself, arguing that it creates silences through various stages of the historical process – from creating sources and establishing archives, to producing narratives and affording 'retrospective significance', i.e. constructing history in the final stage (Trouillot, 1995: 26). This suggests that whilst curricular representation is important, simply adding more characters of colour may not tackle processes which wrote them out in the first place. Therefore, if we are to overturn an endemic pattern of silencing, the antecedents of history as a discipline and their role in shaping the curriculum, must be considered too.

Meanwhile, studies such as the 2007 Historical Association report, *Teaching Emotive and Controversial History,* suggest that for a range of reasons and to varying degrees, teachers may be reluctant to address potentially emotive and difficult histories. Chapman highlights 'how complex and difficult it is to interpret, represent and teach a contested and controversial past' (Chapman, 2007: 321). Furthermore, Taylor and Guyver (2014) find during 'history wars', history falls prey to politicised forces which reduce its 'critical, reflective, reflexive and multi-perspectival nature […] in favour of […] a politically expedient,

self-serving monoculturalism' (Taylor and Guyver, 2014: xii). Thus, politicisation of the history curriculum presents both the 'opportunity' and 'danger' that arises during a conjuncture (Hall ca. 1973 in Bennett, 2016). My responsibility as a history educator in particular is thrown into sharp relief by this analysis; the conjuncture during the summer of 2020 required deliberation and action.

These recent debates, aligned with history's enduring value, meant that I began to consider my teaching practices in three key interrelated ways (see Figure 1). Firstly, how far had I equipped my students to engage with public discourse on legacies of empire, 'race' and racism, and the history curriculum – did they have sufficient historical knowledge, understanding and confidence to participate in these conversations? Secondly, just as debates about legacies of colonialism in wider society were ensuing, how far had they shaped my teaching and in particular, my history teaching? Perhaps a colonised curriculum had narrowed the possibility of my history curriculum offering meaning to students in the debates concerning decolonisation. Thirdly, what did resurgence of the term 'decolonisation' mean in theory and practice for my curriculum – did it offer any tangible value beyond semantics in comparison previously touted bywords for achieving 'racial' justice, such as 'diversifying', 'inclusion' and 'multiculturalism'?

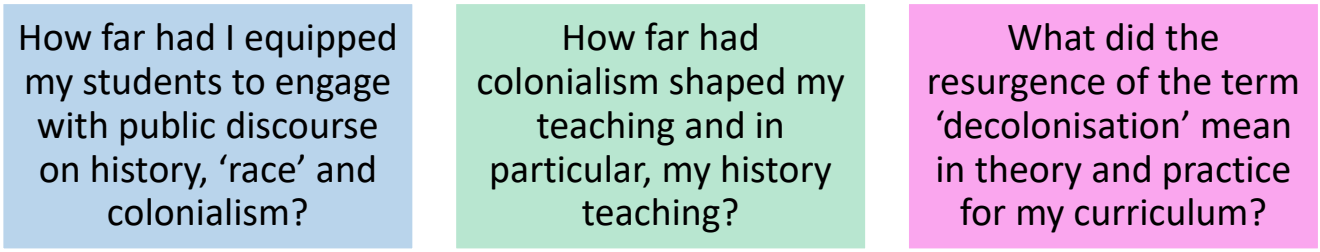


Figure 1 - Initial research questions

To begin to answer these questions, Taylor and Guyver (2014) draw attention to the multi-levelled formulation of the curriculum as it moves from the political arena, to publishing, and into schools. Therefore, when analysing a curriculum, influences beyond the school walls must also be considered. Schools do not exist in a vacuum – curricula are shaped by society's perception of what holds importance, and students exist as citizens influenced by the world around them. To better understand decolonisation, public discourse must first be scrutinised because schooling cannot be divorced from its context. It is only by examining the concomitantly nebulous, imperceptible, and crudely politicised outside influences which create 'history wars' (Taylor and Guyver, 2014), that we can begin to consider if alternative ways of thinking, such as decolonisation, are necessary. Therefore, my first question of the literature is to shed further light on my school's context asking, what do colonialism and decolonisation mean in contemporary Britain?

Literature Review

What do colonialism and decolonisation mean in contemporary Britain?

Historian Antoinette Burton's analysis, although written in 1997, provides profoundly relevant insight into popular narratives of British nationhood and empire. As someone associated with 'new imperial history', she argues that the reification of a distinction between 'home' (i.e. British Isles) and lands of the British Empire preserves a particular 'ideological attachment' to the narrative of an 'Island story', 'splendid isolation' and 'European exceptionalism' (Burton, 1997: 231). In reality, Empire was a 'fundamental part of English culture and national identity at home' (Burton, 1997: 230). To authenticate the distinction between home and empire, the presence of non-white Britons prior to 1945 has been censured, thereby generating an idealised vision of the nation wherein Britain, prior to the intrusion of post-war immigrants was, 'as stable and peaceful as it was ethnically undifferentiated' (Gilroy, 1993 in Burton, 1997: 230). This echoes Taylor and Guyver's (2014) reference to 'history wars' giving rise to a 'self-serving monoculturalism' borne out of an attempt to distort the narrative in favour of a particular argument. Attempts to preserve this distinction between home and empire are visible in many places: particular strands of Euroscepticism which propelled the 2016 Brexit vote idealised European exceptionalism (Glencross, 2014); the abuse levelled at classicist Professor Mary Beard for her cartoon featuring an ethnically diverse Roman family evidenced the misappropriation and suppression of Black British history (Boseley, 2017); MP Kemi Badenoch was one of a multitude of voices that argued against curriculum reform, asserting that the school curriculum is not 'colonised', thereby adding weight to the narrative of separation between Empire and 'home' (Robinson, 2020). The emergence of such division and polarisation

through questioning popular narratives surrounding Empire is perhaps unsurprising; 'What is at stake in these debates is not just the nation per se, but the territorialized domains of the social versus the cultural and with them, the complicity of history-writing itself in narratives of the 'national' citizen-subject as well.' (Burton, 1997: 229). With Empire bound up so tightly to the imagining of the nation, scrutiny of the popular narrative has potential to overturn a fundamental defining characteristic of national identity.

For British historian, writer and academic, Gilroy, 'race' and nation are tightly bound, 'racism and nationalism should not be artificially separated' and have 'been densely interwoven in modern British history', evidenced by the fact that, 'Britain's nationalism and racism are still routinely and symptomatically articulated together' (Gilroy, 2002: xxiii). Gilroy's inclusion of 'culture' in his critical analysis of racism and nationalism in Britain, illuminates the contingent and protean configuration of 'race', arguing that uncertainty about 'racial' identity has been increased by Britain's loss of empire (Gilroy, 2002: xxiii). Gilroy (2002) draws on a range of examples to highlight the contradictory treatment of Black figures in the public eye such as Ian Wright and Naomi Campbell (or, equally the 2021 English football team or Meghan Markle to utilise more modern examples) who may at one instance be celebrated as examples of Great Britain's exceptional tolerance and openness, but at another, vilified in racially-charged terms. Behind this, the Black British community continue to experience 'racialised' discrepancies in institutions such as the education or criminal justice system (Byrne et al. 2020).

Gilroy's and Burton's work fully implicates 'race' in any discussion around decolonisation. Following Hall, they are alert to its contingent nature. The contingent nature of 'race' requires further in investigation into its definition. The 'scientific' categorisation of races arising from European colonialism and the slave trade is no longer putative and has been disproved (Donald and Rattansi, 1992: 1). Yet, Gilroy argues, whilst the term holds no scientific relevance, its significance is collectively and discursively constructed by societies, therefore warranting investigation, ''race' must be retained as an analytic category not because it corresponds to any biological or epistemological absolutes, but because it refers investigation to the power that collective identities acquire by means of their roots in tradition.' (Gilroy, 2002: 339). Furthermore, historian Michael Biddiss (1977) charts the ever-shifting meanings of 'race' and 'racism' in Europe from its 18th century ideological construction to 19th century Darwinian eugenicists, and the 20th century mingling of nationalism with racism. Racism, he argues, must not be seen as a temporary 'aberration' from otherwise beneficent 'Western tradition' (Biddiss, 1977: 114). Rather, it is a continuation of intolerance and elitism present throughout European civilisation (Thomson, in Biddiss, 1977: 114). Gilroy and Biddiss highlight that 'race' is continually constructed in the present, and groups 'racialised' as 'in or out' are subject to change. Evidently, using the term 'race', needs to be with care. In this paper, I opt to use the term (and its derivatives such as 'racism' and 'racialised') in inverted commas to emphasise the fact that it is a social construct. Whilst 'race' is contingent and scientifically obsolete, it is of consequence in society in creating 'racialised' groups, seen as within or outside the norm of 'whiteness' (Gillborn, 2005). Some refer to groups outside this norm as 'BME' or 'BAME' but others argue that these terms problematically obscure the range of experiences between different communities that fall under such a large umbrella. The term, 'minoritized', coined by Yasmin

Gunaratnam in 2003, provides a social constructionist approach that highlights the processes through which people are actively minoritized. Therefore, when referring to groups seen as outside the norm, I will be using the term 'minoritized'.

Beyond nomenclature, 'race' requires a frame of analysis which allows examination of its complexities. Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers this frame of analysis. It seeks to better understand and expose how racial inequality has been maintained through normal and unremarkable structures (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). British educational researcher, Gillborn (2005: 40) lays out key tenets of CRT: racism is seen as endemic rather than aberrant or rare; 'race' is viewed as socially constructed and constantly changing; liberalism is critiqued – its claims of neutrality, colour-blindness and meritocracy camouflage 'racialised' issues; it calls for greater attention paid to context, challenging ahistoricism and emphasising the importance of experiential knowledge. CRT offers tools to better understand present manifestations of 'race' and 'racism' in society, focusing on experiences of minoritized groups. According to Gillborn (2005: 13), 'CRT isn't a closed and finished doctrine, it's very much alive and changing', thereby offering the necessary flexibility to understand such a changeable concept as 'race'.

CRT is not without its critics, including the current UK government (Trilling, 2020). Gillborn (2005) is alert to more academic questions of CRT related to dangerous essentialism, limited intersectionality and an inherent pessimism. All three of these critiques call for CRT to have more nuance than its singular focus on 'race'. However, each of these points can be addressed. Firstly, whilst individual anomalies within groups defined as being from the same

'race' exist, some degree of generalisation is necessary in order to spot 'racialised' patterns. Secondly, whilst factors such as gender and class are likely to intersect with 'race' to shape the life of an individual, this does not mean 'race' is not a category worth exploring in itself. Just as Marxist and feminist critiques offer frames of analysis for class and gender, CRT can work alongside these to offer analyses of 'race'. Thirdly, according to Gillborn (2005), CRT has nuance; it should acknowledge the contingent nature of 'race', drawing attention to experiential knowledge, thereby emphasising the importance of individual voices since 'race' is discursively constructed. The final critique of CRT's pessimism is one the current government have emphasised; The Department for Education stated that schools must not teach 'victim narratives that are harmful to British society' (Trilling, 2020). But it is unclear how investigating and elucidating the existence of 'racialised' structural inequalities, as CRT seeks to do, is 'harmful to British society'. As Gillborn (2005: 40) points out, critiques such as these that focus on supposed pessimism misunderstand CRT, indicating 'little or no serious engagement'. Crowley and King (2018), state that 'Critical theory is about identifying and confronting social injustices with the goal of transforming those unjust social relations.' Therefore the alternative to CRT would be to assume, without evidence, denial of systemic 'racialised' injustices and therefore no need for change. However, marginalising CRT, refusing the existence of 'racialised' inequality and white privilege, pathologies minority groups as responsible for perceived 'failures', rather than any inherent systemic issues. Additionally, it serves proponents of the view mentioned by Gilroy (1993, in Burton, 1997) in which Britain was stable and peaceful prior to the 'intrusion' of migrants, placing the burden of improvement on individuals, rather than wider systemic failure, since their arrival disrupted the existing order.

In understanding what colonialism and decolonisation mean in contemporary Britain I have highlighted the need to interweave ideas of nation, empire and 'race'. The consequences of these factors is varied and ever-changing. As Bhambra et al (2018: 2) have argued, ''Decolonising' involves a multitude of definitions, interpretations, aims and strategies.' However, it does involve situating racism and colonialism as central units of analysis and involves new ways of thinking. The authors suggest that contestations are inevitable given the range of spatial and temporal contexts of decolonisation. Whilst Bhambra et al's work is situated in the university context, my desire in this assignment is to explore what this might mean in a school context. This implicates a need to assess how 'race' and colonialism are manifested in school. This will be addressed in my next question of the literature, what might decolonisation mean in schools?

What might decolonisation mean in schools?

Education research finds little doubt that systemic, 'racialised' inequality features in British schools. Alexander and Shankley (in Byrne et al., 2020) contend education has always been a locus of struggle for 'racial' equality in Britain. They find that whilst English schools are increasingly ethnically diverse, governmental policy can be characterised by creation of a ''hostile environment' within schools, and imposed an exclusionary and utilitarian version of citizenship, which has pushed issues of race equality and diversity to the margins' (Alexander and Shankley in Byrne et al., 2020: 94). It is unclear whether this is a reaction to increasing diversity, but it appears to be a continuation of a political trend which emphasises Euroscepticism, British exceptionalism and isolationism that Burton (1997)

mentions. Joseph-Salisbury's (2020) report on racism in English schools, drawing upon teacher perspectives across Greater Manchester, finds 'racism is deeply embedded in schooling' (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020: 2). These 'racialised' issues have historical precedence. Gillborn's (2005) work has been influential in applying CRT to an education context, arguing that emphasis should be placed on outcome and effect over intent. Consequently, research suggests a glut of problems face minoritized pupils, such as disproportionate levels of exclusion, under-prediction by teachers, exclusion from 'gifted and talented groups', and marginalisation and othering, even if they are from 'model' minority groups such as Indian or Chinese (Author, 2020). Strand argues that differences in attainment between those of different ethnic groups is at 'least partially due to what students bring into the school with them' (Strand 2011 in Basit, 2013: 727). However, Basit's (2013) three-generational analysis of 12 British South Asians in a West Midlands town, finds 'educational capital' is highly regarded for its transformative capabilities across all generations. Whilst this is a small-scale study, it offers a relatively rare in-depth ethnographic analysis, and its conclusions about high educational aspirations of children from minoritized or migrant backgrounds can be supported by evidence elsewhere. For example, Mirza and Reay, in their research into Black Supplementary Schools in Britain, find a range of collective educational strategies in the Black community in addition to supplementary education, including conferences, forums and parent advice centres (Mirza and Reay, 2000). This suggests that whilst minoritized students face disadvantages in mainstream schooling, these cannot be explained away by intrinsically negative characteristics possessed by students due to their 'racial' background. Therefore, 'racialised' disadvantages must also be attributable to experiences within the school system.

Moncrieffe (2020: 8), in his study of British schooling, argues, 'Black children's school exclusions are caused by many factors including 'epistemic violence' inflicted upon them by a Eurocentric national curriculum (particularly history)'. This marginalisation of non-white histories positions white people as actors of history whilst all others are passive subjects, sometimes mentioned as an addendum to the larger narrative. Teachers must, 'see their curricular decisions as a form of either violence against or support for Black and Brown children' (Cridland-Hughes and King in Fasching-Varner and Hartlep, 2015: 101). CRT explains that, 'existing structural and historic relations of domination' create countless acts of 'reiteration and reinforcement' to formulate a world in which whiteness becomes normative (Gillborn, 2005). In educational institutions, curriculum content is one such site upon which these acts of 'reiteration and reinforcement' shape student identity, impacting their worldview and their place in it. Cridland-Hughes and King (in Fasching-Varner and Hartlep, 2015) write in an American educational context, but their analysis reminds all educators of their curriculum's power. They shed light on the 'hidden curriculum', which can be summarised as the 'meta-narrative' created by topics selected, topics overlooked, and pedagogical practices employed. They argue, 'through the hidden curriculum, children implicitly learn about 'race', culture, and gender, which indicate a level of humanity, questioning who are/can be considered human', concluding that Black and brown youth are 'not cared for, valued, or respected' (Cridland-Hughes and King in Fasching-Varner and Hartlep, 2015: 99).

Whilst the curriculum's Anglo- and Euro-centricity is detrimental to students, educational policy under various governments has done very little to change this. Gillborn (2005) focuses

on educational policy in England following the arrival of post-war migrants. He finds issues of 'race' in education have been given marginal attention by several different governments, through varied practical and linguistic iterations and interpretations. Initial post-war neglect was followed by explicit integrationist and assimilationist policies of the 1970s and 1980s (Gillborn, 2005). A 'colour-blind' approach then characterised consecutive Conservative governments (Gillborn, 2005). New Labour's initial citing of critical theory to reject 'race inequity', which in practice achieved little tangible change, was somewhat reversed when their subsequent educational policies neglected to use the term 'race' altogether, instead replacing it with a blanket approach to 'standards' and 'inclusion' (Gillborn, 2005). All have fallen short of correcting inequity, and even, in some instances, have exacerbated it (Gillborn, 2005). Educational policy following Gillborn's 2005 work also appears to have fallen far short, reflecting currents of insularity and exceptionalism which propelled the Brexit referendum. Gove's curricular reforms focusing on a linear narrative of 'our island story' pushed away non-white British stories from English and History in particular (Author, 2020). Alexander and Shankley's (in Byrne et al., 2020) work, as mentioned above, highlight policies which have created hostility for minoritized pupils. Meanwhile, continued calls for antiracist curriculum reform, heightened in 2020, have been met with rejection and denial that any issue exists (Duffy, 2020). This lack of recognition leaves no room for meaningful policy change.

Concurrent to these governmental policies, and intermittently influential, 'Multicultural education' attempted to rectify 'racialised' inequity in education. The evolution of multiculturalism throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and its development in

different contexts (such as the US, UK, Australia and Canada) makes it difficult to construct a comprehensive account of its policies and practices (Abu Rass, 2016). Ruwaida Abu Rass (2016) takes Bennet's definition, which is a comprehensive description of multiculturalism as reflected elsewhere in the literature; 'an approach to teaching and learning based upon democratic values and beliefs and that affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an interdependent world (Bennet, 2003: 14)'. Explicit recognition and affirmation of cultural diversity is an improvement on marginalisation, assimilationist and colour-blind approaches taken by some governments. Yet, British educationalist, Stephen May (1998: 1) argues, 'multicultural education has promised much and delivered little'. Its popularity has ebbed and flowed in Britain; it was popularised in the late 1960s and 1970s, and experienced a resurgence in the late 1990s (May, 1998). The 7/7 bombings in 2005 threw into question multiculturalism's suitability, which heralded a shift in policy towards an assimilationist, explicitly 'British' identity to create national unity (Tomlinson in Banks, 2009: 121). This change was based on the critique that multiculturalism is too much – it is unnecessary and divisive.

There are also those who argue multiculturalism has not achieved enough – its lofty ambitions have translated into little concrete improvement in minoritized students' lives (May, 1998: 1). Multiculturalism, according to May (1998: 2), has been critiqued for overemphasising curriculum change whilst side-lining structural racism students face. This is not to suggest that curriculum reform is unimportant, but recognises that multiculturalism has often been non-critical, thereby in practice the curriculum offers limited meaning and utility to navigate and resolve realities of everyday life in multicultural Britain. King (2018:

23) discusses ‘neoliberal multicultural reformers’, who he argues, ‘have sanitized Black history to exclude notions of White supremacy, racism, and anti-Blackness.’ A curriculum which whitewashes over uncomfortable episodes of history leaves little room for students to make sense of their journey to the present. Side-lining ‘race’, and minimising racist legacies are two ways in which Gillborn (2005) argues white supremacy is maintained. As acknowledged by the American scholar, bell hooks (1994), in her work on emancipatory pedagogy, critically assessing the present may be far less palatable, and even painful and uncomfortable for staff and students alike, but it is vital comfort for educators isn’t prioritised over opportunities for reform that can only occur through critical reflection. Vital questions about how schools may be producing structural racism must be answered and acted upon.

Ngo (2010), although writing from a US perspective, offers further critique on multiculturalism, which can be applied to a British context. She argues, multiculturalism’s emphasis on ‘“healing past wounds” (Mohanty, 1994) of violence and exclusion’ through ‘making peace’ and ‘inclusion’ ignores current structural racism (Ngo, 2010: 3). Translations of multiculturalism in practice have resulted in activities such as themed diversity days in which students celebrate their cultures. Whilst in principle this could be positive, both Youdell (2006) in Australia and Ngo in America (2010), observe examples of these, finding they exacerbate issues by ‘otherising’ and marginalising students of colour, doing little to solve pre-existing structural racism. These experiences are an example of the tokenism hooks (1994) warns against. She cites the example of expecting a Korean student to be the ‘native informant’ when a Korean book is read in class. This expectation unfairly places the

responsibility of educating on the minoritized student, and suggests diversity need only be discussed when minoritized students are present. This cements whiteness as a norm that requires no discussion (hooks, 1994: 43). Similarly, diversity days are tokenistic, placing non-white students in the role of 'native-informant' is a surface-level opportunity to celebrate and recognise diversity in a contained, non-critical, and non-threatening way, whilst avoiding meaningful structural change.

Gillborn (2005: 485) argues, 'the most dangerous form of white supremacy isn't neo-nazis, it's the taken-for-granted routine privileging of white interests that goes unremarked in the political mainstream.' We should therefore see 'race' and 'racism', not as 'fringe questions', but as having a 'volatile presence at the very centre' (Gilroy, 1992: 51, in Gillborn, 2005: 491). CRT acknowledges that liberal multiculturalism does not go far enough (Gillborn, 2005). As outlined above, successive governmental policy, as well as movements such as multiculturalism and inclusion appear to simply tinker at the edges, cloaking 'race' and education in more palatable terms. They have done little to overturn issues such as the Anglo- and Euro-centric curriculum, disproportionate levels of exclusion, and under-prediction of minoritized students. Activists calling for change to schooling to serve diverse pupils better, have grown considerably (Leach et al., 2020), which suggests previous policies have not succeeded. There is a need for greater criticality - questioning the very structures that have given rise to 'racialised' inequity, to make way for more whole-scale, disruptive change. With Burton's (1997) argument that Empire has been a fundamental defining characteristic of English culture and national identity, it is perhaps unsurprising that decolonisation has much to offer in the way of achieving this greater criticality and whole-

scale change. The British Educational Research Association's (BERA) 2020 publication, *Decolonising the curriculum: Transnational Perspectives,* suggests that decolonisation can reconsider both the epistemological and ontological bases of education. It encourages questioning pedagogy, curriculum content and narrative, asking what is deemed important and unimportant knowledge across disciplines, considering how far this has been shaped by colonialism implicitly or explicitly espousing 'monocultural dominance' (Moncrieffe, Race and Harris in BERA 2020: 9). Therefore, having considered the opportunities decolonisation may offer to rectify existing 'racialised' patterns of inequality in schools, I will look at how this may be applied in practice, both disciplinarily and pedagogically. This necessitates, firstly, examination of the discipline of history and the school history curriculum specifically.

What might it mean to decolonise the history curriculum in schools?

How has colonialism shaped history and the history curriculum in schools?

Todd (2019: 6) reminds us that colonialism has been central to the discipline of history; 'the European project of modernity that helped to shape our subject simultaneously shaped notions of 'race' and ethnicity, something that should give us pause for thought.' Moncrieffe, Race and Harris (in BERA 2020: 9) argue, 'monocultural dominance' characterises the history curriculum in the UK, but can be overturned through decolonisation. Further scrutiny of contextual processes that have shaped history, helps reveal why decolonisation is important. This involves defining how history is understood. Both Brazzoduro (in Døving and Schwaller, 2010), in his work on decolonising national memory, and Trouillot (1995), refer to the Latin distinction of history as *res gestae* - the objective, 'what happened' of history, and *historia rerum gestarum* – the subsequent

narrative of historical facts. Thus, history cannot be separated from the social process – it is both 'what happened' and 'what is said to have happened' (Trouillot, 1995:4). However, everyday vernacular of the term 'history' fails to recognise a distinction between 'what happened' and 'what is said to have happened' (Trouillot, 1995: 2), therefore precluding understanding and awareness of the *process* of historical construction.

Trouillot (1995) challenges the popular notion that history, in its truest form, is simply an uncritical account of facts, as per a 'storage cabinet model', in which history is perceived as fixed collection of memories stored in a cabinet. This ignores the reality of history's construction and use in society. As Trouillot (1995: 14) states, 'the contents of our cabinet are neither fixed nor accessible at will.' Therefore, social processes must shape history in some way. Scrutiny of this process is made fraught since both the *res gestae* and *rerum gestarum,* 'both history and its memory, come together within the unitary synthesis of the State' (Brazzoduro, in Døving and Schwaller, 2010: 40). Therefore questioning of historical narratives is equated to criticising the nation itself. However, potential for discomfort must not deter fulfilling the need to scrutinise social processes that have determined what society knows as historical 'fact', what events hold collective significance in creating national identity and the state, and how this has influenced school history. History's ubiquity lends deep importance to scholarly scrutiny of it, since it profoundly impacts individuals, communities and societies.

Brazzoduro's (in Døving and Schwaller, 2010) work highlights that to understand history as a discipline, it should be contextualised in 19th century imperial expansion (or the

aforementioned European project of modernity (Todd, 2019)), which cemented Europe's civility and inherent historicity as opposed to non-European ignorance and a-historicity, 'one can state the structuring of historical time as "first in Europe and after in the rest of the world" – in Chakrabarty's ironic formulation – allowed Europe in the 19th century, by means of the ideology of "progress", of "development" and the idea of "civilisation", to dominate the world' (Brazzoduro in Døving and Schwaller, 2010: 39). This 'Whig' view of progress is surprisingly enduring. Mohamud and Whitburn (2016) refer to the 'Whig' interpretation as continuing to shape British school curricula despite decades of critique, presenting an 'inexorable unfolding of the triumphant progressive forces […] and assumes the positive influence of British ideals and actions around the world.' Examining topics covered in history curricula, and those left out, alludes to the colonial past that has shaped it. Moncrieffe (in Moncrieffe et al. 2020: 18) finds the English primary school curriculum offers a 'whitewashed' narrative of 'nation-building' which ignores migration. It is impossible to say with certainty how much diverse history is being studied at Key Stage Three. The National Curriculum offers various options to schools including study of 'Britain, Europe and the wider world' (DfE, 2013), none of which are compulsory except the Holocaust, yet academies are not obligated to follow the National Curriculum. At GCSE, a study from the Guardian newspaper of 50,000 members of the British public shows that just 11% of pupils 'are studying modules that refer to Black people's contribution to Britain', despite Black history topics being made available through exam boards (Leach et al., 2020). Burton's (1997), analysis sheds light on how history and its memory have come together to create the popular imagining of Britain, where nationhood is predicated on a nostalgic distinction between peaceful and prosperous 'home' and the lands of the British Empire (Burton, 1997). Any contradiction, such as the existence of non-white Britons prior to 1945, must be

glossed over to maintain this narrative of distinctly and exceptionally British (read white-Anglo) progress. This explains why so few students appear to be studying Black British history. Colonial thinking has thus shaped history's ontology, centralising Anglo- and Euro-centric histories.

Furthermore, colonial epistemology authenticates this ontological marginalisation of non-white voices in history. A colonial ideology that centres western progress enables its proponents to set the parameters for what 'good' disciplinary history is, what it is not, and therefore what should be studied. Mackenzie (1995, in Burton 1997: 233) states, 'Here 'History'(capital H) is a convenient stick with which to berate the un- or under-disciplined'. In practice, this distinction between what is 'History' and what is not, is drawn along colonial lines, privileging the coloniser's ways of knowing over the colonised. This is compounded by 19th century positivist epistemology, which generates a clear distinction between history as *res gestae* and *rerum gestarum,* in which the discipline of history upholds a 'scientific professionalism' wherein the historian's role is uncovering 'the truth' (Trouillot, 1995: 5). Since the historian is supposedly a neutral actor, the socio-cultural process of history is side-lined, and power structures in which history is constructed are regarded as irrelevant (Trouillot, 1995). This does not do justice to history for a number of reasons. Firstly, it assumes that academia is the only 'proper' preserve of 'true' history. A history curriculum along these lines ignores history in popular culture and society which, Wineburg (in Stearns et al., 2000) shows, is important, albeit sometimes implicitly, to pupils' understanding of history. Secondly, it assumes history is about uncovering the singular, fixed truth, thereby delegitimising alternative historical interpretations. This offers little space for authentic

understanding of how varied interpretations are constructed, since they are either correct or incorrect. Thirdly, in a positivist view the western-centricity of benchmarks for good history is unimportant – narratives are either 'true' or not.

This epistemological position has powerful consequences. Western-centric positivism enabled the Hegelian notion that Africa is without history, a belief with astonishing longevity in popular psyche – even echoed by French President Nicholas Sarkozy in 2007 (Brazzoduro in Døving and Schwaller, 2010: 40). Africa's varied history is undoubtedly rich and vibrant, but its multiple oral testimonies and material culture are viewed as an illegitimate and untrustworthy form of history. As Trouillot (2005) argues, all societies have rules about the past's 'debatability', but these are not recognised by an epistemological position influenced by 19th Century historical constructivism. Another example of the privileging of western thought, comes from Cutrara (2018), who demonstrates how indigenous Canadian epistemologies are delegitimised by western benchmarks of what constitutes history. King (2018: 23) argues, 'White epistemic logic provides for a curriculum that teaches about Black history and not through Black history. […] aligning Black history to the existing White narrative becomes an extension to White history, not Black history. Black history is forced within frameworks, topics, and narratives meant to exclude Blackness.' For example, often the first encounter pupils have with Africa in their history curriculum is through European slave traders, implying that Africa only holds importance when westerners become interested in it (King, 2018). Thus colonialism shapes history epistemologically, cloaking disciplinary standards in terms which privilege western ways of knowing, and marginalising all else. This supports Brazzoduro's (in Døving and Schwaller,

2010) suggestion that rather than considering how minority narratives can become integrated into 'national memory', we should instead be considering the very nature of history. As Freire (1970) argues, the term 'integration' assumes the oppressed have been apart from society, but in reality they have always existed, contained by its structures. Therefore, 'the solution is not to "integrate" into the structures which have previously oppressed them, but to transform that structure so that they can become "beings for themselves".' (Freire, 1970: 74). Simply including more minority histories, echoing multicultural education's non-critical stance, is inadequate. The framing and method of inclusion is also significant to avoid recreating oppressive structures.

The upshot of colonial epistemology and ontology on history has, partly, gone hand in hand with formulating nationalistic narratives of Britain's past, attempting to create a unitary national memory. Currents of this have been evident in recent governmental policy towards history education, in which emphasis on 'return' to a 'knowledge-rich' curriculum has been used to formulate a singular 'island story' of Britain. This recent 'knowledge-turn', influenced by Young and Muller (2010), is purported to be a reaction to over-emphasis on skill at the expense of historical knowledge (Chapman, 2021). According to Kitson (in Chapman, 2021: 36), neo-traditionalists such as current Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, define 'school history as the acquisition of a body of knowledge'. The knowledge selected is centred on learning 'our island story'. However, this is not what Young and Muller intended by powerful knowledge, in fact a fixed and static canon is seen as flawed (Kitson in Chapman, 2021: 33). Furthermore, Brazzoduro (in Døving and Schwaller 2010) reminds us to proceed with caution, pointing out that national memory can never fully be one, a point

given further importance by Ahonen's contention that a history curriculum 'in the service of direct identity politics' will always be contested by those outside of the narrative (Ahonen, 2010: 192). Whilst Brazzoduro is discussing the arguably wider topic of 'national memory', his point is nonetheless worth exploring in relation to the curriculum. As history has shown us, national memory and the history curriculum are interrelated. In times of political turmoil, for example the Colston statue's toppling in summer 2020, questions are raised about the history curriculum and how it has both shaped and is shaping national memory. A curriculum which attempts to create a singular national memory will always go through periods of turmoil when that national memory is contested, as Trouillot (1995) reminds us, this is part of the historical process. Perhaps we need to find alternative epistemologies of history that provide authentic examination of a range of perspectives.

Constructivism is presented by Trouillot (1995) as a problematic but antithetical epistemological position to positivism. It is important to note here that in using the term constructivism, I am solely considering it as a rigid epistemological position in history, as defined by Trouillot, not as it may be used valuably in other disciplines. Popularised in the 1970s, Trouillot argues constructivism asserts there is no way to know what truly happened in history. Therefore every conception of the past is an interpretation of equal value. In this view, 'history becomes one among many types of narratives with no particular distinction except for its pretence of truth' (Trouillot, 1995: 6). Constructivism offers some way forward since it accepts the existence of multiple historical perspectives where positivism does not. But as Trouillot (1995: 6) points out, constructivism is problematic; its assumption that all narratives hold equal legitimacy offers dangerous foothold for ideas such as Holocaust

denial and white supremacy. Additionally, constructivism side-lines the sociohistorical process; asserting that all narratives are construction does not explain how some narratives 'win', holding more weight and therefore accepted as history (Trouillot, 1995). It neglects to provide critical tools through which to examine and make sense of historical narratives and societal manifestations of history. History is a source of 'identity and power' (King, 2018: 22) for individuals and communities, but a constructivist perspective has little to offer students by way of discursive power to engage in and challenge collective narratives of history. Kitson and Huber (2020) in their research on how British students from various 'racial' backgrounds view history, find that students are keen to scrutinise and critique historical narratives that they find in the world around them. Both constructivism and positivism, when adhered to as rigid drivers of history teaching, are incomplete in enabling a better understanding of the social process of history, ignoring the interplay between 'process' and 'narrative' of history. This dilemma of constructivism versus positivism is echoed in history education by Kitson (in Chapman, 2021: 32), who refers to the problem of historical knowledge expressed as either 'over-socialised' and 'relativist' or 'fixed and unchanging'. Neither of these positions enable history to be understood and studied as simultaneously *res gestae* and *rerum gestarum.*

To help reconsider history's nature as Brazzoduro (in Døving and Schwaller, 2010) encourages, Trouillot (1995) argues focus should be shifted towards history's construction and its relationship to power. He stipulates the four moments silences can enter the historical process; 'The moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); The moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final

instance)' (Trouillot, 1995: 26). Trouillot draws attention to context in producing and shaping history owing to the duality of human beings' historicity; we participate in history both as 'actors' and 'narrators' (Trouillot, 1995: 22). Similarly, Kitson (in Chapman, 2021) calls for a social realist approach, emphasising historical knowledge as contested and social, since communities interpret knowledge in ways that are meaningful to them. This knowledge is therefore in a state of flux, subject to the best available evidence at the time. According to Chapman, students believe that the past has a 'fixed identity and meaning', which subsequent interpretations of the past should 'ideally mirror' (Chapman in Davies, 2011: 97). This suggests students have limited awareness of processes that create historical narratives. As Lee and Shemilt (2004) argue, students tend to value historical interpretations in terms of their relationship to 'truth'. Interpretations are, rather fatalistically, construed as depending on the whim of the author's perennially biased opinion. Little attention is paid to how or why multiple interpretations exist, and why particular narratives take hold in society.

Highlighting the contested nature of history and processes of historical construction is key to decolonisation as it offers an antidote to the rigidity which marginalises and relegates alternative voices. For students, this involves exploring ways history is used and constructed, through examining multiple narratives and their relationship to power. Discussing power allows implicit critical reflection on multiple perspectives, without imposing Euro- or Anglo-centric colonial standards. Whilst discussion of power sounds complex for school-aged children, existing disciplinary tools used in history classrooms lend themselves to this analysis well. They can be used to explore the aforementioned four moments when, according to Trouillot (1995: 26), silences enter historical production. As

Todd (2019: 6) argues, despite colonialism's impact on the discipline, we do not need to 'throw the disciplinary baby out with the bathwater.' According to Counsell (in Cuthbert et al., 2021: 157), disciplinary knowledge in UK history education falls into three categories: '(a)types of historical question and corresponding accounts (b)using evidence and (c)interpretations.' In all these dimensions, it is possible to consider decolonial ways of thinking. I will take each of these categories in turn to demonstrate how.

Firstly, enquiry questions, usually based around canonical second-order concepts in history teaching, can be adjusted to challenge pre-existing narratives. Counsell cites the example of a departmental head of history shifting from a causation question about slavery, 'Why was slavery abolished in 1833?', to a change and continuity question, 'Was there more continuity than change in British–Jamaican relations between 1760 and 1870?' (Counsell in Cuthbert et al., 2021: 158). She argues this change, 'surfaces disturbing continuities and uncovers the stories of Black agency that have too often been silenced by 'formulas of erasure' (Trouillot, 2015)' (Counsell in Cuthbert et al., 2021: 158). Similarly, questions about historical significance offer a focus on history's construction and its varied meaning to different communities. Savenije, van Boxtel and Grever (2014) use historical significance effectively in a Dutch school to help explore the contested heritage of slavery. It is easy to see how contemporary debates on statues in Britain lend themselves well to questions of historical significance from multiple perspectives. Using evidence, Counsell's second category, has in the past harboured the assumption usefulness is a property of the source itself, rather than depending on the type of question being asked (Counsell in Cuthbert et al., 2021: 159). Whilst this is problematic on a number of levels, when focusing on

decolonising the curriculum, this conception of evidence lends itself to writing off non-traditional primary sources, namely non-written ones, as untrustworthy. For example, Cutrara (2018) argues, the canonical disciplinary 'historical thinking' does not respect indigenous Canadian voices and epistemologies. Counsell (in Cuthbert et al., 2021) acknowledges that establishing evidence from 'alternative' sources such as poetry, myths, legends and dance, is underdeveloped. Thirdly, examining a range of historical interpretations offers ample opportunity to uncover and evaluate multiple constructions and narratives of the past. As Todd (2019) argues, the discipline of history does have much to offer by way of decolonising the curriculum.

However, it is vital that 'traditional' ways of interpreting and teaching must be challenged, reconsidered and re-evaluated to overturn the Euro-centric, colonial character of history's antecedents. Chetty (in Moncrieffe, Race and Harris, 2020: 10) sheds light on the impact of traditional pedagogies and what the alternative must be, 'the ways in which knowledge is imparted, the modes of delivery and assessment, are equally important loci where the struggles for decolonisation can take place.' This warrants a closer look at pedagogies that enable decolonisation.

What pedagogical tools can be deployed to decolonise the curriculum?

Paulo Freire's (1970) text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* forged during Brazilian liberatory struggles, is considered foundational to 'emancipatory pedagogy'. This approach emphasises the instrumental role of education in creating just, democratic societies (Nouri

and Sajjadi, 2014). To harness this potential, Freire argues that we must reconsider the traditional 'banking model' of education which presumes students are empty vessels whose learning should consist of absorbing and then regurgitating fixed knowledge bestowed upon them by teachers. In UK history teaching, the recent 'knowledge-turn', as referenced above, assumes a specific canon of knowledge must be memorised through direct instruction from teacher to students. Despite this being a distorted and partial interpretation of Young and Muller's work, Kitson explains she has experienced schools in which memorising a canon of facts is a substantial part of history lessons, whilst interaction with these facts is comparatively unimportant (Kitson in Chapman, 2021: 37). This 'banking model' of education does little to encourage better understanding of, and participation in, the discipline. It fails counteract the problematic view Trouillot (1995) mentions, of history being 'memories stored in a cabinet'. As, Freire explains, the 'banking model' of education is disempowering; 'Knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry' (Freire, 1970: 72). In reality, even if the canon of knowledge is diverse and global in scope, students will extract little meaning from it unless this knowledge is cogitated upon, as highlighted by Todd (2021).

hooks (1994: 32) describes solely diversifying content without considering pedagogy as, 'replacing one dictatorship of knowing with another'. Chetty (in Moncrieffe, Race and Harris, 2020: 10), calls for educators to go beyond diversifying book lists, to challenging the 'traditional top-down method of teaching, with its dichotomy of experts and learners,'

replacing it with, ‘a collaborative environment.’ hooks (1994) acknowledges that reconsidering traditional classroom power dynamics may be a frightening prospect for both teacher and student; teachers are afraid of being unable to control their classes, whilst students fear their ‘captain’ lacks sufficient knowledge to guide them. However, it is important to emphasise that emancipatory pedagogy is not calling for a scenario in which a teacher’s expertise is side-lined in favour of students taking complete control of the classroom. It is instead calling for restructuring and rethink of the role of teacher and student. hooks emphasises that a ‘safe’ classroom is one where all feel valued and respected, arguing, ‘the classroom should be a space where we are all in power in different ways’ (1994: 152). This helps mobilise education’s capacity to liberate, or as termed by hooks (1994), ‘education as the practice of freedom’ empowering students to challenge oppressive, in this case colonial, ways of knowing and thinking.

Freire’s work advocates for emancipatory education made *with* rather than *for* the oppressed (Freire, 1970). This education should lead to the ‘critical discovery’ that both the oppressed and their oppressors ‘are manifestations of dehumanisation’ (Freire, 1970: 48). Education made *by* the ruling class is vulnerable to the neuroticism and paternalism of the oppressor (Freire, 1970: 48). The oppressed must have discursive power to share their realities and act to overturn their oppression. This raises two important points; amplifying voices of the oppressed, and the centrality of dialogue and discussion in education. To challenge colonial epistemologies and ontologies that have shaped the history curriculum, I will take insights from specifically Black-led movements which aim to re-humanise Blackness by overturning harm caused by Eurocentric schooling. I will draw on examples from: King’s

(2018: 4) heuristic, 'Black Historical Consciousness', which aims to 'recognise essential and effective types of Black history knowledge'; Black critical theory; and the UK Black Sunday Schools movement. Whilst my own research will focus on a 'racially'-diverse British school setting, not specifically Black African-Caribbean heritage students, these movements helpfully exemplify pedagogy made *with* rather than *for* oppressed groups. It is important to note that I am not uncritically adopting 'political Blackness', a practice which Andrew argues bluntly groups all those who are non-white, thereby obscuring complexity and creating a 'perspective of non-whiteism that normalise(s) whiteness' (Andrews, 2016: 11). In practice, non-white students have a range of experiences of schooling. However, some degree of essentialising is necessary to identify patterns of disadvantage, as King (2018) argues. Additionally, all minoritized students share similar experiences of curricular exclusion and marginalisation, meaning lessons learnt from Black-led movements may be applicable to all.

There are three main aims of emancipatory pedagogy (see Figure 2), termed by Nouri and Sajjadi as, 'manifestation of humanization, critical conscientization, and establishing a problem-posing education system' (Nouri and Sajjadi, 2014: 76). King's (2018) Black Historical Consciousness framework outlines types of knowledge needed to facilitate emancipatory pedagogy's aim of humanisation. He argues, Black history told through White epistemic historical frameworks limits Black history knowledge. Instead, he calls for a 'holistic approach' to Black history 'taught through Black people's epistemologies, gazes and imaginations', speaking 'through Black experiences' (King, 2018: 5). He advocates the inherently humanising 'diaspora literacy', defined as speaking about Black history authentically, without centralising whiteness (King, 2018: 5). Similarly, Simmons et al. (2019:

62) implement a 'Black historical consciousness framework' in a high school class in America, which 'resists White epistemic knowledge(s), recognizes diversity in Blackness, and explores what it means to be a Black human by providing a historical narrative that has its own timeline separate from aspects of Western importance.' Historical consciousness is different to traditional historical thinking, critiqued by Cutrara (2018) as making 'historical' judgements which marginalise colonised histories. It instead seeks to examine how societies cultivate and understand the past (King, 2018: 5). This echoes Trouillot's (1995) call for focus on history's construction, offering an alternative epistemic framework, which values marginalised voices, allowing for humanisation. These examples offer epistemologies alternative to traditionally Eurocentric ones, allowing 'manifestation of humanisation' to occur.

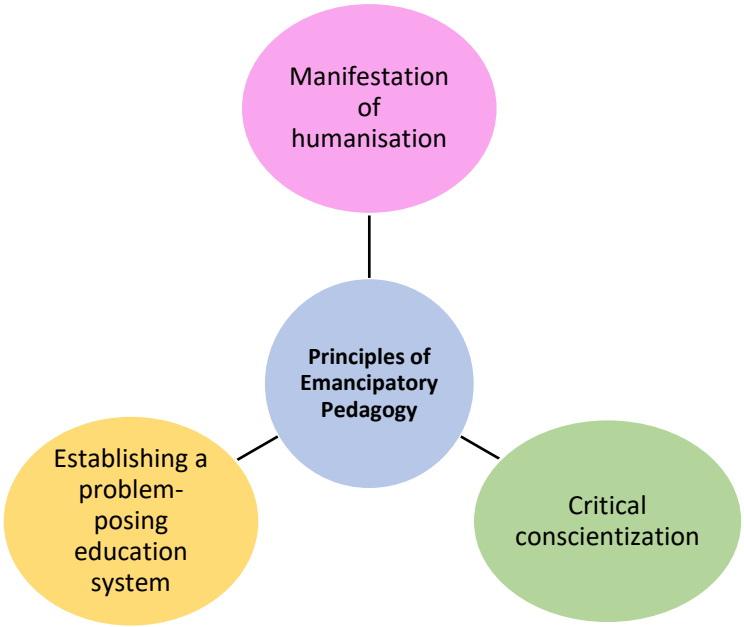


Figure 2 - Principles of Emancipatory Pedagogy, based on Nouri and Sajjadi (2014)

Furthermore, Mirza and Reay (2000: 534), in their analysis of Black Supplementary Schools in the UK, find they create 'a sanctuary where the Black child is recentred' through offering empowering visions of Blackness. This overturns dehumanising experiences in mainstream schooling that pathologize and marginalise Blackness. African-centred pedagogy moves emphasis away from narratives of Black victimhood that are so often children's only experience of Black history (Merry and New, 2008: 10). Freire (1970: 64), argues that to rehumanise both the oppressed and oppressors, the oppressed must see examples when the oppressor has been vulnerable. This emphasises the importance of curriculum content that moves beyond singular and simplistic narratives painting whole groups as either the victims or heroes, agents or subjects, of history.

The second and third aims of emancipatory pedagogy, 'critical conscientization', and 'establishing a problem-posing education system', taken together are suggested methods to achieve humanisation, and unlock education's liberatory potential. Freire's concept of conscientization is translated by hooks (1994) as 'critical awareness and engagement'. Freire (1970: 79) argues, 'Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.' Crucially, for education to be emancipatory, reflecting on injustice must be followed by discussion of practical action. To achieve this, 'problem-posing education' is called for, to facilitate transformation of unjust social relations. Crowley and King (2018), in analysing power and 'racial' inequity, call for 'critical enquiries', which involve students identifying and challenging 'master narratives that legitimate systems of oppression and power'. This emphasises the

classroom's potential to be a place of liberation, through which students may 'come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation' (Freire, 1970: 83). Mohamud and Whitburn (2020)'s School's History Project workshop exemplifies this possibility. They argued, despite its ugly shadow over the present, there has never been a reckoning for the trauma of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, but classrooms can offer this space through carefully chosen enquiries that encourage critical reflection. Mohamud and Whitburn's (2020) emphasis on how the slave trade impacts the present offers opportunities for students to make meaningful connections, considering how its legacies can be overturned in the present. This illuminates hooks' vision of the power and possibility that exists in the classroom, offering space to reflect and heal, such that, 'the academy is not paradise, but learning is a place where paradise can be created' (hooks, 1994: 207).

hooks (1994: 40) argues, 'accepting the decentring of the West globally, embracing multiculturalism compels educators to focus on the issue of voice. Who speaks? Who listens? And why?'. Dialogic teaching can unlock education's potential; legitimising students' centrality to the learning, encouraging critical reflection on the world, and offering genuine interest and excitement. Van Boxtel and van Drie (2017) contend that dialogic teaching helps students become better historians, arguing learning is 'entering a community of practice' and 'learning the language' of the discipline. This can only be achieved through dialogue, enabling students to practice historian's language and thinking processes, rather than information being passed in a top-down format. The classroom should demonstrate learning as 'part of a collective endeavour to think and to reason to reach historical understanding and develop and discuss new questions' (van Boxtel and van Drie 2017: 574).

Emancipatory pedagogy calls for critical reflection on the world, therefore a dialogic classroom is necessary for students to find and voice their own meaning. Since a banking model of education casts a singular, static truth for students to absorb, emancipatory pedagogy should conversely call for valuing all voices in the classroom. As Freire (1970: 50) points out, 'world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction'. The classroom should be a place to demonstrate, reflect and act upon this interaction. Critical conscientization calls for students to develop their own critical thinking, as such thinking cannot be done by the teacher for the students. hooks (1994) states, 'students in public institutions, mostly from working-class backgrounds, come to college assuming that professors see them as having nothing of value to say, no valuable contribution to make to a dialectical exchange of ideas'. Freire (1970: 64) writes, 'almost never do they realise that they, too, "know things" they have learned in their relations with the world and with other women and men.' To overturn structures which take power away from students, especially those from minoritized groups, it is important that they feel empowered and their voices are legitimised.

Summary of literature

My literature review revealed answers to my initial research questions as well as avenues for further investigation. Firstly, questions one and two overlap. They were, 'how far had I equipped my students to engage with public discourse on history, 'race' and colonialism?' and 'how far had colonialism shaped my teaching and in particular, my history teaching?'. As the literature suggests, colonialism has undoubtedly cast a long shadow over the present, permeating political and societal discourse, shaping the discipline of history and narratives

told in and out of the classroom. As Taylor and Guyver (2014) demonstrate, school history often becomes an ideological battleground, and, prey to political forces, is consistently reshaped. Contemporary public debate seemingly outside classroom walls cannot remain external. As Wineburg (2000) argues, pupils are not 'blank slates'; they enter the classroom and approach learning with extant personalities, preconceptions and perspectives shaped by a wealth of external experiences. It is likely that their beliefs and understandings of the world are sculpted by media, communities and families, in part influenced by the ubiquity of colonialism. Incongruously, the extent to which colonialism's centrality is understood by scholars and the general public alike, is at best, incomplete. Satia argues the discipline of history itself is shaped by the context of colonialism, even if this has not been fully explored or realised, 'History was remade in the crucible of twentieth-century anticolonialism, but the discipline has yet to come to terms with its role as time's monster' (Satia, 2020: 10). Tendency towards creating an artificial ideological separation between the British Isles (or 'home'), and the lands of the British Empire as Burton (1997) shows, has created general ignorance around empire. Todd (2021) aptly uses Sigmund Freud's words to characterise the nature of Empire in the British psyche, 'some impression of the event must have been left inside me. Where is it now?'. To return to my two research questions, then, whilst Empire remains extremely salient in contemporary Britain and history education, pupils are likely to be ill-equipped, lacking literacy to facilitate effective participation in public discourse on 'race', history and empire.

My final question centred on opportunities the term 'decolonisation' provided. The term itself is rather vast and indefinite; its exact definition, mechanisms and modus operandi

have proved difficult to locate. Whilst this may initially appear a weakness, the functions of decolonisation across wide-ranging temporal, geographical and disciplinary loci renders the flexibility of its meaning and various manifestations both a necessity and a strength. For the specific purpose of my intervention, decolonisation can be looked at on two levels – disciplinarily and pedagogically.

Colonialism has shaped the discipline of history in the west, and as it is taught in schools, ontologically and epistemologically; it has prioritised a narrative of western progress, relegating non-western ways of knowing as 'other' and presenting a Euro- and Anglo-centric curriculum as the unadulterated norm. This is compounded by pedagogy built upon a 'banking model' of education in which emphasis is on regurgitating fixed and static knowledge. This fails to encourage critical reflection and action on learning. Lessons become artificially separated from reality, history's importance and usefulness becomes, in the pupil's eye, limited (van Straaten, et al., 2015). A largely whitewashed history curriculum is presented as the unquestionable absolute, with few opportunities to reflect on how or why this is the norm, or if it needs challenging. Therefore power is sapped away from students, towards the body of fixed knowledge and the teacher as the deliverer of it. hooks (1994) asserts, students, especially from working class or minoritized backgrounds, do not feel confident participating in public discourse. Van Boxtel and van Drie (2017) emphasise the importance of pupils 'learning the language' of the discipline to build ability and confidence participating in it. A decolonised curriculum must disrupt uneven power dynamics in which, functionally, history becomes the preserve of the elite. Pupils must not be written out in this way; they must have the opportunity to meaningfully practice participation; multiple

perspectives and narratives must be examined, offering opportunities for students to critically reflect on sources, evidence and the history they are learning.

My intervention, therefore, had to uplift and value students' voices, whilst encouraging reflection and questioning. Trouillot (1995) offers a way forward by focusing on the social process of history, explaining how power creates historical narratives. Trouillot (1995) speaks of humans as simultaneously 'actors' and 'narrators', but it is unlikely that pupils will realise these dual aspects of their historicity. Revealing to students the way history operates both as *res gestae* and *rerum gestarum* facilitates their involvement in the discipline. Pedagogical tools must be carefully selected to amplify participation. Emancipatory Pedagogy recognises the humanity of the student and education's power and potential. The pupil's learning journey is seen as extending beyond the classroom walls, shaping their identities and interactions in wider society. Praxis is emphasised, which affords opportunities for critical reflection on the present.

Drawing on the above literature, and the local history topic pupils were due to be studying, my research questions for the intervention were (see Figure 3):

1. What might be the impact of local history in decolonising the curriculum?
2. How does a focus on construction impact on students historical thinking?
3. How does a pedagogy built around praxis, voice and usefulness support decolonisation?

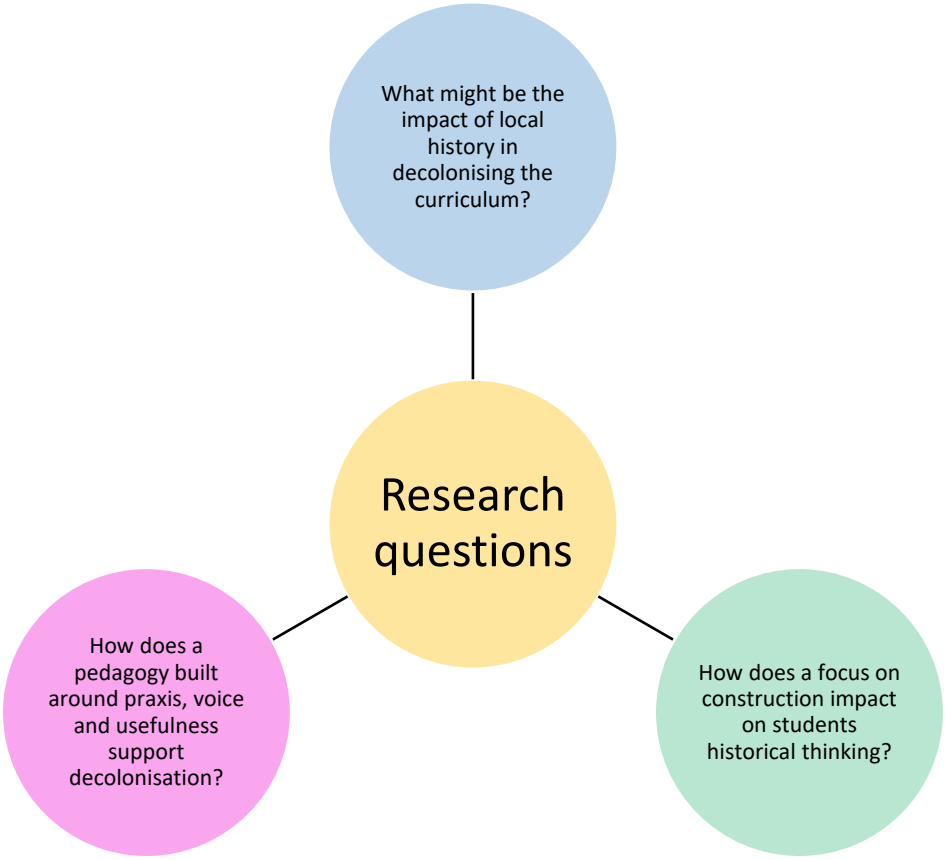


Figure 3 – Research questions

Methodology

This section will outline the nature of the intervention I undertook, and design of the research strategies I used to investigate the outcomes of the intervention. Figure 4 outlines how the intervention was initially supported by some preliminary research to both inform my intervention and provide some baseline data. Firstly, I will outline the outcomes from Questionnaire 1 (see Appendix 1) as they inform my intervention before offering a more detailed explanation of the research design, including ethics, as part of the section, *closing research design*.

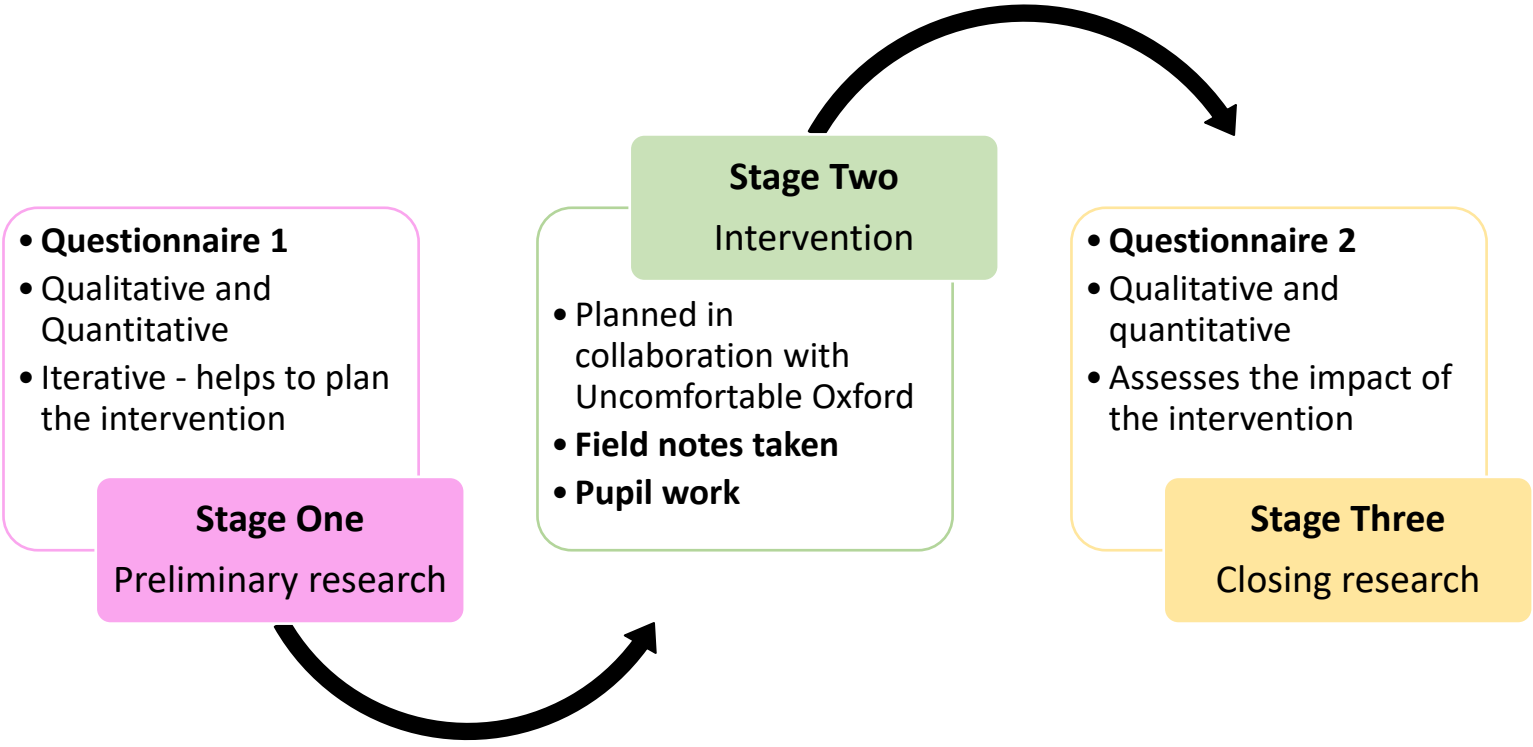


Figure 4 - Process of my research project

Preliminary research

My three research questions (see Figure 3), underscored the centrality of students, their voices and interests. Wineburg (2000) emphasises the importance of taking into account pupil preconceptions. This determined my choice to carry out a preliminary iterative data stage, which would inform and shape my intervention – I wanted the intervention to, at least in part, be influenced by my pupils. Leeway with topic choice was limited since focus on local history had already been determined through faculty decision making processes, but I felt that in doing a preliminary questionnaire, I could at least focus the intervention slightly better on areas highlighted by students once they had revealed their preconceptions. Therefore, Questionnaire 1 served a dual purpose. As well as being iterative, it provided me with baseline data that could be compared to a post-intervention questionnaire.

In designing Questionnaire 1, I broke down my research questions into five more measurable foci. Table 1 demonstrates how these areas of focus helped to answer my research questions. The questionnaire comprised of both qualitative and quantitative style questions. I will briefly analyse the data gathered through taking each of my five key foci in turn. I will offer more in-depth analysis in the discussion of my findings in the next chapter.

Areas of focus	RQ1 – local history	RQ2 - construction	RQ3 – Praxis, voice & usefulness
Where do students feel history is located?	X	X	
Who do students feel has the power and authority to tell history?		X	X
How important is local history to students?	X		
How can history help reflection and action in the present?		X	X
The space given to, and importance of, student voice in the classroom.			X

Table 1 - Areas of focus for Questionnaire

Where do students feel history is located?

To answer this question, I asked pupils, 'where do you encounter history?', in order to better understand pupil preconception of what constitutes history. I provided a list of varied options (see Figure 6), and space to include an 'other'. Whilst it was important to avoid over-prescription, allowing students to interpret the world for themselves, I recognised the need to draw students' attention to historical places they perhaps had not considered. This decision was taken in light of Syreeta Cumberbatch's (in Alexander and Weekes-Bernard, 2016) analysis, 'Black students often don't recognise what they're taught at home as history, as the same as the academic discourse.' Therefore, I wanted to legitimise a range of responses, broadening the definition of what they may feel constituted history.

Figure 5 presents the data by showing, as a percentage, how often each option was selected by pupils. As Figure 5 demonstrates, the most popular options chosen were Film, TV, Museums and Books. The popularity of 'Film' and 'TV' is perhaps surprising given Banham

and Hall's (2003) contention that pupils do not usually realise film as legitimate historical interpretation. For my class, this can be explained due to the time we spent looking specifically at films during an interpretations unit on Anne Boleyn. This may have influenced its popularity. However, it was clear to me here that community histories, be they from the local area, families, or social media, appeared to be paid comparatively less attention. Therefore, my intervention aimed to bring further value to community histories.

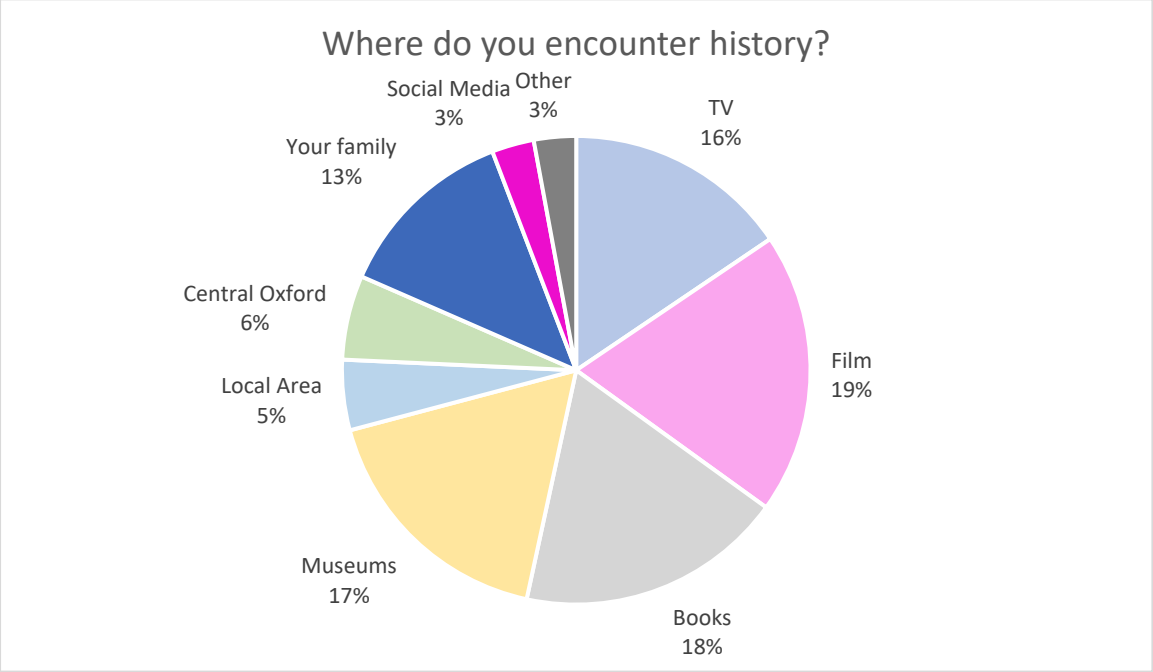


Figure 5 - Where do you encounter history?

Interestingly, 'Central Oxford' versus 'Local Area' had just a 1% differential. Owing to the historic Oxford 'town and gown' divide, I had expected far more pupils to assume history happened in central Oxford rather than in their local areas, especially since a majority of my school's catchment is in an area historically regarded negatively by students (Burn and Todd, 2018). I wanted to investigate this further during my intervention to determine if the result could be explained by either lack of belonging students felt towards the affluent central

Oxford thereby lessening the possibility of historical encounters happening there, or if pupils felt comparatively more history did indeed happen in their local area.

Who do students feel has the power and authority to tell this history?

I chose to break down the rather vague question of who owns history into power and authority. This added greater specificity for pupils and broadened the possibility of what may constitute historical ownership. I chose again, to provide a range of options for the same reasons as above. I began by asking who had the power to tell history, then who had the authority, and finally which three they felt had the most authority. This added triangulation and encouraged students to think about the telling of history in different ways. In hindsight, there is a limitation to this question as it is unclear whether the pupils were reflecting on the present, or if they were considering history as they felt it *should* be. Nonetheless, I managed to extract some insights useful for planning my intervention.

Firstly, as Figure 6 shows, pupils chose a broader range of actors as having 'power' than they did 'authority'. The number of times each option was selected was broadly similar between power and authority with museum creators, teachers, politicians and historians. Few students chose themselves, their families, or their communities as having power or authority. The starkest differences were between 'Film/TV directors' and 'People on social media', where some students felt they had power, but far fewer felt they had authority. Similar to the previous section, the focus on Film/TV directors may be partially explained by the unit of work the class previously completed scrutinising historical interpretations of Anne Boleyn.

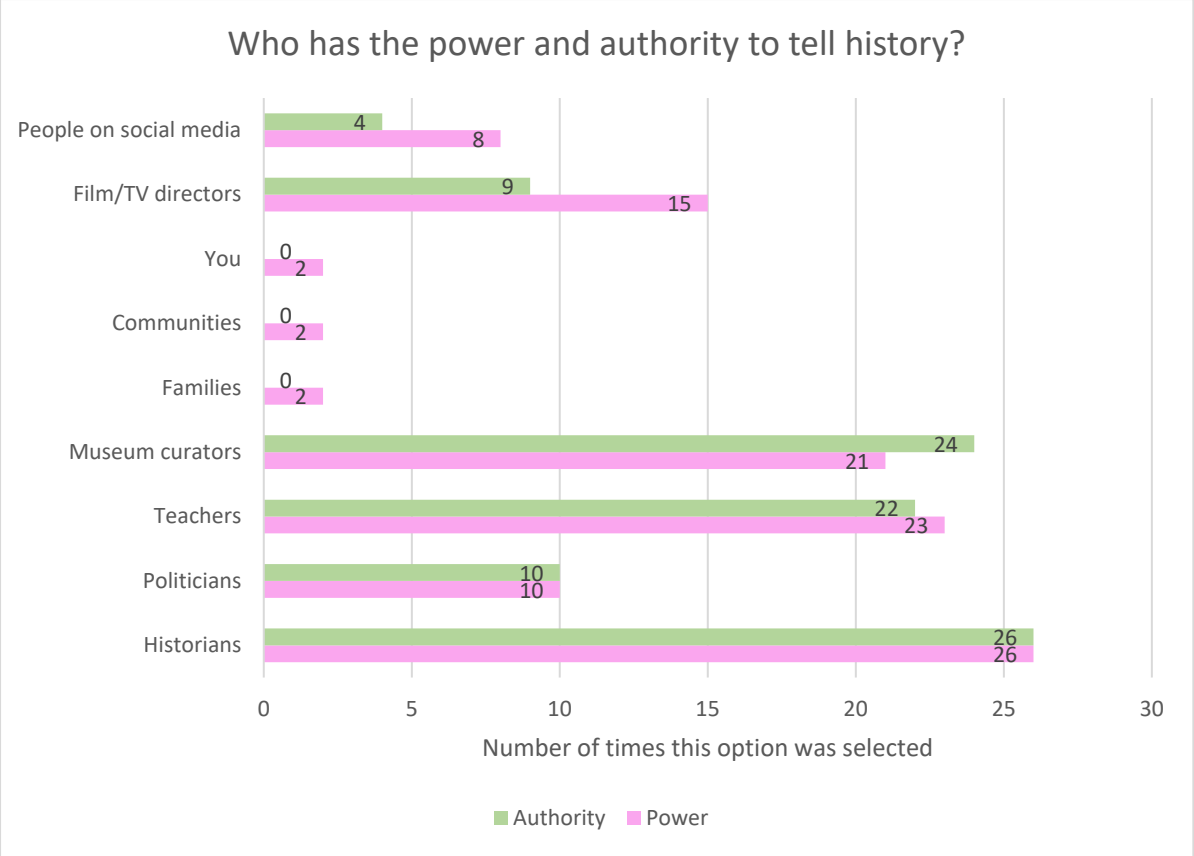


Figure 6 - Who has the power and authority to tell history?

Figure 7 demonstrates again that students felt history was most authoritative and powerful in the hands of the academy – with historians, teachers and museum curators - and comparatively far less in public hands. Again, my intervention had to alert students to the range of ways history could be told, delving deeper into the criteria applied when deciding who may authoritatively tell history.

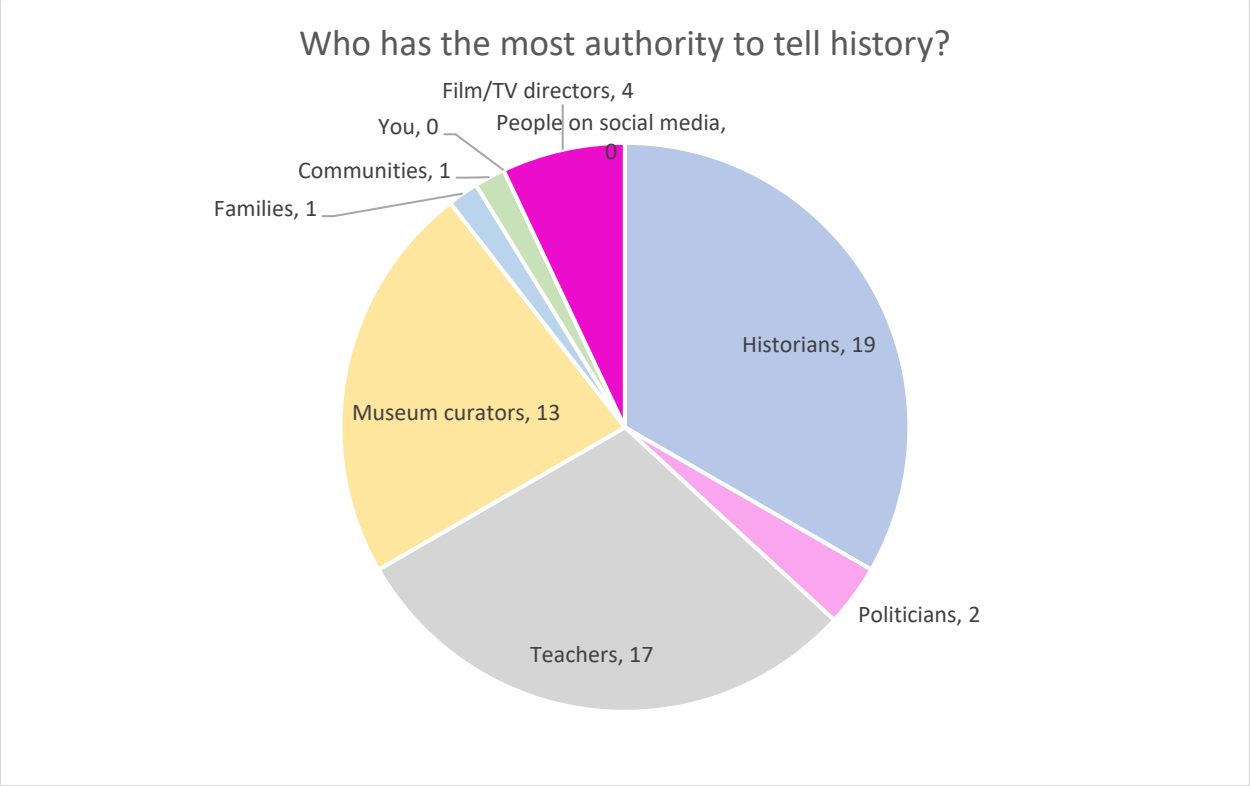


Figure 7 - Who has the most authority to tell history?

How important is local history to students?

Through this question, it was fairly evident most pupils did not realise the value of local history. Most students (15 out of 24) gave local history an importance score of two or below out of five (see Figure 8) on a Likert scale. The average was just 2.08 out of five. It could be argued, for this reason, local history was a topic to be avoided since it held little value in pupils' eyes. I acknowledge this may be construed as a limitation to my intention to value the voices and needs of students. But, I think this tension exemplifies an accurate application of engaged emancipatory pedagogy; some may assume moving away from a banking model relegates the role of teacher to the deliverer of the unconstrained wishes of the students. Rather, as hooks (1994) explains, education as the 'practice of freedom' is about respecting students enough to help them guide, not necessarily proscribe, learning.

The learning should be empowering to students. Therefore, I hoped through adopting principles of emancipatory pedagogy, students would realise the value I saw in local history. In hindsight, it may have been useful to delve deeper into why pupils felt local history was not worth study. Perhaps, I assumed, they did not see local history as valuable due to the bounds they set for what it could involve. Therefore, this question spurred me to ensure learning was enhancing, and I resolved to assess how well this had worked after the intervention.

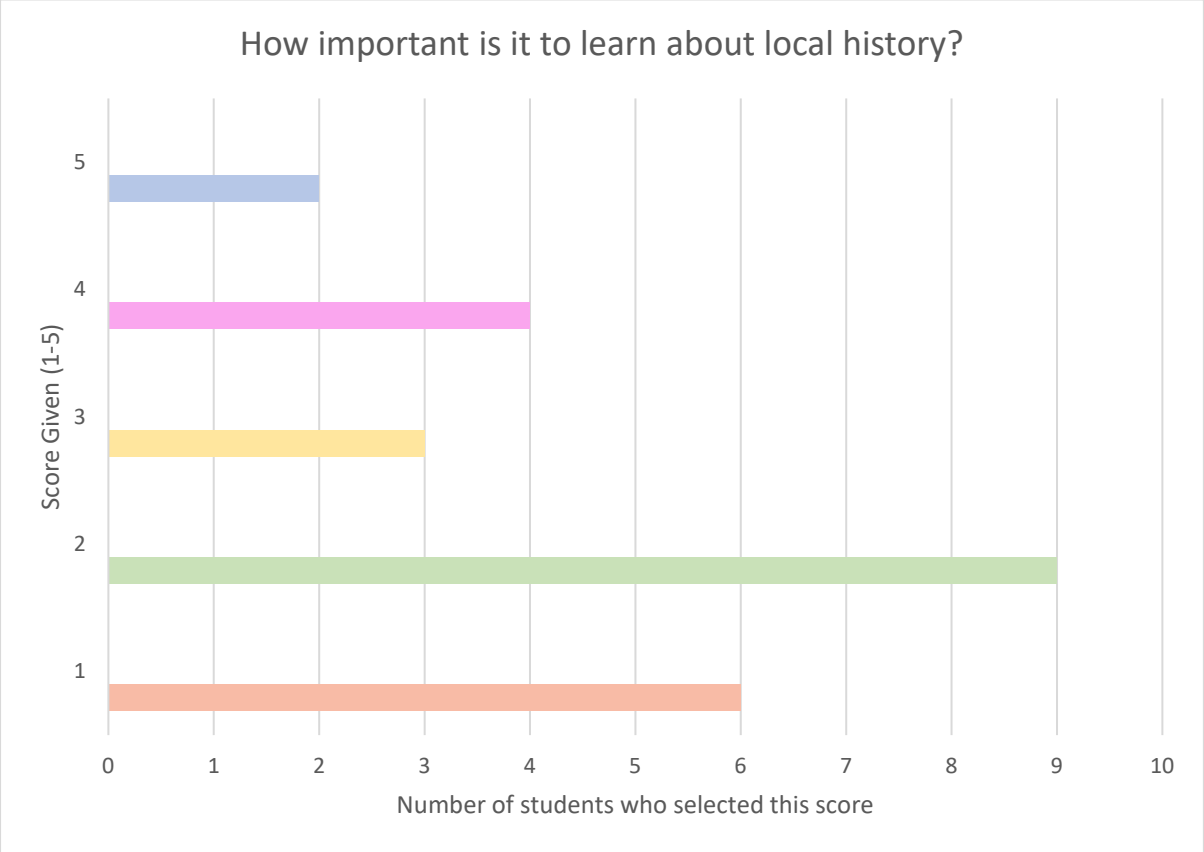


Figure 8 - How important is it to learn about local history?

How can history usefully help reflection and action in the present?

To elicit a range of responses, I gave freeform space for pupils to answer the question, *'In what ways can you use the things you learn in history lessons? If you feel you can't, in what ways can it be changed for it be more useful?'.* Disappointingly, this garnered just seven

responses from a possible 25 students. This may suggest few students are able to see the usefulness of history education. However, there were also no suggested changes to the curriculum. This makes it more difficult to reliably say whether students found history useful or not. In hindsight, it may have been helpful to include an additional quantitative data collection method, such as a Likert scale, to encourage more responses, secure my conclusions, and to make the intervention's impact easier to assess.

Table 2 shows all pupil responses, divided into three categories. The most popular type of response was regarding History's ability to 'shape the future'. Broadly, these responses purported lessons learnt in history may help improve the future. There were also a number of practical skills pupils felt history could offer, suggesting some acknowledgement and understanding of the functions and applications of history in the wider world, especially in future careers. The least acknowledged category was 'Understanding and taking action in the present'. Despite limitations to this question, especially the small sample size, it is possible to tentatively suggest students had not yet had experiences in their history lessons that helped them see history as useful to their present lives. Again, this was something my intervention could address, through focusing on praxis, voice and usefulness.

Category	Pupil Response	Number of responses
Understanding and taking action in the present	*'History helps you know why things are how they are'*	1
Shaping the future	*'You can learn about the past, so you can help improve the future'* *'So you know when you're older'* *'You can learn from mistakes'*	3
Practical skills	*'To help understand things in the world of books'* *'If you're doing a history debate in your job so you know about it'* *'How to excavate and do digs so you can know about the past'*	3

Table 2 - Why might history be useful?

How much space and importance is given to student voice in the classroom?

I asked students two questions related to student voice. Firstly, how much time, on average, students assumed they spent talking about history in their lessons. Here, I was less concerned about getting timings exact than I was about unveiling perceptions. I could then compare this after the intervention, once I had developed the purpose and use of dialogue in the classroom. Therefore, this question had less of an iterative function than the others. Results were rather varied, with most falling between 10 and 40 minutes (see Figure 9). I also asked students how important they thought dialogue was in the classroom. The vast majority gave dialogue an importance rating of three or above out of five (see Figure 10). Questionnaire 2 (see Appendix 2) would help to ascertain the intervention's impact on the importance pupils attributed to dialogue.

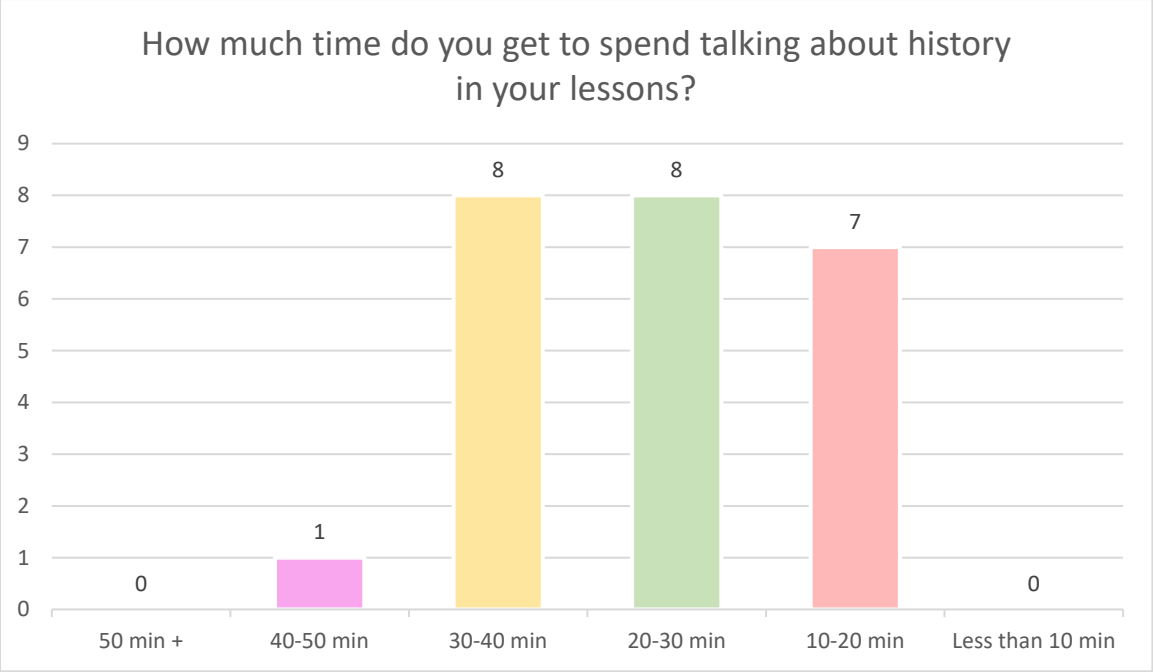


Figure 9 - How much time do you get to spend talking about history in your lessons?

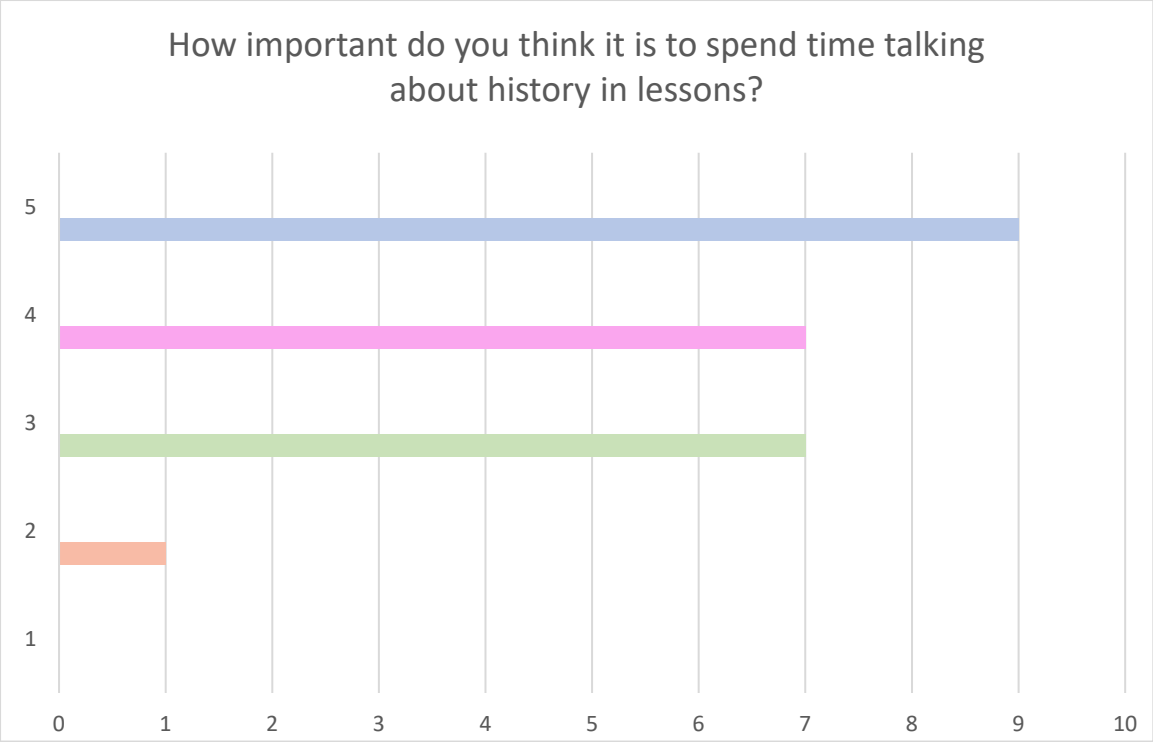


Figure 10- How important do you think it is to spend time talking about history in lessons?

In summary, Questionnaire 1 drew my attention to key areas to focus on in the intervention. It revealed pupils broadly felt history was the preserve of the academy, namely teachers, historians and museums. There was a general lack of recognition of the social processes of history in communities, families and locality. I had assumed mentioning these in the questionnaire may spur more students to acknowledge history 'in their world' but this was not the case. Pupils also struggled articulating how or why history may be useful in the present. This is in line with van Straaten's (2015) findings that whilst students may implicitly use history to make sense of the present, they do not always realise it. My intervention, then, would seek to reveal the various places history could be located, how and why history could be of use in the present, and foster a recognition of the pupils' power in the dual nature of historicity, as Trouillot (1995) puts it, we are simultaneously actors and narrators.

Intervention Design

Procedural contextual considerations had to be taken into account when planning my intervention. My priority was to have maximum freedom to design a series of lessons as I wished. Since Key Stage Three classes did not have the pressure of formal external examinations, they became the focus of my intervention. My choice of year group and topic was, in part, guided by my desire to honour the conjuncture (Hall ca. 1973 in Bennett, 2016) of summer 2020, as mentioned in my introduction. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests were, unsurprisingly, a popular topic of conversation amongst my pupils. I do acknowledge, due to my personal interests, I was particularly susceptible to hearing pupil conversations around BLM, which may exaggerate how often it was actually discussed. However, the eagerness of the Student Leadership Team to release a statement on the matter coupled

with residues from the protests such as posters and placards attached to the walls and gates lining students' route to school, cemented the relevance, in my mind at least, of the protests in students' lives. As such, local history, a topic year seven were due to be taught, provided perfect opportunity to honour the conjuncture.

My collaboration with local organisation, *Uncomfortable Oxford*, was particularly fruitful. The iconography of their logo, the famed Radcliffe Camera turned on its head, perfectly signifies why. They provide tours of the city of Oxford focusing on its under-acknowledged 'uncomfortable' aspects such as legacies of empire and slavery (Uncomfortable Oxford: 2021). Their focus on amplifying hidden voices and untold narratives aligned well with my aims. Together, we planned a nine-lesson sequence.

Drawing together findings from my literature review and Questionnaire 1, our scheme of work's overarching enquiry question was, 'What stories can we tell of Oxford's history?'. This enquiry question emphasised the multiplicity of stories (or narratives) that could be told of Oxford. In using the term, 'we', it centralised pupils in the classroom, emphasising learning as a collective endeavour and highlighting the power of the students in telling history. Each lesson had its own enquiry question, as shown by Figure 11, tackling different aspects of the larger enquiry. Appendix 4 explains each lesson in further detail. The lessons worked together to build up to the outcome task - creating a historical walking tour of the city, devised by students in groups, judged by Uncomfortable Oxford and hosted on their website.

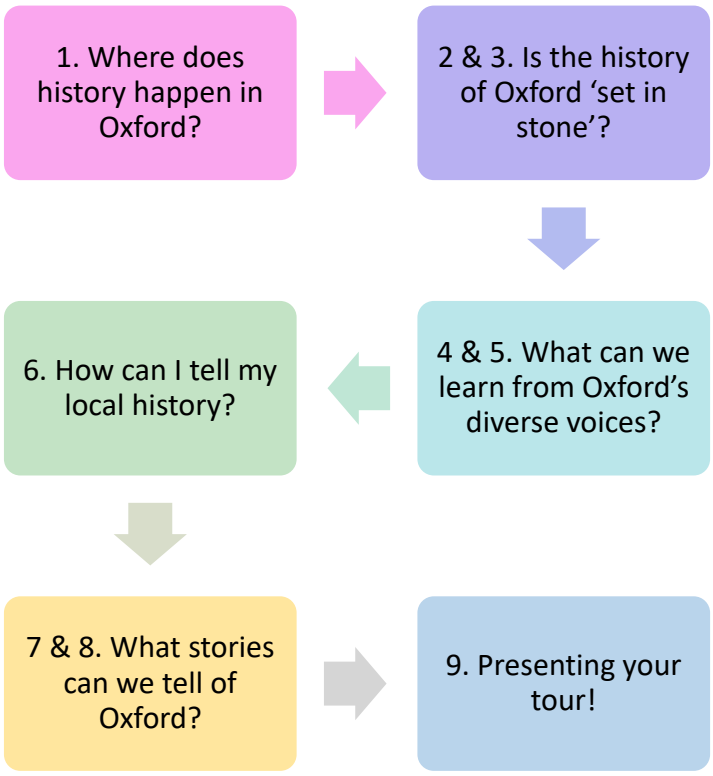


Figure 11 - Lesson sequence

I will take each research question in turn to explain how my intervention aimed to provide answers. It is important to note, though, there is some overlap between each of these areas; they often worked together to facilitate progress. Therefore the following discussion is an attempt to categorise some of my key areas of thought. Figure 12 offers a summary of the discussion, outlining how I designed the intervention to address my research questions.

What might be the impact of local history in decolonising the curriculum?

Local history provided ample opportunity to meaningfully harness pupils' expertise on their town and local communities. hooks (1994) contrasts 'Education as the practice of freedom' with a 'banking model', in which teachers have nothing to learn from their students. This is

inherently disempowering. Colonial power structures have little hope of being overturned if pupils from all backgrounds do not feel they have a right to participate. The powerful reminder from hooks (1994) that teaching is an edifying experience for both student and teacher, helped me to consider my own role in the classroom. I wanted students to see me, not as the 'font of all knowledge' but as a learner too. Since I am not an Oxford native, local history opened up this possibility even wider, and encouraged students to see learning as a shared endeavour.

Additionally, local history facilitated praxis, encouraging meaningful engagement in debates happening in the pupils' local communities. Pupils were asked to discuss and deliberate frequently, for example on whether they felt blue plaques and monuments were reflective their communities, how culture may be present around them and what they thought should happen to the controversial statue of Cecil Rhodes. Again, this was important in creating a classroom dynamic in which power was shared, and validation given to student voice. These elements will be further elaborated upon in my discussion of research questions 2 and 3.

How does a focus on construction impact on students historical thinking?

The enquiry was designed to place emphasis history's construction, especially as a social process. Counsell's aforementioned exposition of the categories of disciplinary knowledge present in history teaching offered a useful rubric to hone this focus; '(a) types of historical question and corresponding accounts (b) using evidence and (c) interpretations' (Counsell in Cuthbert et al., 2021: 157).

Firstly, Counsell (2021) argues historical questions can be crafted to challenge existing narratives. The enquiry questions invited student participation in the historical process. My overarching enquiry question, 'What stories can we tell of Oxford's history?', explicitly focused on multiple stories that might be told of Oxford. This was deliberately couched in terms that did not call for an overall judgement on which was the 'true' narrative. Instead, focus was on illuminating the formulation of these narratives, and the social and historical processes resulting in particular stories holding power differently across time and place. For example, pupils were asked to consider why blue plaques were not representative of Oxford's diverse population in 2021, and what might be the impact of tours of the city only focusing on the city centre. The final outcome activity encouraged students to make choices about narratives to tell based on the audience of their historical tour. This group work involved difficult conversations about which pieces of evidence they would have to side-line, and which they would focus on. They also presented tours to one another, enabling understanding of how the same brief could be interpreted differently depending on the criteria chosen. Uncovering these processes helped to move away from the role of the historian being to uncover a 'fixed truth' and toward an emphasis on the context and choices creating particular historical narratives.

The second enquiry question, 'Is Oxford's history 'set in stone'?' specifically encouraged students to assess the impact of statues and monuments, both in producing and being produced by, historical narratives. Students were then encouraged to look beyond these more obvious forms of memorialisation in considering what constitutes history. This is

related to Counsell's second form of disciplinary knowledge, highlighting the importance of using different types of evidence. With the help of Uncomfortable Oxford's emphasis on material culture, we looked for history in a range of places; in street art, institutions on the Cowley Road, and cultural events, to challenge students' inclination towards the academy being the preserve of history, as revealed by Questionnaire 1. Lesson six in the series was dedicated to oral histories, shaped by communities. Students were asked to bring in a historical story collected from individuals at home. These stories were shared in small groups and students worked together to come up with steps for further historical enquiries into these community stories. Therefore, broadening the scope of where historical evidence can be found encouraged pupils to validate sources beyond canonical written texts to facilitate decolonisation.

A range of historical interpretations (the third element of Counsell's disciplinary knowledge) about Oxford's history, were presented to students. Through collaboration with Uncomfortable Oxford, we looked at differing interpretations of Oxford through the lens of historical tours of the city. We began by uncovering what a traditional interpretation of Oxford's history might be through looking at images rendered by a Google-search of the term 'Oxford city history'. These were the traditional, quintessential Oxford city buildings, present in the city's affluent centre. This was then contrasted with the work of James Attlee and Uncomfortable Oxford. Attlee, in his 2007 book, *Isolarion*, embarks on a pilgrimage during which he extols the virtues of the congested, concrete-clad and cosmopolitan Cowley Road. This road is far more often frequented by pupils, but is rarely a tourist attraction. This reflects historical fault lines between 'town' i.e. ordinary residents of Oxford, and 'gown' i.e.

the historically more affluent and powerful University located around the city centre. Having scrutinised various constructions of Oxford's history, students then participated by formulating their own interpretation of Oxford's history, presented through a tour of Oxford. In scrutinising these interpretations, I hoped pupils would consider power dynamics that had shaped these narratives, providing ownership over history of their town, validating their own experiences.

How does a pedagogy built around praxis, voice and usefulness support decolonisation?

Questionnaire 1 revealed pupils struggled to articulate why and how history may be useful and meaningful, and doubted their authority, and that of their communities, in telling history. This does little to encourage diverse voices entering the arena of historical debate. To create engaging learning, the voices of all in the classroom should be empowered. Therefore, in uplifting and empowering student voice I had to consider both my own role and that of my students. I therefore ensured lessons contained as many named individuals and visitors as possible. This helped avoid voice appropriation. It also suggested I too was a learner, who had taken steps to find a multitude of voices to shape learning. hooks (1994) reminds us, we cannot expect our students to be the only vulnerable ones in the classroom. Therefore I participated in the oral history activity, sharing with students stories from my own parents and how I might work with them to create an oral history of their childhood homes.

Meaningful dialogue was given central importance. Structured group work, wherein participation from all students was expected, was used often. The dialogue held a great deal of importance since the outcome of it involved a real life consequence for students – their work would be published on a website viewed by the public. The pupils worked in groups to share oral histories and create their walking tours of the city. I hoped giving significance to pupil voice would create the perception that participation in the discipline was open to those of all backgrounds. Taken together with illuminating the construction of history, I anticipated therefore students would be more knowledgeable as well as more confident.

Throughout the intervention, students were invited to engage in praxis, acting and reflecting on the present using the knowledge and skill acquired in history lessons. Their tours of Oxford consisted of at least one 'imaginary stop', in which they either edited, or created from scratch, a form of memorialisation. This task was deliberately broad but students were given examples to inspire and encourage them. Editing could involve making changes to current statues, blue plaques, or street art. To widen their view of what a museum could be, they learnt about the Empathy Museum's *a Mile in my Shoes* (n.d), a pop-up exhibition where visitors don others' shoes whilst listening to their stories. This allowed students to reflect on their learning and put into action this space by presenting it to the Uncomfortable Oxford team, again enhancing empowerment.

Another example of praxis was when pupils spent time learning about the function of statues in public places, considering the controversial statues of Edward Colston in Bristol and Cecil Rhodes in Oxford. Pupils were invited to participate in the debate by writing a

letter about their views on the statue of Rhodes to Oriel College's Provost, Lord Neil Mendoza. The headteacher, a teaching assistant and I guided pupils when letter-writing. I took a number of steps to mitigate the possibility of our authority as teachers unduly influencing pupil's views. Students worked together to create a list of opinions as to what action could be taken regarding the statue. These were garnered through class discussion and watching debates on the topic on video. I enlisted help from additional members of staff to ensure my personal views on the topic did not monopolise debates. The other members of staff and I expressly decided that when checking over pupil work, we commented only to encourage use of more historical evidence, or to correct factual errors. The letters were written up neatly and posted to Oriel College. Students therefore engaged in a public debate and felt their voices were heard. As such, their history lessons had use outside the classroom, enabling civic participation.

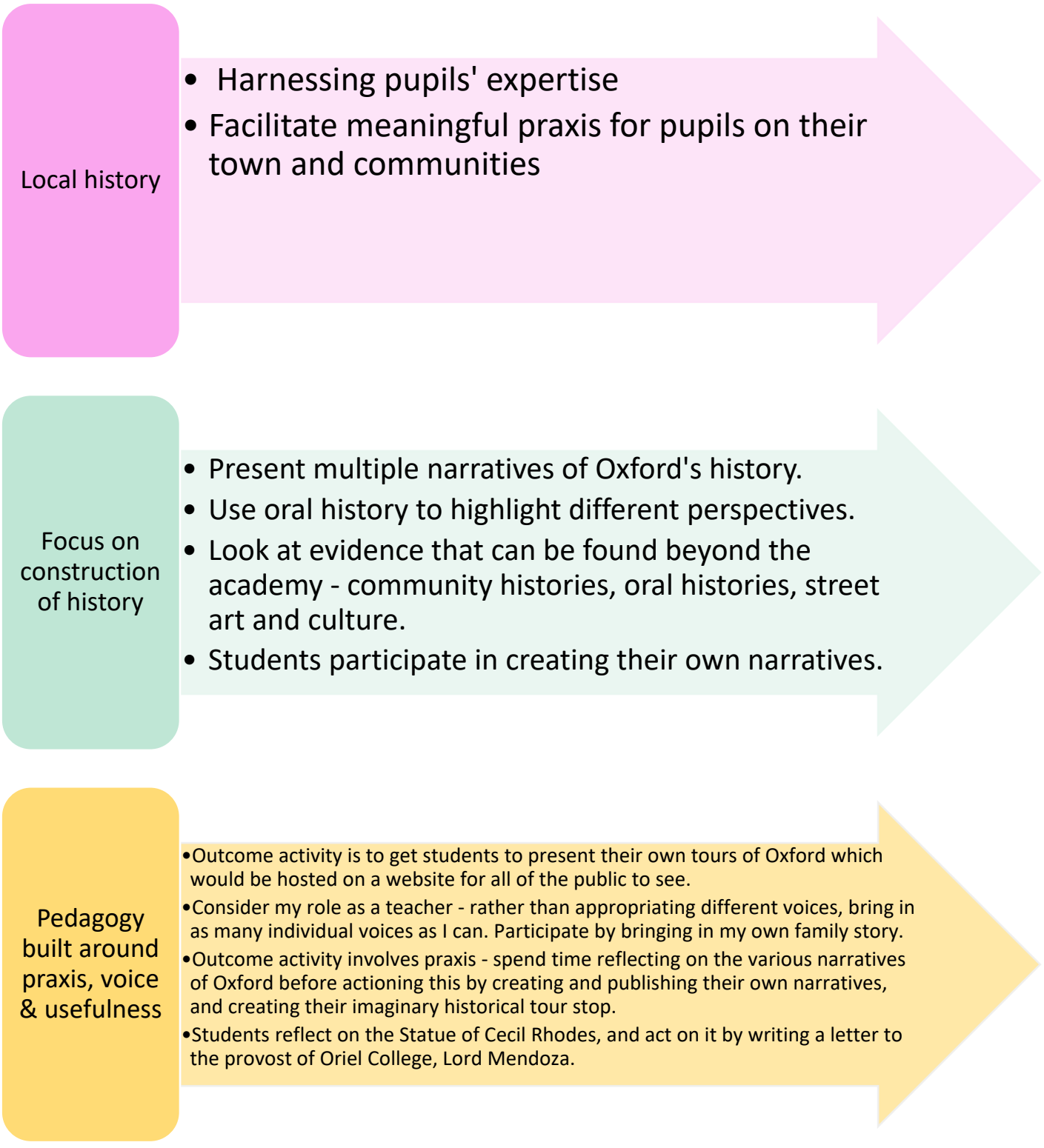


Figure 12 – Intervention design

Closing research design

Given my wish to reshape power dynamics to give students a voice, a phenomenological, interpretivist research paradigm was helpful. As explained by Denscombe (2007), it emphasises subjectivity, description, agency and human experience first and foremost. I hoped this would help me speak through, not for, the voices and experiences of the students. Additionally, an important ethical consideration when designing the data collection methods was ensuring sufficient triangulation (Denzin, 1978 in Haydn, 2019). It was important to engage in triangulation, as Vetter (et al., 2013) reminds researchers, we must recognise how our position affects our analysis of data. I had to be aware of my own positionality in three ways, in my role as a teacher, in light of my outward personal identity as a BME female, and due to my own interests.

When gaining ethical approval, I deliberated upon my role as a teacher and how my power may impact students. I considered whether students would be more inclined to be positive about history they were learning, or feel obliged to participate. In line with BERA (2018) guidelines, I therefore made clear to students, participation in the questionnaire was optional, would have no bearing on their grading, and the emphasis was on telling me how they felt so changes could be made to better their experience.

In terms of ethical considerations related to my personal positionality, Empire, 'race' and the history curriculum have been personal interests of mine for a number of years, which I feared may increase the danger of misinterpreting data based on my own assumptions, and to fit the patterns I would like to see. After all, as Vetter (et al., 2013) states, we can never

be entirely certain of the purpose and intention behind a speaker's words. Any qualitative data I collected is especially vulnerable to projecting my own assumptions, but since absolute neutrality is neither helpful (since the researcher must at least have a good knowledge of the topic of their research), nor possible, triangulation will help to mitigate this issue. Methodological triangulation was achieved through having both qualitative and quantitative data in my questionnaires. Qualitative data, including more open ended questions such as, *'In your own words, what have you learnt during this unit of work on Oxford's history? You can write as much or as little as you'd like.'* and, *'in what ways can you use the things you learn in history lessons? If you feel you can't, in what ways can it be changed for it to be more useful?'* were included so that students were given opportunity to voice their ideas in a freeform way. In addition to this, quantitative data collected across both questionnaires enabled me to make comparisons between Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2 more easily by comparing quantitative data sets.

Another form of qualitative data I used was collecting field notes. I wrote down my own thoughts after each lesson bearing in mind my research questions, and noted particularly interesting comments from pupils. There is a likelihood I missed some comments from pupils, as this method relies on my own bias towards what constitutes as interesting and relevant. However, recording the entirety of the nine lessons, and then transcribing them, was an impossible task in the time given. Importantly, the information gathered in the field notes will be used to add more depth to the two questionnaires, and will not be relied upon to do the bulk of my analysis since the data here was not collected as systematically as in the questionnaires. I did take steps to ensure accuracy - as far as possible I wrote down pupil responses word-for-word within a ten-minute window. There was only one instance

where I was not able to write down pupil responses within this time frame. Rather than discarding a potentially useful and interesting comment, I endeavoured to write the idea down as accurately as possible, and double checked the wording with the student. Of course, this is vulnerable to some misremembering. However, the triangulation with other qualitative and quantitative data collected in the questionnaire will hopefully alleviate too much skewing of the data. This triangulation of methods and data, will help to improve the validity of my analysis.

Findings and analysis

To assess the impact of the intervention, I will be drawing on my second questionnaire as well as field notes collected during the intervention itself. Questionnaire 2 was designed to offer comparison with Questionnaire 1. As such, questions were largely repeated, with the exception of a few changes. The major change was the inclusion of a freeform space for pupils to write their reflections under the question, '*In your own words, what have you learnt during this unit of work on Oxford's history? You can write as much or as little as you'd like.'* One of the aims of my intervention was to create a set of lessons pupils were able to make meaning from, and I felt this could most reliably be concluded if pupils could explain their learning in their own words. To allow a suitable length of time to be spent on the freeform question, I needed to reduce the length of the questionnaire. I removed some time-consuming questions that had proven too difficult for students in Questionnaire 1, such as asking pupils to write down elements they would include in curriculum design. In addition to this, Questionnaire 1 had helped me to hone my focus and therefore identify superfluous questions such as asking pupils about the content of their current curriculum.

In coding my responses and organising my analysis, I used the constant comparative method. Since Questionnaire 2 provided the bulk of my comparative analysis, I began by open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) the data derived from both qualitative questions, which were: 'In what ways can you use the things you learn in history lessons? If you feel you can't, in what ways can it be changed for it to be more useful?'; and the final question, 'In your own words, what have you learnt during this unit of work on Oxford's history? You can write as much or as little as you'd like.' Through a process of axial coding, I was then

able to place each response in a category depending on which research question they helped to answer. Appendix 3 presents the criteria for my coding and the student responses categorised.

What might be the impact of local history in decolonising the curriculum?

Questionnaire 1 revealed students felt local history was not an important topic of study. If we are to encourage new ideas and voices to enter the historical arena and challenge colonial ways of thinking and knowing about the discipline, engagement and interest for the broadest possible range of pupils must be considered. This result was overwhelmingly different after the intervention. Figure 13 below shows the change in scores pupils gave to the importance of local history in Questionnaire 1 and Questionnaire 2. The average score given by pupils on a Likert scale out of 5 jumped from 2.08 to 4.08 after the intervention. A vast majority of student responses to the question, '*In your own words, what have you learnt during this unit of work on Oxford's history? You can write as much or as little as you'd like'* related to learning more about local history or mentioned Oxford in their answer. Pupils appreciated learning more about their city. As one student said during lesson 5, *'You might not think history is that interesting but if you see it in your neighbourhood you might become interested.'* What is less clear is if the pupils' interest in local history can be attributed to the importance of the topic itself, or if it was due to the pedagogical tools employed that rendered it 'enriching and enhancing' (hooks, 1994: 19). My assumption is that if this scheme of work was taught in a 'banking model' that emphasised teacher exposition, it may have had considerably less of an impact. However, this hypothesis will be considered in more detail in my discussion about praxis below.

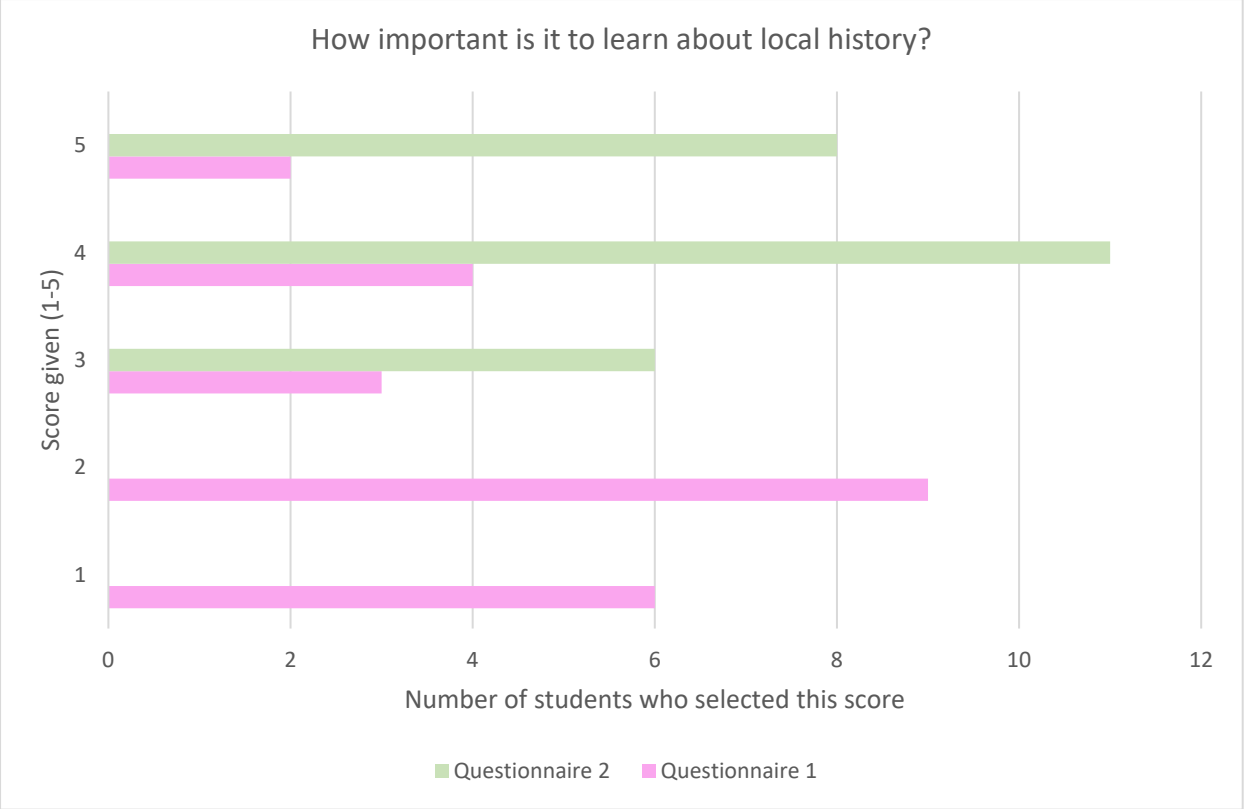


Figure 13 – How important is it to learn about local history?

In addition to this, pupils showed a marked increase in the range of places they felt they could encounter history, as Figure 14 shows. Pupils could select as many choices as they liked, and 27 more choices (127 in total) were selected in Questionnaire 2 compared to Questionnaire 1. Whilst pupils continued to feel they could encounter history in books, museums, film and TV, there were large increases in the history encountered elsewhere, most notably in the 'Local area'. 16 students selected this option, whilst just 5 had done so during Questionnaire 1. Evidently, the students had increased their awareness of the multiplicity of ways history might be told. In bringing validation to the history told by pupils themselves, and in communities, this may offer the tools for pupils to challenge colonial narrowness about where history is located. This can help overturn silences, as Trouillot (1995) argues, which are created by the historical process side-lining particular sources, leaving them out of archives, and ignoring them as valid historical evidence.

Related to discussion about local history, Questionnaire 1 brought into question whether I had overstated the relevance of the Oxford 'town and gown' divide. Six students had selected 'Central Oxford' as being a place to encounter history, whilst five selected 'Local Area'. During Questionnaire 2, there was an inverse but equally small margin between pupils selecting 'Central Oxford' and 'Local Area'. Whilst the quantitative data from the questionnaires show little evidence of a 'town and gown' divide, evidence from elsewhere suggested otherwise. During lesson four, *'What can we learn from Oxford's diverse voices?'*, pupils were asked to come up with words to describe central Oxford and the Cowley Road. In line with Todd and Burn's (2018) findings pupils described the Cowley Road in far more negative terms. The '*old'* and '*posh'* central Oxford was the preserve of '*tourists'* and the '*rich'* in contrast to the '*dirt'*, '*drugs'* and '*traffic'* that supposedly occupied the Cowley Road. During the pupils' presentations and in Questionnaire 2, many students referred to their newfound understandings of the Cowley Road. These snippets from three separate presentation groups (out of a total of six) exemplify this:

'We chose a barber shop on Cowley Road because you can talk to all the different types of people in Oxford.'

'We chose Cowley Road because it's so diverse but it's usually overlooked.'

'We chose Cowley Road because it shows the actual people of Oxford better.'

Many statements from Questionnaire 2 show a similar train of thought, for example:

'I have learn a great deal about the Cowley Road and why it is important yet so understated.'

'Oxford has more history than just the uni'

'Mostly people hear about rich people's history in Oxford'

This demonstrates an awareness that the usual narrative is that central Oxford is historical, whilst the pupils' own locality is not. The intervention overturned this assumption, and many students were keen the general public were better informed about their locality. As Mohanty argues, 'uncovering and reclaiming subjugated knowledge is one way to lay claim to alternative histories' (Mohanty, 2990 in hooks, 1994: 21). This validation of the pupils' own community proved empowering and help to overturn uneven power dynamics that write them out of the historical process.

Hooks (1994) argues that students from working class backgrounds tend to feel they have little to add to classroom discussion. Through the intervention I was deeply impressed with the level of engagement from students across all backgrounds. A moment of particular significance to me was when three lower-prior attaining students, two of whom spoke English as an Additional Language, all three of whom I had found particularly difficult to engage in homework or even class work previously, asked if they could take home their presentations to work on and carry out further research. I believe this extraordinary moment (at least, it felt extraordinary to me) could be attributed to the empowerment they felt through being 'handed the reigns' to find out about their locality. Again, further interviews may have helped to cement this conclusion. The sense of interest and pride in their work was something I felt extended across the classroom. This echoes van Boxtel and van Drie's (2017) work on the power and central importance that should be given to student voice in the classroom, arguing that through truly valuing it, meaning and engagement can best be unlocked. Perhaps choosing the topic of local history enabled this, and helped

students feel more engaged. Again, however, further analysis needs to be done to ascertain if the engagement was down to the subject matter itself or the pedagogical methods deployed.

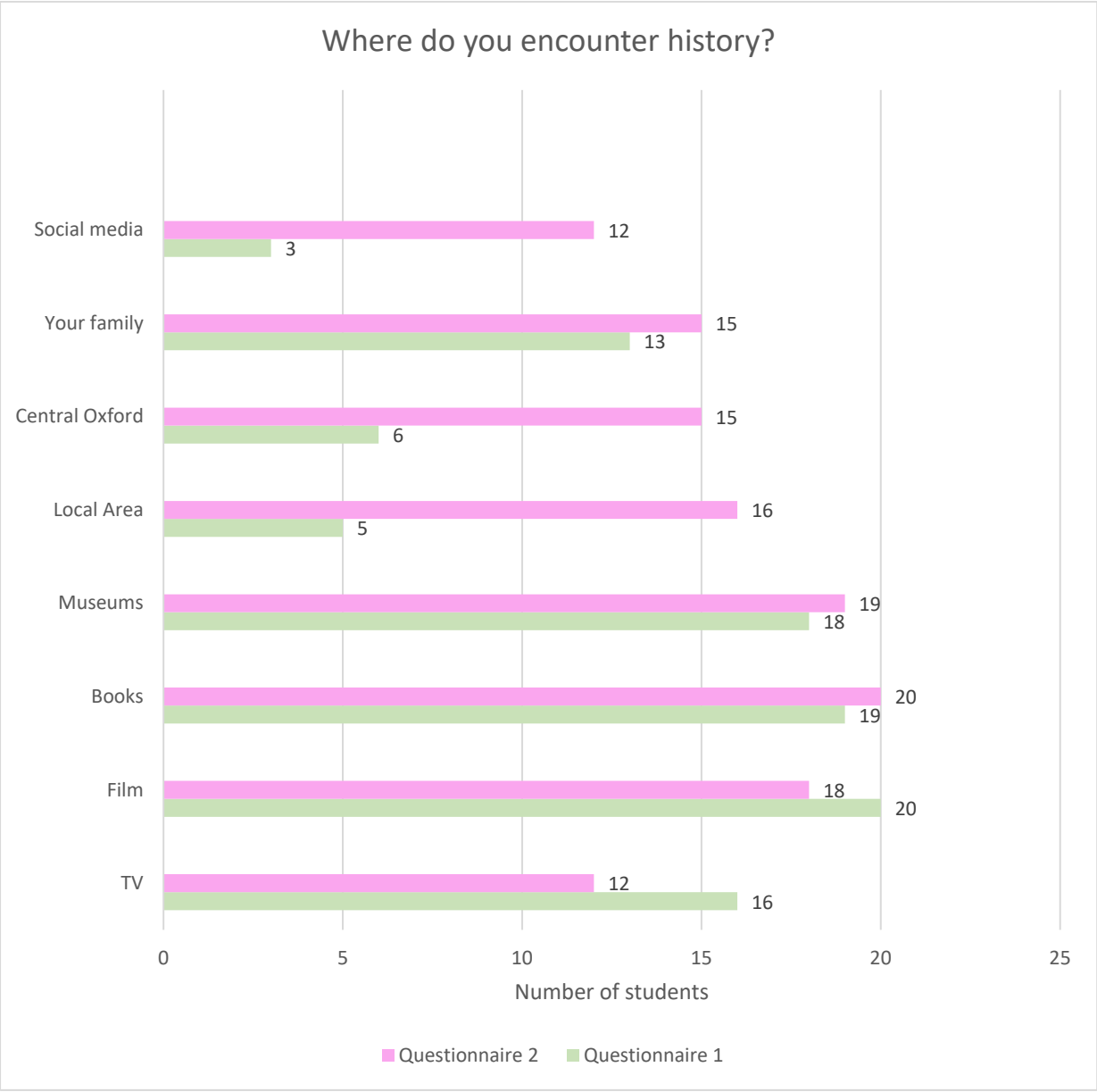


Figure 14 – Where do you encounter history?

How does a focus on construction impact on students historical thinking?

The focus on local history, coupled with an emphasis on the construction of history as Trouillot (1995) calls for, especially as a social process, proved very valuable. Firstly, in attempting to illuminate the construction of history, I wanted my pupils to broaden their understandings of who had power and authority to tell history. Questionnaire 1 revealed students felt history mainly resided in the hands of the academy, and far less so in themselves and their communities. I wanted students to recognise the duality of their historicity as both 'actors and narrators' (Trouillot, 1995). Questionnaire 2 revealed a big change in this respect. As Figures 15, 16 and 17 below show, there was an increase in the range of actors pupils felt had the power and authority to tell history. Most importantly, perhaps, there was a large increase in the number of students who felt they themselves had the power and authority to tell history. This suggests an increase in the ability of pupils to see themselves as narrators in history. However, this cannot be construed as applying to every possible topic students learn about - perhaps they only feel confident telling history about their locality. This suggests that a single scheme of work cannot be expected to shift perceptions entirely, perhaps more work needs to be done across the curriculum to embed the idea that pupils can also have the power and authority to participate in telling history.

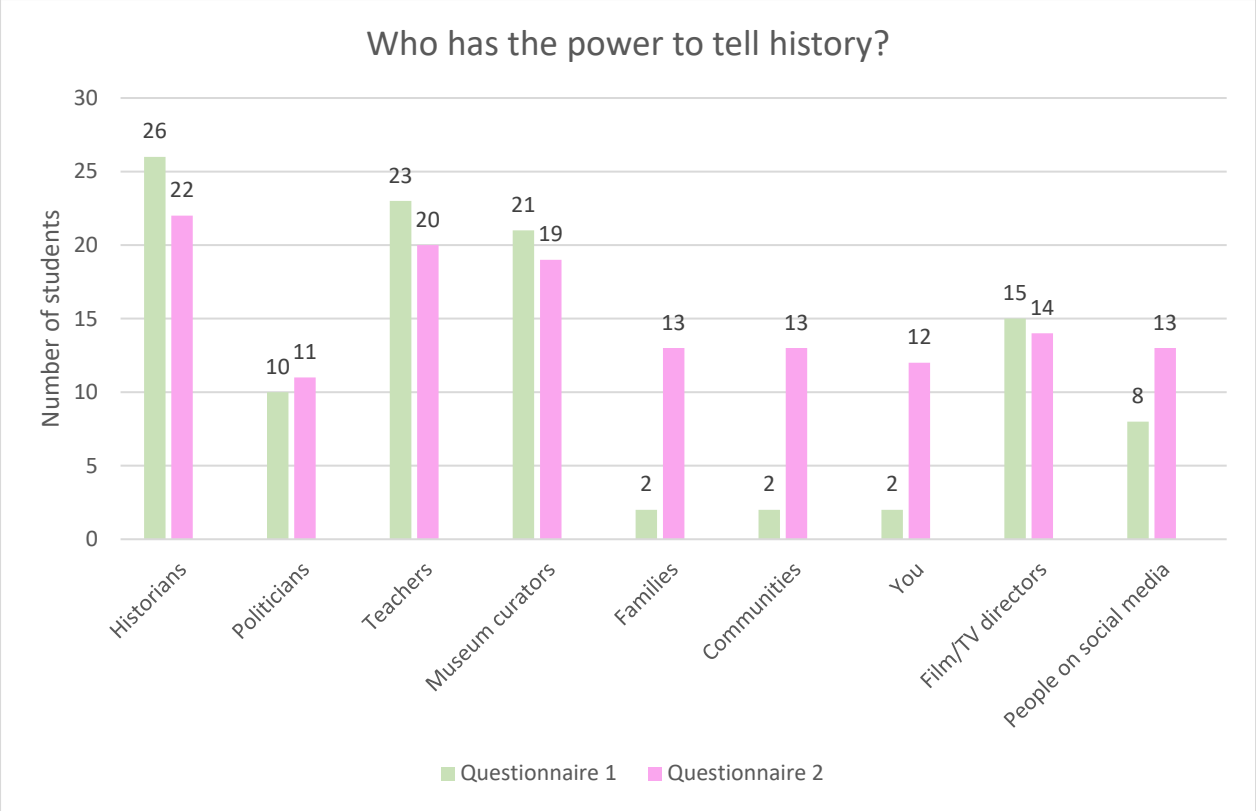


Figure 15 - Who has the power to tell history?

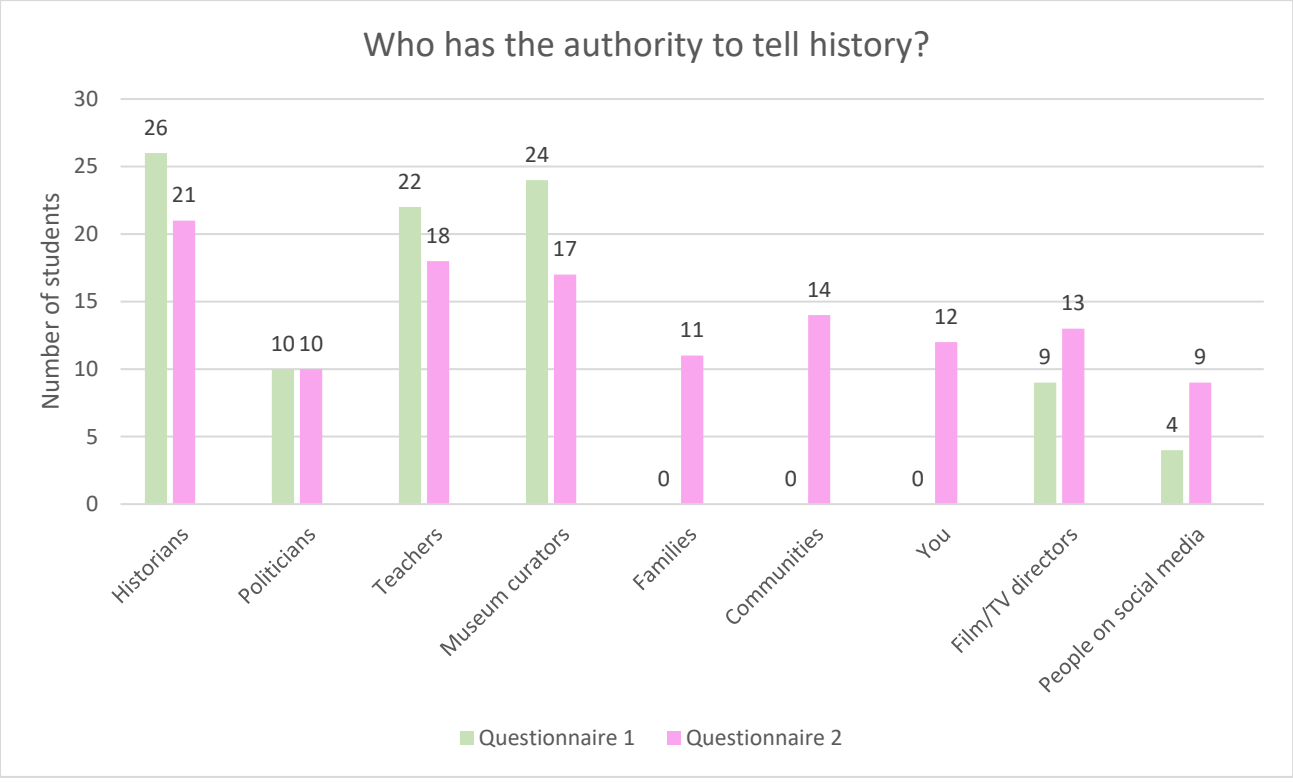


Figure 16 - Who has the authority to tell history?

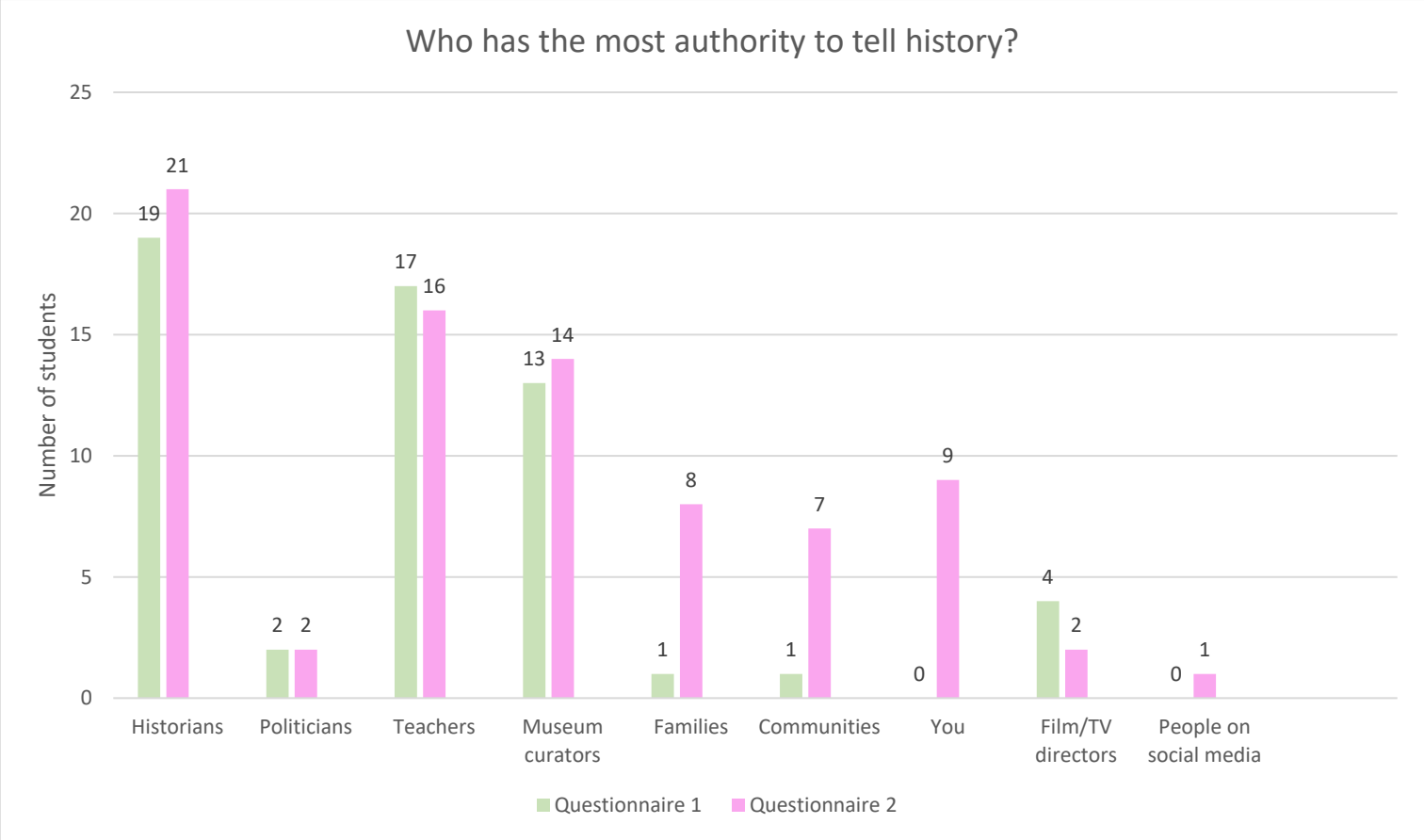


Figure 17 - Who has the most authority to tell history?

Whilst students increased the range of people who they felt had the power and authority to tell history, this was not at the expense of historical standards. As mentioned in the discussion above, some may assume broadening history invites a descent into an unhelpful, rampant form of constructivism that gives equal validity to all historical claims. Therefore, in learning more about the construction of history, pupils looked at various narratives and interpretations, different types of evidence, and oral histories. Spending time on this, as the qualitative data shows, was fruitful in helping students know more about the construction of history, and as van Boxtel and van Drie (2017) put it, 'learn the language' of the discipline. Table 3 below shows some of the statements pupils made in relation the the construction of history, grouped into three categories for visual and discursive ease. There is some overlap

between the categories, with some statements fitting into more than one, but broadly pupils show an awareness that:

- There are many unexpected places historical evidence can be collected from, including oral histories, statues and street art.
- There are 'hidden histories' that we can try to uncover.
- There are different perspectives/narratives of history.

Category of historical construction	Pupil responses (Green – from Questionnaire. Blue – from field notes)
There are many places we can collect historical evidence from e.g. oral histories, statues, street art	• The small parts of Oxford can be the most historical • I've learnt about different types of history, and I think that now I know what history is much more • 'It's good to listen to other people's stories because they tell you about history you haven't heard about before.' • 'We chose a barber shop because you can talk to all the different types of people in Oxford.'
Sometimes aspects of history can be hidden, but we can try to uncover them	• There are different ways of writing about history • Mostly people hear about rich people's history in Oxford • Oxford's history is actually very diverse • The bad parts of history can be hidden and covered up • 'The statue itself hides the history' • 'We should be learning about the actual people of Oxford, not just the fancy ones.' • 'We chose Cowley Road because it's so diverse but it's usually overlooked.' • 'We chose Cowley Road because it shows the actual people of Oxford better.' • 'We think it's important to remember people we don't usually hear about because they can be just as important'
There are different perspectives/narratives of history	• Other people have different perspectives of Oxford's history • Oxford has more history than just the uni • Oxford's history is often portrayed differently to what's real •Lots of history came from ages ago when different things were considered acceptable, like Rhodes having a statue • 'People don't realise that the statue isn't the history, it's also what people have done to it.' • 'We have the internet, TV, the stuff we remember. When we remove a statue, we're not removing history, we're just removing part of it.' • 'We chose Cecil Rhodes because there's lots of controversy'

Table 3 - How did pupil understanding of historical construction develop?

In scrutinising these three categories, it appears that pupils were perhaps better equipped in considering three out four of the moments when, Trouillot (1995) argues, silences enter historical production; when sources are made, when narratives are formulated, and when history is made i.e. its 'retrospective significance'. We did not spend time discussing the making of archives, Trouillot's fourth moment, during this scheme of work. These three areas represent significant progress in terms of considering decolonisation. Firstly, since 'traditional' i.e. colonial thinking, values written sources as evidence of historicity, the pupils' encounter with alternative forms of history helps to avoid this silencing of alternative voices. Secondly, students' awareness of the multiplicity of historical narratives may encourage thinking against the grain of popular narratives. Finally, through the discussion of statues and blue plaques, pupils considered how the making of history may obscure marginalised stories. It is important to strike a note of caution here – it is impossible to say if the learning was developed securely enough for students to realise it could be made applicable to all historical enquiries in lessons or encounters outside of the classroom. This type of thinking about the construction of history would need to be embedded across the curriculum, and its impact on pupils regularly assessed. Additionally, I cannot say if every single pupil developed these understandings, but as the evidence showed, they at least all considered, in some way or another, how history is constructed.

How does a pedagogy built around praxis, voice and usefulness support decolonisation?

hooks' assertion that, 'different, more radical subject matter does not create liberatory pedagogy' (hooks, 1994: 148), emphasises the centrality of pedagogical practices that make the learning meaningful. The increase in pupil engagement, as referenced in the earlier

discussion, may have been made possible by the focus on praxis, student voice, and the usefulness of the learning outside of the classroom. In comparison to Questionnaire 1, there were many more pupils able to answer the freeform question about the usefulness of history. 13 pupils provided responses in Questionnaire 2, compared to just seven during Questionnaire 1. As Table 4 below shows, the type of response also shifted. This was particularly pronounced in the 'understanding and taking action in the present' category, where total responses jumped from one to eight. The responses were far more specific, rather than the vague ideas about history teaching unspecified 'lessons' that characterised Questionnaire 1. Perhaps this can be explained away by the fact that pupils knew they were reflecting on this scheme of work, but this nonetheless suggests that it may be a useful exercise to ask pupils explicitly to consider how they might use their learning. I had assumed that the topics I previously taught pupils had purpose beyond the classroom, but evidently, the responses to Questionnaire 1 suggests that this was not always realised by students.

Category	Pupil Response	Number of responses
Understanding and taking action in the present	• *I can tell people not all statues and monuments are of good people* • *I can help people find out important things* • *I think more about peoples' lives* • *Thinking differently about the things you pass in your day to day life* • *I can usefully protest against things I feel to be wrong, backed up by key information* • *Help me make decisions on important topics* • *Knowing about controversial statues* • *Learn more about my home*	8
Shaping the future	• *Educate others about important things* • *Know what to do in situations and act clever in future*	2
Practical skills	• *Write a book to tell people what I learnt* • *In arguments with people* • *When I become a history teacher*	3

Table 4 - How did pupils' perception of the usefulness of history develop?

Many student responses indicate that considering statues was a particularly significant moment in the scheme of work. Many of the 'imaginary stops' in pupils' final tours were centred around the need to memorialise a wider range of people than the statues and plaques in Oxford were doing currently. Public debates often feel rather ephemeral. In a media frenzy, debate often seems to happen in echelons unreachable to students, as various academics and social commentators are invited to speak. However, bringing the debate to the classroom concretely demonstrated how the statue was indeed relevant. Witnessing them care very deeply about the statue's impact not only on themselves, but also on their wider community, reified the debate around Rhodes. The letters written to Lord Mendoza attest to this, with one pupil writing, '*As someone who lives in Oxford and walks by the statue almost every day, I think it is important that my voice is heard.'* The fact

that pupils received a detailed reply from Lord Mendoza cemented the importance of their task. His response outlined the university's commitment to placing a plaque on the statue, which aligned with the views of a handful of pupils. As hooks argues, conscientization is not an end in itself, 'but always as it is joined by meaningful praxis' (hooks, 1994:47). Of course, there will not always be the possibility for this sort of praxis in every single topic learnt in history, but seeking out these opportunities and finding ways for pupils to make meaning holds much value.

Another activity which invited to students to practice praxis, and is perhaps easier to apply across other topics in history lessons, was the students making their own tours. These tours encompassed many of the lessons I had wanted pupils to learn throughout the scheme; uncovering hidden histories, the place and purpose of statues and other forms of memorialisation, and the multiple historical narratives that can be told. Many of the themes chosen by pupils reflected social justice issues. Some examples include: a tour in which the participants would collect some oral histories about Oxford themselves by travelling along the diverse Cowley Road; a tour focused on LGBTQ+ history which began with visiting the school site where relevant graffiti had been chalked by students across the school during a sixth-form organised LGBTQ+ awareness day; one group, in the wake of marches in support of Palestine, and in memory of the BLM protests, chose to honour protestors throughout Oxford's history; a community garden was designed as a living museum, where members of the public could collect seeds to plant named after past and present environmentalists from the city. Pupils had grasped the opportunity to speak about issues that held importance to them, to honour the 'Stuart Hall conjuncture'.

Quantitative data, as Figures 18 and 19 show, speaks to this increase in dialogue in the classroom. Questionnaire 1 demonstrated that pupils felt that dialogue was important, and that they had time for dialogue about history in their lessons. Questionnaire 2 affirmed this. Most pupils (18 out of 24) felt they spent half of the lesson or more talking about history, and there were more responses that demonstrated the importance pupils gave to dialogue. It would have been helpful to find out precisely why they thought that dialogue was so important, but taking the above analysis into account helps me in drawing some tentative conclusions. Pupils felt a great deal of enjoyment in taking part in debates, listening to one another and collecting their oral histories, and creating tours of their city. None of these would have been possible without dialogue and discussion with one another. As hooks (1994) argues, enjoyment in learning derived from our interest in one another. Meaningful dialogue allows this to happen.

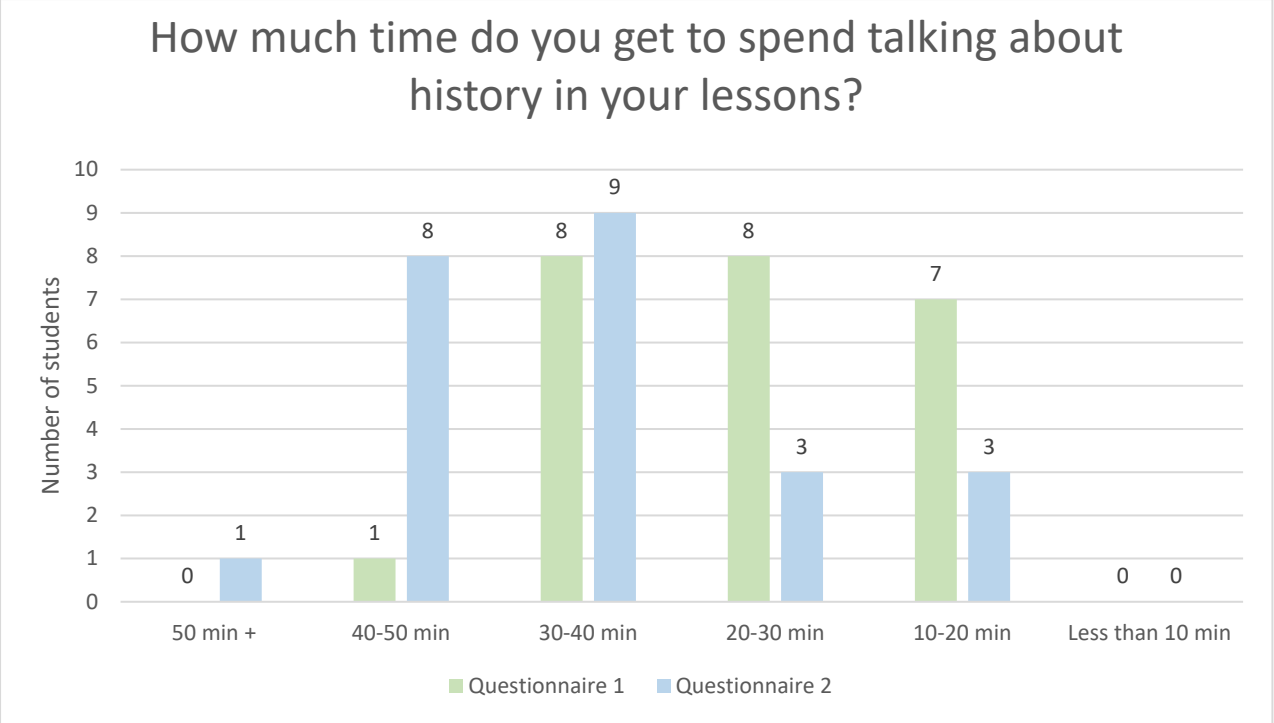


Figure 18 - How much time do you get to spend talking about history in your lessons?

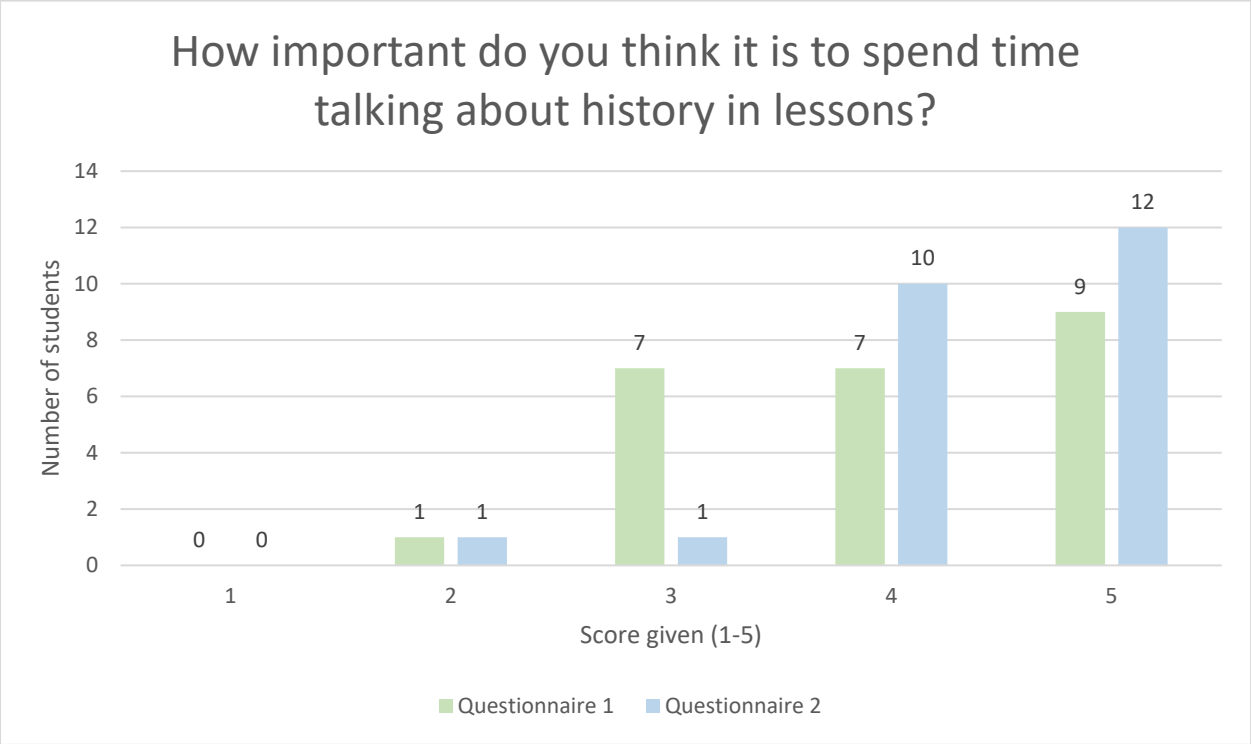


Figure 19 - How important do you think it is to spend time talking about history in lessons?

Conclusion

Perhaps the most important aspect of my learning through this paper was the rich and deeply edifying window into pupils' gazes, imaginations and abilities that engaged emancipatory pedagogy enabled. hooks argues, 'to teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin' (hooks, 1994: 13). To this, I would add that throughout a learning process which puts into practice the tenets of emancipatory pedagogy, the teacher fosters further respect and care for their pupils. hooks' emphasis on education as the dialectical exchange between teacher and pupil illuminates its power for both parties. In engaging in praxis, in taking action on the conjuncture of 2020, public discourse that was previously remote had become tangible and immediately important. The debate around the statue of Rhodes was a particularly good example of this, but the value of amplifying students' voices was evident consistently. As one colleague texted me in excitement when he experienced the very rare occurrence that every single one of the pupils in his class brought in their homework, which was their stories from home:

'They all brought in their homework! There were kids from Poland, East Timor, China, Surrey, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Romania, Cowley, the Philippines, Sudan, Barton and more. All of them sharing their heritage and what's important to them and their families. If you are trying to make them feel represented by the curriculum then you are succeeding!'

Decolonisation calls for empowerment to reclaim spaces that are rendered inaccessible by 'racialised' structures. This implicates the discipline of history, and asks us to think differently, to reconsider its ontological and epistemological foundations. The likely result of

this is a curriculum more diverse in scope to address the uneven weight given to Euro- and Anglo-centric histories, but through working on this assignment, pedagogy appeared equally important. The topics I had covered in history prior to this scheme of work were diverse and in my mind, exciting; we traversed the steppes of central Asia alongside Genghis Khan, marvelled at the vast libraries of the 8th Century city of Baghdad, and charted the upheaval in England after 1066. But as the unrivalled levels of engagement during the local history lessons demonstrated, perhaps involving more tools from emancipatory pedagogy, such as praxis, would have made these subjects even more meaningful for pupils. Much of my confidence in approaching local history differently was due to collaboration with Uncomfortable Oxford. Since they are made up of historians and academics, they helped provide legitimacy to the scheme of work and alleviate my anxieties around reconsidering the discipline.

What was also clear was that the lessons I aimed to teach pupils about the construction of history, opening the door to the discipline, must be embedded across the curriculum. This rings true also for realising in full the impact of engaged emancipatory pedagogy which empowers and uplifts student voice. One scheme of work is not enough to do complete of the work we would like decolonisation to do. Lessons later on in the year with the same pupils built on ideas such as the purpose of museums, how oral history could be used, what voice appropriation might be and how to work with material evidence. From this, it was clear that whilst the local history scheme of work had sowed the seeds in pupils' minds, they needed to revisit, reiterate and apply this understanding in various scenarios for it to continue to be meaningful

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Appendix

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire 1

Survey

Hello! Thank you so much for taking the time to read this, and hopefully fill in the questionnaire if you can. This questionnaire is for a research project I'm doing as part of my Master's course at Oxford University. I would really like to know about your views on history and history teaching; where you encounter history, what you think is important to learn about, what you think about local history, and also about how much talking (on topic, of course!) you do or you'd like to do in your lessons.

I will use your ideas to help me design some lessons for you over the next few terms. I'll then write up all my findings and my lessons in a big essay for my university. If I do use your questionnaire response in my essay, or anywhere else like a presentation to other teachers, it will be completely anonymised (no one will know your name). I may invite you to join a group conversation in a few weeks if I'd like to know more about some of the things you put in the questionnaire. Although, don't feel you have to agree to be part of that.

All participation in this is completely optional, and you can change your mind whenever you want, so don't worry if you get halfway through and don't want to carry on. You can skip any questions you want, too.

Thanks again, I'm really looking forward to hearing your ideas!

Part one – History in your world
1. Where do you encounter history? Circle/highlight all that apply: *- TV - Films - Books - Museums - Your local area - Central Oxford - Your family - Social media* *Somewhere else, such as:*
2. *Who do you think has the power to tell history? Circle/highlight all that apply:* *- Historians - Politicians - Teachers - Museum curators (people who organise and select the objects on display at museums) - Families Communities - You - Film/TV directors - People on social media* *Someone else, such as:*
3. *Who do you think has the authority to tell history? Circle/highlight all that apply:* *- Historians - Politicians - Teachers - Museum curators (people who organise and select the objects on display at museums) - Families Communities - You - Film/TV directors - People on social media* *Someone else, such as:*

4. *Of these, who do you think has the most authority to tell history? Select a* ***maximum of three.***

- Historians - Politicians - Teachers - Museum curators (people who organise and select the objects on display at museums) - Families Communities - You - Film/TV directors - People on social media

Someone else, such as:

5. *Are there ways History can be used for positive purposes?*

- Yes - No - Maybe - Not sure

6. *Are there ways History can be used for positive purposes?*

- Yes - No - Maybe - Not sure

Part two - Your history curriculum

7. Who makes your history curriculum? *Circle/highlight all that apply:*

- Teachers - Government/politicians - Historians - Students - Communities
- Families - Universities

Someone else, such as:

8. Of these, which three shape your curriculum the most?

- Teachers - Government/politicians - Historians - Students - Communities
- Families - Universities

Someone else, such as:

9. Are most topics you study in your history curriculum global (about the world), local (about Oxford), or national (about the UK)?

- Mostly global (about the world)
- Mostly local (about Oxford)
- Mostly national (about the UK)

10. Do you think it is important to study local history (about the city in which you live)? Circle one number on the scale:

Not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

11. Can you name three things you think are important to learn about in history? This can be dates, skills, people, or anything else you think is important to learn.

12. If you could design a curriculum, what three topics would you choose?

13. In what ways can you use the things you learn in history lessons? If you feel you can't, in what ways can it be changed for it be more useful?

Part three – Dialogue in your classroom

14. How often do you get to talk about history in lessons? (Don't worry about being exact, just make your best guess of how much time you spend talking about history in a 60 minute lesson)

1. 50 minutes or more
2. 40 - 50 minutes
3. 30 - 40 minutes
4. 20 – 30 minutes
5. 10 – 20 minutes
6. Less than 10 minutes

15. How important do you think it is to talk about the history you're learning?

Not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire 2

Hello! Thank you so much for taking the time to read this, and hopefully fill in the questionnaire if you can. This questionnaire is to help me finish a research project I'm doing as part of my Master's course at Oxford University. You may remember we did a questionnaire just before we learnt about Oxford's history. I would really like to know more - about your views on history and history teaching; where you encounter history, what you think is important to learn about, what you think about local history, and also about how much talking (on topic, of course!) you do or you'd like to do in your lessons.

If I do use your questionnaire response in my essay, or anywhere else like a presentation to other teachers, it will be completely anonymised (no one will know your name).

All participation in this is completely optional, and you can change your mind whenever you want, so don't worry if you get halfway through and don't want to carry on. You can skip any questions you want, too.

Thanks again, I'm really looking forward to hearing your ideas!

Part one – History in your world
1. Where do you encounter history? Circle/highlight all that apply: TV - Films - Books - Museums - Your local area - Central Oxford - Your family - Social media Somewhere else, such as:
2. Who do you think has the power to tell history? Circle/highlight all that apply: Historians - Politicians - Teachers - Museum curators (people who organise and select the objects on display at museums) - Families Communities - You - Film/TV directors - People on social media Someone else, such as:
3. Who do you think has the authority to tell history? Circle/highlight all that apply: Historians - Politicians - Teachers - Museum curators (people who organise and select the objects on display at museums) - Families Communities - You - Film/TV directors - People on social media Someone else, such as:

4. Of these, who do you think has the most authority to tell history? Select a **maximum of three.**

Historians - Politicians - Teachers - Museum curators (people who organise and elect the objects on display at museums) - Families Communities - You - Film/TV directors - People on social media

Someone else, such as:

Part two - Your history curriculum

5. Do you think it is important to study local history (about the city in which you live)? Circle one number on the scale:

Not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

6. In what ways can you use the things you learn in history lessons? If you feel you can't, in what ways can it be changed for it to be more useful?

Part three – Dialogue in your classroom

7. How often do you get to talk about history in lessons? (Don't worry about being exact, just make your best guess of how much time you spend talking about history in a 60 minute lesson)

1. 50 minutes or more
2. 40 - 50 minutes
3. 30 - 40 minutes
4. 20 – 30 minutes
5. 10 – 20 minutes
6. Less than 10 minutes

8. How important do you think it is to talk about the history you're learning?

Not important at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very important

Part four - reflection
In your own words, what have you learnt during this unit of work on Oxford's history? You can write as much or as little as you'd like.

Appendix 3 – Coding

1. What might be the impact of local history in decolonising the curriculum?
    - How have pupils engaged in the topic of local history?
    - Have they increased their understanding of local history?
    - How have their views on the topic changed? Why/why not?
2. How does a focus on construction impact on students historical thinking?
    - Is there any evidence that students have learnt more about the construction of history?
    - Have students broadened their view of where history might be located?
    - Have they considered multiple perspectives and/or interpretations?
    - Have students contended with the existence of multiple narratives?
2. How does a pedagogy built around praxis, voice and usefulness support decolonisation?
    - Do the students feel that they can use some of the things they've learnt in history?
    - Have students been able to consider how they may act on the things they have learnt about in history?
    - Do students feel their voices have been heard and/or valued?

Construction of history

Reponses from Questionnaire 2:

Key	
Green – Derived from freeform question	Yellow – Derived from usefulness question

Local history

Reponses from Questionnaire 2:

Key	
Green – Derived from freeform question	Yellow – Derived from usefulness question

- The small parts of Oxford can be the most historical
- There are different ways of writing about history
- Other people have different perspectives of Oxford's history
- Oxford has more history than just the uni
- Mostly people hear about rich people's history in Oxford
- Oxford's history is actually very diverse
- Oxford's history is often portrayed differently to what's real
- I've learnt about different types of history, and I think that now I know what history is much more
- The bad parts of history can be hidden and covered up
- Lots of history came from ages ago when different things were considered acceptable, like Rhodes having a statue

- I now know lots about Oxford's history
- I got to learn about Oxford
- I know more about the city when I walk around it
- Now I know more about Cowley Road
- I've learnt about Oxford and its history
- Figuring and finding out more about the things you pass in your day to day life
- I have learn a great deal about the Cowley Road and why it is important yet so understated
- Learn more about my home
- Learnt about the history of Oxford
- Oxford is iconic and has lots of interesting history
- More about Oxford
- More about Cowley Road

Praxis, voice & usefulness

Reponses from Questionnaire 2:

Key	
Green – Derived from freeform question	Yellow – Derived from usefulness question

- I can tell people not all statues and monuments are of good people
- I can help people find out important things
- Know what to do in situations and act clever in future
- Write a book to tell people what I learnt
- I think more about peoples' lives
- Educate others about important things
- Thinking differently about the things you pass in your day to day life
- Learning about controversial / overlooked topics
- I can usefully protest against things I feel to be wrong, backed up by key information
- Help me make decisions on important topics
- Come up with my opinion on controversial statues
- Knowing about controversial statues
- In arguments with people
- When I become a history teacher

Appendix 4 – Lesson sequence

Lesson title	*Lesson objectives*	*Rationale*
1. Where does history happen in Oxford?	• Students identify traditional narratives of Oxford by being presented with the first images that appeared when Googling 'Oxford City History'. Images were entirely of central Oxford. • Students read extract from James Attlee's *Isolarion* which talks about the significance of the Cowley Road as a site of change. • Video is played to pupils from *Uncomfortable Oxford* who present the final outcome task.	**Identifying existing narratives.** **Reflection on the validity of the narratives and the power dynamics that constructed them.** **Awareness of the real-life consequence of their unit through the collaboration with *Uncomfortable Oxford*.**
2 & 3. Is the history of Oxford 'set in stone'?	• Students begin by giving their preconceptions about what makes a place historical – is it age, is it architecture, something else? • Students analyse the statue of Rhodes, consider what it suggests about him. Then, more is revealed about Rhodes' past. • Video is played about recent protests in Oxford, before finding out about what happened to the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol. • Students consider a range of options as to what might happen to the statue of Rhodes, and write a letter to Lord Mendoza of Oriel College informing him about their idea.	**Opportunity for praxis with letters written to Lord Mendoza** **Reflection on who owns historical spaces in their city, and how memorialisation works in the present.** **Consider the function of public spaces. This is an example of 'problem posing' education. They can reflect on and solve a clear problem.** **Students consider multiple narratives & sources of evidence**
4 & 5. What can we learn from Oxford's diverse voices?	• Begin by looking at statues and blue plaques in Oxford, considering which demographics are most often represented. Students consider whether they feel this is an accurate portrayal of the people of Oxford. • Ask students – where might this diversity be in Oxford? • Look at the common beliefs about the Cowley Road which are mainly negative, but remind pupils of James Attlee's contention about the importance of the change that has occurred on the Cowley Road. • Learn about histories of street art, culture, religion and care on the Cowley Road.	**Give pupils authority on their local area** **Consider multiple narratives of Oxford depending on where you look** **Consider alternative forms of memorialisation through culture** **Who we hear about depends on their power – we often hear about the powerful**
6. How can I tell my local history?	• Students bring in their homework – they had been asked to speak to older family members and bring in any story from their past. • Define oral history, explain why it might be helpful, especially in uncovering hidden or forgotten voices. Consider the limitations of oral history. • I bring in guest (colleague who has done a community oral history project), to discuss why she chose to do oral history and how she used it.	**Praxis on the lack of history about the ordinary, everyday people by learning about and practising oral history** **Consider forms of history other than traditional buildings and plaques** **Chance to uplift their voices.**

	• Students share their stories in small groups and use them to come up with an imaginary tour of their locality. They do this step by step using an example I have brought in based on talking to my own parents. They consider what further avenues of investigation there might be and what questions they could ask to complete their tours.	**Hear about real life methods and impact of collecting oral history.**
7 & 8. What stories can we tell of Oxford?	• With guidance from Uncomfortable Oxford, students begin planning their own walking tours in small groups. • They know these tours may be hosted online. • Their tours must consist of two real stops and one imagined stop. The imagined stop must be their own method of memorialisation in Oxford. This could be changing an existing space, or coming up with an entirely new one. • Each stop must have a narrative with it. They must also come up with a theme for their tour. • In order to help with the imagined stop, and give them a wider understanding of what museum and memorialisation may entail, they watch a video about the 'Empathy Museum', which is a physical museum experience in which visitors walk in another person's shoes whilst listening to their stories.	**Imagined stop considers the issue of power & memorialisation. This is an opportunity for praxis.** **Tours are a chance for pupils to figure out the narrative they want to tell, but also the wealth of other narratives there may be depending on where you're looking and what story you choose to tell.**
9. Presenting your tour!	• Students discuss presentation skills before presenting their tour to the class and a member of Uncomfortable Oxford. • They are assessed on: their justification for their stops, their oral presentation skills, and the overall coherence of their theme and narrative.	**Presenting the ideas to an audience makes them aware of other narratives that could exist.** **Chance to meet Uncomfortable Oxford in real life – real life consequences.**