

## Painting a picture of the ‘outstanding’ history trainee using the lens of the history ‘enquiry question’ (EQ)

The following list is the result of the activity which took place on the history mentor day in June 2010. At that day, all history mentors worked on a first draft of these statements and were invited to amend, augment or edit them. What follows, is the improved version.

The goal of our task was to paint a more robust and subject-specific picture than the QTS Standards can give of the excellence that we *already* strive for. We sought to build an explicit picture:

- that is typical of the current discourse on our Cambridge history mentor team;
- that is evidenced in typical weekly targets that we Cambridge mentors create on the MMRS in order to keep moving trainees forwards;
- that reflects the activities, training, discussions and PGCE policy-making in which we have all participated in history mentor team training in recent years;
- that the majority of our Cambridge history trainees attain by Term 3.

We used the EQ for two reasons. It was our chosen focus because:

- a) on their school visits, Christine, Kath, Rachel, Sally, James and Geraint noticed that proficiency in the EQ is the THE major decider between the trainee making rapid progress and the trainee moving more slowly.
- b) We must find a way of avoiding the separation into ‘planning’, ‘assessing’, ‘teaching’, ‘subject knowledge’ etc. It is impossible to describe our history trainees’ learning, let alone to plan for it or manage their personalised programmes, if these attributes are separated. *Rather, each of these facets of professional performance is a facilitator and measure of the other.* Our use of the EQ in the different angles on the prism below, is starting to capture this.

**Note – ‘lesson sequence’ or ‘enquiry’ are used interchangeably in the items below. Lesson sequence = anything between 3 and 8 lessons – i.e. ‘medium-term plan’.**

By May, the ‘outstanding’ Cambridge history trainee normally:

- **wrestles with the wording** of an EQ, prioritising time to reflect upon and improve the wording until it is as conceptually tight, as potentially engaging and as organisationally powerful (for planning the lesson sequence) as he/she can make it.
- in their wording of the EQ, **imaginatively encapsulates the analytic thinking required by one of the second-order concepts or processes** throughout the lesson sequence.
- **is able to convey to pupils the kind of historical thinking** they must engage in during the course of the enquiry and **directly fosters reflection on the wording of the enquiry questioning order to do this.**
- **thinks through the final outcome activity thoroughly** in order to test and refine the historical validity and conceptual focus of the EQ.
- **thinks through the final outcome activity thoroughly in order to ensure that pupils can actually answer the EQ at the end of the enquiry** in a satisfying, substantial, culminating activity that will show progress..
- is able to **judge** (in anticipation and through evaluation) the **effectiveness of the final outcome activity as a tool for assessing** the quality of pupils’ thinking developed and knowledge gained across the lesson sequence.

- *can justify the design and order of objectives, activities and content, across the lesson sequence*, explaining how these will gradually move pupils towards answering the EQ for themselves.
- *reflects on what will be recorded by pupils* during the course of the enquiry's lesson sequence, in order to allow pupils to perform well in the final activity where the enquiry question will be answered (using knowledge and thinking built up over the sequence).
- powerfully enriches *the beginnings and endings of lessons* by exploiting the EQ's organising and motivating role (eg at the start: reviewing how the mystery deepened last lesson; eg at the end: asking pupils to speculate where the enquiry might need to go *next* lesson in order to resolve new problems or dimensions of the EQ which were uncovered in *this*).
- uses the EQ as a major strategy in ensuring that in-lesson *transitions* go beyond the routine; their transitions help pupils to see the unfolding purpose of the lesson in the light of the enquiry as a whole (eg transitions between activities, between strings of Q and A, between one aspect of historical content and another).
- sees the EQ as tool for moving pupils *moving from simplicity to complexity*: the whole purpose of many lessons in the sequence will be to show how a deceptively simple EQ actually has hidden dimensions/complexities/potential meaning/evidential challenges etc.
- reflects explicitly on how their *in-lesson oral questioning is informed, disciplined and enriched* by explicit ongoing reference to the mystery and fascination of the EQ.
- is able to discuss the role (actual or potential) of this particular EQ in contributing to pupils' *longer-term progression* in a particular concept/process or type of historical thinking (eg planned progression across a year or across a Key Stage in, say, causal reasoning, evidential thinking or analysis of historical change [etc]).
- having located the enquiry question within the department's scheme of work, *is able to point the pupils towards prior learning in the relevant second-order concept* (e.g. refers to enquiries tackled earlier within that concept) and makes pupils aware that they are building on that prior learning (e.g. comparing how this enquiry question on causation is different from an earlier one on causation).
- can place their planned enquiry *within a genuine historical problem* that is historically appropriate (i.e. it is an historical question, not a moral question or some other kind of non-historical question).
- can place their planned enquiry within an historical problem *that reflects the historiographical context*.
- *situates the above within the subject community's practices and standards*; i.e. searches for parallel and precedent within both existing history education discourse (eg articles by history teachers or history education researchers defining and extending the meaning of the NC second-order concepts) and academic historians' writings about history itself.