

The value and way forward of History – a motivational discourse from a 21st century perspective¹

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If I don't care for you, I don't care for myself (an African saying; Anonymous)²

Samevatting

Die waarde en toekoms van Geskiedenis – ‘n 21e eeuse diskoers as motivering

Om die waarde van Geskiedenis as vak te bespreek, is so oud soos die akademiese self. As die waarde van Geskiedenis egter beoordeel sou word teen die agtergrond van ‘n veranderende samelewing (bv. interdisiplinêr gedrewe beroepseise, die gemaklikheid van inligtingonttrekking dmv moderne tegnologie en ‘n groter begrip vir kultuurgroepe in die wêreld oor beskikbare kommunikasiemoontlikhede afstand laat “krimp” het) dan behoort die fokus ten opsigte van Geskiedenis – veral as skoolvak – ook andersoortig gemotiveer te word. In onderrigprosesse in die verlede het politieke en, dikwels, eensydige vaderlandsgeskiedenis voorkeur in Geskiedenisonderrig geniet. Hierdie beeld is totaal strydig met die resente navorsingsfokus van Geskiedenis as dissipline wat veel interdisiplinêr neig. Gevolglik is met hierdie artikel beoog om juis dié neiging te verdiskonteer en ‘n andersoortige motiveringsvoorstel vir ‘n leerprogram aan te bied. As agtergrond vir die voorstel is die volgende fasette ook oorsigtelik aangeraak:

i) huidige persepsies van vakdidaktici in Geskiedenis en tersiêre tendense mbt studentegetalle ii) ‘n Geheueverfrisser voor te hou van die waarde en plek van Geskiedenis vanuit ‘n akademiese perspektief iii) Drie “impressionistiese”

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- 1 The discussion is primarily based on the research done in E.S. van Eeden, *Didactical guidelines for teaching history in a changing South Africa* (Keurkopies, Potchefstroom, 1999), Chapter 2. Acknowledgement from this research is offered to the following authors of similar publications: A.L. Beane & M.A. Zaczmanoglou, “History and career awareness, a potpourri of activities”, *History and the Social Science Educator*, 15(2), 1990; N.C. Gysbers, Major trends in career development, theory and practice, *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, 33(1), September 1984; E.S. van Eeden, “The history of mankind as silent formative force in all careers with specific reference to History training and its career relevance”, *New Contree*, 42, November 1997.
 - 2 As used by M.J. Berson, “Rethinking research and pedagogy in the Social Studies: The creation of caring connections through technology and advocacy”, *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 28(1), Winter 2000, p. 122.

scenarios van Geskiedenisonderrig voor te hou vanuit 'n eie belewenis met die vak/dissipline iv) Geskiedenis se interdisiplinêre sterkte vanuit moontlike kurrikulum/leerprograminhoude te debattee en v) 'n Motiveringsvoorstel vir 'n geskiedenisgerigte leerprogram (dus sou gesê kon word: “praktiese” geskiedenis) aan te bied. Die bedoeling hiermee is geensins om Geskiedenis as regmatige vak/dissipline te vervang nie maar om 'n bykomstige geleentheid binne die opvoedingsproses te skep waarin Geskiedenis se waarde meer in die praktyk gekomplimenteer word.

Introduction

To approach any workshop topic very theoretically and intellectually is quite appalling, and in a way it usually is also somewhat comforting. However, fortunately or unfortunately such an approach to this topic will not serve the purpose within a practical workshop³ format, especially nor where a discussion on the sustainable future of History is on the agenda. The discipline/subject seriously needs some proactive thinkers and doers. It doesn't need a “wait-and-see crowd” because the last train is already departing...

Perhaps many History educators will be able to provide stimulating and positive opinions to the question ‘why teach History’? However, have we not already been through numerous “why's” in previous decades on this topic? It probably still remains a mystery to the bulk of educators, learners and the general community as to whether those opinions necessarily complement any educational associations in the classroom situation as the practicing ground for “why History” and the “value” of History to the world/community out there. Some educators of History claim to have an answer, but possible solutions are constantly absent.

Recently I asked a few History educators from the HET and FET-phases to give me some general impressions on the current morale of teachers on the status and future of History within an educational environment. Most of them echoed negativity and the perception that a cul de sac situation has been reached as a result of changing educational visions and structures⁴ in which History appears to be treated like Cinderella.

3 Paper presented at the History Workshop: Empowering the History Educator, Emfuleni Conference Centre, Vanderbijlpark, 22 June 2006.

4 Compare opinions of educators at High School Zwartkop, Centurion. They were questioned about the general morale of teachers, also in their surrounding area. Head of the Subject Group History: Mr Niemand, May 2006.

Among academic scholars History has been labelled as a discipline numerous times:

... generally not considered to be a science, but something closer to the humanities. At best history is classified among the social sciences of which it rates as the least scientific...history departments rarely, if ever, label themselves as a 'Department of Historical Science'. Most historians do not think of themselves as scientists and receive little training in acknowledged sciences and their methodologies...⁵

Others were more positive:

History trains the mind, enlarges the sympathies and provides a much-needed historical perspective on some of the most pressing problems of our time

John Tosh

History, even at its worst, gives us the comforting and necessary feeling that the world is stable and intelligible. History at its best gives us a real chance of reacting sensibly to a new situation. It does not guarantee correctness of our response, but it should improve the quality of our judgment

Strayer, as quoted in Hamerow⁶

To me it was Hamerow who actually prophesied wise words applicable to the 21st millennium and what may follow:

History is still young. In a few thousand years it may have developed into a study and art, embracing a thousand schools of thought, feeling and opinion, as multiform as the human mind

Theodore Hamerow⁷

These old sayings are also complemented by ministerial activities within the National Department of Education. In e.g. 2000 the Ministerial Committee that investigated the matriculation exam recommended that in Grades 10 and higher curricula should be more vocation-friendly. This will enhance opportunities in different careers e.g. learnerships may be available, 'more realistic, vocationally-oriented choices' can be made, and the retention of the matriculation exam. The dream about the possibility of a commercialised curriculum

5 Compare J. Diamond, "The future of human history as a science", R.E.Dunn (Ed.), *The new world history. A teacher's companion* (Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), p. 587.

6 Compare E.S. van Eeden, *Didactical guidelines...*, Chapter 2.

7 T.S. Hamerow, *Reflections on history and historians* (Wisconsin University Press, USA, 1987).

and knowledge being made a commodity⁸ is not so recent or even unique to South Africa or any other country. The difficulty is that educators shy away from the possibility because the complexity of implementing it might stand in the way of any implementation of this kind.

The discussion to follow is an effort to exchange some thoughts (old and new) based on the value of history up to, and from 2006. An in-depth conceptual discussion on “value” will not be offered, though it is accepted as a word that involves complexities and easily arouses academic debate. In this discussion ‘value’ can be understood as ‘the man-valued importance’ of History. From a 2006 perspective I would like to understand it as ‘what can I gain’ from taking some kind of History as a subject/discipline on especially FET level to support me in an HET academic and any other environment; as ordinary citizen in my future career?

To answer these questions, the following structure was decided upon.

The status of training History teachers in South Africa

Statistics, in many ways, can point out strengths and weaknesses, but let us, for the moment, wash our hands from responsibility in order to argue that the current status in which we find ourselves must be because of some ‘other’ complicated issues and developments that have influenced History.

On 19 April 2006 David Langhan, the Publishing Director of Pearson Education, informed me that they “only focus on publishing subjects for which we can safely expect to sell 3 000 or more copies”. He continued:⁹

At the moment, we do not publish anything at all in the field of teacher education because the number of students registering for teacher qualifications of any kind has diminished so significantly over the last 10 years, that it simply isn’t viable to publish in the area...

I was determined to enquire about the actual status from colleagues myself. The responses I received were, I must admit, somewhat depressing though expected:¹⁰

8 S. Vally, “Teachers in South Africa...”, L. Chisholm, S. Motala & S. Vally (Ed.), *South African policy review* (Heinemann, Sandown, 2003), pp. 581-582.

9 E-mail, D. Langhan/E. van Eeden, 19 April 2006.

10 Some responses were translated from Afrikaans to English.

University of KwaZulu Natal:

History Didactics/Teaching Methodology: Dr. Johan Wasserman¹¹

Student enrolment: Between 13-16 per year. Is growing

Reasons for status are:

- ideas that history is on the way out;
- the extremely boring teacher-centred manner in which history is taught;
- many principals make it their business to kill the subject;
- the existence of HSS in Grades 8 and 9 does not help when you have to choose an 'unknown' subject in Grade 10.

Future:

- We keep growing steadily;
- We are on par with many 'important' subjects such as Natural Science and Maths, and in fact we do better on numbers with 'no special bursaries'.

University of South Africa:

History Didactics/Teaching Methodology: Prof. Sonja Schoeman¹²

Student enrolment: Between 40-60 per year. Not sure what is expected, but is growing

Reason(s) for status: None

Future: There is indeed a need for history method or didactics textbooks.

- Ms. Henriette Lubbe (Departement Geskiedenis, UNISA)¹³

The History Department installed a certificate course titled "Certificate Short Course in School History Enrichment" to assist teachers in presenting the new curriculum in creative ways. An option A focus on curriculum changes for Grades 11 and 12, and an option B has been recently developed to assist Grade 10-educators. The duration of these courses are 6 months respectively and enjoys the creditation of SAQA, NQF level 5 aangebied. In total they have trained 200 educators since 1999.

11 E-mail, J. Wasserman/E. van Eeden, 20 April 2006.

12 E-mail, S. Schoeman/E. van Eeden, 20 April 2006.

13 E-mail, Ms H. Lubbe/E.van Eeden, 13 Junie 2006.

Crawford College, Pretoria:

History Educator: Mr. Patrick McMahon¹⁴

Learner enrolment: Our Grades 11 & 12 are quite stable (just under half of the grade)...

Reason(s) for status:

- It seems that we and a number of surrounding schools had a big dip in history enrolment for the new Grade 10s in the new curriculum. They seem to be losing interest in history.
- I think the new OBE with the new curriculum and rubrics are quite complicated for them (and the teachers!) and there are many competing subjects!

Future:

- Needless to say, we and some other schools are doing quite a big drive for Grade 9s this year.

University of Stellenbosch:

History Didactics/Teaching Methodology: Prof. Arend Carl¹⁵

Student enrolment: Has actually declined from 19 in 1995 to 4 by 2006 (bear in mind that 2006 represents a drastic decline after the 15 and 14 students of respectively 2004 and 2005 with a similar decline of 4 to 5 students between 1995 and 2003).

Reason(s) for status:

- Difficult to say. Student numbers declined at the Dept. of History that impacted on our enrolment figures.¹⁶ We started exploring other routes through which students can take History Didactics.
- Students don't necessarily follow the traditional route of History I, II and III, but follow other discipline routes to do didactics (the module content of Political Science and Ancient Studies etc. are History-related so that we also accept these teachers). We are of the opinion that we should be lenient, therefore we accommodate them. It appears as if these

¹⁴ E-mail, P. Mc Mahon/E. van Eeden, 24 April 2006.

¹⁵ E-mail, A. Carl/E. van Eeden, 5 May 2006.

¹⁶ This fact and the e-mail statistics prof. Albert Grundlingh provided, clashes. Prof. Grundlingh stated that the Dept of History has actually grown in number from 210 pregraduate students (in 1999) to 1020 in 2006. It may be that prof. Carl actually only refers to History students that indicated their intention to continue with Didactics as part of their future career.

students are up to standard as far as basic knowledge and a fundamental efficiency are concerned.

Future:

- The image education currently has in the community impacts negatively in a variety of areas. We have good relations with colleagues from the History Department, namely Wessel Visser and Albert Grundlingh. We share their sentiment on the importance of History in all educational phases. However, I am in doubt whether the student enrolment for History will dramatically improve in future.
- A number of students for training in the Social Science (where History takes up 50% of the module content) range from approx. 35 students in the 2nd year to 20 in the 3rd year and 10 in the 4th year (in the 4th year it is an optional module). At least there is a constant flow of educators for the GET-phase. Colleagues Peter Beets and Edward Smuts also are directly involved.

Northwest-University, Potchefstroom Campus:

History Didactics/Teaching Methodology: Mr Pieter Warnich¹⁷

Student enrolment: Between 10-15 annually.

Reason(s) for status:

- The schools (FET-phase) are to blame for not offering History as a subject any more. As long as schools are nurturing this approach it will be very difficult for History/History didactics at tertiary institutions to survive. If enthusiastic history teachers can be trained it may help. Also a national plea to the DoE may help.

Future:

- A revised publication on the methodology of History teaching is dearly due.
- Prof. Rob Siebörger did some work on OBE, especially for primary schools, but we desperately need a new revised and updated publication.

¹⁷ E-mail, P. Warnich/E. van Eeden, 24 April 2006.

University of Pretoria:

History Didactics/Teaching Methodology: Ms Alta Niemann (Groenkloof Campus, Pta)¹⁸

Student enrolment: From amalgamation of the Pretoria University College with UP in 2002 between 4 and 12 students annually.

Reason(s) for status:

- Schools gradually phased out History as subject. A few schools still teach History at the Grade 10 level. Uncertainty with regard to the future of History and future History curriculum content after 1994 worsened the situation.
- Consequently students feel that they have no future in History teaching as profession.

Future:

- Active efforts from the Department of History will be needed to accentuate the importance of History as discipline and school subject. Currently the subjects in especially the Natural Sciences are over-emphasised and idealised to the detriment of the Human Sciences.
- More emphasis on basic language skills. Learners cannot spell and write decent sentences because educators don't focus on those fundamental skills any more. Eventually it works negatively towards the language abilities of the learner/student to properly communicate the subject/discipline.

Free State University:

History Didactics/Teaching Methodology: Prof. R. (Fief) van der Merwe¹⁹

Student enrolment: Approx. 3 students per year

Reason(s) for status: Negative comments and publicity about History.

Future:

- I cannot think that the current status will change in the immediate future.
- It appears as if all white historians retreated and don't want to have any-

18 E-mail, A. Niemann/E. van Eeden, 24 May 2006 (Ms Niemann is from the Department Social Studies Education, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria).

19 E-mail, R van der Merwe/E. van Eeden, 10 May 2006.

thing to do with History [*Van der Merwe probably refers to History teaching in the GET and FET phases*].

- It also appears as if black people are just as negative about History as a school subject. Maybe History should be de-shackled from politics.

University of the Witwatersrand:

History Methodology: Prof. Cynthia Kros & Helen Ludlow²⁰

Student enrolment: 50 (in 1989); 20 (1999); 15 (2002); 4 (2006)

Reason(s) for status:

From Cynthia's response it appears as if she regards the restructuring of educational programmes as a possible detriment to History but she perceives the scenario as too complicated to exactly pinpoint reasons.

Future:

None suggested [see comments related in other discussion with Cynthia further down in this article]

From the commentary above, one may ask, what then has changed for History since its heydays? To summarise then, perhaps the following movements (some less or more complicated than others) contributed to the backward sliding of History:

- History Curriculum and assessment relevancy under scrutiny;
- Content by 2000 still the most important aspect of History teaching, and not its application value practically explored as part of assessment;
- Perceptions (valid and invalid) of history writing;
- No/limited bursaries for students wanting to teach history;
- History's failure to market itself/believe in itself in the current economic market;
- Limited educational programmes (HET & FET) in which History can operate;
- Limited support from school principals;
- Limited publication of books for using in the GET and FET level. History educators sometimes prefer to develop their own working material because of difficulty to understand existing material, or to make material more effective;
- History's changing/uncertain focus/foci on HET level (e.g. the exploring of a

²⁰ E-mail, C. Kros/E. van Eeden, 5 May 2006.

number of fields other than the political with the focus on being transdisciplinary/multidisciplinary in its approach) that still needs to be clarified in new learning programmes.²¹

In this regard then Cynthia Kros (University of the Witwatersrand)²² added:

...I think we were badly hurt by the new curriculum - at first in 1997 it was rumoured that History was going to disappear altogether. Now it doesn't exist until Grade 10 and although there is a lot of merit in the revised national curriculum statement for the Social Sciences Learning Area I don't believe that most teachers are equipped to teach it, and that that will result in a very diluted, wishy-washy look-after-the environment kind of subject.

School principals and parent bodies are generally very unsupportive of History. They regard it as vocationally useless. This is a vicious circle I think because the reason History can't compete in the market is because it's often badly taught (as a rote learning subject). The good thing about the new curriculum is that theoretically it encourages the development of critical and investigative skills, which are potentially of great market value. BUT - then History has to be taught and assessed in ways that really do facilitate skills development. AND we have to make a convincing case for it [my accentuation-ESvE].

But probably the greatest blow to us has been the withdrawal of state bursaries for teacher education. It's not only History that has suffered... - It's the lack of bursaries, the low status that teaching has as a profession in a society that increasingly adopts the values of the nouveaux riches, the complexities and bureaucracy associated with the new curricula that make teachers' lives a lot harder than they used to be, the poor salaries and a perception that school-children have become much more unruly than they used to be...

Keeping this huge bag of negativity, and at least some noticeable positive sparkles, in mind, let us then revisit the existing status and potential of History as a "convincing case" in education for the future:

History teaching and its value in an academic and wider environment

To restrict History between walls where historical thinking is taking place and eventually preserved to a limited 'consumer public', has limited value. This scenario is further aggravated if its producers – the academic environment – devote only second-hand time to seriously debate the future of His-

²¹ Also compare these ideas with the written impressions received from Hoërskool Zwartkop, Centurion, 19 May 2006.

tory in other environments in which perhaps the bulk of their students must become professionals somewhere in future.

Investing your life in focussing on History, means that you are dealing with especially human-related knowledge in its variety acquired through investigation and interpreted by means of specific generic and History-specific skills. These investigations normally result into many human-related relics of the past (e.g. publications on themes in its variety). Time and revolutionary developments (e.g. the industrial and information revolutions) necessarily required that the practitioners within the discipline History had to accept that academic room is required for applied human-related knowledge in a multiple spectrum of working spaces. In its fundamental, basic and intellectual form History as discipline will always be indispensable to “inform” and “feed” vocational programmes of some HET fields as “applied practitioners” in some way or another.

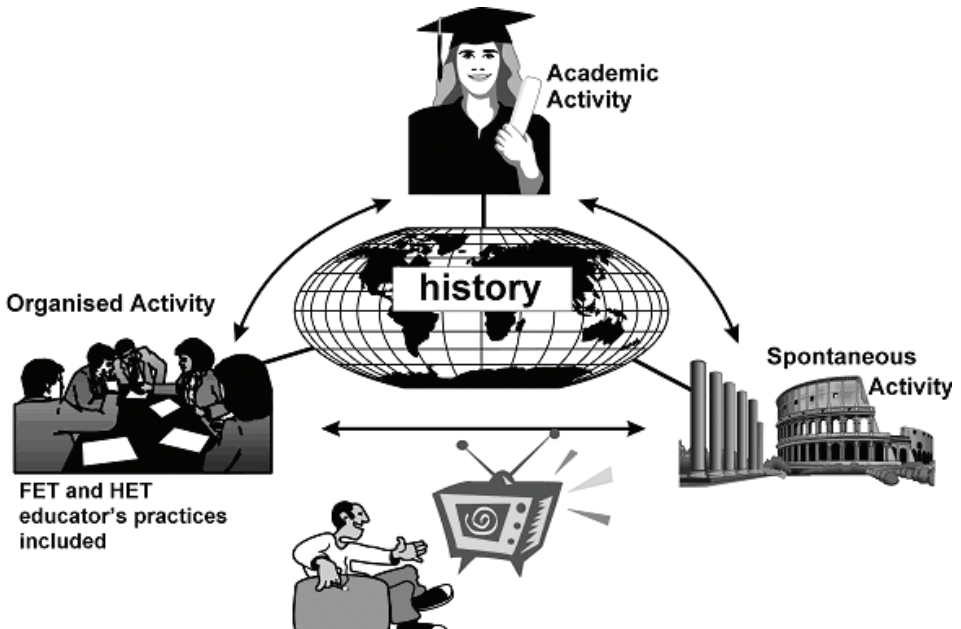
The ‘basics’ of History and the ‘applied’:²³

The basics...

still are, and should still flourish on the gathering and critical analysis of human life- related knowledge. With the aid of a sophisticated historical methodology it is possible to rearrange existing knowledge scattered all over the earth to create new knowledge that provides new insight and is in itself a contribution to knowledge [compare William Blake]. History Departments at HET institutions all will acknowledge the saying that History has the ability to train students in the acquiring of “transferable generic skills” as valuable in the professional employment market.²⁴

23 Also compare: E.S. van Eeden & J.L. van der Walt, “Creating a future for History within South Africa’s ‘Curriculum 2005’”, *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 28(1), Winter 2000, pp.85-95.

24 Compare Internet research: Yahoo.com, University of Glasgow, SR 043/2002, April 2002.



The applied...

therefore, from an intellectual point of view, should be accepted (with honour) that history-related content will always feature more prominently in an applied environment than in its pure fundamental or basic form. History as an applied discipline for future professional practising purposes can feature in three directions:

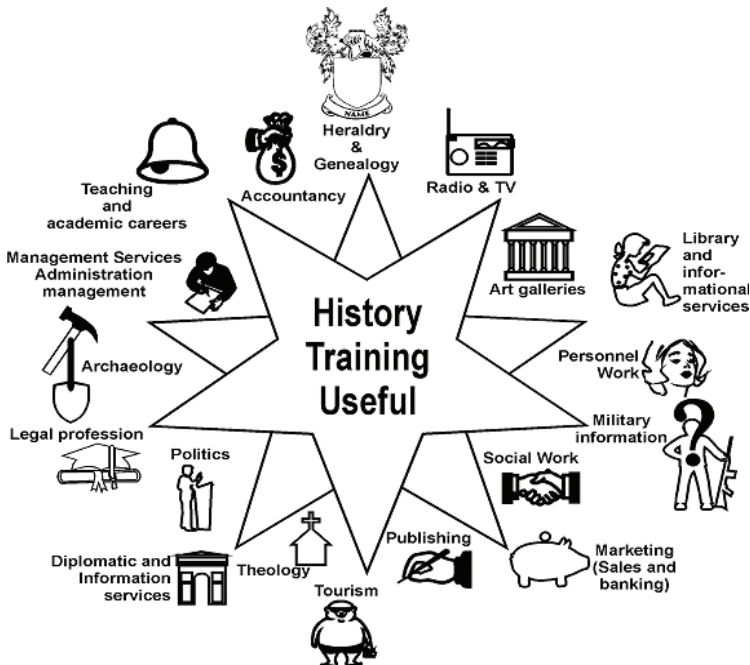
History as academic activity

Those that are practising History as well as those who are attached to other disciplines, may use parts of the same content or sources that History as discipline rely on. My personal opinion is that History educators from all educational phases have not yet explored and utilised the vocational possibilities of History together with other disciplines/subjects sufficiently enough.



History as an organised activity applied by history professionals in other professional environments

In the structure below, History is reflected as an organised activity exercised by individual professionals of History in the economic sector, the private and public sector:



Skills required mainly are:

- Generically-related
- A sound historical knowledge
- Acceptable writing skills
- Acceptable communication skills

As far as History's ability to offer skills development is concerned, the following amongst others are accentuated as, literally, habits of the mind:

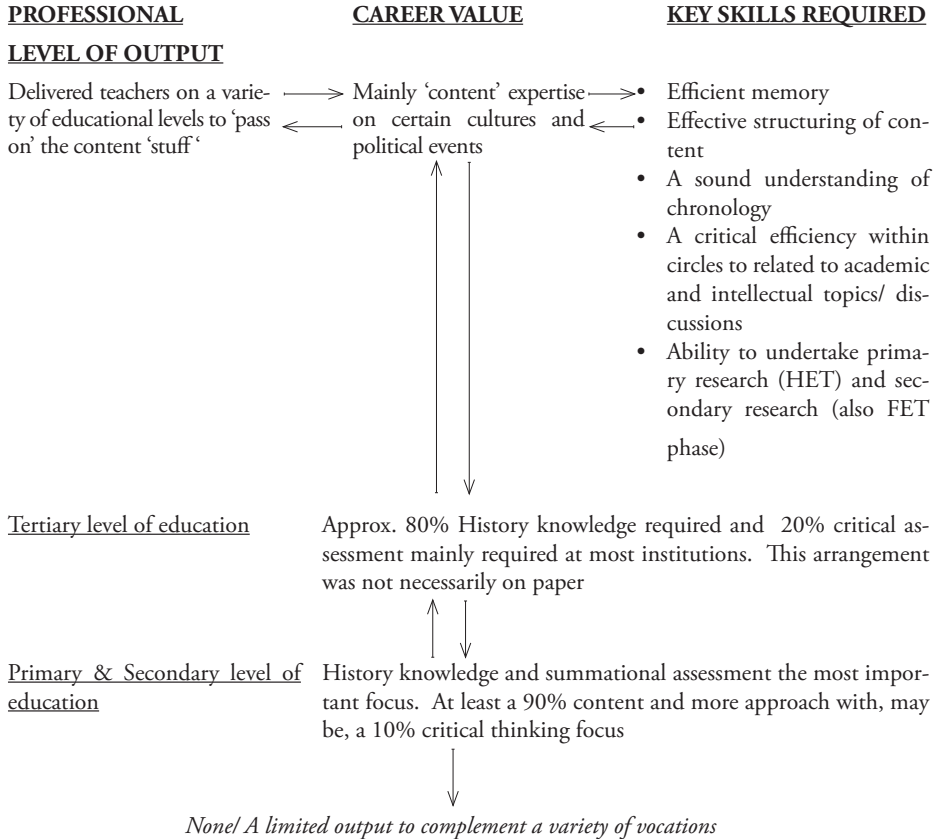
- Acquire a skilled and sustained sense of historical perspective.
- Acquire informed insight into the historical method.
- Develop those skills and attitudes of mind that distinguish the educated person: the habits of scepticism and criticism, of thinking with perspective and objectivity, of judging the good and bad and the in-between.
- Attain life's greatest value: wisdom.
- Acquaint learners with the basic tools and methods of research and expression - both written and oral.
- Develop in him/her the skills of analysis and synthesis for the evaluation of historical evidence with particular stress on sound writing and reading skills.²⁵

These skills should be applied (in different levels of difficulty) from the FET level to the HET phase in practical ways (not only portfolio assignments in a comfortable classroom situation, but also practically in real economically active environments –See diagram explanation on pp.42-43). A firm belief in what you are doing, and a pro-active regular revision of what is required by the community and the economic market may help tremendously if all that are practising the discipline are doing it with an attitude of having the future in mind. The following content has been developed with this vision:

²⁵ Compare Republic of South Africa, Department of Education, "National Curriculum Statement, Grades 10-12 (General), History", 2003, p.11.

History teaching and its value from an impressionistic²⁶ scenario on:

the past:²⁷



26 This concept is more familiar in the Arts. From a literary perspective it can perhaps be explained as a style generally characterized by the use of details and mental associations to evoke subjective and sensory impressions rather than the recreation of objective reality (Compare Grolier, *The new book of knowledge dictionary*, Vol 1, A-L, (Howard Mifflin Co., Massachusettes, 1981), p. 662. By applying this concept in this scenario, the intention is to indeed recreate a new objective reality for History in especially future applications.

27 All the scenario impressions as provided (from personal experience) on the teaching approach to History in the past, present & future scenario should and could be empirically tested.

the present:

PROFESSIONAL

CAREER VALUE

KEY SKILLS REQUIRED

LEVEL OF OUTPUT

Deliver less educators in History on a variety of educational levels to focus on content and critical thinking and more effective source analysis in the discipline/subject

Knowledge selection expanded to e.g. selections of historical studies in local, regional and environmental tourism feminism, land reform etc.

- Efficient memory
- Effective structuring of content
- A sound understanding of chronology.
- An understanding/feel' for generic skill as key activities applications like critical thinking, comparisons, source identification and analysis etc.
- Ability to undertake primary research (esp. HET) and secondary research (esp. FET phase)

Tertiary level of education

Approx. a 50% content approach and a 50% critical assessment approach with students still emphasising the content above critical thinking

GET and FET level: Social Sciences and History

History knowledge, continuous assessment practices; Social Sciences and History History only after Gr. 10: At least a 75% content approach and an effort to accomplish a 25% critical thinking approach

cc-Business and individual offsprings from History as key focus in a career. These are limited to practical efforts to apply History content and its generic versatility

the ideal future:

PROFESSIONAL

LEVEL OF OUTPUT

Requirements more transdisciplinary / inter-disciplinary and practically applied generic skill abilities to serve communities / private business ventures / economic communities / Government Departments / Academic Institutions more effectively

CAREER VALUE

More emphasis on History's secondary/ applied value than the primary/basic as far as History content concerned

KEY SKILLS REQUIRED

- The quality of, and the approach to, the training in History will determine its future status, e.g.:
- A sound source analysis (to be applied in professions)
- Critical source and other content analysis (To be applied...)
- Skills in source reference and Selection (To be applied...)
- Skills in openness, fairness, multi-perceptiveness and re-interpretation
- Effective adaptation and application of skills in other career environments e.g.:
- Writing skills
- Communicative skills with regard to content required
- Skills to efficiently find, select, assess/value and apply content within a specific theme/project focus
- Summarising skills
- Sufficient knowledge with regard to specific theme to make sound judgements and other skill applications

Tertiary Level of Education

Expanded History knowledge at 1st and 2nd year level, though still approx. a 50% content assessment approach required. Constructive practical applications of History skills in a variety of environments and projects with a 50% critical assessment value

Primary & Secondary level of Education

- 1) History knowledge and continuous assessment practices in a sound practice-making OBE environment; At least a 60% content approach (40% 'old' History and 20% contemporary History) and an effort to meaningfully apply and monitor activities with an estimated value of 4
- 2) Implementation of a new programme/short course(s), in the FET-phase for Gr. 10-12 can possibly be titled **Practical History** or **Commercial History** or **Vocational History**. In this programme approach a 30% theoretical assessment and a 70% practically applied assessment is advised. The purpose of such a programme is to provide practical experience in the generic skills application of history-related knowledge. The eventual end objective is to develop a sense of the needs and requirements on HET-level (within other disciplines than History) and the economic active market for historical content and methodology.

A growth in individual business efforts based on history-related content, value and skill applications. Skill applications of History in disciplines/careers related/associated with aspects of History

Learning outcomes in History from an extended angle

It is necessary to know that the DoE has developed four Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards related to “traditional History” that include Enquiry Skills as a practical competence outcome. For all basic purposes other historical assessment standards, such as foundational competence, knowledge construction and communication, as well as heritage as reflexive competence, necessarily will apply in a newly proposed learning programme such as “Practical History”. However, the difference between History and Practical History lies in the “walk of the proposed practical competence talk” within a selection of themes that relates to some disciplines/ subjects in which History serves an active economic and interdisciplinary environment. Among others, they can be:

Examples of history in some professions	Examples of some skills required (knowledge excluded because it is not a choice but a necessity in each)	What traditional history can offer (In terms of content)	Practical history (in terms of generic training) to all grades on various cognitive and assessment levels	Educator involvement, DoE, GET, FET, HET, Government and Business Sector
Tourism	Communicative; ²⁸ management and writing abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>World History</u> (people, places and developments); • <u>Regional/local history</u> of South Africa and Africa (on places and developments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge on cultural heritage • Communication • Writing (extraction and organising of evidence)²⁹ • multi-perspectivity and tolerance 	E.g. SAtour; Dept of Environment and Tourism; Tour organisations; SA Transport Services; Local governments; tourist agencies
Publishing	Communicative; language and writing abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History (people, places and developments); • * Aspects of Regional/local history of South Africa and Africa (on places and developments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge on cultural heritage • Communication • Writing 	E.g. Publishers; HET-language departments
Diplomatic services	Cultures and communicative and writing abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History; • Regional/local history of South Africa • Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge on political structures and public management • Communication • Writing 	E.g. Diplomatic Services personnel; Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Legal profession	Communicative; language and writing abilities; insight; comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and general History of states (international/regional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of state/government law practices; structures and constitutional management • Communication • Critical analysis of information/evidence 	E.g. The legal professional community/ Associations; HET-Faculties of Law
Military information	Communicative and writing abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts, legal law history; military history and the military history of especially all the countries worldwide. Also aspects of cultures and politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of state/government military practices; structures and the culture/politics within constitutional management • Communication • Critical analysis 	E.g. Military-focussed Government Departments and organisations; local security services etc.

28 Communicative in this context can imply: critical analysis; comparisons; identification; multi-perspective thinking and clear thinking.

29 This piece of detail also applies to the rest of disciplines in this discussion.

Library and informational services	People, places and activities; communicative, writing abilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History; • Regional/local history of South Africa • Africa • A search in History themes in hard copy/ electronic format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad general knowledge of people, places and activities • Knowledge of history-related sources 	E.g. Information centres; Library; Archival depots; Museums
Marketing (sales and banking)	People, places and activities; communicative abilities; a cultural understanding and tolerance obtained through a range of source interpretations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World economic history; • Regional/local history of South Africa and Africa from an economic history angle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of people, places and activities; • Comparative and research skills; • Research abilities in selective Economic History-/ Economic thought- related themes. 	E.g. Banking services; Sales Services; Dept. of Economic Affairs
Radio and TV	Places, events and activities; communicative, language and writing abilities. Production of e.g.Documentaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History; • Regional/local history of South Africa • Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad general knowledge of people, places and activities • Knowledge of history-related sources, especially communication systems; • writing and communicative experience in practical applications. 	E.g. SABC; local radio stations; SABC-TV; Dept. of Communication
Journalism	Places, events and activities; communicative, language and writing abilities. Production of e.g.Documentaries and reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World History; • Regional/local history of South Africa • Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad general knowledge required of people and places; • Accuracy; • Objectivity; • Critical thinking; • Multi-perspectivity; interpretation and a sound sense of the context in a specific time. 	E.g. Communication agents/ firms;institutions

This above-developed structure can certainly be efficiently refined after a broader input and debate. A few people on HET level in other disciplines were asked to provide their opinions on the possibility of also developing a practical leg for traditional History:

History and interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary opportunities– a selective discussion:³⁰

The Legal profession

Prof. Robinson considered it important that the “Faculty of Law should be reminded that the changing socio-welfare environment must be negotiated and experienced on a firsthand basis.”³¹ Prof. Du Plessis added to Robinson’s thinking:

The legal profession, amongst others, deals with historical fundamental aspects and contemporary aspects of the South African law; the Roman-Dutch

³⁰ The comments were freely translated from Afrikaans to English. Approximately 20 academics from a variety of disciplines were asked a few questions based on the association of History with their subjects, as well as the idea as proposed, but only a few responded.

³¹ Opinion, Prof. JAR Robinson, Dean, Professional Services, (NWU - Potchefstroom Campus) 24 May 2006.

law practices and law relating to Africa as well as religious systems and aspects of land rights. Students must be familiar with history-related knowledge to understand how law practices have changed. If future law practitioners do not have a solid sense of the social, political and economic context – they will certainly not be efficient as law practitioners.

Another Law specialist, Prof. Gerrit Ferreira, complemented the thinking of Du Plessis. He referred to the learning programme Law of Nations or International Law for 4th year LLB-students that mainly focuses on relations between countries/states. In this programme themes are covered such as the international safeguarding of human rights and law regulations with regard to violence/war between countries/states. The role of international organisations is to create international and regional peace and security (such as the UN), regional organisations (such as the AU) as well as the immunity of states and the functioning of international courts etc. International Law was created as a result of accords between states and state practices. No student can study this programme efficiently if he/she lacks historical consciousness (that includes ignorance of historical time on a time-line basis). The ultimate is supposedly general historical knowledge such as e.g. what is the Middle Ages; when did the two world wars break out and who was Hitler?. Even knowledge from Southern Africa and Africa in general is non-existent. “To read newspapers and listen to news have passed our new generation”- thus Prof. Ferreira. He accentuated the urgency to address this lack of basic historical knowledge among learners and law students.³²

HET-legal experts who have been asked for their co-operation if a practical history should realise, were positive.³³

Physics

Prof. Pieter Stoker from Physical Science at the NWU has no doubt that History is important to each and every field of study, especially the development of a discipline that is made more/less practical in education and teaching.³⁴ As example he referred to S. Kuhn who, in the seventies already, remarked that:

32 Opinion, Prof. GM Ferreira, Faculty of Law, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa, 25 May 2006.

33 Opinion, Prof. W du Plessis, Dean, NFA Development in the South African “Regstaat”, NWU, 23 May 2006.

34 Opinion, Prof. PH Stoker, NWU, Faculty of Physics, NWU, 23 May 2006.

the history of a particular field of science is characterised by a succession of phases of problem solving. Each phase of problem solving is paradigmatically founded. A paradigm expresses as a worldview the deepest meaning of reality.³⁵

Though I have not obtained a clearer picture from academics currently in practice on the association of more disciplines to the human-related past, some historians and other academics did some enquiry on the relation of History to other disciplines.³⁶ With this information in mind the following proposed Learning Programme was developed:

A learning programme proposed as Practical/Commercial/Vocational History – FET level³⁷

Methodological suggestion:

Grades 10-12

Total hours per quarter: 39 hours (based on 13 weeks)

- *4-6 Themes per year*
- *Notional time per week: Theoretical meetings – 1 hour = 13 hours per quarter*
- *Notional time: Practical excursions – Fri. afternoons/weekends/holidays/ evenings: 24 hours per quarter*
- *Notional time: Practical discussions (talks and ideas by professionals and others): – 2 hours per quarter*
- *Assessment approaches: Portfolios; practical assignments (thematic – skill-oriented.*
No summational/a very limited summational assessment is advised (30%) because the practical section of the proposed learning programme should have a 70% assessment value. No formal exam is then required but perhaps one/two oral feedback sessions annually in some themes, with the assistance of HET and other expertise from specific economic active environments, can be required.

35 PH Stoker, "Besinning oor die aard van die fisiese werklikheid," Skool vir Fisika, Potchefstroomkampus, Noordwes-Universiteit, 2006 (article as prepared for *Koers*), 23 May 2005.

36 Compare E. Mertz, "The uses of history: Language, ideology and law in the United States and South Africa", *Law & Society Review*, 22(4), 1988; B. Laslett, "Interdisciplinary teaching and disciplinary reflexes", *Historical Methods*, 23(3), 1990; *Historia* series on History and other disciplines, 1983-1984-editions.

37 This proposal should be regarded as a working document to serve as a point of departure for implementing an additional focus to "traditional" History within a totally new Learning Programme. The purpose is not to replace "traditional" History, but to allow the two programmes to be simultaneously practised in the FET level Grades 10-12.

A proposed way forward to implement “Practical History” as a learning programme:

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICAL/ APPLIED HISTORY IN THE GET PHASE RELATED TO SOME PROFESSIONS	EXAMPLES OF SOME SKILLS TO BE REQUIRED <i>(The competence descriptions as in the 2003 publication of DoE will also apply when a detailed structure is developed)</i> ³⁸	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE CURRICULUM CONTENT	PRACTICAL HISTORY (in terms of generic training) FOR GRADES 10-12 ON DIFFERENT COGNITIVE AND ASSESSMENT LEVELS
Theme 1 Tourism and History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about cultural heritage • Effective writing (analysis and synthesis) • Aspects of multi-perspectivity and tolerance • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>World History</u> • a spatial and historical background on a selection of places; • <u>Regional/local history</u> of South Africa and Africa (on places and developments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet research on some places and enquiry discussions with informed mail-pals abroad and local • Museum; library; institutional and community research on a selected local tourist theme (gathering/analysing information) • Exploring the availability of material on a selected theme in audio libraries and the producing of a useable audio product • Visiting, exploring and assessing an environment where nature and humankind affected each other
Theme 2 Past and contemporary diplomatic and political issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge on Cultures, heritage and politics • Abilities in contextual analysis; criteria development; communication and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A selected world history theme on diplomacy issues; • Regional/local history of Southern Africa • Apartheid politics opposed to... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting of/an assignment from or by one/more embassy/ies to explore/be informed on a theme • A local oral recount on a political theme/issue • Visiting and assessing of museums reflecting political issues
Theme 3 Library and informational services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended knowledge of people, places and activities; • Communicative abilities; • Historical source enquiry skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A selected world history theme; • A selected regional/ local history theme on South Africa/ Africa • A search for a non-traditional history-related theme(s) in hard copy and electronic format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting and exploring of a i) Record Management Centre ii) Library and iii) Archive • Development of an information technology product based on the exploring of hard copy and technological products in a non-traditional history-related theme
Theme 4 Radio, TV & History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad knowledge of people, places and activities; • Communicative abilities; • Multi-perspective source comparison skills; • Research, writing and visual production abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective contemporary theme(s) in world history; • A selective contemporary theme(s) in the regional/ local history of Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting and exploring a local radio / TV station / network's research/ information centre(s)/ networks and dealing with one multi-perspective theme in cooperation with a professional • Development of a visual news presentation on a selective contemporary local theme with the assistance of a professional

³⁸ See Republic of South Africa, Department of Education, “National Curriculum Statement, Grades 10-12 (General), History”, 2003, pp.45-61.

<p>Theme 5 Journalism and History</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive general knowledge of places, events and activities; • Communicative, language and writing abilities. • Source exploration, reliability, factual/ argument; construction; accuracy; objectivity; critical thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A theme in world history; • A theme in regional/ local history in Southern Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visiting and exploring of a newspaper agency and processes to record/preserve/utilise information. • Identify the value of each newspaper section for historical enquiry and application in selective topics (a practical assignment) • Identify and research a local theme (source exploration, determining criteria for setting an argument on reliability and effective construction. The assistance of professionals also required
<p>Theme 6 Environmental history issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive general knowledge of environmental issues and green politics • Knowledge of how to apply the historical methodology in an environmental context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A theme in trans-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary history (local) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit(s) to local/national institutions to obtain a firm understanding of the environmental activities they are dealing with and how human intervention (past and present) affected environment • Explore an environment-related theme at local level critically from a historical context in assistance with HET-expertise in various environmental fields
<p>Theme 7 International and regional legal issues between states</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A broad spectrum of knowledge of the development of, and negotiations between states/countries; organisations that safeguard the rights of countries/states • A critical analysis and comparison of the role of culture, religion and economy in state practices in a historical and legal context. • A critical study of the effectiveness of one or two constitutions of African states 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An orientation in historical time with the focus on key events and events related to legal practices and changes • A critical study of the SA constitution with the focus on human rights (past and present) • A theme on e.g. human rights/ Aids/ war/violence, and how countries handle(d) it (historically and legally) • A selection of two countries is made to focus on how their cultural heritage, the religions they represent and the economic perspectives affected/affects government decision making on legal issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oriented to a court scenario (a physical visit to one), the critical following of a parliamentary debate on a legal issue (otherwise to be followed in Newspapers/TV channels and documentaries) and a visit to an embassy-legal section to understand their functions. • HET-expertise intervention and guidance on the South African constitution and e.g. Human Rights. Perhaps a practical project on some local experience (past and present) with regard to law and/or Aids/violence

Strengths in the application of “Practical History”

- It is practical and hands on.
- It relates more to vocations/professions after Grade 12.
- It has the ability to make the economically active sector and general community more aware of the practical value of History.
- Learner/Student enrolment should improve.
- More educators will be required, thus more working opportunities.

Weaknesses in the process towards the application of “Practical History”

- The availability of finances will determine its success.
- Ensuring effective planning and implementation (e.g. Outcomes; AS; curriculum content) in harmony with the needs in the market and on

HET-level, will require a substantial amount of time, national and international research and a substantial amount of funds).

- If getting the go-ahead to be developed as programme, “Practical History” may take 2-3 years from now to be implemented in FET-level;
- Retraining, in service training or/and a HET training in an additional programme for educators in History teaching will be required.

The role of the educator

Most certainly the role of the educator to determine success cannot be over-emphasised. At the University of Vienna a preliminary job-description for educators has been developed, based on recent literature regarding History as subject. This job-description focuses on teacher training, and the available analyses and prognoses about the development of the school system. The profile is based on the assumption that History educators need to acquire content-related and pedagogic competencies in order to act deliberately and successfully in the classroom. The following job description was suggested for appointing future History educators:

- A high academic competence:

We would expect this to comprise a certain flexibility in the handling of factual and methodological knowledge about the subject; the ability to establish connections between political, economic, social and cultural developments in the historical period under discussion; readiness to cross borders between academic disciplines; a choice of teaching contents which is oriented towards the present; critical and problem-oriented choice and treatment of a historical subject in a way that creates identity.

- a fourfold didactic competence consisting of:
 - the ability to self-reflect. That is the ability to act out social roles in a differentiated way and the ability to maintain a certain distance towards one’s own role in the teaching situation; a transparent handling of (institutional) power; dealing with conflict constructively; the ability to recognise transference from pupils, to separate it from one’s own reaction of counter-transference and, if possible, to arrive at a functional interpretation of that reaction in the context of the classroom.
 - social and communicative competence / skills. This concerns the immediate social learning environment, that is, the class-

room: process-oriented thinking and work-styles; competence in developing and implementing experience-oriented learning processes; ability to direct, analyse and reflect on processes happening within the learning group.

- planning and design skills. This skill area requires basic knowledge of learning and developmental theories; knowledge about the appropriateness and application of different media; profound procedural knowledge in handling different teaching methods (e.g. lecturing, group-work, role-play, project work) and in the handling of media.
- skills in the analysis of organisations. These skills are of importance in dealing with colleagues, superiors and parents. Required are analytic skills which enable teachers to be realistic about the possibilities of co-operation within their organisation; also, the ability to plan and implement interdisciplinary co-operation and project-work.

The competence table was concluded with the words:

In sum we need history teachers who will not only present facts about particular historical topics but who are able to transmit its relevance for the social dynamics of the learning environment.³⁹

And I would like to add: the professional economically active environment.

In this process of proposing a new learning programme and some additional skill requirements from the History educator, the positive attitude of the regional practitioners/representatives of History (such as the Subject Advisors) and of the Provinces (Directors involved in curriculum development etc.) as well as the Ministry of Education will be absolutely necessary.

To implement “Practical History” as eg. a Learning Programme, it is also necessary to:

- efficiently motivate and sell the idea of a practice-oriented History approach to the Department of Education; and
- if the idea is approved funds should be made available on ministerial level for a more intensive theoretical, academic and marketing research

³⁹ A Ecker, “Process-oriented methods in the teaching of history,” *New avenues in the initial training of history teachers*, University of Vienna, ca 2000. Also compare E.S. van Eeden, *Didactical guidelines ...*, Chapters 2- 3.

- at national and international level for exploring the possibilities of implementing such a learning programme.
- Specialists in History, History teaching and in a selection of disciplines (HET level) as well as practitioners in the FET level (Grades 8-10) should be identified to participate in the development and implementation of a curriculum for Practical History.

At this very moment these are just theoretical suggestions and ideas, and they should be discussed and refined in a broader forum of stakeholders. We should not shy away from obstacles in the process of rethinking the role of History on FET-level, but rather ensure that changing ideas for practicing History in the 21st century are given a fair chance to be explored and debated. I would like to close this discussion by using Michael J. Berson's⁴⁰ article in 2000, directed to educators in the Social Studies, in which he suggested that they should rethink their approach to educational changes and challenges in approaching learning programmes that also partially applies to the aforementioned discussion:

Although this is a difficult initiative we should not be discouraged from the task. We should seize the opportunity to formulate a strong core group with a sheered vision that can overcome the inertia of traditional practices...

Amongst others Berson mentioned that three challenges guided his vision for reform:

the evolution and maintenance of collaborative networks; an advocacy for children and the integration of technology into Social Studies teaching and learning.

In turn Ecker remarked that the teaching of History is also confronted with new challenges and that the need requires a constructive application of new and relatively familiar teaching methods that allow the learner to experience the complexity of social change:

We need complex, i.e. holistic, integrated and process-oriented methods of teaching and learning. Such methods should enable the learner not only to acquire declarative knowledge about certain historical facts (e.g. the social dynamics of industrial societies, the restructuring of the family, the changing relationship of the sexes) but to also develop procedural knowledge which can

⁴⁰ See MJ Berson, "Rethinking research and pedagogy in the Social Studies: The creation of caring connections through technology and advocacy," *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 28(1), Winter 2000, pp.121-122.

be acted upon in concrete, everyday social situations - in other words such methods should help learners develop their social competence.⁴¹

In conclusion - the way ahead

For History the GET, FET and many HET curricula have changed BUT not necessarily the layman's or even the History educator's narrow perceptions on the discipline's/subject's:

- “marketing value” within vocations;
- ability to be approached from a multi-perspective and avoid personal voices on the past;
- “worth” in general. An attitude of losing can have serious negative consequences that History cannot afford. Those practising the discipline/subject are actually sometimes the instigators of such perceptions and actions because broad community perceptions of History's value are easily and willingly digested by History educators.

For many decades now practitioners of History have allowed themselves to debate History's “relevancy”. In the afore-mentioned discussion a remedial view has been offered by means of a revised understanding of History's interdisciplinary connections and new learning programme that complements the “traditional” History on Grades 10-12-level.

History educators should cultivate a 21st century progressive marketing attitude, and pass on the attitude and a reality that History is an “ultimate” discipline whose traces are to be found in many careers and disciplines. The contribution that fundamental/core History can provide to the world (that is content and methodology) should also not be underestimated in providing additional quality and wisdom.

The value of History is supposed to be reflected by:

- the historian, though the historian is not the sole ‘marketing agent’ of History. This profession is mainly involved in the application and quality of generic skills that could reflect a marketing value. However, the History educator of Didactics/Methodology_ plays a key role in the training of a new generation of History educators (and even historians) so that

41 A Ecker, “Process-oriented methods...,” *New avenues in the initial training of History teachers*, Chapters 2-3.

- this educator should be able to complement the value of History, as produced by the historian, in whatever theme or context;
- the marketing role of enterprises, founded/ developed by History consultants. These efforts in practice have a certain value in the sense that they are an acknowledgement to learners and educators of what can be done in an “unfamiliar” environment that actually should be familiar and utilised, though not yet very easy. In itself History consultants cannot take up the marketing role of History on their shoulders, because, apart from their methodological accent that mainly complements the generic skill qualities of History, they are usually working in isolation. Perhaps, as in the afore-mentioned advised possibility of co-operation between tertiary and secondary institutions, a liaison between History consultants and HET institutions (even FET institutions) might benefit all if information is exchanged on what is required in the market and how FET learners perhaps can be drawn in on shorter projects for some experience;
 - individual experiences of professionals in a variety of careers in which History is useful and can always be of value to learners that still struggle with choosing their future subjects/career. Professions, with History as one of the many secondary subjects that support them, are not the only way in which the value of History, should be “measured”.

This brings me again to my original introductory questions: ‘what can I gain’ from taking History as subject on FET and HET level to support me as e.g. a 21st century student in my future career and as an ordinary citizen?’ Certainly my answer will be, after having been exposed to so many facets of History in my professional career, that History from an angle of content and skills could provide immense wisdom to many professions where the focus is on human actions. The value of History to the ordinary citizen is the exposure to a world of information to understand and be informed on issues that require informed opinions based on a variety of information. History in education has all the ingredients to be a very “cool” discipline and subject, if only the educators can methodologically approach it for its richness as such and not get stuck into the icy cold traditional teaching and meaningless assessment methodology so many are married to. These have a strenuous effect on History’s present and future value.