

## Executive Summary

Title of the Work	To what extent can on-line discussion forums develop thinking skills in history?	
Author	Sarah Butterworth	Date of Completion 05/2010
Institutional Contextual Details E.g. Phase (Optional)		
Major Needs Identified	<p>*Literature review focused on definitions of thinking skills, the role of dialogue, specifically 'Communities of Enquiry' in the development of thinking skills.</p> <p>*Action research explored whether on-line forums can develop thinking skills in history to the same extent as dialogue within the classroom.</p>	
Methods used to collect data.	<p>*Questionnaire with open and closed questions on why students study history, what skills they think they learn and their use of ICT in history.</p> <p>*2 learning activities undertaken by 2 Year 9 classes; an alley debate and an on-line forum on 'Was Haig the Butcher of the Somme?'</p> <p>*Student survey on their perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of both activities, which activity they thought they learnt more in and which activity they thought they enjoyed more.</p>	
Summary of Major Findings (Or recommendations to others)	<p>*Students are not always aware of the skills they are developing within a subject. The skills being used in an activity need to consistently be made explicit by the teacher.</p> <p>*Thinking skills are infused within history and thus any attempt to 'separate' them is challenging.</p> <p>*On-line forums should be part of our teaching and learning repertoire, helping to personalise learning for students, but should not replace dialogue within the classroom.</p> <p>*Some students who preferred the on-line forum commented on the opportunity to re-read the contributions their peers had made. Those students who preferred the alley debate cited social interaction and the ability to use body language as key benefits.</p>	
Impact of the Project (And evidence source) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge</li> <li>• Practice</li> <li>• Pupil/Student learning Experience</li> <li>• Pupil/Student Learning Outcomes (What happened as result?)</li> </ul>	<p>*More recently, there is a growing body of literature on the use of on-line forums which could shed more light on the findings of the action research.</p> <p>*On-line forums can be an effective tool in AfL. Forums can help in identifying common misconceptions and understandings.</p> <p>*On-line forums can be made more effective through the development and implementation of agreed guidelines that all classes in history follow.</p> <p>*Through completing the survey, students were able to reflect and think metacognitively about their own learning.</p>	
Contact E mail or address (Optional)	sarah.butterworth@nowerhill.harrow.sch.uk	
Other Information		