

Look at History through the RTÉ Archives
Pilot Project

EVALUATION REPORT

By

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“It’s an interactive, engaging, visual stimulus, which brings history to life and complements your work and teaching”*

* Participating teacher’s quote.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction:

Look at History through the RTÉ Archives is a collaborative pilot project between the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), the History In-Service Team (HIST) and Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) in which video/radio clips from media, preserved by the RTÉ Archives, are presented for use in second-level education, all of which relate to Topic 6 of the Later Modern Ireland section of the revised Leaving Certificate History syllabus. Each video/radio clip is accompanied by brief explanatory text and related website links.

In January 2006 four second-level schools volunteered to participate in a pilot project, which aimed to draw on preserved RTÉ archives to introduce the medium of television and radio to the history classroom to assist history teachers to adhere to the newly revised aims and objectives of the revised syllabus (Department of Education and Science (DES), 2004), which encourages the use of a number of mediums to access primary sources of history. The primary aims of the revised syllabus are:

1. The development of the Leaving Certificate students' knowledge and understanding of human activity in the past, whilst encouraging a more thorough understanding of current society.
2. The expansion of students' ability to interpret and acknowledge the presence of multiple perspectives, supporting the development of the students' research skills.
3. The preparation of history students for citizenship in present-day society by encouraging them to think logically and critically (DES, 2003).

Following discussions between NCTE, HIST and RTÉ (late 2005) it was decided to conduct an evaluation of the materials developed, assessing the usability and value of such materials in the schools setting with teachers and students. In early 2006, Karen Mahony (Independent Research Consultancy) was employed to embark on the evaluation of the project, the objectives of which were finalised as being:

1. General Objectives:

- (i) To highlight technical issues which may impact on the adoption of the materials in schools.
- (ii) To identify the technology infrastructure necessary to distribute the materials effectively in school environments.

2. Specific Objectives:

- (i) To demonstrate how dedicated media-rich resources can be used to support and enhance the classroom experience in the selected curriculum areas.
- (ii) To evaluate and assess the value of materials in the learning contexts by:
 - Identifying teaching methodologies and approaches used during the pilot phase (in particular changes from traditional methods).
 - Observing student motivation and attitudes to learning using the media-rich materials.
 - Observing whether engagement with the materials leads to any observable improvement in understanding / comprehension of certain historical concepts among individual students.
 - Assessing teachers' views of the appropriateness, relevance and usability of the materials with regard to the revised Leaving Certificate History Syllabus.
 - Analysing whether the availability of relevant and targeted interactive materials leads to a greater usability by teachers and significant student usage.

The Evaluation Methodology:

In agreement with the NCTE evaluation steering group, the evaluator developed a detailed evaluation methodology, which involved the following elements:

1. A comprehensive review of programme documentation, files and reports with a view to identifying the key objectives, actions and outputs of the pilot project.

2. Interviews with history teachers in the participating schools who had previously and/or were, at the time, using the *Look at History* media-rich archives. The interviews were conducted to assess the use of the RTÉ archives and the technology which compliments them and were not designed to examine the quality of teaching, the teachers or the pupils.
3. A survey of history students, distributed to seven 4th / 5th year classes who had previously and/or were currently using the *Look at History* archives. The questionnaire explored the use of the media-rich archives both within and outside the history classroom, the students' reaction and attitudes towards the use of the project materials as a means of learning history and the impact that they believe it had on their own learning.
4. Classroom observations were used to further identify teaching methodologies used in conjunction with the materials, as well as to observe students' level of engagement with the materials and with the subject matter.

Each participating teacher and student was guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality throughout the evaluation process.

Conclusions:

Overall the evaluation demonstrated that both the teachers and students were highly receptive to the introduction of the archives to the history classroom. The participating teachers, the students and the evaluator (during the three data collection phases) commonly highlighted the following technological issues, which are easily rectifiable:

- Poor archival sound, which must be resolved through the distribution of speakers to compliment the laptops distributed.
- Lack of availability of extension leads, lengthy computer and projector cables, and blackout blinds in history teachers classrooms, all of which must be financially/physically provided for prior to implementation.
- Laborious access to the resource, which must be resolved by providing financial support to permanently mount projectors in teachers' history classrooms.
- Difficulty accessing broadband, which will no longer be an issue as all schools will be broadband-enabled come December 2006.

- Trouble accessing the clips because the firewall/internet filtering system did not permit access, which has been rectified as the *Look at History* website is listed on the ‘*whitelist*’ of approved websites that schools can access.

As a result of each of the issues outlined above, the evaluation highlighted the need for teachers to allow adequate time to set-up equipment prior to class, which will prevent impingement on valuable time. Also outlined was the need for teachers to be aware of the benefit of preparing alternative lesson plans to cater for the eventuality that the archives may be inaccessible at the time required.

From a pedagogical point of view, the combined evaluation processes highlighted that the participating teachers persistently abandoned the use of traditional teaching methodologies in favour of more interactive, engaging, discursive methods. Interestingly, teachers and students alike favoured the new methodologies introduced, which is a major finding. It was also highlighted that the sense of interaction and engagement was carried over to the observational strand of the evaluation, with the evaluator classifying the more interactive classes as being considerably more positive environments, with pupils appearing to be more engaged (be it actively or passively) during lessons which incorporated the interactive, discursive methodologies. The more positive teaching methodologies described by the participating teachers and the evaluator included:

- Continuous reference to previous lessons and current knowledge to contextualise the clips;
- Question and answer sessions subsequent and prior to watching the clips;
- The completion of questionnaires prior to watching the clips;
- Student discussion groups.

Whilst disadvantageous methodologies include “*chalk and talk*” and ‘lecture-type’ class structures and inflexibility during group discussions, i.e. not allowing students to explore issues of interest to them personally, whilst ensuring the topics remain relevant to the revised history curriculum.

It was also found that teachers predominantly felt the archival resources, with adjustment, would be of benefit to Junior Certificate students. Suggested amendments included:

- The provision of an accompanying text/workbook appropriate to Junior Certificate level;
- The introduction of more recently produced documentaries and television programmes;
- The development of clips more appropriate to the Junior Certificate Curriculum;
- The inclusion of key personalities rather than key concepts, which would ensure the clips remain at a basic level for the younger students.

Based on an assessment of both the objective observations and the subjective perspectives of the stakeholders, the evaluator ultimately concluded that the *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* Pilot Project contributed to the generation of positive outcomes for Leaving Certificate history students, whilst also helping students to reach the aims of the revised Leaving Certificate Curriculum.

Evaluation Recommendations:

A number of key recommendations have been deduced as a result of the evaluation. These are divided into technological and pedagogical recommendations and are outlined below:

(a) Technological/Logistical Recommendations:

1. Speakers must be distributed to compliment the laptops distributed to participating history teachers prior to nationwide implementation, this will help resolve the poor sound quality of the archives and help maintain student attention.
2. Participating history teachers/schools must be provided with financial support to allow them to prepare their classrooms for the smooth introduction of the technology. Such financial support must consider costs relative to (i) permanently mounting projectors in individual history teachers classrooms or in a designated IT room to reduce time wasting, (ii) purchasing extension leads, lengthy computer and projector cables to ensure students can sit comfortably at their desks and are not compelled to ‘huddle’ in a corner to view the clips, and (iii) the installation of blackout blinds to assist viewing and reduce time wasting.
3. All schools are due to be broadband-enabled come December 2006. The *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* site is included on the ‘whitelist’ of

approved websites and will be accessible to all schools on the Schools Broadband Network. Therefore, issues relative to accessing broadband and/or the site will no longer be an issue. However, it is necessary that teachers have access to a direct line of communication, in the form of an IT support phone number or email address, to express any concerns or difficulties which they may be experiencing relative to the resource.

4. Teachers must be made aware, prior to utilising the archival resource, to allow adequate time to set-up the equipment, which will prevent time wasting at the beginning of the history lesson. Preparation must also be emphasised for the prevention of unforeseen eventualities; teachers should be encouraged to prepare alternative lesson plans in the eventuality that the resource is inaccessible at the time required.

(b) *Pedagogical Recommendations:*

1. A major requirement highlighted throughout the evaluation process was the need for professional development for future users incorporating modules on (i) the appropriate use of online streaming media, including information on copyright, (ii) an introduction to Information Technology and the Internet which would simplify use for teachers, and (iii) an introduction to successful interactive, engaging, discursive teaching methodologies to be incorporated in to the history classroom to compliment the archival resource.
2. Develop and distribute specific supplementary resource packs appropriate to higher and ordinary level history, e.g. contextualising literature and photographs, exemplar class/lesson plans and teaching methodologies and student workbooks. Supplementary materials should be developed in consultation with pilot project teacher participants. Such a resource would help to cut down on the preparation time which participating teachers felt could act as a deterrent for future users.
3. Extension of the resource to the Junior Certificate cycle will only be successful if clips are made appropriate to the Junior Certificate syllabus by employing the suggestions made by participating teachers, notably: (i) by providing an accompanying text/workbook; (ii) introducing more recently produced documentaries and television programmes; (iii) developing clips more appropriate to the Junior Certificate Curriculum; and (iv) the inclusion of key personalities rather than key concepts, which will ensure the clips remain at a basic level for the younger students.
4. At the time of the evaluation process only two students had accessed the *Look at History* archives outside of class time. Both students were scholars of a particular teacher who had designed and displayed his own poster containing the website address. It is anticipated that the development and distribution of student-friendly posters advertising the web address and benefits of accessing the resource including greater use of the accompanying literature links on the site would encourage greater student usage.
5. Students outlined that they would like to see the inclusion of war documentaries, documentaries relating to 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland and in relation Irish sporting and musical histories amongst the available archives. Consideration should be given to such perspectives.

CHAPTER 1:

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE *LOOK AT HISTORY* PILOT PROJECT

1.1 Introduction

Look at History through the RTÉ Archives is a collaborative pilot project between the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE), the History In-Service Team (HIST) and Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ) in which video/radio clips from media, preserved by the RTÉ Archives, are presented for use in second-level education. The RTÉ Archives preserve a unique and valuable record of Irish life as seen and heard through the media of television and radio. In total there are 38 clips, all of which specifically relate to the Leaving Certificate History syllabus, Later Modern Ireland, Topic 6 *Government, Economy and Society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989*. Within this topic, the focus has been on one case study and two elements:

- The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972 [case study].
- *Social Change: The Changing Status of Women, Housing, Schools, Amenities*
- *Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture*.

Look at History through the RTÉ Archives provides teachers and students with unique access to primary historical sources relevant to the individual elements outlined above. Each video/radio clip is accompanied by brief explanatory text and related website links. The clips are accessible online by logging on to <http://www.scoilnet.ie/lookathistory/>.

1.2 The National Centre for Technology Education

The National Centre for Technology Education (NCTE) was established under the auspices of the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1998. The Centre acts as the Government's agency on the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in education. The Centre plays a fundamental role in helping to maximise the benefits for students and teachers in utilising ICT. The initial role of the Centre, as determined by the DES, was the management of the implementation of

Schools IT 2000¹. However, the role of the Centre has since evolved and the core work of the NCTE presently includes:

- Providing advice and developing policy proposals for the DES on issues relating to the development and use of ICT in the Irish education system.
- Providing information and advice to other educational agencies on ICT in education.
- Maintaining a mechanism of funding for schools to develop their technological infrastructure and purchase ICT equipment and software (the funding is provided in most cases by the DES).
- Designing and implementing a series of in-career ICT training programmes for teachers.
- Developing and maintaining an educational website portal titled *Scoilnet*.
- Developing and evaluating educational software.
- Piloting models of technology integration and support through the Schools Integration Project (SIP).
- Providing support in educational ICT to teachers working in the area of special educational needs.
- Undertaking research on the best uses of ICT in education.
- Maintaining Irish involvement in current and future EU initiatives.
- Developing and maintaining an NCTE website.

The NCTE is based in Dublin City University at its campus in Glasnevin, Dublin.

1.3 The History In-Service Team

In 2004, a revised Leaving Certificate History syllabus was published by the Department of Education and Science (DES) and introduced to second-level schools for Leaving Certificate students in September of that year. The use of film, media and other communication technologies form a significant aspect of the revised syllabus. The initial Leaving Certificate examination under the revised syllabus took place in June 2006.

¹ *Schools IT 2000* is a government-initiated project. Its main objective is to fully integrate technology into K-12 schools. Key initiatives under the *School IT 2000* program are: Technology Integration Initiative (TII), Teaching Skills Initiative (TSI), School Support Initiative (SSI), School Integration Project (SIP), and ScoilNet.

To ensure the effective and successful integration of the new syllabus, the Minister for Education and Science established a History In-Service Team (HIST) to provide both in-service and support for Leaving Certificate history teachers relating to the revised syllabus. To date [June 2006] the team have been responsible for the successful organisation and distribution of five distinct phases of in-service training with Leaving Certificate history teachers.

The HIST team are located in the Monaghan Education Centre, Knockaconny, Armagh Rd., Monaghan.

1.4 The Leaving Certificate History Syllabus

The Leaving Certificate History Syllabus has three fundamental aims with corresponding objectives, notably:

1. The development of students' knowledge and understanding of human activity in the past, whilst promoting an understanding of the present.
2. The progression of students' skills of history, i.e. increasing their awareness of various perspectives and interpretations of historical contexts, whilst also developing various research skills which can be used in the study of history.
3. The preparation of history students for life and citizenship by enhancing their ability to think critically as well as an appreciation of their own and other societies, both present and past (DES, 2003).

The Guidelines for Teachers (DES, 2004) encourage the utilisation of a host of resources which support the attainment of the aforementioned aims and objectives. The resources suggested include '*...reference books, specialist secondary works, document packs, online archives, libraries, videotapes, CD ROMS, DVDs...*' (DES, 2004:64). The syllabus encourages the use of primary sources suitable for use in the classroom, as an extension of the students' research tasks. The Guidelines emphasise the benefits associated with the use of information and communication technology, and in particular the use of the 'World Wide Web' / Internet. Each participating teacher attending the HIST in-service during Spring 2004 was provided with documentation outlining the rationale for using film to assist in the teaching of history

in the Leaving Certificate². However, the Guidelines publication also forewarned teachers of the dangers associated with using / directing students on use of the Internet and advises them to both acquaint and adhere to the Internet usage policy of their specific school.

Leaving Certificate History students can select ONE of the two Fields of Study prescribed — either Early Modern or Later Modern history. Within the chosen Field of Study, students choose two topics from a list of six in Irish history and two more from a list of six in “Europe and the wider world”. Additionally, within each Field of Study, the State Examinations Commission nominates one topic for documents-based study.

In the Later Modern Field of Study, students can select from the following six topics in Irish history:

- (ii) Ireland and the Union, 1815-1870
- (iii) Movements for Political and Social Reform, 1870-1914
- (iv) The pursuit of Sovereignty and the Impact of Partition, 1912-1949
- (v) The Irish Diaspora, 1840-1966
- (vi) Politics and Society in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993
- (vii) Government, Economy and Society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989

Subsumed under each specific topic are three perspectives, all of which must be covered under the topics being examined. They are:

1. Politics and Administration
2. Society and Economy
3. Culture, Religion and Science.

The 38 film/radio clips available for use under the current pilot project all relate to the Leaving Certificate History syllabus, Later Modern Ireland, Topic 6, *Government, Economy and Society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989*. Within Topic 6, the focus has been on one case study — *The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972* — and two elements — (1) *Social Change: The Changing Status of Women, Housing, Schools, Amenities*; and (2) *Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture*.

² The distributed document is contained in Appendix One.

1.4.1 The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972

The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972 is listed as a case study associated with the perspective *Culture, Religion and Science*. It incorporates two elements under that perspective, notably *The Impact of Television* and *The Impact of the Communications Revolution*. One key personality, Gay Byrne, features under both elements. The key concepts, which teachers must illustrate under such elements, include: equality of opportunity, ecumenism, secularisation, balance of payments, discrimination, censorship, pluralism and liberalisation. Teachers are recommended to spend a minimum of five classes teaching such a topic.

1.4.2 Social Change: The Changing Status of Women, Housing, Schools, Amenities

This element is associated with the perspective *Society and Economy*. Two key personalities are featured — Mary Robinson and Sylvia Meehan. The key concepts to be illustrated within the topic include: equality of opportunity, discrimination, censorship, pluralism and liberalisation. Teachers are recommended to spend a minimum of four classes teaching this element.

1.4.3 Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture

The final element is also associated with the perspective *Culture, Religion and Science*. The key personality featured is Seán O'Riordán. The key concepts to be dealt with under the topic include: economic planning, pluralism and liberalisation. Teachers are recommended to spend a minimum of four classes teaching this element.

1.5 The Pilot Project

In January 2006 five³ schools volunteered to participate in a pilot project, which aimed to draw on preserved RTÉ archives to introduce the medium of television and radio to the history classroom. It was anticipated that such would assist history teachers to adhere to the newly revised aims and objectives of the revised syllabus (see: DES, 2004), which encourages the use of a number of mediums to access primary sources of history. The primary aims of the revised syllabus were: the

³ Due to unforeseen circumstances one of the schools was not in a position to participate in the evaluation, therefore the total number of participating schools was four and the total number of participating teachers was seven (three teachers participated in one school, two in another and one in each of the remaining two schools).

development of the Leaving Certificate students' knowledge and understanding of human activity in the past, whilst encouraging a more thorough understanding of current society; the expansion of students' ability to interpret and acknowledge the presence of multiple perspectives, which will support the development of the students' research skills; and finally the preparation of history students for citizenship in present-day society by encouraging them to think logically and critically (DES, 2003).

In 2005, the NCTE, in collaboration with HIST and RTÉ, produced a project website to house the 38 preserved video/radio clips. Brief explanatory text and related website links were developed to accompany each individual clip, to provide a context and further literature relative to the topic being examined. The clips can be accessed online by logging on to <http://www.scoilnet.ie/lookathistory/>. To further assist and simplify the utilisation of the archives, each of the participating schools was provided with a laptop computer, a portable data projector and documentation outlining the rationale for using film to assist in the teaching of history in the Leaving Certificate⁴. The schools were encouraged to familiarise themselves with the resource before introducing it in to the history classroom. Teachers were encouraged to integrate the clips in an appropriate manner, utilising a variety of teaching methodologies and were asked to only pilot the resource with non-exam years i.e. 4th and 5th year Leaving Certificate students.

1.6 *Look at History* Evaluation

To assess the value and significance of the project, NCTE, HIST and RTÉ mutually agreed that an evaluation of the pilot project was necessary. The evaluation would assess the materials developed and the usability and value of the technological materials being utilised by teachers and students of the revised history syllabus in the classroom setting. It was proposed that the evaluation would be carried out in five schools nationwide and would include, if feasible, transition year students and a Gaelscoil, all of whom were studying Topic 6 of the Later Modern Ireland section of

⁴ The distributed document is contained in Appendix One.

the Leaving Certificate History syllabus, *Government, Economy and Society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989*⁵.

In early 2006, Karen Mahony (Independent Research Consultancy) was employed to embark on an evaluation of the project, the aims of which were devised by the NCTE, HIST and RTÉ and examined through the evaluative techniques which can be distinctly divided in to two exclusive categories: the general objectives and the more specific learning objectives. The general were concerned with technological issues and the specific related to educational matters.

1.6.1 General Objectives

The utilisation of the archival resource in the history classroom is essentially reliant on the successful and smooth integration of the technological tools into that room. Therefore, it was necessary that the evaluation assess any technical issues which participating schools experienced on integrating the tools in to the classroom, as well as identifying the infrastructure necessary within the schools to distribute the resource effectively.

1.6.2 Specific Objectives

The successful integration of the technology is the first step in the introduction of the *Look at History* resource to the history classroom. Once such has been established, the teacher can focus on introducing the medium in to their history lesson plans, whilst being aware of the aims and objectives of the revised syllabus (DES: 2003). Taking note of such aims and objectives it was necessary that the current evaluation assess each of the following:

- (i) How the media-rich resources can be used to support and enhance the classroom experience in the selected curriculum areas;
- (ii) Evaluate the value of materials in the learning contexts by identifying teaching methodologies and approaches used during the pilot and observing student motivation and attitudes to learning whilst using the materials;

⁵ Due to unforeseen circumstances the Gaelscoil was not in a position to participate in the evaluation, therefore the total number of participating schools was four and the total number of participating teachers was seven (three teachers participated in one school, two participated in another and one participated in each of the two remaining schools).

- (iii) Observe student learning whilst examining improvement in understanding as a result of engaging with the materials;
- (iv) Evaluate teachers' views of the appropriateness, relevance and usability of the materials with regard to the revised Leaving Certificate History Syllabus; and
- (v) Measure whether the availability of relevant interactive materials leads to greater utilisation by teachers and/or students.

1.7 Evaluation Methodology

In January 2006 a preliminary meeting was held with the four participating schools. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the participating teachers of the purpose and nature of the evaluation and of their role within it. The meeting was also used to agree on dates for on-site data collection and to respond to any concerns the teachers may have had regarding the evaluation process. A total of seven teachers opted to participate in the evaluation: three representing one school, two representing a second school and one representing each of the remaining two schools.

The evaluator, in agreement with the NCTE evaluation steering group, developed a detailed evaluation methodology. It involved the following elements:

1. A comprehensive review of programme documentation, files and reports with a view to identifying the key objectives, actions and outputs of the pilot project.
2. Interviews with history teachers in the participating schools. In total the evaluator conducted seven face-to-face interviews with teachers who had previously and/or were, at the time, using the *Look at History* media-rich archives. The interviews took place in the respective teacher's school environment and were conducted throughout the months of February and March 2006. The teachers were assured that the interviews were being conducted to assess the use of the RTÉ archives and the technology which compliments them over the period of January 2006 - February/March 2006 and were not designed to examine the quality of teaching, the teachers or the pupils. In all cases, the interview duration was approximately one hour.

Taking in to account the specific objectives outlined in Section 1.5 above, each interview focused on the following areas:

- (i) The logistics of using the archival resource;
- (ii) The teaching methodologies used when accessing the resource;
- (iii) The outcomes for students utilising the archives;
- (iv) The anticipated benefit of the resource to the revised Leaving Certificate History Syllabus.

3. Survey of history students. In total the evaluator distributed survey questionnaires to seven 4th / 5th year classes who had previously and/or were currently using the *Look at History* archives. The evaluator distributed the questionnaires during a preliminary visit to the school; students were then given the opportunity to complete the questionnaires within a history class environment throughout the months of March and April 2006. The evaluator gathered the questionnaires on a subsequent visit. All students were advised to complete the questionnaires based on their assessment of the use of the RTÉ archives and the technology that complements them over the period January 2006 – March/April 2006 and not to examine the quality of teaching or the teachers. The questionnaire explored the use of the media-rich archives both within and outside the history classroom, the students' reaction and attitudes towards the use of the project materials as a means of learning history and the impact that they believe it had on their own learning.

4. Classroom observations⁶. The observations were used to further identify teaching methodologies used in conjunction with the materials, as well as to observe students' level of engagement with the materials and with the subject matter. A total of six history teachers participated in the observation strand of the evaluative process. Two forty-minute periods were observed for each participating teacher⁷, during which the project materials were being utilised by the teachers and students. The evaluator sat at the back of the classroom, remaining as unobtrusive and inconspicuous as possible; this ensured that both the teachers and the students remained comfortable and that the class lesson

⁶ The observation instrument was uniquely designed for the current evaluation. A copy of the observation schedule can be accessed by contacting the evaluator directly.

⁷ In a number of the schools the two class periods were run as double period classes.

resumed in as ‘normal’ a manner as possible. All teachers were assured that the observations were being conducted to assess the use of the RTÉ archives and the technology which complements them and was not designed to examine the quality of teaching, the teachers or the pupils.

In order to ensure that the research proceeded in an ethical fashion, each of the participating teachers and students were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. Although a school and class identification number appeared on each student questionnaire, the participating students could not be traced individually.

1.8 Report Structure

The report consists of five chapters in total. The current chapter, chapter one, contextualises the ‘*Look at History through the RTÉ Archives Pilot Project*’ outlining a review of each of the organisations involved in the administering of the project, an examination of the Leaving Certificate history syllabus, a review of relevant documentation and an outline of the project evaluation procedures. Chapter two outlines the main findings relative to the teachers’ interviews. Chapter three describes the findings of the quantitative survey questionnaires and chapter four provides a review of the observations conducted in the history classrooms. The final chapter, chapter five draws the evaluation together, providing a set of conclusions and recommendations for the future.

CHAPTER 2: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

The perspectives of the participating history teachers, in each of the four schools, were gathered through face-to-face interviews. Seven teachers participated in the pilot project, six of whom were male and one of whom was female. A copy of the interview schedule is contained in Appendix Two at the end of this report.

The average number of times teachers used the resource over the two/three month pilot phase period was 3.14 times. Five of the teachers piloted the resource with 5th year classes and two of the teachers piloted it with 4th year classes. One teacher had also introduced the resource to a 3rd year class and a 2nd year class. During the pilot phase all seven teachers had access to all 38 clips. To conceal the teachers' identities, from this point forward all teachers will be referred to using the masculine pronoun.

2.2 Technological Issues

The initial introduction of the *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* in to the history classroom requires the smooth integration of the technological tools. Highlighting any technological issues which participating schools experienced will allow for the rectification of such issues in preparation for the effective distribution of the resource.

The main difficulties outlined by teachers included:

- Poor sound when using the resource - speakers were required to complement the laptop computer.
- Poor visual quality of some of the clips, e.g. Opening night of TÉ: Address by President Eamon De Valera, which is to be expected when accessing historical archives.
- Lack of provision of lengthy computer and projector cables, blackout blinds and computer software.

- Difficulty accessing Broadband, which will no longer be an issue as it is intended that all schools nationwide will be broadband enabled come the end of 2006.
- Laborious access to the resource. Four teachers felt the resource would be used more often if a projector was mounted permanently in each history teacher's classroom.
- Difficulty accessing the clips because the school's firewall/internet filtering system did not permit access to the RTÉ archives. By the end of 2006 all schools, nationwide, will be broadband enabled via the Schools Broadband Network. The Schools Broadband Network has a standard filtering system containing a 'whitelist' of approved websites that schools can access, of which the *Look at History* website is one. Therefore, there will be no future filtering issues.

The majority of teachers felt financial support was required to purchase connection leads and/or cables, speakers and personnel, e.g. to mount the projector and/or install broadband, whilst five teachers felt that they would have benefited from a crash course on IT before using the resource.

More minor issues identified by participating teachers included:

- The lack of a display screen to project the images.
- Lack of clear labels on the website – two non-IT literate teachers felt the web page containing the clips should be more clearly labelled, e.g. 'Click here to begin' and 'Click here to increase the size of the clip'.
- Lack of access to broadband at home, which compels teachers to prepare for classes during school time.
- Two teachers felt the clips were too short and need to be expanded upon> However, another teacher felt the length of the clips was ideal as it allowed time to contextualise the clip before playing it and to examine it with the students afterwards. Therefore the matter seems to be subjective.

2.3 Pedagogical Issues

Pedagogically, the media-rich resources were advantageously used to support and enhance the classroom experience of the history curriculum. Teachers readily and

effortlessly introduced more interactive and engaging teaching methodologies than previously employed which highlights the value of the materials in the learning context. Teachers used a variety of teaching methodologies to incorporate the clips. Five outlined that they did not rely on traditional methodologies when accessing the resources and that previous reliance on “*chalk and talk*” had become redundant. They outlined that the classes became more “...*collegial*”, more focused on engagement, interaction and discussion and much more enjoyable than previously.

The main methodologies outlined by teachers which contributed to the interactive environment included the distribution and completion of a contextual questionnaire, prior to watching the clips; the distribution of ‘*analysis forms*’ to be completed during the watching of the clips; and the incorporation of student discussion groups, prior and post watching of the clips. The participating teachers stressed the importance of contextualising the clips before and after watching them. This, they stressed, is usually carried out in the previous/next history lesson. Flexibility, on the teachers’ behalf, was also highlighted as a major factor – the majority of teachers stressed the importance of allowing students to engage in open-ended discussion regarding the clips and also permitting them to pose and analytically decipher answers to their own queries and questions. Hence, teachers strengthened their theories by stating that methodologies that conflicted with those outlined above, combined with bad time management, impacted negatively on the classroom environment and did not promote an interactive, engaging, discursive class.

All seven teachers were in agreement that the resource helps to enhance the classroom experience for students and that it was very relevant to both the history curriculum and the history class. Teachers views on the benefits of the clips were quite subjective: two felt the clips help to better integrate weaker students; another worried that the clips might isolate the weaker students as the stronger students engage in more discussion and debate; another outlined the benefits of the clips as a primary source of history which is invaluable at Leaving Certificate level; whilst two felt the clips help focus student attention, whilst enhancing their confidence to discuss and debate history more fluently (resulting in greater interaction between the students and the teacher). Two of the participating teachers stated that they would like to see the

resource expanded to include European topics. Factors determining regular use of the resources, as outlined by the teachers, included:

- The provision of accompanying workbooks, literature, photographs, class plans and examples of teaching methodologies to support each individual clip.
- Permanent mounting of a projector in history teachers' classrooms.
- The availability of individual personal laptops for each history teacher.

2.3.1 Outcomes for Students Utilising the Archives

Teachers emphasised a vast increase in student motivation and attitudes to learning whilst using the materials and an improvement in understanding as a result of engaging with the materials. Five of the seven teachers felt students' attitudes to learning history greatly improved as a result of using the resource, whilst four outlined that the resource helped to better motivate students to learn by providing them with a window to the past. Six of the seven teachers felt the students' understanding of the topics under examination improved as a result of engaging with the materials. However, three of those teachers added that the resource could be better improved by the provision of accompanying workbooks, literature, photographs, class plans and examples of teaching methodologies to support each individual clip – the teachers outlined that presently there was too much preparation time involved in integrating a clip in to a lesson plan, which would result in teachers being less inclined to use the resource. Five of the seven teachers felt the materials helped students to reach such objectives of the syllabus as personal interpretation, awareness of bias and awareness of propaganda.

The majority of teachers felt the resource helped students to understand that history is not solely concerned with the powerful and influential, but also the ordinary. Clips outlined to strengthen this assertion include 'Ballymun Residents on Learning More Irish' and 'Women in Irish Society: An Employee's View'. It was also felt that the clips helped students to describe, in detail, the key personalities examined in the clips and that the clips helped students to look at a controversial issue from more than one point of view. Smaller numbers of teachers felt the students were better equipped to show a basic understanding of the main causes and consequences of the events under examination as a result of using the resources, whilst others felt the students were

better able to show the relevance of the clips viewed to the topic under examination, as a result of watching and discussing them.

2.3.2 Anticipated Benefits to the Junior Cycle

Towards the end of each interview participating teachers were asked to outline whether or not they felt the resource would be of benefit to the Junior Certificate History Syllabus. Six of the seven teachers felt the *Look at History* resource would be beneficial for use with Junior Certificate students. However, all six added that clips more appropriate to the Junior Certificate curriculum would have to be provided. Three of the six teachers added that the introduction of such resources to the Junior Certificate classroom would help to increase students' love of history, would be beneficial when teaching social history topics and that younger students enjoy learning through visual stimuli. Two teachers expressed concerns regarding time – they felt time was not a luxury which teachers had at Junior Certificate level, as the syllabus was already very tightly packed.

Six of the seven teachers who participated in the pilot project felt the *Look at History* clips were user-friendly and could be easily mastered by Junior Certificate students, however, they also added that the language used in the clips would have to be more simplistic than that in the Leaving Certificate clips and that the features would have to be more 'action-packed' and 'to-the-point' to engage the younger students.

The following suggestions were made by teachers to make the resource more appropriate to the Junior Certificate curriculum:

- The provision of accompanying text/workbooks.
- The introduction of more recently produced documentaries and television programmes.
- The provision of dramatic adaptations of historical events to educate students e.g. *The Plough and the Stars*.
- The development of clips more appropriate to the Junior Certificate Curriculum.
- The provision of a 'back-up' DVD containing all the online clips.
- The editing of already available documentaries to only include details significant to the Junior Certificate curriculum.

- The inclusion of key personalities rather than key concepts, which will ensure the clips remain at a basic level for the younger students.

2.4 Conclusion

In total seven teachers participated in the evaluation. Teachers mainly used the resource with 4th and 5th years, but a few also introduced it to Junior Certificate classes. The participating teachers felt that overall the archives work as a resource for teaching history. Issues relating to the use of the resource can be divided in to technological issues and pedagogical issues. Although necessary for the smooth integration of the *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* in to the history classroom, the technological and logistical issues are not alarming as they are easily rectifiable. Technological issues highlighted throughout the evaluative process included: poor sound, which can be resolved through the distribution of speakers to compliment the laptops; lack of availability of extension leads, lengthy computer and projector cables, as well as blackout blinds – all of which can be easily rectified; difficulty accessing broadband, which will no longer be an issue as all schools will be broadband-enabled come December 2006; laborious access to the resource, which can be resolved by providing financial support to permanently mount projectors in teachers' history classrooms; and finally difficulty accessing the clips because the firewall/internet filtering system did not permit access, which will also be rectified come December 2006 as the *Look at History* website will be listed on the proposed 'whitelist' of approved websites that schools can access. Overall, history teachers should be aware of the amount of time required to set-up the relevant equipment – preparation is key to the smooth integration of the resource in to the history classroom. Also highlighted was the need for teachers to have an alternative lesson plan on-hand, in the event that the site is temporarily inaccessible. Financial assistance is essential in the initial stages of nationwide implementation to support the efficient integration of the technology e.g. to access blinds, cables, mounted projectors etc., as well as the provision of professional development courses around the appropriate use of online streaming media, and relative to information technology.

More notable than the technological issues outlined by the participating teachers are the pedagogical benefits experienced by the participating teachers and their students. Teachers outlined that the resource helped to compliment their teaching, whilst also

enhancing the classroom environment and student experience of learning history. A particularly significant finding was the openness of the participating teachers to experiment with and explore new teaching methodologies to support the integration of the archives in to the history classroom. The majority of teachers outlined that they had rejected previous, traditional methodologies in favour of more interactive, discursive, engaging methodologies e.g. student group discussions and question and answer sessions. The teachers outlined that such methods allowed them to interact with students to a greater extent than previously used “*chalk and talk*” or ‘lecture-type’ methodologies did. This is a considerable finding, as the teachers added that using interactive, engaging methodologies encourages student learning and a greater love for history, whilst also assisting teachers to reach the three fundamental aims of the history syllabus (as noted in Section 1.4). More importantly, the interviews with the teachers highlighted that the project has predominantly reached its proposed objectives, notably that teachers have identified positive teaching methodologies and approaches to be used whilst accessing the resource; recognised an increase in student motivation, attitudes to learning and understanding of history whilst using the materials; highlighted that teachers view the materials as being appropriate, relevant and mainly user-friendly with regard to the revised Leaving Certificate History Syllabus; teachers also identified that greater utilisation can be encouraged by ensuring teachers have access to a permanently mounted projector and a personal laptop. Predominantly, teachers felt the archival resource would be of benefit to the Junior Certificate cycle, understandably however, it was suggested that minor changes must be made to the resource prior to implementation. Such changes included the provision of an accompanying text/workbook; the introduction of more recently produced documentaries television programmes; the development of clips more appropriate to the Junior Certificate Curriculum; and the inclusion of key personalities rather than key concepts, which will ensure the clips remain at a basic level for the younger students.

CHAPTER 3: STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

The perspectives of the participating students in each of the four schools were also gathered for this evaluation. Questionnaires were used to collect data in relation to both the general and specific evaluation objectives as outlined in the greater detail in the chapter one. A copy of the survey questionnaire is contained in Appendix Three at the end of this report. To conceal the students' identities, they were asked to only reveal their gender, class year and age. Students were advised not to write their names anywhere on the questionnaire.

3.2 Student Profile

A total of ninety students completed the survey questionnaire, seventy-five (83%) of whom were male and fifteen (17%) of whom were female. Twenty percent of the students surveyed were aged 15 years (14 males and 4 females), fifty-two percent were aged 16 years (37 males and 10 females), twenty-seven percent were aged 17 years (23 males and 1 female) and one percent was aged 18 years (1 male). Figure 3.1 below crosses student gender with student age.

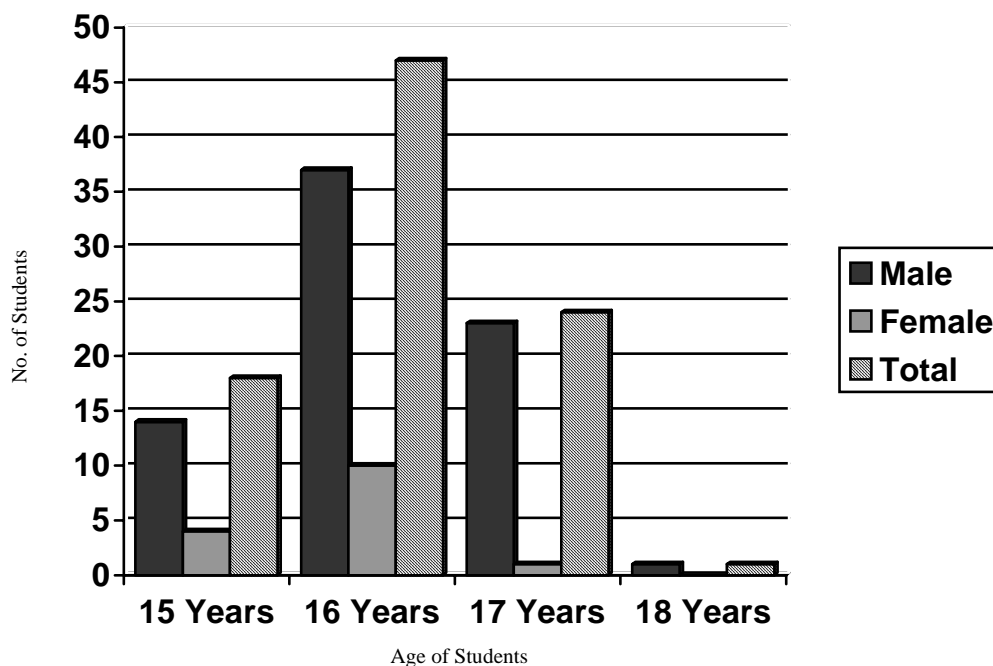


Figure 3.1: Student Gender crossed with Student Age

Of the ninety students thirty-one (34%) were studying ordinary level Leaving Certificate history and fifty (56%) were studying higher-level history (there were nine (10%) missing values). All students studying ordinary level history (thirty-one) were male, whereas 72% of students studying higher level were male and 28% were female.

N = 90	
Level of Study	N
Ordinary Level	31
Higher Level	50
Missing Value	9
Total	90

Table 3.1: Participating Students' Level of Study

3.2.1 Frequency of Utilisation

The majority of students (71%) had accessed the *Look at History* archival clips between 1-5 times over the three/four month period, with 28% accessing the clips between 6-10 times (one student didn't know how many times his/her class had accessed the clips). Thirty-one (34%) of the students who accessed the clips had accessed them between 1-5 times and were ordinary level Leaving Certificate students and twenty-six (29%) were higher level students. No ordinary level students had accessed the clips more than five times, whereas 23 (26%) of the students who had accessed the clips between 6-10 times were higher-level students (one (1%) higher level student didn't know how often he/she had accessed the clips during class time)⁸. As outlined in Table 3.2 below a selection of clips were accessed by classes from each of the three areas ('The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972', 'Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture' and 'Social Change: The Changing Status of Women' topic).

⁸ There were 9 (10%) missing values for this particular question.

N=90		Responses
		N
The Impact of RTÉ	Radharc in Africa	66
	Opening Night - Eamon De Valera	58
	The Late Late Show	57
	The Riordans	45
	Gay Byrne – Broadcaster	37
	Civil Rights March in Derry	35
	Gay Byrne Reflects	34
	Opening Night - Cardinal D'Alton	32
	Brian Trevaskis	23
	Impact of American Programmes	2
Changing Attitudes Towards Irish Language and Culture	Launch Radio na Gaeltachta	31
	Buntús Cainte	29
	Launch of Anois	27
	Ballymun Residents	22
	Proposal for All-Irish School	16
	Language Freedom Movement	16
	Compulsory Irish Abolished	16
	Gaeltacht Civil Rights	14
	Watch Your Language	4
Social Change: The Changing Status of Women	Women - Employee's View	49
	Women - Education of Girls	37
	Women - Employer's View	34
	M. Robinson - Family Planning	23
	M. Robinson wins award	15
	M. Robinson on Divorce	2
	Trade Unionist	2
	Minister for Women's Affairs	2
	Woman takes case to Europe	1
	Women and New Irish State	1
Missing Answer	2	

Table 3.2: Archival Clips Accessed During Class time

The clips under ‘The Impact of RTÉ’ topic were accessed most frequently (53%), followed by ‘Changing Attitudes Towards Irish Language and Culture’ at 24% and ‘Social Change: The Changing Status of Women’ at 23%.

At the time of completing the survey two students (2%) had accessed the archival clips outside of the history classroom, eighty-seven students (97%) had not accessed it outside the class and one (1%) outlined that he didn’t know. The two students who stated that they had accessed the clips outside of the history class were both male 16-year-olds in fifth-year.

3.2.2 Reactions, Attitudes and Impacts on Student Learning

Sixty-seven percent of the student population (60 students) stated that having access to the archival resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ easier than using traditional methods. One student stated that she found having access to the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ more difficult and 29% (26 students) outlined that they didn’t know whether the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ easier or more difficult. The student who felt having access to the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ more difficult was a non-national student whose first language was not English. She suggested that in order to improve the resource accompanying notes should be provided, particularly for students whose first language is not English.

Did having access to the resource make learning about 'Later Modern Ireland' easier/more difficult?	
	Total
Easier	60
More Difficult	1
Don't Know	26
Missing Value	3
Total	90

Table 3.3: Ease of learning as a result of accessing the resource

The reasons students gave for why the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ easier were varied and are displayed in Table 3.4 below.

Response	N	%
The visual medium gives an inside view of the time	21	23.3
It's easier and quicker to learn using visual mediums than it is using text	9	10.0
It's easier to relate to and/or learn through visual images than it is through text	7	7.8
Visual mediums provide a more entertaining and/or interesting overview of history and/or the topics	6	6.7
The clips provide a new/different source of information	5	5.6
The resource allows you to get a better sense of people's emotions and feelings	4	4.4
The resource will help with the RTÉ Case Study	1	1.1
Because we can access the clips in our own time	1	1.1
The mix of visual and teacher made it easier to understand the topic	1	1.1
The clips keep your attention	1	1.1
Missing Value	7	7.8
N/A ⁹	27	30.0
Total	90	100.0

Table 3.4: Why Access to the Resource Results in Easier Learning

⁹ The N/A variable includes 26 students who didn’t know whether having access to the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ easier/more difficult and the one student who felt it made learning more difficult.

Sixty-nine percent of the students felt their knowledge on the topic ‘Later Modern Ireland’ improved as a result of using the media-rich archives. Seven percent felt their knowledge on ‘Later Modern Ireland’ didn’t improve as a result of using the resources and 22% didn’t know. Of the six students who didn’t feel their knowledge improved, three gave ideas for improving the resource: one outlined that the clips need to be lengthened and two stated that the school should be provided with access to broadband internet to make accessing the clips easier¹⁰. Students who felt the resource did help to improve their knowledge on ‘Later Modern Ireland’ were asked to expand on how they felt the resource helped in such a way. Their responses are contained in Table 3.5 below.

N=90	Level of Study			Total
	Ordinary Level	Higher Level	Missing Value	
It is easier to understand the feelings of the people and life during that period	5	4	0	9
It has allowed me to view first-hand images of events	0	4	4	8
My knowledge of history and the past has expanded and/or is clearer	0	6	0	6
Viewing images makes the topic more interesting than reading/listening	2	1	2	5
It's easier to remember information based on visual clips	2	2	0	4
Images make history easier to understand than reading/listening	0	2	2	4
The resource acts as a form of revision as you get to view images relative to lessons learned	0	3	0	3
The clips help students to understand the significance of the event	1	1	0	2
The resource provides a new medium from which to learn	1	1	0	2
The resource allows students to learn about the style of television in past	0	1	0	1
The resource allows students to compare old and modern Ireland	0	0	1	1
Missing Value	9	10	0	19
N/A ¹¹	11	15	0	26
Total	31	50	9	90

Table 3.5: Reasons for Improvements in Knowledge crossed with Level of Study

¹⁰ It should be noted that both students were attending one of the schools that had difficulty accessing broadband at the beginning of the implementation of the pilot project.

¹¹ The N/A variable includes 20 students who didn’t know if their knowledge on ‘Later Modern Ireland’ had improved as a result of utilising the resource, 6 students who didn’t feel their knowledge improved and 2 students who didn’t respond to this particular question.

Eighty percent (72) of the students felt the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ more enjoyable than using traditional methods, 7% (6) felt the resource did not make learning more enjoyable and 11% (10) didn’t know.

		Level of Study			Total
		Ordinary Level	Higher Level	Missing Value	
Does the resource make learning about 'Later Modern Irl.' more enjoyable?	Yes	27	38	7	72
	No	1	5	0	6
	Don't Know	3	5	2	10
	Missing Value	0	2	0	2
Total		31	50	9	90

Table 3.6: More Enjoyable Learning crossed with Level of Study

Four of the students who didn’t feel the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ more enjoyable explained that it could be improved by including more interesting or recent clips/documentaries. The reasons why students did feel the resource made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ more enjoyable are outlined in Table 3.7 below.

N = 90		Level of Study			Total
		Ordinary Level	Higher Level	Missing Value	
If yes, how?	The visual is more fun / interesting / less monotonous than text/teacher	8	13	3	24
	The visual helps me to remember more / it's easier to learn using visual	4	4	0	8
	It gives students a break from reading text	2	4	1	7
	It helps bring history/topic to life	1	5	0	6
	Visual mediums maintain attention	1	1	1	3
	It allows you to witness society, trends & culture of the time	0	3	0	3
	It's something different to do during class	1	1	0	2
	It helps make Irish history more interesting	0	1	1	2
	It's more productive than taking down notes	2	0	0	2
	It makes history easier to understand	1	0	0	1
	Missing Value	7	8	1	16
	N/A	4	10	2	16
Total		31	50	9	90

Table 3.7: Reasons for Enjoyment crossed with Level of Study

3.3 General Student Comments

The final question on the questionnaire was an open-ended qualitative question that allowed students to make any additional comments with reference to the *Look at History* resource. More than half the participants (54.4%) did not make any additional comment. Eleven students (10.7%) said they would like to see the resource used more often; eight students felt that some of the clips need to be made longer, whilst others need to be shortened a suggested time-span was five minutes per clip – it was outlined that the ‘Civil Rights March in Derry’ clip and ‘The Riordans’ clip need to be extended as they are currently too short; seven students stated that they would like to see the available clips expanded to include footage relating to wars, ‘*The Troubles*’, Irish sport and/or Irish music; five students outlined the need to install blinds in the classrooms before accessing the clips; five others stated that the sound and picture quality of the clips need to be improved as they are both quite poor; four students emphasised the importance of ensuring all schools have access to Broadband before implementing the resource nationally. Other comments added by individual students include the importance of teachers expanding their knowledge on all topics before introducing the clips in to the classroom; that all students should be taught how to access the clips so they may do so in their own time; that the resource should be made available to every history teacher nationally; that the projector should be mounted in the classroom permanently; that the resource should be made easier to use; and that the visual clip of the Brian Trevasakis interview should be made available.

3.4 Conclusion

In total ninety students completed the predominantly quantitative survey questionnaire. The perspectives of the students are invaluable and vital in the current evaluation, as the success of the resource is ultimately dependent on their receptiveness and responsiveness to it. Therefore, the data contained in this chapter relates to such. At the time of the evaluation higher-level students had accessed the resource more often than ordinary level students, which contradicts the findings in the previous chapter, which suggested that some teachers felt the resource was more beneficial for weaker students. Similar to the teachers’ perspectives however, students felt the newer learning methods made learning about ‘Later Modern Ireland’ easier and more enjoyable than relying on traditional methods. This is a very positive finding as it suggests that the archival resource was generally received well by

students, which is encouraging for both future students and their teachers. It is also interesting to learn that students and teachers alike feel confident and comfortable teaching/learning through the newly developed, interactive, engaging methodologies as opposed to relying on traditional methods. We can therefore deduce that pedagogically the archival resource was considered a success amongst the participating students, who were generally very positive and content in their use of the resource during class time. A little concerning is the fact that only two students have accessed the resource outside of class time, however as outlined in Section 3.3 earlier, the students are receptive to accessing the archives outside of class-time and outlined that they would like additional information and instruction on utilisation of the resource. Therefore, it is anticipated that the introduction of a poster campaign detailing the website address and containing basic instructions for use of the archival resource would encourage greater student use.

As with the previous chapter, students also outlined logistical/technological issues which they observed when accessing the resource during class time. They included issues relating to archival sound, black-out blinds, short cables and permanent mounting of the projector and laptop in the history teachers classroom, all of which are similar to the issues addressed by the teachers during the interviews and, as can be noted in the subsequent chapter, the evaluator during the observations. As outlined in the previous chapter, all logistical/technological issues are easily rectifiable but necessary to ensure the smooth implementation of the resource on a nationwide basis.

CHAPTER 4: CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

4.1 Introduction

The two preceding chapters presented findings relative to both the teachers' and the students' perspectives regarding both the general and the specific objectives. However, a rather unique aspect of the evaluation was the development of an observational evaluative technique, which allowed the evaluator to observe whether or not the devised objectives were being met. The tool aimed to identify technological difficulties experienced within the classroom, to further ascertain teaching methodologies used in conjunction with the materials, as well as to observe students' level of engagement with the materials and with the subject matter in-hand.

A presentation of the classroom observations is contained below. The information is displayed both graphically and textually and covers (i) classroom profiles, (ii) technological issues, (iii) pedagogical issues, and (iv) general observations. To protect student and teacher identities, any reference to classes will be made numerically.

4.2 Classroom Profiles

Four of the six classes observed were 5th year Leaving Certificate classes and two were 4th year classes. The total number of students present in classes during the observation period was 118; one hundred and five (89%) of the students were male and thirteen (11%) were female.

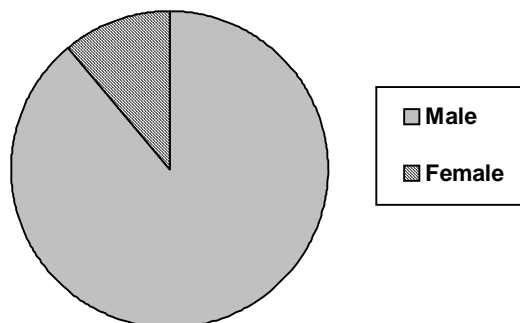


Figure 4.1: Observation Participant Gender

Two of the classes observed were higher level Leaving Certificate classes, one was ordinary level and the other three classes remained un-streamed i.e. comprising both ordinary and higher level students.

4.3 Technological Issues

The average amount of time it took for teachers to set up the technological equipment was six minutes; the least amount of time being less than one minute and the longest period of time being twelve minutes. The following difficulties relative to setting up the equipment were experienced by classes during the observation process:

- (i) Lack of availability of a plug socket at a convenient location, obliging students to gather in one corner to view the projector screen.
- (ii) Access to the online resource being temporarily down.
- (iii) Difficulty getting the laptop and projector to run in unison.

Each of the difficulties experienced is logistical in nature – they suggest that teachers should be aware of the amount of time required to set up the equipment to ensure adequate time is designated to preparing for use of the resource. Preparation is key to utilising the *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* resource.

On average, it took teachers one and a half minutes to access the online resources after the technology had been set up. Three of the teachers had no difficulties accessing the online resource, therefore it took them less than one minute to access it. It took four minutes for one teacher to access the resource, for a second it took three minutes and it took the final teacher just over one minute to access the online resource. The difficulties associated with accessing the online resource were as a result of the site being temporarily down. The temporary crash was rectified within two days and the site was accessible immediately.

4.3.1 Clips Accessed

During the observation process, two of the classes accessed clips from ‘The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972’ topic, two accessed clips from the ‘Social Change: The Changing Status of Women’ topic, one accessed clips from the ‘Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture’ topic and one accessed clips from both ‘The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972’ topic and the ‘Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture’ topic. The following clips were accessed during the observation period:

A. The Impact of RTÉ, 1962-1972

- (i) Opening Night of TÉ: Address by President Eamon De Valera (1961).
- (ii) Opening Night of TÉ: Address by Cardinal John D'Alton (1961).
- (iii) The Late Late Show (1965).
- (iv) Radharc in Africa (1966).
- (v) Impact of American Programmes Broadcast on RTÉ (1972).
- (vi) The Riordans (1972).
- (vii) Gay Byrne Reflects on the Late Late Show (1974).
- (viii) Gay Byrne Talks about Working as a Broadcaster (1984).

B. Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture

- (i) The Language Freedom Movement (1967).
- (ii) Buntús Cainte: Learning the Irish Language (1967).
- (iii) Launch of Radió na Gaeltachta (1972).
- (iv) Launch of Anois (1984).

C. The Changing Status of Women

- (i) Women in Irish Society: The Education of Girls (1970).
- (ii) Women in Irish Society: An Employee's View (1970).
- (iii) Women and the New Irish State (1975).
- (iv) Appointment of Minister for Women's Affairs (1982).
- (v) Mary Robinson on Divorce (1986).
- (vi) Mary Robinson Wins Award (1988).

4.4 Pedagogical Issues

The main teaching methodologies adopted by teachers to integrate the online resource in to the history classroom during the observations included question and answer sessions, group discussions, lecture-type contextualisations, provision of hand-outs and PowerPoint presentations. Pedagogically, the observations highlighted that the classroom experience has moved from a reliance on traditional teaching methodologies e.g. “*chalk and talk*” to a more interactive, discursive experience. Students were invited to complete questionnaires prior to watching the clips as well as subsequent to doing so. A greater emphasis was placed on active learning, through analysis of the clips and the contexts, but also through group discussions. Both teachers and students were engaged in the activities and discussion on the topic under

scrutiny. A greater emphasis has been placed on discourse and analysis, which ultimately develops students analytical and research abilities.

In contrast to the beneficial elements of the integration of the resource, the observation phase also highlighted methodologies, which did not impact positively on the classroom experience. Examples include the failure on the teachers behalf to contextualise the clips prior to watching them; inflexibility to allow the students to explore the issues of interest to them in order to remain within the remit of the revised Leaving Certificate curriculum; and lecture-type class formats which disengage students and do not allow for open discussion and/or exploration.

Ultimately, the observational phase of the fieldwork highlighted the importance of discussion, exploration, flexibility and engagement both amongst the students themselves to discursively analyse the clips and contexts, but also between the teachers and students in the form of exploratory question and answer sessions. In contrast, non-flexible discussion and 'lecture-type' presentations of the material were at a minimum disadvantageous, but ultimately disengaging and tedious.

4.4.1 Level of Student Engagement

The level of student engagement was observed within each classroom during each observation period and is rated based on the majority of the students' activities. The evaluator observed each class and classified whether the students were actively, passively or not engaged. 'Actively engaged' students were actively participating in an activity (e.g. reading, writing, discussing), 'passively engaged' students were watching, listening or following text as a teacher read, and 'not engaged' students were disinterested or 'staring in to space'. Table 4.1 below displays the percentage of time that each class was observed being actively, passively or not engaged:

	Actively Engaged	Passively Engaged	Not Engaged	Total
Class One	89%	11%	-	100%
Class Two	58%	42%	-	100%
Class Three	40%	49%	11%	100%
Class Four	29%	71%	-	100%
Class Five	27%	73%	-	100%
Class Six	87%	-	13%	100%
Total % Student Time	55%	41%	4%	100%

Table 4.1: Level of Student Engagement during Observations

In all instances, the greatest majority of student time was spent engaged in the classroom activity, i.e. actively or passively. On average, 55% of students' time was spent actively engaged and 41% was spent passively engaged. Four percent of the average amount of student time was spent disengaged. This data suggests that the resource predominantly engaged students either actively/passively, which is ultimately beneficial to student learning.

4.5 General Observations

The evaluator rated one of the classes observed as being a 'very positive experience', two were rated 'positive' and the remaining three were rated as 'average' experiences. The following general observations were also made during the observation process:

4.5.1 Technological / Logistical Observations:

1. Two of the teachers had the technological equipment set up prior to class time, which avoided impingement on class-time.
2. The use of speakers improved the sound of the clips accessed and helped to maintain student attention.
3. The students who watched the 'Opening Night of TÉ: Address by Cardinal John D'Alton (1961)' clip were amused and laughed during the playing of the clip.

4. One teacher used a 'white-board' to project the clip – this worked particularly well as the teacher was in a position to make notes directly next to the clip as it was playing.
5. One teacher had a self-made poster on display in the classroom with the Internet address for the *Look at History* archives – this may help to encourage student usage of the archives outside of class time.

4.5.2 Pedagogical Observations:

1. Two of the teachers occasionally paused the clips to ask questions or make observations relevant to the Leaving Certificate history curriculum. This helped to retain student attention and helped to keep them engaged.
2. One teacher seemed particularly passionate about the topic under discussion – this helped to keep students engaged throughout the class period.
3. Providing handouts with a list of questions, which needed to be answered whilst the clips were being played, increased student attention.
4. Flexibility on the teachers' behalf is particularly important, one teacher allowed the students to steer the discussion relative to the clips watched – it was a very positive experience and seemed to be a positive learning experience for the students.
5. One teacher referred back to past lessons/learning, which held student attention and helped to keep them engaged.
6. Lecture-type classes are not as effective at engaging students as more interactive classes utilising such teaching methodologies as group discussions and question and answer sessions.

4.6 Conclusion

A total of six classes were observed during the fieldwork period of the evaluation process, four were 5th year classes and two were 4th year classes. The data gathered through the observations alluded to a greater emphasis on class discussion, interaction and engagement both on the students and teachers behalves. Advantageous teaching methodologies included: reference to previous lessons and current knowledge to contextualise the clips; question and answer sessions prior and subsequent to watching the clips; the completion of questionnaires prior to watching the clips; and

student discussion groups. Disadvantageous methodologies included a reliance on more traditional methodologies, e.g. “*chalk and talk*” and ‘lecture-type’ class structures; and inflexibility during group discussions, i.e. not allowing students to explore issues of interest to them personally, in order to ensure the topics remain relevant to the revised history curriculum. The evaluator also noticed that one particular teacher had designed and displayed a poster containing the website address which houses the archives in his classroom. It was also noted that the two students who accessed the materials outside of class time (Section 3.2.1) were students in that teacher’s class, therefore it is recommended that a student-friendly poster campaign be administered during the initial implementation stages of the resource.

Technological issues were also highlighted during the observation strand of the research, e.g. lack of availability of plug sockets, difficulties running laptops and projectors in unison, lack of access to the online resource due to the site being temporarily down. The logistical and technological issues faced during the observations emphasise a need on the teacher’s behalf to allow adequate time to set-up the equipment and to prepare in advance for unforeseen eventualities. Preparation was highlighted as the key to smooth integration of the archival resource in to the history classroom. Teachers should be aware that alternative lesson plans should be available in the eventuality that the resource is inaccessible. However, it is also the responsibility of the administrative bodies to better prepare schools/classes for the smooth integration of the resource. Overall, the observation strand of the research emphasised the engaging nature of the resource and the positive benefits of introducing the clips to the history classroom.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the main conclusions which can be drawn from the evaluation, as well as providing a set of recommendations in relation to the project's future operation.

5.2 Technological / Logistical Issues

Successful delivery of the *Look at History* project was primarily dependent on the abilities of the teachers and the receptiveness of the students with whom it is being used. Frequency of utilisation and ease of introduction to the classroom are paramount for the smooth utilisation of the resource. Overall the evaluation has demonstrated that both the teachers and students were highly receptive to the introduction of the archives to the history classroom.

A key conclusion of the evaluation is that the *Look at History* project was successfully integrated in to the history classroom by all participating teachers. Excluding the initial logistical difficulties associated with setting-up the resource equipment, no major problems arose surrounding the smooth integration of the resource. Both the site which houses the clips and the clips themselves were easy to locate and access, and teachers and students alike were highly receptive and flexible towards the introduction of such new technologies to the history class. Although the participating teachers, the students and the evaluator (during the three data collection phases) commonly highlighted the following issues they are easily rectifiable and should not, in any way, obstruct the immediate implementation of the archival resource. In fact two of the issues outlined below are already being resolved:

- Poor archival sound, which must be resolved through the distribution of speakers to compliment the laptops distributed.
- Lack of availability of extension leads, lengthy computer and projector cables, and blackout blinds in history teachers classrooms, all of which must be financially/physically provided for prior to implementation.

- Laborious access to the resource, which must be resolved by providing financial support to permanently mount projectors in teachers' history classrooms.
- Difficulty accessing broadband, which will no longer be an issue as all schools will be broadband-enabled come December 2006.
- Trouble accessing the clips because the firewall/internet filtering system did not permit access, which has been rectified as the *Look at History* website is listed on the 'whitelist' of approved websites that schools can access.

The logistical and technological issues faced by teachers highlight the need for teachers to allow adequate time to set-up the equipment, which will ultimately prevent impingement on the history lesson. Advance preparation must also be emphasised for the prevention of unforeseen eventualities. Teachers should be aware that they must prepare alternative lesson plans in the eventuality that the resource is inaccessible at the time required. Ultimately, the evaluation process has highlighted minor logistical/technological issues, which are easily rectifiable and should in no way impinge on the nationwide implementation of the *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* project. However, easy accessibility of the equipment, technology and archives is paramount for the encouragement of resource utilisation, which must be made as straightforward and uncomplicated as possible to encourage greater use of the RTÉ archives as a history resource.

5.3 Pedagogical Issues

Fundamentally, the evaluation process emphasised the engaging nature of the resource and the positive benefits of introducing the clips to the history classroom. The combined evaluation processes highlighted that teachers persistently abandoned the use of traditional teaching methodologies in favour of more interactive, discursive and engaging methodologies, which both teachers and students alike viewed favourably. The teachers outlined that the benefits of using more interactive, engaging methodologies include the encouragement of student learning and a greater love for history, whilst also assisting teachers to reach the three fundamental aims of the history syllabus. Students stated that the new learning methods make learning about 'Later Modern Ireland' easier and more enjoyable than relying on traditional methods of learning. It was also highlighted during the observation phase of the evaluation that

the engaging, interactive, discursive methodologies generated a more positive class environment with greater levels of both active and passive engagement, whilst more traditional and less interactive methodologies, e.g. “*chalk and talk*” and ‘lecture-type’ presentations, were less positive experiences and often disengaged. Exemplar positive methodologies highlighted throughout the process include: continuous reference to previous lessons and current knowledge to contextualise the clips; question and answer sessions subsequent and prior to watching the clips; the completion of questionnaires prior to watching the clips; and student discussion groups. Whilst disadvantageous methodologies include “*chalk and talk*” and ‘lecture-type’ class structures and inflexibility during group discussions, i.e. not allowing students to explore issues of interest to them personally in order to ensure the topics remain relevant to the revised history curriculum.

As with the technological issues above, good time management and preparation must again be emphasised relative to the pedagogical integration of the resource. Time management during the class is fundamental for the smooth introduction of the resource to the history classroom, whilst a major pedagogical issue associated with the utilisation of the resource was the amount of preparation time required to introduce one single clip to a history class. A lack of accompanying material, e.g. workbooks, literature, photographs, class plans and examples of teaching methodologies, to support each individual clip greatly contributed to the amount of preparation time required to plan a lesson incorporating the use of an archive.

Predominantly, teachers felt the archival resource would be of benefit to the Junior Certificate cycle. However, it was suggested that minor changes must be made to the resource prior to implementation, e.g. the provision of an accompanying text/workbook; the introduction of more recently produced documentaries television programmes; the development of clips more appropriate to the Junior Certificate Curriculum; and the inclusion of key personalities rather than key concepts, which will ensure the clips remain at a basic level for the younger students.

5.4 Pilot Project Outcomes

The fundamental purpose of any project evaluation is to enquire as to whether or not the project successfully accomplishes its core role. In this case, the evaluation sought to discover whether the *Look at History* archives supported the attainment of the

fundamental aims and objectives of the Leaving Certificate History Syllabus by introducing primary sources as an extension of the students' research tasks. The primary aims of the Leaving Certificate history syllabus include (i) the development of students' knowledge and understanding of human activity in the past, while promoting the present, (ii) the progression of students' skills of history i.e. increasing their awareness of various perspectives and interpretations of historical contexts, and (iii) the preparation of history students for life and citizenship by enhancing their ability to think critically. The *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* pilot project helped students to achieve those aims by introducing primary sources in to the history classroom, allowing greater student/teacher interaction and a greater emphasis on research/discussion based learning than 'chalk and talk'-type methodologies. Therefore, the outcomes for students included improved attitudes to learning history, greater motivation to learn, advanced understanding of the topics under examination and greater awareness of personal interpretation, bias and propaganda.

The success of the *Look at History* Pilot Project therefore depends on the presence of successful outcomes for students. As outlined, assessing the project's achievement in this area required the evaluator to access students' and teachers' perspectives, as well as observing the participating classes. The observation of participating classes highlighted distinct positive outcomes in relation to levels of student engagement, the introduction of interactive and engaging teaching methodologies and the overall positivity of the lesson experience. While the provision of interesting archives plays a role in the achievement of such outcomes, the flexibility of teachers and the receptiveness of students play a central role in the achievement of these outcomes.

From the perspective of its stakeholders, *Look at History* has achieved positive outcomes. Teachers outlined such outcomes as improvements in students' attitudes to learning, increased motivation to learn history, greater understanding of the history topics under examination, more advanced levels of awareness surrounding personal interpretation, bias and propaganda, as well as a broader overall knowledge and understanding of history, its consequences and the controversies associated with it. Students outlined improvements in knowledge on the topic of 'Later Modern Ireland', a greater enjoyment of learning about Topic 6 and a more enjoyable class period.

Taking the objective observation data and the perspectives of the stakeholders, it is possible to conclude that the *Look at History* Pilot Project has contributed to the generation of positive outcomes for Leaving Certificate History students.

5.5 Conclusion

This evaluation has worked towards the achievement of a number of objectives:

- 1) To highlight technical issues which may have impacted on the adoption of the material in schools.
- 2) To identify the technology infrastructure necessary to distribute the material effectively in school environments.
- 3) To demonstrate how dedicated media-rich resources can be used to support and enhance the classroom experience in the selected curriculum areas.
- 4) To evaluate and assess the value of the materials in the learning context.

To the degree possible, the evaluation has demonstrated what has worked, what has not and why, and it has identified areas where the project could be doing more to meet the objectives of the resource. It has not uncovered major unanticipated outcomes. Overall, the evaluation should inform the future integration of the resource to schools nationally.

However, the key evaluation objective was to ascertain if the project has met its objectives. As outlined in Chapter one, the project's objectives can be inferred from what are documented in initial planning materials as its desired outcomes. In the context of the evaluation, these relate to the two areas just considered – project implementation and project outcomes. Based on the foregoing analysis, overall, it can be concluded that the project has met its objectives. More significantly for the future, while some work is required in relation to the improvement of the resource and the development of accompanying supports, the core project objectives remain highly relevant.

5.6 Recommendations

The following section outlines recommendations as determined by the evaluation process. They are drawn from the preceding chapters, as well as the discussion relative to such issues at the beginning of this chapter. The recommendations can be

broken down in to logistical/technological recommendations, which are easily rectifiable and pedagogical recommendations, which require greater consideration.

5.6.1 Technological/Logistical Recommendations:

1. Speakers must be distributed to compliment the laptops distributed to participating history teachers prior to nationwide implementation, this will help resolve the poor sound quality of the archives and help maintain student attention.
2. Participating history teachers/schools must be provided with financial support to allow them to prepare their classrooms for the smooth introduction of the technology. Such financial support must consider costs relative to (i) permanently mounting projectors in individual history teachers classrooms or in a designated IT room to reduce time wasting, (ii) purchasing extension leads, lengthy computer and projector cables to ensure students can sit comfortably at their desks and are not compelled to 'huddle' in a corner to view the clips, and (iii) the installation of blackout blinds to assist viewing and reduce time wasting.
3. All schools are due to be broadband enabled (via the Schools Broadband Network) come December 2006. The *Look at History through the RTÉ Archives* website is included on the 'whitelist' of accessible sites available through the Schools Broadband Network. Therefore, issues relative to accessing broadband and/or the site will no longer be an issue. However, it is necessary that teachers have access to a direct line of communication, in the form of an IT support phone number or email address, to express any concerns or difficulties which they may be experiencing relative to the resource.
4. Teachers must be made aware, prior to utilising the archival resource, to allow adequate time to set-up the equipment, which will prevent time wasting at the beginning of the history lesson. Preparation must also be emphasised for the prevention of unforeseen eventualities; teachers should be encouraged to prepare alternative lesson plans in the eventuality that the resource is inaccessible at the time required.

5.6.2 Pedagogical Recommendations:

1. A major requirement highlighted throughout the evaluation process was the need for professional development for future users incorporating modules on (i) the appropriate use of online streaming media, (ii) an introduction to Information Technology and the Internet, which would simplify use for teachers, and (iii) an introduction to successful interactive, engaging, discursive teaching methodologies to be incorporated in to the history classroom to compliment the archival resource.
2. Develop and distribute specific supplementary resource packs appropriate to higher and ordinary level history e.g. contextualising literature and photographs, exemplar class/lesson plans and teaching methodologies and student workbooks. Supplementary materials should be developed in consultation with pilot project teacher participants. Such a resource would

help to cut down on the preparation time which participating teachers felt could act as a deterrent for future users.

3. Extension of the resource to the Junior Certificate cycle will only be successful if clips are made appropriate to the Junior Certificate syllabus by employing the suggestions made by participating teachers, notably: (i) by providing an accompanying text/workbook; (ii) introducing more recently produced documentaries and television programmes; (iii) developing clips more appropriate to the Junior Certificate Curriculum; and (iv) the inclusion of key personalities rather than key concepts, which will ensure the clips remain at a basic level for the younger students.
4. At the time of the evaluation process only two students had accessed the *Look at History* archives outside of class time. Both students were scholars of a particular teacher who had designed and displayed his own poster containing the website address. It is anticipated that the development and distribution of student-friendly posters advertising the web address and benefits of accessing the resource including greater use of the accompanying literature links on the site would encourage greater student usage.
5. Students outlined that they would like to see the inclusion of war documentaries, documentaries relating to 'The Troubles' in Northern Ireland and in relation Irish sporting and musical histories amongst the available archives. Consideration should be given to such perspectives.

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APPENDICES

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Rationale for the use of film in the teaching of history in the Revised Leaving Certificate Syllabus

1. *“Unlike previous centuries, the 20th century can be studied and interpreted through new media such as the cinema, radio, television and more generally images which accompany or indeed replace written information”* (Tardif, 1999:10).
2. However, it is important that students are equipped with the requisite skills to subject such media to the same critique as any other sources they may encounter in their study of history.
3. The syllabus places an emphasis on working with evidence and exposing students to different types and repositories of evidence. Film footage can play an important role here.
4. Many historical issues, events and people relevant to the topics for study have been the subject of historical documentaries, which may help students to achieve learning outcomes.
5. Original archival footage and recordings of interviews with key personalities from the topics also exist in film form.
6. A wide range of film types can play a part in the teaching of history, including documentary record, historical documentary, historical fiction and film realism.
7. Such film material can be utilised as sources for the Research Study.
8. Many historical websites avail of multi-media facilities to demonstrate the range of sources available for any historical subject or to broaden understanding of a subject in an accessible way; for example, www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/learning/history. Excellent material related to the 1916 Rising can be found on this site. Film clips, witness statements, historical commentaries and radio excerpts are among the media which feature in such sites. See also www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/timeline.html.
9. As a medium with which most students are familiar as a form of entertainment, the use of film in teaching can help to make certain issues more accessible and attractive.
10. Exposure to various types of film allows the student to become familiar with the nature of such types and to discern how historical reality is represented. For example, the observational documentary simply records all that appears before the lens and the microphone, such as the very first films shot in 1895 by Lumière.
11. However, the contemporary or post – the – event documentary structures film footage and interviews within a narrative, often with scripted commentary, music shot selection and editing, thus increasing the degree of interpretation.

12. The student's capacity to recognise bias, propaganda or subjectivity is enhanced by encountering various forms of film.
13. Film reconstruction of historical events using actors, often termed 'costume dramas' or 'period pieces', also help to render history attractive and accessible to students. Notable examples include *Gandhi* (Richard Attenborough, 1982); *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993); *Elizabeth* (Shekhar Kapur, 1998) and *Michael Collins* (Neil Jordan, 1996). Dramatised documentaries or 'docudramas', such as *The Treaty* (Jonathan Lewis, 1991), instruct and inform an audience while also offering the drama and tension of a true narrative.
14. Historical fiction, in literature or film, can be a gateway to a more dynamic and personal engagement with history. Even where the quality of the historical detail is questionable, it can provide the basis for the development of critical skills through the identification of non-historical or improbable details. (65,G).
15. Film also offers students living examples of oral history in interviews with historical figures or witnesses to historical events, thus making the experience of history more personal and meaningful. Such interviews can be adapted as documents for the documents – based question as well, so students can prepare for this by viewing such interviews.
16. Interestingly, the historical context of film is acknowledged in the contents of the syllabus topics. For example, LME6, *The United States and the world, 1945-1989*, includes the elements *Hollywood-the American Dream and the mass media in modern American culture*, with Marilyn Monroe included as a key personality. LME3, *Dictatorship and Democracy in Europe, 1920-1945* includes the element *Anglo-American popular culture in peace and war: radio and cinema*, with Bing Crosby and Charlie Chaplin as key personalities. The use of film as a propaganda tool is explored in the element *Nazi propaganda-State control and the use of mass media* as well as the case study *The Nuremberg Rallies* and key personality Leni Riefenstahl. (See also http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/wwtwo/nazi_propaganda_gallery.shtml)
17. In Irish history, the topic LMI6, *Government, economy and society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989* involves the study of the elements *the impact of television* and *the impact of the communications revolution*, with key personality Gay Byrne and case study - *The impact of RTE, 1962-1972*.
18. Awareness of the historical import of film also develops students' understanding of archives and their value as repositories of evidence.
19. The advances in film technology, such as the development of DVDs and CD-ROMs (with their adaptability to history teaching) adds to the image of the subject as dynamic, modern and progressive, which will appeal to many students.
20. The many historical programmes available widely in DVD and VHS form or shown on television can be adapted for classroom use according to this rationale.

Look At History through the RTÉ Archives

Teachers' Interview Schedule

The current research is about assessing the RTÉ Archives technology, and not the quality of teaching, the teachers or the pupils.

4 main sections with approximately 10 questions in each:

1. Practicalities to using the resource,
2. Teaching methods,
3. Outcomes for students and
4. Benefit to the Junior Cert. Cycle.

Introductory Questions:

1. How often have you used the resource?
2. How often do you use it on a weekly basis?
 - a. And a monthly basis?

Practicalities:

3. Did you experience any difficulties installing the resource?
4. Did you have any difficulties accessing the resource on the Internet for the first time?
 - a. If yes, was there help on hand to assist with installation?
 - b. Who provided that help?
 - c. Was it useful?
 - d. Would you make any recommendations in relation to future installation for other teachers?
5. Have you experienced any practical issues that you believe make it easier to use the resource?
6. Are there any practical issues which inhibit/may inhibit the use of the technology e.g. technical issues, space, equipment, personnel?
7. Can you suggest a solution to greater facilitate the use of the technology?
8. Have you had any difficulties at all using the resources?
 - a. What were they?
 - b. How did you overcome them?
9. How could the resource be improved to prevent such a difficulty from occurring again?

10. Did you have all the required infrastructure within the school setting to utilise the resource?
 - a. If not, how did you overcome that?
 - b. How would you suggest preventing such a difficulty in the future?
11. Do you have access to all the video clips?
 - a. Which ones do you predominantly use?
 - b. Why?
12. Which ones are you satisfied work best with your classes?
13. Which ones are least beneficial?

Teaching Methods:

14. What teaching methodologies did you use during the pilot phase?
15. Did those methodologies differ from the methodologies you traditionally use?
 - a. If yes, what changes have you had to make to your teaching to incorporate the use of the resource?
16. What teaching approaches work best with the resource?
17. And work least well with it?
18. Do you think the methodology you used was useful?
19. How could you have improved your methodology?
20. How does the resource fit in to the class schedule?
21. Why do you use it?
22. What curriculum areas did you use the materials within?
23. Do you feel the materials enhance the classroom experience in the selected curriculum areas?
24. Did you utilise the materials to support your teaching?
 - a. How did you utilise the materials to support your teaching?
25. Do you feel the clips themselves are relevant to the history curriculum?
26. Do you feel using the interactive material is relevant to the history classroom?
27. Do you feel easy availability of the interactive materials leads to greater utilisation by teachers?

Outcomes for Students:

28. Do you feel that easier availability of the interactive materials would lead to greater student usage?
29. Do you feel students' **attitudes to learning** improved/worsened as a result of using the media-rich materials?
 - a. How?
 - b. How could their attitudes be better improved?
30. Do you feel students' **motivation to learning** improved/worsened as a result of using the media-rich materials?
 - a. How?
 - b. How could their motivation be better improved?
31. Do you feel your individual students' **understanding/comprehension** of the topics under examination improved/worsened as a result of engagement with the resources?
 - a. How?
 - b. How could their understanding be better improved?
32. On considering the syllabus objectives e.g. acquiring knowledge, understanding that historical knowledge is open to interpretation, awareness of bias and propaganda, do you think the resource assists in reaching those objectives?
33. Do you feel students were better able to reach the proposed learning outcomes of the syllabus e.g.
 - i. Show a basic understanding of the main causes and consequences of the events under examination.
 - ii. Recognise that historical study is not just concerned with the powerful and influential, but also the ordinary.
 - iii. Look at a controversial issue from more than one point of view.
 - iv. Describe in some detail the role of the key personalities examined in the clips, including their role in the events under examination.
 - v. Show the relevance of the clips to the topic in question.

Junior Cert. Cycle:

34. How relevant/appropriate do you feel the resources would be to the Junior Cycle curriculum?
 - a. Why?
35. How user-friendly do you feel the resources would be to the Junior Cycle curriculum?
 - a. Why?
36. How could the resource be amended to increase appropriateness to the Junior Cycle?

Conclusion:

37. Overall, do the archives work as a resource for teaching history?
38. What are the positive aspects of the resource?
39. What are the negative aspects of the resource?
40. Have your expectations of the resource been met?
41. In general, are you in favour of the resource?
42. What advice would you give to teachers/future users of the archive resource?
43. Is there anything else you would like to add which hasn't been discussed during the interview?

Look At History through the RTÉ Archives

NOTE: The Following Questionnaire is about the RTÉ Archives, which your class may have used during history lessons.

The questions are about Assessing the Technology and the Archive Resource ONLY.

Leaving Cert. Year e.g. Trans., 5th, 6th: _____

Student Age: _____

Student Gender: Male Female

History Level: Ordinary Level

Higher Level

1. Has your class used the *Look at History* RTÉ Archives resource during class time?

Yes

No

Don't Know

1(a). If you answered 'yes', how many times has the resource been used in your history class?

1 - 5 Times

16 - 20 Times

6 - 10 Times

21 or More Times

11 - 15 Times

Don't Know

1(b). If 'yes', please tick the television/radio clips on the next 2 pages, which your class has used.

A. The Impact of RTÉ, 1962 - 1972

Opening Night of TÉ: Address by President Eamon De Valera (1961)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Civil Rights March in Derry (1968)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opening Night of TÉ: Address by Cardinal John D'Alton (1961)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Impact of American Programmes Broadcast on RTÉ (1972)	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Late Late Show (1965)	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Riordans (1972)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brian Trevasakis on the Late Late Show (1966)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay Byrne Reflects on the Late Late Show (1974)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radharc in Africa (1966)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay Byrne Talks About Working as a Broadcaster (1984)	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture

The Language Freedom Movement (1967)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seán Ó Riordáin (1972)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buntús Cainte: Learning the Irish Language (1967)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Launch of Radió na Gaeltachta (1972)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watch Your Language: A View From Outside (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compulsory Irish Abolished (1973)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposal for All-Irish School in Ballymun (1971)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Launch of <i>Anois</i> (1984)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ballymun Residents on Learning More Irish (1971)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Slógadh (1988)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaeltacht Civil Rights Movement (1972)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

C. Social Change: The Changing Status of Women

Women in Irish Society: The Education of Girls (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Unionist Opposes Working Wives (1982)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in Irish Society: An Employee's View (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appointment of Minister for Women's Affairs (1982)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in Irish Society: An Employer's View (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women in Farming (1985)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mary Robinson on Family Planning Amendments (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minister for Women's Affairs Two Years On (1985)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reaction to the Status of Women Report (1973)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Robinson on Divorce (1986)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women and the New Irish State (1975)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Robinson Wins Award (1988)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woman Takes Case to Europe (1978)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sylvia Meehan on Employment Equality (1989)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in the Seventies (1980)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forum na mBan (1989)	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Women Recruits in the Army (1981)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

2. Have you ever used the *Look at History* RTÉ Archives outside of your history class?

Yes

No

Don't Know

2(a). If 'yes', how many times have you used the resource i.e. outside of your history class?

1 - 5 Times

16 - 20 Times

6 - 10 Times

21 or More Times

11 - 15 Times

Don't Know

3. How would you rate the usability of the archive resource?

Very Easy Easy Average Difficult Very Difficult Don't Know

3(a). If you found it 'difficult' or 'very difficult', please explain what difficulty you had using the resource:

4. Does your class have easy access to the archives?

Yes

No

Don't Know

5. How easy/difficult was it to find the Internet site which holds the archives?

Very Easy Easy Average Difficult Very Difficult Don't Know

5(a). If 'difficult' or 'very difficult' have you any suggestions to make accessing it easier?

6. Does having access to the archives make learning about Later Modern Ireland easier/more difficult?

Easier
More Difficult
Don't Know

6(a). If 'more difficult', how could the resource be improved to make it easier to learn about Later Modern Ireland?

6(b). If 'easier', how so?

7. Do you feel your knowledge on the topic 'Later Modern Ireland' has improved as a result of using the archives?

Yes

No

Don't Know

7(a). If 'no', how could the resource be changed to help towards improving your knowledge of 'Later Modern Ireland'?

7(b). If 'yes', how?

8. Does the resource make learning about Later Modern Ireland more enjoyable?

Yes

No

Don't Know

8(a). If 'no', how could the resource be improved to make learning about Later Modern Ireland more enjoyable?

8(b). If 'yes', how?

9. Does using the resource make class-time more enjoyable?

Yes

No

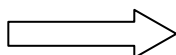
Don't Know

9(a). If 'no', how could the resource be improved to make class-time more enjoyable?

9(b). If 'yes', how?

WE'RE ALMOST THERE...

PLEASE TURN OVER



10. On the next 2 pages is the complete list of clips available. Please tick the ones which **MOST** appealed to you.

(YOU CAN TICK AS MANY BOXES AS YOU LIKE)

A. The Impact of RTÉ, 1962 - 1972

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Opening Night of TÉ: Address by President Eamon De Valera (1961) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Civil Rights March in Derry (1968) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Opening Night of TÉ: Address by Cardinal John D'Alton (1961) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Impact of American Programmes Broadcast on RTÉ (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Late Late Show (1965) | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Riordans (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brian Trevasakis on the Late Late Show (1966) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gay Byrne Reflects on the Late Late Show (1974) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Radharc in Africa (1966) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gay Byrne Talks About Working as a Broadcaster (1984) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

B. Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Language Freedom Movement (1967) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seán Ó Riordáin (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Buntús Cainte: Learning the Irish Language (1967) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Launch of Radió na Gaeltachta (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Watch Your Language: A View From Outside (1970) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Compulsory Irish Abolished (1973) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Proposal for All-Irish School in Ballymun (1971) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Launch of <i>Anois</i> (1984) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ballymun Residents on Learning More Irish (1971) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Slógadh (1988) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gaeltacht Civil Rights Movement (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

C. Social Change: The Changing Status of Women

Women in Irish Society: The Education of Girls (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Unionist Opposes Working Wives (1982)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in Irish Society: An Employee's View (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appointment of Minister for Women's Affairs (1982)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in Irish Society: An Employer's View (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women in Farming (1985)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mary Robinson on Family Planning Amendments (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minister for Women's Affairs Two Years On (1985)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reaction to the Status of Women Report (1973)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Robinson on Divorce (1986)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women and the New Irish State (1975)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Robinson Wins Award (1988)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woman Takes Case to Europe (1978)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sylvia Meehan on Employment Equality (1989)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in the Seventies (1980)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forum na mBan (1989)	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Women Recruits in the Army (1981)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

11. Now tick the ones which **LEAST** appealed to you.

(AGAIN, YOU CAN TICK AS MANY BOXES AS YOU LIKE)

A. The Impact of RTÉ, 1962 - 1972

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Opening Night of TÉ: Address by President Eamon De Valera (1961) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Civil Rights March in Derry (1968) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Opening Night of TÉ: Address by Cardinal John D'Alton (1961) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Impact of American Programmes Broadcast on RTÉ (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Late Late Show (1965) | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Riordans (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Brian Trevasakis on the Late Late Show (1966) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gay Byrne Reflects on the Late Late Show (1974) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Radharc in Africa (1966) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gay Byrne Talks About Working as a Broadcaster (1984) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

B. Changing Attitudes towards Irish Language and Culture

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Language Freedom Movement (1967) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seán Ó Riordáin (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Buntús Cainte: Learning the Irish Language (1967) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Launch of Radió na Gaeltachta (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Watch Your Language: A View From Outside (1970) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Compulsory Irish Abolished (1973) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Proposal for All-Irish School in Ballymun (1971) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Launch of <i>Anois</i> (1984) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ballymun Residents on Learning More Irish (1971) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Slógadh (1988) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gaeltacht Civil Rights Movement (1972) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

C. Social Change: The Changing Status of Women

Women in Irish Society: The Education of Girls (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade Unionist Opposes Working Wives (1982)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in Irish Society: An Employee's View (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appointment of Minister for Women's Affairs (1982)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in Irish Society: An Employer's View (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Women in Farming (1985)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mary Robinson on Family Planning Amendments (1970)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minister for Women's Affairs Two Years On (1985)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reaction to the Status of Women Report (1973)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Robinson on Divorce (1986)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women and the New Irish State (1975)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mary Robinson Wins Award (1988)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woman Takes Case to Europe (1978)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sylvia Meehan on Employment Equality (1989)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Women in the Seventies (1980)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forum na mBan (1989)	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Women Recruits in the Army (1981)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**12. Is there anything else you would like to add which you think would make the archive resource better for future students?
(Please use extra paper if necessary)**

Thank you for your time and energy. Your opinion is very important to us and will help improve the resource for other students



Table A.1: Additional Teachers' Perspectives Data

#	Positive Aspects of the Resource	Negative Aspects of the Resource
1.	Students enjoy using the technology; it allows them to display and use their advanced computer/technological skills.	The resource, as it currently stands, requires much more planning/preparation time than traditional methods. Supplementary literature and materials e.g. lesson plans and examples of successful teaching methodologies are required before the resource is implemented nationally.
2.	Students like being asked for their opinions, which ultimately makes them feel valued.	The current number of clips is restrictive – additional clips should be provided for other topics within the history curriculum.
3.	The clips help bring history to life.	The time it takes to set up the projector and laptop is too lengthy, which eats in to class time and will discourage utilisation. Projectors should be permanently mounted in history teachers' classrooms.
4.	The clips visually display social change over the past decades e.g. dress, culture and formality regarding the medium of television. They also help give clearer insight in to the period under discussion.	Some clips are too brief/short and need to be lengthened to have any significance.
5.	The clips help to project that the people discussed in history books are real people with real emotions.	The use of the resource may encourage certain students to become disruptive – teachers should carefully monitor the classes they use it with.
6.	The clips help to develop confidence levels and self-esteem of students; particularly that of weaker students.	Over utilisation of the resource may result in students becoming apathetic and bored with the medium.
7.	Students become more academically engaged in class because there is more in-class discussion and after-class conversation. Students seem to be enjoying lessons more; there is more laughter during class time.	Technical difficulties are plentiful for non-IT literate teachers.
8.	The level of classroom interaction increased as a result of integrating the resource in to the classroom.	
9.	History teachers engage in more discussion with one another and network and support each other more within a school as a result of using the resource.	
10.	The resource helps to develop students' analytical and judgement skills.	
11.	The tools better motivate students to learn history.	
12.	Because certain students respond better to visual mediums, the resource is beneficial for use with them.	
13.	The resource compliments the teachers' work.	