

HISTORY TRANSCRIPT: This teacher-mediated dialogue between learners drew on their experiences of multimodal digital resources encountered, annotated and interacted with using the IWB during two previous lessons. It thus met the teacher’s objective of “trying to get them to see that the work they had done before counted for something in this too.”

The dialogue synthesised students’ evolving views about how far historians can extrapolate from using such sources and from partial experience, and how convergent their thinking can realistically be.

Edited transcript	Commentary
Dillon: We don't actually know if that's true because it's a DVD. So because we weren't actually alive, some of that might be true, but we can't be sure.	Spontaneously raising questions about reliability of the evidence (teacher follows up by making this explicit).
Ricky: It's like when you imagine winning the lottery. . . it wouldn't necessarily be like what you think.	<p>Recognising that meanings are inevitably partial through their situation within given contexts, based on our construal of that context and our past experiences; making a distinction between (historical records of) experience vs. feelings.</p> <p>T deliberately brings in significant comment he heard Robert make during pair work and then “stored up”. He commonly used this strategy of bringing private interactions into the public arena, and constantly encouraged students to comment and build on others’ viewpoints.</p> <p>Two students who joined the review meeting later on remembered Robert’s point as a key one emerging from the dialogue.</p>
Alex: I think there are probably bits we can imagine and bits we can't.	
T: All right. Robert, can I take the point that you made? It links in with what Alex said. Listen to this. This is Robert's view.	
Robert: You can imagine what it would look like, but you can't imagine what it would feel like or how you would be feeling.	
T: Ok. What do you think about that Owen? [repeats Robert’s comment] I quite like that.	
Owen: Yes, because on the DVDs or on the films and the poems and stuff, it explains and you can see what it looks like, in wasteland, and you're both in trenches, but you wouldn't know what it was like to go ages without food or water.	Highlighting the relevance of the vast range of resources previously encountered by the class; using them to guide formulation of thinking, whilst critically acknowledging their limitations in answering the inquiry question.
Ricky: That's partially true, but you wouldn't know what it would be like to be shot by a bullet or be bombed or something. You wouldn't see what it looked like either.	
Felix: Every single person's experience with it would be different... Everybody's got different feelings towards the war... and you wouldn't know what anyone would have felt like, even if we were there, you would only know what you felt like.	Recognition of the relativist viewpoint that individuals bring their own conceptual frameworks, perspectives, experiences, recollections and feelings to bear, and they attribute salience or pertinence differently to aspects of a single, commonly experienced event.
Teacher: Yes, can we ever achieve a common understanding of anything?	T considers Felix’s point to be very important and in the review meeting subsequently proposes asking students what this is telling us about how people experience history or about whether we can in fact reach a common understanding of what happened in the past.