Surfing the past: digital learners in the history class

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In early April 2009 I met history teacher Antheun Janse at the 26th edition of the *Nationale Onderwijstentoonstelling* [National Education Exhibition, NOT] in Utrecht. To be precise, we met during a workshop hosted by *Noordhoff Uitgevers*, one of the leading Dutch educational publishing houses. The latter was introducing its new product under the name of *Geschiedenis i-Werkplaats* [History i-exercise book]. This i-exercise book was Web- and CD ROM-based, with exactly the same design as the printed version. The difference was that the i-exercise book was *interactive* – hence the *i* – as teachers and pupils could hyperlink to or from any part of the book, import pictures and do many other operations. Each of the participants introduced him- or herself, and it was then that I realised that Janse was a history teacher, interested in using new technologies and media in the history class. There was a degree of convergence in our interests. Mine was in knowing how he and his colleagues integrate the latest technologies in their classrooms, while his was in knowing what the latest technologies had to offer.

It was one of Janse’s classes at the *Baarnsch Lyceum* in Baarn that I observed one year later, from January to May 2010. I attended the class once, sometimes twice a week. In this chapter, I shall present the results of that field research. In the first place, I shall briefly place the class in its context, that is, situate it within the Dutch educational system, and describe the class and its pupils; then I shall present the results proper of my field research, organising them around the three points mentioned previously (see Chapter 4, Section 4.1), namely the attractiveness of the history class subsequent to the use of digital media and resources, how the latter fosters historical thinking, and the variety of sources that result from the use of digital media. The findings are analysed in Chapter 7.
5.1 The System, the Place, and the People

Every social situation can be identified by three primary elements: *a place, actors, and activities*. In doing participant observation you will locate yourself in some place; you will watch actors of one sort or another and become involved with them; you will observe and participate in activities. These primary elements do not exhaust the social and cultural meaning of social situations, but they do serve as a springboard into understanding them. Most important by focusing on a single situation you will greatly simplify the task of beginning your ethnographic research (Spradley, 1980: 39-40).

As suggested by Spradley (see epigraph), I shall briefly introduce my research environment via the *place-actors-activities* triangle. I shall start with the broader framework – the school – by placing it within the Dutch education system, before coming to the actors and finally to the activities in the last three sections. The class I observed had a name: B2D. The B stands for *brugklas*, literally ‘bridge class’, and stands for the intermediary cycle between primary school
and the upper cycle of secondary school; the 2 represents the second year of that lower cycle; and the D distinguishes that particular class from other parallel B2 classes. The school offers two sorts of education: hoger algemeen voortgezet onderwijs [general secondary education, HAVO]; and voorbereidend wetenschappelijk onderwijs [pre-university education, VWO], whereby the latter is subdivided into two types – the gymnasium offering Latin, Greek and Classical Arts; and the atheneum, which does not offer these classical courses. Thus, the pupils I observed were heading either toward a HAVO or a VWO upper cycle, both of which open the doors to higher education, either at a vocational college [in the case of HAVO] or at a university [in the case of VWO].

The pupils I observed were having history for a second consecutive year, with two 50-minute lessons a week. History is a compulsory discipline in the entire three-year lower cycle of HAVO/VWO schools. The law that provides for the organisation of the lower cycle, the Wet op het voortgezet onderwijs [Secondary Education Act, WVO], lists twelve goals that the Mens en Maatschappij [Mankind and Society] course – under which the history class [together with Civics, Geography, and Social Studies] falls – should strive to achieve. These goals can be divided into four categories: goals for social studies, for history, for civics and for geography. The goals of history classes are that pupils learn: [1] how to place events, people, and major developments within the framework of the ten historical eras (see Chapter 1), and to establish connections between past events and developments in the twentieth century; [2] how to identify the implications of the image [they have] of their locality, the Netherlands, Europe, and the world vis-à-vis their own environment; [3] how to use historical sources; [4] how to view current tensions and conflicts against their historical background. A few other goals, though meant for civics or Social Studies, are also relevant to the history classes. These include for instance the goal stipulating that [5] ‘pupils learn how to ask meaningful questions about social issues’ and how to take a critical stand about them. Another states that [6] pupils learn how to conduct a simple enquiry into current social issues. The remaining six goals relate to Geography and Civics.

In connection with the class I observed, I should first mention the fact that the Baarnsch Lyceum had an entire block reserved for history classes [at the time of my observation]. The very décor of

the block announced that these classes were exclusively dedicated to history: the outer facet of the main window of one of the classrooms in which B2D attended their history class was entirely covered with historical or cultural heritage posters. One poster of the Hollandsche Schouwburg, the Amsterdam-based theatre [1892–1942] that served as a deportation centre [1942–1943] during World War II and subsequently became a national monument in memory of the deportees, showed a black-and-white picture of the World War II deportees with the title: ‘Theater 1892–1942 – deportatieplaats 1942–1943 … Monument tentoonstelling’. Next to it, another poster of the Mauritshuis – a Hague-based arts museum – announced a Droom Uit Italië [Dreams from Italy] exhibition to be held between 11 March and 25 June 2006. Beside it was the poster of the Canon of the Netherlands, followed by two of the Allard Pierson Museum announcing, in both Dutch and English: ‘Objects for Eternity. Ancient Egyptian Treasures’; and ‘Crete, Cradle of Europe’. Though these four were imposing, they still left room for smaller posters. A similar impression was generated inside of the classroom: the same window was covered with historical maps showing not only local Dutch places, but also other parts of Europe and the world. The rest of the window was almost entirely covered with Canon of the Netherlands’ window posters, that is, posters for individual windows as well as other smaller posters. In the corner was a TV set and a showcase containing books, DVDs and a variety of old objects.

Having briefly described the physical environment in which I conducted my research, and having placed it within the educational system, I would now like to move to the second point in Spradley’s triangle: the actors. The B2D pupils were aged between 13 and 14 years, that is, the early years of adolescence (Steinberg, 1985: 6-7; Fine and Sandstrom, 1988: 11). The class had a total of 24 pupils: 13 girls and 11 boys. Pupils sat in pairs behind a single desk, girls next to girls and boys next to boys. The chairs and desks were arranged in three columns and four rows. The pupils, who all sat facing the blackboard, generally did not change their seats. The next three sections deal with the last aspect of the Spradley triangle: activities.
5.2 Attractiveness

... a particular medium can be described in terms of its capability to present certain representations and perform certain operations in interaction with learners who are similarly engaged in internally constructing representations and operating on these (Kozma, 1994: 10).

In this section, I shall focus on ways in which the Web appeared to make history lessons more lively and attractive for the pupils. The notion of ‘attractiveness’ as I use it refers to a state in which learners find themselves subsequent to certain external factors, and whereby they are inclined to undertake a certain action or behave in a certain way that shows interest and engagement. Such external factors are said to be attractive if they create pleasure, interest, concern, and en-
gagement. Attractiveness is first considered in situations whereby the teacher used the Web during class time, mostly as a source of Web-based historical videos. I shall also discuss pupils’ inclination to use their mobile phones during class time, especially when the teacher shifted from the Web to a textbook.

The lesson was about to start. Pupils were taking pens and text/note books out of their bags while chatting together about the latest sports or political news. Janse, the teacher, had already switched on the projector and his laptop computer. From a Microsoft Word document with his course plan showing ‘Rond de Gouden Eeuw’ (Around the Golden Century (1600–1700)), he clicked on a hyperlink to open a Canon of the Netherlands page dedicated to ‘Eise Eisinga 1744–1828. De Verlichting in Nederland’ [Eise Eisinga 1744–1828. The Enlightenment in the Netherlands]. On the right side of the window, he clicked on a thumbnail showing: ‘Canonclip voortgezet onderwijs’ [Canon clip for secondary education]. A new page opened, by which time the pupils were ready, although some noisy discussions were still going on, prompting the teacher to ask for silence every now and then. The noise finally stopped when Janse announced the film and asked the pupils to watch and take notes, drawing their attention to the concept of the Enlightenment, the age of Eise Eisinga, and on the latter’s achievements.

The video began, full-screen. A male voice began telling the story of Eise Eisinga. Pupils watched and took notes. ‘Since the Middle Ages, scientists had relied on the Bible and on the Church Fathers, but as of the 18th century, rationalism was emerging with the idea of enquiring into everything’. This is how the clip began. It went on: ‘The Friesland-born Eise Eisinga is a child of the Enlightenment’. The commentator then introduced and commented on the early works and achievements of Eisinga, including a book on arithmetic at the age of 15 and a planetarium showing the solar system hanging from the ceiling of his living room. He also commented on think-

157 John Dewey ([1916]1926: 148-149) conceptualised the notion of interest, which is close to attractiveness as I use it, in terms of absorption by the tasks in which one is engaged: ‘To be interested is to be absorbed in, wrapped up in, carried away by, some object. To take an interest is to be on the alert, to care about, to be attentive. We say of an interested person both that he has lost himself in some affair and that he has found himself in it. Both terms express the engrossment of the self in an object’.

158 The Canon of the Netherlands, ‘Eise Eisinga 1744-1828. De Verlichting in Nederland’. http://www.entoen.nu/eiseeisinga (Accessed 6 July 2010). Eise Eisinga was ‘an amateur astronomer who built a planetarium in his own home in Franeker (Friesland). Today this planetarium is recognised as the oldest in the world’ (Ibid.).

ers of the age of Enlightenment, Rousseau and Voltaire, while their pictures were shown. Towards the end of the clip, a black screen appeared with a question both in text and audio: ‘Science is rational while faith is emotional. Is the society in which we currently live rational or emotional?’

‘EMOTIONAL!’ the pupils called out loud in unison. The question was not being put to the pupils directly, but to two young girls and one boy who were being interviewed in the clip. They all said the society they lived in was more rational than emotional and explained why. These answers triggered discussions among the pupils, some of whom agreed, while others disagreed. Then there was another black screen and another text with a voice asking: ‘Are you [yourself] rational or emotional?’ This time, the class was divided. Some said ‘RATIONAL!’ and others maintained ‘EMOTIONAL!’ The teacher asked why the answer was now ‘rational’ for some while everyone had answered ‘emotional’ in reply to the first question. When this led to further discussions among the pupils with clearly conflicting views, the teacher asked each to write down their arguments on paper and submit their essays during the next session.

Janse asked the pupils for silence again as he wanted to replay the clip. Unlike the first time, he now pressed the pause button from time to time in order to make comments. When the commentator announced Eise Eisinga’s age, he paused and commented. He did it again when the clip reached the planetarium and the arithmetic book. He then paused on the pictures of Rousseau and Voltaire and commented on Liberty-Equality-Fraternity. All in all, the clip and related explanations lasted about 30 minutes. The teacher then moved to the next point. The laptop and the projector remained on, reflecting the Eise Eisinga page, but he made no further use of them.

‘Any questions about the assignment [from last time]?’ Janse asked. He was referring to the subjects he had handed out the previous week. The pupils were to deal with them in groups of two and submit their written assignments by the end of the period [in about six weeks’ time]. Topics related to the Golden Century (see Section 5.4). Pupils who had questions raised their hand and the teacher went to each of them. Noisy discussions erupted between pupils, some of which were close to arguments. Some pupils took out their iPhones and started browsing the Web or SMS-ing. A fight, or what nearly became a fight, broke out in one corner, as a result of which the teacher sent one boy out. Two of the boy’s classmates wanted to

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160 Original Dutch text: ‘Wetenschap is rationeel en geloof emotioneel. Leven wij nu in een rationele of emotionele samenleving?’

161 Original Dutch text: ‘Ben jij rationeel of emotioneel?’
follow him, but the teacher ordered them to stay. Even from outside, the boy kept up a disturbance on the other side of the door. Five minutes later Janse called the boy in, though the class was still as noisy and chaotic as it had been when he was sent out. A few minutes before the end of the lesson, the teacher returned to the front of the classroom and moved on to the last point on his agenda: how to write a good historical article. He showed the class a few examples that he considered to be exemplary. Almost all had titles that had most likely been edited with Microsoft Word Art, some in colours, and all contained more than one picture. The class was more or less silent again and all pupils’ eyes were directed at the screen and the teacher standing in front of it. He explained the function of the title, the introduction, the body, the conclusion, and footnotes, as well as how to cite sources and bibliographic references.

The above is a representative sketch of the 50-minute B2D history class during the period of my research. The large screen in front of the class and the moving or still images and texts it showed, as well as the sounds it emitted in combination with those images and texts, all supported by explanations and comments from the teacher, seemed to have the power to keep the pupils calm and – more importantly – attentive. The few minutes during which the teacher stopped using the screen culminated in chaos and a complete lack of concentration and interest on the part of the adolescents. There seemed to be a direct link between on the one hand, quietness, attention and concentration when digital media were used, and on the other hand, noisy discussions, quarrels and lack of attention when digital media were not used. For instance, on one occasion, when Janse shifted from the screen and Web-supported resources to the textbook, two pupils sitting beside me made a shift of their own. Their attention shifted from the large screen and the teacher to the small screen of their iPhones. The first, Rick, browsed to the Ajax football club website, while the other, Mike, browsed to Google.nl, probably to carry out a search. Their talk, though not noisy, went as follows:

- **Rick**: Ajax won yesterday
- **Mike**: I know.
- **Rick**: They will be champions
- **Mike**: No. I don’t think so.

[Then another pupil, Kaj, sitting at the desk in front of them, turned around to face the other two, wanting to glance at the screen on Rick’s iPhone]

162 None of the names attributed to pupils are their actual names.
**Case Study One: The Baarnsch Lyceum**

- *Rick:* Where is your iPhone?
- *Kaj:* My mother took it away.
- *Mike:* Wow! What did you do?
- *Kaj:* Nothing bad. I had a bad mark.

The teacher interrupted this talk when he saw Kaj with his back turned toward him. The two phones did not go further than under the covers of the textbooks Rick and Mike were pretending to read. I could see that other pupils were also busy with their phones either covertly or overtly, browsing the Web or something similar, with textbooks lying open on the table. In the meantime, other pupils, at the request of the teacher, were reading aloud from the textbook, paragraph for paragraph. Thus, two categories of activities were going on simultaneously: on the one hand textbook reading and related explanations, and, on the other hand, private activities, most of which centred around the iPhone, *e.g.* Web browsing, gaming, *etc.* This schedule of digital media and resources, textbook reading followed by teacher's explanation and group or individual assignment, was the one used most frequently during the period of my field research. The order in which the activities took place varied. However, two other schedules were noted: one with no digital media being used at all, and one – rare – comprising nothing but the use of digital media.

On some occasions, thus, Janse used no digital media at all, the whole lesson long. Generally, such lessons were far from quiet. It was no easy task getting the pupils to stop their discussions after they had entered the classroom, as they seemed oblivious of the teacher’s injunctions. When the pupils became quiet, it would not take long before their attention shifted away from the blackboard or textbook to their iPhones, either for messaging or Web-browsing. On one such occasion, on 3 March 2010, the teacher announced right from the start that he would not be using a projector or computer. He announced: ‘Today, we’re going to deal with current affairs [actualiteit].’ Municipal elections were taking place on that day. Indeed, even as they entered the classroom, the pupils were commenting on the previous night’s TV-debate between political leaders that had been held at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. The teacher somehow managed to pick up on their discussions. According to the agenda, however, the lesson was supposed to be about ‘Louis XIV, an absolute monarch’. Janse explained to the quieter pupils that ‘elections are all about power … who has or wants to have power’. He then asked: Who currently has power [in the Netherlands]? The question
was not fortuitous, as Prime Minister Jan-Peter Balkenende and his coalition cabinet had resigned in February. ‘Is it Balkenende?’ he asked. Some said ‘yes’ while others said ‘no’. One girl, who belonged to the former group, argued that the prime ministry as an institution has power. A boy from the latter group counter-argued that the lower chamber of the parliament [the House of Representatives] had power. Yet another said that the Queen had the most power.

After 30 minutes spent discussing this ‘news’, the teacher asked the pupils to open their textbooks on the page about Louis XIV, explaining that ‘Elections such as those we have today have a history’, even in the reign of Louis XIV, a history that was marked by internal fights between Prime Minister Mazarin and the knights. Then the paragraph-for-paragraph reading began, interrupted by comments and explanations. However, one boy beside me preferred to take out his iPhone and browse to the website of *de Volkskrant*, a daily newspaper, which had regular postings of updates and pictures of the election.163 This lesson, which ended with an assignment on ‘who has power?’, ‘the Queen’s powers’, and ‘the relationship between citizens and leaders from a historical perspective’, was generally quiet, as pupils seemed to be engaged, though some did shift to their digital gadgets towards the end of the lesson. This concentration and attention could be explained by the fact that the teacher’s approach was based on a ‘hot’, highly mediatised subject, one that the pupils had clearly followed with keen interest.

On another occasion, Janse started his lesson by handing out previously written assignments that he had marked. After a few comments on them, he asked the pupils to choose between a historical film on the Golden Century and group-work on an assignment using laptops. 18 pupils raised their hands in favour of the laptops, while 2 wanted to watch the film. 4 abstained. In the meantime, questions arose. One was: ‘Can we do both?’ [film and assignments on laptops]. Another was: ‘Can we work with iPhones [instead of laptops] Sir?’ The teacher rejected both suggestions and went out to fetch the laptops. When the laptops had been distributed, one laptop per two pupils, the pupils started attempting to get them connected to the school’s wireless network. All their attempts failed. A message on the screen persistently asked them to be patient but they could not wait longer than five minutes. ‘Do you have internet?’ one pupil at the front asked. ‘No!’ replied another. Yet another said: ‘Yes, I have it, but on my iPhone’. Pupils’ reactions to this technical failure were of three sorts. Some, especially the girls, gave up trying

163 The pupil was on this page: 
http://www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/article1354944.ece/Lokale_themas_ondergesneeuwd
to connect to the network and opened Microsoft Word to work on their assignments, though they could not check their Web-based resources. One pair had a USB stick containing their work. Others, especially the boys, persisted in their efforts to get connected. While some – two pairs – took their laptops out into the corridor, nearer to the network antenna, others started working on the network settings in an effort to get connected. Both attempts did not deliver any results. The last response was simply to shift from the laptop to the iPhone, for which connecting to the network was not an issue, as the iPhone did not depend on the school’s inefficient network. I should say that, in the end, most pupils spent their time either attempting to connect to the Internet or using iPhones to navigate the Web on subjects not necessarily related to their assignments. Only a few had taken advantage of the limited off-line advantages offered by the laptop computers. As all them were involved in an activity they seemed to enjoy, the class was quiet.

Similarly to other schools in the country, the *Baarnsch Lyceum’s* computer room got connected to the Internet in the early 2000s, but the connection was not extended to reach the classrooms until 2007. In that same year the school received laptop computers and projectors. However, Internet connectivity remained poor in the block reserved for history classes. Unlike that block, the computer room had a faster connection, but this room was always overbooked.\(^{164}\) Janse’s three colleagues with whom I spoke had renounced using Web-based resources, all blaming their decision on the Internet connectivity issue.\(^{165}\) As for Janse, he said that, unlike other historical websites, the one of the Canon of the Netherlands website loaded faster, especially videos, which explains his preference for the Canon clips.

\(^{164}\) Author interview with Antheun Janse, history teacher at the *Baarnsch Lyceum* (Baarn, 28 January 2010).

\(^{165}\) Andrea Koomen, who taught a HAVO class of 15- to 16-year olds, told me on 8 March 2010 that she never used the computer during her lesson for a number of reasons, including uncertain Internet connectivity.
Finally, at about eleven to twelve years of age, there begins a fourth and final period of which the plateau of equilibrium coincides with adolescence. This period is characterized in general by the conquest of a new mode of reasoning, one that is no longer limited exclusively to dealing with objects or directly representable realities, but also employs ‘hypotheses’, in other words, propositions from which it is possible to draw logical conclusions without it being necessary to make decisions about their truth or falsity before examining the result of their implications (Piaget, [1969] 1971: 30-33).

In this section, I describe the way in which the historical thinking of B2D pupils manifested itself both through class interactions [among pupils, with the teacher or with digital media] and through
their written assignments. As briefly explained in Chapter 4 (Section 4.1), the notion of historical thinking I use relates more to adolescent thinking than to expert thinking. In this respect, any sign indicating that a pupil has gone beyond the surface message to make some relevant associations, comparisons, inductions or deductions, is interpreted as a manifestation of some form of historical thinking. In what follows, I shall first consider ‘live’ situations, that is, those that happened while a lesson was in progress. They include answers to the teacher’s questions and spontaneous, Web-prompted verbal and gestural reactions. I will then look at forms of historical thinking as reflected through written assignments.

One day in January the pupils were entering the classroom while their history teacher, Janse, was preparing the large screen and the laptop computer. When both the pupils and he were ready to start the lesson, he asked a question: ‘What does water have to do with the Golden Century?’ While the pupils were still thinking, he went on to say: ‘before answering, let’s watch a clip from the Canon’. He asked them to take notes, taking into account five aspects that their final written assignments must also take into account: economic, political, scientific, social, and cultural aspects.

The Canon clip on the Beemster166 then started. A male voice spoke while pictures, including animations, were showing on the screen. Against a backdrop of old maps, the voice announced: ‘Four centuries ago the Beemster Lake was drained using windmills. [More] Land was needed for food supplies for Amsterdam’.167 Most pupils were already writing in their notebooks. At this precise moment, Dirk, the pupil beside me, wrote the following: ‘Economie: boeren gaan voedsel verkopen’ [Economy: farmers will sell foodstuffs]. Next to him, Stan wrote: ‘politieke beslissing droogmaken’ [draining the lake was a political decision]. The clip went on, giving the details of the 1612 project: 38 km-long dike to hold the water, 43 windmills to drain the lake, etc. At a certain moment, the commentator said that ‘the Beemster project was conducted following a mathematical schema’.168 This time too, almost all the pupils wrote something down. Dirk and Stan wrote respectively: ‘wetenschappen’ [sciences] and ‘Wiskunde = wetenschap’ [Mathematics = science]. While the video depicted ancient Greek vases, the commentator suggested that the resulting geometrical forms were similar to those on the Greek vases. He further indicated that the draining of the Beemster had a

167 Original Dutch text: ‘Vier eeuwen geleden werd de Beemster meer leeggemalen. Er was land nodig voor de voedsel voorziening van Amsterdam’.
168 Original Dutch text: ‘De Beemster is volgens een wiskundig patroon aangelegd’.
big impact both inside and outside Europe. This time, a few pupils, including my two neighbours, jotted something down in their notebooks. Dirk wrote: ‘VOC???,’[169] while Stan wrote: ‘handel–economie’ [commerce–economy]. The clip mentioned that the Beemster is on the UNESCO World Heritage list and ended with questions and responses regarding the preservation of cultural heritage sites.

At the end of the film the teacher repeated his initial question about the role of water during the Golden Century, narrowing it down to each of the five aspects. ‘Who noted something about the economy?’ he asked. Five pupils raised their hands. ‘The land obtained after draining led to an increase in agricultural production and thus to a growth in the economy’, said Jennie. The teacher acquiesced. A few desks away from her, Tess added: ‘I think that the draining meant the end of a fishing-based economy in the area’. The teacher approved, smiling. The teacher then remarked: ‘But there is still one other important economic aspect’. As he did not receive a quick answer, he said: ‘The draining led to greater specialisation in agriculture and cattle-rearing. This specialisation resulted in a higher productivity and ultimately in exporting the surplus in products’. Dirk promptly and excitedly said: ‘Yes! I noted it! The VOC!’ The teacher acquiesced and moved to the scientific aspect. Braham, sitting at the front, said: ‘The drainage took place according to a mathematical plan’. Niels added: ‘To make windmills powerful enough to drain a lake also involved scientific knowledge’. The teacher acquiesced in response to both answers.

During the 30 minutes that the clip and related exercises lasted, it was easy to notice how the pupils made quick associations between the clip and other prior knowledge they had, and how these associations were guided by the teacher’s initial remarks. The teacher’s emphasis on the five aspects was a way of telling the pupils that they should go beyond the clip and place it in a broader context. The ideas that the statements and images in the clip brought to the mind of each pupil were different, depending on which perception was prompted by the thinking process. For instance, the statement ‘Four centuries ago the Beemster Lake was drained using windmills. [More] Land was needed for food supplies for Amsterdam’ drew the pupils’ attention in at least four different ways: Jennie perceived economy in it, as farmers would have more land and produce more food items which they could sell in Amsterdam; Stan perceived politics in it, as such an important, nature-transforming decision could but emanate from political authorities; Dirk, Stan and Niels per-

169 VOC stands for Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, the Dutch East India Company that was founded in 1602 and was involved in commercial activities between the Netherlands and Asia until around 1800.
ceived science in it, as envisaging such a complex project required technical and scientific knowledge both in making windmills and in placing them in strategic places to get the best out of them. As for Tess, she looked at it from the social perspective, since draining the lake implied changes in the social status of fishermen and their communities.

On another occasion in April, the teacher spent almost half of the lesson time [about 25 minutes] playing a clip on the ‘Patriots’ [1780–1795] from the school-tv database and which has been integrated into the Canon page on the Patriots (See the vignette at the beginning of the book’s introduction). A female voice briefly sketched how the Republic was governed and how State Holder William V emerged as an authoritarian leader. Though the clip started playing while the pupils were still talking noisily, after 10 to 15 seconds they had settled down and were listening silently. At one point, the commentator mentioned the citizens’ complaints about their leader: ‘Moreover, the State Holder acts as if he were a king.’ At this moment, Braham, sitting two desks in front of me, said [to himself]: ‘Guillotine’. Then, the commentator mentioned the pamphlets that angry citizens, the Patriots, were distributing to express their opposition to William V. Quoting one of them written by Joan Derk van der Capellen [1741–1784], the commentator said: ‘The State Holder controls the army, that is why the citizens have no power. They cannot undertake anything against William V. He can do whatever he wants’ [Italicisation is mine].

As soon as the italicised passage was pronounced, Braham spontaneously said [to himself again]: ‘Echt niet!’ [No way!, meaning, ‘that is impossible, unacceptable!’]. He completed his response with a revealing gesture: with his right hand, he turned his fingers into a pistol – the index and middle finger forming the barrel and the ring finger and pink the grip – and ‘shot’ himself in the side of his head (see Figure 5.3). This verbal and gestural reaction shows that Braham had processed the information conveyed by the clip, weighed it against his prior knowledge about the French Revolution [where the Guillotine was first used] and, in a fraction of a second, had come to a conclusion: William V – who behaved like the Ancien Régime aristocracy – deserved, like that aristocracy, the Guillotine or, at least, a shot in the head.

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171 Dutch original text: ‘Bovendien doet de Stadhouder als hij de koning is’.
172 Original Dutch Text: ‘De stadhouder heeft de leiding over het leger, daarom hebben de burgers geen macht. Ze kunnen niets beginnen tegen Willem V. Hij kan doen wat hij wil’.
This association, together with those mentioned in previous examples, resulted from a *thinking* process in which at least four factors came into play: a medium that kept the learner engaged (see previous section), proper guidance from the teacher [on which aspects notes should be taken] and prior knowledge from which learners make associations. It seems that the first factor — a medium that kept the learner engaged — played the most decisive role, since learning and thinking begin when the learner’s attention is captured (see Chapter 7).

Similar implications could be detected from the written assignments, though use was made of various media, particularly the Web and books. This fact made it difficult to assess which analogue or digital resources led to which thinking process. In other cases, both book and Web sources were mentioned, which made it difficult to distinguish the role of the Web in the entire thinking process. As I was solely concerned with Web resources, I considered only instances in which it clearly appeared that pupils’ historical thinking was backed with, or based on, Web resources. Before considering these texts, I should first mention how they came into being. At the start of the lesson period in January 2010, the teacher made a list of broad topics relating to the Golden Century [1600–1700] and revolving around the five above-mentioned aspects. Each pupil downloaded from the school’s intranet [internal network] a two-page document of instructions. The document was entitled:

Assignment to write an article about one development in ‘The Netherlands during the 17th century’, the period also known as ‘The Golden Century’. The informative character of the article should be enriched with relevant illustrations and suitable captions.\(^\text{173}\)

The teacher’s instructions also indicated that the pupils must form pairs according to their own affinities. They were also told that it was *mandatory* [verplicht] to use at least four sorts of books and at least five sorts of websites as sources (see next section). The document also explained, among other things, how pupils should cite their sources. In the following text analysis, I consider only the passages in which Web sources were clearly used to back the pupils’ historical thinking.

\(^{173}\) Original Dutch text: ‘Opdracht tot het schrijven van een artikel over een ontwikkeling uit ‘De Nederlanden in de 17e eeuw’, welke periode ook bekend staat als ‘De Gouden Eeuw’. Het informatieve karakter van het artikel dient te worden vergroot aan de hand van enkele relevante illustraties met passend bijschrift’. 

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One pair decided to explore the scientific aspect by working on “Gouden” wetsenschap [“Golden” science], focusing on mathematician and astronomer Christiaan Huygens [1629–1695], philosopher Benedictus Spinoza [1632–1677] and self-taught astronomer Eise Eisinga [1744–1828]. Their first page, which focused on Huygens mentioned two sources: the Canon’s page on Huygens, and the Dutch Wikipedia page on the same scientist which they mistook for the Canon page (see Figure 5.4 below). In other words, no other reference or source was used on this page apart from the above-mentioned Web-pages. The page has 40 lines, with a picture of Huygens without a caption but probably taken from the Wikipedia page on Huygens where the same picture can be found. The first 9 lines contain a general introduction to the assignment, followed by a short introduction to the section on Huygens. Then follows a 9-line quotation from Wikipedia [mistakenly referenced as a Canon page]. The next 12 lines discuss Huygens’ education and how his...
ambitions conflicted with his father’s plans. The last 10 lines of this page contain two short quotations from – and a short paraphrasing of – the Canon page, all of which relate to Huygens’ admiration of René Descartes, and about his own discoveries in mathematics, physics, and clock making.

On this all-Web inspired page, the first instance of historical thinking manifests itself in the following reasoning: the pair explained Huygens’ work and discoveries by placing them in the broader historical concept of the Scientific Revolution, of which Descartes was a part. Like him, they wrote, quoting the Canon, ‘he constantly observed, experimented, and monitored’. Half of the second page contains some quotations about Huygens’ Pendulum Clock [Wikipedia] and another [from a book] on Galileo’s astronomical discoveries, and how these served as the basis for Huygens’ subsequent discoveries. Providing the basis on which Huygens built his own work might be called another instance of historical thinking. In other words, of all scientific discoveries made prior to Huygens’, the pair chose those by Galileo as the most influential on Huygens’ own work. However, this historical thinking appears mostly to consist of collecting quotations from Web resources. It is the reasoning behind the choice of often lengthy quotations and the order in which they are placed that show that the pair made an attempt to think historically. Their efforts consisted not in commenting on the associations they highlighted, but in juxtaposing them by using three successive quotations from the above-mentioned sources.

Another pair explored the cultural aspect as reflected by ‘Rembrandt, de Atlas Major van Blaeu, de Statenbijbel’ [Rembrandt, Blaeu’s Atlas Major, the Authorised Dutch version of the Bible]. The two pages on Rembrandt contain 33 lines of text (first page), including an embedded picture of the Night Watch [1639–1642]; and, on the second page, five self-portraits, the Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp [1632] and The Jewish Bride [1664]. The pair cited three Web-pages used for the text: one from infonu.nl [177] and two from scholieren.com. [178] In this all-Web referenced text, not a single instance of historical thinking could be detected: the first 11 lines discuss Rembrandt’s birth and family life; the following 8 lines are a quotation from infonu.nl; the last 14 lines describe the Night Watch.

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176 Book reference as presented by the pair: S. McKeever, F. Martyn (e.a), Wetenschap voor de jeugd.Baan: Bosch en Keuning, 1994 (pag.291).
as the most famous of Rembrandt’s work [4 lines] and end with a
10-line quotation from scholieren.com. All in all, the text does not
contain a single historical, or cultural concept. The pair stuck to the
Web resources that they consulted and from which they quoted at
length.

The section on Blaeu’s Atlas Major (see Figure 5.5) follows the
same model to some extent: embedded picture of the Atlas; an en-
tire page with five pictures of the Atlas; and lengthy quotations from
Web-pages. The pair added a page with a cartoon. The text is 35
lines long. The introduction is a 7-line quotation from historische-

Figure 5.5: Extract from a written class assignment on culture in the Golden Century.
just after this, there is another 15-line quotation from cultuurwijzer.nl; this is followed, without any transition, by yet another 11-line quotation from schooltv.nl; the 3-line conclusion, the only text that is not [presented as] a quotation and which thus presumably emanated directly from the pair, informs one that: ‘People in those days had a lot of information, as they had actually experienced the situations themselves. Only wealthy people could actually afford this special Atlas’. This could be called an instance of historical thinking, as the pupils attempted [rightly] to link the concept of access to knowledge to people’s social and economic status.

The same subject was handled by another pair. The difference between the two is the number of quotations used and their length. This pair used four references, all Web-based, for the section on the Statenbijbel. These sources included the digitised Statenbijbel on the website of the Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap [the Dutch Bible Society] and the website of the Statenvertaling [Dutch Authorised Version]. Their three-page, non-illustrated document presents at least two clear instances of historical thinking: at one point, the pair drew an analogy between developments in the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands and those taking place in England. The pair pointed out that the 1618 Dordrecht Synod wanted to have an equivalent of the King James Version [1611] of the Bible. At another point, the pair assessed the significance of the Statenbijbel for the Dutch language and politics. They suggested that the linguistic rigour that marked the translation paved the way for the Standard Dutch that had emerged since the 17th century. They also mentioned the emergence of new expressions and the integration into Standard Dutch of certain grammatical structures originating from regional dialects. In this respect, historical thinking manifests itself in the way the pair began with a Dutch historical event and highlighted analogies with developments in a foreign country as well

as establishing a cause-and-effect relationship between that event and subsequent linguistic developments.

Dealing with the same subject – the *Statenbijbel* – in a 46-line text that made use of Web sources only [four], another pair relied on a lengthy quotation from *Nederlands Online* [Dutch Online], a website of the *Institut für Deutsche und Niederländische Philologie* [Institute for German and Dutch Philology] of the *Freie Universität Berlin*. The 16-line quotation shows the pair’s intention to consider the relationship between the *Statenbijbel* and the Dutch language from a different perspective than that used by the previous pair. The selected quotation draws attention to the view of the general public *vis-à-vis* their language: among other things, it was old-fashioned, with complicated sentence construction.

Yet another pair chose to study economic and political aspects and they framed their subjects as follows: ‘*De Gouden Eeuw: economie en politiek*’ [The Golden Century: the Economy and Politics]. They focused on the Dutch East India Company [VOC], the Hanseatic League [1356–ca 1450] and Slavery. The section on the VOC starts, on the title page, with a picture of a ship in the middle of a storm. The next three pages, two of which each contain a single picture, are extensively hyperlinked, which suggests two things: firstly, that the pair mostly used Web resources; secondly, that their use could have consisted of copying and pasting chunks of text from the Web-pages they consulted and then modifying them.\(^{185}\)

In one 8-line paragraph, they discussed competition [concurrerend], which they hyperlinked, and the 1602 [political] decision of ‘the States General, the government of that time’ to found the VOC, which is also hyperlinked (see Figure 5.6). In this all-Web inspired paragraph, the pair linked the foundation of the VOC to a prevailing phenomenon – competition between individual Dutch traders and small-scale companies, and explained that the States General’s decision was a consequence of that fruitless competition. To arrive at this cause-and-effect reasoning, the pair used resources from scholi-
eren.com, the Canon and Wikipedia. In another paragraph on the organisation of the VOC, the pair discussed the birth of share-holding, a practice introduced by the VOC in order to raise funds to build new ships and meet other obligations. They drew a comparison between then and now: ‘Nowadays thousands of companies sell shares, but in the 17th century that phenomenon was new, the VOC was the first to do that’. These two paragraphs show that one of the ways in which the pair made their points, mainly based on concepts such as competition and share-holding, was by placing them in their contexts. The use of many hyperlinks and of three Web sources sug-

188 Wikipedia, ‘Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie’.
suggests that the thinking processes of the pupils were greatly influenced by Web resources.

My aim in this section was to show the different manifestations of historical thinking both during the lesson and via written class assignments. In the first place, it appears that attention-capturing Web resources, especially those that combine audio and visual features, accompanied by some guidance by the teacher, helped to trigger historical thinking. In the second place, the few examples I discussed, which are representative of the 13 assignments, could be summarised as follows: firstly, in more than 50 percent [8 out of 13] of the assignments, attempts at historical thinking consisted of selecting and compiling lengthy quotations deemed relevant to the topic, with very little input from the pair; secondly, attempts at historical thinking resided in the input of pairs, most likely inspired by, and certainly backed up with, relatively short quotations from the Web [3 assignments, one of which contained some paraphrasing]; thirdly, no attempt at historical thinking was made despite the use of Web resources [1 assignment was a perfect pasted copy of Webpages]. The next section discusses the sources pupils used for their written assignments.

Figure 5.7: B2D pupils working on their assignment on the Golden Century (Photo: O.N., 2 February 2010).
5.4 Sources

... and in any case it is a necessary part of education that one should acquire the ability to supplement the narrowness of his immediately personal experiences by utilizing the experiences of others. Excessive reliance upon others for data (whether got from reading or listening) is to be depreciated. Most objectionable of all is the probability that others, the book or the teacher, will supply solutions ready-made, instead of giving material that the student has to adapt and apply to the question in hand for himself (Dewey, [1916] 1926: 185).

The document containing instructions on the ‘Assignment to write an article about one development in “The Netherlands in the 17th century”…’ was very clear on sources the pupils were to use. It was mandatory to use at least four sorts of books, and at least five sorts of websites. Within the category ‘books’, pupils must use [1] a textbook to check ‘aspects’, ‘major lines’ and some ‘details’; [2] a general Dutch history book; [3] an encyclopaedia for specific concepts, figures, and situations; and [4] a specific book on ‘your main subject’. In the ‘Web’ category, they must use [1] specific [Canon] ‘windows’ and similar windows from [2] other ‘canon sites’, including regional canon websites; [3] a website of choice with an overview of Dutch history; [4] Wikipedia for specific concepts, figures, and situations; and [5] online exercises/educational websites, for instance, www.scho-lieren.com [werkwijzen = projects]. In addition to this document, the teacher frequently returned to sources and discussed how to assess them. On one occasion he provided the pupils with – and commented on – a four-point checklist: 1. Is the source usable or relevant for my research? 2. Is it representative? 3. Is it reliable? 4. Does it reflect facts or is it an interpretation? In this section I shall scrutinise the Web-based sources used by the B2D pupils for their written assignments. I shall describe the main types and their uses.

The previous section revealed, among other things, the frequency with which lengthy quotes were used. For instance, one piece of text on the Statenbijbel, 46 lines long, contains a 4-line introduction as well as four lengthy quotations [respectively 11, 9, 5, and 16 lines long], all of which were obtained from Web-pages. This 100 percent Web-sourced assignment resulted in a text consisting for about 91 percent of quotation saturation. Another piece of text on ‘Politiek in de Gouden Eeuw’ [Politics in the Golden Century], 41 lines long, included a 6-line introduction followed by three lengthy, uninterrupted [i.e.: with no transition or comment] quotations, two of which were from websites [18 and 10 lines respectively], the other one [7 lines] having been taken from a print-based encyclopaedia. In other words, this pair had used about 67 percent Web sources and
about 33 percent print sources, which resulted in a text comprised for about 15 percent of non-quotation text, 68 percent of Web-sourced quotations and 17 percent of print-sourced quotations. In at least 8 of the 13 cases, the pupils had used Web sources mainly to obtain lengthy quotations for their assignments.

A phenomenon closely related to the use of lengthy quotations is what I shall call ‘ripping’, which is usually used to refer to copying images or sound files from one electronic carrier [generally streaming media on DVD or the Web] to a computer drive. It involves copying an entire file, which is not the case for copy-pasting. The latter – copy-pasting – was used to refer to the above-mentioned quotations and this does not imply that entire Web-pages were copied. Of the 13 group assignments, one was a case of perfect ripping from five Web-pages – 3 from the Canon, 1 from Wikipedia and 1 from scholieren.com. In this case, the pair had used 100 percent Web sources and the result was 100 percent transferral of text from the Web onto paper.

The second most important use of the Web for the subjects of the written class assignments consisted of copying images, including pictures, charts and maps. All pairs except one (Pair 13 in Table 5.1) used images. Though all [twelve] of the remaining pairs used

Figure 5.8: Title page of one written class assignment [left] and extract from another [right].
images from the Web, two pairs added scanned images from print documents [books and newspapers] and used them alongside Web-sourced images. I should also add that the twelve pairs had different ways of using images. While some used them soberly, others used as many as they could. For example, one pair used only 3 Web-sourced images for a 5-page document, while another pair used 37 images [32 from the Web and 5 scans] for a final document that was 24 pages long. On the title page alone, 17 images were used to cover the entire page. Yet another pair produced a 12-page document containing 14 Web-sourced images.

Pupils also used Web sources to structure and frame their assignments, often paraphrasing contents they had found on Web-pages. One pair working on the VOC used four Web sources – *voc-kenniscentrum.nl* [a website that is a project of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies], *scholieren.com*, *scholieren.samevattingen.com*, and the *vocsite.nl* – and one book.\(^{189}\) The text on the two first pages is structured as follows: the title – *De VOC* and three sub-titles – *Oprichting* [Foundation], *Octrooi* [Patent], and *De organisatiestructuur van de VOC* [VOC Organisational structure]. One of the websites cited\(^ {190}\) shows a text with the following structure: the title, *Oprichting, Organisatie en Ondergang van de VOC* [Foundation, Organisation and Fall of the VOC], followed by three paragraphs on the background that led to the foundation of the VOC, one paragraph on the organisation of the VOC and a final paragraph on the VOC’s Patent. Though the similarity between the two structures is very striking, this does not imply that this pair had ripped or copy-pasted from that site. Instead, the pair had paraphrased from other websites. For instance, citing – though not quoting from – two sources,\(^ {191}\) the pair used their own words to discuss the VOC’s patent and thus formed a new, original text that had been inspired by the two Web-pages.

This kind of paraphrasing of texts could be seen in five assignments. Four of them had one important feature in common: the relatively large number of books used. The first pair cited 6 Web-pages and 3 books and wrote a document that contained almost no quotations. The second cited 5 Web-pages and 3 books and contained a


mixture of long quotations, all Web-sourced, and some paraphrasing. The third cited 1 website – in their document of 32 pages, all of which referred to the *Geheugen van Nederland*’s image files – and 8 books (see Pair 3 in Table 5.1). Their text did not contain a single quotation. The fourth pair cited 3 Web-pages and 6 books and contained a few short quotations and many instances of paraphrasing. In these four cases, the greater the number of books used, the greater the extent to which paraphrasing was used and, thus, the fewer quotations there were and the shorter their length. The last case is one pair’s assignment in which 22 Web-pages and 1 book were cited. It contained more instances of paraphrasing than those that contained long quotations. The table below gives an overview of the uses of Web and print sources, as well as indicating instances of using long and short quotations and the predominance of paraphrasing and ripping:

**Table 5.1: Uses of Web and print sources for class written assignments**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web Sources</th>
<th>Printed Sources</th>
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<td>No. of Sources</td>
<td>Quotation predominance</td>
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<td>Pair 13</td>
<td>6</td>
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Note: Pair 3 mentioned the *Geheugen van Nederland* as the source of 32 images they used.

The predominance of [long or short] quotations or of paraphrasing, as reflected in Table 5.1, does not refer to their exclusiveness. However, combinations show that paraphrasing predominates where long quotations are absent and *vice versa*, while ripping [Pair 13] excludes every other possibility. Three major points emerge from this
surfing the past

table: in the first place, images taken from the Web appear to be omnipresent in all assignments but one, while scans that originated from print media are scarce. This might be explained by the fact that obtaining a scan from the page of a book is a complex, multi-step process, including locating the book, borrowing it [if it is available for loan and if it has not already been loaned out], identifying the relevant page(s), finding a scanner and finally making the scan. The process needs to be repeated for every print-based source. Secondly, many cells in the Print Sources column are empty, which leaves the question about the use of print sources unanswered. Though this falls beyond the scope of this research, I feel that this is due to the ambiguity surrounding the ways in which pupils cited their print-based sources. In many cases, book references were given at the end of the text, but no in-text references were provided to indicate how the source had been used, or where. In most cases involving the use of Web sources, references were presented either in footnotes or endnotes, making it easier to detect where and how they had been used.

Thirdly, there are clearly more long quotations and cases of ripping in the Web Sources column than in the Printed Sources column, where not a single long quotation is noted. This could be explained by the fact that it is easy to search a Web-page and to copy-paste words, sentences, paragraphs, or entire pages into an assignment, while from a printed source this would entail not only physically finding the text in the book, but also retyping it into the assignment. Once, following a remark the teacher made to one pair about the fact that they had neglected to use other sources than websites, I asked one of these two pupils about the reason why they had restricted themselves to using only the Canon and Wikipedia. Her answer was: ‘I find it irritating to have to go to the library when I can find everything on the Internet’. She added: ‘But since it is compulsory, I shall do it’. Her assignment classmate intervened to add: ‘Look! All of us are working on [similar subjects from] the Middle Ages and you cannot be sure of finding the book you are looking for [because other classmates need that same book too]’. Another pupil was busy browsing in a bulky book entitled De chroniek van de mensheid [The Chronicles of Humanity]. I asked him how he was enjoying the book and his response was: ‘I found information about the three scientists [Huygens, Eisinga, and Spinoza], but it was stupid information [domme informatie]. I have forgotten everything [that I’ve read]’. This pupil formed half of Pair 13 from Table 5.1. That pair had not used a single book and simply ripped the Canon and Wikipedia pages for information on the three scientists. The ‘stupidity’ of the information in the book might then be interpreted as...
its refusal to submit itself to the pupil’s will. In other words, in all probability the information was regarded as ‘stupid’ because the pupil could not easily copy or rip it into his assignment.

The next point I want to discuss is the types of Web sources pupils used for their written assignments. In general the Web sources used by the pupils of class B2D can be divided into eleven categories: 1. *Canons*, both the Canon of the Netherlands and the regional canons; 2. *Wikipedia*; 3. *Educational sites*; 4. *Heritage sites* including both those of heritage institutions and those of other non-heritage organisations; 5. *Commercial sites*; 6. *Personal or family sites*; 7. *Blogs*; 8. *General information sites*; 9. *Religious sites*; 10. *Academic sites*, i.e., those maintained by academic research institutes and which contain contents emanating from those institutes; and 11. *Newspaper sites*. Of all these categories, Wikipedia and the Canon appear *ex aequo* to have been used with the greatest frequency, as 11 of 13 pairs cited them or used material from both of them on at least one occasion.

As shown in Table 5.2, Pair 6 cited Wikipedia 9 times and the Canon 4 times. Pair 9 cited the Canon 5 times and Wikipedia twice. The regional canons were cited only five times by four pairs. Pair 9 cited the *Grachtengordel* [the canal ring area of Amsterdam] page of *canon.amsterdam.nl*, while Pair 7 cited the *Utrechse canons* [Canons of Utrecht], in particular its sub-regional component – the *Canon van Eemland* [Canon of Eemland].

192 Sources relating to the remain-

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ing nine categories were not used as frequently. For instance, only six pairs cited sources from educational websites. These include websites such as schooltv.nl, scholieren.com, scholieren.samenvatting.com, which clearly state that pupils are their target audience. Next come the websites of heritage institutions [museums, archives, etc.] that were cited on a single occasion by five pairs. In this respect, Pair 11 quoted from a text found on the Statenbijbel page\(^\text{193}\) of hetutrechtstarchief.nl [the Utrecht Archives], which, apart from containing the archives of the city and the province of Utrecht, also serves as ‘the national centre for ecclesiastical archives and the Dutch Railways’ [Italicisation is mine]. There were also six pairs that used resources from other heritage sites, \(i.e.,\) those maintained by non-heritage institutions. The latter sub-category includes, for instance, voc-kenniscentrum.nl, a project initiated [and maintained] by the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies [KITLV] in 2002 on the occasion of the 400-year jubilee of the VOC foundation. This sub-category also includes Bijbelsdigitaal.nl, a digitisation project of the Dutch Bible Society, and historische-cartografie.nl, a website owned and maintained by the Studiekring Historische Cartografie [Historical Cartography Study Group].

The next category of cited Web sources consists of personal or family websites. Five pairs had recourse to these for their assignments. For instance, Pair 1 cited vocsite.nl and bertsgeschiedenissite.nl, owned and maintained by respectively Jaap van Overbeek and someone else who introduces himself simply as Bert.\(^\text{194}\) Two other pairs [5 and 7] whose assignments were about, among other things, the Statenbijbel, used resources from statenvertaling.net, a personal initiative of Ronald Klip.\(^\text{195}\) Similarly, for their section on Amsterdam’s Grachtengordel, Pair 9 cited klaasschoof.com, a photo site owned and maintained by a man named Klaas Schoof.\(^\text{196}\) In their assignments on politics in the Golden Century, Pair 12 even cited Engelfriet.net, a genealogical family site,\(^\text{197}\) specifically the section on lawyer


\(^{195}\) In an e-mail exchange with the author, Ronald Klip – the initiator and owner of the site – wrote: ‘The website is my personal initiative. I realised in 1999 that the text [of the Statenbijbel] should be available online because of its importance to the Dutch cultural history. Shortly after this, art works were added: [with the aim of] providing information about the paintings and, where possible, establishing a [hyper-]link with the corresponding passage in the [Statenbijbel] text’ (16 July 2010).


Hugo de Groot [1583–1645]. Closely related to personal sites are blogs, a category cited once by Pair 6, who used a picture that came from 1.bp.blogspot.com. Commercial and general information websites were mentioned by two pairs. Pair 9 cited vvv.nl, a tourism and recreation website, for their section on the Beemster, while Pair 5, for their section on the Statenbijbel and its impact on the Dutch language, cited gatim.nl, the website of a company known as Global Affiliation of Translators & Interpreters & Multilingual Manpower [GATIM].198 Pair 11 consulted the art and culture page of infonu.nl [which claims to be a library of information from A to Z] for their section on Rembrandt. Finally there are the religious and academic websites and those of newspapers, each being cited by one pair. Pair 6, for their section on the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, referred to hervormdonstwedde.nl, the website of the Reformed Community in Onstwedde; for their section on sailor and marine officer Michiel Adriaenz de Ruyter, the same pair cited refdag.nl, the website of the Reformatorisch Dagblad, a Dutch daily newspaper; lastly, Pair 11 extensively quoted from neon.niederlandistik.fu-berlin.de, the website of the Institute for German and Dutch Philology of the Freie Universität Berlin.

Table 5.2 shows that all but one pair [No. 3] used at least two different types of Web sources. Pair 6 used Web sources from all categories and sub-categories [9 in total] except for educational, commercial, general information, and academic sites. As noted above, Pair 3 used no other website apart from the Geheugen van Nederland, a website containing material obtained from heritage institutions and this was exclusively for the 32 images they used.199 I should emphasise that many more Web sources were actually used, particularly for images. As can be seen from Table 5.1, Pair 7 used 20 images from the Web but cited only 10 Web sources. Similarly, Pair 11 used 23 images from the Web, while only 10 Web sources are mentioned. Thus, the data in Table 5.2 are based only on the cited and duly referenced Web sources.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter I introduced the class with which I was involved during my research, placing it within the context of the broader educational system. I indicated that the second-year, bridge-class was part of the HAVO/VWO trajectory of secondary education. I also described the 13- to 14-year-old pupils, highlighting not only

199 As already pointed out in Chapter 1, Section 1.1, one must remember that the Geheugen van Nederland was, right from the beginning, an image-based site, and thus text-unfriendly (Schouten, 2009: 11).
their attentive attitude when digital audio-visual media were used, but also their lack of attention when these media were not used. I also discussed the connection between use of the Web and the pupils’ historical thinking: in some cases, the attractiveness of the Web-based audiovisual resources triggered not only pupils’ attention, but also their engagement in the thinking process. In other cases, the ease with which pupils interacted with Web-based texts and still-images [copy-pasting, ripping, downloading images], prompted some of them to extract long quotations from the Web, though this practice did still leave room for some forms of historical thinking. These consisted mostly of identifying the source and the relevant fragments, and converting them into a new coherent narrative. In yet other cases, a few pupils found another way of making use of Web-based texts, a method that implies some degree of historical thinking: paraphrasing. Finally, I examined the Web sources that the pupils used and realised that most of them had used a variety of sources, including, among others, personal, heritage, religious, news, academic, and educational websites. The next chapter examines the second case study, which took place in a different class and school.