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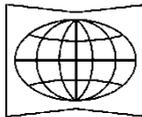


**WOCHEN  
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HISTORY EDUCATION  
AND HISTORY CULTURE (JHEC)  
YEARBOOK  
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR HISTORY DIDACTICS (ISHD)

Historical Thinking



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## INTRODUCTION

Developing historical thinking is becoming an overarching goal of history education, at least on the declarative level. The concept is not new and has been developed for many years in various national and international contexts. However, its scope and contents, and especially the methods of transferring it onto everyday school practice still remain work in progress. Moreover, it seems that the more popular the concepts become, the more questions it raises revealing new areas of research on both theoretical assumptions and school practice.

These issues were the matter of discussion during the 2018 annual conference of the International Society for History Didactics in Gatineau-Ottawa, however submissions for the journal were not limited to the conference participants.

On the level of theory, the authors of this volume address, among others, the issues of historical agency and pupils' identity, as well as the inclusion of ethical aspects in the process of developing historical thinking.

Shifting from the traditional model of history as memory where education provides learners with ready-to-memorize facts and stories – to teaching critical analysis and discussion on historical narratives seen from multiple perspectives involves deep changes on the level of practice, e.g. in developing curricula, textbooks and lesson plans. In this case, modernizing history education is not about incorporating new technologies but rather about developing new approaches to any and all resources used in the classroom and issues discussed in the process of history education. Some of the papers in this issue of JHEC address the issues posed by the use of films, museums, writing, and the introduction of local and regional history in history education. They present the results of experiments on, and observations of pupils at schools and teacher trainees at universities. More often than not they give voice to the participants of those actions themselves. The reception by and satisfaction of various groups of stakeholders related to all areas of life, education included, has become more important today than ever. In case of the notion of historical thinking, many academic researchers in the area of history didactics speak in favour of introducing it into school practice, even if (or especially that) it involves major re-structuring of traditional

ways of teaching. Policymakers and history teachers are the main groups to be convinced in order to make this major change come true. Policymakers can change school curricula so as to provide benefits which go beyond the acquisition of substantive historical knowledge, while teachers are the ones who actually introduce pedagogical concepts into school practice. Research on these groups and their attitude towards the implications on teaching historical thinking instead of memorizing the past can also be found in this volume.

The strong tradition of JHEC is in providing insights into international perspectives on the discussed topics. In the case of historical thinking, examples from many countries prove that similar questions and objections are raised, prejudices and fears expressed, but also benefits enumerated and satisfactions proven, disregarding existing traditions and educational practices. It gives hope that that the findings, including some practical solutions, can bring similar outcomes in more than one national context.

Starting from this year, JHEC launches its new section devoted to book reviews. It discusses publications related to history didactics and all aspects of historical culture and history education in the past and present, published in the recent years in the English language. We encourage authors to submit the books for review in the prospective issues.

I wish to express my gratitude to Kath, Terry and Mark Haydn for the English language proofreading of the articles and to Markus Furrer and Dorota Wiśniewska with Tereasa Malinowska for the German and French translations, respectively.

Joanna Wojdon

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## VORWORT

Die Entwicklung des historischen Denkens wird zu einem übergeordneten Ziel der Geschichtsvermittlung, zumindest auf deklarativer Ebene. Das Konzept ist nicht neu und wird seit vielen Jahren in verschiedenen nationalen und internationalen Kontexten entwickelt. Umfang und Inhalt, insbesondere die Methoden der Übertragung auf die schulische Praxis, sind jedoch noch im Gange. Darüber hinaus scheint es, dass, je populärer die Konzepte werden, desto mehr Fragen aufkommen, die neue Forschungsgebiete sowohl zu theoretischen Annahmen, als auch zur schulischen Praxis aufdecken.

Diese Fragen wurden an der Jahrestagung 2018 der Internationalen Gesellschaft für Geschichtsdidaktik in Gatineau-Ottawa diskutiert, wobei das Einreichen von Beiträgen für die Zeitschrift nicht nur auf die Konferenzteilnehmenden beschränkt war.

Auf der theoretischen Ebene beschäftigen sich die Autorinnen und Autoren dieses Bandes unter anderem mit Fragen der Handlungskompetenz und der Identität von Schülerinnen und Schülern wie auch dem Einbezug ethischer Aspekte in den Prozess historischen Denkens.

Der Übergang vom traditionellen Modell einer an Gedächtnisleistungen orientierten Geschichtsvermittlung, indem Lernenden primär Fakten und Geschichten zur Verfügung gestellt werden, hin zum Unterrichten kritischer Analysen und Diskussionen über historische Erzählungen aus verschiedenen Perspektiven, bringt tiefgreifende Veränderungen auf der Ebene der Praxis mit sich, z.B. bei der Entwicklung von Lehrplänen, Lehrmitteln und Unterrichtsplänen. In diesem Fall geht es bei der Modernisierung des Geschichtsunterrichts nicht darum, neue Technologien zu integrieren, sondern vielmehr darum, neue Ansätze für alle im Unterricht verwendeten Ressourcen und Themen zu entwickeln, die im Geschichtsunterricht diskutiert werden. Einige der Artikel dieser Ausgabe des JHEC befassen sich mit Themen, die sich durch die Verwendung von Filmen, dem Besuch von Museen, dem Schreiben und der Einführung lokaler und regionaler Geschichten in den Geschichtsunterricht ergeben. Sie präsentieren die Ergebnisse von Experimenten und Beobachtungen von Schülerinnen und Schülern in

Schulen sowie Lehrerbildnern an Universitäten. Meistens geben sie den Teilnehmern dieser Aktionen selbst eine Stimme. Die Rezeption und Zufriedenheit verschiedener Interessengruppen aus allen Lebensbereichen, einschließlich der Bildung, ist heute wichtiger denn je. Im Falle des Begriffs des historischen Denkens sprechen sich viele akademische Forscherinnen und Forscher im Bereich der Geschichtsdidaktik für eine Einführung in die schulische Praxis aus, auch wenn (oder gerade) dies eine große Umstrukturierung traditioneller Unterrichtsformen erforderlich macht. Politikerinnen und Politiker sowie Geschichtslehrpersonen sind die Hauptgruppen, die überzeugt werden müssen, um diesen großen Wandel zu verwirklichen. Die Politik kann die Lehrpläne so ändern, dass sie einen Nutzen bieten, der über den Erwerb von fundiertem historischem Wissen hinausgeht, während die Lehrpersonen diejenigen sind, die tatsächlich pädagogische Konzepte in die schulische Praxis einführen. Forschungen über diese Gruppen und ihre Einstellung zu den Auswirkungen auf die Vermittlung von historischem Denken an Stelle des Memorierens von Vergangenheit finden Sie auch in diesem Band.

Es ist eine starke Tradition von JHEC, Einblicke in internationale Perspektiven zu den diskutierten Themen zu geben. Im Falle des historischen Denkens zeigen Beispiele aus vielen Ländern, dass ähnliche Fragen und Einwände gestellt, Vorurteile und Ängste geäußert, aber auch Vorteile aufgezählt und befriedigt werden, ohne Rücksicht auf bestehende Traditionen und Bildungspraktiken. Dies gibt der Hoffnung Ausdruck, dass die Ergebnisse, einschließlich einiger praktischer Lösungen, in mehr als einem nationalen Kontext zu ähnlichen Ergebnissen führen können.

Ab diesem Jahr startet JHEC neu mit Buchbesprechungen. Es werden Publikationen zur Geschichtsdidaktik und allen Aspekten der historischen Kultur und Geschichtsvermittlung in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart diskutiert, die in den letzten Jahren in englischer Sprache veröffentlicht wurden. Wir möchten Autorinnen und Autoren darin bestärken, ihre Bücher zur Besprechung für die nächste Ausgabe einzureichen.

Ich möchte Kath, Terry und Mark Haydn für das Korrekturlesen der Artikel in englischer Sprache sowie Markus Furrer und Dorota Wiśniewska mit Teresa Malinowska für die deutsche bzw. französische Übersetzung danken.

Joanna Wojdon

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## PRÉFACE

Le développement de la réflexion historique devient un objectif primordial dans l'enseignement de l'histoire, du moins au niveau déclaratif. Le concept n'est pas nouveau et a été développé pendant des années dans différents contextes nationaux et internationaux. Toutefois, son champ d'application et son contenu, en particulier les méthodes pour le mettre en pratique scolaire, sont encore en cours d'élaboration. De plus, il semble que plus les concepts deviennent populaires, plus ils soulèvent des questions qui révèlent de nouveaux domaines de recherche sur les hypothèses théoriques et la pratique scolaire.

Ces questions ont fait l'objet de discussions lors du congrès annuel de l'International Society for History Didactics à Gatineau-Ottawa en 2018, mais les soumissions pour publication dans la revue n'étaient pas limitées aux participants du congrès.

Au niveau de la théorie, les auteurs de cet ouvrage abordent, entre autres, les questions de l'agentivité historique (*historical agency*) et de l'identité des élèves, ainsi que l'inclusion des aspects éthiques dans le processus de développement de la réflexion historique.

Passer du modèle traditionnel de l'histoire en tant que mémoire – où l'éducation fournit aux apprenants des faits et des histoires prêts à être mémorisés – à l'enseignement de l'analyse critique et de la discussion sur des récits historiques vus sous l'angle de multiples perspectives implique des changements profonds au niveau de la pratique, par exemple dans l'élaboration des programmes scolaires, des manuels et des plans de cours. Dans ce cas, la modernisation d'enseignement de l'histoire ne signifie pas incorporer de nouvelles technologies, mais plutôt développer de nouvelles approches de toutes les ressources utilisées en classe et des questions abordées dans le processus d'enseignement de l'histoire. Certains articles dans le présent numéro du JHEC montrent des problèmes associés à l'utilisation des films, des musées, de l'écriture et de l'introduction de l'histoire locale et régionale dans l'enseignement de l'histoire. Ils présentent les résultats d'expériences sur et d'observations d'élèves dans les écoles et ceux de chercheurs spécialisés en formation des enseignants. Le plus souvent, ils donnent la parole aux participants à ces actions. La réception et la satisfaction des différents groupes d'acteurs liés à tous les domaines de la vie, y compris l'éducation,

sont aujourd'hui plus importantes que jamais. Dans le cas de la notion de la réflexion historique, de nombreux chercheurs universitaires dans le domaine de la didactique de l'histoire parlent en faveur de son introduction dans la pratique scolaire, même si (ou d'autant plus que) cela implique une restructuration majeure des méthodes traditionnelles d'enseignement. Les décideurs politiques et les professeurs d'histoire sont les principaux groupes à convaincre pour que ce changement majeur devienne réalité. Les décideurs peuvent modifier les programmes scolaires de manière à offrir des avantages qui vont au-delà de l'acquisition de connaissances historiques substantielles, tandis que les enseignants sont ceux qui introduisent les concepts pédagogiques dans la pratique scolaire. Des recherches sur ces groupes et leur attitude à l'égard des implications de l'enseignement de la réflexion historique au lieu de la mémorisation du passé peuvent également être trouvées dans ce volume.

La forte tradition du JHEC est de fournir un aperçu des perspectives internationales sur les sujets mentionnés ci-dessus. Dans le cas de la réflexion historique, des exemples de nombreux pays prouvent que des questions et des objections similaires sont formulées, des préjugés et des craintes exprimés, mais aussi des avantages énumérés et des satisfactions prouvées, sans tenir compte des traditions et des pratiques éducatives existantes. Cela donne l'espoir que les conclusions, y compris quelques solutions pratiques, peuvent donner des résultats similaires dans plus d'un contexte national.

À partir de cette année, le JHEC lance sa nouvelle section consacrée aux critiques de livres. Elle traite des publications relatives à la didactique de l'histoire et à tous les aspects de la culture historique et de l'enseignement de l'histoire dans le passé et dans le présent qui ont été publiées ces dernières années en anglais. Nous encourageons les auteurs à soumettre des livres pour qu'ils soient examinés dans les numéros futurs.

Je tiens à exprimer ma gratitude à Kath, Terry et Mark Haydn pour la relecture en anglais des articles et à Markus Furrer et Dorota Wiśniewska avec Teresa Malinowska pour les traductions allemande et française, respectivement.

Joanna Wojdon

HISTORICAL THINKING

HISTORISCHES DENKEN

PENSÉE HISTORIQUE



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# CHANGING IDEAS ABOUT THE ROLE OF HISTORICAL THINKING IN SCHOOL HISTORY: A VIEW FROM ENGLAND

Terry Haydn

*The paper analyses recent discourse in England about the aims and purposes of school history, and changes in ideas about the part that 'historical thinking' might play in the teaching of history in schools. The paper uses Stephen J. Ball's (1990) theoretical framework of 'contexts of influence', together with discourse and content analysis, to consider the perspectives of politicians and educationalists on these matters. Analysis of public discourse and curriculum documentation on the aims and purposes of school history, and in particular, scrutiny of the role of values and dispositions in school history, reveal significant differences and changing views about what history education in schools might entail in terms of aims and outcomes. The paper raises important questions about the role that substantive historical knowledge, disciplinary understanding, and the cultivation of particular values and dispositions play in the teaching of history in schools. The focus of the study is on England, but the issues raised are relevant to many other countries.*

## 1. Introduction

All countries which have national education systems make pupils study history as part of their school education. This is presumably because governments feel that the study of the past will have some form of lasting impact or influence on the pupils when they leave school and become adult citizens. In the words of the British historian Eric Hobsbawm (1997: 19), 'Why do all regimes make their young study some history in school? Not to understand society and how it changes, but to approve of it, to be proud of it, to be or become good citizens.' However, both over time, and in present times, there is no consensus over what qualities are likely to produce 'good citizens, even within liberal democratic societies. This question seems particularly pertinent at a time of considerable concern over present day challenges to the health and vitality of democratic societies in Europe and elsewhere' (Council of Europe, 2016), and 'the major cultural and political challenges facing history education in Europe today' (Council of Europe, 2018a: 1; see also Council of Europe, 2018b).

As well as the contested interpretation of what constitutes ‘a good citizen’ (see, for example, Haydn, 2011; Mansfield, 2019), Carla Peck (2018) makes the point that there is very little empirical evidence to explain or measure what effect school history has on young people emerging from schools, in terms of their ability to function as good and effective citizens (see Smith, 1997; Schudson, 1998; Westheimer and Kahne, 2004; Grever et al., 2008 for further discussion of this point).

There is also a question about what history in schools is for. What is it about the study of the past that makes it useful – to young people, to society, the state, the nation, to the future well-being of the human race? For much of the time that history has been on the school curriculum, its primary purpose has been to inculcate loyalty to the nation state in which it is taught (Carretero, 2012; Berger, 2018). But over recent decades, ideas about the purposes and benefits of school history have encompassed the contribution that it might make to the well-being, general capability and economic and life prospects of the individual, the possible benefits for social cohesion within societies, and, in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, the transnational and global benefits which it might make to the future welfare of the human race (Haydn, 1994; Barton and Levstik, 2004; Aldrich, 2010).

The issue of aims and values for school history is a complex one. In England, even within the history education community, there has been no consensus over the extent to which school history should be used for the purposes of ‘socialisation’, in the sense of using the study of the past to develop the beliefs and dispositions which will produce citizens who will espouse and adhere to liberal democratic values. In a collection of papers published shortly after the introduction of the first version of the National Curriculum (Department for Education and Science, 1991), John White (1992: 19) argued that ‘the main reason for teaching history in schools is as a necessary element in the cultivation of those personal qualities in students, like self-knowledge, self-determination and concern for the well-being of others, which fit them to be citizens in a liberal democratic society.’ In another paper in the same volume, Peter Lee (1992) argues against this position, pointing out that as soon as we try to make history ‘do something’, whether it be the inculcation of patriotism, support for democracy or concern for others, it is antithetical to the core values of the discipline of history, where the

aim is to look dispassionately at the historical record and the evidence available, not to engineer a desired outcome. In the words of former lead HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector) for history, John Slater (1989: 15-16), 'It does not require us to believe that a society's values are always valuable. If history seeks to guarantee any of these things, it ceases to be history and becomes indoctrination.'

One other question might be kept in mind: are the aims and purposes of school history enduring and unchanging, or should they change in the light of what the current National Curriculum for history terms 'the challenges of our times'? (Department for Education, 2013: 1). In England, influential figures have argued that school history should not 'change with the times', and should transmit to pupils 'the best that has been said and thought in the world' (Arnold, 1869: preface), and focus primarily on a positive and celebratory narrative of the national past. The idea of 'The national canon' of the past has remained an influential concept; not just in England (Grever and Stuurman, 2007). Examples of such sentiments can be found in the pronouncements of influential figures in the English educational system. Speaking on BBC Radio 4, Chris Woodhead, for several years (1994-2000) Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England, argued that 'basic skills have not changed since the nineteenth century, it is unnecessary to make the curriculum any more relevant to the twenty-first century. When it comes to history, surely the focus ought to be the national story and the national story hasn't changed in the last decade or so' (Woodhead, 2005). In similar vein, former Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove (2010a) has argued against the temptation to teach for 'relevance' in school history: 'Curriculum content should contain the classical canon of history [...] We should pull back from seeking to make content more relevant to the contemporary concerns and lives of young people.'

A central tenet of this view of school history, was that one of the values which school history should seek to inculcate in pupils was pride and identification with the national past and the national story. Gove's (2010b) address to the Conservative Party Conference provides an insight into his rationale for school history:

*There is no better way of building a modern, inclusive, patriotism than by teaching all British citizens to take pride in this country's historic achievements. Which is why the next Conservative Government will ensure the curriculum teaches the*

*proper narrative of British History – so that every Briton can take pride in this nation.*

It is important to note that this position on the function of school history is not confined to politicians of the right. Although couched in terms of promoting social cohesion rather than the more traditional Victorian notion of patriotism, several Labour politicians such as Ruth Kelly, Jack Straw and Gordon Brown have also espoused the cause of ‘traditional’, national-story based school history, and promoted the concept of ‘Britishness’ as an exceptionalist and positive quality (see, for example, Straw, 2000; Kelly, 2006; Brown, 2007).

Ranged against these ideas about the aims of school history were those outside the world of politics, such as educationists and history teacher associations (although it would be misleading to suggest that all educationalists and teachers are against the traditional ‘national’ form of school history). Examples of those arguing for a more ‘relevant’ and non-national rendering of the past in schools can be found in the work of Lawrence Stenhouse (1968), founder of the Humanities Curriculum Project in the UK, arguing for a curriculum ‘that took better account of social and economic change, and was more congruent with the needs and interests of young people’ (Elliott & Norris, 2012: 16). In similar vein, the influential Schools History Project in the UK, in its enunciation of principles which should govern the teaching of history states that there should be ‘a determination to connect history to young people’s lives [...] As history educators we need to make our subject meaningful for all children and young people by relating history to their lives in the 21st century’ (SHP, 2018).

Much of the public debate about school history, in England and elsewhere, has focused on what substantive historical content should be on the school curriculum, the extent to which the story of the national past should be at the heart of the curriculum, and the extent to which there should be either a positive or critical rendering of that past (see Haydn, 2012 for a more developed discussion of this point). In recent decades, there has also been public controversy about the appropriate balance between transmitting substantive knowledge of the past, and developing pupils’ understanding of disciplinary concepts relating to the study of history. Less attention has focused on the affective domain of school history, that is to say, the values,

dispositions, beliefs, attitudes and emotions which might derive from the study of history in schools. This is in spite of the fact that this facet of school history has been subject to radical change over the past two decades in terms of curriculum specifications. Media coverage of history in schools has tended to focus on ‘who’s in and who’s out’ of the curriculum, and (sometimes ingenuous) arguments about ‘knowledge versus skills’ (Counsell, 2000). Recent changes in statements about values and school history have gone comparatively unremarked. The aim of the paper is to examine factors that influence the place of values and dispositions in school history, using England as a case study, and to consider the wider implications of recent changes in ideas about the role that values in school history might play in terms of creating ‘the good citizen’.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In his analysis of the formulation of the original National Curriculum for history, which was introduced in England in 1991, Phillips (1998) drew on Stephen J. Ball’s ‘applied sociology’ approach to the analysis of curriculum change (Ball, 1990). Ball’s framework consisted of three overlapping ‘contexts’ which, he argued, had an influence on the ways in which education policy was formulated and changed. The first of these was what he termed, ‘the context of influence’, in the sense of gleaning an understanding of the people who were influential in policy formulation at the time. This would encompass politicians, civil servants and interest groups involved in consultations over curriculum change. The second lens for gaining insight into the processes of policy development in education was to be derived from a study of the protagonists who were responsible for the key texts announcing reviews or changes to the curriculum – which people actually wrote the documents. It is important to note that in the English context, there is a clear overlap between ‘the context of influence’, and ‘the context of text production’. The government of the day has the power of patronage over the composition of working groups and committees related to curriculum reform, and also has complete power over choosing the Chief Inspector of Schools. Unlike the United States, the legislature has no powers to limit these powers of appointment. In spite of this overlap, this does not mean that in practice the state has complete and overarching control over the school curriculum.

The third influence on curriculum formation was termed 'the context of practice'. Noting the not uncommon gap between policy intent and actual implementation of educational initiatives, Ball argued that the government was dependent on practising teachers to actually deliver the curriculum change. Given the loose relationship between government and schools which pertains in most liberal democracies, this allows scope for teacher initiative, interpretation and creativity to influence the extent to which the stated intentions of the curriculum makers are put into practice. Fullan (quoted in Edwards, 1995: 11) argues that this can even extend to 'resistance' on the part of the teaching force, suggesting that 'it is the hubris in policy makers to over-rate their own power to reshape practice by underrating the power of practitioners to subvert initiatives or to simply carry on as before.' An example of this tension between 'the context of influence' and 'the context of practice' can be found in Joseph Smith's (2017) analysis of the failure of politicians to drive through a radical revision to the National Curriculum for history in February 2013. A Historical Association survey of history teachers found that 96 % of practising history teachers opposed the proposed changes, and with the aid of other history interest groups, the proposals were drastically curtailed.

The paper also draws on Richard Aldrich's ideas on the role of historical perspectives in shedding light on current issues and problems; that is to say, is there any question into which we cannot gain more insight by exploring what has gone before (Aldrich, 2005).

The analysis of the changing ideas about the aims and purposes of school history will therefore draw on some of the documents, statements and research reports on the views of the history teaching force and its professional associations, as well as the public pronouncements of politicians, and the curriculum documentation which has been produced since the introduction of the first National Curriculum for history which was first taught in schools in 1991.

### **3. Changing Ideas About the Aims and Purposes of School History: A View from England**

Historian of Education Richard Aldrich (1989) argued that for much of the time that history has been on the school curriculum, its primary purpose was to provide moral exemplars to the young. It was not until the 1970s, with the advent of that has been termed in

England, ‘The new history’, that less emphasis was placed on the traditional ‘heroic’ rendering of the national past, with more emphasis being placed on historical skills and ‘historical thinking’. Even then, these changes were not uncontested – there remained a divergence of views about what school history was for (Haydn, 2012).

Ideas about the aims of education in general were also influenced by Prime Minister James Callaghan’s Ruskin College speech, which was to start ‘The Great Debate’ about the aims and purposes of education in the UK. Influenced by concern over Britain’s economic decline, the speech questioned whether the UK’s education system as it stood adequately prepared young people ‘to do a job of work’.

This economically instrumental turn in ideas about the aims of education can also be discerned in the Department for Education and Employment’s definition of the aims of education in 1995:

*The government’s principal aim for the education service at all levels is to support economic growth and improve the nation’s competitiveness and quality of life by raising standards of educational achievement and skill and by promoting a flexible and efficient labour market (DfEE, 1995: 1).*

In England (and in some other countries), the implications of this development led to increasing focus on international competitiveness in education, concern over the nation’s position in international league tables for education, increasing emphasis on STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) in schools and universities, and an emphasis on performativity and competitive individualism (Sahlberg, 2006).

A National Curriculum was not introduced in England until 1991. Before that, schools were to a considerable extent free to teach history in whatever way they thought best, up to the age of 14, when pupils who chose to continue with the subject started to study for external examinations. However, even after the introduction of the first version of the National Curriculum, although content and assessment procedures were more standardised, the curriculum document had very little to say about the role that values and attitudes might play in school history (DES, 1991). Although there may have been significant variations in terms of history teachers’ ideas about what values and attitudes might be inculcated in young people through the study of the past, this was not difficult for schools and teachers, as the first two versions of the National

Curriculum for history (introduced for teaching 1991 and 1995) had almost nothing to say about values and attitudes.

The revisions in the second version of the National Curriculum were mainly concerned with reducing the amount of content to be covered, and simplifying assessment arrangements. However, subsequent revisions, in 1999, 2004 and 2007 saw radical changes in terms of the specification of ‘aims, purposes and values’ for the curriculum (Department for Education and Employment/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1999; Department for Education and Skills/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2004; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007).

These iterations of the National Curriculum contained a long and detailed list of the aims, purposes and values of the school curriculum, with a strong emphasis on moral and ethical dimensions of citizenship. The list extended to 3 pages of the National Curriculum documentation, under the sub-title ‘Aims, values and purposes’. This ran in total to 554 words, with 196 words (Aim 2) dedicated to moral and ethical qualities (see below).

In addition, the 1999 version of the National Curriculum included as an appendix a statement of values by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community. This added a further 863 words to the curriculum document and included sections on personal qualities (for example, ‘make truth, integrity, honesty and goodwill priorities in public and private life’, p. 148), societal values (including ‘support those who cannot, by themselves, sustain a dignified lifestyle, contribute to, as well as benefit fairly from, economic and cultural resources’, p. 148), and environmental issues (including ‘accept our responsibility to maintain a sustainable environment for future generations, understand the place of human beings within nature, understand our responsibilities for other species’, p. 149).

An indication of the inclusion of moral and ethical values in national curriculum documentation between 1999 and 2007 can be gleaned from the following extract from the 2007 National Curriculum orders (DfES, 2007: 10-12):

*The National Curriculum should promote [...] equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy [...] commitment to the virtues of truth, justice, honesty, trust and a sense of duty [...] to make a difference for the better [...] develop principles for distinguishing between right and wrong [...] develop pupils’ integrity and autonomy and help them to be responsible and caring citizens*

*capable of contributing to the development of a just society [...] enable pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping, develop awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environments in which they live, and secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, local, national and global level [...] develop their ability to relate to others and work for the common good.*

However, the most recent and current version of the National Curriculum, introduced in September 2014 by a Conservative government, swept away these moral and ethical dimensions of the National Curriculum. They were replaced by a stipulation that all teachers and schools (and all school subjects) should promote ‘Fundamental British values’, defined as support for ‘democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for those with different faiths and beliefs, tolerance’ (DfE, 2014a: 5). Whereas the three previous versions of the National Curriculum had included an extensive section on values, this was now pared back to the ‘Fundamental British values’ noted above, and a single sentence to state that the National Curriculum should promote ‘the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society’ (DfE, 2014: section 2.1).

In a series of speeches, Her Majesty’s (current) Chief Inspector of Schools, Amanda Spielman (appointed, as always, by the government of the day) has stressed the importance of all schools actively promoting British Values, stating in one speech that ‘pupils should learn how we became the country we are today and how our values make us a beacon of liberalism, tolerance and fairness’ (Spielman, 2017).

Thus, within the last two decades, ideas about the aims and purposes of school history’ have been subject to significant change. Although the substantive content of the history curriculum (what topics are taught), has not been subject to radical change across the five iterations of the National Curriculum for History, and the identification of particular second order or ‘disciplinary’ concepts to be developed has stayed relatively stable, the role of values and dispositions in the teaching of history has been subject to quite significant fluctuations. An initial period in which there was almost no mention of aims, purposes and values (1991-1999) was followed by several years during which aims, values and purposes were very extensively spelled out (1999-2014), and then more recently, there has been a move towards a much more limited and ‘exceptionalist’

statement of values, defined in national, rather than human terms (2014 to the present).

#### 4. Discussion

What are the implications of this return to a ‘traditional’ and celebratory form of school history (at least in the context of government policy), and the stipulation that school history should promote ‘Fundamental British Values’? What part should ‘historical thinking’ play in school history, and how should such thinking be defined? And what values and dispositions (if any), are most helpful and appropriate for young people growing up in the twenty-first century?

Scrutiny of National Curriculum documentation between 1999 and 2014 reveals that the ethical and moral aims of the curriculum which received significant attention up to 2014 have been largely excised, and the values stipulated are now expressed in national (i.e. ‘British’) rather than human terms. The aims and purposes of the history curriculum (and the curriculum in general) now define historical thinking in purely cognitive terms (DfE, 2013: 1). Of course, substantive historical knowledge is an important asset to be derived from the study of the past in school, as is the ability to ‘understand methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed’ (DfE, 2013: 1). It could be argued that at a time when the manipulation and distortion of the past for dubious political purposes poses an existential threat to democratic societies (D’Ancona, 2017; Kakutani, 2018; Wineburg, 2018) this facet of school history has never been more important. However, this does not mean that this aspect of school history should exclude consideration of moral and ethical dimensions of the past. As well as equipping pupils to ascertain the validity of claims, and to discern between claims that are (to some degree) true and those that are false, historical thinking can encompass moral and ethical issues (Seixas & Morton, 2012), and help young people to develop their understanding of issues of good and bad, right and wrong.

Michael Gove’s argument that a positive telling of ‘our island story’ will improve social cohesion, and will promote ‘a modern, inclusive patriotism [...] by teaching all British citizens to take pride in

Britain's historic achievements' (Gove, 2010) is not a new one, but it is an unexamined assumption. As Carla Peck (2018) has intimated, there is little evidence to prove that 'this works'. There are some problems with the idea that a positive rendering of the national past will aid social cohesion. Several studies have suggested that that in open societies, young people do not find such narratives plausible or relevant to their lives (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998; Grever et al., 2008; Barton, 2009). Wertsch (2000) makes the point that even if learners have understood and remembered a narrative about the past, this does not mean that they have appropriated it in the sense of believing it to be true, or it influencing their core emotions and belief systems. He goes as far as to suggest that such attempts to impose a narrative may even generate resistance on the part of the learners.

As well as the question of whether attempting to use school history to inculcate loyalty and pride in the nation 'works' (that is to say, is accepted, believed and adopted), there is the question of whether it is 'good history'. There is a degree of naiveté in Michael Gove's (2010) statement that young people should learn 'the proper narrative of British history': there are very few historians who believe that there is one simple true and correct story of the national past.

The problem with 'The Whig version of history' – the idea that national problems of equity, well-being and social justice have been eliminated after the march through history towards a perfect democracy, unblemished prosperity and social harmony, is that it is difficult to sustain, given contemporary realities in most countries. It is not difficult for young people to find, through watching television, reading books and newspapers, going on the internet, that contrary to Amanda Spielman's (2017) assertions, study of British history shows that Britain has not always been, nor is it now, 'a beacon of liberalism, tolerance and fairness'. Moreover, the idea that Britain in some way invented or discovered democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and tolerance, and bequeathed it to other parts of the world, does not stand up to rational enquiry. As Appiah (2018) points out, 'The values of liberty, tolerance and rational inquiry are not the birthright of a single culture.' History is supposed to be the enemy of facile generalisations, ill-founded stereotypes and lazy analogies. The idea that Britain as a nation is, and always has been, superior to other nations in terms of the civic virtues proclaimed by the Department for Education is a dubious one.

Of course, Britain is not the only country where pupils are told that their country is ‘exceptional’ compared to others – better, stronger, more virtuous – but there are countries which have adopted to at least some extent a different approach. Neil MacGregor, former director of the British Museum has praised recent German attempts to adopt a ‘warts and all’ approach to its national past, which openly acknowledges some of the dark pages of German history (MacGregor, 2017), and Belgium has recently taken steps to acknowledge the less salubrious side of its colonial past (Smyth, 2018). Other countries have placed more emphasis on the global and human dimensions of history rather confining school history primarily to the story of the national past. Rautiainen (2017) provides the following summary of the values underpinning the Finnish National Curriculum:

*The underlying values of basic education are human rights, equality, democracy, natural diversity, preservation and environment viability and the endorsement of multiculturalism. Basic education promotes responsibility, a sense of community, and respect for the rights and freedoms of the individual.*

Insight into school curricula can be gained from what is not included, as well as what is there. It is interesting to note the values that are not mentioned in the current version of the National Curriculum in England. In school history in England, limited attention has been paid to the concept of veracity, in the sense of the ethical importance of making an honest attempt to provide the most accurate explanation possible from the evidence available. (It has never been elevated to the status of a ‘key element’ or ‘key concept’). This is in spite of the fact that respect for evidence is of central importance to the discipline of history, and lack of respect for ‘truth’ and evidence is a major problem in many modern societies.

The extent to which school history attempts to tell an honest and accurate story also has implications for teaching young people about democracy. Rather than asking teachers and schools to ‘promote’ support for democracy, it could be argued that some time should be spent considering the limitations and deficits in many modern democracies. Did getting the vote bring about an equal and fair society? Teaching about women in history in England often concludes with the story of the Suffragettes, and how they got the vote after the First World War. This raises the interesting and

important point about the idea (espoused by the Chartists in Britain in the mid nineteenth century – Chase, 2015) that getting the vote would inevitably bring about a full solution to the problems and inequities suffered by the disenfranchised elements of the population. How many pupils leave school with a profound and sophisticated understanding of the virtues and limitations of democratic societies? In terms of democratic vocabulary, how many pupils leave school understanding words and phrases such as ‘plutocracy’, ‘populism’, ‘lobbying’, ‘astro-turfing’, ‘polemic’, ‘the manufacture of consent’, ‘demagogue’, ‘playing the race card’ and ‘confirmation bias’?

So what values will citizens and policymakers need to successfully negotiate humankind through ‘the challenges of their time’ in the 21st century? Might they be at least in some ways different to the ‘British Values’ listed in the current version of the English National Curriculum? To what extent should school history be about the national past, rather than the human past? Is ‘historical thinking’ to be defined solely in terms of the development of pupils’ understanding of the cognitive components of history as a discipline or should it extend to a consideration of the affective domain and the moral and ethical dimensions of the study of the past?

## 5. Conclusions

One of the ironies of the current National Curriculum for History in England is the statement that ‘History helps pupils to understand the challenges of their time.’ Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education who set the requirements for the current version of the National Curriculum has argued publicly for a return to a traditional form of school history ‘with children sitting in rows, learning the kings and queens of England’. He has also argued that school history should tell a positive story about the British Empire (Gove, 2010b), and the National Curriculum for history over which he presided remains resolutely focused on telling the story of the nation state. The current National Curriculum for history has almost nothing to say about climate change, globalisation, resource depletion, poverty, employment, population or developments in science and technology.

Just because school history treated the past primarily in national terms in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries does not mean that it needs to be stuck in that paradigm in the twenty first century. In a review of Norman Davies’ book *Beneath another sky*, Michael Kerr

(2017: 28) notes that ‘One of (Davies’) conclusions is that it makes no sense to separate in our minds, or in our studies, domestic European history and the history of the interactions of Europeans and non-Europeans: Global history or the history of humanity is all that there really is.’

Nor is it helpful or plausible to peddle a sanitised and Disneyfied fairy story about the National past. In free societies at least, young people will find out that such narratives are not reliable, and will consider school history to be neither relevant nor useful (Loewen, 2007; Grever et al., 2008). A more constructive approach would be a school history curriculum which deployed the idea of ‘critical patriotism’ when dealing with the national past, and which aimed to critically examine rather than transmit values claims relating to the national past. Chua and Sim claim that critical patriotism is ‘an ideal in many liberal western nations’, but it is not one that appears to have reached policymakers in England.

Amongst the community of practice of history teacher educators in England, there is to at least to some extent a consensus that school history should be about developing the intellectual autonomy of young people and helping them to handle information intelligently (see Davies, 2017 for evidence to support this claim). This is an increasingly important issue in what has been termed a ‘post-truth’ society, with significant changes in the ways that people receive information about the past (and the present) and the increasing sophistication with which information about the past can be manipulated, sometimes for unethical and immoral purposes. In the words of former lead inspector for schools John Slater (1989: 16):

*If history does not guarantee attitudes or aspirations, it is a necessary if not sufficient condition which might enable the making of informed choices. It not only helps us to understand the identity of our communities, cultures, nations, by knowing something of their past, but also enables our loyalties to them to be moderated by informed and responsible skepticism [...] It cannot guarantee tolerance, though it can give it some intellectual weapons. It cannot open closed minds, although it may sometimes leave a nagging grain of doubt in them. Historical thinking is primarily mind-opening, not socialising.*

The Historical Thinking Project at the Centre for Historical Consciousness, based at the University of British Columbia has ‘understanding ethical dimensions of history’, as one of its six ‘big

historical concepts (The Historical Thinking Project, n/d). Perhaps surprisingly, there is no reference to concern for truth or respect for evidence in the section on ethical dimensions, issues that Peter Lee (2012: xii) describes as ‘cognitive ethics’. However, with the excision of the ‘Values’ section in the English National Curriculum, and its replacement with the much more limited reference to ‘British Values,’ in the current version of the National Curriculum, the question of ethics and morals more generally plays little part in curriculum specifications in England. Given the inextricably ethical and moral nature of history as a discipline, and current concerns about truth and morality in many societies (Davies, 2017; D’Ancona, 2017; Kakutami, 2018), it seems surprising that there is so little reference to issues such as ‘concern for truth’ or ‘respect for evidence’ in National Curriculum specifications.

Not all UK politicians have championed the traditional model of school history. In 1984, Conservative Secretary of State for Education Sir Keith Joseph argued that the teaching of history should take place ‘in a spirit which takes seriously the need to pursue truth on the basis of evidence’. The current National Curriculum for history in England makes no reference to concern for truth, and beyond the statement on ‘British values’ has very little to say about morality, ethics and values compared to the earlier (1999 to 2007) versions of the National Curriculum.

There is a danger that clinging to ‘the wonderfulness of us’ (Evans, 2011) national model of school history may limit the social usefulness of history as a school subject, and its potential for improving the future prospects of the human race, and the current issues and problems confronting many societies at the present time. This is not to argue against the importance of teaching young people about ‘historical thinking’ in the sense of imparting an understanding of the key second order concepts which enable young people to make sense of the past (commonly including such concepts as cause and consequence, chronology, interpretation, significance, continuity and change). However, many of the problems and issues facing humanity in the twenty-first century have moral and ethical dimensions, and limiting the consideration of historical thinking to the cognitive realm may constrain the social utility of school history. The values excised from the English National Curriculum in 2007, including concern for truth, respect for evidence, personal integrity and concern for the

common good are values that have relevance for the history curriculum beyond England.

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## HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS: FINNISH HISTORY TEACHERS' CONTENTMENT WITH THEIR NEW CURRICULUM <sup>1</sup>

Jukka Rantala and Najat Ouakrim-Soivio

*The new Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education emphasizes the acquisition of historical thinking skills. In this article, we present teachers' perceptions about the objectives, content descriptions and assessment criteria expressed in the curriculum. We focus our study on teachers' responses to the open-ended questions in an online survey carried out among history teachers in 2017. We studied the quantitative data by those respondents who provided written feedback to see if their responses differed from those who did not provide written feedback. Only one-third of the respondents provided responses to the open-ended questions and those who did gave relatively short but overall negative remarks. According to respondents' answers to the Likert scale statements, however, those who did not give written feedback had a more positive attitude towards the curriculum. In that respect, our study exposes Finnish teachers' relative contentment with it. The written feedback reveals that few respondents complained about teaching historical thinking skills as the key objective in the curriculum.*

Historical thinking is the interplay of substantive and procedural knowledge. Nevertheless, there is no consensus about the ideal proportion of content of history and skills. As Grant (2018: 425) states, 'the discussed is largely artificial in practice: Skills – whether generic or discipline-specific, historical or pedagogical – are a means of learning content.' In some contexts, the discussion is the other way around: the body of knowledge is a means to learn the form of the knowledge. Even though the content of history and historical thinking skills are interwoven in practice, in history curricula they are often represented detached from each other. Usually, one has more space than the other, and it relates to the dominant orientation of history teaching (see Seixas, 2000).

In Finland, the history curriculum for basic education has separate sections for the key content areas and the objectives. The skills are integrated into the latter. In the Finnish history curriculum, there are no equivalent mentions in the US's *Framework for Social Studies State Standards* that content and skills ought to be considered to be of equal importance (see Grant, 2018). The new national curriculum for basic

education (elementary and lower secondary education) emphasizes skill-based assessment criteria which imply that depth of thinking skills overrules breadth of content.

In this article, we discuss Finnish history teachers' contentment with the descriptions of historical content, historical thinking skills and the assessment criteria in the new National Core Curriculum for Basic Education (later shown as NCC). We will focus our study on teachers' open-ended answers gathered with an online survey in 2017.

## **1. The Changes in the Portrayal of Content in Finnish Curricula**

Governments have used history teaching for nation-building purposes (e.g. Ahonen, 2017a; Grever & Stuurman, 2007; Symcox & Wilschut, 2009). That is clearly seen also in the Finnish context. Up until the late twentieth century, history teaching in Finland was to foster the great national narrative in which the era of pre-independence was seen as a development towards the national independence and the era of independence as a surviving struggle to maintain it. A sense of shared collective memory was promoted through the history curriculum. The focus was on national identity and significant national content was stressed (Rantala & Ahonen, 2015). Basically, about half of the contents of the 1985 NCC covered Finnish history. Even in the 1994 NCC an essential aim of studying history was 'to become familiar with students' homeland, its history and cultural tradition so that his or her national identity was strengthened.' Placing the emphasis on historical content was not only to promote patriotism but was also the way curriculum designers understood the importance of substantive knowledge. The definition of the content offers a vision about certain substantive historical knowledge belonging to the general knowledge that all students must master to achieve basic cultural literacy (see Hirsch, 1988).

In Finland, the NCC has been updated approximately every ten years since the 1970s. The history curriculum of 1985 consisted mainly of a list of contents. The next core curriculum of 1994 gave enough space to the teaching tied to competence-based objectives. The emphasis on history teaching was henceforth on procedural knowledge instead of substantive knowledge. At that time, historical thinking skills were brought into the core of the history curriculum. When the contents of the core curriculum for basic education listed

164 items to be taught in 1985, the curriculum of 1994 gave teachers a free hand to choose the contents. The abandonment of prescribed contents for history made teachers into curriculum designers which was the central idea in the school-based curriculum work. However, not everyone appreciated the teachers' new role (see Syrjäläinen, 1994; Ormond, 2017).

Ten years later, content descriptions came back to the history curriculum. The 2004 national curriculum specified 18 key content areas (such as 'The period of transition in Finland') and 35 sub-content descriptions (such as 'the breakdown of the class society' and 'the russification of Finland and resistance to russification') in total. That meant that numerically, teachers had eight lesson hours for each piece of content. However, the latest curriculum which was published in 2014 reduced the number of key content areas to 11. In addition, the designers of the curriculum omitted more precise content definitions (see Appendix 1). Today, teachers have 24 lesson hours for each content area. The visible change compared with the previous curricula is realized in content descriptions which are less exact than they used to be but gives teachers leeway to promote historical thinking skills among their students.

According to the 2014 NCC, students developing a sense of identity is a goal that history teaching should promote. When the NCC in the 1980s guided the teaching of local and Finnish history to bolster local and national identities and in the next decade the NCC guided the teaching of Finnish history to strengthen students' national identity, the concepts of 'national identity' and 'Finnish identity' excluded from the 2004 NCC. Since then, identity education has been based on supporting the students in building their personal cultural identity.

To summarize, the content domain descriptions have changed from an exact level to a more general level and the canon – the historical grand narrative, consisting of 'selected figures, events, story lines, ideas and values, colligated by definite plots, perspectives and explanations' – has been excluded from the curriculum (see Stuurman & Grever, 2007: 3). Crucial historical events such as the russification of Finland and resistance to russification, the Finnish civil war of 1918 or the Winter War against the Soviet Union in 1939-1940, which were always immanent in the curricula (except in the 1994 NCC) are no longer mentioned in the core curriculum of 2014. Nevertheless, this does not mean that content of this kind has been

excluded from teaching – it means that the designers of the curriculum have left the decision about arranging their teaching to the teachers.

## **2. The Emphasis on Historical Thinking Skills in the Core Curriculum**

The concept of historical thinking skills means both specific skills such as interpreting sources, and broad-based approaches to understanding history, like causation. In recent decades, historical thinking has been studied particularly in Anglo-American countries. The research tradition, however, originated with the seminal work done by the British scholars such as Rosalyn Ashby, Peter Lee and Denis Shemilt in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Lévesque & Clark, 2018). Thinking historically, students need intellectual tools which they ‘use to understand how the history they encounter came to be known as well as to create their own evidence-based interpretations’, as Linda Levstik and Stephen Thornton (2018: 474) describe it.

In Finnish basic education, historical thinking skills have been distributed across four territories: (a) significance, values, and attitudes, (b) acquiring information about the past, (c) understanding historical phenomena, and (d) applying historical knowledge. Each territory is further divided into subsections (see Appendix 2). Using substantive concepts is not included in the objectives of instruction in the curriculum.

Basically, the NCC describes skills in the same way as Seixas (1996) who list significance, epistemology and evidence, continuity and change, progress and decline, historical empathy, and empathy and moral judgment, although ‘empathy and moral judgement’ which is part of Seixas’ definition has not been included in the Finnish curriculum. Historical thinking skills are seen as broad-based approaches to understanding history but in the assessment criteria – which have a significant role in the Finnish core curriculum – the focus is on working with historical sources.

The assessment criteria were introduced in 1999 but implemented for the first time in the 2004 NCC. In Finland, there is no national-level assessment of basic education. Hence, the purpose of the assessment criteria was to enhance the consistency of students’ grading. As in other subjects, the criteria in history were supposed to be skill-based.

The curriculum guides teachers to teach three historical thinking heuristics used by historians: sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration (see Wineburg, 1991). Students are taught to identify the key elements of the authorship of sources, to bind them in time and space, and to compare them with one another. Therefore, the history core curriculum is based on the disciplinary way of thinking and inquiry.

### **3. Survey of Teachers' Contentment with Their New History Curriculum**

The aim of our survey was to study how the aforementioned change from the content-based history teaching orientation towards the disciplinary history teaching has succeeded from the respondents' way of thinking. The target group in our study was history teachers in basic school at lower secondary grades 7 to 9 (for those aged 13-15). A total of 177 basic school teachers completed the online questionnaire which was open for a month at the beginning of 2017. Our questionnaire reached about one-fifth of all Finnish lower secondary school history teachers (see Kumpulainen, 2014: 179, 193; Nissinen & Välijärvi, 2011: 53).

In the survey, our questions focused on the teaching and learning objectives of history in the national curriculum; whether they corresponded with the respondents' own views about the objectives of history teaching. Teachers were also asked whether they thought that the descriptions of the contents were acceptable. In addition, the respondents were asked to give feedback to the designers of the curriculum.

The questions were formulated as statements and the respondents stated their views on a Likert scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Three of the statements were directed at the objectives of history teaching, two to the content descriptions and three to the assessment criteria. To summarize our results, with the first two mentioned, teachers were rather pleased. For example, the statement 'the objectives for history teaching defined in the NCC respond to my own perceptions of the aims of history education', averaged 3.6 and the statement 'there are enough key content areas in the NCC' averaged 4.0 on the Likert scale. The statements concerning the assessment criteria were rated the lowest by the teachers. For example, the statement 'the NCC gives enough

guidance to assess students' performance' averaged 2.8 on the Likert scale.

	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Resp. who gave written feedback</b>
<b>Objectives</b>		
The objectives for history teaching are expressed clearly in the NCC	3.6 (N=177)	3.5 (N=58) *
The level of requirement defined in the NCC is suitable	3.3 (N=177)	2.6 (N=58)
The objectives for history teaching defined in the NCC respond to my own perceptions of the aims of history education	3.6 (N=177)	3.1 (N=57)
<b>Content</b>		
There are enough key content areas in the NCC for history	4.0 (N=173)	3.8 (N= 55)
The content areas defined in the NCC for history give a good starting point for planning the teaching	3.7 (N=174)	3.4 (N=56)
<b>Assessment guidelines</b>		
In my opinion the criteria for good performance are aptly described in the NCC for compulsory schooling	3.5 (N=177)	3.0 (N=57)
The NCC gives enough guidance to assess students' performance	2.8 (N=175)	2.5 (N=58)
Overall opinion about the NCC		
The NCC for history responds my opinion how the curriculum for history should be.	3.6 (N=172)	3.3 (N=57)
<b>School grade for NCC</b>		
I will give a school grade for the NCC of history (4 = failed, 10 = excellent)	7.8 (N=177)	7.2 (N=58) **

\*The difference between groups is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ )

\*\*The difference between groups is statistically very significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Table 1. Comparison between the mean scores of all respondents and the mean scores of those who gave written feedback.

We studied more closely the mean scores given by those respondents who provided written feedback. In our analysis, we used typical quantitative methods – frequency distributions and measures of central tendency. Differences between two groups were analyzed using a one-way ANOVA test. If we found statistically significant differences between the two groups, we reported the effect size using Eta square (Cohen, 1988; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002).

It can be seen from Table 1 that those respondents who gave feedback chose the values of lower rank across the board than those who did not give feedback. The differences were statistically significant in the statement ‘the objectives for history teaching are expressed clearly in NCC’ ( $F = 7.548$ ,  $df = 1$ ; 175,  $p < 0.01$ ). Whether the teacher wrote written feedback explained four per cent of the differences of the group in this statement. There was also a statistically very significant difference between those two groups in what school grade they gave for the NCC ( $F = 11.559$ ,  $df = 1$ ; 175,  $p < 0.001$ ). Those teachers who gave written feedback graded the NCC averaged 7.2 (‘satisfactory’) and those who did not 7.8 (‘good’). The written feedback explained six per cent of the differences between the teacher groups mentioned earlier.

The quantitative results are not considered further in this article because the quantitative data were examined systematically and published elsewhere (see Rantala & Ouakrim-Soivio, 2018). This article discusses teachers’ responses to the open-ended questions of our survey.

#### **4. Analysis of Teachers’ Responses to Open-ended Questions**

The respondents were not very eager to write answers to the open-ended questions. Besides expressing their views with Likert scale statements, only one-third of them, 58 teachers in total, wrote answers. Teachers’ answers were relative short, averaging 23 words. We used inductive content analysis to analyze them. As an outcome of our analysis, we formulated categories ‘general thoughts about the history curriculum’, ‘historical contents in the curriculum’, ‘the objectives of history teaching’, ‘the assessment of historical knowledge’ and ‘organizing history education’ that describe the respondents’ comments appropriate.

#### 4.1 *General Thoughts about the History Curriculum* (23 answers)

The most answers concerned the general decisions made in the new core curriculum. Some of the respondents complained that the curriculum was difficult to understand, ambiguous, or too academic. 'It is too technical in nature', encapsulated one teacher. Another expressed mixed feelings: 'The new curriculum has considered all sides and it tries to achieve good things, yet it is too complicated and academic to function in reality'. One respondent questioned teachers' competence to fulfil extravagant plans. Overall, the responses included in this category were short.

#### 4.2 *Historical Contents in the Curriculum* (20 answers)

Second most comments were directed at historical contents. In the 2014 NCC, the number of key content areas was reduced, and the master narrative of Finland and other Western countries abolished. The respondents were in favor of that decision. The debate of breadth versus depth was almost totally missing from teachers' responses. One respondent wanted to have a different balance between historical thinking skills and substantive knowledge: 'I understand the importance of skill-based objectives; however, the curriculum ignores historical contents almost totally.' Only eight per cent of the respondents appraised that some significant key concept area was missing from the curriculum which indicates that most of the respondents were relatively satisfied with the decision concerning the key content areas.

However, some respondents expressed their fears concerning diminishing the 'general knowledge' when the curriculum stresses historical thinking skills. The others resisted content descriptions that were too loose: 'The portrayal of the content is too loose to guide teachers in what they should teach.' A few respondents demanded the reinclusion of chronology in the history curriculum.

Some respondents had clearly missed the idea of letting teachers decide how to structure their teaching. Seemingly the old tradition, in which historical contents were strictly outlined still has a strong effect on some teachers' thinking, as can be seen from the following quotation:

*The new history curriculum demands teaching too heavy a burden of contents. You will be in an appalling hurry if you try to teach all the content required by the*

*curriculum. There are big and difficult issues to handle, for example, socialism, capitalism, liberalism, and both world wars.*

However, teachers were not longing for the national canon. Only three respondents wrote about its absence from the curriculum.

#### 4.3 *The Objectives of History Teaching* (10 answers)

The objectives of history teaching elicited only a few comments from the teachers. A couple of comments praised the decision to emphasize historical thinking skills more clearly than before. However, some respondents expressed their opinion that the disciplinary approach had gone too far already:

*In my opinion, history teachers have low self-esteem. When some teachers of other subjects blame the study of history as being only rote learning, we jump from one extreme to the other. Now history learning focuses only on skills. When we emphasize the historical thinking skills, we don't give enough 'tools' for using those skills. I'll give an example. For skillful analysis of sources, you need to master the facts and structures connected with them. You have to understand the phenomena before analyzing the sources.*

Another respondent doubted students' abilities to cope with skill-based studying:

*The new curriculum aims at teaching historical science. What a beautiful thought from the academic spheres. Only a few lower secondary students are capable for that. Their literacy and reasoning skills are insufficient. It is impossible to raise students' basic abilities to a level that they could use to analyze historical sources.*

#### 4.4 *Assessment of Historical Knowledge* (10 answers)

According to their views on the Likert scale statements, teachers were the most displeased with the assessment criteria expressed in the core curriculum. Nevertheless, they provided only a few comments concerning assessment. A couple of respondents complained that the assessment criteria were difficult to master and measure. Some respondents claimed them to be suitable for the university level, but not for the basic school level:

*The objectives and assessment criteria are just high-flown phrases. They would be better suited to the university. At the moment, only one or two of my students would reach numerical grade 8 ['good'].*

#### 4.5 Organizing History Education (14 answers)

Teachers' answers concerning organizing history education were comprised of the comments about the number of lesson hours given to history instruction, the normative nature of the core curriculum and the lack of textbooks and in-service training. Because those issues are not connected directly with teachers' satisfaction with their curriculum, we will not discuss them further in this article.

In sum, teachers' written answers were negative overall. Few teachers demonstrated a positive attitude towards the curricular decisions. One of them wrote that the objectives in the curriculum are the kind he has been waiting for, for a long time. The other stated that historical thinking skills are represented better than ever. Supposedly, the negative responses are more common in surveys of this kind. Usually those who have a neutral or a positive attitude against the issue measured in surveys do not give feedback or respond to the open-ended questions because they are pleased or indifferent, as can be seen in our study (see Table 1). However, those who have a negative attitude usually want to have a change on the issue and they might see their responses as a way to reach it. An example of such hope can also be seen in our survey:

*During the last ten years I have participated in several surveys like this, but my answers have never influenced anything. I suppose the same will happen this time.'*

### 5. Finnish Teachers' Relative Contentment with Their Curriculum

One-fifth of Finnish history teachers in the lower secondary schools participated in our survey. The respondents could give their answers to Likert scale statements without answering the open-ended questions. It is worth noting that relatively large proportion (18.5 %) of history teachers voluntarily responded to the survey but few of them answered the open-ended questions. The lack of response to the open-ended questions cannot be explained by respondents' fatigue, because the survey was a relatively short one. There were

only nine Likert scale statements. Therefore, relatively few answers might indicate teachers' overall contentment with the curriculum.

The results of our survey can be compared with similar studies elsewhere. For example, scholars in the UK (Harris & Burn, 2016; Harris & Graham, 2018) implemented studies with a research frame and data collections that are close to those we used in our study. In the study by Harris and Burn, the focus was on history teachers' views on what substantive content young people should be taught, and in the Harris and Graham's study on history teachers' willingness to support curriculum change. It seems that particularly those teachers who were against the curriculum development participated in the survey and gave their comments. Only one-third of the respondents in our study gave feedback to the designers of the core curriculum whereas in the UK the proportion was two-thirds. In addition, the Finnish teachers' responses were only one-fifth of the length compared their colleagues in the UK (see Harris & Burn, 2016). In that respect, our results can be interpreted as Finnish teachers' relative contentment with their curriculum.

In Finland, teachers' contentment with omitting the historical canon corresponds with the feedback of the 70 largest schooling providers (i.e. municipalities) gathered by the Finnish National Board of Education between 2012 and 2017. It indicates that most history teachers found the solutions satisfactory. This was also seen in the feedback collected by the Association of Teachers of History and Social Studies in Finland in 2013 (Pönni, 2013). Neither the working groups for implementing the local curriculum nor representatives of schools gave feedback about the absence of the historical canon (Rantala & Ouakrim-Soivio, 2018). As we stated earlier, there are only 11 content areas in the NCC and no precise content descriptions. Only two content areas focus on Finnish history. Basically, teachers can leave out of their teaching such canonical contents as the wars Finland was involved in during the 20<sup>th</sup> century or historical key figures. The battle between breadth in content versus depth in thinking in the core curriculum ended with the victory of the latter. Historical canon no longer exists in the curriculum. In this respect, Finland is moving in a different direction from some post-communist countries of Eastern, Eastern Central and South Eastern Europe and some Western countries like Denmark, England and the Netherlands, which have returned to curricular canons (see Ahonen, 2017a; Grever, 2008; Harris & Burn, 2016).

A canon can be seen as threatening the disciplinary approach in history teaching. For example, Larry Cuban (2016: 93) sees that the heritage approach that attempts to grow good citizenship through teaching the ‘official’ story of the US conflicts with the disciplinary approach which is based on the idea that there are many accounts of the past and students should develop the skills needed to analyze those. However, abolishing the canon from the curriculum does not necessarily eliminate it from teaching, as can be seen from the Finnish context. When analyzing Finnish history teachers’ attitudes towards history Tom Gullberg (2010) noted that the grand national narrative still characterized history teaching a decade ago when the core curriculum of 2004 sought to guide teachers towards the disciplinary approach. The common historical narrative can be seen as the glue to strengthen the cohesion of the nation which might explain teachers’ decisions. Other scholars made similar findings in the early 2010s. At that time, teachers still seemed to be concentrating more on content than historical thinking skills (Ouakrim-Soivio & Kuusela, 2012; Rantala, 2012). It underlines the fact that teaching at schools will not change solely with of the orders given by the school administrators (see Coburn, 2004; Troyer, 2017). The change in history teaching depends on teachers’ contentment with the curricular policy. Our survey reveals that finally in the latter half of the 2010s most Finnish teachers seems to have accepted the new course with their teaching. However, the open-ended answers of teachers explain the problems that curriculum developers have to consider. It remains to be seen if the respondents have adopted historical thinking skills as their guideline or whether their responses to our survey were only paying lip service.

## Notes

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## **Appendix 1. Key Content Areas in the NCC of 2014**

Key content areas related to the objectives of history in grades 4-6 (for those aged 10-12):

C1 Prehistoric era and the birth of civilization: The students learn about the lives of small human populations, the hunter-gatherer culture, the revolution of farming culture, and the birth of civilization.

C2 Ancient times and the heritage of the classical period: The students learn about the dawn of democracy in Greece and the Roman society. The era is also examined from the perspective of the settlement of the Nordic countries.

C3 Middle Ages: The students study the medieval worldview as well as cultural similarities and differences in the East and the West and their impacts on different groups of people. They learn about the dawn of the historical era in Finland and how Finland became part of Sweden.

C4 The revolution of the modern times: The students are familiarized with changes that took place in science, arts, and people's beliefs.

C5 Finland as a part of Sweden: The students learn about the development in Finland in the 17th and the 18th century.

Key content areas related to the objectives of history in grades 7-9 (for those aged 13-15):

C1 The origins and development of the industrial society: The students familiarize themselves with a phenomenon that has changed the lives of human beings and the relationship between humans and nature as well as the world.

C2 People changing the world: The students familiarize themselves with social ideologies, their significance and consequences as well as how people have been able to make an impact in their time.

C3 Creating, building, and defending Finland: The students familiarize themselves with the significance of culture for building identity during the time of autonomy and with the beginnings of independent Finland.

C4 The era of great wars: The students familiarize themselves with the World Wars, the Cold War and surviving a war, particularly from the viewpoint of ordinary people and human rights issues. The

students learn about crimes against humanity, such as the Holocaust and other forms of persecution as well as the promotion of human rights.

C5 Building the welfare state: The students explore the history of everyday life and the origins of the current way of life in Finland. In addition to benefits development has brought the individual, the students learn about the change in the economic structure, service professions becoming more commonplace, as well as urbanization.

C6 The origins of the world politics of today: The students explore the shared history of developed and developing countries and the origins of new kinds of political tensions in the world as well as solutions for them.

**Appendix 2. Objectives and Assessment Criteria in the NCC of 2014**

<b>The objective of the instruction of history is</b>	<b>Knowledge and skills for numerical grade 8</b>
<b>Significance, values, and attitudes</b>	
to guide the student to become interested in history as a field of knowledge and a subject that builds his or her identity	The development of the student’s motivation is not used as a basis for grade formulation. The students are guided in reflecting on their experiences as a part of self-assessment.
<b>Acquiring information about the past</b>	
to guide the student to recognize different sources of history	The student is able to search for historical information in different sources with guidance.
to guide the student to notice that historical information can be interpreted in different ways	The student is able to tell facts from interpretations.
<b>Understanding historical phenomena</b>	
to help the student to understand different ways of dividing history into eras and using the related historical concepts	The student recognizes the main ways of structuring time in history and is able to give examples of typical features of societies in different times and different eras.
to guide the student to understand the motives of human activity	The student is able to put himself or herself in the position of a person of the past and to describe the motivations of his or her actions.
to help the student to perceive different reasons for historical events and phenomena and their consequences	The student recognizes and is able to give examples of causal relationships of historical phenomena.

to help the student to identify changes in the history of his or her family or community and to understand how the same changes may have meant different things to different people	The student is able to describe changes and explain why change does not equal progress. Using some examples, the student is able to describe how the same change has had a different meaning for different people and groups.
<b>Applying historical knowledge</b>	
to guide the student to propose reasons for changes	The student is able to describe the main features of the causal relationships of some historical phenomena.
to instruct the student to explain how interpretations may change as a consequence of new sources or new ways of examining them	Using some examples, the student is able to explain why the same event or phenomenon may be interpreted in different ways.
to guide the student to explain human activity	The student is able to describe the studied event or a phenomenon from the point of view of different actors.

Table 2. Assessment criteria for history at the end of grade 6 for a verbal assessment describing good knowledge and skills/numerical grade eight (National Board of Education, 2014: 298-299).

<b>The objective of the instruction of history is</b>	<b>Knowledge and skills for the grade 8</b>
<b>Significance, values, and attitudes</b>	
to strengthen the student's interest in history as a field of knowledge and as a subject that builds his or her identity	Not used as a principle for grade formulation. The student is guided in reflecting on his or her experiences as a part of self-assessment.
<b>Acquiring information about the past</b>	
to activate the student to acquire historical information from diverse age-appropriate sources and to evaluate their reliability	The student is able to search for information from different historical sources of information and detects differences in their reliability.
to help the student understand that historical information can be interpreted in different ways	The student is able to read and interpret different sources.
<b>Understanding historical phenomena</b>	
to strengthen the student's ability to understand historical time and the related concepts	The student is able to place the studied topics into their temporal contexts and thus in a chronological order.
to guide the student in understanding factors that have influenced human actions and decision-making in different historical situations	The student is able to put himself or herself in the position of a person of the past and to describe the motivations of his or her actions.
to help the student to consider different reasons for historical events and phenomena	The student is able to separate factors explaining historical events or phenomena from less important factors.
to guide the student to analyze historical change and continuity	The student is able to explain why in some spheres of life, people once acted differently than people act today and in other spheres in a similar way.

<b>Applying historical knowledge</b>	
to encourage the student to make interpretations	The student knows how to form his or her own justified interpretation is able to form justified interpretations of historical events.
to guide the student to explain the intentions of human activity	The student is able to describe the intentions of human activity.
to guide the student to explain why historical information can be interpreted and used differently in different situations and to critically evaluate the reliability of interpretations	The student is able to evaluate the reliability of interpretations of historical events or phenomena.
to guide the student in developing his or her competence in using a variety of sources, comparing them, and forming his or her own justified interpretation based on those sources	The student is able to answer questions about the past by using information he or she has obtained from different sources.
to guide the student to evaluate alternative futures based on his or her knowledge of history	The student is able to describe how interpretations of the past are used to justify choices made for the future.

Table 3. Final assessment criteria for good knowledge and skills in history (numerical grade 8) at the end of basic education (National Board of Education, 2014: 503-504).

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**TEACHING ABOUT HISTORICAL AGENCY:  
AN INTERVENTION STUDY EXAMINING  
CHANGES IN STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING  
AND PERCEPTION OF AGENCY  
IN PAST AND PRESENT**

Marjolein Wilke, Fien Depaep  
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*Agency is considered a key concept in historical thinking. Understood in a sociological way, it addresses the question of who has the individual or social potential to act purposefully and to effectuate change in society. Teaching about agency is also assumed to influence civic behaviour, as reflection on the various agents in the past and how they contributed to changes in society, can make students aware of their own role in society today. Explicit teaching is believed to be an effective teaching strategy to foster students' understanding of agency. Empirical research supporting these assumptions is, however, scarce. This research examines, through a quasi-experimental design with pre- and posttest, the effects of explicit teaching about agency on students' understanding and on their perception of agency in past and present, in terms of active societal engagement.*

Agency occupies a central position in the study of the past as historians try to assess, with hindsight, who in the past generated certain historical changes or ensured continuity. The question of who had agency in particular historical events in the past is not a simple matter and remains a subject of discussion among historians. Seixas (2012) describes different stances taken by different scholars towards the notion of historical agency. While some historians, such as Carlyle (1841), pointed mainly to the 'great man' in history, historiographical shifts particularly since the Second World War brought along different perspectives on agency. Braudel (1949) and others emphasized structural factors as change agents. Scholars in social, economic and later on cultural history and subaltern, gender and postcolonial studies, such as Thompson (1966), Spivak (1988) and Davis (2000) emphasized the agency of ordinary people in history and even of marginalised groups in society. According to Seixas (2012: 543) this democratisation of historical agency constituted a revolution in the approach of agency as it presented people who had

previously been ascribed a passive role in history, as active agents now.

Aside from a purely historical perspective, agency can also be understood in a sociological way, addressing the question of who has the individual or social potential to act purposefully and to effectuate change or continuity in society. This view is reflected for example in Barton's definition which will be used throughout this research: agency is 'the ability to act on decisions in order to bring about desired goals' (Barton, 2012: 131). In this sense, it can also be applied to various historical contexts to assess the potential agency various agents had in the past (whether this potential was realised or not). Although agency is a complex notion, reflection on agency is crucial in history education in order to fully grasp concepts such as continuity and change or cause and consequence. It can, for instance, help to understand which agents instigated certain historical change or preservation, and hence to reflect on the causes and consequences of historical events.

A thorough understanding of agency is therefore inextricably linked to key historical thinking concepts such as continuity and change or cause and consequence (Seixas, 2012) and it also plays a key role in the moulding of civic attitudes. Barton (2012) considers agency to be at the heart not only of historical understanding but also of democratic decision making. Historical thinking about agency is believed to have an important impact on civic behaviour in the present (Barton, 2012; den Heyer, 2003; Clark, 2014; Peck, Poyntz & Seixas, 2011; Seixas, 1993). It helps to understand the limits and possibilities of actions and the role that ordinary people can play in (historical) change (Seixas, 2012).

Despite its importance and suspected impact, the concept has received far less attention than other aspects of historical thinking in history education research (Barton, 2012; Seixas, 2012). Empirical evidence to support the assumption that reflection on agency in the past affects students' civic attitudes in the present is scarce. A newly developed exhibition on poverty in Belgium since 1800, set-up by an associated research centre, provided us the opportunity to address this research gap through a small intervention study. Parallel with the exhibition we developed a lesson series based on explicit teaching about agency and invited teachers to implement this lesson series in their history classes and, if desired, visit the exhibition. As the option of the exhibition visit was less chosen by teachers, and, if a visit was

made, the class groups spent only very little time in the exhibition,<sup>1</sup> we focused only on the effects of the lesson series and did not distinguish between class groups which visited the museum and those who did not. Through a quasi-experimental design, the research studied the effects of explicit teaching about agency on students' understanding and perception of agency in the past and the present. The article first provides a brief overview of the state of the art with regard to research on agency in history education, followed by the research context, questions and methodology. The research results will then be presented and discussed.

## **1. International Research on Agency in History Education**

Agency is a key concept in historical thinking, meaning the ability to understand and organize information about the past, with the aim of describing, comparing and explaining historical phenomena (people, groups, events and developments from the past) (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008).

Despite the importance of agency in historical thinking, little research has been conducted on the matter. A number of studies have focused on how agency is represented in history textbooks for secondary education and on students' perceptions of agency. Van Nieuwenhuysse (2019) examined the attribution of agency in textbook accounts of the Cold War, showing that textbooks ascribe agency mostly to non-human agents such as 'the Soviet Union' or 'capitalism', and to 'great men', such as Truman or Stalin. Ordinary agents, ordinary individuals or groups of people who are not specifically in a position of power, are rarely attributed agency. Ordinary groups, such as labourers or students, are predominantly presented as passive agents. In addition, the notion of agency is not explicitly addressed in these textbooks; consequently, reflection on the role of various agents in generating historical change or continuity is not encouraged. This trend in history textbooks to present agency in a one-sided way was confirmed in other research addressing representations of the colonial past in history textbooks in various countries in the world. For Western history textbooks, it was found that agency – again – was attributed in particular to powerful Western agents and non-human agents, such as capitalism and nation-states (Van Nieuwenhuysse & Pires Valentim, 2018). Furthermore, Barton (2012) found that marginalised groups in

history, if included, are often represented as mere passive victims of history rather than active participants.

Some research has been conducted on children and adolescents' understanding of historical agency, albeit often in an indirect way. Research into causal reasoning in history among elementary and secondary school students showed that these students tend to point mainly to either powerful individuals as causing historical events and historical change or to abstract structures. Barton's (1997) research revealed that, over a broad range of topics, elementary school students consistently understood historical developments and changes 'in terms of the intentions and interactions of individuals' (Barton, 1997: 298), thereby overlooking the role of broader social or economic developments or of social institutions. A similar finding was reported by Carretero et al. (1994) who noted that 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade-students, when explaining the causes for the discovery of America ranked intentional factors the highest, at the expense of political or social factors. Although the role attributed to personal agents varied according to the specific subject which was discussed, they noted that adults and adolescents consistently considered personal agents to be more influential than did history experts (Carretero, López-Manjon & Jacott, 1997).

The comparative European Youth and History survey (Angvik & von Borries, 1997) addressed agency directly, when asking students to assess the extent to which various factors change people's lives. It showed that students strongly believed in scientific, technological and economic progress effectuated by non-human agents and did not really believe in the impact of individuals or grassroots movements, being human agents. Other research was conducted by Peck, Poyntz and Seixas (2012) who examined students' essays on the Canadian national past to gain insight in their ideas about who were the agents responsible for historical change. They asked students to write 'the story of Canada from the beginning to present' and categorised the historical agents mentioned. Students attributed agency mostly to corporations, nations, (powerful) individuals and especially to collectivities. First Nations people and other marginalised groups were rarely attributed agency. A similarly simplified attribution of agency was also found in research of Van Havere et al. (2017) examining students' essays on the Belgian national past and in a review study of den Heyer (2003) examining research on students'

attribution of causes to historical events and their explanations for historical change.

In a previous article (Wilke, Depaepe & Van Nieuwenhuysse, 2019) we examined students' perception of agency in past and present. The analysis revealed the difficulty students faced when dealing with the notion of historical agency and showed that they attributed agency in (a specific context in) the past mostly to powerful, rather than ordinary agents. However, when asked specifically about the potential agency of ordinary people in the present in the society they live in, most students indicated that they did consider ordinary people to have agency, especially when acting as a group.

It can be deduced from this overview that history textbooks as well as young people exhibit a somewhat simplified view of agency, attributing agency in particular to certain types of agents, while disregarding the agency of other (less powerful) agents. How to account for this preponderant attribution of agency to either powerful individuals or to abstract structural factors, and the absence of agency attributed to ordinary individuals and groups? It seems as if history education, and by extension the students in the history classroom, is indebted to the approach of the past from both the 19<sup>th</sup> century – when agency was often particularly attributed to great white men – and the 1960s – when history education was under the influence of the social sciences approach, in which non-human agents, social processes and structures, rather than ordinary people, received attention (Erdmann & Hasberg, 2011).

It is, however, important that history education passes on and that students gain a more differentiated understanding of the notion as this can provide young people with a more thorough understanding of historical change (den Heyer, 2003). Aside from contributing to students' in-depth understanding of history and historical thinking abilities, improving students' understanding of agency is also expected to be very impactful on students' civic behaviour. Several history education scholars argue that a good understanding of agency in the past is crucial for students to get a grasp of their own potential role in society today. By making students aware that the present is not merely determined by the past, that change is possible and that civic engagement is worthwhile, history education can create agency and thus assist in the development of active citizenship (den Heyer, 2003; Harris, 2011; Wilschut, 2012; Wilschut et al., 2013). Peck et al. (2012) argue that paying attention to the active role of ordinary

people in the past will make students aware of their potential for generating change in society. Barton (2012) argues that history education should expose students to a wider range of historical agents as this will help them to understand the complexity of historical agency. By reflecting on the actions of people in the past, students will be more prepared for their role in society. Students need to understand the balance between acknowledging people's ability to act and the influence of the societal context in which their actions take place. To support students in gaining a more profound understanding of agency, Barton (2012) emphasises the need for explicit teaching about the notion.

Explicit teaching or instruction in history includes the explicit naming and modelling of strategies used by professional historians when training students (Collins, Brown & Holum, 1991). It can include explicitly addressing expert strategies, second-order concepts and even underlying epistemological beliefs on history (Stoel, van Drie & van Boxtel, 2017). The effectiveness of explicit teaching as a strategy for enhancing different aspects of historical thinking and epistemological beliefs has already been demonstrated by various scholars (De La Paz, 2005; De La Paz & Felton, 2010; Khishfe & Abd-El-Khalick, 2002; Reisman, 2012; Stoel, van Drie & van Boxtel, 2017). Empirical research on the effect of (explicit) teaching about agency on students' understanding of agency or on their views of agency in the present is, however, absent.

## **2. Research Questions, Context and Methodology**

### *2.1 Research Questions*

Although several authors speculate that enhancing students' understanding of agency in the past will contribute to active citizenship, this theoretical assumption has not yet been empirically substantiated. This study therefore empirically examines the effects of explicit teaching about agency on students' (conceptual) understanding of agency in the past and perceptions of agency in the present. A specific interest is taken in students' beliefs about the potential and value of the agency of ordinary people. Agency is hereby understood in a sociological way, applicable in various historical contexts, as the ability to decide and act purposefully, to bring about change within the own society. A differentiated understanding of agency is considered to be the recognition that

different types of agents had (and have) an ability or the potential to generate change or continuity, even though this potential might not have been (or be) fully realized, and even though this potential was (is) different for various agents. More specifically, the research aims to answer the following research questions: (1) Does explicit teaching about agency contribute to students' development of a more differentiated, nuanced understanding of agency in a specific historical past? (2) Does explicit teaching about agency affect students' view on agency in present-day Flemish society, in that they recognise the potential agency of various agents in the present and the usefulness of active engagement in society?

## *2.2 Research Context*

The research has been conducted in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, which has its own, autonomous history curriculum and accompanying standards that students should meet. The Flemish government made a deliberate choice not to define an extensive list of historical knowledge that students should be acquainted with (Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, 2000). Rather, the history standards stress the importance of developing critical thinking skills and historical consciousness.

Overall, two main goals are set for secondary history education. On the one hand, history education has to introduce students into history as an academic discipline, on the other hand it is expected to contribute to the development of active citizenship, through offering cultural training, training in social resilience and stimulating identity building. Despite its disciplinary goals, the standards testify to a neomodern, rather than postmodern view. In its approach of the past, Flemish history education adopts a very structural approach, based on the social sciences, aiming to identify broad and underlying patterns in the past (Wils, 2009). The result is a history education of abstract, all-encompassing stories, but in which concrete people are often absent and are rarely attributed any agency.

## *2.3 Research Design*

This study, conducted in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade of general secondary education, used a quasi-experimental pre-posttest design. In general education, students receive two hours of history education per week.

The 11<sup>th</sup> grade addresses the Late modern period (approx. 1750-1945).

Five classes in four different schools and with four different teachers participated in the study, making a total of 109 participants.<sup>2</sup> The intervention group received a lesson series of two lesson hours ( $N=84$ ). One class ( $N=25$ ) functioned as a control group. In the control group, students received no classes on the topic of poverty and continued with their regular classes. Unfortunately, we were unable to conduct a posttest in the control group. Because of the short-term nature of the intervention, the time between pre- and posttest was no longer than two weeks. As the participating teacher of the control group feared students would not be motivated to complete the same test at such short time notice, he skipped the posttest. We could therefore not include the control group data in the analysis and will henceforth only report on the data of the intervention group.

Of the participants, 25.3 % identified as male, 74.7 % as female ( $N=83$ ). The average age of the respondents was 16.7 years old ( $SD = 0.73$ ).

Participants in the intervention group completed a pretest, followed, the next week, by the intervention. Immediately after the intervention, students were given a posttest.

#### 2.4 *Intervention: Lesson Series*

The central historical theme in the lesson series was the evolution of poverty in Belgium and Western Europe since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This topic was selected because it closely connects to commonly studied subjects in this stage of secondary education and because it is a well-known subject among students due to its presence in popular culture (for instance through the Flemish historical movie *Daens* (Coninx, 1992) about the 19<sup>th</sup> century social question). This way, we avoided selecting a subject which students perhaps knew nothing about. Students at this stage of secondary education can reasonably be expected to have some background knowledge of the process of industrialization, the social structure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century society in Western Europe and the prevailing political, economic and religious system.

In terms of content, rather than trying to cover every aspect related to socio-economic developments in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Belgium, the

lesson series had a clear focus on poverty, allowing for a more thorough and profound reflection on the subject. Furthermore, the lesson series focused on historical thinking, and more particularly on the concept of agency. It paid attention to the various ways in which a wide range of agents actively contributed to change or continuity in society. It was our explicit aim to not only focus on the agency of powerful people and abstract structures, but to also include the agency of ordinary people, and particularly that of poor people. The lesson series therefore also included historical sources made by various agents (including sources made by people living in poverty themselves), and focused on both reasoning with and about sources (Van Nieuwenhuysen et al., 2015). In so doing, it aimed to address both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ strategies for fighting poverty in past and present, and to reflect with students on connections between both. For instance, the lesson series demonstrated the actions taken by state and religious institutions to reduce poverty (such as organising charity events or providing dole), but also depicted strategies which poor people themselves used to improve their situation (such as pawning valuable objects or migrating to areas with better economic circumstances). This was also discussed with students during the lesson series. This provided a differentiated representation of agency, breaking through the seemingly all-encompassing power of abstract structures and powerful individuals. It paid attention to the agency of ordinary people, both as groups and as individuals, while at the same time paying attention to the societal structures within which their actions took place (and often limited them). It thereby took into account Barton’s (2012) recommendations for teaching about agency.

Essential to the lesson series was explicit teaching. The lesson series explicitly addressed the concept of agency and a broad range of agents (see above) as well as related aspects of historical thinking, such as critical reasoning about sources (taking into account author perspectives and subjectivity of sources) and reflection on the interpretative nature of historiography. Throughout the lesson series, for instance, students analysed a broad range of sources on (fighting) poverty, stemming from various authors. However, only a very small number of sources stemmed from people living in poverty themselves. At the end of the lesson series, students were asked to reflect on why so few sources stemming from people living in poverty were available and how this absence might affect our current

image of poverty in the past. In so doing, students were led to the understanding that sources represent a certain viewpoint (the role of the author) and that historians' image of the past is influenced by the sources that they have at their disposal.

Teachers were offered a fully prepared lesson series, including historical source material, contextual information and concrete questions accompanying the historical source material and background information on essential aspects of the lesson series, such as agency. To ensure a reliable execution of the intervention, foundational knowledge for educators was ensured through training which participating teachers received beforehand by one of the researchers (Alexander, 2005). This training drew the teachers' attention to the importance of explicit teaching and provided the participating teachers with the necessary knowledge on the concept of agency in history education, historical thinking and the topic of the lesson series. The researcher explained the aims, content and methods of the lesson series. During and after the intervention, the teachers remained in contact with the researcher, and reported on the execution of the lesson series (and pre- and posttest). This provided confirmation that the lesson series was implemented as intended.

## 2.5 *Data Collection*

Students completed a pre- and posttest, consisting of a questionnaire and performance task, to complete in 45 minutes (= approx. one lesson period). Open-ended questions were provided with an indication of the maximum allowed length. Students completed both forms anonymously and individually, without access to the internet or other sources.

The performance task assessed the first research question on the impact of explicit teaching on students' conception of agency in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It started with an explanation, accompanied by examples, of the notion of agency, understood in a sociological view, in one paragraph. Subsequently, students were presented with a typical learning text from a Flemish secondary school history textbook on the process of 'proletarianisation ca. 1870-1914'. In one page, the text discussed the societal structure of the industrial society and the work force, the increasing poverty, and the poor working and living conditions of the labourers. To prevent the language from being a barrier in students' comprehension of the task, some

textbook formulations were slightly adapted (in terms of shorter phrases with less difficult words). These minor adaptations did not alter the content or the structure of the text. By using a text from a broadly used Flemish history textbook, the task remained close to typical classroom practices and provided an assignment which students are familiar with. The text approached the subject from a macro-perspective, ascribing agency in particular to abstract entities (such as the industrial revolution, social legislation and developments in agriculture), economically powerful agents (such as employers and factory owners) and, to a much lesser amount, to workers. Little agency was attributed to other groups of ordinary people, such as people living in poverty, while worker's unions, individuals or political agents were not mentioned at all.

In several open-ended question, respondents were asked (1) to indicate all agents in the text which were ascribed agency and (2) to assess this attribution of agency. More specifically they were asked whether they thought all relevant agents were mentioned, whether agency was attributed in a differentiated way and, if not, which agents they would ascribe more or less agency to.

A questionnaire addressed the second research question. It examined the impact of explicit teaching about agency on students' views of agency in present Flemish society. The questionnaire contained profiling questions (on students' age, gender, ethnic background) and addressed students' views of agency in the present. Students were asked the following questions: (1) 'Can ordinary people take up an active role with the aim to bring about change within their own society?' (2) 'Do you believe it is useful for ordinary people to take on a voluntary societal engagement (such as community work, participation in a protest march, political engagement etc.) in order to bring about change in the society they live in, to achieve a certain goal?' They were asked to assign a score between zero (no role/use at all) and ten (a very active role/very useful). They were also asked to briefly clarify their score in one or two sentences. As it was not possible to gauge students' actual active engagement in society, we wanted to address on the one hand their view on ordinary people's potential agency in current Flemish society, and on the other hand to what extent they considered an active engagement of ordinary people in their society to be useful and effective in bringing about societal change. In addition, respondents were presented with the following question: 'Who or what in society

has the power to take action and make decisions, to initiate change, to achieve a goal?' and were asked to grade the agency of 18 agents (such as the government, the army, a teacher, etc.) on a Likert-type scale from zero (no power at all), to five (a lot of power). The performance task and questionnaire were identical in the posttest, only the profiling questions (regarding items such as age and gender) were left out.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

Category	Clarification	Example
0	No answer or the answer contains no correct element.	<i>Everyone has an active role. I think it is balanced [...]</i>
1	Answer contains a correct element (no sufficiently differentiated representation in the text, missing agent), but no further explanation.	<i>Not all agents are mentioned. The king could also interfere so the text is imbalanced.</i>
2	Answer contains a correct element and good clarification a (e.g. strategies used by the missing agents demonstrating they did have agency).	<i>Personally I think they focus too much on the agency of the factory owners. They had a lot of power at the time, but they were also controlled by people above them, for instance political leaders. Also, workers' unions are not mentioned, even though they brought on better social legislation.</i>

Table 1. Examples of answers for each category.

A partial-credit coding system was used to analyse the data from the performance task. Students' answers were assigned into one of three categories (with a score of 0/2, 1/2 or 2/2). Answers were assigned a zero when the question was not answered or was answered incorrectly. When students' answers contained a correct element but lacked a (good) clarification, they were assigned a one. A two was given when students provided a good answer, containing multiple

correct elements and a good clarification. Table 1 provides an example of answers categorised as zero, one and two.

To assess the validity of this classification system, 10 % of the tasks were graded by two independent scorers, providing a good inter-rater reliability of 0.80 using the Kappa statistic (Banerjee et al., 1999).

Additional agents listed by students were ranged under seven categories. The categories of individuals, corporations and collectivities and nations were based on the research of Peck, Poyntz and Seixas (2011). A further distinction was made between individuals mentioned by name or by their function. An additional category of 'systems' was established, arising from the answers provided by the students. This resulted in the following six categories: individuals mentioned by name (e.g. King Leopold II), individuals mentioned by their function (e.g. the king, the prime minister, the pope), corporations, meaning any entity with an organised structure (e.g. the army, parliament, the government, the worker's union), collectivities (being a group of people which does not constitute a formal entity (Peck et al. 2011), e.g. the ordinary people, religious leaders, the rich, citizens), and ideological, political, religious or economic systems (e.g. democracy, capitalism). Agents who could not be ascribed to one of these categories, were assigned to a 'miscellaneous' category (e.g. Marx' alienation theory, elections).

The data from the questionnaire were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. To detect underlying factors in the question related to the agency of various agents, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the 18 agents presented in the questionnaire. This resulted in the identification of two underlying factors. The effects of the intervention were measured using paired samples t-tests or, when the data were not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon signed rank tests

The qualitative analysis was used to analyse respondents' answers to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire (regarding the potential and usefulness of ordinary people's agency). In analysing the qualitative data, a dialectic approach was adopted. On the one hand a priori (sensitizing) codes and categories were developed from the research question and/or literature. On the other hand, codes were created as new themes came up from the data. The units of analysis were 'utterances', phrases or sentences that held a view on agency or (a referral to) a historical agent (Peck et al., 2011). This resulted in two categorisations. A first categorisation examined

students' view on ordinary people having agency as individuals or as a group. Another set of categories, constructed from the data themselves, identified recurring themes in respondents' explanation of the potential and usefulness of ordinary people's agency.

### 3. Research Results

#### 3.1 *Changes in Students' Understanding and Perception of Agency in the Past*

In order to assess the first research question regarding students' understanding and view of agency in the past, respondents were asked to read a textbook account on the process of proletarianisation (ca. 1870-1914) and to assess the attribution of agency in the text. The answers were analysed qualitatively and assigned to one of three categories (zero, one or two – see methodology section). Table 2 shows the overall result in pre- and posttest.

Category		Pretest	Posttest
0	Frequency	13	4
	Percentage	15.48 %	4.76 %
1	Frequency	62	64
	Percentage	73.81 %	76.19 %
2	Frequency	9	14
	Percentage	10.71 %	16.67 %
Unanswered	Frequency	–	2
	Percentage	–	2.38 %
<b>Total</b>	Frequency	<b>84</b>	<b>84</b>
	Percentage	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 2. Distribution of answers in the performance task among three categories, in pre- and posttest.

The data show a strong decrease in the number of answers assigned a zero between the pre- and posttest (from 15.48 % to 4.76 %) in favour of a small increase in the categories assigned a two (from 10.71 % to 16.67 %). A Wilcoxon signed ranks test performed on the complete set of intervention group data shows that these differences are significant ( $T=84$ ;  $p=0.034$ ). The intervention thus improved students' performances and hence their understanding of agency. More respondents managed to either sum up one or more missing

agents in the textbook account or indicate that the textbook did not present a differentiated attribution of agency. However, adequately explaining why these agents should have been attributed more agency or in what way precisely the textbook did not provide a differentiated picture, remained a challenge as the majority of respondents in the posttest (76.19 %) did not provide an explanation or provided one that was unclear. There was also no change in the proportion of answers providing either no explanation or an unclear one.

Respondents were also asked to list additional agents which were not mentioned in the text but nevertheless were agents in the historical process of proletarianisation. All additional agents mentioned in the open ended questions were assigned to one of six categories. Table 3 shows the distribution of listed agents over the different categories in both pre- and posttest.

Type of agent		Pretest (N=84)	Posttest (N=84)
Individuals by name	Frequency	3	3
	Percentage	1.38 %	1.28 %
Individuals by function	Frequency	32	24
	Percentage	14.68 %	10.21 %
Corporate bodies	Frequency	59	96
	Percentage	27.06 %	40.85 %
Collectivities	Frequency	108	97
	Percentage	49.54 %	41.28 %
Systems	Frequency	7	6
	Percentage	3.21 %	2.55 %
Miscellaneous	Frequency	9	9
	Percentage	4.13 %	3.83 %
<b>Total</b>	Frequency	<b>218</b>	<b>235</b>
	Percentage	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Table 3. Categorisation of additional agents, in pre- and posttest.

In the pretest, 5 respondents (5.95 %) did not mention any additional agents. In the posttest, 4 respondents (4.76 %) did not do so. The results of the pretest show that respondents mention certain types of agents far more often than others. Mainly collectivities were mentioned as additional agents (such as the elite or the clergy), or corporate bodies (such as the government, the state, parliament).

Individuals were less frequently mentioned. A closer look at the agents mentioned by students showed that they mainly listed agents that could be considered powerful at the time, because of their political, economic or otherwise influential position (as portrayed in history textbooks and historiography). Frequently mentioned were, for instance, kings, the pope, the state, government, ministers or the church. This does not mean that ordinary agents were completely ignored. Especially within the category of collectivities, some ordinary agents (such as ‘the people’) could be found. For that matter, general trends in students’ initial mentioning of additional agents were explored in a previous article (Wilke, Depaepe & Van Nieuwenhuysse, 2019).

When comparing the results of the pretest and posttest, it shows that there is overall a small increase in the number of additional agents mentioned (from 218 to 235), unevenly distributed among the categories. The increase is largely situated within the category of corporate bodies (from 59 agents mentioned to 96 agents mentioned, taking up 40.85 % of the total in the posttest). The number of individuals and collectivities mentioned decreases slightly. Some interesting changes take place in the specific agents mentioned by respondents, as three groups of agents in particular are more frequently mentioned after the intervention. First are agents such as ‘the state’ (increasing from 21 times mentioned in the pretest to 26 times in the posttest) or ‘the government’ (from 5 to 15). This is especially the case within the category of corporate bodies. Second are ordinary agents, in particular within the category of collectivities and to a lesser extent in the category of corporate bodies. An increase can be noted in the mentioning of agents such as ‘people living in poverty’ (from zero in the pretest to 10 in the posttest) and ‘the people’ (from 5 in the pretest to 10 in the posttest). Third are religious agents, such as ‘the church’ and ‘religion’, which increased respectively from 4 to 12 and 4 to 9 between pre- and posttest. The intervention hence resulted in an increased awareness of the agency of certain types of agents. Furthermore, although the number of agents mentioned in the category of collectivities decreases after the lesson series, the additional agents listed by students become more accurate. Whereas in the pretest, a lot of seemingly ‘random’ agents were mentioned which were not especially relevant to the subject of proletarianisation (students mentioned for example artists and

inventors), the agents mentioned in the posttest are more relevant to the topic and are in line with the content of the lesson series.

### 3.2 Changes in Students' Perception of Agency in the Present

In order to answer the second research question on students' perception of agency in the present, two topics were covered. First, who are considered agents in present-day Flemish society? Second, to what extent do respondents believe in the agency of ordinary people and how do they evaluate the value of voluntary societal engagement within the society they live in?

#### 3.2.1 Who Has Agency?

Items	Rotated factor loadings	
	1	2
People living in poverty	0.78	
Political or economic refugees	0.76	
Students	0.77	
Members of an ethnic-cultural minoritized group	0.69	
Teacher	0.72	
Regular (middle class) people	0.72	
Workers	0.78	
Leader of a social resistance movement		0.53
Religion		0.57
Religious leader		0.70
President/ prime minister		0.67
The capitalist system		0.53
Bankers/ CEO's		0.52
Army		0.65
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>2.35</b>
<b>% of variance explained</b>	<b>30.86</b>	<b>16.78</b>
<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.69</b>

Table 4. Results of the EFA.

Respondents were asked to rate the agency of 18 agents from zero to five. An EFA with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) was conducted on these items, providing an acceptable value of 0.76 for the Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Field, 2009). Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2(91) = 407.219$  was significant at the 0.001 level. Horn's (1965) parallel analysis was used to determine the number of factors to retain. This suggested a two-factor model. The two factors together explained 47.64 % of the variance. In the factor analysis, items with factor loadings below 0.4 (the state and worker's unions) were suppressed as well as two items with high cross-loadings (Mortelmans & Dehertogh, 2008). Table 4 presents the rotated factor loadings for each item derived from the pattern matrix, the factors' eigenvalues, the percentage of explained variance and the Cronbach's alpha for each factor.

EFA revealed that certain agents were consistently scored in a similar way, allowing us to classify them within a single category. A first factor seems to consist of agents which can be considered as common people and people in underprivileged positions (such as refugees or minoritized groups). The second factor consists of both powerful individuals (such as religious leaders and presidents) and abstract structures (such as the capitalist system and religion). Two items were excluded because they had high cross-loadings, suggesting a correlation of these items with both factors. It concerned government officials and volunteers for 11.11.11, which is a large coalition of NGO's, unions, movements and solidarity groups in Flanders. The high cross-loadings could indicate that these items were ambiguous and were interpreted in different ways by students. Possibly, some students associated government officials with high-ranking, influential officials, while others assumed it concerned low-level officials. Similarly, it is possible that while some students considered the agency of an individual volunteer at 11.11.11, others regarded them as representatives of the influential NGO they work for. Because of this ambiguity, these items were not included in the further analysis.

For both factors, the average attributed score was computed, in both pretest and posttest. Table 5 provides an overview of the average attributed scores.

		Mean attributed score on 5	
Factors	Agents included	Pretest	Posttest
1.	People living in poverty, political or economic refugees, members of an ethnic-cultural minoritized group, students, teacher, regular (middle class) people, workers	1.70 (N=81)	2.12 (N=82)
2.	Leader of a social resistance movement, religion, religious leader, president/prime minister, the capitalist system, bankers/CEO, army	3.37 (N=83)	3.37 (N=83)

Table 5. Overview of agents and average attributed score for each factor in pre- and posttest.

In the pretest, the data show a large difference between the amount of agency attributed to common people (factor one) and powerful people and abstract structures (factor two). In the posttest, the data show a large increase in the mean score attributed to common agents (factor 1) from 1.70 to 2.12, whereas the mean score attributed to powerful and abstract agents (factor 2) remains unchanged. As the data were not normally distributed, a Wilcoxon-signed rank was used to assess the changes. The analysis showed that the increase in the scores attributed to common people between the pre- and posttest was significant ( $T=461.5$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). It hence seems that the intervention managed to change students' perception of agency in the present to a slightly more differentiated and relative perception. The very one-sided attribution of agency to powerful and abstract agents shifts somewhat to a more nuanced understanding in which common people have agency in society as well.

### 3.2.2 Agency of Ordinary People

Students' views on the agency of ordinary people in particular was further addressed in two questions asking respondents to assess the potential agency of ordinary people and the usefulness of societal engagement on a scale from zero to ten. On average, scores on the question of the potential agency of ordinary people remained more or less the same after the lesson series (from 7.11 to 7.03).

<b>Category</b>	<b>Example</b>
No agency	<i>People can vote for who they want, but politicians always do what they want, without listening to the people</i>
As individuals	<i>Regular people can definitely play a great role. They determine the everyday surroundings and the way they treat each other [...]</i>
Only as a group	<i>A single person will have no effect, but if everyone wants the same thing, this can change something</i>
Both as individuals and as a group	<i>Seeing as society is made up of ordinary people, they can make a difference. A single person can make a small difference, but a large group is capable of making large changes in society</i>
Indeterminate	<i>People have a large influence on society, but other factors also play a role</i>

Table 6. Examples of answers for each category based on the participants' view of agency of ordinary people.

<b>Category (view on agency of ordinary people)</b>	<b>Pretest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
No agency	4 4.760 %	5 5.95 %
As individuals	14 16.67 %	5 5.95 %
Only as a group	37 45.05 %	34 40.48 %
Both as individuals and as a group	4 4.76 %	5 5.95 %
Indeterminate	22 26.19 %	33 39.29 %
Unanswered	3 8.57 %	2 2.38 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b> <b>100 %</b>	<b>84</b> <b>100 %</b>

Table 7. Categorisation of answers based on the participants' view of agency of ordinary people, in pre- and posttest.

Despite the overall positive grade, the data show a great variety in students' perceptions of the agency of ordinary people. Respondents' clarifications of the score they provided were assigned to one of five categories, based on whether they considered ordinary people to have agency as individuals or as a group (collective). The content of these categories was further explored in a previous article on students' understanding of agency in past and present (Wilke, Depaepe & Van Nieuwenhuysse, 2019). A brief overview of the categories is provided in Table 6. Table 7 shows the distribution among the different categories in both pretest and posttest.

Overall, there are no striking changes in students' views in the agency of ordinary people after the intervention. The majority of respondents consider ordinary people to have agency, although the consensus seems to be that ordinary people have agency mostly as a group.

A second set of categories was constructed from the data themselves, centering around a number of recurring themes in students' clarifications which provided insight into respondents' spontaneous views on the agency of ordinary people. Themes were: the inclusion of strategies through which regular people could effectuate societal change, the mentioning of a reason why ordinary people did have agency, mentioning limitations or preconditions to the agency of ordinary people, stating that ordinary people had no agency at all and a category of answers which were unclear. A further exploration of the content of these categories can be found in Wilke, Depaepe, Van Nieuwenhuysse (under review). A comparison between students' answers in pretest and posttest showed no striking changes in the way students viewed the agency of ordinary people, but did show that certain ideas became more prominent. For example, six respondents in the posttest mentioned that particularly the government can provide real change, for example: 'Often it is poor people themselves who try to play a role, but the government can make the most changes.' This limitation had not been mentioned in any of the answers in the pretest. Also, after the intervention more respondents mentioned strategies (from 14 to 32) and they mentioned a wider range of strategies, including more permanent and organised forms of bottom-up strategies, such as the formation of a worker's union, an association or cooperation. Both changes point to an influence of the lesson series which paid attention both to

bottom-up strategies and to the governments' role in improving the situation of the workers.

The second question regarding students' views of agency in present society examined their views on the value of societal engagement. The results were in accordance with those of the previous question as similar themes occurred throughout students' answers. The average score did not change significantly (from an average of 7.25 to an average of 7.09). The content of students' clarifications confirm the insights derived from the previous question. Although the lesson series did not substantially change pupils' perceptions on the potential and value of ordinary people's agency, it did leave some traces in their views on the subject.

#### **4. Conclusion and Discussion**

Through an intervention study, this research examined the effects of explicit teaching about agency on students' perception of agency in a specific historical context and their views on agency in present-day society. The relatively small sample in this intervention study forces us to be careful when drawing general conclusions. Moreover, as we could not provide pre- and posttest data for the control group, we cannot fully guarantee that the changes we found can be attributed to the intervention or (also) result from a testing-effect. Despite these limitations, some interesting shifts were found between the pretest and posttest.

With regard to the first research question, one might conclude that the study suggests that explicit teaching about agency influences the development of students' understanding of agency in that it improves their understanding of the notion. We found that after the intervention, more students provided an answer which reflected a nuanced and differentiated understanding of agency. However, we should deal carefully with this suggestion, first, because the majority of students' answers on the performance task still reflected an ambiguous understanding of the notion. Students recognized the one-sided representation of agency in the textbook but were still unable to explain why this was problematic. This indicates that students still struggled with gaining a profound understanding of the notion. In addition, we also need to take into account the lack of control group data, as previously mentioned..

Another aspect to consider related to the first research question is that respondents did manage to sum up slightly more, and especially more relevant agents after the intervention. Particularly agents that were discussed in the lesson series could be more frequently found in students' answers. The study provides some support for the belief that explicit teaching about agency affects the way students understand this notion (Barton, 2012). The effects were limited, which can be explained by the short duration of the lesson series. It can be expected that students will need more time to fully understand a concept as complex as agency. The study thus calls for more, continuous and long-term explicit teaching about agency, as this will probably yield more profound results. Further research is also needed to establish what the long-term effects of explicit teaching about agency are, as we do not know if the changes in students' understanding of agency retained. We also do not know whether students' increased understanding of agency, measured for this particular historical context, is transferable to other contexts.

An answer to the second research question was provided by the questionnaire in which students were asked to grade the agency of various agents on a Likert-type scale and to assess and comment the potential agency of ordinary people and the usefulness of societal engagement. The questionnaire showed that the intervention did to some extent affect students' perception of agency in present-day society. Particularly when looking at the factor analysis and the changes in the mean scores for each factor, it seems that students developed a slightly more differentiated view on the distribution of agency among various agents in society. Instead of attributing agency mostly to powerful and abstract structures, as they did in the pretest, they acknowledged that 'common people' have agency as well, attributing them significantly more agency after the intervention. Thus, a more nuanced and differentiated view has been established. However, the question assessing students' views on the potential agency of ordinary people and the usefulness of societal engagement did not yield significant changes. Overall, although respondents seemed to consider ordinary people to have agency and societal engagement to be useful, they also saw certain limitations and considered people to have agency mostly when they act as a group. This did not change after the intervention. A possible explanation is that although the lesson series tried to portray a differentiated attribution of agency among various types of agents, it might be that

when it came to the agency of ordinary people, more stress was put on ways in which ordinary people changed society through working together, for example in cooperation or worker's unions. We hence need to deal carefully with the assumption that students' understanding of agency in the past can also affect their civic behaviour (Barton, 2012; Seixas, 2011). On the one hand, we found a significant increase in students' attribution of agency to common people. On the other hand, this was confirmed in their specific assessment of the potential agency of ordinary people and the usefulness of societal engagement. Furthermore, we only examined attitudes and ideas and did not take into account their actual behaviour (Barton, 2012; Seixas, 2011) Hence, more research is needed to further explore this topic.

It is also noteworthy that the specific content of the lesson series – although it handled agency in the past – was reflected in students' answers on agency in present-day society: agents and strategies that were mentioned in the lesson series were also explicitly referred to in the posttest-answers. This calls for a careful selection of teaching subjects within history education, so that a differentiated representation of various agents is achieved.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> One of the participating teachers let us know the students did not fully engage in the exhibition, due to a lack of motivation. In addition, one of the participating classes got delayed in traffic and had only a small amount of time to go through the exhibition.

<sup>2</sup> Originally, a set of 91 respondents was obtained. However, the data of seven respondents were excluded from the analysis, as they were absent during either the pretest or posttest.

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## CONCEPTUALIZING 'IDENTITY' IN HISTORY EDUCATION RESEARCH

Floor Van Alphen and Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse

*Even though identity and the representation or comprehension of history are commonly supposed to be related in history education research, the conceptualization of identity is often vague. In this article, empirical history education research involving students is reviewed to look at how identity is approached. This raises several theoretical and methodological issues that will be addressed by turning to the conceptualization of identity in the human and social sciences. The concept of identity has been problematic; however, alternative approaches have been proposed that foster reflection on the conceptual and methodological choices made in history education research. With notions like identification, self-understanding, categorisation and sense of belonging, the difficulties surrounding the identity concept are clarified and perspectives for further research are given. In the end, the possible contribution of reflection on identity concepts in history education practice is discussed.*

That identity and history learning are closely related is a widely shared and probably fundamental idea in the field of history education. History is 'seen to be a subject that contributes to young people's developing sense of identity' (Harris & Reynolds, 2014: 472) or as conducive to the construction of identities. In line with several historians of history education, Carretero (2011) has identified the construction of identity as one of the two main educational aims that, moreover, has a much longer history. To aim at fostering students' historical and critical thinking is a much more recent endeavour. Research on historical thinking suggests that not only history learning can influence identity construction, but identity can influence history comprehension at the same time. The last two decades, a lot of research on how students comprehend and signify history has focused on how their identities affect history learning.

Specifically, looking at the classroom as a multicultural setting and at the impact of social inequality, the field has focused on how history is relevant for and significant to the different students that inhabit it. Seixas already observed in 1993 that 'in a multicultural school population, with students whose families do not share a common historical experience, [the disjunctions between family and

school as sources for historical knowledge] at best render school history less meaningful, and at worst pose an impediment to students' construction of any meaningful frame of historical reference' (Seixas, 1993: 302). Terrie Epstein's work with African-American high school students (1997; 2009) found that they distanced themselves from school history as 'white people's history', not theirs. This added to the concern that many of the students cannot see themselves<sup>1</sup> reflected in the history curriculum and that this could negatively impact their history learning. Barton and Levstik (2004: 18) suggested that 'ethnicity is such a profound determinant of social experience that representations of the past are likely to differ substantially among groups within the same country. Attention to these differences will help us [educators, researchers] better understand how students' ideas arise in interaction with their environments, and it may also alert us to previously unexamined assumptions about the nature of historical learning'.

Over the years, research has accumulated on the relation between students' history comprehension, their identities and how history is meaningful for them. Thus, students belonging to different (sub-)national groups – based on ethnicity, culture, gender – have been at the centre of attention in relation to the, often national, history contents taught. More recently, Hawkey (2012: 174) has called for caution with the identity categories used by researchers and teachers, because 'catch-all categorisations, unless carefully handled, can be crude divisions to work with. There is a danger that such specification might conjure a perhaps fixed, monolithic or stereotyped image.' Hawkey & Prior (2011: 240) prefer to use the concept of the 'hyphenation' of identity. In their opinion, young people (particularly with a migration background) operate with multiple identities, and often regard themselves as a mixture of the country they live in and the country they or their (grand)parents came from. Moreover, Hawkey (2012: 174) states that looking at the history of different communities 'will not necessarily speak to those students whose heritage is from such communities.' The identity categories often used might not even be so relevant for the students' socially guided self-reflection at all. Other categories might be equally important and practically relevant and even carry a heavier weight, such as youth identity, city-dweller identity, music genre identity, street culture identity.

All these years there has been an underlying and pressing question, that has perhaps only been partially answered: *what exactly is this identity we are talking about?* There is a wide agreement on its importance and it is a fundamental part of research and practices in history education. But how is identity operationalised and mapped out? We think that some conceptual revision and organisation is key to further investigation in history education as well as its practice. In this paper we propose to do this, leaning on approaches to identity in human and social sciences, fields relevant for educational research. In what follows, we first present the central questions of this paper and the methodology used to answer them. Next, empirical research in the history education field that addresses identity and involves students as subjects is reviewed. This raises issues and questions that will be addressed by turning to the human and social sciences and their approaches to identity. This, we propose, can be helpful in fostering reflection on the conceptual and methodological choices made by scholars in the field of history education research. Furthermore, this will help in clarifying the difficulties with identity in the field of history education research and suggesting potentially fruitful pathways for investigation. Finally, by way of conclusion, it is discussed to what extent all this might contribute to the reflection on the identity concepts put into history teaching practice.

## 1. Questions and Methodology

In this article, we attempt to address the following four questions. 1) How are students' identities approached and investigated in the research on history learning? 2) What are the issues, questions and difficulties surrounding the use of the concepts of identity found in the field of history education research? 3) What concepts of identity have been proposed in the human and social sciences? 4) How might alternative conceptualisations help to transcend the problematic issues, so as to contribute to the research on students' history learning and to history education in general?

In answering the first question, we delimit ourselves to reviewing empirical and peer-reviewed history education research that involves students as subjects. Research was selected based on three recently published international handbooks that provide an overview of the current state of the art of studies on history learning, including aspects of identity and its implications (Carretero, Berger & Grever,

2017; Epstein & Peck, 2018; Metzger & MacArthur Harris, 2018). These handbooks allowed the selection of a number of studies, their authors and the journals they were published in. Several of those journals, such as *Theory and Research in Social Education*, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *Culture and Psychology*, *Cognition and Instruction* or *London Review of Education*, have high impact factors. A more thorough search was done, both with author names and within the journal titles (including articles and book reviews) that appeared, listing more peer-reviewed studies. This was complemented by a search within the research literature databases Web of Science and Scopus (using the keywords ‘History education’ – ‘Identity’ – ‘Identification’ – ‘Students’ – ‘Pupils’) and an examination of journals specifically oriented towards history education research, such as *International Journal of Research on History Didactics*, *History Education and Historical Culture*, *International Journal for History and Social Sciences Education*, and *History Education Research Journal* (including its predecessor International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research). In total some 40 peer-reviewed empirical studies involving students as subjects, published in both journals and books, were selected for analysis. Most of the studies are qualitative, only some are quantitative. Based on this analysis, the second question was addressed.

To answer the third question, recent overviews on the concept of identity were the starting point (e.g. Barvosa-Carter, 2005; Spears, 2005; Thiel, 2005; Schwartz, Luyckx & Vignoles, 2011; Martín Alcoff & Mendieta, 2003). These allowed to get a view on prevailing theories and conceptualisations of identity in several disciplines within the human and social sciences, such as anthropology, history, psychology and sociology, that were used to answer the third and fourth questions.

## **2. Approaching Students’ Identities in History Education Research**

The history education research that has involved students’ conceptions of, attitudes towards and representations of the history they learn, draws attention to their different national, ethnic, cultural and gender identities. In what follows, a number of trends that appear in this research will be described, based on our review of

about 40 studies. The research has been grouped according to the trends observed.

### 2.1 *Research Dealing with One Identity, A Priori Attributed*

The connection between youth's identities and history understanding has been predominantly investigated through qualitative research, in which different kinds of research patterns can be discerned. A first series of studies addressed the influence of one particular identity layer on students' historical narratives. In those studies, the concept of identity has not really been defined, as the emphasis is mostly on its influence on the historical narratives. Bermúdez (2012), for instance, analysed excerpts of an online discussion among 120 American high school students about a historical controversy, in order to examine how the management of values and emotions shapes students' historical understanding and their use of key historical concepts such as change and continuity or perspective coordination. In her research, 'identity' as a concept was mentioned, but not clearly conceptualised or defined. The same applies to the research of Carretero & Kriger (2011), among others.

Furthermore, in this first series of studies, 'identity' is limited to one layer only and *a priori* attributed, therefore it seems to be considered as 'given' and 'fixed'. Zanzanian (2015) for instance, in a small-scale research in which he analysed five high school English-speaking youth's historical narratives on Quebec's past, used an *a priori* identification category, framing the participants in a (sub)national identity category, as Anglo-Québécois. Lopez, Carretero & Rodriguez-Moneo (2014), focusing on 31 Spanish college students' understanding of the concept of nation, stated that all their participants 'had been born in and lived in Madrid, as people from different regions of Spain, such as the Basque Country or Catalonia, would be influenced by different national and regional identity elements' (261). In *a priori* attributing a single (sub)national identity to students, the researchers neglect the potential 'national indifference' proposed by Zahra (2010). That is, people and groups, especially in multinational states, can express a complete indifference towards (belonging to) the nation.

While much research focused on (sub)national identity, Epstein (2009) focused on ethnic identity. She conducted a study on how students' racial identities influence their understandings of (national)

history and contemporary society. She did not really define or conceptualise 'identity': its meaning was left implicit as 'racial identities'. She acknowledged the tension between the participants in her study who held a 'rather fixed and bifurcated' sense of one's own and others' racial identities versus other contexts in which identities are regarded by other (young) people more as fluid and mixed. Epstein's account also echoed notions of personal and social identities and the idea that identities are attributed by others. She nevertheless focused on one aspect of identity in particular, that she moreover considered as 'fixed': the racial component. Epstein started from an *a priori* categorisation connected to a racial divide, between African Americans ('black') and European Americans ('white'). She did not take other aspects into account, such as a socio-economic, national or religious identity, nor the idea of a multilayered identity. Epstein organised performance tasks and interviews with more than 100 secondary school students of different colours, indicating that she was conscious of her own position and how it inevitably influenced in the interviews. In the analysis of the data, she saw her *a priori* categories mostly confirmed.

Other researchers, such as Goldberg (2017), exploring from a psychoanalytical and social psychological perspective how the curriculum, teachers and learners deal with difficult histories in an Israeli context (the Holocaust and the creation of Palestinian refugee problem), also started from an *a priori* category (Jewish-Israeli students), yet 'doublechecked' participants' self-identification by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire serving to measure national identification among the participants was the 'national glorification scale' (Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006). It measured (chauvinistic) social identification based on the mean score of agreement, on a scale from 1 to 5, with seven items (item example: 'compared to other nations we are very moral'). Likewise, Lévesque (2017) employed an *a priori* category of French Canadians in his research with 58 high school and 18 university students on the influence of their self-identification on their narrative structure and orientation. He nevertheless offered the participants the chance to choose their self-identification with collective, national groups by scoring (from 0 to 7) their belonging to Canada or French Canada/French Ontario. Interestingly, Lévesque included two different age groups: 58 high school students with an average age of 16.5 and 18 university students with an average age of 26 years old.

While paying attention in the analysis to the differences in length and depth of the historical narratives the participants produced, possible differences in identification are not mentioned. The possibility that identity and identification are not stable and might develop and change according to age is not reflected upon. The same applies to other research, such as González & Carretero (2013) examining the emotional and identity preferences regarding the foundational historical narratives of 240 Latin American adolescents and adults. Carretero & Van Alphen (2014), comparing Argentine national historical narratives of 8th and 11th graders, found a similar number of discursive indicators of identification in both groups. However, it was not always clear whether the use of 'we' and 'us' implied the students' active identifications and how this develops from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

## *2.2 Research Dealing with a Hyphenated Notion of Identity*

A second series of studies does not limit 'identity' to only one layer. A large-scale quantitative study, examining the interplay between identities and (school) history, was conducted in 2006 among 448 respondents (from 14 to 18 years old) in three urban areas in the Netherlands, France and England (see Grever & Ribbens, 2007; Grever, Haydn & Ribbens, 2008; Grever, Pelzer & Haydn, 2011). It entailed a questionnaire survey consisting of fourteen questions, of which two focused on the personal significance of history and on its societal relevance. The starting point of the researchers was that identities are multilayered, and that identification is an incremental and ongoing process, influenced by political context and personal circumstances. Furthermore, according to these researchers, identification is volatile, and some conditions and circumstances might promote the foregrounding of specific identities. The researchers, referring to Widdicombe & Woofitt (1995), also emphasised that young people often resist attempts to categorise their identities. They therefore took the dynamics and variety of student identities into account and instead of categorising them in 'natives' or 'non-natives' inquired about their ethnic background, gender, level of education, and whether they were first or second generation migrants. The researchers allowed participants to give their own views on identity, and on the influence of school history on their ideas of identity. One question asked respondents to give

a 'top 5' in terms of how they chose to identify themselves ('I see myself as ...'), in order to explore which self-identity took precedence over others. In support, students were given a list of words that could help them to describe themselves: inhabitant of their quarter, their village/city, and then national and religious identity markers. It therefore seemed that the researchers instrumentalised their notions of *identity-frames* available to students in today's diverse classrooms and their *self-presentation* in terms of these frames (Grever & Ribbens, 2007: 21). Participants were nevertheless also given the possibility to add important descriptions they felt were lacking, although students hardly made use of this possibility (Grever & Ribbens, 2007: 89-90). Follow-up group-interviews showed that students understood this task but also struggled with organising their sense of belonging selectively and hierarchically.

In terms of mapping out young people's identities or identification, three main remarks can be made about this research. First, it can be seen how in a large-scale quantitative analysis a great variety is collapsed into broad categories. For example, the researchers only counted the student into one of the non-native groups if both parents came from that group. In the end, participants were divided in ten different 'parental-country of birth groups': three native groups (Dutch, French and English) and seven groups of non-western migrant descent, mainly second generation. Only respondents whose parents were born in the same country were selected. Mixed descent was thus not taken into the analysis, nor varieties within the 'native' group. Of course, this was necessary for the comparative analyses, but a lot of complexity relevant for those approaching diversity in the history classroom is lost in categorisation. Second, the study has been very significant for taking gender into account as a comparative variable. Gender had been on the research agenda for quite some time (Barton, 2008) and was explicitly included in the questionnaire as a dichotomous item. Curiously, it was not included as an option for composing a top 5 of social identifiers, even though the *intersection* of gender and other social identities has been a great concern, particularly in studies with first- and second-generation migrants (Collins, 1998; Crenshaw, 2003; Mahalingham & Rabelo, 2013). Either way, both gender and national/ethnic/migration background were found to be related to the students' interest in kinds of history, historical periods and profiles of historical interest (Grever, Pelzer & Haydn, 2011). Third,

the 'top 5' students composed, did not provide an insight into how important these aspects of their identity actually were, each on its own and in relation to each other. It remains unclear what the distance was between position 1 and 5. It might well be that students considered what they put in position 1 and 3 as almost equally important, or very different. The questionnaire did not assess this.

A qualitative study addressing the multi-layered character of identity is, for instance, An's (2009) examination of the perspectives of 55 US high school students with a Korean background (of which 40 transmigrants and 15 second-generation migrants) on US history and the impact of their sociocultural background (migration status) on their historical interpretation. In so doing, her work connects to the aforementioned idea of the 'hyphenation' of identities among young people with a migration background (Hawkey & Prior, 2011). The participants were asked to choose the three most important people and events in US history, to justify their selection, and to talk about their general ideas and experiences of learning history including their like/dislike of history, achievement in history courses, sources for learning history, evaluation of the school history curriculum, and ideas about the nature of history. In the analysis, An scanned the 'rich stories' of the students for information on their 'subjective identification of racial/national/cultural belonging' (An, 2009: 767). She used identification in terms of 'national or social belonging' and of 'their actual experience of citizenship' (An, 2009: 768). She did, however, not elaborate on the concept or on how she addressed and analysed participants' identity throughout the interviews. She kept the notion of identity rather vague.

### 2.3 *Research Dealing with One Identity, Not A Priori Attributed*

A third series of studies again focused particularly on one layer of identity, yet here, the researchers did not *a priori* attribute an identity to the participants. By contrast, they asked the participants to describe in their own words their self-identification. For example, Barton & McCully (2005) conducted an empirical investigation of secondary school students' conceptions of history and identity in Northern Ireland by analysing interviews with 253 students from a variety of backgrounds. Participants had to complete a picture-sorting task related to the history of Britain and England. Students had to sort them in groups. Afterwards they were asked which of the

categories, or individual pictures, 'have the most to do with you or who you are' (Barton & McCully, 2005: 92). The researchers were aware of the difficulties students might have with 'identity': they therefore did not use the word 'identify with' but deliberately used a vague and broad phrase that would at the same time not over-determine students' responses and would allow them to read their own interpretations in the question. Interviews were conducted away from classrooms (in spare rooms, libraries or offices), and students were interviewed in groups, in order to generate richer data. The researchers acknowledged a possible disadvantage of using interviews, in that students would feel inhibited by the interviewers, although on the other hand they were probably unable to determine the religious or political affiliation of the interviewers. These researchers did therefore not impose a specific identity on the participants and were aware of the influence of researcher and context. At the same time, however, they perhaps minimised the role of gender in the interviews. Furthermore, they did not critically reflect on the fact that group interviews might inhibit students to openly speak up about their identity.

Following phenomenographic research methods, on the relationship between 26 students' ethnic identities and their ascriptions of historical significance to moments in Canada's past, Peck (2010) also did not assume a certain (here: ethnic) identity in her study. She asked the students to describe their ethnic identity and then reflect (via group and individual interview) on the ways in which their ethnic identity may have influenced the decisions they made during a group performance task (i.e. a picture-selection task, in which they had to select the most significant historical events from a range of 30 cards). Regarding the description of students' ethnic identities, Peck (2010: 584) stated: 'As a White researcher I did not want to make assumptions about students' ethnic identities. Participating students were asked to complete a questionnaire on their demographic information. In addition, I asked students to write a paragraph describing their ethnic identity 'in a way that made sense to them.' This proved fruitful and worthwhile because many students' descriptions of their ethnic identities were different and much more detailed than their responses to closed questions related to identity on the questionnaire.' She also acknowledged the complex, fluid, and subjective concept of ethnic identity and the fact that the descriptions the students provided should be regarded as provisional

(hence pointing to identification as a contingent process). Unlike many previous studies of the relationship between identity (ethnic or otherwise) and students' conceptions of historical significance, and in line with Barton & McCully (2005), she directly asked students to reflect on the intersection between their ethnic identity and their historical thinking. In so doing, she came to the finding that several participants had not really thought about their (ethnic) identification, and therefore struggled with explaining the link between the card selection and their identification.

This method was followed by several other scholars doing similar research, such as Van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils (2015) and Lévesque (2014). The latter did not ask 58 participants to write a paragraph about their identification, but to make a choice between different pairing circles overlapping gradually on a continuum – 'me vs. Canada; me vs. Ontario; me vs. French Ontario' – allowing them to establish a self-reported sense of belonging to Canada, Ontario, and French Ontario. Peck repeated her method in another study (2018), again providing students with the possibility to describe their own ethnic identity, and acknowledging her own position as a researcher.

On the other hand, the influence exerted by the researcher while giving students their task was not elaborated upon, nor was the weight of students' ethnic identification in relation to other layers of identity addressed, or what role other identifications might have had in attributing historical significance. It is interesting to note that several students, in the studies mentioned, denied the relation between their ethnic or (sub)national identities and their ascriptions of historical significance. Nevertheless, afterwards a relation often did occur, according to the researchers (e.g. Peck, 2010; González & Carretero, 2013; Van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2015). How to account for this and how to measure students' spontaneous answers against their answers on (unremitting) questions of the researcher in this respect? Did students gradually become aware of a relationship, or did they rather construct an instant answer, to please the interviewer?

### **3. Emerging Questions, Difficulties and Unresolved Issues**

Given the research reviewed above, a number of unresolved issues can be discerned regarding the use of the concept of 'identity'. On a *conceptual and theoretical level*, there are four:

1) 'Identity' is often not fully conceptualised. In several studies, no definition of identity or a reference to identity literature is provided. Therefore, it remains unclear what the term precisely refers to or how it is understood by the researchers.

2) As some scholars start from *a priori* categories to which they later assign participants, they seem to adhere to an essentialist notion of identity and suggest that 'identity' is a given and fixed condition. Others, by contrast, point to the constructed nature of identity and emphasise its processual character by using 'identification' instead. In so doing, several of them point to the multilayered and hyphenated character of identification.

3) Some scholars apparently assume that identity is stable, or at least do not reflect on this issue, as they do not consider changing identities among participants of different age groups.

4) Although acknowledging that identification is at the same time a personal and social act, several scholars do not differentiate between both, or at least do not fully address this tension. On the one hand, some categorise all students in one national group attributing them *a priori* a collective identity, while on the other hand they are interested in how identities influence students' personal historical narratives.

On a *procedural and methodological level*, there are also four issues, often relating to the theoretical and conceptual issues mentioned above:

1) Many scholars try to map out identities via the use of *a priori* categories top-down imposed on participants, as opposed to approaching identity as an agentic bottom-up process. This methodological choice is perhaps made without being aware that it invites essentialist notions of identity or may even reify such notions. Moreover, in those cases, scholars often focus on one identity (layer), such as young people's ethnic, national, religious or gender identity. This might be justified in the light of a concrete research question; however, when focusing on one aspect of identity it remains unclear how 'strong' that aspect is in relation to other identity aspects. Often, researchers elicit statements from students on one identity layer without gauging for its weight and importance in the whole of their identity. This might hinder an in-depth understanding of the influence of identity, as the research method is to a certain extent counterproductive to answering the research question.

2) There is the issue that students can identify themselves, but they can also be identified by others. Because a gap can exist between how one perceives oneself, and how one is perceived by others, this poses major challenges to research. A researcher may influence the outcomes, because of who (s)he is, how (s)he sees the participants and how the participant sees the researcher. This tension becomes even more apparent when using a focus group interview method: who identifies, who is identified and from which point of view? It is not always clear to what extent researchers are aware of this tension or how they deal with it.

3) It is not clear whether researchers are aware of the situation and context that need to be considered when mapping out students' identification. Depending on the context, the setting, the company, participants can identify more or less. Again, this poses a methodological challenge, as the concrete context in which a researcher asks questions may influence the answers. Most studies, however, do not seem to take this into account, or at least do not report on this in the methodology section.

4) Researchers do not always address the issue whether identification processes occur in an explicit way or remain implicit. Again, this poses challenges for research. In case participants claim not to have thought about a particular identification, is it because this identification does not matter or because it functions implicitly? And when a researcher insists, what importance should be attributed to the answers of the participants? Are these answers valuable because the researcher makes the identification process explicit by her/his questions or does the participant just say something to give an answer? These methodological issues often remain undiscussed.

Taking all these considerations and reflections into account, one can only agree with Barton (2012) and Peck (2018: 312) that the concept of identity has not been sufficiently theorised in history education research. As a consequence, the methodologies used to examine and map out identities lack accuracy and do not fully succeed in grasping the accompanying complexities. This applies to both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The question then arises how to remedy this. In this respect, it is worthwhile to peek over disciplinary walls, and to consider how scholars in other human and social sciences have dealt with 'identity'.

#### 4. How the Human and Social Sciences Approach Identity

In the following, conceptualisations and theories of identity will be addressed in response to the questions and issues formulated above. Next, we will turn to the related issues on a methodological level, before bringing our argument back to the field of history education research.

##### 4.1 *Conceptualisation and Theory: An Overview*

Turning to the conceptualisation of identity in the human and social sciences the difficult issue of defining identity becomes clearer when looking at the identity concept over time. Initially identity was a mathematical concept indicating sameness. Indeed, identity's Latin root, *idem*, means the same. Whereas in math sameness is tantamount to resolving problems, considering people rather than numbers to be the same has been generating them. When identity started to be conceptualised as something characterising a person, from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century onwards in the work of John Locke and others, they had to address the problem of personal identity (Thiel, 2005): how can a person be the same person while changing over time? David Hume tried to resolve it by conceptualising personal identity as the *imaginary belief*, common to human beings, ascribing unity and identity to the self. In the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, on the other hand, the unity and identity of the thinking person are *a priori* properties. Otherwise, how can there be any personal thought at all? Here we see a bifurcation in the conceptualisation of identity, as a *belief about* or *reflection on the self*, on the one hand, and the idea that somebody is reflecting and therefore has *a priori identity*, on the other. These different approaches and contemporary variants are still seen in the research practice and this makes it hardly surprising that researchers deal with essential versus constructed identities nowadays. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) refer to 'strong' and 'weak' identity concepts and indicate that strong essential identities are often found in identity politics and wider discourse, whereas weak constructed identities are most common in the contemporary human and social sciences. The latter have proposed 'identification' as an alternative, to avoid the essentialist connotation of 'identity'. But before further addressing the push of essentialist identity and pull of constructive processes, twentieth century identity theories need to be considered that have

addressed the issues of the stability or change of identity and its personal or social conceptualisation.

Throughout the twentieth century, the conceptualisation of identity evolved: a developmental notion of identity was elaborated, which apparently has not resonated much in history education research, and the identity concept was gradually taken from the personal to the social level, which has impacted history education research much more. Two sets of identity theories were developed in a developmental psychological and a social psychological vein (Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2011).

First off, Horkheimer and Adorno, Freud and others who disagreed with Kant's stable notion of the subject contributed to evolving ideas of a decentred subject and, therefore, increasingly multiple and diverse identities (Barvosa-Carter, 2005). Inspired by Freud's psychodynamics and working with US middle class youth, Erik Erikson (1968) related identity to personal development, specifically in adolescence. That is, he articulated a theory of *identity crises* or instabilities that troubled adolescents, who faced an increasing amount of social commitments on the way to adulthood. In this theory, identity is a personal matter and in a developmental vein geared towards stability, that is, a clear picture that the person acquires about her or himself in relation to the social environment. Through crises a personal identity stabilises. Most research in developmental psychology on personal identity can be traced back to this theory (Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2011). In this developmental vein, identity became compatible with the passing of time and both stability and change were integrated in the developmental notion of identity. However, even though Erikson acknowledged that the social and cultural environment was crucial for identity development, identity in itself remained a personal affair.

Social psychologist Gordon Allport (1954) had an important role in taking identity to the social level, because he related identity to ethnicity. Over the course of the 1950's and 1960's, the social sciences were gradually infused with the identity concept, particularly in the United States where the ethnic and human rights movements gained momentum (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). The relation between personal and social identity has been explicitly addressed in the social psychological theories developed in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Fundamentally, Henri Tajfel (1978) developed *Social Identity Theory*, conceiving social identity as a part of the self-concept that derived

from group membership and was related to the idea of a collective self – that what is social in a person. The notion of social identity built on the research focusing on intergroup relations (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Ascribing oneself to a group, in this framework, depends on specific social situations in which one identity or group membership can become more salient than the other. People are considered to be members of multiple social groups but, for example, gender identity becomes salient in the opposition between male and female groups, national identity becomes salient in the opposition between different national groups, and so on. Furthermore, the formation of an in-group depends on the out-group and vice versa. Hence, there is no ‘us’ without a ‘them’. Social identity theory was further elaborated with *self-categorisation theory*, which proposed a separation between personal and social identity (Turner, 1982) so that the idea of *categorising* the self in terms of group membership could be developed (Turner et al., 1987). In this vein, personal identity is often still seen as unitary, whereas there is multiplicity in terms of ascription to social groups (Spears, 2005). Gender, nationality, ethnicity and the other markers of social identity have been treated as different categories of the self-concept. This idea of social identity categories, and the behaviour that supposedly underlies them, has been the rationale for a lot of quantitative research and has clearly influenced studies in history education.

Even though, in this social psychological tradition, identity is a process of self-ascription, which transcends the issue of personal versus social identity, it still depends on the social identity categories available. The categories employed for studying this process are not necessarily considered as dynamic in themselves – as if national identity, ethnic identity and gender identity are given *a priori*. Therefore, some essentialism seems to be inherent to this approach. Take, for example, Hogan’s (2009) account on nationalism, in which national identity is taken to be a kind of social identity and a function of intergroup relations. That the framing and kindling of intergroup conflict in terms of national identity is relatively recent, historically speaking, is not elaborated upon. Thus, the socio-historical construction of identities is not necessarily addressed in social psychology. Of course, the research builds on situations in which *current* group membership is (made) salient for the participants. Yet, are these kinds of groups stable and enduring or are they dynamic, contingent and changing over time? Tajfel conceived of social

identity within a process of social change, but not all research set-ups allow to capture this so as to go beyond reification. This is related to the methodological issues addressed further on, but some theoretical ground still needs to be covered in relation to essential identity categories versus constructive processes, an issue very relevant for history education research.

In the wake of the linguistic and the postcolonial turn, the human and social sciences have been wary of essentialism and reification. The linguistic turn greatly impacted the thinking about identity and enabled notions of the socially *constructing* and *constructed* subject that are still widely used in these fields today. In this vein, and standing very close to history and memory, Paul Ricoeur (1992) proposed a solution to the issue of the stability or change of identity. He brings *ipse* identity – or self-constancy – and *idem* identity – or object constancy – together in *narrative identity*. Ricoeur proposes that people make sense of themselves through narratives and that the reflection on the self takes the shape of a narrative. In the research of Peck (2010) and others this clearly resonates. The definition of identity in terms of an autobiographical narrative allows for stability, in terms of the protagonist of the narrative, as well as change through life-experiences. Ricoeur's narrative identity clearly is a construction, not an essence, and perhaps more personal than social, because the subject constructs a narrative about life experience. This, however, does not mean that this process is not thoroughly cultural (Bruner, 1990).

The notion of the construction of identities rejects essences and affords dealing both with personal and social identity over time. Fundamentally, it considers identity in time as well as social space, that is, in social relations. George Herbert Mead (1934) already situated the person in a continuous social interaction, which fundamentally contributes to a sense of self. In this vein, there is no self without a social environment; with the development of social relations, a person develops. Mead's symbolic interactionism and other perspectives developing with the linguistic turn, have kindled the analytic focus on discourse and positioning. Embedded in discourse and social relations, social identity categories have been flexibilised to reflect people's actual experiences, for example at the intersection of identities and due to their hybridity, dynamics and dependence on social situations (Collins, 1998; Crenshaw, 2003; Blommaert & De Fina, 2015). Bamberg, De Fina & Schiffrin (2011)

propose an ongoing identity construction and positioning in relation to others – and the self – in different moments in time. This construction has to do with the specific goals of human interaction and often takes a narrative form: we tell others about who we are for some reason. Thus, identity is taken to be a socially situated biography, narratively organising experiences for specific purposes. This is an addition to Ricoeur's narrative identity, because it is continuously reconstructed and the narrative depends on particular objectives in specific situations. Therefore, constructivism adds a developmental dimension to the social psychological notion of identity presented above and a social dimension to the developmental psychological notion of identity presented before, providing flexible identity concepts that a researcher might be eager to work with. Nevertheless, in history education research the notion of the socially constructing subject is not as common as the notions of social construction and collective identities moving away from personal identity.

With the postcolonial turn came notions of hybridity and multiple social identities that have been well received in history education research over the last years. Focusing on identities at the collective level rather than the personal level, many social scientists have worked particularly on their deconstruction. To conceive identity at the social aggregate level traditionally builds on the assumption that there is something in common within a group that distinguishes it from another in terms of nationality, ethnicity, gender, class etcetera (Martín Alcoff & Mendieta, 2003; Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This sameness within the social group is greatly problematic, not in the least when, like in historiography, the passing of time is considered. Stuart Hall, an important reference on identity in the social sciences, heavily criticises the notion of a 'collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common' (Hall, 1990: 223). Essentialist identities are also criticised with the notion of multiple identities, suggesting that there is no one true self-defining identity (Barvosa-Carter, 2005). Moving personal identity to the background and social multiplicity to the foreground, the issues of stability or change, essence or construction do, however, not disappear, but now befall the social identities. A person might be constructed out of social multiplicity, but how changeable are social identities? If anything, a historiographical perspective suggests the

difficulty of considering a group to be the same over time. The discursive explosion of 'identity' and the simultaneous deconstruction and anti-essentialist critique developed over the second half of the 20th century, made Stuart Hall (2011) wonder '*who needs identity?*'. Answering this question, he suggests that identity is crucial for political movement and that a *strategic and positional notion* of identity is needed instead of an essentialist notion. Identities, according to Hall, are the product of marking and exclusion rather than the all-inclusive sameness implied by the traditional notion. They acquire, therefore, a certain dynamic. There is identity of a group when the members move towards an objective together, not because they are the same. Individual indifference towards certain shared goals (see Zahra, 2010) would thus undermine collective identity. This should be considered particularly when doing research with youth, because categorising a student as a group member without knowing whether she or he actually shares the collective goals makes little sense.

#### 4.2 *Conceptualisation and Theory: An Alternative*

In summary, the identity concept has moved around, from sameness to selfhood, between stability and change, between unity and multiplicity and between a personal, social and a collective level. Related to ethnicity, gender and nationality (among others) on a macro level (Martín Alcoff & Mendieta, 2003), at the meso level identities have been proposed to intersect because experiences relate to several identity categories (Collins, 1998; Crenshaw, 2003), and at the micro level even chronotopic identities, dependent on specific place and time, have been proposed (Blommaert & De Fina, 2015). If anything, this explains the status-quo and confusion in history education research. In the human and social sciences there have been many attempts to avoid the reification and essentialising of race, gender, and nationality by introducing more dynamic and flexible identity-concepts, but the term identity seems unable to shake of a certain centred or stable meaning.

Brubaker & Cooper (2000: 9) critically reviewed the complex conceptual landscape and reflected on these attempts, arguing that 'if one wants to convey the late modern sense of a self being constructed and continuously reconstructed out of a variety of competing discourses – and remaining fragile, fluctuating and fragmented – it is not obvious why the word identity captures the

meaning being conveyed'. They suggest that instead of using a term that easily reinforces reification another analytic vocabulary is in order. In their move 'beyond identity', even a narrative identity that is variable over time and embedded in contexts as well as social relations is scrutinised: why should it be 'identities' that are constituted through narratives and in social settings? Brubaker and Cooper (2000) propose that many of the phenomena that human and social scientists want to study (personal development, autobiographical memory, interpersonal interaction, social categorisation, social movement and transformation) can be studied without the concept of identity and that, for the sake of analytic productivity and consequently discursive clarity, this has to be done. Untangling the heterogeneity of meanings they propose three sets of alternative terms: a) *identification* and *categorisation*; b) *self-understanding* and *social location*; c) *commonality*, *connectedness* and *groupness*. All three sets address specific parts of the analytical work done by 'identity' thus far, but they avoid reification. Identification emphasises an *active process* and that there is an *agent* doing the identifying. Whereas identification involves relating the self to others, categorisation involves ascribing oneself to a group or placing others in group categories. Identification and categorisation can capture both the *cognitive* and *affective* dynamics of the complex relation between the individual and the social, as well as *power* dynamics when somebody is being categorised. Self-understanding designates a *subjective sense* of who one is, how one is located socially and therefore how one may act. This may vary across settings, but may also be stable, indeed this is subjective. Furthermore, self-understanding does not imply, nor is it semantically connected to sameness or difference. Commonality, connectedness and groupness help to differentiate ways of self-understanding in relation to others, that is, sharing common attributes, having relational ties and feeling a belonging to a distinctive bounded group respectively. This is important because this relation may vary and has very different effects on what people think and do. This last set of terms actually allows differentiation.

#### 4.3 *Methods and Procedures*

The methodological issue of using *a priori* identity categories in history education research is clearly related to the conceptualisation of identity discussed above. Given that generally in the human and

social sciences the essential and reified conceptualisation of personal and social identities is avoided and potentially fruitful analytical alternatives have been proposed, it seems odd that such *a priori* identity categories are still present in our research procedures. The social psychological research tradition, as we have seen, has contributed to the methodological use of social identity categories. Indeed, if the aim is to study the categorisation process like this tradition proposes, then the attribution of group-membership to oneself or another in terms of social identity categories seems unavoidable. However, cognitive and developmental psychological approaches are needed to properly flesh out this categorisation process to not take categories for granted. If the aim is to see how categories appear and develop, then socio-cultural approaches are needed to embed the cognitive and affective categorisation processes in a context that is already category-laden. Social identities already exist in discourse and people don't invent these categories themselves. So, if identity categories are used then it should be clarified how they are used.

Furthermore, it is one thing that research participants employ common sense identity categories as labels for themselves and others. It is something completely different when group identities circulate among researchers, as independent variables or socially categorising analytical tools. Anthropologist Frederic Barth (1969) has made a well-known argument in this vein on ethnic groups and their boundaries. According to Barth an ethnic group is not defined by the sharing of a common culture but is rather a result of the organisation of ethnic groups, which in turn are nothing more than categories of ascription and identification by human actors organising the interaction between people. If researchers entertain a preconceived notion of common culture they will not be able to see how group boundaries are negotiated and exist in actual intercultural contact rather than between preconceived cultural essences. Barth's argument supports the idea that, instead of employing identity categories as independent variables which allow to explain collective phenomena merely in a circular fashion – in function of the common culture that these categories referred to in the first place (Voestermans & Verheggen, 2013) – the ethnic group only exists in the research participants' self-ascription or identification. Barth does not deny the reality that ethnic group boundaries hold for human actors, but it is a reality that cannot be studied when the researcher holds preconceived

notions of common culture or essentialist notions of identity. Furthermore, the categories used by the researcher need not be relevant to the participant. The national indifference that Zahra (2010) found is an example, because it indicated the potential irrelevance of national identity for participants. The analytical tool of *chronotopic identities* also suggests the relevance of a specific place and specific time for the phenomenon that the identity concept refers to. This tool fits 'ethnographic, practice-based oriented approaches to communication and discourse, aimed at the most minute aspects of identity practices operating as indexicals for large-scale, 'structuring' characteristics of social practice' (Blommaert & De Fina, 2015: 2). Again, the empirical focus is on practices and processes. General analytical categories with a heavy discursive burden, like nationality, ethnicity and gender, can but overshoot or underscore these phenomena. In short, there are methodological as well as conceptual reasons to move beyond *a priori* identity categories.

There are, however, methodological issues when studying identification too. Identification has already been introduced in history education research, as an alternative to the notion of identity, and three methodological issues arise. First, the confusion of self-identification and identification by others. Thanks to the clarification by Brubaker and Cooper (2000) we can now distinguish between identification as something done by the self and categorisation as something done to the self and to others. These are different cognitive and affective processes that can be studied in individual students or in the interaction between them. The incongruence between top-down social categorisation by researchers on the one hand and bottom-up self-understanding of participants is a related methodological issue. In reference to Barth it was just argued that when studying identification the focus is on what the participants *do* and the observer should suspend the proper categories so as to capture this. It is important to understand that categorisation is a cognitive and affective processes in which social categories and personal experiences play a role. In this vein, others might label you, but you can resist or transform this label (Hacking, 1995). Either way, unless the researcher is interested in what researchers do, the focus is on what the research participants do in terms of identification or categorisation. An *a priori* identity category can hardly contribute here.

This is related to another methodological issue, the impact of the environment on the identification process. One of the environmental elements is the researcher him or herself who might steer the participant in some direction. Anthropologists like Barth give clear instructions on participant observation that might help the researcher to become aware of his or her influence on the process under investigation. Because identification processes are by definition social and interactive they cannot be isolated from an environment. Therefore, in discursive social psychology (Billig, 1995; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) researchers look at identification in discourse, occurring also *between* interviewer and interviewee. In a sociocultural vein similar approaches to identification in action have been developed (e.g. Polman, 2006).

Over the years, sociocultural approaches have proposed ways of dealing with identity that align with the alternatives suggested by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), moving from the substantive *identity* to the verb *identifying* in the process of *identification*, from individually isolated to socially situated phenomena and from essentialist to dynamic views (Bruner, 1990; Gonzalez, 2010, 2017; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998; Rosa & Valsiner, 2018; Van Alphen, 2012). In this vein, it is argued that 'neither identity nor the self should be taken as any sort of transcendental entities, but as the result of biological and socio-cultural-historical processes' (Rosa & Blanco, 2007: 18). This move involves the development of research methods that allow for studying identification. For example, 'actuations of identification, the function they play in the life of the individual, and the resources applied for this purpose; something that may only be elucidated by looking at the kaleidoscopic shapes these operations show in the sceneries in which they are performed' (Rosa & Blanco, 2007: 5). Rosa and Blanco suggest that the privileged settings for researching these processes are narration, discourse and performance. Sociocultural approaches typically focus on human action, in which historical-cultural means are employed by actors (Wertsch, 1998). Thus, processes of identification can be studied as students employ narratives (Carretero & Bermúdez, 2012; Van Alphen & Carretero, 2015, Wertsch, 2002). Processes of self and social categorisation can be studied in the students' representation of the past. Even a practical sense of self and commonality, connectedness or groupness can be approached socioculturally. That is, in discourse analysis various *I-positions* can be recognized that are

situated in particular *We*-positions and discursively transition from one group to another (Rosa & Blanco, 2007). Indeed, in the researchers' focus on interaction and discourse as well as narratives, identity has become dynamic and practical. The shift to studying identification is encouraged by findings in ongoing research and methods for studying identification are developed in the process. Thus, methodological issues with identification have stimulated ongoing research in a sociocultural vein.

The final methodological issue, concerning explicit as opposed to implicit identification, is related to methodological conundrums that have been present in psychological research for many years. Particularly social psychological research has pointed at the disparity between explicit and implicit measures of cognition (see the line of work initiated by Greenwald et al., 1998) and at automaticity in social cognition (see the line of work initiated by Bargh et al., 1996). That is, different results are obtained when participants are explicitly asked about what they think and do compared to when their thoughts and behaviours are implicitly measured. In discursive social psychology, processes of identification are straightforwardly inferred from discourse analysis, that is, whether 'we' or 'us' appears in the discourse (Billig, 1995), although such identification is not necessarily explicitly admitted by the participant. In cultural psychology, many methods such as questionnaires and interviews are seen as initiators of a meaning-making process that, instead of measuring an existing attitude or cognitive construct, lead to a psychological creation or construction process (Valsiner, 2017). This can even be a joint constructive process. It is often suggested about qualitative interviews that interviewer and interviewee construct the interview together (Packer, 2018). In this vein, rather than making the implicit explicit, a new psychological phenomenon arises in the research. Indeed, the opposition between implicit and explicit measures is related to whether the theoretical framework supposes latency. If no latent essential identity is supposed but rather ongoing processes of identification, categorisation and meaning making are studied then this issue becomes less important. What becomes important at this point is how to approach identification.

## **5. Implications and New Pathways for History Education Research**

What can history education research learn from how human and social sciences approach identity, and particularly from the alternative concepts regarding identity they have provided? As it became clear that the concept of identity poses a lot of difficulties and problems, the move beyond identity can certainly contribute to both the conceptual and methodological issues faced in history education research.

It suggests and even urges that researchers need to be clearer on what exactly they want to look at and why they refer to identity. What is the phenomenon they believe to be behind this term that they want to capture? Do they want to look at what students *do* cognitively and affectively in order to characterise themselves or others, or to locate themselves vis-à-vis others so as to look at how this relates to historical thinking, building historical narratives or significance attribution? Then 'identification' is more appropriate, which at the same time allows to approach the phenomenon over time, that is, in development, because it indicates a dynamic process rather than a fixed state of affairs. Also, 'identification' is a personal and agentive process, not necessarily including or resulting in sameness.

When using categories, history education researchers should be clear on who is categorising and how, as categorisation is done to others as well as to the self – by students, their peers, teachers, parents and the researchers. As we have seen, social psychology has done much research on the social categorisation process in intergroup relations but within this approach categories need to be theoretically explicit and clear. Where do these categories come from and how are they implemented? Take for instance research on students' narratives and national identification. How are (sub)national categories developed, how are students assigned to them, and how is the attribution possibly verified? Can students also choose not to be part of a category or to place others in it, for example because they feel indifferent to it? If researchers are not clear on their own categorisation and rationale, they can but confirm the very categories that they start out with, leaving their contribution unclear. Identification and categorisation can happen very implicitly, but the history education researcher needs to be aware of and explicit about

the proper categories. Investigating categorisation is therefore very complex, but getting rid of ‘identity’ at least makes it viable.

Investigating the subjective sense of who one is (‘self-understanding’) and how one might act is appropriate in the applied education practice and in interacting with individual students. The reflection on the self in relation to others, as we have seen in the research reviewed above, is what students find very complex. Indeed, if the development and changes throughout adolescence are considered then this is unsurprising: self-reflection in terms of a position among others develops over time. In relation to investigating historical thinking, narratives and significance attribution, self-understanding is hard to grasp or pin down.

In this respect, connectedness and groupness are easier to investigate. Connectedness and groupness are relevant to students already at a young age, even though ‘we’ refers to a smaller group at first and increases in size and abstraction throughout youth and adolescence (connected to young people’s growing ability to think in an abstract way; Egan, 1997; Del Barrio, Hoyos, Padilla & Lara, 2013). Furthermore, this set of phenomena has probably attracted most researchers to inquire about ‘identity’ in history education research. The question of whether the feeling of belonging to a group can influence historical thinking and narrating histories in significant ways is what a lot of history education research boils down to. In those cases, however, the fuzzy concept of ‘identity’ is not needed as an analytical tool. Instead, a method to measure connectedness or groupness (i.e. a feeling of belonging) and its relation to historical thinking is needed.

The move beyond ‘identity’ is a very fruitful suggestion for re-conceptualisation, and helps to more accurately capture the precise processes one aims to study. This move also invites methodological innovation.

If there is, for instance, an interest in commonality, connectedness and groupness rather than in identification or self-understanding, social psychological research again becomes a source of inspiration together with discursive and socio-cultural approaches. Indeed, how to study a sense of belonging? Barth suggested that groupness, the boundaries of a group, are contingent upon identification and categorisation processes that can be ethnographically observed. If the researcher wants to depend more on what participants say, then a lot can be found for example in the students’ use of narratives and

discursive positioning. If the researcher wants to know how the students feel and might act, (s)he can prompt students' ideas by confronting them with different positions to a certain situation in which a particular group is at stake and ask them to choose, or (s)he can ask them what cultural symbols of the target group (such as national flags or anthems, portraits of heads of State, religious images) *mean* to the students. If the researcher is interested in an active sense of belonging, then the focus will rather be on what students *do* as a function of feeling belonging to a group. For example, to what extent do students participate in rituals (e.g. religious festivals, civic processions, rites of passage). Experimental setups can trigger a student's sense of belonging and behaviour can then be observed. This ranges from the cultural psychological initiation of a meaning making process, such as recording how students react to a burning flag or other potentially meaningful material (Valsiner, 2012), to the social psychological experiments triggering an out-group and measuring affective response. Note how, again, previous notions about groups play a role in research and that careful observation and contextualisation are important to not jump into superficial conclusions.

And what about researchers rather focusing on the self, stemming from an interest into the connection between identification or self-understanding on the one hand, and historical thinking, narrative construction or significance attribution on the other? Here, human and social sciences scholars have shown the importance of giving research participants the opportunity to present themselves. Such research might benefit from an in-depth qualitative approach, tackling not only self-understanding but also the contextual and other issues surrounding and influencing this. A socially situated and narratively organised biography, in which students tell another person about who they are (Bamberg, De Fina & Schiffrin, 2011) allows for instance (1) to not *a priori* place students in categories, but rather give them an agentic voice; (2) to differentiate between layers of identification, by analysing what layers are spontaneously mentioned; (3) to explore in-depth one or several layers by explicitly addressing them in questions or assignments; (4) to differentiate between self-identification and the perception of the self by others, by asking students to describe how they feel that others consider them; (5) to address the factors influencing their self-representation, by asking them to what extent and how the context, the researcher or the

setting influenced their answer; and (6) to express whether they already thought of it or not and why (not), which enables to get a view on the abovementioned latency of aspects of self-representation. Such a biographical assignment can always be complemented by a questionnaire starting from *a priori* categories in which students can indicate which are meaningful to them or not, and which are important or not (also in relation to each other). Such a mixed method approach, although not simple, might help to avoid the pitfalls in history education research mentioned above.

Methodology remains a complex issue, but the clarification of what is studied in particular, moving beyond identity, creates opportunities for choosing the appropriate methods allowing to answer the questions that concern many researchers in history education. It can also instigate reflection on other aspects to consider or to connect to issues with identity, such as the potential interplay between identification or self-understanding and political perspectives/attitudes. It might be relevant to reflect on whether the latter influence (self)identification and historical representations. In several studies, particularly those in which the influence of a national identity is examined, political preferences seem to resonate and exert an influence. However, this is not further elaborated upon (see for instance Lévesque, 2017; Van Nieuwenhuysse & Wils, 2015), even though this was explicitly suggested by Stuart Hall (2011). He emphasises that there is commonality, a common purpose, rather than sameness within groups. The relation between shared purposes, often political, and historical representations certainly begs further study.

## 6. Conclusion

Identity has proven to be a historically charged and heavily disputed concept that raises a lot of issues. The interdisciplinary approach and the suggested move 'beyond identity' might help to address a lot of difficulties, as it urges for both conceptual and methodological clarity. It thus contributes to further history education research.

At the same time, the reflection on and move beyond identity might also be very relevant for history education itself. In classroom practice, the concept of identity is often not explicitly addressed or conceptualised, let alone critically reflected upon. This is a missed opportunity and causes problems on various levels. Issues

surrounding identification and categorisation, self-understanding or connectedness and groupness are often important in analysing and understanding historical events and phenomena. It is for instance very interesting (and necessary in order to build a profound historical understanding) to make an internal/external distinction with regard to societies in the past, and to examine whether groups as we perceive them today (e.g. 'the Spaniards' in 1492, or 'the Jews' in European cities in the Middle Ages, or 'Orientals' during the period of modern imperialism) actually existed, or rather constitute (perhaps even *post factum* created) categories. The difference lies in the fact that a group only exists when its members acknowledge its existence and feel like a member; a category is formed when others consider a number of people as a group without those people necessarily doing so themselves (Jenkins, 2008: 104). Both 'group' and 'category' tend to contribute to what Brubaker (2002) calls group-ism: the tendency to regard strictly separated and clearly distinguished groups as the basis of social life and as protagonists in conflicts. This can then be linked to exclusion mechanisms of in-group versus out-group. Brubaker (2010) applies this also on migration and the nation-state, 'understood as an internally fluid but externally bounded space' (63). He addresses the nation-state that remains 'the decisive locus of membership' (77), also in a globalizing world, and evolving politics about and visions of internal and external belonging.

The aforementioned issues need to be understood, in order not to hinder a deep historical understanding. Moreover, students in the secondary school history classroom are always adolescents looking for and struggling with who they are. A better understanding of identification processes might help them in this search, and might put the categorisation they receive from others (which is often conflicting to self-understanding) into perspective. For teachers, a thorough understanding of the issues surrounding the identity concept is important. As they are important actors within the students' developmental process, particularly teachers should be well aware of the restraints and affordances of identification and categorisation processes. This would allow them to put into question categories that are often held for granted, and go beyond them, together with their students. Also, this would provide the opportunity to reveal (ab)uses of the past and of history in the name of 'identity'.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> ‘Themselves’ as individuals situated in their communities. The students related to school history in terms of their social identities.

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## LANGUAGE MATTERS: THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF HISTORICAL THINKING AS A CHALLENGE IN TEACHER TRAINING

Georg Marschnig

*Language is the epistemic basis of history. Without language, history cannot be thought, written or learnt. Consequently, language plays a major role in historical learning. However, German history didactics has not concentrated a lot on linguistic processes of historical thinking. This article summarizes the recently growing debate about the link between language education and historical learning. In a further step, an empirical study is presented, which was dedicated to the connection between textual competence and history learning. As a conclusion, the program of the bachelor's course 'History and Language' at the University of Graz, where future teachers deal with the topic, is presented.*

'In history teaching, language use has a huge impact on the understanding of historical contents. If certain terms are not clear for the learners, they will not understand the key aspects connected to the actual topic of the lesson.' This statement given by one of my third-year-history-students during the university course 'Geschichte and Sprache' ('History and Language') lightens up an important skill, history teachers have to have to be able to teach history in an appropriate and student-orientated way. She came quite close to Michael Halliday's (1993: 83) famous phrase that learning science is mainly about learning the language of the science. Teachers need to be aware of the fundamental role of language in terms of conveying history to others. For this one particular student that seemed to be clear.

The student's clever statement, was clearly one of the best answers in course of a little survey conducted right at the start of the course 'Geschichte und Sprache' in the winter term 2018. Others meandered from the importance of political correctness to questions of clear pronunciation or described language as the medium of 'transport' of history to the learners. Most of the students' answers on the question 'How is language connected to the teaching and learning of history?' were very imprecise and showed that they have not spent a lot of time and effort on thinking about the relation of language and history teaching in two years of studying.

In the second question of the survey, the students had to focus on the relation of language and historiography. The results were – luckily! – a bit more elaborate. Some students saw the connection in the kind of ‘unnatural’ way historians talk to each other about history, using terms no one else uses. Others described the importance of language in constructing narratives about the past. Others again explicated the central role of questions in the process of historical research. One student even mentioned that the sources tell about ‘their’ present through language and have to be seen as important ‘players’ in history – telling, concealing, or stressing details about the past. Wrapping up the students answers concerning the relation of language and historiography, most of them understood that there is a strong connection, but could not clarify it sufficiently. In two years of studying history to become a secondary school teacher, most of them were confronted with language as an important factor in history for the first time.

This was surprising and somewhat alarming, as they were right on the doorstep to the second half of their bachelor studies. Interestingly enough, this depicts a status quo in German history didactics that is very slowly changing in the recent years (see Handro, 2018: 8). In the last decade, and strongly connected to a long and intense debate about competencies in historical learning, language awareness is getting more and more on the radar of the discipline (see Bernhardt, 2018: 2).

### **1. History and Language Relationship Status: It’s Complicated!**

‘The conviction of the limits of language as the limits of thinking or the conviction that ‘below’ or beyond language and language use no reality is hidden, leads to a momentous insight: Any analysis of ‘reality’ is linguistically determined and through a language priority, filtered’ (Bachmann-Medick, 2007: 34). This is the basic assumption of the linguistic turn, which shook historiography in a dramatic way, as it made clear ‘that it only has access to a textually, language mediated world, too.’ Today, after a long and harsh battle over discourse-theoretical approaches, especially with those of post-structuralism, the enormous relevance of language based practices in historical research is hardly controversial anymore (Landwehr, 2008: 35). Historical issues are at the mercy of the language medium ‘for

better and for worse' (Landwehr, 2008: 10). Interestingly, the debate about language had long since become a topic in the history of science.

As far back as the 1930s, the French *Annales* were working on language matters in history. They saw language as a subordinate medium that allows us access to the past (Landwehr, 2008: 30). In their view, language functioned as a bridge to the past, without considering its constructive character.

In the German-speaking world, Reinhard Koselleck's work on conceptual history was the first step to approach the theoretical relation between language and history. He described the connection between language and history with a 'doubled difference': 'There is always a twofold difference between an ongoing history and its linguistic enablement and between a past history and its linguistic rendering' (Koselleck, 1979: 300). According to Koselleck, the past is framed twice by language. At first, in its manifestation in sources, and secondly through the construction of a narrative formed by historians. In addition to the bridging function of the historians language, which they use to tell about the past, Koselleck is pointing on the limits of access to the past reality, which are strongly connected to the number of (written) sources and to the language skills of the historian, too. Rolf Reichardt's approach of Historical Semantics processed the main critique on Koselleck's work – his strong focus on terms and concepts by to some extent neglecting the communicational role of language – in extending it especially methodically. This led to a stronger focus on the social constructive character of language: 'Language is not just a medium of social expression, but forms to a considerable extent this society and its respective reality' (Landwehr, 2008: 36).

Needless to say that no one else influenced the debate about language and history more than Hayden White. With his thesis about the central role of narrativity in historiography, he started a long and intense discussion, also in the German-speaking history research community. The content of a historical text is determined by its form. This is how Philipp Sarasin (2007: 25) summarizes the essence of White's *Metahistory*: It triggered a shock in the international historiographic community lasting until today. 'Historiography', Achim Landwehr (2008: 44) explains one of White's main theses, 'is therefore subject to less scientific than narrative principles.' This was seen as an 'attack' on the scientific character of historiography, of

course. Historians saw themselves ‘in the abyss’, wrote a ‘Defense of History’ or feared the end of history as a science had come (Sarasin, 2007: 10). Eventually, the fundamental dispute had calmed down, ‘out of sheer exhaustion of all involved persons’, as Sarasin (2007: 8) explains; and today, the huge input historiography gained from White’s approach, is beyond doubt. The thinking about narrativity is, not least, strongly connected to the work of Jörn Rüsen, a basic cornerstone in the German-speaking theory of history.

## 2. Language Awareness in German History Didactics

### 2.1 *Narrativity and Narrative Competence*

By mentioning Jörn Rüsen, the door to history didactics is wide open. In defining the central issue of history teaching in the generation of meaning through narration (in German: *Erzählung*), that is, to link the past with present-day problems to generate options for action in the future, the training of linguistic actions becomes a teaching program. Rüsen has fundamentally changed the requirements for historical learning by describing history lessons as narrative events, *Erzählveranstaltung* (Rüsen, 2008).

Michele Barricelli, who may well be regarded as the most prominent representative of the narrativistic paradigm in German history didactics, argues that basically all currently negotiated models of historical learning competence, and the current school curricula, too, consider narrative competence to be an ‘essential, if not the goal of historical learning’ (see Barricelli, 2012: 268). According to this, historical instruction should be planned in such a way that narrativity is made conscious and tangible, and the ‘ability to act in this field’ (see Barricelli, 2012: 255), ‘narrative competence’, can be acquired as the ‘highest learning goal of historical learning’ (Barricelli, 2005: 8). This is why Barricelli addresses the German verb *erzählen* as the *summus operator* – the main operation procedure in historical learning.

He describes historical narrating as a synthesizing speech that includes describing, analysing, interpreting, thus producing a historical sense as a subject-specific narrative method (see Barricelli, 2012: 285). Without mastering these requirements, history cannot be told, so it cannot be learned. Barricelli (2015: 30) admits, that this is not the easiest goal in school: ‘Narrative competence is at least a matter of a school and professional career. Of course, it also changes in the course of a lifetime.’ According to Barricelli (2005, 151), an

individual must not only master the conscious handling of the blueprint of the historical narrative, but must also be able to critically process supra-individual, intersubjective and genre-typical narrative patterns, to meet the requirements of historical thinking and telling. Needless to say, this sounds quite high-level, and is not an adequate target definition for history teaching in schools. In this respect, it is not surprising that Markus Bernhardt and Francisca Conrad recently demanded to abandon the ‘Höhenkamm’-discussion about narrativity and to turn the narrative competence from its head to its feet (Bernhardt 2018: 4).

## 2.2 *‘Immer schon ein Sprachfach’*

However, both Bernhardt/Conrad and Barricelli underline the massive role of proper and subject-specific language use: ‘History has always been a language subject’ (Barricelli 2015: 25). Without language, there is no history, one could declare in the radical simplification of Hans-Jürgen Goertz’s thesis, that language is not history, but history is not possible without language.

The competence debate, that has already been touched on above, drew the attention again to the subject-specific language in the history-didactic discussion. With the elaboration of the various competence models – in particular those of the FUER group and Peter Gautschi – the German-speaking community started to think anew about the language of history and history learning. Both models focus on the basic operations of historical consciousness – questioning, sourcing, interpretation, deconstruction and narrating, and admit (although basically unsaid), that these operations require elaborate language skills. To specify these skills remains an open task for history didactics, ‘which, after the modelling of historical competencies, must show the way to the fulfilment of theoretical well-founded ambitions’ (Handro, 2015: 21).

Already in 2010, Hilke Günter-Arndt stated that the competence debate has triggered a new reflection on language. And Saskia Handro stated in the first of many path breaking texts on language in historical learning, that language is the ‘key problem’, especially in the light of the debate on historical competences: ‘Learning processes can only be thought of in the interplay between oral/written language products and the recipient’s language based knowledge structures’ (Handro, 2010: 9). In this first text, Handro introduced a

categorization that breaks down the relationship between language and history teaching into four relationships that help to clarify the complex and confused relationship.

The first relation, entitled ‘Past Reality and Language’, addresses the constituent role of language in historical learning. In this context, Handro rightly demands that students have to convey the gap between past and language worked out by Koselleck in order to draw attention to the language-related limits of cognition (see Handro, 2010: 4).

The second relation – entitled ‘Historical Understanding and Language’ – focuses on the language of the learners. Here, Handro (2010: 6) is concerned with the ongoing development of the learners’ repertoire of everyday language to a professional language in order to be able to more effectively perform the historical process of understanding. In doing so, however, she not only addresses receptive skills such as reading, but also explicitly addresses the gradual development of narrative competence.

The relation ‘history presentation and language’ highlights central difficulties in the teaching of history: ‘Making history usable as a text for the present always requires narration in the linguistic structures of the lifeworld’ (Handro, 2010: 7). Handro thus describes the need for a common language base between narrators and learners, without whom historical learning is not possible. She does not forget to mention that this also addresses the textbook publishers, who must be taken into account in this respect.

The last aspect of Handro’s categorization is particularly relevant to civic education. The relation ‘discourse and history’ underlines the discursive work in historical-political learning and thus again focuses on the great importance of the interaction between the language of students and teachers in the learning process (Handro, 2010: 8f). In addition, she does not overlook the fact that history and political education must of course also take account of societal discourses and enable the learners to be able to participate in them – especially from the perspective of public history.

### 2.3 *Putting Narrative Competence on Its Feet*

Handro’s second step of systematization appears even more elementary for historical and political lesson planning and can thus be seen as a concrete attempt to consistently combine historical learning

processes on the one hand and the necessary language based operations on the other. Merging these two levels is a very useful and practice-oriented system especially for the sensitization of teachers. With the ‘Process Model of Linguistic Action in History Teaching’ (Handro, 2013: 325f), Handro combines theories of history with the linguistic actions specific to historical research practice, whereby the language based steps of the historical cognitive process can be operationalized (Bernhardt, 2015: 285). With its detailed and sophisticated approach to historical learning – based on both theoretical and language based perspectives – Handro has provided a major improvement to sensitize for language related aspects of historical learning, in teacher training as well as in didactic research.

Recently, Handro presented a third systematization step, which will bring the debate on the linguistic history lesson even closer to the concrete lesson planning and classroom reality. It focusses on the linguistic structures of historical narration at the level of words, sentences and texts. Following Wolfgang Hallet’s model of the linguistic nature of learning, she describes these three levels as genres of historical texts, secondly historical thought patterns and thirdly historical terms and concepts (see Handro, 2018: 32-34). Without a clear idea of the targeted text format (i.e. source interpretation, biography etc.), learners will grope in the dark regarding the necessary actions or preparations. Without a basic index of historical terms and concepts (i.e. ‘revolution’, ‘scope of action’, ‘rule’), learners have no chance to develop concepts of historical thinking such as cause and consequence, for example. Without a fundamental set of linguistic patterns such as syntactical variety or lexical flexibility, historical thinking remains indifferent and gross.

So, the three levels mentioned above are to be strictly considered in any lesson planning. On the basis of the thematic concretization, special attention must be paid to the formulation of the concrete learning objectives.

### **3. Writing History to Learn**

#### *3.1 Historical Learning Based on Genre-knowledge*

Handro has led the way to focus on the epistemic potential of language awareness in historical learning. She underlines the importance of the subject-specific modelling of linguistic processes to use narratives as a resource of historical thinking (see Handro,

2015: 12). This hasn't been done yet *in extenso* in history didactics, as Olaf Hartung (2008: 157) has pointed out correctly over a decade ago: 'The writing and telling history is rarely discussed in the classroom, but constantly demanded in written performance tests.' In the last ten years, however, some steps have been undertaken, to understand the epistemic function of writing better, but still, research in this field is quiet rare. This is unfortunate because Hartung and Memminger have already been able to demonstrate in their projects that fundamental operations of historical thinking, such as taking perspective or recognizing the constructive nature of history, are made very well aware through writing.

It is mainly due to Hartung's work that we know much more about writing in history lessons today than we did a decade ago. By concentrating on the genre as an operative term, he was able to set a significant quality step in historical learning. Genres as structured types of text can serve to bridge the gap between teacher expectation and student perception of using a particular operator. The knowledge of the requirements of the respective text genre is fundamental to be able to understand and produce texts properly. 'The knowledge of the type of text frames and directs the understanding of the text and thus supports reading and writing' (Hartung, 2013: 76). According to Hartung, genre-knowledge thus serves as a production guideline when writing. In generic learning, students are provided with tools to better utilize the epistemic function of writing, as it is based on language centred genre rules.

The formation of such tool boxes is still in the state of development, some interesting approaches were assembled in the *Geschichte Lernen*, Edition 176 (Hartung & Memminger, 2017). All of them deal with the epistemic power of writing in the historical learning process.

Undoubtedly, the research of Hartung has already demonstrated the great impact of productive writing in historical learning. Students equipped with writing strategies, target text formats, and their features can use writing as a 'powerful tool of independent historical thinking' (Hartung & Memminger, 2017: 5).

### 3.2 *Generic Writing and Literal Didactics*

#### 3.2.1 *Literal Didactics and the 3-Phase-Model*

In 2018, a diploma thesis by Vera Kogelnik conducted at the University of Graz,<sup>1</sup> focussed on a broader approach to writing in history education. In the course of an interdisciplinary approach, the attempt was made to make Sabine Schmölzer-Eibingers' write-didactic 3-phase model (Schmölzer-Eibinger, 2007: 207) fruitful for historical learning.

The 3-phase model was developed to strengthen the scientific 'textual competence' (in German 'Textkompetenz') of students. 'The term textual competence,' says Paul Portmann (2007: 9), 'focuses on the cognitive basis of all text-related activities.' According to him, textual competent learners can deal with texts in a receptive and productive way, read independently, process the information obtained and produce texts, so communicate intentions understandably and adequately (see Portmann-Tselinkas: 2002). Schmölzer-Eibinger (2007: 207) states more precisely: 'They [the learners who have textual competence] are able to reflect on texts, to comment on texts and to use a written language verbally in the respective context.' In addition, such learners are able to look at texts from different perspectives, to use variable reading and writing strategies, to filter out key messages and to open up meanings and structures of meaning from the context. Text literacy also becomes manifest when texts are logically structured, topics unfold meaningfully, and meaning structures are processed both lexically and syntactically in a variety of ways (Schmölzer-Eibinger, 2007: 211).

These ambitious linguistic requirements are those indicators of textual competence that Schmölzer-Eibinger based on the concept of 'literal didactics'. Its goals also clarify this: literal promotion, active language action, individual knowledge construction, coordinated knowledge and language acquisition. Literal didactics understand any teaching as a permanent language action, which must be made aware to all participants who can work on their respective individual linguistic (and subsequently also professional) skills. The coordination of knowledge (in the sense of subject orientated) and language acquisition can be considered the core of the system: The development of professional language skills is synonymous to the development of professional competencies (and vice versa). Saskia Handro's third model comes to mind: without understanding of the

specific historical text frames, the related linguistic strategies and the basic conceptual index of history, historical thinking is not possible (see above).

By means of the 3-phase-model, these objectives should be integrated into the lessons and a total of six didactic principles should be implemented: integrated language and subject learning, authentic language practice, language awareness, integration of skills, cooperation and, finally, a focus on writing. In the course of three consecutive steps, students are focusing a specific topic based on texts. In a first phase of free writing, learners should approach the negotiated subject in a very individual and creative way. With a picture or a concept as a source of impulses first, very unstructured texts emerge. They represent the basis of the learning process, which is used again during the process and, above all, at the end. In phase 2 (called 'textual work'), the learning is confronted with different texts on the topic. They work with these in various methodical settings, for example, have to arrange sections of text, supplement passages or invent headings. On the one hand, they are very linguistically active and, on the other hand, they are very busy with the content. The newly acquired knowledge will be used in the final phase 3 ('text transformation') in the own texts (from phase 1). This trains both the ability to apply newly acquired knowledge and the competence of text reworking. The six principles of literary didactics (integrated language and language learning, authentic language practice, language awareness, integration of the four skills, cooperation and focus on writing) become visible in this 3-phase- model, and given the linguistic determinacy of historical thinking, these can also very well integrated into historical learning.

### 3.2.2 *Literal Didactics and Historical Learning*

As mentioned already, this concept was adopted for historical learning. The research project, conducted in two seventh grade history classes, aimed on combining historical and literal learning. The students were instructed to write abstracts about the colonial history in Congo. While one group of students was trained in the shape of the 3-phase-model, the others wrote their abstracts in a 'normal' classroom setting. The texts were examined both linguistically and content wise and the results underscored the benefits of the 3-phase-model. Particularly in the linguistic and stylistic field, the texts of the intervention group stood out clearly.

Regarding the content quality of the texts, it can be stated that also here the intervention group performed slightly better than those of the control group. Specifically, concerning the receptive performances large differences between the two groups could be found. Those students trained in course of the 3-phase-model achieved much better results than those of the control group (see Kogelnik, 2018: 108).

The diploma thesis underlined the potential which the 3-phase-model can provide for historical learning. Basically, two main profits can be defined. On the one hand, benefits lay, as mentioned above, mainly in text quality (as writing style, syntactics and the lexical dimension). So it can be stated that the 3-phase-model can be used to strengthen the professional language use of history learners. Following Halliday's famous theorem (Halliday, 1993: 83) that learning the language of science also means learning science, the improvement of professional language skills through the 3-phase-model will also reinforce the historical thinking skills of the learners. On the other hand, Kogelnik highlighted the advantages of the 3-phase-model in the receptive field. Obviously, reading skills are practiced in an intensive manner through Schmölder-Eibinger's model. The ability to gain more information out of texts is crucial for working with sources in the historical learning setting. So, also in this respect, the use of the 3-phase-model promotes historical thinking.

#### **4. Teacher Training and Language Awareness**

Although results such as these are not yet sufficiently available and, of course, the study presented here is a diploma thesis, its results – but also those of Hartung, Sven Oleschko (2019) or Josef Memminger (2009) lead in a very clear direction: language matters. When learners receive language-based guidance, they inevitably improve in historical learning. Having been introduced to the 'language of history' – the hidden curriculum (Christie, 1985) of our subject – it is much easier for them to learn our subject.

In 2015, a new curriculum for future history teachers was introduced at the University of Graz, Austria. After a long and intense debate about the design of this curriculum, it was finally decided to install a course with the title 'History and Language' in addition to the classical historical subjects. During this course, future history teachers are prepared for language-aware history teaching.

They are sensitized to the special role that language plays in the subject of history. The students become involved with the theoretical formations around narrativity and narrative competence in the history didactic context and have to read and discuss texts of Rösen, Barricelli and Handro. In addition to the 3-phase model, they are also familiarized with measures for linguistic scaffolding and the great relevance of reading and writing techniques. Furthermore, they have to analyse history textbooks in a language aware perspective and are confronted with the linguistic challenges, primary sources pose to learners. In group work, they have to design a written, language aware lesson plan based on the Schmölder-Eibinger's model. In order to complete the course, the lesson-plan has to be presented and defended in class.

The course has been held for the third time now and it turns out to be a very challenging experience for the students. Those whose second subject is not a language, find it particularly hard to achieve the objectives of the course. The students report that they benefit greatly from the content and recognize their high practical relevance. But they also make it clear that in the two academic years before, they hardly ever, or never have to deal with the theoretical foundations of the subject, which causes them difficulties in the course. However, the feedback also indicates that, based on their practical experience, they understand the importance of language aware instruction and are therefore highly motivated in the course.

## **5. Conclusion**

In an increasingly multi-ethnic and multilingual society, schools are not only tasked with communicating content to students but are also faced with integrative and sociopolitical responsibilities that they need to address. With the background of an increasingly mobile population and many young people with a migration background, teachers today can no longer assume that all students have a sufficient command of the language of instruction. Therefore, more than ever, the school has the mission to support the linguistic education of young people. Since this cannot be done by the language subjects alone, all subjects are required to participate in it. This is especially true for those subjects that are particularly dependent on language or use a strong terminology. When historical thinking manifests itself mainly in meaningful narratives, it is essential

to provide young learners with the widest possible range of linguistic support to enable those with linguistic deficits to think historically. Future teachers must be adequately prepared for this – on the one hand to become aware of the high relevance of language in historical learning, and on the other to enable them to support young learners.

For the future of history teaching, the focus on linguistic processes seems indispensable and it is to be hoped that the research processes outlined above will be further intensified.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>This diploma thesis was supervised by the author and conducted in two classes of the BG/BRG Fürstenfeld in Styria, Austria. In total, 47 students participated.

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# UTOPIA, HISTORICAL THOUGHT AND MULTIMODALITY FOR THE MEDIA EMPOWERMENT OF PRE- SERVICE TRAINEE HISTORY TEACHERS

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*This study presents an education research design for the multimodal project entitled 'Audiovisual heterotopias for new education spaces' (as one of the strands of research pursued within 'LITMEC research project: Multimodal Literacy and Cultural Studies), the purpose of which is to develop historical thought by incorporating the concept of 'Utopia' into history teaching from a multimodal pedagogical approach. Teaching the history of the past-present-future time is approached through three heterogeneous spaces proposed by Foucault: Utopia, Dystopia and Heterotopia. These three dimensions are used to formulate three research questions about how they can be applied in the teaching and learning of history. Hence, this paper will set out three education proposals for the initial training of pre-service trainee high school history teachers, so as to promote the acquisition of historical thinking as well as critical, creative, social and citizenship competencies through media deconstruction and the trainee teachers' own audiovisual productions in order to turn these teachers into key agents of social change.*

## 1. The Role of Utopia in the Teaching of History

To mark 500 years since the publication of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516-2016), we embarked on an education research project focusing on the role of Utopia in the teaching of history. Initially, this concept was extremely important in education studies, especially for critical pedagogy (Stanley, 1992; Giroux, 2001). The concept of 'utopia' refers back to the Greek term ou-topos, 'no place', and harks back to the literary genre initiated with More's work, in which he offers a critique of his contemporary society and proposes a better society. Furthermore, according to the *Dicionário da Crítica Feminista* (Macedo & Amaral, 2005: 191), 'utopia', according to Lyman Sargent, can have two meanings: 'Eutopia (eu from the Greek meaning good, and topos meaning place) and utopia (u from the Greek meaning absence of). In relation to the first concept, utopia is understood as a promise of a better society or of more adequate social structures that contrast

with the author's society. With regard to the second concept, utopia emerges as a representation of a place that does not exist, except in the imagination of the author or the reader'.

In this research, we decided to link these three heterogeneous spaces around the concept of 'utopia' established by Foucault (1967) to the teaching of three historical times:

- Past: utopias that allude to a location, a real place, where we 'would find' an improved society.
- Present: a mixed experience through mirrors ('the utopia of mirrors'), a recurrent element in literature (Borges, 1964); which could be understood as a virtual space. Foucault (1967: 3) would say that the mirror is a kind of 'placeless place', 'an unreal space that opens up virtually behind the surface'. That virtual space is understood within the context of this study as the 'media' space, and corresponds to the label of 'dystopias'.
- Future: Heterotopias understood as absolutely other spaces, different spaces, those other places, those mythical and real contestations of the spaces in which we live.

From a didactical approach, we are proposing the introduction of utopia in order to facilitate the development of historical thinking. The educational dimension of 'utopia' is related with the teaching and learning of the past-present-future time, which allows students to engage in a triple process: 'the present is the active crossing place between the past and the future, between the history yet to be made' and the 'being affected by the past' (Peñalver, 2005: 82).

Hence, we begin with the concept of utopia as a non-place projected in a certain past historical time that allows us to discover and understand a certain society of the past and to detect the concerns and proposals for future improvement of that time. In spite of the widespread conception of history as the 'science that studies the past of human beings in order to understand the present and create projects for the future' (Fernandes, 2005: 152), history is regularly associated with the historic-past time. For that reason, firstly, we should understand history didactics as the place of fusion between past-present horizons where hermeneutical conscience is acquired. All historical understanding involves gaining a horizon, understanding this as 'the sphere of vision that encompasses and encloses all that is visible from a certain point' (Gadamer, 1975/2007: 372). Assuming historical conscience would involve 'seeing the past

within one's own being, not from our contemporary patterns and prejudices but rather from within its own historical horizon' (Gadamer, 1975/2007: 373).

Furthermore, it is necessary to incorporate one of the purposes of history as a subject of education; in other words, 'facilitating understanding of the present' (Prats & Santacana, 2011: 21). The introduction of the present time will require the use of new documents taken from media culture and which are circulated on social media (Napolitano, 2003; Popp, Schumann & Hannig, 2014). And it is here that we move from 'utopia' to 'dystopia', understanding this latter concept as a media-place in the historic-present time, which allows us to observe and analyse the problems of our own society. The dystopian phenomenon is continually reflected in the media culture, from television series (*The Handmaid's Tale*, 2017) and films (*Black Mirror*, 2015; *Divergent*, 2014; *The Hunger Games*, 2008) to videos (*Chained to Rhythm*, 2017) and video games (*The Last of Us*, 2013), etc. In this respect, we see history didactics as a discipline that contributes to the use of mainstream culture in the classroom, a fundamental basis for the acquisition of 'historical thinking' (Plá, 2005; Pagès, 2009, 2011; Santisteban, 2010; and Santisteban, González & Pagès, 2010) which is a key priority and a solid means of achieving critical, social and citizenship competencies.

Finally, the teaching of the historic-future time, establishing a series of hypothesis around a counterfactual history following the line of 'future studies' and an education for the future (Hicks & Slaughter, 1998; Anguera & Santisteban, 2012; Anguera, 2013; Santisteban & Anguera, 2014). For this teaching and learning process, we would move from 'dystopia' to 'heterotopia'. How to improve our future history through our present history? How to deconstruct these 'real places that have been places of exclusion, deviation, opening and closure, marginalisation, etc.' (Triviño & Vaquero, 2019) so that they can be reconfigured as being spaces of empowerment for citizenship? Consequently, the dual educational dimension of the concept of 'utopia' and its variants not only allows us to formulate hypotheses about the future, but also to propose solutions for social change 'by imagining other possible worlds' (Triviño & Vaquero, 2019) promoting 'optimism' (Santisteban, 2011) and adopting great educational potential (Jensen, 2005).

The core concept within the teaching of history is a historical-temporal awareness based on the relationship between past, present

and future (Pagès & Santisteban, 1998: 99). Taking the triple perspective of the use of the present moment as a teaching tool for history didactics (Ortiz, Miralles & Molina, 2013: 157), applied to media culture, we could say that:

- Media culture in the history classroom could provide a starting point in the search for historical, artistic, philosophical and geographical precedent; as well as its historical, artistic, philosophical and geographical projection in the future.
- Through media culture, we shall be teaching ‘immediate history’ or ‘history of the present time’.
- Tackling media culture in history, social-critical thinking can be shaped by dealing with social issues.

This latter aspect revolves around how the history syllabus, through its organisation in terms of social problems, shapes critical thinking (Santisteban, 2011; Canals, 2013); it confirms the importance of the discipline of history in the development of critical literacy of media culture. With regard to the first two points, research into history didactics examines an approach to teaching history that aims to: ‘shape historical thinking, with the intention of furnishing students with a series of instruments of analysis, understanding or interpretation, which would enable them to tackle the study of history with autonomy and construct their own representation of the past, whilst at the same time being capable of contextualising or judging historic events, aware of the distance that separates them from the present. In any case, the formation of historical thinking must be placed at the service of a democratic citizenship, which uses history to interpret the world today and in order to manage the future better’ (Santisteban, 2010: 35).

Herein lies one of the core notions whereby history didactics is seen to be essential for audiovisual education, insofar as the competencies of historical thinking comprise four types of concepts (Santisteban, González & Pagès, 2010) capable of developing critical literacy and multimodality in Social Sciences teacher training:

- The construction of historical-temporal awareness. Which historic time is represented in media culture for pre-service trainee Social Sciences teachers?
- The representation of history. What are the past-present-future historical narrations that converge in media culture according to pre-service trainee history teachers? How are scenarios, figures

- and past-present-future historic facts construed in media culture according to pre-service trainee history teachers?
- Learning historical interpretation. How are historical sources and historical texts used to analyse media culture in the training of history teachers?
  - Imagination/historical creativity. How can imagination and creativity promote critical-creative thinking among trainee history teachers?

The teaching and learning of history seeks to foster historical thinking that necessarily leads to critical and creative thinking, in the sense that ‘critical thinking might not be creative, but creative thinking is always critical’ (Santisteban, 2010: 46); and, finally, social thinking, given that the history didactics deals with relevant social problems in the classroom. Hence, a series of competencies are generated, such as social, citizenship, critical and aesthetic competencies, thus educating citizens through the development of historical-temporal-critical-aesthetic-social awareness.

## **2. The Multimodal Project ‘Audiovisual Heterotopias for New Education Spaces’**

The education research design was entitled *Audiovisual Heterotopias for new Education Spaces* and was put into practice as part of the subjects Design and Programming of Education Activities and The history, Geography, Art and Philosophy Syllabus on the Masters’ Degree in Secondary Education Teaching, in the speciality of Social Sciences, integrating the school disciplines of history, geography, history of art and philosophy; considering the use of qualitative methodology, based on a case study with N=40 students and using a multimodal teaching approach, in accordance with the considerations of Kress (2000, 2010) regarding teachers and students as designers of the syllabus, and that the process of construction involves using various modes for teaching and learning about the world that surrounds them.

Kress defines mode as ‘the name for a culturally and socially fashioned resource for representation and communication’ (2003: 45) and distinguishes between three types: according to time (talk, dance, action and music); according to space (image, sculpture and other three-dimensional forms); and mixed modes (spatial-temporal) such as gesture and writing. In the case of this project, the following types

of modes were used: time (talk, dance, action and music); space (image); and mixed modes (gesture and writing). The media culture expands on the concept of text – associated with the written text – and encourages schools to move from monomodality to multimodality (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001).

We formulated three research questions based on Foucault's three heterogeneous spaces linked to three historical times:

1. How to propose that pre-service trainee history teachers teach the past historic time through the concept of 'Utopia'?
2. How to propose that pre-service trainee history teachers teach the present historic time through the concept of 'Dystopia'?
3. How to propose that pre-service trainee history teachers teach the future historic time through the concept of 'Heterotopia'?

To tackle the first of these questions, through the subject of Design and Programming of Education Activities, the students individually put together a teaching unit that would deal with an area of content from the secondary education history syllabus, focused on the notion of utopia. Among the activities, they had to plan a visit to Modern Utopias, a temporary exhibition at the Malaga Pompidou Centre. The theme of this exhibition is:

*This new semi-permanent exhibition, on display until 2020, narrates the history of the major utopias of the 20th and 21st centuries, through eminent works of art on loan from the Centre Pompidou. Thematic, multimedia and chronology, this exhibition is shaped into six major chapters: 'The great utopia', 'The end of illusions', 'Together', 'The radiant city', 'Imagine the future' and 'Golden Age'. The works of art selected reflect the historic events that have shaped our time and which have fed the imagination and ideals of modern and contemporary artists.*

*This exhibition is a reflection, a question to be answered, an interpellation about the ideologies and utopias that spread through the world in the 20th Century. This exhibition takes visitors on a journey around modern utopias about society and ways of life. From communism to environmentalism or hippies, without forgetting the current counter culture and even consumerism (individualism), almost all developments of the last century to improve society are here in one way or another. And reflections are triggered through art, using 60 of the most important works of modern art (Picasso, Kandinsky, Chagall, Saura, Miró, Peter Doig, etc.) that deal with dreams, illusions and disillusion, new promises and new dreams. An exhibition that talks about the risks of starting at the beginning once again (Centre Pompidou Málaga, 2018).*

A second moment tackled the second question, showing the music video *Chained to the Rhythm* by Katy Perry, which shows a perfect and idyllic society as part of a theme park where everyone seems happy, does the same activities and has the same interests. But this is purely an appearance. It is set against a background of a media dystopia – and even the title of Orwell’s dystopian novel *1984* appears – in which we see stereotypes of gender, class, and race; and names of rides that reflect the problems and conflicts of the United States: *No Place Like Home*, as an allusion to the expulsion of immigrants; *Fire Water*, in relation to the fight for oil, etc. To teach about present time, the ‘Didactic of Eutopia’ was developed (Triviño & Cañestro, 2019) based on the proposal of a ‘Method to detect digital caves’, in which we suggested a series of categories that pre-service trainee history teachers had to detect in the video, for example, male chauvinism, global hegemony, heteronormativity, adult-centrism, gerontophobia, aporophobia, homogenisation, cultural appropriation, alienation, etc.

After this process, a proposal was made to create an audiovisual heterotopia in the sphere of education; in other words, the pre-service trainee history teachers would have to create an audiovisual resource that would raise the visibility of these other spaces that would empower citizens to become the main agents for social change, and to make a proposal of future history. To this end, we continued with the ‘Method to construct global agoras’, which involved proposing a series of categories that were approached as alternatives to the previous ones observed in the music video. Hence, categories were described, such as feminism, local counter culture, sexual diversity, strengthening the visibility of childhood and old age, philanthropy, differentiated individual identity, assimilation, otherness, etc. The categories were agreed by teachers in training in group based on their citizens’ concerns.

The resulting audiovisual productions were used as educational resources that were used in educational workshops designed by the pre-service trainee history teachers aimed at high school students at the Clara Peeters Conference: ‘Audiovisual heterotopies for new education spaces’, in the University of Malaga’s Faculty of Education.

Finally, the project was evaluated by pre-service trainee teachers through a questionnaire about the difficulties, threats, strengths and opportunities. The result of the questionnaires reflected the good development of the project, the interest felt by the students in incorporating the concept of ‘utopia’ and its derivatives into history

teaching. One of the most salient aspects was the opportunity to teach high school students using their own educational resources through the creation of productions and audiovisuals. The majority of students indicated how striking the concept of 'heterotopia' was, and the possibilities it offered in terms of tackling the visibility of otherness in the teaching of history, by promoting empathy. Hence, the inclusion of the term 'empathy' becomes necessary. For Lee (2004: 92), empathy will be 'part of (and a necessary condition for) historical understanding and imagination as an assumption that constitutes a criterion for said understanding.' Building on this concept, the term is expanded to 'historical empathy' as 'its own competency of what has been termed the learning of historical thinking' (González, Henríquez, Pagès & Santisteban, 2009: 284), in a broader definition: 'understanding and explaining the actions of people in the past, so that they become intelligible to contemporary minds. A fact that implies knowledge of the respective historical context and interpretation of diversified historical evidences and/or contemplated from different perspectives, which is also linked to the use of historical imagination' (Zamboni & Ferreira, 2009: 119).

### 3. Conclusion

According to Pagès (2009), the development of historical thinking in high school education should, therefore, turn students into reflexive, critical and creative thinkers. Our project implies the formation of the teaching profile of the historian/artist to generate critical-creative thinking. Now more than ever, we are living in a society that demands creativity for commercial purposes; but creativity through history didactics must recover its social commitment:

*The culture of creativity must be understood in the broadest sense of the expression, in other words, as everything that might enhance the specificity of the human being: create, innovate, undertake. Not a culture of subjection to a soulless commercial and financial law, but rather a policy that gives everyone the opportunity to express the very best of themselves and to contribute in their own way to humanising collective culture (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2010: 190).*

Freire, in conversation with Shor (1989: 141-143), talks about the question of the educator with regard to artists. He considers the role

of art in teaching to transform. Shor calls on us to think about the possibilities of art. He describes how he must use his creative wit and adjust his teaching in each new class. His proposal involves carrying out exercises that develop critical literacy among his students but which also allows him to get to know the students. Hence, an atmosphere is created in the classroom where auditory and visual dimensions are found: 'Artists work with predictable materials such as oil, marble or music. How are teachers sculptors, painters, managers and composers? One of the ways I perceive this aesthetic aspect of teaching and classroom evaluation is as a previously moulded plastic material, but one which can be moulded again in a different way' (Freire & Shor, 1989: 141).

We promote the role of pre-service trainee teachers in Social Sciences as readers and writers/receivers and issuers of texts; it responds to a triple technical, critical and creative dimension that leads to the creation of their own modes (Santisteban, 2011) but also to the use of different types of media that go beyond the printed word (Pagès, 2011: 139). In this respect, the idea is that pre-service trainee teachers should deconstruct media culture in order to create their own glocal mode that acts as an education resource. Hence, making citizens critically literate involves a dual process: reaching the media mode and writing the glocal (Robertson, 2005) mode. Barthes (1972) stated that the rejection of reading by generations was directly related with the lack of a writing habit; not only would they need to be prepared to consume messages but also to produce messages.

We have endeavoured to take all these aspects into account in this project, through the triple dimension of utopia, with a view to teaching history of the past (utopia), present (dystopia) and future (heterotopia) time so as to foster historical thinking. Furthermore, through this design, we have examined in greater depth the need to train history teachers to develop critical-creative thinking through the analysis of media culture and the creation of their own educational audiovisual resources.

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# FORUM



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## ENHANCING HISTORICAL FILM LITERACY: A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK AND FINDINGS FROM AN UNDERGRADUATE CLASSROOM

Maria Mavormmati

*Film is often used to teach history in primary and secondary education, because it is believed that it can provide a representation of past events through a narrative form that is easier to comprehend than that provided by academic or school history. Apart from the extensive use of documentary film, the most common uses of mainstream films in the history classroom aim at distinguishing an historical fact from its cinematic representation or at allowing students to dive deep into the atmosphere of the depicted era and thus develop a sense of historical empathy, without interrogating the film as a source or discussing its representational choices of the past. The approach designed and utilized in order to teach Contemporary American History to first year undergraduates aimed at developing the students' historical film literacy through the adoption of a method designed in accordance with the principles of film analysis: each film was discussed as a visual recreation of a specific historical theme or event, using tools of film theory and the film's form analysis. Data was collected in the form of students' reflective accounts. The analysis of the data shows that students reflected deeply on the evolving nature of history in addition to developing certain skills of historical thinking.*

Even before the beginning of the 21st century, sources of historical consciousness and understanding started to include many more products of popular culture than ever before. The field of public history researches precisely the effects of public displays and representations of history on historical understanding and thinking, namely the ways in which we understand our past and decode its meanings in a culture that gradually reflects on its past more and more, with the aim of understanding it, excusing it or being inspired by it. According to relevant research, youth today is largely informed about their national history not only from textbooks and the school, but from products of mass consumption (Wineburg, Mosborg, Porat & Duncan, 2007), such as cinema, television and computer games. At the same time, media literacy, namely the skills to decode information and critically read information that is presented in a mostly visual form is also a skill that is underdeveloped in the current curricula, while efforts are being made to promote these skills (Hobbs &

Jensen, 2009). Our suggested approach aims to provide a framework that will promote both historical film literacy and historical thinking skills. During an undergraduate General Education course with a focus on American History, seven films were screened in order to discuss themes in American history, from the Civil War and the abolition of slavery to the Twin Towers attack, and a set of filmic language elements such as editing, *mis-en-scène*, cinematography and the use of sound were explored as meaningful choices of representation. Each film was seen as both a secondary historical source, presenting understandings of past events which the film represented, and a work of visual art, with its specific language and codes which convey meanings in ways that are specific to the medium.

## 1. Historical Film Literacy

Although teachers had been using films in the classroom much earlier (although apparently, not with much success (Walker, 2006)), it was Robert Rosenstone's seminal work (2006) that sparked the discussion with regards to the value and specificities of historical film as actual historical work (Munslow, 2007). Rosenstone's understanding of historical film as a legitimate account of the past, that is different from but equal to the academic interpretation of the past, was greeted well by other academic historians and set the scene for a deeper consideration of cinematic artwork as work of historical construction and understanding. Due to the ever-decreasing study of historical text and the increasing dominance of visual media, it is possible that 'History on the screen is the History of the future' (Rosenstone, 2000), while Munslow (2007) reflects on and rejects the dominance of the written historical text as the only legitimate kind and form of history, explaining and expanding Rosenstone's ideas on the changing nature of history and the role of the historian. It is not only the craft of the historian that changes, though, or, to be more precise, this craft is just the tip of the iceberg: by understanding the nature of the historical film, our epistemological beliefs about what constitutes history and what is truth in the past also change. Due to the dominance of the image, but also the post-modern conceptions of/about history, the nature of history has changed and this is reflected on/in the media that (re)create history, such as the film. Afterall, 'History is not a 'reflection' of past reality but a construction

of a moral story about the past out of traces that remain' (Rosenstone, 2000: 2), and the new media in which this past is recreated challenges current conventions of thinking about the past. Moreover, this understanding of historical film as a legitimate source of history is based on the acceptance of the idea that both history on film and written (academic) history are narrations that construct meanings through the use of certain conventions, e.g. inventions of facts, moral teachings in each narration etc. Therefore, legitimizing film as an historical account presupposes that we accept that both kinds of history (academic/written and popular/visual) relate very closely to and are products of the imagination.

Films, however, can be analysed only as a whole, only when we consider their form as an entirety, and not by bits (through the use of short videos), as they create meaning only when they are treated as a system made up of narrative and stylistic elements (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008). In addition, the movie cannot and should not be treated like text, like the written word, but should be analysed through these specific elements, which are editing, sound, *mis-en-scène* and cinematography. Hence, the development of historical film literacy, as Marcus (2005: 62) has called the skills to analyse and critique the contents of an historical film, becomes necessary. This view of films as legitimate means of historical representation is of course related to the post-modern understanding of history as a variety of representations and interpretations. However, all this complexity and multiplicity of factors get lost and are not utilized in the classroom, where films are used in a very superficial manner, most often as simplistic depictions of life in the past.

## 2. Use of Film as an Instructional Tool

Historical films are gradually being treated both by academics and teachers as a special tool for the development of historical understanding, with their specific limitations and prospects. It is a well-known fact that students learn more about their national history from popular media, such as films, than school history (Wineburg, 2001; Wineburg et al, 2007). Although it is often and easily suggested as a tool for learning school history, its use is limited in the utilization of documentaries, which are considered scientific enough to be included in a classroom, and are not criticized or discussed critically in the process of their analysis in the classroom. When documentaries

are not used, the next best choice is Hollywood film clips that are used in order to transmit a visual representation of the era or an historical fact discussed in the classroom, more often to create empathy with the historical (fictional or otherwise) characters or to detect and discuss historical inaccuracies, in the form of a historical test, or even to keep the class awake during a screening, as Walker's research has indicated (2006), although there have been proposals for a deeper analysis of films in classrooms (Metzger, 2010). More often, they are used in order to replace the teacher's narration and with the hope of enriching students' understanding through the addition of information that is presented visually. Regarding the timing of their screening, they are either inserted before the topic they relate to is actually taught, as an introductory activity that will raise their interest or after the teacher has taught the topic, as a concluding activity. This approach implies that all viewers decode film work the same way, as there is no actual analysis taking place in the classroom, because what the film shows seems self-evident, and more often the film's content is taken at its face value, with little or no analysis taking place in the classroom. From all these approaches, the main thing that is missing is the interpretation of films as sources and their interrogation as such (Donnelly, 2016). Even if they were interrogated as sources, however, such an approach would also be limited, since history is much more than source analysis anyway (Munslow, 2007).

Our approach has a different view on the use and role of films in creating meaning relating to the past, taking into consideration its stylistic and narrative elements as they interact with each other and create meaning. By using *mis-en-scène*, editing, sound and cinematography, cinema creates its own unique version of the past. The purpose of this approach is to connect and synthesize the narrative of the film with the film's techniques in order to understand the ways in which historical meaning is constructed through filmic language. The techniques and style of the film constitute its form and the form of the film is the way it chooses to tell a story (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008). Therefore, the form is important in order to understand the content. Afterall, cinematic style and message are interwoven, as shown in Rosenstone's (2000) analysis of Stones' JFK: films that employ new artistic visions that present new visions of history. Through experimentation with form, they also experiment with versions and interpretations of history, hence the form is not

irrelevant to the content. However, formal elements are rarely discussed in the history classroom, even though the interplay between these elements is what constitutes History as Vision (Rosenstone, 2000).

### **3. The Teaching Approach**

Through our teaching approach, the aim was to read historical films as secondary sources with their own specific language and therefore develop historical thinking skills as a result of analysing the film's formal elements and their meaning. The purpose of this approach was twofold: to develop historical film literacy skills and historical thinking skills, i.e. to learn how to analyse an historical film and also to acquire basic historical thinking skills. The proposed approach, therefore, attempted to combine historical analysis with the films' form analysis. Our method aimed at developing an instructional tool for the development of historical thinking skills through familiarizing the students with filmic language. Historical films were treated as secondary sources that needed to be analysed in a particular manner due to their visual form. Just like students are (supposedly) familiar with working with textual sources and analyzing texts and images, which are mostly used as sources in school history, so too they need to have a tool to understand and critically analyse the historical film as a specific kind of historical text. This tool can be found directly in the area of film studies and film analysis and be adjusted for the purposes of historical film literacy development. Decoding the language of historical films through the use of filmic language, students analyse the historical film, in terms of its content (the era/the facts it enacts/represents) as well as the context it was created and screened in, and the environment in which the analysis takes place, thus performing an analysis in three levels (Borgoyne, 2009: 9). This means they analyse the film as a historical source, asking it questions such as 'what audience was it addressing?' etc. By analyzing the film and its form, an extra layer of analysis is added. Apart from the typical source analysis process as described in the previous step, during which students answer questions relating to the source creators' aims, background etc., they are also encouraged to answer questions that are related to the ways of representation. For example, why is a specific kind of music used in this part/scene? What emotions does the director seek to create? Why is editing fast

in this scene? What meaning does this editing style create? This way, students familiarize themselves with filmic language as a unique language which is used for the writing of new historical texts, namely new readings of the past. We follow the medium and its particularities in order to decode the message and do not analyse it as if it were a written text, but as a visual text with its own ways of meaning-making. In the instance of historical film interpretation, 'the medium is the message' (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967). Taking into consideration the public dimension of the source (film), we also analyse and discuss not just what the film shows but also why the specific representation was chosen, what the conventions of the medium it addresses are, but also how it forms our conception of our past, the mechanics of memory and our current culture. We therefore reflect on how films communicate their message through cinematic language and representation tools specific to the medium. For example, two films that can be analysed together regarding the role of the protagonist are *October* (1927) and *Schindler's List* (1993). In *October*, the anonymous crowd is the protagonist, and crowds fill most of the screen and screen time. History is made by the masses (Rosenstone, 2001) and the genre that can represent this vision is the epic film. This interpretation reflects the Marxist analysis of class struggles that was the political interpretation of the Bolsheviks and the film's creator, Sergei Eisenstein. On the contrary, in *Schindler's List*, the saviour of the Jews that are driven to death by the Nazis is the lone protagonist, the brave Schindler who acts alone in response to the historical circumstances of his times, against all dangers, and manages to make a difference on his own, mostly because of his moral character, a narrative that is very familiar in capitalist post-war West, while the genre most appropriate to represent these ideas is the biographical film (Burgoyne, 2008). By analyzing with the students these choices of protagonists in history and film, first on a script level and secondly through specific camera frames that emphasize collective or individual action respectively, students learn how the contemporaries of each film saw the historical facts in question through their ideological stance, analyzing thus the time of the screening of the film in addition to the analysis of the time the film refers to. In addition, the kind of history we teach when we discuss the reasons why facts are presented in a specific way removes us from the narrow boundaries of factual, political history, and widens

its limits to include intellectual history and the history of ideas. In order to achieve a deep analysis, filmic language is deployed and the filmic form is discussed in connection to its content, instead of the content alone. The analysis of the form allows for a more critical discussion of the creative choices, which create historical interpretations.

#### 4. Research Design

The research design followed an action research approach, with students participating in the design of lessons through providing timely feedback, selecting films from a list provided, and producing a reflective account at the end of the course, in which they reflected on their learning experience and the weaknesses and strengths of the approach. A curriculum was designed combining principles of media literacy skills development, film studies and historical sources analysis. The content of the module was contemporary American history, starting from the Civil War and reaching the 2001 attack on the Twin Towers. The data analysed was the students' final reflective analyses on their learning experiences during the course. Nine students participated in the research, coming from different disciplines (psychology, business administration and computer science), as this was a first-year introductory elective course. The research took place during the spring term in 2015 in a college in Greece.

It was explained from the start that the teaching of the specific historical period would be heavily influenced by and designed in close connection with film studies approaches. To that end, students were provided with two books which would be the main readings of the module, i.e. *Film Art: An Introduction* by Bordwell & Thompson (2008), which would be used in order to help them produce their film analyses and *A People's History of the United States* by Zinn (2003), which would be the historical reading for the module. For each film they were also provided a short list of academic articles discussing the specific films and the Powerpoint slides that were used during the lectures.

<b>Film</b>	<b>Historical period</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Film literacy skills</b>
<i>Amistad</i>	American Revolution and the abolition of slavery	The making of the USA, African-American fight for equality, Civil Rights movement	The basics of film language: scene, editing, cinematography, film analysis example
<i>Lincoln</i>	Civil War	The Great Man approach in historiography, The making of the USA	Biopic as film genre
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	Dust Bowl and the 1930's economic crisis	Migration, environmental history	Film adaptations of novels, political film
<i>Flags of our Fathers</i>	Second World War	The role of the media in the construction of history and memory, monumentation	Documentary style drama, irony, subjectivity
<i>JFK</i>	The assassination of John Kennedy	Conspiracy theories in US history	History as the search for truth, historian and film director as detectives
<i>Apocalypse Now!</i>	Vietnam War	Anti-war movement, war as expression of collective madness	Narrative structure, uses of cinematography
<i>Fahrenheit 911</i>	The attack on the Twin Towers	Post-modern truth, subjectivity	The documentary genre, argumentation in visual narrative

Table 1. The module's contents.

The films used were *Amistad* and *Lincoln* by Steven Spielberg, *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Ford, *Flags of our Fathers* by Clint Eastwood, *JFK* by Oliver Stone, *Apocalypse Now!* by Francis Ford Coppola, and *Fahrenheit 911* by Michael Moore. The historical topics they covered respectively were the American Revolution and the abolition of slavery, Civil War, the Dust Bowl and the 1930's economic crisis, the Second World War, the assassination of JFK, the Vietnam War, and the attack on the Twin Towers. Each lesson also aimed at discussing intellectual and social history themes, as well as introducing students to the process of analyzing films as historical sources and developing film literacy skills. Table 1 explains what was sought by teaching each of the films and the multi-layered approach which was followed in the design of the module.

Each week students were presented with a basic introduction to the historical era and the film and watched the film in the classroom. The following week, an analysis of the film was conducted combining historical analysis and film analysis methods. For example, as shown in Table 1, *Amistad's* analysis included both a discussion of how the Founding Fathers and the abolition of slavery are a major part of the American national identity and narrative today, identifying freedom and justice with the making of modern America, as well as an analysis of the film's form, editing and cinematography, i.e. a combination of the narrative and the visual qualities of the film. Therefore, each film was seen as both an historical narration, presenting ideas that were current when the film was produced (and not when the story was set, i.e. in the historical time it depicts) and a work of visual art, with its specific language and codes. Students were finally required to submit their own interpretations of the film they watched the previous week through writing a 1,000-word film analysis.

## 5. Data Analysis and Discussion

The data analysed were the students' reflective accounts at the end of term. The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework for qualitative data analysis in three stages: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. Data was read multiple times and codes emerged, and after careful consideration they were combined to make up categories. These categories eventually, after further refinement, made up two large themes. The

themes and the categories making up each theme are pictured in Figure 1.

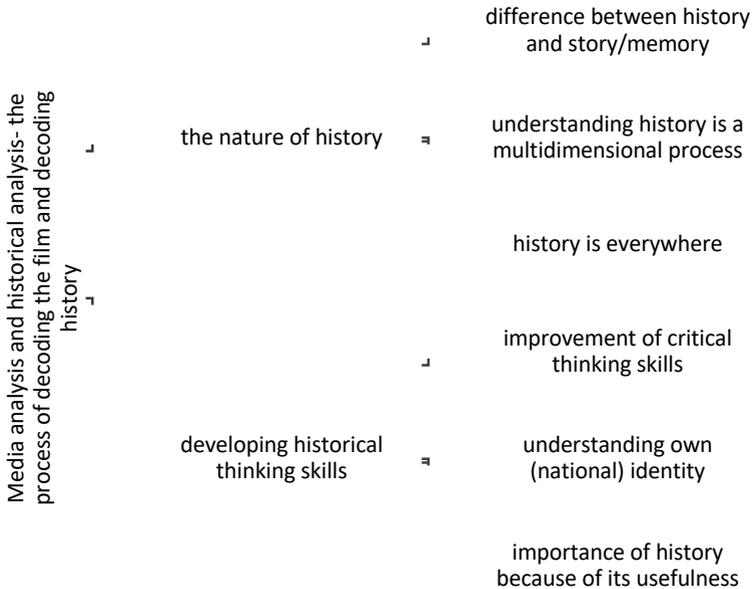


Figure 1. Themes and categories

More particularly, students reflected on both the nature of history and the process of developing historical skills through the proposed approach to history teaching that utilized elements of filmic form analysis. Regarding their ideas on the nature of history, there was a strong emphasis on student understanding on the omnipresence of history, the nature of understanding history as a multidimensional process, as well as a strong distinction between history as a set of facts in the past and the construction of memory and historical understanding, sparked by popular media, such as, as in this case,

film. In addition, the students reflected on the development of historical thinking skills as a result of historical film analysis, with the three categories identified being the recognition of history's importance for understanding the world today by providing us with background knowledge, the process of historical analysis as a means of understanding our own identities (national and personal), and the improvement of critical thinking skills as a result of learning to analyse historical films.

## 5.1 *The Nature of History*

### 5.1.1 *Difference Between History and Story/Memory*

The most important finding and one of the most frequently repeated thoughts, as recorded in the students' reflective accounts, was the distinction between history (what happened) and the stories we make up about past events, or how we remember them. The process of film analysis empowered students, who were soon able to make critical judgements about the content and the agenda of the movie maker on their own. Formal elements of the film and basic knowledge of filmic elements allowed students to deconstruct the content and interpret it not as a mere depiction of past events, but as purposeful representation and re-evaluation of them.

*The interesting thing was that we, students, were trying to reveal why each one of the directors has chosen this particular way to tell his story. I have learned to pay attention to the cinematic ways that a director uses during the film and search for glimpses that will reveal to me the message that he really wants to pass on. (Student 5)*

The particularities of filmic form and the needs of the medium reflect dramaturgical choices, and this is a danger that viewers become aware of when approaching the film in a critical manner:

*Sometimes, the director may add some things to make the movie more dramatic to the audience. This is the reason why when you see a movie about a historical event you have to think critically. (Student 2)*

However, these creative choices shape what we think about our history and what we remember about past events. For some students, the work of media on shaping identities and knowledge about our

world became even more evident through the analysis of historical films:

*[...] many of us, even if we have been through a certain historical event we usually tend to remember what the most of us experienced as a group and not our own personal experience [...] With the media trying to give you more information about the subject and the event and in the process they choose what to show and what to hold back. And that in itself is what shapes our understanding and our own opinion. This is how History is now being made. (Student 7)*

These reflections echo ideas of the film re-presenting the collective memory of past events and history rather than a presentation of an objective truth about the past. Taking a critical stance towards the historical film and rejecting the idea that the spectators of the film can witness history ‘as it happened’, brings film viewers closer to the idea that the film provides ‘a mere impression of pastness suggested by the medium itself’ (Borgoyne, 2009: 8).

#### 5.1.2 *Understanding History is a Multidimensional Process*

The past in the historical film may be presented as closed, completed and simple, as Rosenstone puts it (2000: 4), but the students’ understanding is that it is much more multidimensional; understanding history requires a process of understanding the interrelations of a multitude of factors that result in a specific outcome. Ambiguity in historical interpretation becomes the norm, instead of simplistic, ‘easy’ interpretations. Filmic history is by definition experimental anyway, because it stretches the limitations of the conventional historical text (Munslow, 2007: 573).

*Expressing opinions and developing your own thoughts into stable arguments would be one thing that is not so easy to do after all, and after this semester it is surely one thing that I learned. After this knowledge I could understand that history is the changes that have already taken place. In itself, it is objective. Our relation to it, is subjective. We probably don’t have access to the entirety of the changes. (Student 9)*

*History is not only about who and when. In order for an event to happen or a decision to be taken there are multiple factors that lead to them. (Student 5)*

This understanding of the nature of history as an outcome of the interrelation of multiple factors relates to the development of a more relativist approach to historical knowledge in general, or as this student put it:

*Now I think I can actively watch a film and point out multiple complexities in it rather than being stuck in one-sided arguments.* (Student 8)

### 5.1.3 *History is Everywhere*

The third category related to the development of a broader view of what constitutes history- a change in students' epistemological beliefs. The public nature of history was recognised, as a result of recognition of the public nature of the historical film. The dramatic film represents the past in the public sphere. History is not only the written, academic text, but is everywhere (Munslow, 2007).

*This course made me realise that history is everywhere. We can find history in our everyday lives. History is hiding in various popular media, for example in films, in pictures, in songs and in lyrics.* (Student 6)

*History can be easily narrated through song, images, and also paintings. Ancient ruins is history, folk songs also. A painting has its own history but so does a picture taken by an unknown photographer . Even traditional customs are history.* (Student 5)

## 5.2 *Developing Historical Literacy Skills*

Downey and Lang (2016: 8) believe that 'the goal of historical literacy is to enable students to read history texts critically, to write thoughtfully, and to engage in meaningful discussions about the past.' In these contexts, our students' reflections represented three main skills related to historical literacy, namely the improvement of critical thinking skills, the understanding of the importance of history due to its usefulness and the development of a context through which one can understand their personal and national identity in a more thoughtful manner.

### 5.2.1 *Improvement of Critical Thinking Skills*

Learning to 'read' historical films helped students improve their critical thinking skills through adopting a method to analyse the

filmic representations and move beyond the surface of the filmic recreation of the past, through discussions of why the historical past is presented this way or another, the reasons behind the directors' choices etc. For some students, the process of distinguishing between the filmic representation of the past and what were considered actual historical facts sharpened their critical thinking skills:

*[...] the fact that I had to distinguish between the way the story was told to me through the film and what really happened as I researched the given historical event in the movie improved my critical thinking [...]* (Student 1)

While for many of them, there was a vast improvement in their visual literacy skills:

*While 'scanning' throughout a film I learnt to pay attention on the colours of the scenery, the colour of the clothes that the actors wear and even the expression on their faces. Even to look for historical inaccuracies that got me thinking why the director uses it, he wants to send a message or he just did it because it fits better with his movie?* (Student 5)

These critical thinking skills are not just 'academic' skills, necessary for school, but are related to growth in general, making clear the role of historical literacy to critical thinking skills advancement.

*Prior history and literature courses have touched on analysis, but only in these specific fields. Literary analysis focuses on symbols and themes, while historical analysis focuses on primary and secondary sources. [This module] combined these two methods of analysis and provided a way to apply it everyday situations. Movies are an important part of popular culture. Being able to watch them actively, rather than passively, helps us to understand them as part of culture and history [...] Being able to step back and see the entire story of a movie rather than what is shown on the screen is a skill that can apply to any media source. That skill is thinking for yourself, and is essential to growth as a human being.* (Student 2)

Sometimes, the process of 'digging into history' resembles a trial. Afterall, 'we can only mesh with the past by interrogating it through the narratives we write about it' (Munslow, 2007: 572). According to a student:

*What I think now about history, is that it's the same as a trial: once the crime is committed, there will be those who support the truth and those who lie, but no one can really prove their claims. So the judges and the jury decide who is telling the better story.* (Student 8)

### 5.2.2 History is Important Because It is Useful

Some student reflections echo Seixas' (2017) historical thinking skills such as the recognition of the importance of historical facts but also the moral role of history. History, but most importantly the method used to analyse historical films, helped them understand the world they live in today. History is taught in order to apply the wisdom gained to our everyday lives today, what Lee (2011: 12) calls a 'usable historical past.' Although ideas of the usefulness of history because of its trend to repeat itself were found in a number of student accounts, such as the one below by Student 1, more critical connections of the past with current life and its uses in order to create meaning about the present are evident in other accounts, such as the ones by Student 3 and Student 2:

*[...] After taking the class I totally recognized the importance of history. Before I thought of history as only stories and tales about the past. Now I know that history helps you understand the world much better because of the fact that as I mentioned before 'history repeats itself'. Because of that knowing history and being able to find similarities between events that are happening now and events that happened in the past can help you understand them much better.* (Student 1)

*History is part of our nature, every country has its own history it's like genes that are transferred from the ancestors. After [this course] I learned that history can be more creative and you can learn a few things that are important for your life. For example, what does a monument mean in your town?* (Student 3)

*It is only by understanding a long-term, multi-faceted view of history that can we ever hope to understand the present.* (Student 2)

### 5.2.3 History Helps Understand My Own (National) Identity

In close connection with the above category is the category that emerged in relation to the role of history in understanding one's own identity, either national or individual. This was considered a

consequence of understanding how we are all subjects of history but are also shaped by it, a recognition of the influences of the historical environment on each one of us. As one student put it:

*History is connected with my life and with all peoples' lives.* (Student 6)

Additionally, students felt that history can explain current mentalities and ideologies, recalling ideas of continuity and change in historical understanding (Seixas, 2017), but also through developing a primary understanding of how cultural and national identities are shaped through our relationship with our past:

*This course helped me a lot to understand how everyone is connected to his/her history and past. I can now understand better people in my country and I also can understand a lot of things about Americans and why they act as they do in 2015.* (Student 4)

## 6. Conclusions

Historical films are a genre that needs to be carefully approached both in the classroom and outside school. Current theory on the features of this genre support the idea that historical films can indeed be viewed as historical works of equal value to academic history, but this conception comes with a specific view on the teaching of history films and the development of historical skills that address these new approaches to history as a way of knowing about the past. Our approach was used in an undergraduate classroom and the results show that it is promising: students were able to reflect deeply both on the nature of memory and history, understanding the multiple dimensions and roles of historical understanding, but also to develop specific skills related to history such as connecting it with their lives today, understanding how identities are formed in relation to history and recognizing the importance of history.

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## THE IMPACT OF VIDEO TESTIMONIES IN HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IN HUNGARY<sup>1</sup>

Csaba Jancsák, Eszter Szőnyi and Ágnes Képiró

*This paper reports on a research study conducted in the spring of 2018 in Hungary, on the impact of the use of video testimonies of Holocaust survivors in formal history education. The question the authors aim to answer is how using testimonies in history lessons affects students' learning and attitudes, as well as skills, competences and social values – in comparison to the more traditional, textbook-driven history lessons. Results of the research show that testimony-based history lessons have a strong impact on student empathy skills, promoting affective learning through the connection of students to the stories or the survivors; they facilitate learning and better understanding of the event; they engage students in topics which the traditional lesson does not; and they satisfy the needs of students for visual elements in the classroom.*

### 1. Introduction

Youth research conducted in the past few years in Hungary proves that families spend less and less time talking together while the time spent using smart phones, computers or the Internet is on the increase (Jancsák, 2013). As a result, the transmission of social values from older to younger generations is fading away, and the elements of collective (national) memory among middle school and secondary school age youth are disappearing. The lack of the value transmitting role of family discussions on historical milestones causes disturbances in the educational and socializing function of family communities.

Today's youth can be characterized as having a special world of life 'outside history' due to the lack of family stories. In recent years, the role of universal (trans-historical humanist) social values (such as solidarity, empathy, public and individual responsibility) has been replaced by the peer group and the Internet among young people (which also determines peer discourse). This results in more exposure to accept fake information uncritically (Aczél, 2017; Jancsák, 2018; McIntyre, 2018). As there is no discussion about the past in children's 'interpreting communities' (family, peer group), certain elements of our collective memory (events of our historical past, which are also value holding symbols) are fading away (Seixas, 2016;

Megill, 1994). In the context of school education, past events become highlighted sentences in textbooks with no deeper background knowledge and attitudes.

The Oral History and History Education Research Group (OHERG) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the University of Szeged sets out to work in the field of research-based educational development and supports the approach of value-saturated history teaching. In the first phase of the research group's work, testimony-based lessons for history classes are developed on the topic of the Holocaust in Hungary, an unspoken of topic in Hungarian society. The lessons are built around video clips of survivors and witnesses from the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation.<sup>2</sup>

In the international discourse on pedagogical methods in history education two prevalent – but not exclusive – approaches have emerged. The first approach places source analysis and the development of critical thinking in the center of history education (Husbands, 1996; Keating & Sheldon, 2011; Levstik & Barton, 2011), while the second approach argues that one of the main functions of history teaching is the preservation of collective memory (Megill, 1994; Barrett, 2007). The pathway of history teaching in Hungary has taken a shift in the 1990s from methods emphasizing the autonomy of teachers towards curricula- and textbook-driven education. Today, there are rifts between the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, leaders in education policy and institutions of remembrance policy considering the objectives of history didactics and the development of tools for history education. One pertinent element of these discourses and debates among historians and history education experts is the Holocaust in Hungary and its interpretation.

In the last few years, the institution for remembrance politics led by Maria Schmidt<sup>3</sup> and supported by the government has emphasized Hungary's victimization (collectively considering both Jews and non-Jews as victims) after the German occupation in 1944, while historians of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Ignác Romsics, Krisztián Ungváry) and the expert of this era, Randolph L. Braham, argue that this portrayal of the Hungarian Holocaust is a distortion of history. Our research group views the role of formal history education in not only transmitting social values, but also in the development of historical critical thinking, which is a crucial aspect for both history teaching and civic education.

As a pillar of our work, we believe that narrative-analytical competence is just as important considering the goals of history education as supporting the preservation of collective memory. We consider the support to shape personal and social identities as well as education for active and responsible citizenship the most important 'added values' of history education (Nora, 1996; Körber, 2011). The formation of social identities (Pataki, 2001) is equally based on information and values transmitted through public discourse, life-stories (Pászka, 2007) as well as oral, personal history and family stories, which are especially important for our research. Therefore, an important pedagogical goal of history education (Husbands, 1996; Levstik and Barton, 2011; Keating and Sheldon, 2011), is to support a more conscious and planned development of students' personalities, as well as to preserve collective memory and to develop analytical and critical thinking. Preservation of collective memory as an aim, is considered to be a contribution to the value-transmitting process of history teaching, while critical thinking is crucial for familiarizing students with the approach of historians: critical, analytical and interpretative thinking.

The narratives ('stories') of the family or the community about the past play an important role in this process (Riley, 1997; Farmer & Cooper, 1998; Bage, 1999). The memoirs of survivors and witnesses are not only part of the individual but the collective memory (Seixas, 2016), therefore, remembrance strengthens the collective conscious, national identity and enculturation. In the case of trans-historical values (Rezsohazy, 2006; Schwartz, 2006), these memoirs become part of the socialisation processes for youth (Jancsák, 2013). At the same time, it is important that we use the available information-communication technology (ICT) for today's screenager generation in the world of education as well, and these tools and technology-driven opportunities should support the mission of the 21st century modern school.

This research project, and generally the use of video testimonies in history education, does not question the validity of traditional, textbook-based history education, nor does it question the importance of written sources. At the same time, we argue for the use of video testimonies as sources and the integration of oral history into the teaching and learning process, where it proves to be adequate. We acknowledge the importance and dominance of written sources in history education today (predominantly based on

textbooks), we believe that there is need for better cooperation between a variety of educational materials including both written and oral sources, traditional and digital materials.

## 2. Methodology

The aim of this research is to study the impact of education materials using video testimonies in Holocaust education, in contrast to more traditional, textbook-based history lessons. Our main research question considered how the testimony-based lesson affects student learning and attitudes as well as skills, competences and social values of the students. The sample consists of 72 students in 11th grade (17-year-olds), in two secondary grammar schools (see Table 1). In each school two lessons were held by the history teacher of the class on the topic of the Holocaust: one lesson built around video testimonies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses (lesson A), the other one is a traditional, ‘textbook-driven’ lesson, without any multimedia tools (lesson B), representing the control group of the research.<sup>4</sup>

	Type of lesson	No. of lesson participants	No. of interview participants
School 1 (Capital city)	Testimony-based (lesson A)	13	5
	Textbook-driven (lesson B)	16	6
School 2 (City in East-Hungary)	Testimony-based (lesson A)	21	7
	Textbook-driven (lesson B)	22	6

Table 1. Description of the sample of the research

The teachers voluntarily participated in the research, using self-developed educational materials in the traditional lessons. The teacher of School 1 developed the educational material for lesson A as well, while in School 2 the teacher used the lesson plan of our research group, which is accessible online at <https://eyewitness.hu/hu/a-magyarorszagi-holokauszt-kozepiskola/>. All video testimonies used in the educational materials in our research are part of the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah

Foundation. The testimonies were selected based on the learning aims of the lesson. For example, when a teacher wanted to teach about stages of discrimination during the Holocaust, testimonies were selected in such a way that they represent these stages. It is important to note, that the testimonies were not used as mere illustrations, students had to not only identify the type of discrimination that the experience in the clip entailed, but unpack the meanings and interpret deeper layers, such as how that impacted on the person's life. The testimony clips primarily portrayed local experiences of Holocaust survivors, to further support the development of a connection between the students and the personal stories. These two lessons contain clips of ten different testimonies, mostly in Hungarian language. This paper presents the results of the first phase of our work; there are more lessons being developed, using different testimonies, and further research will be conducted on a wider sample of schools and students.

For a more comprehensive understanding of the differences in impact between the lessons, we used a mixed methodology approach, collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. Students filled out a 'pre'-questionnaire one week prior to the lesson and a 'post'-questionnaire a week after the lesson took place. In addition, structural group interviews were conducted with 5-7 students from each lesson on the same day as the 'post' questionnaire. Regarding the impact of the testimony-based lesson in contrast to the traditional, textbook-driven approach, we propose three hypotheses:

- H1: Testimony-based lessons promote learning about the topic of the Holocaust.
- H2: Testimony-based history lessons develop skills and competences of students that would not be possible within the framework of a traditional history lesson.
- H3: Testimony-based lessons have a more significant impact on social values through personal stories.

The present research faced certain challenges which are important to keep in mind for the interpretation of our results. The first challenge is a dual selection bias, considering the teachers on the one hand, and the interviewed students on the other. Both teachers leading the lessons participated in the teacher training of the USC Shoah Foundation on the use of video testimonies in Holocaust education

and both have a strong interest in the educational method as well as the topic. The students were selected for the interviews in various ways; where there was opportunity, the interviewer selected students randomly, but in other cases students volunteered or teachers appointed the interview participants.

Another crucial challenge concerns the sample size, as this analysis uses data from the first round of data collection of a larger research project. The small sample size resulted in few statistically significant results, nevertheless the overall outcome of the research has important implications for the use of video testimonies in formal education.

### **3. Results of the Quantitative Analysis**

Students evaluated the lessons they participated in and were asked about the extent the lesson helped them in a number of areas, such as developing or strengthening certain values, skills and competences, among other questions relating to the impact of the lesson on their interest in the topic of the Holocaust and their intent to engage in activities related to the topic (e.g. watching (more) video testimonies or visiting local memory sites). This section presents the most important findings from the student questionnaires.<sup>5</sup>

The evaluation<sup>6</sup> of the testimony- and textbook-based lessons did not differ (statistically) significantly, nevertheless the results are indicative of a more positive evaluation of the testimony-based lesson (lesson A). It is important to consider these differences for future research and the possible implications, keeping in mind that in this sample there is no statistical association of these elements.

The most notable difference by lesson-type is how students evaluated the lesson being instructional, having a clear message. As the figure below shows, in lessons A, none of the students said that it was not instructional, nor were they neutral in this respect; half of the students thought the lesson was rather instructional, while the other half said it was very instructional, having a strong message (see Figure 1). In comparison, in lesson B, 15 % of students did not find the lesson instructional, or took a neutral stand. This difference, considering that there was not one student who did not find the testimony-based lesson at least somewhat instructional, is an illustrative indication of the effect the testimonies, and more

importantly the stories, told in those testimonies can have on students.

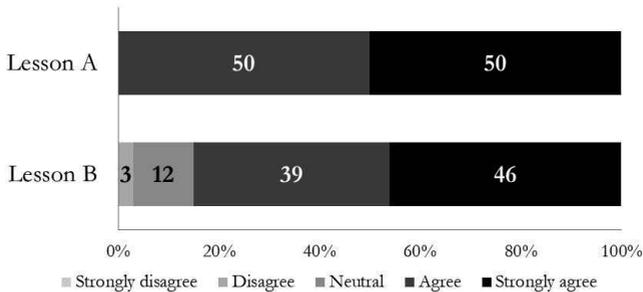


Figure 1. The lesson I attended had a clear message, by lesson type (%)

Among the aspects students were asked to reflect on, and the extent these aspects helped them or supported the development of their skills, competences or social values, almost exclusively the elements related to empathy or tolerance proved to be significantly different according to the type of the lesson.

In the first set of these questions, students needed to indicate the extent they agree<sup>7</sup> that the lesson they attended helped them in three categories: practical aspects related to school and advancing in school; cognitive aspects related to acquiring knowledge, understanding the content or deepening prior knowledge; and aspects related to empathy.<sup>8</sup> The two aspects which proved to have a significant correlation with the lesson type were the ones related to empathy. In the case of the first statement (see Figure 2), students participating in lesson A strongly agree in 68 % that the lesson helped them to ‘see and feel the ‘human’ side of the historical event’, compared to the 30 % of students who strongly agree in lesson B. Moreover, there is no student in the testimony-based lesson who said the lesson did not help them (disagree or strongly disagree answers) to see and feel the ‘human’ side of the historical event; while 9 % of students in the control group stated the same about their lesson.

Regarding the second statement (“The lesson helped me to empathize with the sufferings of the victims”) the trend is similar to above: only 21 % of the students in lesson B say the lesson helped them a great deal (strongly agree), compared to 56 % of students in

lesson A. In both cases a higher percentage of students gave a positive answer (agree or strongly agree) in the testimony-based lesson.

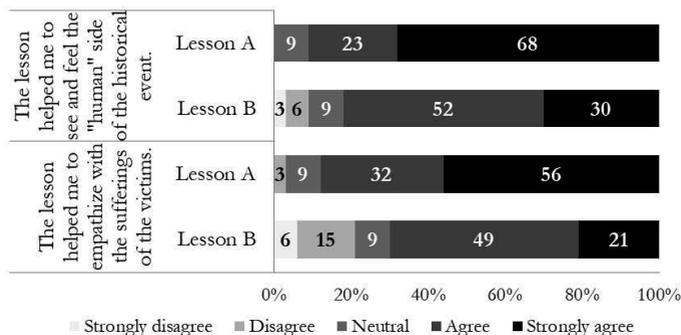


Figure 2. Development of different aspects of empathy, by lesson type (%)

In the second set of questions, students were reflecting on somewhat different aspects in which the lesson could have helped them. These aspects compose four categories: aspects related to social values (e.g. taking responsibility for others or a better understanding of democracy and its values); aspects related to skills and competences (e.g. understanding the relations and impacts of the past and the present); aspects related to a better understanding of society today (e.g. understanding the thoughts and behavior of today's Jewry); and personal aspects (e.g. clarifying one's own values).

Two of these questions showed significant results with regard to the lesson type, one from the category of skills and competences and the other from social values. The first considers the development of empathy towards the persecuted and the victims, and the second concerns the rise of sensibility towards social issues. The answers by lesson type show a similar pattern to the previous questions (see Figure 3). Students in lesson A said that lesson helped them a great deal (strongly agree answer) in the development of empathy in a higher ratio – 59 % compared to 18 % of students in the control group. The results are similar in the case of social sensibility, although the difference between the two groups of students is smaller considering the strongly agree answers only: 41 % in lesson A

compared to 30 % in lesson B. Moreover, the positive answers generally (agree and strongly agree answers together) are higher for both empathy and social sensibility in lesson A, than in lesson B.

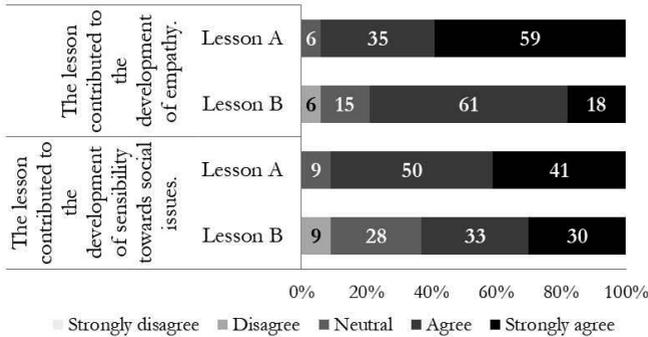


Figure 3. Development of empathy and social sensibility, by lesson type (%)

The implications of these results are twofold. First, the results show that based on the students’ self-evaluation the use of video testimonies in Holocaust education have a significantly greater impact on their skill of empathy and related aspects of affective learning, than for students who followed the traditional, textbook-driven lesson plan. Second, due to the small sample size the statistically significant associations and correlations of variables are scarce, therefore it places additional emphasis on the results showing the impact testimony-based lessons have on students’ empathy and social sensibility. At the same time, the sample size constitutes one of the main limitations of our study, impeding generalization of the results. Nonetheless, the differences between the two types of lessons and the salience of empathy are indicative of the (possible) impacts of educational materials using video testimonies in formal education.

#### 4. Results of the Qualitative Study

Based on the analysis of the interviews,<sup>9</sup> we identified three main thematic areas which signify the most important differences between the testimony- and the textbook-based lessons and highlight the results in relation to educational aims, such as responsible citizenship, in order that citizens have the necessary tools to engage in debates

and actions with critical and multi-perspective thinking. The themes are 1) promotion of learning, 2) different topics of engagement, and 3) students reflecting on their own learning. The main results of the qualitative study are presented through these themes, in addition to the general evaluation of the lesson by the interview participants.

It is important to note, that the results of the qualitative study should be considered as case studies of two Hungarian schools, as they portray a very specific section of Hungarian education, as both schools are secondary grammar schools with teachers who are very invested in teaching about the Holocaust as well as using testimony-based educational materials in class.

#### 4.1 *Evaluation of the Lessons*

Students evaluated the lesson very positively in all groups, there were very few criticisms and most of them were a response to follow-up questions specifically asking about aspects of the class they did not like. The most common factors of why students liked or enjoyed the lesson were the teacher's personality or way of teaching or explanations. One student explained why he/she likes their teacher's way of teaching (although reflecting on history classes in general, not only on the one lesson in question), as follows:

*I think it is very good in the history lessons that it is not simply pushed down our throats that this and that happened but we are forced, figuratively speaking, to try to find the connection between the events. (School 1, lesson B)*

The most common negative aspect of the lessons, that students mentioned in the discussions, was that they did not learn new things or there was not enough new information.<sup>10</sup> Most criticism or negative comment appeared in the discussion of lesson B in School 2, although they also highlighted that they liked the lesson, because of their prior interest and the interactive nature of the lesson. The only student who explicitly said he/she did not like the lesson, was also in this group. She/he explained her/his point of view in the following way:

*For me there weren't many interesting things in the lesson. I have already engaged with these things, with this topic, I watch videos in relation to it, so I didn't learn much with this lesson. (School 2, lesson B)*

In the groups of lesson A, the students immediately started reflecting on the video clips when generally asked about the lesson. One of the students in School 1 explained that the reason why he/she liked the lesson is because he/she already knew the facts about the Holocaust and it was interesting for him/her to learn about the ‘emotional side’ of the event. In School 2, the two most common elements of the positive evaluation of the testimony-based lesson were its interactive character (with tasks related to the testimony clips) and its peculiarity, in the sense that it was different from most history lessons and it was not only interesting but also special.

Based on the interviews, the general evaluation of the two types of lessons did not differ significantly. However, in lesson B students based their positive evaluation on aspects of cognitive thinking (what they learned or how the lesson pointed out connections and reference to events and mechanisms of history), while in lesson A, students emphasized aspects of affective learning, showing empathy and a sense of connection to the historical event, such as the quote shown below:

*It was special, the classes are not usually like this. Our teacher usually just projects a [presentation] slide that we write down, we discuss it and that's it. But now that we saw video interviews, the topic got closer to us. What the people could have felt when they were taken. (School 2, lesson A)*

#### 4.2 *Promoting Learning*

The testimony-based lessons promote learning for students in various aspects which arise directly from the testimonies, therefore presenting a contrast with traditional, textbook-driven lessons. The first aspect emphasizes that the personal stories (at least partly) resolve the disconnect that students feel towards history and historical events generally. The event of the Holocaust which – according to the students – is an event that happened a long time ago in the past and a part of their textbook they need to learn, became a human story, the story of individuals, which they could identify with. This relates to the second aspect which is the individualization of history. For many students, history is the story of the masses, and through the personal stories they were able to see this event that they knew by the numbers of how many people were killed and where the concentration camps were located, as the history

of individuals. Students attending the testimony-based lessons also mentioned that this helped them understand better what happened.

*When we approach it like this, that people tell how it affected them, we can better identify with the topic, because then we see that it wasn't a big crowd but every person in that crowd had their own feelings and own stories. In my opinion, we understand it better. (School 1, lesson A)*

*I think it also shows [...] that it didn't happen that long ago. (School 2, lesson A)*

The third aspect is related to the authenticity of the sources. As the excerpt illustrates below, students felt that hearing the story personally from someone who lived through or witnessed it, is more credible than reading it in the textbook. This shows the important difference between the written source and video testimonies: the content of both can be the same but the additional elements of the video testimonies, seeing and hearing someone talking about their own experiences and the emotions relating to it have a different effect on the students' learning and their view on the source itself.

*For me, it was more credible to hear him speak about his feelings than read it in a book from a source. The written source doesn't come across that much, I liked it a lot more that I could hear him talk about his personal opinion. (School 2, lesson A)*

The fourth and final aspect of testimony-based education promoting learning is related to the technical part of this educational method. The video testimonies bring audio-visual elements to the classroom which are needed in the era of continuous digital stimuli. This need was expressed directly by a student in one of the traditional lessons, where they did not use any multimedia tool, emphasizing that for him/her, it is easier to remember information if they use visual elements in class.

*It wasn't visual at all. There were no pictures, no videos, nothing. We worked with numbers and texts which stay in one's mind less, while video and pictures stay more. (School 2, lesson B)*

The group interviews showed that the testimony-based lesson promotes learning through complementing learning on the cognitive level – which is very much in the focus of Hungarian education, where primarily fact-based knowledge is rewarded in both classroom

and national assessments – with affective learning. Through the testimonies, students are able to connect to history, they can relate to the stories, to the interviewees and through that connection, together with the use of an audio-visual educational tool, testimony-based lessons facilitate students' learning. Moreover, personal stories bring history closer to the students and they personalize history, which is considered by many of them to be the story of masses and faceless crowds. Additionally, affective learning is crucial in the continuous and long-term process of attitude development which leads to the formation of social values.

### 4.3 *Different Topics of Engagement*

The topics students brought up throughout the interviews differed notably in lessons A and B, indicating that different topics became salient and a subject of interest for students attending A or B lessons. The topics that emerged in the testimony-based lesson were not part of any discussions with students in the control group.

In the discussions of lesson A, the most determinant and capturing aspects of the lesson for students were specific events in the stories told, or small details of the testimonies, such as hope: the way people were hoping until the last minute affected many students. Another example that affected students was how much a little kindness and humanity could help survival in the ghetto:

*People were dependent on each other [in the ghetto]. Just by offering nice gestures they could make life easier for each other. (School 1, lesson A)*

Some students, especially in School 2, were strongly affected by the interviewees themselves. They expressed admiration for their courage to talk about what happened and they were affected by seeing the emotions on the faces of the survivors, which, as mentioned before, is relevant for affective learning and is an important added feature of video testimonies compared to sources such as written memoirs.

Another important aspect was the personal connection of students to specific stories told by the survivors and the empathy they showed. The excerpts below illustrate an essential contrast between the impact of lessons A and B. The video testimony and the personal stories touched upon an everyday aspect of life – family and having children – which the student could connect to and fully empath with and feel

for the survivor. In contrast when a student in lesson B describes how the lesson and more specifically that people did not know what was about to happen, affected her, s/he expresses pity and not empathy towards these people.

*And then I imagined, if I were there and the feeling that I would need to protect my children and I couldn't do anything about it. It affected me. (School 2, lesson A)*

*It always has an effect on me, because I know what the consequences were. And we can be smart from the future about these, but I feel sorry for those people, no one could see it at that point. (School 1, lesson B)*

The topics students were interested in after the lesson were mostly related to factual or content knowledge in lesson B, while all the topics and questions brought up in the groups of lesson A were uniquely connected to the testimonies. The most common theme of the testimony-based groups was trauma processing, trauma resolution. Students were interested in how these people were able to move on, how they processed what happened to them.

*After all this happened [...], they had their own families and kids, how could they process all this? (School 1, lesson A)*

*How did it affect their later life? What was the extent of the psychological and emotional damage it caused? (School 1, lesson A)*

These themes are important considering our research findings, because it further shows the additional aspects the testimonies bring to the classroom. The topics students found interesting or engaging in lesson A, such as trauma resolution, can also be included and brought up in lessons with other methods not exclusively with video testimonies, nevertheless in comparison, these themes were not mentioned by students of lesson B.

#### 4.4 Reflection on Learning

The last aspect of analysis concerns the ways students reflected on learning processes. Although this theme is somewhat distanced from the original research question, the extent students reflected on their own learning<sup>11</sup> calls for its inclusion in the analysis results. This section comprises of three main approaches of reflection on learning, all illustrated with quotes from students.

The first approach is a reflection on a very peculiar characteristic of oral history, that each story told is from the perspective of the person who experienced the given event, therefore no one tells the same story. One of the students highlighted this element as the advantage of watching the video testimonies.

*Different people say different things about what they experienced. They give accounts from different perspectives, about how they experienced that period of their lives. (School 1, lesson A)*

This points out that the skill of looking at, understanding or even evaluating an event or situation from multiple perspectives also constitutes a part of teaching with video testimonies.

The second approach concerns the relation of using video testimonies and more traditional approaches to history lessons. One of the students said that even though she liked the testimony-based lesson, it is not sufficient to only learn about history this way. It was very interesting to hear students reflect on learning this consciously. Moreover, this thought is in line with our approach to testimony-based teaching: we consider this method relevant and important, because it offers additional opportunities to learn certain skills, values, bring history closer to students and facilitate learning about an unspoken, thus sensitive topic in today's Hungarian society, by enabling students to connect – to people and to stories. Testimony-based history education is complementary to lessons building on other methods and sources, and the testimony-based method does not and should not aim to replace these other approaches. Nonetheless, video testimonies and affective learning is an important part of history education, it is part of the 'comprehensive picture':

*If we only learn about the Holocaust like this, in itself it wouldn't be enough, it wouldn't give a comprehensive picture, because these are the experiences of individual people. But I don't think we missed having more details or information in this one class. (School 1, lesson A)*

The third reflection on learning processes arose in the discussion of lesson B in School 1. Students in this group knew that the other group participated in a lesson with video interviews, and very early in the discussion students started to defend their lesson by many of them saying that they are glad they did not have video interviews during the lesson, because their thoughts must not be clouded by emotions or affection while learning about history as 'history is not

something that we can learn based on emotions, but it is a subject to be learned objectively' (School 1, lesson B). This criticism was coming from students who have never participated in a testimony-based lesson before and it was interesting to see that their preconceptions were that the goal of video interviews is to make everyone become emotional and feel how terrible this event really was.

## **5. Conclusion**

Our study focused on the impacts of educational materials using video testimonies in comparison to traditional, textbook-based history lessons in Holocaust education in Hungary. The findings of the study partially prove our hypothesis, as the small sample size only allowed examining our expectation to a limited extent. Testimony-based lessons have a strong impact on empathy and tolerance (social sensibility) and promote learning through several factors.

First, testimony-based lessons promote learning by personalizing history. The testimonies bring history closer to students, which helps them remember information better and to connect their factual knowledge to personal stories and the people themselves. Second, complementing cognitive learning with affective learning impacts skills and attitudes of students that cognitive processes cannot reach. Affective learning together with the themes students have become engaged and interested in during the lesson plays an important (facilitating) role in the formation of social and civic values in the long-term. Third, the use of multimedia tools in the classroom offers students a different way to process information, moreover it is a sufficient way to respond to the needs of students for visual elements during class. Additionally, the video testimonies create lifelike situations, where students can have an experience similar to talking to a family member at home – which helps them connect more to the stories and thus to history.

In a more general sense, lessons using video testimonies help realize the pedagogical objectives of history teaching (a deeper understanding of the teaching material) and the non-formal educational goals of history teaching (helping students reach more informed opinions to form their attitudes, developing historical empathy and sensibility towards social values such as tolerance and

responsibility). According to our results, the same goals seem to be less efficiently realized in the case of lessons using only textbooks.

The results of the study imply that the use of video testimonies complements other teaching methods, as personal stories convey elements of affective learning as well as social and civic values that are unique to this educational tool.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The results of this paper were presented at the ISHD Conference 2018. (Université du Québec en Outaouais, Ottawa, 10-12 October, 2018). The research is sponsored by Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>2</sup> See more on the Visual History Archive: <https://sfi.usc.edu/vha>; and on the work of the USC Shoah Foundation: <https://sfi.usc.edu> (6.02.2019)

<sup>3</sup> Maria Schmidt is Hungarian historian and director of the House of Terror. See more on the institution: <http://www.terrorhaza.hu/en> (22.04.2019)

<sup>4</sup> All lessons were observed by a member of the research group, collecting additional information on the engagement of students and the classroom environment.

<sup>5</sup> The small sample proved to be insufficient for more complex methods discovering causal relations between variables (due to the lack of statistical significance in the results), therefore associations and correlations were used (in the form of Pearson correlations and contingency tables) to examine the relations and patterns of different variables within the dataset.

<sup>6</sup> The evaluation of the lesson included 7 elements in the questionnaire: 1) the lesson was interesting; 2) the lesson was instructional, it had a clear message; 3) the lesson was diverse; 4) I learned new things, new information during the lesson; 5) the lesson was engaging; 6) I learned a lot from the lesson; and 7) the lesson was interesting but I have not learned anything new.

<sup>7</sup> Students were asked to indicate the extent they agree with each statement on a scale of 5 (where 1 meant they strongly disagree and 5 meant they strongly agree).

<sup>8</sup> The students were asked to report on the extent the lesson they attended helped them in the following aspects (grouped in 3 categories. Practical aspects: 1) expanding the history content knowledge; 2) understanding the material of the history subject; and 3) preparing for the matriculation exam. Cognitive aspects: 1) better understanding of what happened; 2) better understanding of the impact of the Holocaust; 3) learning the events of the Holocaust; 4) managing your knowledge; and 5) deepening your knowledge. Aspects related to empathy: 1) seeing and feeling the 'human' side of the Holocaust; and 2) empathizing with the sufferings of the victims.

<sup>9</sup> The structured group interviews encompassed five main topics guided by the questions of the interviewer: 1) evaluation of the lesson; 2) questions students

had generally about the lesson or in the case of testimony-based lesson, questions they would ask the survivors; 3) topics that affected students (emotionally); 4) main messages students have learned from the lesson or from the testimonies; 5) what students think should be done beyond remembrance and what is it that they personally can do.

<sup>10</sup> The criticism of students that they have not learned new things in the lessons was partly explained by the prior knowledge of the students on the topic of the Holocaust in School 1 and by the revisions (i.e. repetitions) of materials the students have learned in previous classes (e.g. the events leading up to the Holocaust) in the case of School 2.

<sup>11</sup> As an overall observation, students in School 1 were generally more reflective as well as more analytical in their thinking than students in School 2.

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## **‘I WANT TO REMEMBER’: STUDENT NARRATIVES AND CANADA’S HISTORY HALL<sup>1</sup>**

Cynthia Wallace-Casey

*In this journal article I explore student-constructed narrative interpretations of Canada’s History Hall in the Canadian Museum of History. Drawing from an empirical investigation that involved students participating in the Canada’s History Society Young Citizens program, I reveal the collective memory narratives that students (n=26) constructed about Canada’s past, and how these related to their museum experience. I conclude by discussing how these findings relate to current discussions in Canada regarding Historical Thinking.*

*This inquiry is part of a larger investigation (supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) that explores: 1) how the Canadian History Hall represents such difficult topics in history as First Nation settler colonial experiences and Residential Schools; 2) the national narratives that students construct from such a learning experience; and 3) the potential role for museum spaces in enabling Historical Thinking.*

### **1. Introduction**

In 2017 the Canadian Museum of History unveiled a new Canadian History Hall, weaving together a complex and multi-layered narrative about Canada’s past. The intent was to present a comprehensive – ‘warts and all’ – storyline, covering more than 15,000 years of history (Amyot, Leblanc & Morison, 2017: 5, 19-20). Clearly there were patriotic factors at play in developing such a storyline, since the Canadian Museum of History is mandated as a nationally funded institution to ‘enhance Canadians’ knowledge, understanding and appreciation of events, experiences, people and objects that reflect and have shaped Canada’s history and identity’ (Canadian Museum of History, 2019). As Seixas (2016) pointed out during production, the challenge would rest with melding patriotic heritage education with critical Historical Thinking.

On opening day the die was cast. However, while the resulting historians’ reviews have been relatively positive (Della Zazzera, 2017; Laugs, 2017), educational researchers have yet to explore how young people interact with the narratives they encounter. Does a critical

approach to presenting complex and difficult knowledge in such a way enable Historical Thinking? In an international context therein lies the research problem: to explore ‘students’ thinking and reasoning in the context of ‘historical representations produced outside [of] the discipline of history’ and to try to understand ‘how people use their understanding of the past to orientate in the present and think about the future’ (vanBoxtel, 2019: 67). This is the problem that has guided this inquiry.

The findings presented in this journal article are part of a larger investigation (supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) that explores three related questions:

- (1) How the Canadian History Hall represents such difficult topics in history as Indigenous settler colonial experiences and Residential Schools;
- (2) The national narratives and beliefs that students carry into the museum learning experience; and
- (3) What national narratives result from such a cognitive process.

In this publication I will first outline the big idea (or collective memory narrative) presented in the new Canadian History Hall. I will then share findings on the narrative beliefs that students brought to the History Hall experience, and the national narratives they subsequently constructed. These findings then lead into a broader discussion on the potential role for museums spaces in enabling student Historical Thinking.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

As Wertsch (2002: 7) has pointed out, ‘memory is more a matter of reorganizing, or re-constructing, bits of information into a general schema than it is a matter of accurate recall of the isolated bits themselves’. In this sense, museums serve as what Wertsch refers to as a ‘cultural tool’ for mediating societies’ collective memory narratives. In the world of museum exhibition design, this collective memory narrative is often referred to as the big idea or mission statement (Serrel, 2015). In this sense individuals interact with the museum’s big idea through a process that Wertsch (2017: 153) describes as ‘active meaning-making’. Hence, the learning dynamic is identified as not simply a process of direct appropriation, but instead a complex interplay between vernacular and official narratives—official, meaning the big idea that the museum has constructed, and vernacular, meaning

the sociocultural beliefs that students bring to the museum setting (Rowe et al, 2002: 108). In this inquiry I was interested in exploring the national narratives that might result from such a cognitive process and how this might relate to students' historical orientation in the present. In the sections that follow I analyze the official narrative that students encountered in the History Hall and the circumstances that brought them to the museum.

### **3. Describing the Learning Context**

The unveiling of a new Canadian History Hall in 2017 coincided with the national sesquicentennial of Canada as a modern nation-state. Covering approximately 4,000 square meters of exhibit space over two floors, the curatorial design presents a concise history of Canada, spanning from time immemorial to the present in a timeline fashion. Of particular note is how this narrative represents a substantial departure from previous versions of the history hall (Wallace-Casey, 2018). With the intent of adopting a revisionist perspective on Canada's past, the Canadian Museum of History engaged in a complex process of content development that included gathering thoughts and ideas from Canadians through extensive public and on-line consultation, as well as establishing curatorial committees of external expertise, and consulting with the original architect (Douglas Cardinal) to remodel the museum space. The big idea that ultimately guided the design process was as follows:

This is the story of Canada, the stories of our country, what it is, and how it got that way. It is a story of conflict, struggle and loss; success, accomplishment and hope. It's all around us, and about us, and we shape its future (Amyot et al, 2017: 20).

The resulting storyline navigates through more than 15,000 years of history, presenting artefacts, images, sounds, first person accounts, and hands-on activities to convey a complex stream of narratives and themes. Divided into three gallery spaces, and organized around three distinct time periods, Gallery 1 spans from time immemorial to the British conquest of New France in 1763; Gallery 2 tells the story of British North America leading up to the eve of the First World War in 1914; and Gallery 3 spans from the First World War to present day. In Gallery 3 a considerable amount of attention is devoted to the Canadian Constitution (patriated in 1982), as well as Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

### 3.1 *Difficult History: Indigenous Settler Colonial Experiences and Residential Schools*

In considering how the new Canadian History Hall represents difficult knowledge relating to Indigenous settler colonial experiences, it is evident that what makes this interpretation distinct from previous versions is how Indigenous voices are included throughout the entire storyline (see also Wallace-Casey, 2018). For example, beginning in Gallery 1, visitors are presented with an Anishinaabe creation story about 'the Great Spirit and the Otter' (Amyot et al, 2017: 34). Then, proceeding through the exhibit space, visitors learn about Indigenous societies that existed within present-day Canada more than 9,000 years ago. Here they see, for example, a delicate walrus ivory carving dating back more than 3,600 years and honouring an Arctic woman's tattooed face.

Continuing into Gallery 2, visitors learn about the impact of settler colonialism on Indigenous societies. In this context they are presented with a dichotomy of progress and decline, since within the context of colonial settlement visitors are introduced to such individuals as Shawnadithit (the last known member of the Beothuk nation in present-day Newfoundland), as well as the emergence of Métis society in present-day Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Here visitors also learn about Louis Riel and the Northwest Rebellion, as well as the clearing of buffalo on Canada's western plains.

In Gallery 3 can be found a section devoted entirely to Indigenous Peoples and Aboriginal Rights. Here visitors encounter Canada's Indian Act of 1876 (a national policy initiative that was designed to systemically eliminate Indigenous societies across Canada). Displayed prominently in this space is a stark depiction of Duncan Campbell Scott (Canada's deputy superintendent of Indian Affairs from 1913-1932), who was instrumental in the operation of Indigenous Residential Schools (Figure 1). Accompanying Scott's image are Indigenous artefacts from his personal collection, along with his own haunting words: 'I want to get rid of the Indian problem [...] Our objective is to continue until there is not an Indian that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department' (National Archives of Canada, 1920). Nearby, visitors also encounter the effects of colonialism in Northern Canada, when after the Second World War and during the Cold War, every effort was made to assert sovereignty over the northern regions of the

Arctic. Here visitors learn that Indigenous people were treated as numbers, separated from their cultural way of life, and forced to relocate to more remote regions of the Arctic.

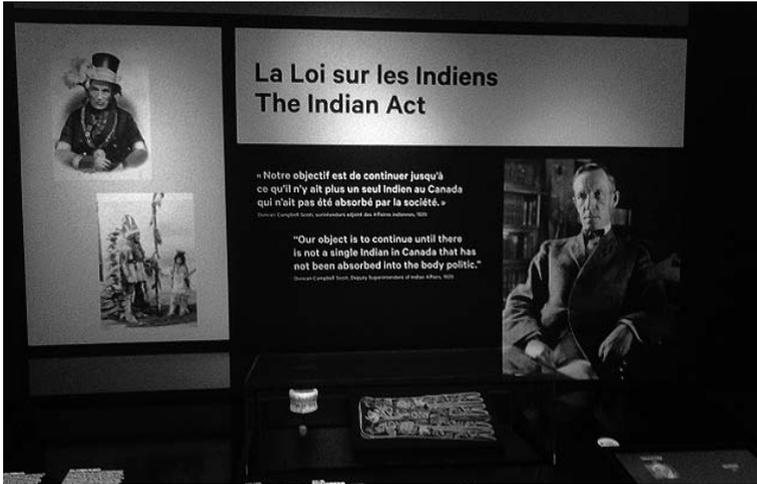


Figure 1. Gallery 3 exhibit unit regarding Canada's Indian Act. Credit: C. Wallace-Casey.

Moving through Gallery 3 visitors next encounter the legacy of Canada's Residential Schools. Through artefacts, images, testimonials, and archival documentation, they experience firsthand the impact of Residential Schools on generations of Indigenous peoples. The systemic removal of children from their families and communities for the purpose of re-education in boarding and day schools, became an instrumental part of Canada's Indian Act. By 1931, under the leadership of Duncan Campbell Scott, Canada's Residential School system reached a peak, with approximately 80 schools in existence nationwide. In total, between the period from 1831 to 1996, there were about 130 such schools – not including day-schools (Legacy of Hope Foundation, 2001). Here visitors learn that the last Residential School closed in Punnichy Saskatchewan in 1996.

From the darkness of Canada's Indian Policy, visitors are then guided into a brightly lit space that is devoted to Indigenous Rights and Cultural Affirmation. Here they learn about the politics of Indigenous self-determination, as well as artistic expression, the role of women

and youth, and aspects of hope for the future. Anchoring this positive message are two significant legal documents: The United Nations International Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), and Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982).

These were some of the difficult narratives that students encountered when they visited the History Hall in 2017. The circumstance that brought them was a national youth engagement initiative, through which two students from every province and territory in Canada were selected to take part in a 3-day National Youth History Forum in the national capital of Ottawa.

#### **4. Methodology**

The methodology for this inquiry is informed by the *Canadians and Their Pasts* initiative, as well as previous research regarding 7th-grade students and their narrative constructions of Canada's past (Conrad et al., 2013; Wallace-Casey, 2014, 2015; Wallace-Casey & Harding, in progress). A case study method was adopted in order to situate student findings within the larger *Canadians and Their Pasts* study. A student friendly version of the original *Canadians and Their Pasts* survey was administered to 26 youths. These participants were selected through a national judging process administered by Canada's History Society as the Young Citizens program (Canada's History, 2017).

##### *4.1 Student Selection*

The process of student selection involved an extensive 8-month exercise that was spearheaded by Canada's History Society. The process commenced by engaging approximately 56,000 students nationwide to research an aspect of Canadian history at classroom level. Students were then tasked with producing and presenting a two-dimensional storyboard about their research, and having their work judged by volunteer educators and historians at school and district-organized Heritage Fairs (Canada's History, n.d.). Students were given free choice in their selection of topics.



Figure 2. Student heritage fair project under video production. Credit: C. Wallace-Casey.

Subsequent to presenting their project at a school or district-organized heritage fair, approximately 14 students per province and territory were invited to submit a short (5-minute) video documentary (relating to their topic) to the national Young Citizens competition (Figure 2). As a result, Canada's History Society received a total of 184 video submissions. These were then posted on the Internet, where they became subject to on-line voting by fellow students across Canada. From the resulting shortlist, a selection of videos was then judged by a national panel of educators and historians against criteria that included aspects of historical reasoning and Historical Thinking.

So it was that after an 8-month process, two students from every province and territory in Canada were selected to participate in a 3-day National Youth History Forum in Ottawa, and to receive an award for their work in researching and developing a short documentary about Canada's past. These were the 26 students, ranging in age from 10 to 15 years, who agreed to participate in this inquiry. Together they represented a geographically balanced cross-section of the nation, of whom 73 % were female and 73 % were born in Canada.

#### *4.2 Student Activities and Analysis Methods*

During the National Youth History Forum students participated in activities that included visits to the national Parliament Buildings

(1 hour), the Governor-General's residence at Rideau Hall (1 hour), and the National War Cenotaph Memorial (1/2 hour). Students also received guided tours of the National War Museum (3 hours) and the community Bytowne Museum (1 hour). Over the first two days (and in advance of their visit to the Canadian History Hall) students were asked to complete a student-friendly version of the Canadians and Their Pasts survey. The resulting Likert scale responses were analyzed quantifiably and are presented in Figures 4 and 5.

In addition to providing survey data, on the last day of the Forum and just before visiting the History Hall, student participants were asked to respond to two open-ended essay questions: 'What history do I wish to remember about Canada?' and 'What history do I wish to remember about my Province/Territory?' In so doing, students were asked to construct personal (vernacular) narratives for remembering Canada's past, as well as that of their home province or territory. The resulting responses were analyzed qualitatively, adopting a two-cycle critical discourse method (Gee, 1999, 2011, 2012; Saldaña, 2012). First cycle analysis involved descriptive and *in vivo* coding methods. This was followed by a Second Cycle of analysis, using pattern coding methods, with the intent of identifying narrative templates and shared themes.

Later that same day participants took part in a questing activity (Clark & Glazer, 2004) in the History Hall, designed to draw attention to aspects of Indigenous history presented within the exhibition spaces. Following this activity, students were then asked to participate in a conceptual task that involved working together to share their personal (vernacular) narratives about Canada's past (Figure 3). For this task students were prompted with the opening statement 'My story of Canada is about ...' The resulting responses were then analyzed qualitatively, adopting the same critical discourse method as used for the pre-responses (Gee, 1999, 2011, 2012; Saldaña, 2012). The overall aim of this methodology was to gain insight into the national narratives students constructed at the end of the Canadian History Hall and National Youth History Forum experience.

## **5. Findings – Canadians and Their Pasts Survey**

In drawing comparisons between the larger Canadian and Their Pasts survey it is perhaps not surprising (given the selection process already described) that student participants showed a high level of interest in

history (Figure 4). Students consistently exceeded their adult counterparts as 'very interested' in history in general, as well as 'very interested' in their family's history, and Canada's history.



Figure 3: Students participating in conceptual task. Credit: Canada's History Society.

Students also demonstrated a very high level of trust in museums (Figure 5), assigning museums with their highest ranking of 'very trustworthy' (81 %). For half of the students, museums were also their most trusted source of information about the past. Students' reasoning for this trust was grounded in beliefs that museums do research with real artefacts so therefore would not lie:

*Museums find their facts from thousands and thousands of sources.*

*Museums wouldn't lie about a story, artefact, places, names, etc.*

*I think museum [sic] are the most trustworthy because they are real artifacts.*

*Because everything in a museum has to be authenticated and go through many people.*

*I think museums are very trustworthy because they have lots of artefacts from the past and the info I find is very trustworthy because it tells a lot about the past and I just find it trustworthy.*

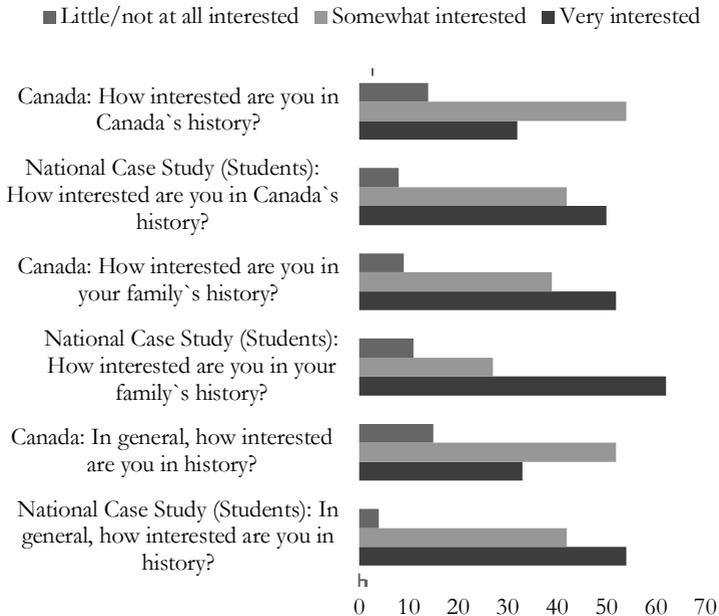


Figure 4. General interest in history, % of respondents (N = 26 in National case study – students; N = 3119 in National Survey – adults).

These findings are consistent with similar research that the author has conducted with 7th-grade students (aged 12-13) in both New Brunswick (Wallace-Casey, 2014) and Alberta (Wallace-Casey & Harding, in progress). These findings also point to the pedagogical significance of museums as dynamic places for learning, since high levels of trust validate their role as a powerful starting point for student exploration of the past. As Seixas (2016) has pointed out, however, such blind levels of trust fall short of expectations for Historical Thinking in Canada.

## 6. Findings – National Narratives for Remembering Canada's Past

### 6.1 *Pre-responses*

Students arrived in Ottawa with very well establish beliefs about remembering Canada's past. Their personal (or vernacular) narratives

at commencement of the inquiry were predominantly orientated towards topics of war remembrances (Figure 6) – particularly soldiers, and sacrifices made to make Canada a ‘better place’. In fact, 10 of the 26 student narratives for remembering directly referenced war, followed by references to goodness (8), sacrifice (7) and soldiers (7).

As some of the students explained:

*One piece of Canadian history I wish to remember is world war 2 [sic] because these soldiers fought for our country. And they should always be remembered.*

*I wish to remember all of the immigrants that came to Canada and made it a better place. I also wish to remember the soldiers that gave up their lives to make Canada a better and Free Country in WWI and WWII.*

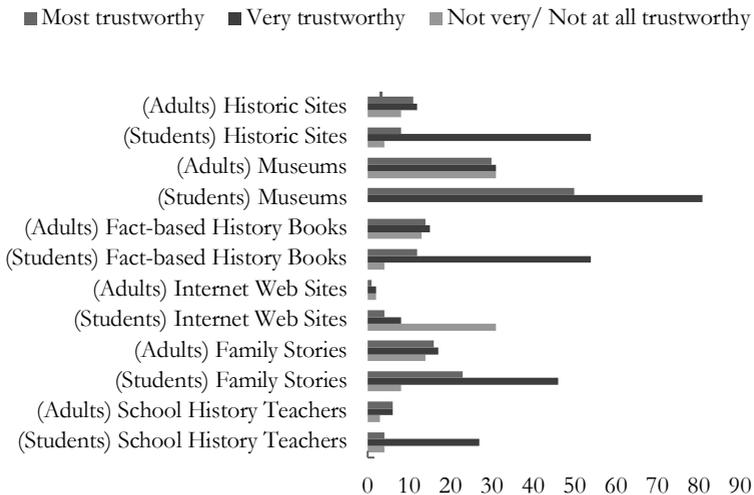


Figure 5. Trustworthiness of sources of information about the past. Results in % of respondents (N = 26 for National Case Study – students; N = 3119 for National Survey – adults).

*I hope to remember the unknown soldiers, sailors, and airmen who have fought courageously in the wars. I hope to remember the countless spies and Guerra fighters who have sacrificed their freedom and lives in order to continue the war effort. I hope to remember and commemorate every contributor, forgotten or celebrated. To honour not only the soldiers on the front line of battle, but also the more calculating ones who fight in other ways for their country. To honour not only the fighters who come back victorious, but also the ones taken hostage as prisoners of war and die cold, shivering, trapped. To honour not only the ones who fight justly, but also the ruthless gurella [sic] fighters, the spies and backstabbers.*

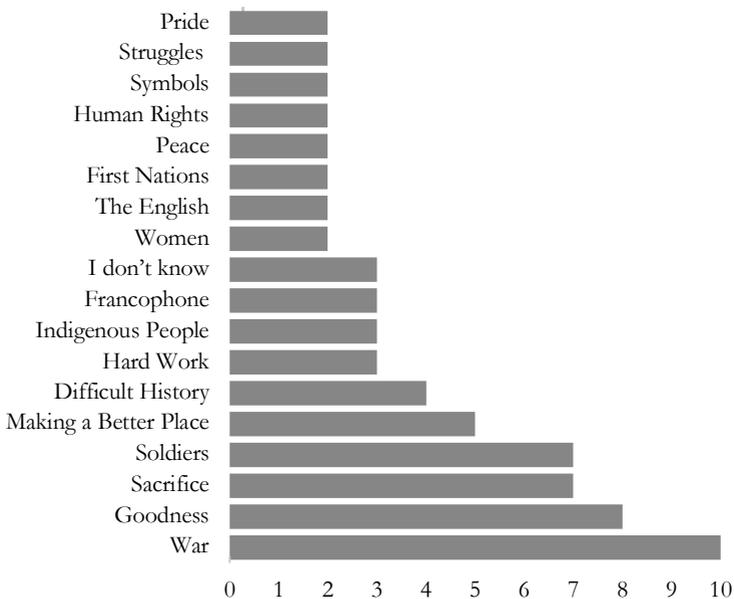


Figure 6: National Narratives for Remembering Canada's Past – Pre-responses.

## 6.2 Post-responses

Upon completion of the questing activity in the History Hall on the last day of the Forum, when students were asked to respond to the prompt 'My story of Canada is about ...', the resulting student narratives showed a significant variance (Figure 7) from pre-responses.

In fact, half of the students changed their narratives about Canada's past. In this sense, their storylines shifted away from those predominantly about war remembrance, to those of remembering struggles, goodness, and hard work:

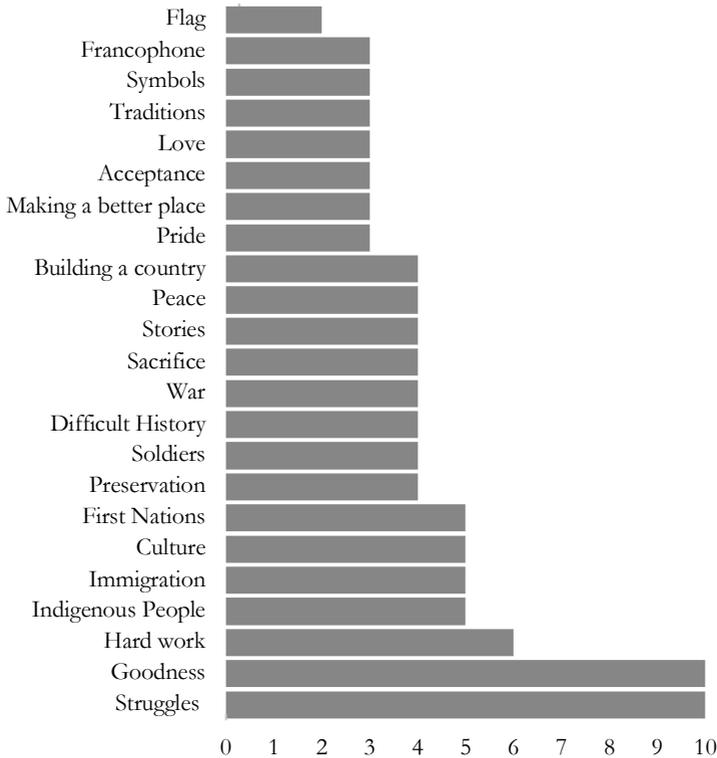


Figure 7: National Narratives for Remembering Canada's Past – Post-responses.

*I believe it's important to recognize the troubles that minorities (ex: race, gender, origin, sexual identity) have had to face in the past and present to prove things to society.*

*Canada. We strive for: Equality; Peace; Acceptance; Generosity; Bravery; Kindness; Respect; Celebrating/Preserving all cultures. I [heart] Canada.*

*The history I want to remember about Canada is all those who worked hard and suffered lots for peace. They have given up so much for our future. This should be important to all Canadians.*

*Je veux me souvenir de toutes les personnes qui ont lutées pour les droits des femmes.*

What is significant about this narrative shift is that the 'big idea' (or official) national narrative of the History Hall was correspondingly similar to these post-responses. The original History Hall narrative was about conflict, struggle, and loss-contrasting with success, accomplishment and hope:

*This is the story of Canada, the stories of our country, what it is, and how it got that way. It's a story of conflict, struggle and loss; success, accomplishment and hope. It's all around us, and about us, and we shape its future (Amyot et al, 2017: 20).*

So, while the students did not pick up on specific aspects of the exhibition content, they did adopt aspects of the museum's 'big idea'. In addition, of the 13 students (50 %) who changed their post-response storyline for remembering, four adopted new narratives (30 %) that included difficult knowledge about Indigenous peoples and concepts of reconciliation:

*I want to remember all the good things about Canada like how it became Canada. I think it is important to remember history because once you learn about it you can tell future generations about it. I want people to really understand that some First Nations were treated poorly. I hope people enjoy history as much as I do.*

*I think the history of the First Nations is really important. We often choose to forget how horribly they were treated.*

*I think it is important to remember that in the past there were schools that took people (children) and tried to make them what they thought was a proper child to get rid of the culture, religion, traditions that First Nations had so that they would be no more and the only religion etc. that remain would be the one that they thought was 'proper' even though it was a terrible thing that happened people still need to know about it no matter how difficult it may be. You have to know the good and the bad things that your country has done.*

*The North: Understanding hunting; Residential Schools; Finding a balance between modern life and traditional; Global warming; Preserving culture; Teaching Canada about the culture; Experiencing the North; Knowing what it is like to leave there.*

These findings are significant because they point to ways in which the museum's curatorial design impacted students' vernacular narratives. The pedagogical impact was thus not through direct transmission, but through implicit formulation of individual beliefs around the official-collective memory-narrative of the museum.

## **7. Discussion**

What is evident from these findings is that contrary to popularly held beliefs in Canadian society, students who participated in this inquiry carried a great deal of interest in history. They also carried vernacular 'minitheories' (Husbands, 1996) or – what Létourneau (2014) has labelled as 'mythhistories' – about Canada's past. For many of the students (69 %) these 'mythhistories' did not relate to their project work at all. So, while the sources for these 'mythhistories' are difficult to identify, what is noteworthy from this inquiry is how the museum's implicit 'big idea' influenced the construction of students' new narrative beliefs.

What is also evident is that students indicated high levels of trust in museums-believing that museums present them with the truth about Canada's past. Their reasoning for this trust was based upon beliefs that museums present multiple sources, as well as real artefacts that can be witnessed as 'truth'. For this reason, as one student stated, 'museums wouldn't lie'. This points to the power of museums in influencing students' narrative beliefs. If, as Létourneau (2014) has argued, more attention needs to be directed towards the sources of students' 'mythhistories' (see also Létourneau & Chapman, 2017) then a good place to begin would be with the museums that frame such beliefs.

Currently in Canada, there exists a growing body of research around historical consciousness as narrative belief and how this intersects with citizenship education (Anderson, 2017; Létourneau, 2014; Lévesque, 2017; Zanzanian, 2017). As Lévesque (2017) has concluded:

*Students must come to understand and appreciate that there are diverse, and possibly contradictory, narratives of the collective past that coexist within a national historical culture. Students' own stories must ultimately be 'polythetic and admit alternative narratives' (Shemilt, 2000: 98). Indeed, what defines Canadian citizens is not a shared collective memory but their historical commitment to a distinctively Canadian deliberation about the past and future of the country (Taylor, 1993; Webber, 1994). That deliberative process is only possible – and viable – if citizens have the dispositions, abilities and tools to understand one another and build a democratic society founded on mutual respect and accommodation of differing narratives of the nation (238, cited from Sears, 2010).*

In reflecting upon the transition of student narratives that took place during this inquiry, it becomes evident that Lévesque's (2017) call rings true for 'polythetic' and alternative narratives. Indeed, many of the participants moved away from a predominant war remembrance, to adopt more diverse reflections that reflected 'mutual respect and accommodation of differing narratives of the nation' (Levesque, 2010: 238). These reflections, however, fell short of what Seixas (2016) describes as Historical Thinking. The challenge then, rests in developing ways of engaging students in active Historical Thinking within the museum setting.

As Seixas (2016) has stated, Historical Thinking holds the potential to move students beyond simplistic narratives that museums (and other heritage sites) convey. To this end, both Husbands (1996) and Nakou (2001) have emphasized the role of museum education in providing students with opportunities to decode meaning from museum collections-not just absorb implicit 'big ideas'. In a similar vein, Létourneau & Chapman (2017), as well as Létourneau and Moisan (2004), have recommended that school instruction in history should enable students to deconstruct and evaluate the narratives they carry (and encounter). According to each of these scholars, opportunities for decoding can be achieved by commencing with the 'minitheories' students bring to the learning setting, and then focusing upon historical evidence and sources, as a way of proceeding beyond both the student's pre-existing beliefs and the museum's intended message. In this case study students encountered a complex array of physical evidence that presented critical perspectives on Canada's past. In interacting with this evidence (evidence that they trusted to be true) students re-constructed new meanings-that in the end coalesced with the intended (official) message. This points to the necessity for

educators to consider the implicit nature of the museum learning environment, since as these findings suggest, it is the underlying narrative that will impact students' mythologies about the past.

## 8. Conclusion

In Canada, Historical Thinking has become firmly embedded within the curricula of most provinces and territories (Seixas & Colyer, 2014). Such pedagogical developments are immensely relevant to museum education, since dramatic changes in how students are expected to learn about the past require that history museums re-evaluate how they design and deliver student programs. What is required is more dynamic tools for engaging students in Historical Thinking in the museum-in ways that extend the pedagogical outcome beyond the museum's constructed narrative. As these findings suggest, educators must seize upon the potential role of museums as cultural tools for mediating societies' mythologies. While it is my belief that the new Canadian History Hall does indeed provide student visitors with an opportunity to confront difficult, diverse and contradictory narratives about Canada's past-the next step in this research process is to explore ways of enabling more dynamic tools for encountering such narratives.

## Notes

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**‘DOES THE TEACHER MATTER?’  
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE UNKNOWN  
PERSPECTIVES FROM GERMAN-LANGUAGE  
HISTORY DIDACTICS**

Christian Heuer

*During the last few years, the teacher has gained attention as a professional actor within history didactics. Numerous studies have attempted to model teachers’ ‘professional competence’ and validate it empirically because that which may always have been known can now apparently also be confirmed empirically: namely, that everything depends on the teacher. The teacher matters when it comes to effectively teaching and successfully learning history. Against this background, the ‘science of historical learning’ also focuses more on history teachers, their subjective theories and epistemological convictions, their professional knowledge, and their teaching of history with the aim of describing what it takes to teach history effectively.*

**1. The History Teacher as the *Main Actor*?**

Although a mantra has been handed down repeatedly in many works on international teacher research since the turn of the millennium, a review should prove helpful in classifying apparently new findings, such as that of the ‘Does the teacher matter?’. The statement that the teacher is fundamental when it comes to the conditions for successful teaching and pupils’ learning outcomes (cf. OECD 2005; Lipowsky, 2006) is as trivial as it is self-evident in its generality and has even been identified as the central topic of pedagogical arguments in many sources on schools and teaching in the last two centuries. Only recently did Ewald Terhart (2017) describe the ‘teacher matters’ not only as a trivial, pedagogical commonplace but also as a topic unsuitable for scientific discourse due to its empirical inaccuracy.

At school and in class, *something* has always been learned for a specific *purpose* and *from someone* (Biesta, 2015: 6). These are the ‘three causalities’ (Benner, 2018: 13) that render teaching and learning – and thus also ‘upbringing as an enabling factor for education’ (Anhalt, Rucker & Welti, 2018: 21) – capable of description in the first place. Enabling history education – which is understood as reflexive self-location in time and space via historical narration (Heuer, 2012: 101)

– is fundamentally dependent on educational actions and measures, even if these elements do not guarantee success in the sense of measurable effectiveness. While teaching is necessary for these educational processes, it is by no means sufficient. At the same time, learning history without being taught by someone or something else is inconceivable (Biesta, 2017). Thus, Markus Daumüller and Manfred Seidenfuß's (2017: 176) conclusion that it is not the history textbook that is the leading medium in history teaching, but rather the history teacher him/herself, arose in the context of a discourse on the 'foundation and formation of German history teaching' (Jakobmeyer & Thünemann, 2018), which – regarding history learning in school – can be traced back to the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, in a speech printed in 1869 and given by Wilhelm Herbst, director of the *Unser Lieben Frau* Monastery's Pedagogical College in Magdeburg and later Ordinary Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Halle, Herbst declared that it is the 'teacher as *Hauptfaktor*' – the 'living, fresh, and artistically creative person' – who is responsible for the 'imprint of the *Facta*' and cannot be repressed by the '*Compendium*' precisely for this reason (Jakobmeyer & Thünemann, 2018: 191). In particular, in order to encourage pupils' 'historical mentality', Herbst believed that a history teacher should continuously educate him/herself 'by attentively and conscientiously following scientific progress' (Jakobmeyer & Thünemann, 2018: 190).

Beginning from the central position of history teachers engaged in quality history teaching, the following sections answer the question of what constitutes a history teacher at his/her core and what is meant by professionalism in history teaching. To this end, empirical findings on the professional competence of history teachers are taken as a starting point in outlining a theoretical modelling of the history teacher.

## 2. History Lessons and the Conditions for Their Success

The question of the necessary conditions to successfully teach history is not really new, and neither is the answer: namely, that everything depends on the teacher. As long as history teaching has existed as an institutionalised form of historical learning, those involved – teachers, students, politicians, and even scientists – have repeatedly provided answers to this supposedly easy question (Bergmann & Schneider, 1982). The fact that these answers must always be viewed historically is as trivial as it is self-evident. As culture-specific knowledge, the

experts' experiential knowledge has always been tied to the narrators' and listeners' respective presents. Thus, the ideas of successful history teaching to the empirical turn of history didactics were first and foremost normative settings that resulted from the respective respondents' wealth of experience and 'dominant thoughts and state regimentation' (Bergmann & Schneider, 1997: 257) in the context of their time. German-speaking history didactics – which became established as a scientific discipline during the 1970s – had the self-imposed task of characterising 'good' history teaching (in the sense of a value-related attribution) by distinguishing that which should be learned from that which can be learned (Bergmann & Rösen, 1978: 13) and thereby setting the standard for the value-related justification of actions in history teaching. The development of a 'reflected historical consciousness' (Thünemann & Jansen, 2018: 94) by pupils – which is still regarded as the central goal of history learning and teaching in school today – has remained both the normative foundation and product of this attribution practice, which only became feasible in the context of 1970s' discourse and the confrontation with critical-communicative didactics aimed at emancipation (Sandkühler, 2014).

Throughout the developing professionalization of subject didactics as independent, scientific disciplines (Heitzmann & Pauli, 2015), this normatively oriented view of good history teaching was extended by including an intensified search for empirical evidence for this basic standard (Hallitzky, Heinze, Herfter & Spendrin, 2018). The current focus is less on the normatively 'good' and more on the effective (i.e. efficient) teaching of history (cf. Kuchler & Sommer, 2018) and on the question of the role played by the history teacher during this process in terms of effectiveness. As Lyotard put it, whether the chain of effect: teacher training → teacher → student performance, is constructed for the purpose of measurement in the research context is a question of 'performativity', of 'the better ratio of input/output' (Lyotard, 1986: 135). For example, the most recent volume on the effectiveness of history teaching contains 'how history teaching can become "effective" today' (Kuchler & Sommer, 2018: 20) – that is, the 'professional knowledge' of 'proven experts' – in order to outline 'the right path to history teaching', 'which encourages pupils to think historically' (Kuchler & Sommer, 2018: 227). Historical-didactic gaps, which were recognised as such at an early stage but have not yet been satisfactorily filled, are revealed in the course of these efforts. From

the perspective of history didactics, the history teacher remains an unknown: Who are these teachers, what do they do? Why and how have they become experts in teaching history?

### 3. The Search for ‘Professional Competence’

Since the results of the first PISA study were published in the context of new control in the field of education and in connection with empirical educational research, the normative settings for the investigations described above have developed further towards a supposed knowledge of causal relationships. ‘Knowledge that works’ became a slogan of evidence-based pedagogy. Afterwards, as the normative quality of teaching was no longer central but rather in a consistent translation of an underlying, offer-use model of teaching, the aim was to highlight the connections between means and purpose as well as cause and effect in order to generate ‘knowledge of effects and knowledge of efficacy’ (Bellmann & Müller, 2011: 15). Thus, the teacher also became the focus of mostly domain-unspecific empirical educational research efforts as one of the central requirements for the quality of teaching (cf. König, 2018) in order to empirically validate the ‘thesis of the teacher’s centrality of impact’ (Terhart, 2017: 229). Against the background of the very widely received 2006 Hattie study, which demonstrated that the teacher has a great effect (Hattie, 2012; Demantowsky & Waldis, 2014), the following years have borne witness to an increased interest in empirical research on the teacher’s actions and professional knowledge as well as individual sub-facets of his/her professional competence.

The currently dominant background to this research – at least in German-speaking countries – is the ‘professional competence’ model (cf. Baumert & Kunter, 2006), which was developed within the COACTIV research group as a ‘psychological disposition construct’ (Helsper, Klieme & Terhart, 2018: 26; cf. Rothland, Cramer & Terhart, 2018: 1017). This model’s central basis is the professional knowledge competence facet as modelled in relation to American psychologist Lee S. Shulman’s (1986; 1987) texts on teachers’ knowledge and in relation to Rainer Bromme’s (1992) fundamental work. The ‘stabilization of the tripartite division’ (Hofbauer, 2019) of teachers’ knowledge into content knowledge (CK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and pedagogical knowledge (PK) – which was established no later than 2006 – also currently represents the

central reference point for research efforts within history didactics (cf. Fenn & Seider, 2017; Heuer, Resch & Seidenfuß, 2017; Sandkühler, 2013).

In the competence-theoretical approach, it is assumed that (prospective) teachers use the offers made during the phases of institutionalised teacher training in the context of their individual prerequisites and that this use leads to the development of knowledge and skills in the course of their professional, biographical learning process. This knowledge and ability is subsumed by the term ‘professional competence’ and includes professional knowledge, convictions, motivational orientations, and self-regulatory skills (cf. Rothland, Cramer & Terhart, 2018: 1017-1018). Professionalism is understood against the background of the model of ‘professional competence’ in the accumulation of professional knowledge and the action competence based on it. Although the results available thus far cannot validate or justify the *Pauschalität* (Terhart, 2017: 233) of the impact centrality of teachers’ actions, the current research on teachers’ professional competence agrees that such abilities and skills – as well as the willingness to cope with professional challenges – can in principle be learned and changed. On the other hand, this understanding follows the assumption that professional competence develops by confronting corresponding learning opportunities and takes place in the course of the three phases of teacher education. Although numerous empirical studies support these theses on the competence-theoretical approach, the matters and subjects studied in them play only a subordinate role (König, 2015). The subject matter or the matter of teacher action is often ignored in the discussion on teacher competences precisely because teaching competences are regarded as generic and interdisciplinary (Martens et al., 2018: 10). The didactics of history are again modelled as mediation science, particularly in the adoption of Shulman’s tripartite division and the formulation of pedagogical content knowledge as a subject-unspecific PCK for history teaching. However, history didactics as a ‘science of historical learning’ (Rüsen, 2013: 254) not only provides practice-relevant action knowledge for history teaching but – as a science of reflection – also produces knowledge that goes beyond its purely school-based mediation function. Knowledge of history didactics is a fundamental prerequisite for legitimising a presented action through principles and making it practical not only in school (where history is taught) but also in other public and everyday contexts.

If a teacher's professional competence is understood as a set of domain-specific skills, abilities, and knowledge, then fading out the subject matter and reducing history didactic knowledge to merely presenting information in history classes represent serious gaps in the investigation of history teachers' professional competence. Therefore, the questions of history's significance and nature in terms of the development of individual competences and underlying professional knowledge, the historical teaching action based on it, and teachers' epistemological convictions and self-understanding in their role as history teachers have also been raised from the perspective of history didactics. Although history didactics recognise the history teacher's failings and lack of history didactic expertise early on, it is characteristic of history didactics and its 'borrower's practice' (Pandel, 2006: 10) that specific research on these teachers only developed in the context of non-specific professionalization research (cf. Bühl-Gramer, 2018: 357-358; Heuer, 2017; Seidenfuß, 2014: 7). Thus, only in the context of the recent and widely received COACTIV study have individual empirical research projects with a history didactic profile been conceived and carried into the professional competence construct, particularly on the aspect of history teachers' professional knowledge and its development during the course of the three phases of teacher training (cf. Resch, 2018; Wilfert & Thünemann, 2018; Hartmann, 2018; Litten, 2017; Heuer, Resch & Seidenfuß, 2017a). An attempt was also made within the interdisciplinary research college EKoL (Effective Competence Diagnosis in Teacher Training) to survey the professional competence of future history teachers at lower secondary level in Baden-Württemberg using a longitudinal design and a comprehensive test instrument (cf. Resch, Heuer & Seidenfuß, 2019; Heuer & Resch, 2019) based on the Heidelberg 'Model for Competence in History Teaching (HeiGeKo)' (cf. Heuer, Resch & Seidenfuß, 2017b). The available empirical findings (cf. Resch, Heuer & Lohse-Bossenz, 2019) on the 'professional competence' of history teachers, however, caused the theoretical modelling of competence to appear inadequate. Although the prospective teachers had domain-specific knowledge, they could not translate this knowledge into history-teaching skills through increased practical experience. Thus, the empirical findings ultimately led to further searches for the core of history teaching professionalism of history teachers.

#### 4. The Unknown. Who Are History Teachers?

Even though almost all considerations and proposals from history didactics have involved history teachers, a theory-based examination remains lacking today, at least implicitly. Early on in the discourse on history didactics, history teachers were shown to be a ‘functional neutrum’ (Kröll, 1985), and central questions about their knowledge and ability as well as their adequate education were not posed or answered. Even in the course of the development of history teaching from a source and problem orientation to a stronger method orientation and the currently dominant competence orientation of historical learning (cf. Borries 2008: 142) as well as the associated ‘new’ challenges to history teaching, questions about history teachers and their knowledge, ability, and history-teaching activities have rarely been posed. In his introduction to the conference proceedings at the Conference on History Didactics in 2013, Michael Sauer (2013: 38) summarised this concept by stating that ‘the training of history teachers is a problem area with a considerable need for research, discussion, and action.’

Satisfactory answers to ‘fundamental questions’ (Thünemann, 2016: 44) on the professionalization of history teachers have thus far remained lacking. What exactly distinguishes a history *teacher* from a *history* teacher? Is every teacher who teaches history a history teacher, irrespective of their education? What is the difference between a non-subject teacher and a teacher who has studied history teaching? Finally, is a history teacher a ‘historian or pedagogue’ (Hasberg, 2010), and if so, what constitutes the core of his/her professionalism?

The notion that teachers’ professional knowledge and competence increases almost automatically within the framework of their professional experience and solely through practical experience – referred to as ‘Wisdom of Practice’ (Shulman, 2004) – has not yet been proven empirically. On the contrary, several studies on a wide range of subjects have concluded that teachers’ expertise as subject teachers is relatively independent of the duration of their individual professional activity (for the natural sciences, cf. Kirschner et al., 2017: 126).

If the empirical results of the historical didactic professional research that is currently available are taken into account, the most ‘central difference’ (Kuchler & Sommer, 2018: 231) – namely the gap

between history didacticians, teacher trainers, and practising history teachers' domain-specific description of teaching – is not surprising. According to the experts, the historic-didactic reflection of teaching as history teaching – which may be the core of knowledge on history didactics (cf. Lucas, 1985: 165) – does not usually take place during the second and third phases. During these phases, general-didactic and pedagogical arguments are used without reference to historical-didactic theory formation or historical-didactic research findings. However, the integration of so-called experts – such as those consulted for the anthology *Effective History Teaching* (Kuchler & Sommer, 2018) – into numerous empirical studies on the evaluation standard (cf. Resch, 2018) and the status of *experts* in the context of a 'best practice approach' (Litten, 2017: 172) – which is usually not discussed any further – raises questions. Who are history teachers, and what is their expertise? Is it possible to be an expert in history teaching without arguing with the 'coordinate system' (Jeismann, 1988: 6) of history didactics?

## 5. Contours of the Unknown

Answers according to which the content is the essence of the history teacher's professionalism or that reveal that 'there is a lack of specialist overview knowledge that would be the prerequisite for valid, order-giving, hands-on didactizations' (Heinßen, 2016: 209) lack any empirical evidence. The answer to the question of whether a history teacher is a 'historian or a pedagogue' must therefore be that he/she is neither one nor the other. From a history didactic perspective, a history teacher is a professional who uses his/her professionalism in history didactics to enable and help shape historical education, which is understood as a non-reproducible, reflexive, self-positioning of individuals in time and space through historical narration (cf. Heuer, 2012: 101). In this respect, we can therefore speak of the history teacher's professionalism in history didactics as the history teacher's central professional skill. Thus, history didactics as a central reference science takes centre stage in the discussion on history teachers' specialist knowledge, which should be at their disposal to enable them to provide high-quality history teaching (cf. Heuer, Resch & Seidenfuß, 2017b). A history teacher is thus not only a person who 'thinks and sorts specialist knowledge in a pupil-oriented way' (Heinßen, 2016: 212), nor is

he/she someone who acts as a ‘historian with pleasure in dealing with young people’ (Heinßen, 2016: 214); rather, he/she is not only someone who has a broad historical knowledge base but also and especially someone who makes obvious reference to history didactics as a scientific discipline of historical learning in his/her teaching of history. Of course, a broad basis of historical knowledge (HK) – that is, disciplinary knowledge on the subject content of history in the discourse of historical science in so far as it has been generated and legitimised by historical science (the nature of history, historical grammar, a theoretical knowledge of history, deeper textbook knowledge) (cf. Heuer, Resch & Seidenfuß 2017b: 29) – is indispensable. However, it is not this area of knowledge that distinguishes a teacher as a history teacher from a history didactic perspective. Instead, the historian and the history teacher differ in precisely their conscious use of the didactic knowledge of history: ‘Pedagogical content knowledge is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from the pedagogue’ (Shulman, 1987: 8). Both historians and history teachers have a broad knowledge of history in the form of historical knowledge (some more, some less), but history teachers also know how to transform their historical knowledge so that it becomes effective in relation to addressees’ historical thinking processes and the respective learning and education situation independent of a concrete teaching action or application situation. Knowledge of history didactics therefore refers to the knowledge facets necessary for teaching historical thinking and the methods and categories that distinguish it from certain historical content in order to prepare this content so that learners can understand it and to present it to learners as history (i.e. as a present narrative formation of meaning about past human actions and suffering) or to enable these learners to form their own historical opinions about the experience of time (cf. Heuer, Resch & Seidenfuß, 2017b: 31-35): ‘The teacher is not only a master of procedure but also of content and rationale, and capable of explaining why something is done’ (Shulman, 1986: 13).

If the proposed centrality of historical didactic reflection knowledge that is used for determining teachers’ domain-specific professionalism as history teachers is taken seriously, it becomes evident that it is not professional competence – which, while clearly necessary, is not sufficient in and of itself (Biesta, 2015: 5) – that distinguishes a history teacher as such, but rather his/her ability to

reflect history-didactically on actions and to judge them with regard to their purpose.

## 6. **The *Main Factor* in History Lessons?**

Although it has not yet been possible to empirically prove that the history teacher is the ‘main factor’ in effective history teaching, from the perspective of educational theory and history didactics, this key role is still assigned to the history teacher. History teaching as an element of historical cultural learning in which historical thinking should be made possible by the history teacher’s history didactic professionalism can be described as an established and institutionalised form of the joint processing and the clarification of history, which takes place during the ‘communication on history’ (Mayer & Pandel, 1978: 163) between teachers and learners (cf. Paseka, Keller-Schneider & Combe, 2018: 2; Zülsdorf-Kersting, 2018: 59). History teaching manifests itself between the subject (history), the teachers (history teachers), and the learners (pupils). History teaching introduces students to the respective cultures of memory and public history and enables them to learn the ‘tools’ of historical thinking in order to be able to deal (historically competently) with the fundamental openness and plurality of historical narratives now and in the future without being overwhelmed by them. Learning how to think historically – as is taught and institutionalised in history lessons – thus requires historical education in the context of the tension between historical-cultural participation and individual life practices. The history teacher’s primary responsibility lies in using his/her didactic competence in history to enable his/her pupils to learn history in a sound manner that makes sense and that they can understand. As experts in teaching history, history teachers’ central task is therefore to enable, challenge, and support their pupils’ learning of history through learning arrangements and a subject-specific task culture.

Against this background, professional history teachers are teachers who make historical thinking and the development of historical competencies in pupils possible in an appropriate and scientifically plausible manner. Their specific professionalism is articulated in the (self-)reflexive possession of different, subject-specific options for action as well as in their fundamental perspective and imperfection (cf. Heuer, Körber, Schreiber & Waldis, 2019).

Knowledge of history didactics thus filters the perception of difficulties and problems in the execution of history teaching and enables the history teacher – as a professional – to justify his/her teaching of history didactically in retrospect and to orient this teaching toward the future. Historical didactic knowledge is necessary for this orientation in order to consider subject-specific operations and the chances for pupils to provide plausible answers, which are made possible by the respective tasks in advance of the respective teaching sequence. This knowledge is necessary but by no means sufficient for successful learning processes in the sense of ‘effective’ learning processes. Knowledge does not automatically imply that there is any ability in the respective teaching situation or effective learning of history by pupils, but historic-didactic professionalism – as wisdom – generates the conditions that make teaching history possible in the first place. However, this understanding also means that the academically imparted scientific knowledge of history didactics cannot lead to ability in a concrete teaching situation, and ‘the independent way of thinking about history’ (Rüsen, 1991: 15) in this sense represents the basis for reflection on which didactic decisions are made since history didactics is not a ‘theory of effectiveness’ (Mayer & Pandel, 1978: 153).

## Notes

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# CONCEPTS FOR TEACHING ABOUT REGIONS IN POLISH SCHOOLS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY IN THE LIGHT OF CURRICULA

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*In the modern world, teaching about the region has gained particular significance. We understand more and more about how important it is to shape a sense of one's own regional identity, providing the basis for engaging in active involvement in its environment and for an authentic opening up to other communities and cultures. There is no doubt that effective and universal satisfaction of this need is possible primarily within the framework of regional school education. This text presents a changing vision of teaching about the region in the Polish education system, implemented at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, indicating the strengths and weaknesses of further solutions.*

## 1. Introduction

We acquire knowledge about our immediate environment throughout our lives, firstly through parents and relatives, and over the course of time – by participating in various communities (local, regional, national, continental, global). For a certain period of our lives, we have the opportunity to learn about our region within the framework of the school curriculum, an institutionalized form of education. In the same period, and often also after completing school education, we take advantage of educational offers concerning regional issues proposed by so-called cultural institutions, such as museums, libraries, archives or community centres. Teaching about the region therefore takes place – generally speaking – in two ways: at school (school education) and outside it (out-of-school education). Although all forms of regional education are important in the teaching of regional identity, the school, due to its mass character and obligatory curriculum, is an invaluable form in this respect.

Representatives of regional movement associations in Poland and the teachers themselves were well aware of the importance of educating students in regional identity. For many years, both these communities have lobbied for the adaptation of the regional idea to school curricula, paying attention to the need to build a bond with

the immediate environment, so important to the sense of identity of a young person. They have been supported by scholars from various fields, showing the didactic and educational benefits of learning about one's own region, including Stanisław Ossowski, who introduced the concept of a regional homeland (Ossowski, 1967: 251), and the Poznań sociologist Krzysztof Kwaśniewski, who even called regionalism a 'local patriotism' (Kwaśniewski, 1986: 3).

The Polish Ministry of National Education also became an advocate of teaching about the region, and in 1995 it developed a comprehensive concept of regional education entitled 'Cultural heritage in the region – curriculum guidelines'. Eventually, regional education was introduced to schools in 1999 as an obligatory cross-curricular path at all stages of education. Since then, along with the evolving 'Basic curriculum of general education', as part of subsequent reforms of the education system, it has undergone several important changes, so it is worth considering what teaching options about the region and regional identity education are in force in Polish schools at the beginning of the 21st century.

The following text focuses primarily on an analysis of the concept of the curriculum for teaching about the region, on the level of official ministerial documents (mainly the 'Basic curriculum of general education'), because in this way formal conditions are set for the implementation of this issue in Polish schools. I am interested in showing the evolution of changes in this concept over the last twenty years, with an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of individual solutions, as well as the consequences of the modifications. While drawing attention to which assumptions of the concept have continued and which have been transformed, I would like to indicate the real direction of the changes being carried out, which influence in a fundamental way the goals and content of teaching about the region in Poland.

## **2. Different Ways of Understanding Regional Education**

Although the idea of teaching using regional content dates back to the 18th century in Poland, the concept of regional education was introduced relatively recently. In earlier periods, the aforementioned tendency took the form of various terminological solutions, such as 'taking local and regional factors into account' – as it was in the 1930s, or 'connecting teaching materials to the history of a town,

environment or region' as was entered into the teaching curriculum in 1957. Treating regional education as one of the pedagogical concepts in the fields of education, social pedagogy and cultural anthropology, we could of course use this term to describe various proposals and positions postulating the introduction of regionalist elements into school education that emerged over the last hundred years. However, the fact is that the concept of 'regional education' only began to be used at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. This was due to the Group for Education and Dissemination of Culture and the Association of Regional Cultural Societies, operating at the then National Council of Culture, which prepared a document under the direction of Dzierżymyr Jankowski in 1989 entitled 'A position on regional education'. In this document, it was recognized that regional education was an indispensable component of the regional movement, including shaping awareness of the region's heritage, its specific features and development opportunities, and strengthening emotional ties with the 'small homeland'. The dissemination and constant use of the term 'regional education' in Polish pedagogical thought was undoubtedly due to the reform of the education system in 1999.

What is worth emphasizing is that the characteristic feature of the late twentieth century in Poland was the adaptation of regionalism (in a variety of meanings) in many educational concepts, in which it sometimes played a less significant role, and sometimes was the main reference point. Instead of just one proposal to transfer the regionalist idea to school education, which finds its justification in the latest trends in psychology and pedagogy, there was a whole set of ideas (proposals, concepts) which, to varying extent, took regionalism into account in its theoretical and practical assumptions. One of them was, among others, the concept of intercultural education, in which the content, competences and attitudes resulting from the regionalist idea, such as learning about one's culture and the world of being rooted, or implementing for cultivation and the taking of targeted actions resulting from ties with a private homeland, took an important place. Jerzy Nikitorowicz even considers that regional education is the first stage of intercultural education, without which it is not possible to build further levels of national and state education and further continental-global education, and that omitting or limiting one of these stages (especially the type of identity that a given level shapes) may even lead to 'breaking continuity and a

disappearance of the ability to see the differences necessary to search for similarities and interpret otherness as stimulating and inspiring' (Nikitorowicz, 2003: 934-942). Regionalism also has much common ground with contemporary ecological (environmental) education implemented in the Polish educational system in the years 1999-2009, among other things by learning about surroundings near and far and the region as a whole; equipping students with the ability to learn about natural and socio-cultural elements of the surrounding environment; shaping emotional relationships with the surrounding environment; creating conditions for taking action for the environment; participating in activities for the environment and the region; pursuing the preservation and multiplication of the cultural and environmental elements of the environment; creating conditions for integration with the local community; and finally – instilling a system of ecological, pro-environmental, pro-social and pro-cultural values for people from the pupils' close environment (Pawlak, 2007: 189-195). Some researchers are even willing to identify regional education with environmental education, referring to its narrow meaning, the one of education focused on learning, teaching and popularizing in the course of school work – knowledge about the local environment, its social, cultural and natural life (Malinowski, 2001: 41-50). As Mikolaj Winiarski wrote in the late 1990s, environmental education began to be interpreted in two areas: in a narrower way, exposing an educational dimension focused on learning and popularizing knowledge about the local environment, its social, cultural and natural life (Winiarski, 2003: 979-980), and in a broader sense – pointing to the process of shaping and developing one's own environmental competences combined with activities directed at the implementation of local needs (e.g. educational, economic, cultural). In this concept of environmental education, an important element was (just as in the concept of ecological education promoted by biologists and environmentalists) educating the pro-environmental attitude, but it was also understood as the constant and positive attitude of the individual towards the local environment (including cultural heritage and tradition), manifesting itself not only in conscious and emotional spheres, but also in specific activity, such as acquiring knowledge about the environment of residence, its past and present, undertaking various works for this environment and solving the problems of local communities. The many functions that should be fulfilled by environmental education include, among

others, the development of local and regional culture as well as the cultivation and creation of cultural traditions (Winiarski, 2003: 981). Some regionalist aspects are also present in the concept of cultural education because it assumes that an indispensable element of national and European culture is regional culture and regional heritage, and its cognition and development constitute a necessary stage in the education of an individual. As Anatol Omelaniuk wrote, regional culture fulfils three functions in the process of education: cognitive-motivating (it allows one to know the entirety of proper behaviour), model-example (provides specific examples of proper existence both in the world and in the community) and a supportive function (provides specific 'help' in shaping the right attitudes and behaviours) (Omelaniuk, 2004: 39-52). Polish regionalism, which strives, among other things, to preserve the value of local cultural heritage, is defined as one of many elements of universal human cultural heritage and stimulates individuals to a widely understood engagement in culture – it finds many common goals with cultural and cultural education, treated in this situation as a set of activities for cultural, social and civic activities.

Considerations regarding selected aspects and ways of understanding regional education also appeared via research into regional identity (Matczak, 1999; Lewandowska, 2007: 444-450), on the basis of geographical sciences in the field of geographical regional education (Mordawski, 1999; Rodzoś, 2002; Hibszer, 2004: 8-20; Osiecki, 2005: 24-27), in regional studies in Polish language education Zienkiewicz, 1985; Kossakowska-Jarosz, 2005: 10-17; Budrewicz, 2006: 9-27), or in relation to regionalism in pre-school and early school education (Michalewska, 1999). However, a specific change in the discussion on the concept of regional education resulted in the introduction of the already mentioned ministerial proposal under the slogan 'Regional education – cultural heritage in the region' in 1999. From that moment, the main thrust of the considerations of Polish pedagogues and educators was basically limited to multiple interpretations of this concept, and a gradual silencing of the topic of developing new theoretical and scientific solutions.

A separate issue, which is beyond the scope of these considerations, is the way in which Polish people understand the basic concept of regional education, i.e. how they understand the region. In keeping with the above-mentioned different ways of adapting the idea of regionalism to educational concepts, the

situation is similar in relation to the way of understanding the concept of the region. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, there has been a lively discussion on this issue among representatives of various disciplines in Poland, sometimes accompanied by contradictory considerations in the didactic environment also, which results in a great deal of freedom in school practice and the often independent decision of the teacher of how to understand the region. Unfortunately, the Ministry of National Education does not help in solving these dilemmas, which are not consistently defined in the curriculum documents in this regard.

### **3. Concepts of Regional Education in Polish Schools in the Years 1999-2016**

From the point of view of the development of regional education in Poland, 1999 was of particular importance. After many years of unsuccessful efforts by regionalists and teachers, made in the period 1945-1989, it was possible to introduce the teaching of the region into compulsory school education, at all stages of education (in primary school, middle school and high school). Without doubt, this was possible thanks to the socio-political transformations in Europe in the late 1980s and the opening of Poland to democracy, which in practice also meant profound changes in the Polish education system. The implementation of the new vision of regional education was provided by all teachers conducting classes at a given educational level, including issues falling within the scope of the areas of their own subjects. Regional issues, although they were considered obligatory for all pupils, did not play a particularly privileged role, complementing the general content of selected subjects and subject blocks, constituting one of the equal elements of the broader concept of cross-curricular integration. This vision, leaving a large scope of freedom of choice in terms of content, clearly defined which regional issues were obligatory and which had to be implemented at a given educational stage, which meant that regardless of which particular curriculum the school was running and which course books were chosen – regional issues were always present. This vision preferred teachers' creativity primarily in the area of didactic planning, including the optimal selection of how to implement curriculum guidelines, teaching methods and auxiliary materials, not expecting them to make the decision of whether to teach about the region and

to what extent, because such decisions had already been taken at the core curriculum level.

The main objective of regional education at all stages of education was to form the pupil's sense of his or her own regional identity, manifested primarily in an involvement in the nurturing and protection of local and regional cultural heritage, and in a readiness to participate in the life of the local community, undertaking various activities for its development. This regional identity was at the same time understood in terms of universalism, as an attitude of tolerance and openness to other cultures, and also as a perception of regional diversity as a value in national and ethnic cultures. The civic and patriotic aspect was also significant, referring to the connection of local and regional culture with nationwide culture, teaching the attitude of national solidarity and developing social, political, economic and cultural activity in the immediate environment. The implementation of the above-mentioned educational goals was to ensure that the content of education was organized at individual stages using a spiral method to solve problems, gradually and cumulatively developing issues related to the past of the region, its natural conditions, widely understood culture, society, language and customs (see Table 1). Starting from knowledge of the family and the local community, through the history of their own region, shown in the wider context of Poland and Europe, content was initially focused on the present dimension (at primary school level), then went back to the past (at middle school level) to return to the present day perspective, but with a focus on the future (at high school level).

The undeniable advantage of regional education in the years 1999-2009 was its arrangement at the level of the core curriculum in the form of a compact, comprehensive concept with clearly defined educational goals, school tasks, educational content and student achievements at every educational level. The weak side, however, was the organization of the didactic process, because in practice all the teachers teaching in a given class were responsible for the implementation of its guidelines, and the final results of the work depended on their ability to cooperate with each other. Yet, even if regional education was implemented in practice in separate subjects, this concept was a permanent reference point, showing the whole process of teaching knowledge, skills and attitudes concerning the local environment and the region.

Primary school	Lower secondary school	Upper secondary school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the student's immediate surroundings (home, school)</li> <li>- elements of the history of the region and their connections with the history and tradition of their own family</li> <li>- general geographical and cultural characteristics of the region</li> <li>- local and regional traditions, language of the region</li> <li>- elements of the history of the region and their connections with the history and tradition of the student's own family</li> <li>- individual profiles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- location and spatial diversity of elements of the geographical environment of the region</li> <li>- the role of the region and its relations with other regions</li> <li>- history of the region,</li> <li>- elements of the history of regional culture, the language of the region</li> <li>- natural and architectural monuments in the region</li> <li>- history and tradition of student's own family against the background of the history and traditions of the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the specific natural, social, economic and cultural characteristics of the region in relation to other regions of Poland and Europe</li> <li>- the past of the region and its cultural heritage as a basis for understanding the present of the region</li> <li>- the history of the region compared to the history of Poland and Europe</li> <li>- prospects and opportunities for the development of the region</li> </ul>

Table 1. The layout of the teaching content in the field of regional education in the curriculum concept of 1999.

Since 2009, after the introduction of another curriculum reform, there have been major changes in the approach to regional education. The separate content of regional education was abandoned, and topics related to the region were directly included in individual subjects. The previous concept of regional education from the late 1990s was replaced by a new proposal, formally only its 'organizational' modification, unfortunately in practice introducing a complete modernization of content. This was not due to the negative attitude of the educational authorities towards the idea of regionalism as such, but rather due to a lack of diligence, adequate supervision and the desire to quickly comply with the EU directives to which Poland had committed (including in the field of the European Qualifications Framework). Subject teams designing new provisions in the core curriculum interpreted the general recommendation of including regional content in their subjects in an extremely arbitrary

way. As a result, an inconsistent and heterogeneous vision of teaching about the region has arisen, which is harder and harder to call a holistic concept.

Above all, the overriding objective of education in this field has been modified to a large extent: although some subjects still had the earlier intention of teaching regional education, openness to other cultures and commitment to one's own environment, the development of pupils is now emphasized to a greater extent, giving a sense of only local ties and preparation for participation (conscious participation) in wider culture, including local and regional. Generally, it was assumed that in primary schools, education is propaedeutic, therefore the introduction of regional elements was to rely on familiarizing the pupil with the immediate surroundings and region, arousing his or her interest in this subject, and at the same time paying attention to the complexity of the surrounding world, so that the pupil knows in which region he or she lives, can show it on a map, see the changes taking place, etc. In middle school, in turn, the main emphasis was on gaining knowledge about the region within individual subjects – equivalents of scientific disciplines. Therefore, this probably resulted in the extension of regional geography to a very wide extent, connecting information about different varieties of Polish to the teaching of the Polish language, as well as a detailed knowledge of historical monuments from the region in history lessons. This stage was also to initiate the practical preparation of the student for conscious participation in culture, which was the main goal of education in secondary schools. Regional education at this stage should have developed the need for the student to be active in the immediate surroundings, motivating him or her to participate in various ways in his or her cultural life (though not only), and most importantly – to learn how to design and implement specific projects (see Table 2). In the new 'Core Curriculum', the existing regional identity has been eliminated, replaced with categories describing relations at other levels, with the local community, ethnic group, nation, and emphasizing above all the connections resulting from joint participation in culture. A clear emphasis was also placed on shaping the attitude of so-called modern patriotism, understood as open patriotism, based on a sense of belonging to the nation – a community of citizens, covering different dimensions of ties from the local community, through regional, national, European and global.

School subject	Primary school	Lower secondary school	Upper secondary school	
			Basic level	Extended lev.
Polish language		The student recognizes the characteristics of the culture and language of his region.		
History and society / history	The student describes his 'small Homeland', taking into account historical and cultural traditions and socio-economic problems; collects information on various ways of commemorating characters and events from the past of the 'Little Homeland'; indicates the local headquarters of the local authorities and examples of the scope of activities and the methods of appointing the authorities; indicates on the map and describes the main regions of Poland.	The student recognizes the monuments of medieval culture, indicating the differences between the Roman style and the Gothic style, taking into account examples from their own region; recognizes representative objects of Renaissance art in Poland, with particular emphasis on their own region; recognizes the characteristic features of Baroque culture, referring to examples of architecture and art in their own region; recognizes the typical features of the Polish Enlightenment and characterizes examples of the		

		art of the Classicism period, including their own region.		
Natural history	The student recognizes and names the rocks typical of the place of residence: sand, clay and other characteristic of the area; gives examples of places in the immediate environment in which favourable and unfavourable changes have occurred under the influence of human activity.		As part of the supplementary module: <i>Learning around us</i> : the student searches for and presents examples of extreme environmental features, record-breaking quantities, that is, the Earth's 'most ...' on a local, regional and global scale.	
Social studies		The student explains, giving examples, how citizens can influence the decisions of the authorities at the local level; presents arguments for participation in local elections; explains what the principles of decentralization and subsidiarity relate to, gives examples of them from the life of		The student describes forms of activity of citizens within the local community and region, participating as far as possible in the chosen activity; presents the tasks and competences of the local, district and provincial self-government.

		their region and town; indicates the main causes of unemployment in their locality and region, assesses its effects.		
Geography		The student characterizes the location of their own region on the basis of maps of different content; recognizes the main types of rocks occurring in their own region; lists the main types of natural resources of their own region; characterizes the diversity of population distribution in the inhabited region; indicates the differences in the employment structure in their own region; analyses, compares and assesses the distribution, size of cities in the inhabited region; explains the causes of changes in industry in their own region; ex-		

		<p>plains the rapid development of selected services in their own region; proposes concrete actions to protect the environment in their own region; characterizes, on the basis of thematic maps, the natural environment of the main geographical regions of Poland with particular emphasis on their own region; designs and describes on the basis of tourist, thematic and general geographic maps as well as their own field observations, a trip along a selected route in their own region, taking into account natural and cultural values.</p>		
Plastic arts	The student determines their cultural affiliation through contact with selected works		The student implements projects in the field of visual arts, including providing information tai-	

	of art, monuments and tradition in their local regional environment, and participates in the cultural life of this environment		lored to the communicative situation and participation in the culture of the school and local community.	
Music	The student listens to folk songs in original and stylized forms		The student plays or sings folk songs heard/read from notes.	
Cultural studies			The student organizes simple activities of a cultural nature (a meeting with a creator of culture, artistic venture, presentation of their interests, local or regional traditions, interprets cultural practices from the immediate environment (class, school, house, housing estate, yard, city, church, football stadium); indicates the relationship between cultures: local, regional, national and European,	

			emerging in specific art departments and cultural practices.	
Bio-logy			The student justifies the need to segregate waste in the household; proposes actions limiting water and electricity consumption as well as household waste generation.	
Technical classes	The student develops projects for rational management of recyclable materials in the immediate environment: home, housing estate, the city.			
Art classes (supplementary subject in second-dary school)		Sample classes: vocal ensemble. The student actively participates in the cultural life of the school and the environment. Examples of classes: art classes. The student implements projects in the field of visual arts to popularize knowledge (about art and artistic phenomena) in school and local communities.		

Table 2. Layout of teaching content in the field of regional education in the 2009 curriculum concept. Source: Ordinance of the Minister of National Education.

What clearly distinguished the concept of regional education of 2009 from that which was implemented in the previous period was a more practical attitude to preparing the student to take up activities in his or her local and regional environment. Instead of the initial education of regional identity, this was limited to forming a sense of ties with the communities the pupils were living in, maybe less ambitious, but more possible to achieve. To a greater extent, there was a focus on a broadly understood participation in culture, as well as a clear linking of regionalist ideas with patriotic and civic upbringing. Although, unlike in the previous concept of regional education, the organizational stage was significantly strengthened (i.e. the planning and assigning of issues to particular subjects), there was definitely a lack of renewed thinking at a global level, which would certainly have avoided so many inconsistencies and would have enabled teachers to understand the basic assumptions of this new vision of teaching about the region.

As a result of these curriculum changes, regional education was present in Polish schools only in fragmentary form, with varying intensity in particular subjects, shifted from the obligatory to the optional sphere, remaining as dependent on the 'good will' of the teacher. It is also worth noting that at the same time, the trend of extracurricular regional education began to grow very strongly, implemented in the form of educational activities undertaken by cultural institutions (museums, libraries, cultural centres), archives as well as various foundations and associations. This resulted in a clear shift of the teaching emphasis on the region from school education to extracurricular education, however, this covers only selected groups of recipients, at different ages and with a very diverse range of impacts.

Its consequences were also found in the declining interest of publishers in publishing materials devoted to regional issues. Even though, after the reform of 1999, a rich and varied range for teachers of didactic materials related to regional education could be found, after the removal of the regional path from the 'Core Curriculum' in 2009, this range was clearly marginalized.

#### **4. Vision of Teaching about the Region in the 2017 Curriculum Reform**

Despite the appeals of the regionalists, the Ministry of National Education did not take full advantage of the opportunity offered by the new curriculum reform in 2017 to comprehensively organize regional education and restore its proper status. Certain changes have been made to the approach to teaching about the region (for the time being at the primary level), but it is still far removed from the concept of 1999. The idea of regionalism must in fact be part of the new educational policy, in which Polish schools will teach primarily about Polish achievements in the past and today, and the regions and local community will serve to confirm and exemplify these successes. Unfortunately, in the core curriculum for primary schools in 2017, regional education was not restored in the form of a separate subject or a cross-curricular pathway, as was the case in the period 1999-2009. However, the importance of knowledge about one's own region in the general formation of a student was definitely more important than after 2009. Strengthening the sense of regional identity, active participation in the cultural life of the local environment and shaping an open attitude towards other people (i.e. the main objective of regional education from 1999) was applied for the purposes of education in new primary schools. Various references to the past and present of the local and regional environment and to regional identity can be found in many of the provisions of 2017, both at the first stage of education and in years 4-7 (see Table 3). Therefore, there should no longer be any doubts as to how the teacher should include regional issues, or in which subject, when working with pupils. Most of these issues can be found within the teaching of nature, geography, Polish language, art, music, and knowledge about society and history. As a plus, one should also note the prominent figures from a given region, who are woven into the tasks of various school subjects, differentiating their categories according to the specificity of the field, for example, the creators of the region are assigned to art classes, creators of local musical folklore – music classes, people especially meritorious in terms of the history and traditions of the pupil's closest neighbourhood – history classes, people performing important functions in local government – knowledge about society.

<b>School subject</b>	<b>Primary school</b>
Polish language	The student learns about the cultural life of their region (year 4) and participates in it (years 7-8), he/she distinguishes between environmental and regional varieties of language.
History	The student collects information on the history of their family, collects family memorabilia and talks about it; he/she learns the history and traditions of their area and the people who are particularly distinguished in it; knows local monuments and describes their history; links the most important monuments and symbols of Polish culture with the relevant regions; recognizes the characteristic features of Baroque culture, referring to examples of architecture and art in their own region; characterizes examples of the art of the Classicism period, including their own region.
Social studies	The student recognizes the social problems of their local community; finds and presents basic information about the region, events and figures from its history; presents the traditions and customs of the regional community; justifies the idea that different socio-cultural identities (regional, national/ethnic, state/civic, European) can be reconciled; presents the goals and forms of activities of non-governmental organizations active in the local community and region.
Natural history	The student recognizes the components of animate and inanimate nature in the immediate vicinity of the school; recognizes the main forms of surface formation in the immediate vicinity of the school and place of residence; recognizes rocks occurring in the vicinity of the place of residence; recognizes and names common organisms occurring in the immediate vicinity of the school; evaluates the landscape in terms of its beauty and the cultural and natural heritage of the 'small homeland'.
Geography	The student evaluates the landscape of the nearest school environment in terms of its beauty and the order and aesthetics of land use during classes carried out in the field, and proposes changes in its land use; indicates the location of their geographical region on the map of Poland; characterizes the natural environment of the region and defines its main features on the basis of thematic maps; recognizes rocks occurring in their own region; presents the main features of the demographic structure of the region's population and economy based on sophisticated statistical data and thematic maps; presents in any form (e.g. multimedia presentation, poster, film, photographic exhibition) the natural and cultural values of the region; designs a sightseeing tour of the region on the basis of sophisticated sources of information and, if possible, conducts

	it in the field; shows relationships between elements of the geographical environment based on field observations carried out in a selected place in the region; discusses the forms of cooperation between their own region and partner foreign regions; identifies the area identified with their own 'small homeland' as a symbolic space in the local dimension (e.g. a community-town, a village, a district of a big city or a local system with unspecified administrative boundaries); recognizes on the ground the main characteristic and decisive features of the attractiveness of the 'small homeland'; presents in any form (e.g. multimedia presentation, poster, film, photo exhibition) the attractiveness of the 'small homeland' as a place of residence and business activity based on information found in various sources; designs on the basis of their own field observations measures to preserve the values of the geographical (natural and cultural) environment and improve the living conditions of the local community; identifies with the 'small homeland' and feels co-responsible for shaping the spatial order and its development.
Plastic arts	The student knows the cultural heritage of the immediate surroundings, lists monuments and works of architecture (historical and contemporary); becomes acquainted with the works of artists within the 'small homeland'.
Music	The student performs basic steps, figures and dance arrangements of selected folk dances (especially from their own region); consciously listens to selected works of musical literature of folk songs in original and artistically developed form; defines the characteristic features of selected Polish folk dances including from their own region; gets to know examples of folk music, customs, and traditions of the region; is involved in creating the artistic culture of their school and the immediate environment.

Table 3. The layout of the teaching content in the field of regional education in the curricular concept of 2017. Source: Ordinance of the Minister of National Education.

In historical education, regional issues have been included in several places. The most important provision in the new core curriculum is the statement contained in the preamble to the subject of history, stressing the importance of learning about local and regional history as a basis for building respect for other people and the achievements of other nations. In conjunction with arousing the student's interest in his or her own past and family, this range of historical reflection on building a regional identity was properly located. As one may

understand it, a student should get to know both the history of his or her immediate vicinity and the region, in order to skilfully note elements of private, local and regional history in historical epochs, as well as combining them with the history of Poland, Europe and the world. Unfortunately, we do not find a proper development of this provision in the further core curriculum regarding history teaching. Local and regional history is not in the general requirements, and in the educational content it was essentially assigned only to the fourth grade of primary school. In one of the first history lessons, the student is to learn about the history, traditions and monuments of his or her area and the people especially deserving of attention, and above all local history. From the history of the region in the following years, the pupil will only learn examples of Baroque architecture and art as well as the period of Classicism. A partial explanation of why this happened can be found in the 'Conditions and manner of implementation' of the subject of history, because there it was explained how to understand the scope of regional history and its associated identity: first of all as a 'place of residence', which is the basis for learning about 'native history' and building ties with 'the home country'. In practice, therefore, the history of the region was reduced to local history in primary schools (and yet this is not the same thing) and this was significantly reduced during the implementation period. It is wrong that throughout the five-year period of history education, the plan is to learn about these issues only during the first lessons in year 4, when the pupils lack proper preparation and also, because of their development in this period – it will have to be very superficial. The drawback of such anchoring of regional education in the teaching of history is also its reduction above all to the level of knowledge and a complete failure to notice the potential of competences and education (especially when the education of patriotic attitudes is so emphasized) that it brings.

The authors of the core curriculum had decidedly different approaches to regional education in the field of knowledge about society, consistently introducing at the level of objectives, educational content and conditions and manner of implementation – the division into the local and regional community and in the same vein local and regional identity. From the provisions of the core curriculum, it also clearly shows how they distinguish between these two types of community, combining the local community with the municipality or city district, and the regional community with the county and

province. The aim of the subject is to educate the intended civic and communal attitudes, which should help in the acquisition of knowledge and skills concerning the subsequent environmental circles in which the pupil moves, from family and school, through the local and regional community, to national, state and European communities. The pupil is to realize the coexistence of various communities in which he or she simultaneously participates, and understand that different socio-cultural identities (regional, national/ethnic, state/civic, European) can be reconciled. In the case of social knowledge, the local and regional dimension is treated equally on the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The authors of this part of the core curriculum deliberately applied the concept of environmental circles in the content system to ensure a specific sequence in their implementation and emphasize the importance of 'local and regional identification', which in their opinion 'may result in more activities by students in these communities'.

Concept of 1999	Concept of 2017
Formation in the student a sense of their own regional identity which is the basis for personal involvement in the functioning of their own environment and authentic openness to other communities and cultures	General education Par. 2. strengthening the sense of individual, cultural, national, regional and ethnic identity
	General education Ptar 11. developing an attitude which is open to the world and other people
	Skills Par. 7. active participation in the cultural life of the school, the local environment and the country

Table 4. Record of the main regional education objective in the concepts of 1999 and 2017. Source: Ordinance of the Minister of National Education.

Therefore, it cannot be denied that regional education is present in the core curriculum for primary schools in 2017 and, although this term is not used explicitly, in practice its key issues are included there. Thus, although the ministry has fulfilled its promise that it will not introduce any major changes in this area, it will organize everything differently and change the emphasis. Indeed, this is the point of interpreting the guidelines for teaching about the region in the light of the new curriculum. Although all three elements of the main

objective of regional education were literally left alone, they have lost their connection and shared meaning because they have been separated and described in other subsections (see Table 4). The education of regional identity was included in the general strengthening of different dimensions of the student's identity, but only after individual, cultural and national identity, while shaping the attitude of openness towards representatives of other cultures (as it was written in the 1999 curriculum) was generalized as 'an open attitude towards the world and other people', while the commitment to one's own environment was limited to 'active participation in the cultural life of the local environment' and was included in the set of skills developed as part of general education. Which teachers, especially younger ones, will remember how the primary goal of regional education was formulated in its original intention or know that the current provisions of the curriculum should be read in this way?

Understanding the comprehensive idea of teaching about the region in the new curriculum will not help, unfortunately, the general lack of consistency in the application of numerous concepts related to this problem. Virtually every subject uses a different scope of understanding of the 'closest surroundings', 'region', 'local and regional culture' or 'regional identity'. These differences are most visible in the case of the term 'small homeland', which, for example, in art is – as one may guess – something intermediate between the immediate surroundings and the region, because all these concepts are applied in parallel, while in geography it is clearly defined that the area identified with the 'small homeland' is a symbolic space in the local dimension, e.g. a community-city, a village, a district of a big city. It would also be difficult to answer the question of how to understand, in the light of the provisions of this curriculum, the notion of regional identity and how it is located in relation to other categories of this kind (e.g. local or European identity). In some places, therefore, the authors have given up on the explanation of these nuances altogether and written in general terms 'one's own identity' or 'developing a sense of identity in themselves'. It is not a secret that the entire core curriculum from 2017 puts the main emphasis on getting to know 'national history', national traditions and Polish cultural heritage, building national identity and educating patriotic and civic attitudes. This has resulted in a specific way of understanding the regionalist idea by some teams editing this

document. The vision of regionalism in the new curriculum has practically reduced it to the local dimension and the local community, while the regional dimension has been reduced to merely its territorial context, instead of being applied to the associated regional community. These transformations have also had an effect on the teaching materials on regional education available to teachers on the market. Compared to previous curriculum reforms, we hardly see any new publications on teaching about the region.

## **5. Conclusion**

How the concept of teaching about the region has changed in Polish schools in the last twenty years is best illustrated by the example of a student from Poznań. After 1999, the student learned about his region, that is Wielkopolska, at all educational stages (from primary school, through junior high school, to upper secondary school). In classes in natural history and geography, he first learned about his natural environment, and then in history, he learned about the most important events and people from the past, in Polish – about different variations of the Wielkopolska dialect, in cultural studies – about cultural heritage, and in social studies – what the rights and obligations of local and regional self-government are. He arranged all his knowledge and skills at the end of each school year in the form of an interdisciplinary educational project during an educational lesson, thanks to which he was aware that although he was part of his region, it did not bother him at the same time being a member of the state and European community. Although he learned about the region in various subjects and with different teachers, it was done in the right order and in a way ensuring proper understanding of various areas of Wielkopolska's functioning. Since 2009, he has not had the opportunity to get to know his region as deeply at all stages of education, only selectively (in one stage more, in the other less). In primary school, the history teacher was the first to tell him where the region was located on the map and what characters were related to him, because this was best connected to him with other topics from history. Then, in natural history, the student from Poznań learned to recognize rocks in the closest environment, and in art and music – how to become actively involved in the cultural life of Wielkopolska. He learned about the varieties of the dialect of Wielkopolska in Polish only in junior high school, and then he had the opportunity to

learn about the history of monuments in the region. In secondary school, he learned to design various cultural and self-government activities, but only provided that he had chosen social studies as an A-level subject. None of these educational stages summarized nor arranged his knowledge of the region, because each teacher acted independently, primarily implementing ministerial guidelines. After the reform of 2017, the student from Poznań gets the most information about the history of Wielkopolska and its famous characters in the fourth grade of elementary school, then at the age of 10, then only in selected lessons from other subjects will he learn about the cultural heritage of the region, which will serve to strengthen his sense of national pride. The natural environment of Wielkopolska will certainly be known in detail, because in natural history and geography there will be many topics related to these issues. He only has the chance in year 8 (the last year of primary school) to learn the fact that his region is not only a part of the Polish state, but an important element of the European and world community. That is, if he remembers year 4 messages and if so, will he understand what it means in practice?

The lack of unambiguous declarations of the Ministry of National Education regarding the principles of teaching about the region in contemporary Polish schools, apart from organizational and methodological problems for teachers, may also cause the gradual marginalisation of regional school education, which in the face of the growing regional presence in the activities of cultural institutions, associations and self-government bodies, announces a completely new direction of reform: a taking over and implementation of educational functions in this regard to an increasing extent through non-school forms of regional education. Is this a good thing? In my opinion, this is not an optimal solution, although I appreciate the increasingly professional and attractive educational offer of the so-called cultural institutions. However, taking into account the voluntary access to this offer, and the resulting fact that a part of the inhabitants of a given region will never use it, I would opt for a comprehensive model in which obligatory teaching about the region takes place within school education, and its significant complement is extracurricular regional education, also taking place at the interface between the school and cultural institutions.

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BOOK REVIEWS

BÜCHERBEWERTUNGEN

LES CRITIQUES DE LIVRES



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## HISTORY EDUCATION AND (POST)COLONIALISM

Harry Haue

on Susanne Popp, Katja Gorbahn and Susanne Grindel  
(eds), *History Education and (Post)Colonialism*.  
*International Case Studies*. Peter Lang, 2019.

This anthology on colonialism discusses the reasons for its upcoming in different parts of the world as a fundamental contribution to the development of modern times, and the substantial impact the decolonization process has on the new modern era after World War II. In the introduction the editors make an overview of the content of the book, which has the following structure: Part 1: Two essays, Part 2: Three narratives, Part 3: Five debate contributions and Part 4: Three approaches.

The editors also present the fundamental problems in the study of colonialism and postcolonialism, and quote UN resolution 1514 from 1960: *All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development*. Consequently, one of the questions raised in education is to what extent actual history teaching in schools represents and communicates the items of colonization and decolonization as well in the former colonies and in the countries of colonizers. The process of globalization has in the last decades made this question urgently relevant and moreover inspired to formulate the question of culpability.

In the wake of decolonization and globalization, especially Europe and the US have experienced a migration movement, which inspire classes to reflect on questions of inequality, and the former subordinates right to travel to high developed countries. This challenge to the national history might lead to fundamental changes in syllabus and teaching, which prompt a focus more on global history and postcolonial studies. As the editors point out: *history educationalists need to take the issue of the 'decolonization of historical thinking' seriously as an important task facing their profession*.

It is not possible in this review to refer and comment all 13 contributions in detail. However, I will present a thematic discussion of the four parts.

In part 1 Jörg Fisch, professor of History, University of Zürich, Switzerland, discusses the concepts of colonization and colonialism. He presents and reflect on the conceptual development on from the Latin idea of '*colere* and *colonus*', in the late renaissance changed into 'colonialist and colonialism'. The last concept is 'aimed at making political, economic, cultural and other gains at the cost of his competitors and is often consolidated into colonial rule.' Whereas the *colonus* occupied contiguous territory, the colonialist thanks to his technological superiority conquered land distant from the colonizer's own country. The result was foreign rule, which required a new theoretical basis: Francisco de Vitoria postulated in 1539 that all peoples had the right to free settlement, trade and free colonization. Another theory was that the indigenous populations had the right to be fully sovereign. Above those two theories, raw power was to decide to what extent the one or the other should be respected, if any of them. When the national state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came into being in Europe and when ideas from the French Revolution gained impact in the Americas, independence was the answer. But this was not the end of colonialism which developed in the same period in the not yet unoccupied areas of Asia and Africa. Colonies became in the period from 1850 to 1914 part of European based empires divided between the big powers at the conference in Berlin in 1884-85. The process was called imperialism. World War I changed this development fundamentally, Germany lost all its colonies and the indigenous elite in the colonies began to question their subaltern status. After World War II the process of decolonization began, and the concept of anti-colonization gained momentum in the aforementioned UN declaration form 1960. As Fisch underlines, the postcolonial world was not synonymous with a just world. In 'Colonialism: Before and After' Jörg Fisch has written a well-structured presentation of the main lines of this complex phenomenon and the conceptual development. His article is an appropriate opening to the following chapters in the anthology.

Jacob Emmanuel Mabe, born and raised in Cameroon, now a permanent visiting scholar at the French Center of the Free University of Berlin, has written a chapter on: 'An African Discourse on Colonialism and Memory Work in Germany'. His aim is to

demonstrate the significance of the concept of colonialism in intellectual discourse of Africans and to show how the colonial question is discussed in Germany.

It was the intellectuals among the colonial peoples who formed the critical discourse against European colonial rule in Africa, which Mabe calls a 'ruthless territorial occupation'. The first materialization of this opposition to European rule was the formation of the 'Pan-African Movement' maybe inspired by the US-based initiative: 'Back to Africa Movement', which culminated in the founding of the Republic Liberia in 1879. On African soil, however in the interwar years a new concept was developed by especially Leopold Sédar Senghor, who was to become one of the most dominant voices among African intellectuals. He and his followers used the concept 'Negritude' and the aim was to create a philosophical platform for the promotion of the African consciousness by means of a literary current, a cultural theory and a political ideology. Mabe gives a short description of the reasons for the many barriers for the fulfilment of Senghor's program.

Mabe ends his article with a discussion of the German attitudes to its colonial past. When the decolonizing process took off after World War II, the Germans were mentally occupied with the Nazi-guilt complex, which in comparison to the regret of the brutal treatment of the Africans, was much more insistent. Nonetheless, Mabe indicates that researchers of the humanistic tradition in the two latest decades have 'presented some brilliant and value-neutral studies which do justice do (to) both European and, in part African epistemic interest. However, a true discipline of remembering which is intended to do justice to its ethics and its historical task can only be the product of egalitarian cooperation between African and European researchers.'

Florian Wagner, assistant professor in Erfurt, ends his chapter with a presentation of African writers in modern post-colonial studies. In competition with the USSR Western historians invited African writers to contribute to a comprehensive UNESCO publication on the development of colonialism. Wagner's aim is to underline that transnational historiography of colonization is not, as often has been thought, a modern phenomenon, but has been practiced by European historians over the last century. His main point is that although nationalism and colonialism went hand in hand, transnational cooperation in the colonial discourse has been

significant. It is an interesting contribution, which partly is a supplement to the chapter of Fisch according to use of concepts about the colonial development. It brings a strong argument for the existents of a theoretical cooperation between the European colonial masters, notwithstanding their competitive relations in other fields. This statement can give the history teacher a new didactical perspective, as Wagner emphasizes in his conclusion: 'Colonialism can provide a basis of teaching a veritable global history – a history that shows how globality can create inequality and how inequality can create globality.'

Elize van Eeden, professor at the South West University, South Africa, has written a chapter on: 'Reviewing South Africa's colonial historiography'. For more than 300 years South Africa has had shifting colonial positions, and consequently the black and colored people had to live as subalterns. The change of government in 1994 also gave historians in South Africa new possibilities, although the long colonial impact was difficult to overcome. For a deeper understanding of this post-colonial realities it is important to know African historiography in its African continental context. Elize van Eeden's research shows that the teaching in the different stages of colonialism plays a minor role in university teaching. Therefore, new research is needed, exploiting the oral traditions of the subaltern people, and relating the local and regional development to the global trends. As van Eeden points out: 'A critical, inclusive, comprehensive and diverse view of the historiography on Africa by an African is yet to be produced.' Van Eeden's contribution gives participant observers insight into especially South Africa's historiography and university teaching and provide a solid argument for the credibility of the former quotation.

In the third chapter on narratives, written by three Chinese historians: Shen Chencheng, Zhongjie Meng and Yuan Xiaqing: 'Is Synchronicity Possible? Narratives on a Global Event between the Perspectives of Colonist and Colony: The Example of the Boxer Movement (1898-1900)', the aim is to discuss the didactical option partly by including multi-perspectivity in teaching colonialism and multiple perspectives held by former colonies and colonizers, instead of one-sided national narratives, partly teaching changing perspectives, instead of holding a stationary standpoint. Another aim is to observe 'synchronicity of the non-synchronous' inspired by the thinking of the German philosopher Reinhard Koselleck. The

chapter starts with a short description of the Boxer War, which forms the basis for an analysis of the presentation of the war in textbooks produced in China and Germany, i.e. colony and colonizer. Then the authors provide an example to improve synchronicity in teaching colonialism, followed by didactic proposals.

The Boxer War ended when a coalition of European countries conquered the Chinese rebellions and all parties signed a treaty. Germany in particular demanded conditions which humiliated the Chinese. This treaty is of course important, however at the same time, one of the Boxer-rebels formulated an unofficial suggestion for another treaty, which had the same form and structure as the real treaty, however, the conditions war turned 180 degrees around, for example, it forbade all foreign trade in China. The two treaties were in intertextual correspondence and expressed the demands of the colonizer and the colonized. The question is whether the xenophobic Boxers in fact were influenced by western and modern factors or whether the imperialistic colonizers were affected by local impacts of China? The 'false' treaty was used as a document in the history examination in Shanghai in 2010, with the intention of giving the students an opportunity to think in a multi-perspective way, and to link the local Chinese development to a global connection. Nonetheless, the didactical approaches in history teaching in schools are far behind the academic state of the art. It is an interesting contribution to colonialism, but it is remarkable that the authors do not use the concept of historical thinking.

In the third part of the anthology, there are five contributions.

Raid Nasser, professor of Sociology, Fairleigh Dickinson University, discusses the formation of national identity in general and its relations to cosmopolitanism. The idea of a global citizenship conflicts with nationalism and the differentiations according to social, economic and ethnic divisions, and Kant is challenged by Fanon. Nasser's own research concerns the history textbooks in the three counties where the state has a decisive say in determining the content of those books and therefore it might have a decisive influence on the identity formation of the pupils, in this case from the year four to twelve. How much room is there for cosmopolitanism? This is a question which Nasser has thoroughly addressed in this chapter.

Kang Sun Joo, professor of Education, Gyeongin National University South Korea, discusses the problems with the focus on nation-building in the history teaching in former colonies and the

need for new 'conceptual frames as cultural mixing, selective adoption and appropriation.' She gives an interesting view on the conformity of western impact on Korean history education.

Markus Furrer, professor of History and History Didactics, teacher training college Luzern, examines post-colonial impact on history teaching in Switzerland after World War II. He has the opinion that we all live in a post-colonial world, including countries with no or only a minor role in colonial development. He emphasizes that there are 'two central functions of post-colonial theory with relevance to teaching: (1) Post-colonial approaches are raising awareness of the ongoing impact and powerful influence of colonial interpretive patterns in everyday life as well as in systems of knowledge. (2) In addition, they enable us to perceive more clearly the impact of neo-colonial economic and power structures.' He analyzes six Swiss textbooks and concludes that there is a need in this regard for teaching materials which enable students to understand and interpret the construction and formation process which eventually end with 'Europe and its others'.

Marianne Nagy, associate professor of History, Karoli Gáspár University, Budapest, has made an examination of history textbooks used in Hungary in 1948-1991 on the period between 1750 and 1914 when Hungary was under Austrian rule. This is an examination of Hungary's colonial status seen from a USSR- and communist-influenced point of view. In the communist period only one textbook was accepted, and in this book, Austria was perceived as a kind of colonial power which controlled Hungary for its own benefit. The communist party had the intention to present Habsburg rule in a negative light, with the wish to describe Hungary's relation to USSR as a positive contrast. Today the Orbán-led country uses the term colony in relation to the EU.

Terry Haydn, professor of Education, University of East Anglia, has made an explorative examination of how 'empire' is taught in English schools. His findings are somewhat surprising. In the history classes of the former leading colonizing country, most schools taught 'empire' as a topic, however with emphasis on the formative process of colonization and not 'the decline and fall'. Haydn has with this short study focused on an item which should be the target of more comprehensive research.

The last three chapters concern the teaching of colonialism in a post-colonial western world. Philipp Bernard, research assistant at

Augsburg University in Germany, discusses the perspectives in teaching post- against colonial theory and history from below. His basic assumption is that: 'No region on the earth can evade the consequences of colonialism', therefore, 'A post-colonial approach emphasizes the reciprocal creation of the colonized and the colonizers through processes of hybridization and transculturation.' The aim of teaching, in this case in the Bavarian school, is to achieve decolonization of knowledge. The author gives interesting reflections from his teaching which could be of inspiration in the schools both of colonized and colonizing countries.

Dennis Röder, teacher of History and English in Germany, writes about 'visual history' in relation to the visual representation of Africa and Africans during the age of imperialism. The invention of the KODAK camera in 1888 brought good and cheap pictures, which could be printed and studied world-wide. Soon those pictures could be used in education, and thereby history teaching got a new dimension, and a basis for critique of the white man's brutal treatment of the natives. These photos were used in the protests against Belgian policy in Congo. Röder emphasises that the precondition for the use of photos as teaching material is the need for some methodological insight both on behalf of the pupils and students. Moreover, it is important to select a diverse collection of photos so that all sides of life in the colonies are represented. Then it would be possible to make a 'step toward the visual emancipation and decolonization of Africans in German textbooks.'

Karl P. Benziger, professor of History, State University of New York, College at Fredonia, in the last chapter of the anthology has reflected on the interplay between the war in Vietnam as a neo-colonial enterprise and the fight for civil rights in the US. Benziger discusses different approaches to teaching those items in high school-classrooms. An interesting course was staged as a role play on the theme: *The American war in Vietnam*. The purpose of the exercise was 'to develop students' historical skills through formulating interpretations and analyses based on multiple perspectives and competing narratives in order to understand the intersection between United States foreign and domestic policy from a global perspective.'

The editorial team should be acknowledged for its initiative. The anthology could be perceived as a didactical patchwork which gives inspiration to new research in the subject matter as well as innovations in history didactics. The current migration movement

would prompt to include colonialism and post-colonialism in history teaching and moreover these aspects are part of any pupil's/student's everyday life.

## HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: WHAT IS IT AND HOW DO WE LEARN ABOUT IT?

Eleni Apostolidou  
on Anna Clark and Carla L. Peck (eds),  
*Contemplating Historical Consciousness: Notes from the Field*.  
Berghahn Books, 2018.

### 1. Introduction

*Contemplating historical consciousness: Notes from the Field*, edited by Anna Clark and Carla Peck revises the effort of Peter Seixas (2004: 4) in analyzing this very interesting concept which ‘implicates historiography, collective memory and history education’. Before proceeding to the structure and the contents of the volume it would be useful to suggest a definition of the concept. Seixas (2004: 10) suggests that of McDonald and Fausser: ‘the area in which collective memory, the writing of history, and other modes of shaping images of the past in the public merge’. It is exactly this merit of historical consciousness that makes it that attractive: it is inclusive of equally disciplinary and ‘lay’ modes of thinking. The latter was appreciated also by the contributors of the 2018 volume, Chapman, Green, and Seixas. Rösen himself in his 1987 article about history didactics in West Germany seeing historical consciousness as broader than history didactics, explains that: ‘the didactics of history now analyzes all the forms and the functions of historical knowledge and reasoning in daily, practical life’ (Rösen, 1987: 281).

In relation to the methodology of historical consciousness studies, Rösen in a 1993 article stated that ‘the proof of theory lies in amassing empirical evidence substantiating its theses’ (Rösen, 1993: 79). On the same lines, contributors of the 2004 volume like Wertsch, Létourneau and Moisan and Lee exemplified the contribution of empirical research in the theorizing of historical consciousness while Lorenz urged for comparative approaches (Seixas, 2004: 14). Thus, the tradition of qualitative empirical research is adopted also by the contributors of the 2018 volume; all the fifteen contributions relate to empirical research making use of an array of research methods, instruments and types of samples. McCully and Burton conducted qualitative research using a set of images referring

to the history of Ireland, and also interviewed students. Chapman used questionnaires for school students and trainee teachers including open questions, Van Nieuwenhuysse and Wils used written history exams, students essays and questionnaires also preferring qualitative approaches, van Boxtel conducted process studies among school students, Wanhalla and Green used oral history approaches, Peck paragraph writing in answer to an ‘open for self-definition’ question and interviews and Silverstein, interviews. The volume also includes research projects similar to the Rosenzweig and Thelen’s 1998 study, specifically Seixas’, Clark’s and Li’s. Finally, Lévesque and Létourneau ‘repeated’ the 2004 Létourneau and Moisan research methodology analyzing students’ narratives.

Clark and Peck distributed all the empirical wealth above in three sections: ‘Historical consciousness, curriculum and pedagogy’, ‘Historical consciousness within and beyond borders’, ‘Historical consciousness and cultural identity’. The distribution above is functional as education or pedagogy and identity constitute elements of historical consciousness. The second part ‘[...] within and beyond borders’ while it implies comparison between different countries and continents, proves to indicate a more intimate relationship of several peoples with their pasts: Canadians, Australians, Chinese.

Insisting on the structure of the volume and the content of the chapters, an editorial novelty was that the contributors responded to specific questions set by the editors. Reading the chapters through the lenses of the first two questions, ‘motives to conduct research in historical consciousness’ and contributors’ ‘conception of memory, history and historical consciousness’, I distinguished the following tendencies: research strategies that address mostly the cognitive part of historical consciousness, the articulation of methodologically valid historical narratives, and others that address existential and political orientation problems. I therefore display the several studies within the latter context which implies possible differences of the contributors in relation to memory. I must admit that despite the above attempted categorization, there are cases where one can only notice emphasis on different aspects of historical consciousness.

## **2. Combining Cognitive and Orientational Approaches**

The Dutch curriculum, as Boxtel described it, focuses ‘on the ability to apply – in a coherent way – historical thinking and reasoning skills

and a chronological frame of reference [...] and did not do much justice to Rüsen's ideas about the practical function of historical interpretations; how historical knowledge and understanding is used to understand the present and to orientate [...]’ (Boxtel, 2018: 62). Boxtel herself, at the beginning of her contribution, states that she does not approach historical consciousness as a cultural or historical phenomenon, but as an individual's understanding of the past and from a learning and teaching perspective (p. 61). She locates ‘collective memory’ in education, in students’ and teachers’ ideas about the past, and also in teachers’ and education specialists’ work in informal education and heritage places such as museums. Her earlier reference to the Dutch ‘dynamic heritage’ project (p. 63) exemplifies her attitude towards cultural heritage, the latter considered as a challenge for the students ‘to construct shared historical knowledge and acknowledge different past perspectives.’<sup>1</sup>

Van Nieuwenhuysse and Wils seem to have a different starting point: the contrast between the Belgian curriculum and teachers’ practices, and also, the transnational narrative templates located in Belgian students as opposed with ethnocentric narratives located in students’ speech internationally. More specifically, Belgian history teachers were found to be ‘past-oriented’ in contrast to the Belgian curriculum guidelines that define the development of historical consciousness as the principal goal of history education (p. 47). Belgian teachers were also found ‘fostering students’ substantive knowledge rather than their strategic knowledge, and hence their historical consciousness’ (p. 56). The latter tendency developed despite the prevailing education culture in Belgium of following student-centered teaching methods and focusing on skills. Van Nieuwenhuysse and Wils end by suggesting a historical consciousness definition that would emphasize the need for the students to differentiate the past from the present while, at the same time, using the past to orientate in the present and the future. In this way historicist and historical consciousness tendencies would be synthesized.

Chapman admits that whilst the main characteristics of historical consciousness – ‘interests’, ‘needs for orientation in time’ ‘functions’ could be appealing – the English national curriculum has traditionally focused on the past. Nevertheless, historical consciousness research in England referred to students’ orientation in time (p. 35). As Shemilt (2009: 194) put it, ‘the possession of a ‘big picture’ of the

human past is a necessary condition for the emergence of more sophisticated and socially productive manifestations of historical consciousness'. Additionally, Chapman refers to his own and his colleagues' research conducted in 1999, 2009 and 2016. This focuses on the past's usefulness for 16 to 19 years-old students, the purposes of school history teaching (trainee history teachers), finally on the modes of historical consciousness suggested by the English curricula. He concludes that historical consciousness research could be rewarding in terms of illuminating problems that did not surface in different research contexts. In relation to the cognition-orientation opposition he finds that the concept of historical consciousness provides at least two affordances: the first is that with the four different types of historical consciousness, one overcomes the tension between heritage-memory and the discipline of history. The second is that, different types of historical consciousness help us to have insight to additional meaning making processes (p. 35).

### **3. Traumatic, 'Spatial' and Identity Approaches**

Four contributions in this volume seem to originate in the same motives on the part of authors: Wanhalla's on 'Mother's darlings of the South Pacific', King's 'What is black historical consciousness', Silverstein's, about teaching the Holocaust, and Marker's contribution about the Coast Salish Territory. They all refer to processes of identity construction, which could count as processes to form historical consciousness, in cases where people experience trauma and marginalization.

'Mother's darlings of the South Pacific' was a 2010 – mainly oral – history project that referred to the Second World War experiences of indigenous women and their partners: American army officers that settled in South Pacific islands between 1942-1945. Wanhalla admits that the project above could belong to memory studies, though, 'uncelebrated, not public, wartime memories' (Leckie in Wanhalla, 2018: 92). Additionally, the project could be a historical consciousness project since it brought to the fore narratives (of indigenous women, American fathers, ex-soldiers, and their illegitimately born children, now grown-ups), that described a traumatic experience of social exclusion since American military authorities did not permit marriages between Americans and indigenous women, applying the US racial segregation laws extra-

territorially. It is also a social history study that reveals unpredicted World War Two and militarization consequences on individuals' personal lives.

King questions the way black history is being constructed at schools and generally in the public sphere, and consequently forms black historical consciousness and culture. He comments on the uses and misuses of history to construct identities as wished by the prevailing political voices. He focuses not on the space that black history occupies in history textbooks and curricula speaking in quantitative terms, but on the type of narrative developed in relation to the black people. It is a narrative of suffering and victimization, a disenfranchising one. Black people end up agentless while other 'narratives involving the institutional aspects of racism that allowed racism to prosper for many decades in the U.S.A. remain silenced' (p. 68). King reports what he calls 'racial neutrality' in public sphere that seems to create 'collective memory ghettos' (Traillie, 2007: 36) for black people and especially youth that form relevant historical consciousness narratives.

Silverstein, starting from her own personal motive, being a Holocaust survivor descendant and having attended Jewish studies in her high school years, conducted research situated in twelve Jewish day schools in New York and Melbourne. Interviewing teachers, she identified common teaching strategies in the form of narratives relating to the future; as she puts it, the main and common concern of all these teachers is to form strategies that will ensure 'that Holocaust education – a form of *lieux de memoire* – becomes public facing and acting'. There were teachers that perceived the maintenance of the Jewish traditions as an 'obligation' and others that transmitted to their students a chronologically developed narrative of the Holocaust ending with the founding of the state of Israel. Nevertheless, the prevailing Holocaust narrative bore caveats as regards a possible Holocaust's repetition even in the USA, a narrative that focused on the factors that made the Holocaust happen. Silverstein notes that the study brought to the fore 'how migrant groups, and post-genocide groups, negotiate their marginality, and we can thus grasp some of the pain – and some of the possibilities – imbricated in such marginality' (p. 183).

Marker, Green and Carretero introduce another perspective as regards historical consciousness, that of space or landscape. Marker, having himself served as a teacher in a Coast Salish high school,

focuses on what he describes as ‘indigenous historical consciousness’ referring to the people of Coast Salish. Its characteristics that differentiate it from the European or western historical consciousness are the following: it is articulated through space instead of time, it includes a metaphysical imperative, time is not developing in a linear but rather in a cyclical way, there is no distinction between categories of knowledge, instead a holistic view prevails. Land plays such an important role in the way Coast Salish people narrate their history that instead of referring to people’s history, we rather refer to the history of the land articulated by Coast Salish people. Apart from the space dimension I would count Marker’s contribution as another case of trauma and marginalization (like Wanhalla, King and Silverstein’s contributions): there were immense consequences that the colonization process had in the lives of indigenous people since the latter were alienated from their land and forced into another culture.

Green’s contribution bears no traumatic dimension like the previous ones: though it is similar to Marker’s contribution because of the space dimension, also to Wanhalla’s project because of the use of oral history. It also connects to Rosenzweig and Thelen’s work (the relevant contributions in this volume, too) because it focuses on family memories and their transgenerational transmission. The contribution is also interesting in relation to methodology and theory of historical consciousness. Green, like Chapman in the same volume, recognizes a certain affordance in the use of the historical consciousness concept as opposed to the collective memory one: it allows space for individual differentiation. Green also speaks in favour of the use of the term ‘consciousness’ as opposed to forms of memory that may not be conscious. Finally, she finds that the study of family memories refers to historical consciousness, since family memories are articulated in the form of narratives that connect past, present and future, also anchored to meaningful places as in the case of the Coast Salish people (p. 208).

Carretero, using as a starting point current politics, specifically the wish of Donald Trump to build a wall between the USA and Mexico to prevent prospective immigrants, notes the need for historization of current political problems to make sense of them, actually the creation of a narrative, the need to historize places, territories, displaying also the disputes about them (p. 79). The latter can be easily achieved by the use of historical maps that show political

developments in an area. He finally explains how disastrous for the people historical consciousness can be, in terms of the fact that Trump wishes to replace symbolic walls, differentiated identities, as perceived by Americans and Mexicans, with concrete ones, imposing in that way a monolithic way of thinking that won't allow individuals the possibility to discern other perspectives.

Levesque & Létourneau's, McCully & Barton's and Peck's contributions originate in the relationship between people's racial, ethnic, self-perception as opposed to school history. Levesque and Létourneau identify historical consciousness with narrative competence, thus their research question was 'how can French Canadian students create usable stories of their collective past?' (p. 143). They drew on previous Canadian studies in narrative competence conducted by Létourneau and Moisan and they themselves involved a sample of 635 students with an average age of 16 years and a half. Students were asked to narrate 'the history of the French presence in Canada'. Influenced by the Howson & Shemilt's (2011) work on students' 'big pictures' of the past, Levesque and Létourneau found that 'by the time students graduate from high school, they have acquired an important stockpile of historical information and little pictures of the collective past that vary from one region to another. Interestingly, these little pictures are part of "bigger" pictures organized in narrative templates such as *la survivance*' (Levesque & Létourneau, 2018: 155). Unfortunately, students' collective identification seems to affect the narrative template they finally select. Narrative templates despite being useful tools to organize the past have their limits too.

The latter remark about students' commitment to their communities take us to McCully's and Barton's research question about 'how history learned in school interacts with history encountered in families and the community'. In relation to motives, they both state that while being aware of several theoretical assumptions, it was school practice that contributed to the initiation of the specific research. Thus, they refer to Wertsch's idea of 'cultural tools', Bakhtin's understanding of 'internally persuasive dialogue', Halpern's suggestions about how to increase empathetic understanding, 'collective memory', 'imagined communities', 'historical consciousness' (p. 22-23). All the above helped them to make sense of the data and to meditate on the development of a history curriculum that would help Irish students to overcome their

country's traditional political and religious division. As in Levesque & Létourneau study above, the main findings of their research were the constraining role of the communities' narratives on students' historical thinking, and teachers' resistance as regards the teaching of the national controversial issues in history classes or their tendency to teach controversial topics in noncontroversial ways.

Likewise, Peck is interested in the connections between students' ethnic identities and their historical thinking about Canada's past (Peck, 2018: 216). Levesque & Létourneau, Peck and McCully & Barton seem to be interested in the relationship between school history and community narratives. Peck and Levesque & Létourneau, also share the experience of living in 'settler' states, where there are ethnic divisions and subdivisions, e.g. English speaking and French speaking Canadians, also a complex relationship with indigenous people, the 'First Nations'. Her argument and thinking context remind me of Epstein's 'old' research about 'students' racial identities and experiences and their historical perspective taking' (Epstein, 1997: 29). In the same way Peck is interested in how students 'situate' themselves in the country, from the racial and ethnic point of view, and how they therefore connect to Canadian history, also its school version. In the end, she notes how important it is for teachers to know how students think of themselves (their identity) in order not to make teaching choices that may 'exclude' students not feeling any relevance to history.

#### **4. Intimate Approaches**

Seixas, Clark and Li share similar historical consciousness and methodology approaches: they study the intimate, family and popular past of Canadians, Australians and Chinese people, as opposed to the formal, public past. Seixas referring to previous literature concerning the concept of progress in historical thinking exclaims, 'Who we are to judge, how people understand and use the past [...]' (p. 105). Thus, in 2006 he conducted a 3419 participants telephone survey with the title 'Canadians and their past' drawing on the Rosenzweig and Thelen one 'The presence of the past'. There were findings similar to the 1998 survey of Rosenzweig and Thelen.

Clark conducted the project 'Private lives, public history' in Australia, also inspired by the Rosenzweig and Thelen survey but following another methodology: she conducted small affinity group

interviews from a sample of 100 participants originating in five different Australian communities and exercised ‘situational analysis’ (Clarke, 2005). Her research question was: how would the Australians engage with the nation and how would they articulate their own historical consciousness in the context of powerful public historical narratives? The findings indicated that official narratives did not speak to Australians’ experiences while they engaged with more intimate parts of the past.

Li drawing on all the above, USA., Canadian and Australian studies, conducted a similar survey in China under the title ‘Chinese and their pasts’. The sample comprised the main Taiwan sample of 425 participants and additional subsamples originating in different Chinese cities. The method of data collection was interview surveys. Her findings were similar to the studies referred to above in the current section: places and sites of public history were highly evaluated in Chinese people’s learning about the past while there was ‘a strong push towards personal, family and local history’ (p. 138).

## **5. Can We Discern Periods in Historical Consciousness?**

Rüsen (1987: 281) saw in the turn of history education to historical consciousness in the 1970s’, the realization on the part of historians and history educators that if history were to remain in the curriculum, it should also serve extra disciplinary criteria. In Ahonen’s (2004) words ‘The progressive pedagogy of the 20th century required personal and social relevance from history. Thus, in addition to their pursuit of “literacy”, Americans have traditionally expected ethical and citizenship education from history’.

As for the 2004 volume about historical consciousness, Ahonen also notices that ‘the organization [of the chapters] reflects well the underlying idea – that people’s relation to the past is not only a matter of formal education but a broad social phenomenon’ (Ahonen, 2004: 3). The same is noted by Clark & Peck in the introduction of the 2018 volume (p. 2): ‘Taken together, this corpus of work into history-making, from the most powerful public narrative to the most intimate memoir, has come to be defined as “historical culture”’. On the other hand, according to Nordgen (2016: 481), ‘historical consciousness guides the use of history and is influenced by historical culture’. In a way historical culture facilitates historical

consciousness, especially as the latter is seen as ‘uses of the past’ (Lévesque in Clark & Peck, 2018: 2).

In other words, and as Chapman and Green have also noted in this volume, historical consciousness was conceived to be something ‘more than historical literacy’ (Ahonen, 2005: 697). Despite the fact that Rüsen differentiated between disciplinary and non-disciplinary uses of the past, and even though Lee (in Clark & Peck, 2018: 4) noted that ‘Indeed, people may hold different types of historical consciousness in tension simultaneously’, one can note on the 2004 volume a tendency on the part of the authors to display their own stance as regards the dilemma historiography-memory. Thus, we have the dialogue among Simon, Lee, Rüsen and Seixas about historical consciousness and its relation with narrative and memory (Den Heyer, 2004).

In this volume, the focus rests on the different uses of the past, cognitive, political, intimate, while new dimensions occur as the ‘spatial’ one. The sections ‘Historical consciousness within and beyond borders’ and ‘Historical consciousness and cultural identity’ are indicative of the latter tendency. I would suggest that the contributors to this volume are immersed in different possibilities of making sense of the past, possibilities enabled by historical consciousness, while the contributors of the 2004 volume are more hesitant and yet focused in defining the concept, thus the references in memory’s relationship with historical consciousness and the discipline of history.

As for the ‘third period’ of historical consciousness, it may not have happened yet according to both Ahonen and Grever. Ahonen ends his 2005 review saying that ‘The culture of history is a strong shaper of people’s historical experience and consciousness: the structure and meaning-attribution in the culture deserve a co-ordinated study’. Grever instead refers to ‘the expanding field of virtual popular historical culture with huge audiences: video games, augmented reality, selfies, instagrams, and YouTube vloggers. These new media stimulate what Jerome de Groot calls historioglossia: a multiplicity of hybrid discourses accruing around a single historical person or event, with overlapping genres all of which might be simultaneously in operation’ (p. 228). Nordgen, when referring to ‘culture’, means the different ways and environments in which one comes in touch with the past. He therefore refers to Rosenzweig and Thelen’s research about the family experience. The latter more

intimate relationship with the past is materialized in three different contributions of this volume (Seixas, Clark and Li). Grever's reference to the means that nowadays allow contact with the past, and mediate it, the new technologies, would need another volume to discuss.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eur.nl/en/eshcc/research/centre-historical-culture/research-programs-and-projects/nwo-program-heritage-education-1> (15.06.2019).

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## TEXTBOOKS AS PROPAGANDA

Barnabas Vajda

on Joanna Wojdon, *Textbooks as Propaganda: Poland under Communist Rule: 1944-1989*. Routledge, 2018.

How did a Communist political system, the Polish one, deal with primary school textbooks? How did it try to influence teaching and learning through Marxist political messages? How did it deliberately distort the content of all school textbooks in order to make an impact on the minds and thinking of future generations? Joanna Wojdon's *Textbooks as Propaganda. Poland under Communist Rule, 1944-1989* gives us a thorough and detailed explanation which goes well beyond Poland's historical experience. Even if her starting point is that 'schools were supposed to install communist ideology and a positive attitude toward the Soviet Union' (p. 140), in fact, I am convinced that the lessons we can learn from this book stretch far beyond the post-Communist countries.

Certainly, we have already known many things. In fact, there is no need to prove that communist regimes wanted schools to indoctrinate young people even from the very first grades. And Joanna Wojdon's book gives us a substantial amount of proof that neither the Polish nor other Eastern European communist regimes even tried to hide their intentions. On the contrary, they openly declared their ideological goals. She rightly touches upon a general rule as an overall context for communist textbooks: "The term "doing a textbook" was coined to characterize the flow of many lessons', i.e. to follow the book step by step, and she reaches an extremely important conclusion that 'textbooks, not curricula, were what teachers and pupils actually "did"' (p. 1).

It has also long been known that Eastern European communist school systems used to have a significant amount of teaching content in textbooks inserted purely for political reasons. Anybody with just the slightest experience from those pre-1989 years could remember the achievements of the Soviet natural sciences and especially space research, the presentation of workers' achievements of those times – and not only in history textbooks! And this is one of the features that places Joanna Wojdon's book on the top of our bookshelves, i.e. 'She explores the ways in which propaganda was incorporated into each

school subject, including mathematics, science, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, history, Polish language instructions, foreign language instructions, art education, music, civic education, defense training, physical education, and practical technical training.' (p. i)

Joanna Wojdon has rightly chosen primary textbooks as the source and subject of her research since she reconstructs the universal message of the communist regime aimed at 'the youngest citizens' who as the youngest readers are vulnerable and 'therefore more susceptible to propaganda messages' (p. 2). The author who is an Associate Professor of History at the University of Wrocław, Poland, and who follows in the steps of her earlier book *The World of Reading Primers: The Image of Reality in Reading Instruction Textbooks of the Soviet Bloc* (2015), nicely explores the most significant ideological strategy of the times, the all-present and omnipotent workers' perspective which used to be the foundation of mass-oriented communist indoctrination. This one-sided world view, where the imaginative 'worker' was the alpha and the omega of all arguments, produced for instance 'in the history of the Roman Empire the reason for its collapse was reduced to, the characteristics of its social classes and the rebellions of its slaves' (p. 111).

Since Joanna Wojdon has researched almost all Polish textbooks of the selected time period (from 1944 to 1989), we can be curious to know if there was a special ideological stress in history textbooks? There certainly was. I regard as extremely fascinating how the author explores the great variety of distortions and biases in the books surveyed. Completely distorted topics such as 'the imperialist First World War' (p. 111) and the fact that WW I was dealt with from the universal perspective of the constant struggle of the working class rather than from the Polish national(ist) view, perfectly fits into a general pattern typical of most Eastern European communist textbooks. It is no surprise that in these textbooks, often written from the Soviet point of view (p. 118), little attention was paid to Polish national(istic) ideology (p. 114). More precisely, the nationalist layer in the textbooks was intentionally selective. One only needs to look at the fact that while on the one hand the Polish textbook omitted any trends of Russification, on the other hand they massively stress Germanization. But the most interesting discovery by Joanna Wojdon is the constant appearance of pictures of the enemy in communist Poland. It was 'the Christian church as general, and

Jesuits in particular, as exploiters of the workers' society' and as stubborn representatives of 'retrograde conservatism' (p. 115).

To measure the quality of propaganda is not an easy task, and to research the specific means and methods of propaganda in school textbooks is a huge scientific challenge. Many propaganda tricks are hidden in the language. Selective language (and branding) for national affiliation of some historical personalities was typical. It concerned for instance Charles Darwin as a 'famous English biologist', Dmitri Mendeleev as a 'great Russian chemist', and Wilhelm C. Roentgen who was left without a nationality (p. 117).

It is even more difficult to spot and identify latent language structures, i.e. deliberate omissions, or as I call them, the 'structures of silence'. Let us be no naive, language tricks happened on purpose, deliberately and in a systematic way (p. 140). In Polish textbooks researched by Joanna Wojdon there are many well-known omissions, such as the system of Gulags or the Katyn massacre, eastern borders of Poland, as well as dozens of other 'sensitive' issues. As the author puts it: 'The textbooks' narratives [...] did leave out certain historical facts, figures, processes and phenomena' (p. 108). The same tendency to deliberate omission is true for the imagological apparatus. As a result one would rarely see church buildings as illustrations in many Eastern European textbooks. And I think that all these 'structures of silence' contribute to the general amnesia and harmful silence about social and historical problems.

Probably the greatest challenge for any researcher identifying the ideological burden in a history textbook is of a semiotic character, as the author puts it, 'propaganda motives, topics and techniques intertwined in the text' (p. 119). In other words, spotting covert messages, and especially those which are hidden not in the text but in the didactical apparatus (questions, tasks, photo captions, etc.) of the textbooks, that make both descriptive text and didactical apparatus almost cognitively indigestible. In this field Joanna Wojdon rightly states that in methodological terms, Polish communist 'textbooks made clear judgements on everything from the past, and left children with no doubts or ambiguity' (p. 109). It may sound weird but it is my own experience that the Marxist ideological burden was palpable in the text, nevertheless it is very, very difficult to prove it scientifically. And yet, it was a pre-calculated effect which contradicted the true nature of history as a science because for professional history 'either – or' situations, disquieting questions and

constant doubts are fundamental. What can we say about a school textbook which entirely switches off critical thinking or multiperspectivity over people and their deeds in the past, and compels a one-sided worldview? No contradictory opinions were allowed (p. 143) in order to change societal opinion *en masse*, and in order to attempt to change cognitive structures from where divergent thinking is excluded (p. 143).

Since the time period selected by Joanna Wojdon is the era of the Cold War, it is worth asking how did these textbooks handle the superpower rivalry? To what extent did Polish communist textbooks present anti-Western orientation or indoctrination? What about anti-Americanism? As the author states, 'The world as presented in geography textbooks was thus bipolar, black and white. It was an arena of battle between capitalism and socialism' (p. 78), and there is no doubt that ridiculous comparisons between the USA and the USSR were present: 'What monstrous amounts of pollution New York, Chicago and Los Angeles must produce each year!' versus 'On the wide and clean streets of Moscow there is much traffic at all hours of the day' (p. 76). And this leads us to a contemporary question regarding current East-West cultural tensions. Was the Communist ideology in the textbooks intentionally anti-Western? If it was, has it contributed to the tensions that can be observed between current Western and Eastern Europe?

Joanna Wojdon's book is a very valuable contribution to general and international textbook research, reaching well beyond the Polish experience. In fact, she gives us a clear list of typology of the specific means of ideological indoctrination: Marxism, socialism, enemies of the system, presentist interpretations, politechnization, etc. (These are Joanna Wojdon's expressions from pages 109-110.) I would be curious to know if these are common Eastern European patterns? There are surely subtle similarities that strongly offer themselves for international comparative textbook research. There is evidently much to offer for Eastern European readers, especially for those who are engaged in comparative analysis of history textbooks. Giving just one example: On the level of phraseology, for instance, in Poland the abbreviations 'Before Christ' and 'Anno Domini' were replaced with 'before our era' and 'of our era'. The same kind of de-Christianized terminology in communist Czechoslovakia used 'before' and 'after our time'. Joanna Wojdon's typology is surely a useful 'toolbox' for coming-soon textbook researchers. Clearly the author is well aware of

many parallels with school textbooks from the GDR (p. 72, 143), and less of those textbooks research involving Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady & Alan Stoskopf (2017), Milan Olejník (2017), Karina Korostelina (2009), Ibolya Nagy Szamborovszkyné (2013a, 2013b) and others, who have produced very valuable books and papers on textbook propaganda in the Soviet Union and its political orbit.

Joanna Wojdon's book ends with a short and poignant Conclusion (p. 140-148) in which she raises one of the most neglected section of textbook research, i.e. 'the question of the effectiveness of textbook propaganda is most problematic' (p. 145). For many pupils textbooks are 'boring'; formal schooling is not omnipotent; and education has never been only limited to schools. What's more, we know that quite a lot of contemporary teachers did refuse to follow senseless 'ideological rules' (p. 147), and this kind of disobedience has had a rather strong impact on many pupils – as it is shown in some rare interview based research materials. If one considers the deep and general social apathy in Soviet bloc countries in the 1970s and 1980s (p. 145) (definitively in Czechoslovakia and Hungary), the failure of overwhelming indoctrination at schools seems to be quite clear.

There might be no doubt that the communist school textbook system, with its no-choice and competition-free textbook regime, all around Eastern Europe, was an integral part of a carefully designed social engineering system. Similar propaganda content and similar patterns 'can be observed in other countries of the Soviet Bloc' (p. 143) which leads us to a very contemporary problem: How should we consider those European countries where the state is the major (sometimes exclusive) sponsor of school textbooks; where there is a limited (if not entirely closed) textbook market; and where the teachers' choice is limited to the one and only available textbook? And I think Joanna Wojdon knows this exactly. For in places she winks at us when she writes that 'school history is notorious for being used as a tool of indoctrination, not only in Poland and not only under Communism' (p. 108).

At least one extremely illuminating message of Joanna Wojdon's book is clear: Democratic school systems have to maintain the power of schools (in fact, teachers) to choose their textbooks because this is the only real and significant professional force in and around schools that can compensate for any ideological push that may occur from time to time.

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ABSTRACTS  
ZUSSAMENFASSUNGEN  
RÉSUMÉS

**Terry Haydn**

Changing ideas about the role of historical thinking in school history:  
A view from England

*The paper analyses recent discourse in England about the aims and purposes of school history, and changes in ideas about the part that 'historical thinking' might play in the teaching of history in schools. The paper uses Stephen J. Ball's (1990) theoretical framework of 'contexts of influence', together with discourse and content analysis, to consider the perspectives of politicians and educationalists on these matters. Analysis of public discourse and curriculum documentation on the aims and purposes of school history, and in particular, scrutiny of the role of values and dispositions in school history, reveal significant differences and changing views about what history education in schools might entail in terms of aims and outcomes. The paper raises important questions about the role that substantive historical knowledge, disciplinary understanding, and the cultivation of particular values and dispositions play in the teaching of history in schools. The focus of the study is on England, but the issues raised are relevant to many other countries.*

*Der Beitrag analysiert den jüngsten Diskurs in England über die Ziele und Zwecke der Schulgeschichte und die Veränderungen in den Vorstellungen darüber, welche Rolle 'historisches Denken' im Geschichtsunterricht an Schulen spielen könnte. Der Artikel orientiert sich am theoretischen Rahmen von Stephen J. Ball (1990) 'Contexts of influence' zusammen mit Diskurs- und Inhaltsanalyse, um die Perspektiven von Politikern und Pädagogen zu diesen Themen zu untersuchen. Die Analyse des öffentlichen Diskurses und der Lehrplandokumentation über die Ziele und Zwecke der Schulgeschichte, insbesondere die Untersuchung der Rolle von Werten und Dispositionen in der Schulgeschichte, zeigt signifikante Unterschiede und verändert die Sichtweise darauf, was Geschichtsunterricht in Schulen in Bezug auf Ziele und Ergebnisse bedeuten könnte. Der Beitrag wirft wichtige Fragen auf, welche Rolle substantielles historisches Wissen, disziplinäres Verständnis und die Pflege bestimmter Werte und Dispositionen im Geschichtsunterricht an Schulen spielen. Der Schwerpunkt der Studie liegt auf England, aber die aufgeworfenen Fragen sind für viele andere Länder relevant.*

*L'article analyse le discours récent en Angleterre sur les buts et objectifs de l'enseignement de l'histoire dans l'école et les changements du rôle que la 'réflexion historique' pourrait jouer dans cet enseignement. L'article emploie le cadre théorique de Stephen J. Ball (1990) sur les 'contextes d'influence', ainsi que l'analyse du discours et du contenu, afin d'examiner les perspectives des politiciens et des pédagogues sur ces questions. L'analyse du discours public et de la documentation des programmes scolaires sur les buts et objectifs de l'histoire dans l'école, et en particulier l'examen du rôle des valeurs et des dispositions de l'histoire dans l'école, révèle des différences significatives et des points de vue nouveaux sur ce que l'enseignement de l'histoire peut impliquer en termes de buts et de résultats. Le texte soulève d'importantes questions sur le rôle que jouent les connaissances historiques substantielles, la compréhension disciplinaire et la*

*culture de valeurs et de dispositions particulières dans l'enseignement de l'histoire dans l'école. L'article se concentre sur l'Angleterre, mais les questions soulevées sont pertinentes pour de nombreux autres pays.*

### **Christian Heuer**

'Does the teacher matter?' Questions about the unknown perspectives from German-language history didactics

*During the last few years, the teacher has gained attention as a professional actor within history didactics. Numerous studies have attempted to model teachers' 'professional competence' and validate it empirically because that which may always have been known can now apparently also be confirmed empirically: namely, that everything depends on the teacher. The teacher matters when it comes to effectively teaching and successfully learning history. Against this background, the 'science of historical learning' also focuses more on history teachers, their subjective theories and epistemological convictions, their professional knowledge, and their teaching of history with the aim of describing what it takes to teach history effectively.*

*In den letzten Jahren ist die Lehrperson als professionell Handelnde auch innerhalb der geschichtsdidaktischen Forschungen in das Zentrum der Aufmerksamkeit gerückt worden. In zahlreichen Studien wurde versucht, die 'professionelle Kompetenz' von Lehrpersonen zu modellieren und empirisch zu erfassen. Denn, was man jahrelang irgendwie wusste, lässt sich nun empirisch bestätigen: auf die Lehrperson kommt es an. Unterrichtsqualität, Berufserfolg der Lehrpersonen wie auch Lernmotivationen und Lernergebnisse der Schülerschaft hängen damit unmittelbar zusammen. Auch die Geschichtsdidaktik als 'Wissenschaft vom historischen Lernen' beschäftigt sich vor diesem Hintergrund konzentrierter mit der Geschichtslehrperson, ihren subjektiven Theorien und epistemologischen Überzeugungen, ihrem professionellen Wissen und ihrem geschichtsunterrichtlichen Handeln, um die zentrale Frage zu beantworten, was es braucht, um Geschichte effektiv und gut zu unterrichten.*

*Au cours des dernières années, l'enseignant s'est fait remarquer en tant qu'acteur professionnel de la didactique de l'histoire. De nombreuses études ont tenté de modéliser la 'compétence professionnelle' des enseignants et de la valider empiriquement parce que ce qui a toujours été connu peut maintenant apparemment être confirmé empiriquement, à savoir que tout dépend de l'enseignant. L'enseignant est important lorsqu'il s'agit d'enseigner efficacement et d'apprendre l'histoire avec succès. Dans ce contexte, la 'science de l'apprentissage de l'histoire' se concentre aussi davantage sur les professeurs d'histoire, leurs théories subjectives et leurs convictions épistémologiques, leurs connaissances professionnelles et leur enseignement de l'histoire dans le but de décrire ce qu'il faut pour enseigner l'histoire efficacement.*

### **Csaba Jancsák, Eszter Szőnyi and Ágnes Képiró**

The impact of video testimonies in Holocaust education in Hungary

*This paper reports on a research study conducted in the spring of 2018 in Hungary, on the impact of the use of video testimonies of Holocaust survivors in formal history education. The question the authors aim to answer is how using testimonies in history lessons affects students'*

*learning and attitudes, as well as skills, competences and social values – in comparison to the more traditional, textbook-driven history lessons. Results of the research show that testimony-based history lessons have a strong impact on student empathy skills, promoting affective learning through the connection of students to the stories or the survivors; they facilitate learning and better understanding of the event; they engage students in topics which the traditional lesson does not; and they satisfy the needs of students for visual elements in the classroom.*

*In diesem Beitrag wird über die Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung berichtet, die im Frühling 2018 in Ungarn durchgeführt wurde. Die Untersuchung zielte darauf ab, zu erforschen, wie im Geschichtsunterricht Ausschnitte aus Video-Interviews eingesetzt werden können, die man mit Holocaust-Überlebenden geführt hat. Die Video-Interviews sprechen die Rezeptions-Gewohnheiten der 'digitalen Generation' an: Die Schülerinnen und Schüler werden auf eine solche Art und Weise in die Oral History einbezogen, wozu das gedruckte Medium der Lehrwerke nicht fähig ist. Die Verfasser suchen eine Antwort auf die Frage, wie die Erzählungen von Holocaust-Opfern die Attitüden der Lernenden beeinflussen, bzw. welche Wirkungen auf das Denken der Schülerinnen und Schüler nachzuweisen sind, im Kontrast zum herkömmlichen Unterricht, in dem die Lehrwerke im Mittelpunkt stehen. Es wird erschlossen, was für einen Einfluss die Interviews auf die Empathie-Bereitschaft der Lernenden ausüben, und ob die Video-Zeugenschaften das Geschichtslernen und die Herausbildung des historischen Denkens fördern.*

*L'article rend compte d'une recherche menée au printemps 2018 en Hongrie. La recherche a visé à examiner l'utilisation des éléments de vidéo-témoignages enregistrés avec les survivants d'holocauste dans le cadre de l'enseignement de l'histoire destiné aux élèves de secondaire. Les vidéo-interviews visent l'aptitude de réception visuelle de la génération digitale en introduisant les élèves dans l'oral history, qui a un impact sur eux que la présentation des sources imprimées des manuels d'histoire ne peut pas assurer. Les auteurs cherchent à répondre aux questions suivantes: comment les propos tenus par les victimes de l'holocauste influencent-ils les attitudes des élèves, quels sont les impacts révélés sur les considérations des élèves par rapport à ceux révélés dans les cours d'histoire traditionnels, basés sur l'enseignement du manuel d'histoire, et quels sont les impacts révélés sur leur compétence empathique. Enfin, les auteurs cherchent à comprendre si les vidéo-témoignages soutiennent l'apprentissage de l'histoire et le développement de la réflexion historique.*

### **Danuta Konieczka-Śliwińska**

Concepts for teaching about regions in Polish schools at the beginning of the 21st century in the light of curricula

*In the modern world, teaching about the region has gained particular significance. We understand more and more about how important it is to shape a sense of one's own regional identity, providing the basis for engaging in active involvement in its environment and for an authentic opening up to other communities and cultures. There is no doubt that effective and universal satisfaction of this need is possible primarily within the framework of regional school education. This text presents a changing vision of teaching about the region in the Polish education system, implemented at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, indicating the strengths and weaknesses of further solutions.*

*In der modernen Welt hat das Vermitteln von Kenntnissen über die Region eine besondere Bedeutung erlangt. Wir verstehen immer mehr, wie wichtig es ist, ein Gefühl für die eigene regionale Identität zu entwickeln, das die Grundlage für ein aktives Engagement im unmittelbaren Umfeld und für eine authentische Öffnung gegenüber anderen Gemeinschaften und Kulturen bildet. Es besteht kein Zweifel daran, dass eine effektive und universelle Befriedigung dieses Bedürfnisses vor allem im Rahmen der regionalen Schulbildung möglich ist. Dieser Text stellt eine sich ändernde Sichtweise des Unterrichts über die Region im polnischen Bildungssystem dar, die zu Beginn des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts umgesetzt wurde und die Stärken und Schwächen weiterer Lösungen aufzeigt.*

*Dans le monde moderne, l'enseignement sur la région a pris une importance particulière. Nous comprenons de mieux en mieux à quel point il est important de se forger une identité régionale propre, ce qui permet de s'engager activement dans son environnement et de s'ouvrir authentiquement aux autres communautés et cultures. Il ne fait aucun doute que la satisfaction réelle et totale de ce besoin est possible principalement dans le cadre de l'éducation scolaire régionale. Ce texte présente une vision nouvelle de l'enseignement sur la région dans le système éducatif polonais, mise en œuvre au tournant des XXe et XXIe siècles, indiquant les points forts et les points faibles des solutions ultérieures.*

Georg Marschnig

### **Language matters: The hidden curriculum of historical thinking as a challenge in teacher training**

*Language is the epistemic basis of history. Without language, history cannot be thought, written or learnt. Consequently, language plays a major role in historical learning. However, German history didactics has not concentrated a lot on linguistic processes of historical thinking. This article summarizes the recently growing debate about the link between language education and historical learning. In a further step, an empirical study is presented, which was dedicated to the connection between textual competence and history learning. As a conclusion, the program of the bachelor's course 'History and Language' at the University of Graz, where future teachers deal with the topic, is presented.*

*Die Sprache ist die epistemische Grundlage der Geschichte. Ohne Sprache kann Geschichte nicht gedacht, geschrieben oder gelernt werden. Folglich spielt die Sprache eine wichtige Rolle beim historischen Lernen. Die deutsche Geschichtsdidaktik hat sich jedoch nicht sehr auf linguistische Prozesse des historischen Denkens konzentriert. Dieser Artikel fasst die kürzlich wachsende Debatte über den Zusammenhang zwischen Sprachunterricht und historischem Lernen zusammen. In einem weiteren Schritt wird eine empirische Studie vorgestellt, die sich mit der Verbindung von Textkompetenz und Geschichtslernen befasst. Zum Abschluss wird das Programm der Lehrveranstaltung 'Geschichte und Sprache' an der Universität Graz vorgestellt, in dem sich zukünftige Lehrkräfte mit dem Thema befassen.*

*La langue est la base épistémique de l'histoire. Sans compétences linguistiques, elle ne peut être pensée, écrite ou apprise. Par conséquent, la langue joue un rôle important dans le processus d'apprentissage historique. Cependant, la didactique historique de la zone germanophone ne*

*s'est guère concentrée sur les processus linguistiques influençant les pensées historiques. Cet article résume le débat récent sur la relation entre l'enseignement linguistique et l'apprentissage historique. En outre, une étude empirique sera présentée, ayant pour objectif de montrer le lien entre la compétence textuelle et l'apprentissage historique. Pour conclure, le programme du cours universitaire de Graz 'Histoire et langue' sera détaillé, dans lequel les futures enseignantes et futur enseignants étudieront ce sujet important.*

### **Maria Mavormmati**

#### **Enhancing historical film literacy: A practical framework and findings from an undergraduate classroom**

*Film is often used to teach history in primary and secondary education, because it is believed that it can provide a representation of past events through a narrative form that is easier to comprehend than that provided by academic or school history. Apart from the extensive use of documentary film, the most common uses of mainstream films in the history classroom aim at distinguishing an historical fact from its cinematic representation or at allowing students to dive deep into the atmosphere of the depicted era and thus develop a sense of historical empathy, without interrogating the film as a source or discussing its representational choices of the past. The approach designed and utilized in order to teach Contemporary American History to first year undergraduates aimed at developing the students' historical film literacy through the adoption of a method designed in accordance with the principles of film analysis: each film was discussed as a visual recreation of a specific historical theme or event, using tools of film theory and the film's form analysis. Data was collected in the form of students' reflective accounts. The analysis of the data shows that students reflected deeply on the evolving nature of history in addition to developing certain skills of historical thinking.*

*Der Film wird oft im Geschichtsunterricht in der Grund- und Sekundarschulbildung verwendet, weil man glaubt, dass er eine Darstellung vergangener Ereignisse in einer narrativen Form liefern kann, die leichter zu verstehen ist, als die akademisch oder schulisch vermittelte Geschichte. Abgesehen von der umfangreichen Nutzung des Dokumentarfilms zielen die gebräuchlichsten Anwendungen von Mainstream-Filmen im Geschichtsunterricht darauf ab, eine historische Tatsache von ihrer filmischen Darstellung zu unterscheiden oder den Schülerinnen und Schülern zu ermöglichen, tief in die Atmosphäre der dargestellten Epoche einzutauchen und so ein Gefühl des historischen Mitgefühls zu entwickeln, ohne den Film als Quelle zu hinterfragen oder seine Repräsentation der Vergangenheit zu diskutieren. Der Ansatz, der entwickelt und angewendet wurde, um die zeitgenössische Amerikanische Geschichte den Studierenden des ersten Studienjahres zu vermitteln, zielte darauf ab, die historische Filmkompetenz der Studierenden durch die Anwendung einer Methode zu entwickeln, die in Übereinstimmung mit den Prinzipien der Filmanalyse entwickelt wurde: Jeder Film wurde als visuelle Nachbildung eines bestimmten historischen Themas oder Ereignisses diskutiert, wobei Werkzeuge der Filmtheorie und der Formanalyse des Films verwendet wurden. Die Daten wurden in Form von reflexiven Darstellungen der Studierenden erhoben. Die Analyse der Daten zeigt, dass die Studierenden tief über die sich entwickelnde Natur der Geschichte nachdenken und darüber hinaus bestimmte Fähigkeiten des historischen Denkens entwickeln.*

*Le film est souvent utilisé pour l'apprentissage de l'histoire dans l'enseignement primaire et secondaire, car il est admis qu'il peut assurer une représentation des événements passés avec une forme narrative plus facile à appréhender que celle employée par l'histoire universitaire ou scolaire. Indépendamment de l'utilisation intensive du film documentaire, les utilisations les plus courantes des films grand public dans les cours d'histoire ont pour but de distinguer un fait historique de sa représentation cinématographique ou de permettre aux étudiants de se plonger de manière approfondie dans l'atmosphère de l'époque décrite et ainsi développer un esprit d'empathie historique, sans examiner le film en tant que source ni discuter ses choix de représentation du passé. L'approche conçue et utilisée pour enseigner l'histoire contemporaine de l'Amérique à des étudiants de 1ère année avait pour but de développer la culture cinématographique historique des étudiants via l'adoption d'une méthode conçue conformément aux principes de l'analyse filmique: chaque film était abordé en tant que reconstitution visuelle d'un thème ou d'un événement historique spécifique, avec les outils de la théorie du cinéma et l'analyse de forme du film. Des données ont été collectées sous la forme de témoignages de la réflexion des étudiants. L'analyse des données montre que les étudiants ont mené une réflexion approfondie sur le caractère évolutif de l'histoire en plus de développer certaines capacités de réflexion historique.*

### **Jukka Rantala and Najat Ouakrim-Soivio**

#### **Historical thinking skills: Finnish history teachers' contentment with their new curriculum**

*The new Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education emphasizes the acquisition of historical thinking skills. In this article, we present teachers' perceptions about the objectives, content descriptions and assessment criteria expressed in the curriculum. We focus our study on teachers' responses to the open-ended questions in an online survey carried out among history teachers in 2017. We studied the quantitative data by those respondents who provided written feedback to see if their responses differed from those who did not provide written feedback. Only one-third of the respondents provided responses to the open-ended questions and those who did gave relatively short but overall negative remarks. According to respondents' answers to the Likert scale statements, however, those who did not give written feedback had a more positive attitude towards the curriculum. In that respect, our study exposes Finnish teachers' relative contentment with it. The written feedback reveals that few respondents complained about teaching historical thinking skills as the key objective in the curriculum.*

*Finlands neuer landesweiter Rahmenlehrplan für die untere Bildungsstufe betont das Aneignen historischen Denkvermögens. In diesem Artikel präsentieren wir die Auffassungen von Lehrkräften bezüglich der in diesem Lehrplan formulierten Ziele, Inhaltsbeschreibungen und Bewertungskriterien. Besonderes Augenmerk richten wir dabei auf die offenen Fragen der Online-Umfrage, die wir 2017 unter Geschichtslehrerinnen und -lehrern durchführten. Diese offenen Fragen wurden nur von einem Drittel der Befragten beantwortet, wobei deren Antworten relativ knapp und im Allgemeinen negativ ausfielen. Dagegen ließen diejenigen Antworten, die in der Bewertung von Aussagen entlang einer Likert-Skala bestanden, darauf schließen, dass die Befragten, die kein selbst formuliertes Feedback lieferten, eine positivere Einstellung gegenüber dem Lehrplan hatten. In dieser Hinsicht zeigt unsere Untersuchung die*

tendenzielle Zufriedenheit der finnischen Lehrkräfte. Die selbst formulierten Antworten offenbaren, dass einer geringen Zahl von Befragten die Vermittlung der Fähigkeit zu historischem Denken als Schlüsselziel des Lehrplans missfällt.

Le Programme national de l'éducation fondamentale (2014) souligne l'importance de l'apprentissage des compétences de la pensée historique. Dans cet article, nous présentons les perceptions des enseignants d'histoire sur les objectifs, les descriptions de contenu et les critères d'évaluation exprimés dans le programme. Nous nous concentrons sur les réponses que des enseignants d'histoire ont écrites aux questions ouvertes de l'enquête en ligne réalisée en 2017. Seulement un tiers des professeurs ont écrit les réponses à la question ouverte où nous avons demandé leurs opinions sur le programme national de l'enseignement d'histoire. Ceux qui l'ont fait ont donné les remarques courtes et avant tout négatives. Selon les réponses aux énoncés sur l'échelle de Likert, ceux qui n'ont pas donné des réponses écrites ont eu une attitude plus positive à l'égard du Programme national de l'éducation fondamentale. Notre étude montre que les enseignants finlandais sont assez satisfaits du programme. Les commentaires écrits révèlent que très peu de ceux qui ont répondu sont contre l'enseignement des compétences de la pensée historique comme l'objectif principal du programme scolaire.

### Laura Triviño-Cabrera

Utopia, historical thought and multimodality for the media empowerment of pre-service trainee history teachers

This study presents an education research design for the multimodal project entitled 'Audiovisual heterotopias for new education spaces' (as one of the strands of research pursued within LITMEC research project: Multimodal Literacy and Cultural Studies), the purpose of which is to develop historical thought by incorporating the concept of 'Utopia' into history teaching from a multimodal pedagogical approach. Teaching the history of the past-present-future time is approached through three heterogeneous spaces proposed by Foucault: Utopia, Dystopia and Heterotopia. These three dimensions are used to formulate three research questions about how they can be applied in the teaching and learning of history. Hence, this paper will set out three education proposals for the initial training of pre-service trainee high school history teachers, so as to promote the acquisition of historical thinking as well as critical, creative, social and citizenship competencies through media deconstruction and the trainee teachers' own audiovisual productions in order to turn these teachers into key agents of social change.

Die vorliegende Studie stellt einen pädagogischen Forschungsentwurf des multimodalen Projekts 'Audiovisuelle Heterotopien für neue Bildungsräume' (Teil des Forschungsprojekts LITMEC: Multimodale Alphabetisierung und Kulturwissenschaften) vor, dessen Ziel die Entwicklung des historischen Denkens über die Einbeziehung des Konzepts der 'Utopie' in den Geschichtsunterricht aus einem multimodalen pädagogischen Ansatz ist. Das Vermitteln von Vergangenheit – Gegenwart – Zukunft wird aus drei von Foucault vorgeschlagenen heterogenen Räumen wie Utopie, Dystopie und Heterotopie angegangen. Diese drei Dimensionen werfen drei Forschungsfragen rund um die Art auf, wie sie im Lehr- und Lernprozess des Geschichtsunterrichts eingesetzt werden können. Diese Arbeit präsentiert daher drei Vorschläge für die Erstausbildung von Geschichtslehrpersonen der Sekundarstufe, mit denen der Erwerb

*von Kompetenzen des historischen Denkens sowie von kritischen, kreativen, sozialen und zivilgesellschaftlichen Kompetenzen über die Mediendekonstruktion und über eigene audiovisuelle Produktionen der Lehramtsanwärter gefördert werden kann, damit sie zum Hauptakteur des sozialen Wandels werden.*

*Cette étude présente un modèle de recherche éducative du projet multimodal intitulé 'Hétérotopies audiovisuelles pour de nouveaux espaces éducatifs' (cela fait partie d'une recherche menée dans le cadre du projet de recherche Littéracités multimodales et Études culturelles) dont l'objectif est de développer la pensée historique via l'incorporation du concept 'd'utopie' dans l'enseignement de l'histoire à partir d'une approche pédagogique multimodale. L'enseignement de l'histoire du temps passé-présent-futur est envisagé à travers trois espaces hétérogènes proposés par Michel Foucault: l'utopie, la dystopie et l'hétérotopie. Ces trois dimensions sont utilisées pour formuler trois questions de recherche sur la façon dont elles peuvent être appliquées à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage de l'histoire. Ce travail permettra donc de faire connaître ces trois propositions éducatives aux futurs enseignants de l'histoire dans l'école secondaire. Elles permettent de promouvoir l'acquisition de compétences de pensée historique ainsi que de compétences critiques, créatives, sociales et civiques à travers la déconstruction médiatique et les productions audiovisuelles des enseignants en formation afin de faire de ces enseignants des agents clés du changement social.*

### **Floor Van Alphen and Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse** Conceptualizing 'identity' in history education research

*Even though identity and the representation or comprehension of history are commonly supposed to be related in history education research, the conceptualization of identity is often vague. In this article, empirical history education research involving students is reviewed to look at how identity is approached. This raises several theoretical and methodological issues that will be addressed by turning to the conceptualization of identity in the human and social sciences. The concept of identity has been problematic; however, alternative approaches have been proposed that foster reflection on the conceptual and methodological choices made in history education research. With notions like identification, self-understanding, categorisation and sense of belonging, the difficulties surrounding the identity concept are clarified and perspectives for further research are given. In the end, the possible contribution of reflection on identity concepts in history education practice is discussed.*

*Auch wenn Identität und die Repräsentation oder das Verständnis von Geschichte in der geschichtsdidaktischen Forschung gemeinbin miteinander in Beziehung stehen sollen, ist die Konzeptualisierung von Identität oft vage. In diesem Artikel überprüfen wir die empirische Forschung zum Geschichtsunterricht mit Studierenden, um zu untersuchen, wie das Konzept der Identität angegangen wird. Dies wirft mehrere theoretische und methodische Fragen auf, die durch die Hinwendung zur Konzeptualisierung von Identität in den Human- und Sozialwissenschaften angegangen werden. Das Konzept der Identität ist problematisch; es wurden jedoch alternative Ansätze vorgeschlagen, die die Reflexion über die konzeptionellen und methodischen Entscheidungen in der Geschichtsbildungsforschung fördern. Mit Begriffen wie Identifikation, Selbstverständnis, Kategorisierung und Zugehörigkeitsgefühl werden die Schwierigkeiten rund um das Identitätskonzept geklärt und Perspektiven für die weitere*

*Forschung gegeben. Am Ende wird der mögliche Beitrag der Reflexion über Identitätskonzepte in der geschichtspädagogischen Praxis diskutiert.*

*Même si l'identité et la représentation ou la compréhension de l'histoire sont généralement supposées d'être liées dans la recherche en enseignement de l'histoire, la conceptualisation de l'identité est souvent vague. Dans cet article, nous révisons des recherches empiriques sur l'enseignement de l'histoire auxquelles ont participé des étudiants afin d'examiner la façon dont le concept d'identité est abordé. Cela soulève plusieurs questions théoriques et méthodologiques qui seront examinées par la conceptualisation de l'identité dans les sciences humaines et sociales. Le concept d'identité s'est avéré problématique, mais d'autres approches ont été proposées pour favoriser la réflexion sur les choix conceptuels et méthodologiques faits dans la recherche sur l'enseignement de l'histoire. Avec des notions telles que l'identification, la compréhension de soi, la catégorisation et le sentiment d'appartenance, les difficultés entourant le concept d'identité sont clarifiées et des perspectives pour des recherches ultérieures sont offertes. En fin de compte, la contribution possible de la réflexion sur les concepts identitaires dans la pratique de l'enseignement de l'histoire est évaluée.*

### **Cynthia Wallace-Casey**

#### **'I want to remember': Student narratives and Canada's History Hall**

*In this journal article I explore student-constructed narrative interpretations of Canada's History Hall in the Canadian Museum of History. Drawing from an empirical investigation that involved students participating in the Canada's History Society Young Citizens program, I reveal the collective memory narratives that students (n=26) constructed about Canada's past, and how these related to their museum experience. I conclude by discussing how these findings relate to current discussions in Canada regarding Historical Thinking.*

*This inquiry is part of a larger investigation (supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) that explores: 1) how the Canadian History Hall represents such difficult topics in history as First Nation settler colonial experiences and Residential Schools; 2) the national narratives that students construct from such a learning experience; and 3) the potential role for museum spaces in enabling Historical Thinking.*

*In diesem Zeitschriftenartikel untersuche ich die von Studierenden konstruierten narrativen Interpretationen der 'Canada's History Hall' im 'Canadian Museum of History'. Ausgehend von einer empirischen Untersuchung, an der Studierende teilnahmen, die am Programm der 'Canada's History Society Young Citizens' mitmachten, beleuchte ich die kollektiven Erinnerungserzählungen, die Studierende (n=26) über die Vergangenheit Kanadas konstruierten, und wie sich diese auf ihre Museumserfahrung bezogen. Abschließend möchte ich diskutieren, wie sich diese Ergebnisse auf die aktuellen Diskussionen in Kanada zum Thema Historisches Denken beziehen.*

*Diese Untersuchung ist Teil einer größeren Untersuchung (unterstützt durch den 'Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council'). Untersucht werden: 1) wie die 'Canadian History Hall' so schwierige Themen in der Geschichte darstellt, wie 'First Nation, Siedler Kolonialerfahrungen und Residential Schools'; 2) die nationalen Erzählungen, die Schüler aus einer solchen Lernerfahrung konstruieren; und 3) die potenzielle Rolle von Museumsräumen bei der Ermöglichung von historischem Denken.*

*Dans cet article, j'examine des interprétations des élèves du récit de la Salle d'histoire du Canada dans le Musée d'histoire du Canada. À partir d'une enquête empirique à laquelle ont participé des étudiants participant au programme Jeunes citoyens de la Société d'histoire du Canada, je révèle des narrations que les étudiants (26) ont construites sur le passé du Canada et je me demande comment ces narrations se rapportent à leur expérience muséale. Pour conclure, je montre comment mes résultats se rapportent aux discussions actuelles sur la réflexion historique au Canada.*

*Cette enquête s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une enquête plus vaste (soutenue par le Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines) qui explore: 1) la façon dont la Salle d'histoire du Canada représente des sujets aussi difficiles dans l'histoire que les expériences de premiers colons et les pensionnats autochtones (écoles résidentielles); 2) les récits nationaux que les élèves construisent à partir de cette expérience d'apprentissage; et 3) le rôle potentiel des espaces muséaux dans le développement de la réflexion historique.*

### **Marjolein Wilke, Fien Depaep and Karel Van Nieuwenhuys**

Teaching about historical agency: An intervention study examining changes in students' understanding and perception of agency in past and present

*Agency is considered a key concept in historical thinking. Understood in a sociological way, it addresses the question of who has the individual or social potential to act purposefully and to effectuate change in society. Teaching about agency is also assumed to influence civic behaviour, as reflection on the various agents in the past and how they contributed to changes in society, can make students aware of their own role in society today. Explicit teaching is believed to be an effective teaching strategy to foster students' understanding of agency. Empirical research supporting these assumptions is, however, scarce. This research examines, through a quasi-experimental design with pre- and posttest, the effects of explicit teaching about agency on students' understanding and on their perception of agency in past and present, in terms of active societal engagement.*

*Handlungsmacht gilt als Schlüsselbegriff im historischen Denken. Soziologisch verstanden, geht es um die Frage, wer das individuelle oder soziale Potenzial hat, gezielt zu handeln und Veränderungen in der Gesellschaft zu bewirken. Der Unterricht über die Handlungsmacht soll auch das zivilgesellschaftliche Verhalten beeinflussen. Die Reflexion über die verschiedenen Akteure in der Vergangenheit und wie sie zu Veränderungen in der Gesellschaft beigetragen haben, kann die Schülerinnen und Schüler für ihre eigene Rolle in der heutigen Gesellschaft sensibilisieren. Es wird angenommen, dass expliziter Unterricht eine effektive Unterrichtsstrategie ist, um das Verständnis der Schülerinnen und Schüler für die Handlungsmacht zu fördern. Empirische Forschung, die diese Annahmen unterstützt, ist jedoch rar. Dieser Forschungsbeitrag untersucht, mittels eines quasi-experimentellen Designs mit Pre- und Posttest, die Auswirkungen der expliziten Vermittlung von 'Agency' auf das Verständnis der Studierenden und auf ihre Wahrnehmung der Handlungsmacht in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart im Sinne eines aktiven gesellschaftlichen Engagements.*

*L'agentivité est considérée comme un concept clé dans la pensée historique. Considéré d'un point de vue sociologique, il aborde la question de comprendre qui a le potentiel individuel ou social d'agir avec détermination et d'apporter des changements dans la société. L'enseignement sur l'agentivité (historical agency) est également supposé d'influencer l'attitude civique, car la réflexion sur les différents agents dans le passé et la façon dont ils ont contribué aux changements de la société peut faire prendre conscience aux élèves de leur propre rôle dans la société d'aujourd'hui. Enseigner dans une façon explicite est considéré comme une stratégie d'enseignement efficace pour favoriser la compréhension de l'agentivité par les élèves. Les recherches empiriques à l'appui de ces hypothèses sont toutefois rares. Cette recherche examine, au moyen d'un modèle quasi expérimental avec pré-test et post-test, les effets de l'enseignement explicite sur la compréhension et la perception des élèves de l'agentivité dans le passé et dans le présent, en termes d'engagement social.*



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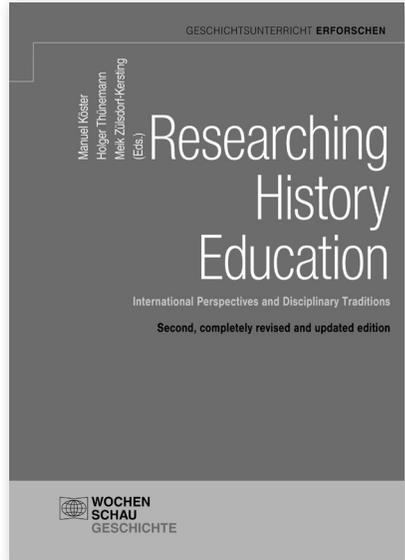
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