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## Introduction to Part Three: Memory Practices in the Classroom

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Teaching is a difficult task. As Lee S. Shulman determined in 1986: 'From the perspective of complexity management, teaching is a far more demanding occupation than is medicine' (Shulman 1986). Doyle (1986, 394-395) has identified six reasons for this complexity: multidimensionality, simultaneity, immediacy, unpredictability, publicity and historicity.

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When it comes to the teaching of history, we can add six further reasons for the particular difficulty in this subject area (Gautschi 2007): First, the learning objects usually *elude the primary view*. History lessons address something now in the past and which must, however, be set within a present context and mindset. Second, this universe of history grows with each passing day – there is *increasingly more past* – while the time available for history teaching is becoming increasingly limited and demands are growing with regard to the choice of topic. Third, history teaching is to a large extent confronted with digital change. This is relevant both to the representation and to the visualisation of the past and, of course, as in all other domains, also to the teaching and learning processes themselves. Fourth, history teaching aims not only at teaching knowledge but also at initiating historical thinking, an ‘unnatural act’, as Sam Wineburg (2001) has put it, which is not simply intuitive and whose facilitation is highly demanding. Fifth, the mediation of history is also always about *individual and social identity*. Jörn Rüsen even wrote in his work *Historik* that ‘Identity formation is therefore one of the most important functions, if not the most important function, of historical thinking in the life practice of its time’ (Rüsen 2013, 267, trans. PG). Sixth, bringing the past to the present mind always involves the working out of *culturally shaped common memories* which have a say in defining what counts as a relevant history (Ahlrichs et al. 2015). All in all, *history teaching requires navigating* back and forth between different poles: between transmitting knowledge, enabling historical thinking or building up identity, between history and the past as well as between history and memory.

Research into history teaching is no less complex than its research object (Gautschi 2013, 2014). How do we define and describe such a *volatile and multidimensional object of research*? How do we find and formulate relevant questions or hypotheses in view of the complexity and unpredictability of history teaching? How can we access a field that in theory is a public sphere but to which entry is restricted or even denied by a large number of gatekeepers in order to protect teaching processes and personal rights (Gautschi 2012)? How should we address the huge challenges of data collection and ascertain which methods of data evaluation prove appropriate, productive and target-orientated (Diekmann 2017, 194)? In recent years, videography has proved to be a particularly productive way of collecting data for research into history teaching,

because it allows the scholar to implement the basic idea of field research: 'to examine its subject in as natural a context as possible in order to avoid distortions caused by the intervention of research methods or by the unrealistic external perspective' (Mayring 2002, 54).

Video-based classroom analysis has a number of advantages over traditional methods (questionnaires, interviews and direct observation in the classroom), in particular the fact that videos can be used to view the classroom activities of different people as often as desired and independently of the time of recording (Gautschi 2016). Further, video analysis provides deeper insight into the complexity of teaching processes, allows the researcher to analyse teaching sequences from several perspectives and guided by different questions, and it facilitates the integration of quantitative and qualitative analyses. Secondary analyses of the data material are possible at a later point in time, the communication of results becomes possible on the basis of examples, and the findings can also be reflected back into practice. In short, the result is an enriching combination of research, theory and practice (cf. Seago 2004; Krammer et al. 2008; Rauin, Herrle and Engartner 2016). In particular, instructional videos are an excellent basis for a case-by-case analysis of history teaching, as the following three chapters will unveil.

Research into history teaching can be carried out in six different directions (cf. Gautschi 2014):

- a) *Phenomenon research* aims at a sophisticated description and analysis of the realities of teaching; that is, the manifestations and production patterns of historical teaching and learning, of methodological and medial aspects of history teaching, but also the description of conditions such as timeframes, curricula and textbooks.
- b) *Outcomes research* aims at collecting and measuring the learning outcomes (performance, interest in the subject, topic-specific attitudes and skills) of students after a history lesson, unit or period, insofar as this teaching effect can be interpreted. The collection of learning outcomes receives an evaluative character by comparing different groups or through clearly defined standards and objectives.
- c) *Effectiveness research* deals with the causal analysis of condition-effect relationships in history teaching. Factors which ensure educational success are to be identified. In this context, teaching and learning

quality are seen as characteristics of effectiveness in the sense of a multi-dimensional understanding of education: attitudes, learning motivation, topic-specific interest and performance interact and need to be investigated simultaneously (Reusser 2001). Effectiveness research connects phenomena and outcomes research and searches for relations between teaching processes and outcomes. In contrast to descriptive outcomes research, it aims at identifying and determining the conditions needed for successful teaching (Van Drie and Van Boxtel 2008).

- d) *Intervention research* generally involves developing, implementing and evaluating concrete teaching sequences, units or products on the basis of didactical and theoretical considerations. Its aim is not to describe the empirical reality of teaching, but rather to create and examine the quality of a *new* reality of teaching. Accordingly, it seeks to improve the process-oriented practice. In the methodological ideal case, intervention research coincides with experimental effectiveness research.
- e) Research on *historical consciousness* is concerned with the analysis of the thought paths of individuals in relation to history. Typical questions ask (i) what exactly teachers and students do when they engage in historical thinking (Wineburg 2001), (ii) what kind of historical consciousness they display (Seixas 2006) and (iii) how students perceive key concepts such as time, change, perspective, significance or evidence (Voss et al. 1998).
- f) Finally, the sixth direction is research on history teaching as an institutionalised and at the same time socially embedded setting in which we may investigate how people who happen to be teachers and students negotiate the meaning of the past (Ahlrichs et al. 2015; Christophe 2017; Binnenkade 2015; Macgilchrist et al. 2017). In this research, the focus is on the patterns of meaning that emerge during classroom talk and on the many strands that connect these meaning-making processes with wider social and cultural discourses. It deals with memory practices in the classroom. To quote an intriguing phrase coined by Alexandra Binnenkade, teaching is construed as a discursive node of all the discourses to which teachers and students are exposed and in which they take part when watching films, reading newspapers, talking to family and friends, browsing the internet or perhaps also the textbook.

These six directions are characterised by a clearly recognisable shared objective. They are not clearly defined categories but rather serve *to convey a big picture*. For example, for a long time the fifth research direction was strongly perceptible. In view of the narratives more-or-less handed down in the established nation states of Western democracies, researchers turned to individuals and their *historical consciousness*. However, this has changed notably over the last few years with the increasing awareness of living in plural and fragmented postmodern societies that are divided with regard to interpretations of the past but also the advance of populism.

While most studies follow more than one single research direction, the following three chapters show clear trends. Whereas Barbara Christophe analyses meaning-making in the classroom as politically loaded memory practices, Robert Thorp looks at narratives offered by teachers and students as indicators for a specific type of historical consciousness. Peter Gautschi and Hans Utz, meanwhile, apply a broad range of concepts from history didactics in order to make informed judgements about the quality of history lessons. However, all three chapters share one crucial feature: while other studies in history education primarily analyse what the history classroom as a setting with certain rules and procedures would do with a certain historical topic (Henke-Bockschatz and Mehr 2012; Hollstein et al. 2002), these three studies investigate what the Cold War as a socially contested historical topic does with the history classroom. Moreover, all three of the following contributions implement phenomenon research and are *based on the same data*, namely on the same four videographed history lessons from the different countries, all of which deal with the origins of the Cold War.

The researchers working on these studies and the authors of the following three contributions contacted secondary-school history teachers in Germany, Switzerland and Sweden, with the request that we observe and film their teaching on the Cold War. We also asked the students' permission to observe and film the lessons; only those who consented were filmed. The observed lessons varied in length. The material was transcribed shortly afterwards, and it is these transcriptions and videos that are used in the following analyses. The transcriptions were then translated from German and Swedish into English. The four teachers included in the study were born before 1970 and thus all had personal experience of the Cold War period. The rationale here was that these teachers would

have a richer and more complex understanding of the Cold War period and that this socio-political circumstance in itself would have informed their own lives and experiences (Gautschi et al. 2014). The lessons analysed here are *introductory lessons to the Cold War period*, offering an excellent basis for comparison between the four teachers and for insights as to how the Cold War is introduced and framed in the classroom.

The lesson from Sweden was the shortest. It lasted 27 minutes and consisted of four parts: At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher introduced the subject with her own experiences and those of her generation. She then showed the class a film about the rise of the Soviet Union and the USA and their struggle against Hitler's Germany during the Second World War. Subsequently she introduced the three politicians Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, presented the Yalta Conference, and showed another film excerpt about the origin of the Cold War and Truman's containment policy. At the end of the lesson, the teacher explained the significance of the Cold War and Sweden's position with formal neutrality and yet an informal belonging to the West.

The lesson from Switzerland, which lasted 60 minutes, also used a film excerpt of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima; however, this was preceded by an introduction to the topic using a caricature entitled 'Tandem or Unicycle?' from a Swiss textbook. The pupils worked in groups to contextualise both caricature and film. Then the teacher and the class discussed the characteristics and interests of the Cold War blocs, recording the results in tabular form on the blackboard. The pupils then received two text sources representative of the two Cold War parties, to be interpreted working in pairs. At the end of the lesson the teacher gave an overview of the prehistory of the Cold War (1941-1945), in particular of the treatment of Germany by the victorious powers in the aftermath of World War II according to the principles of democratisation, denazification, demilitarisation and decentralisation.

We observed two double lessons from Germany on the origins of the Cold War, one from the former West and one from the former East Germany. Each double lesson lasted around 85 minutes. The teacher of the lesson in Lower Saxony began by brainstorming the students' previous knowledge of the Cold War, noting keywords. Interestingly, this teacher also introduced the topic using a caricature, this time with the caption 'Draft of a Memorial to the Victors' (*Entwurf für ein*

*Siegerdenkmal*), and a quotation from Stalin. More detailed analyses of these lessons and how they approached the material are given in the following three chapters.

The courses taken by the fronts in Europe at the end of the Second World War were traced in a group effort. The teacher then presented a brief historical outline of the development of Russia and the Soviet Union since the 19th century, subsequently asking the pupils to do the same for the USA on the basis of their previously acquired knowledge. At the end of the double lesson, the pupils elicited the self-images of the two camps on the basis of representative text sources, juxtaposing these with the image of the other side.

Similarly, in the lesson we observed in Saxony-Anhalt the pupils were confronted with the same caricature used by the lesson in Lower Saxony ('Draft of a Memorial to the Victors') at the beginning of the double lesson, to be analysed with the help of worksheets. The evaluation of this working phase took place in class. Then the pupils were presented with text sources on the Truman doctrine and the Shdanov theory and asked 'who?', 'what?', and 'with what cause?' Here, too, the results were discussed in class. Afterwards, the class discussed the term 'Cold War' on the basis of an image of Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin. The learning results were compared with the text from the school history book and led to the definition of the term 'Cold War'. At the end of the double lesson, the topics covered were summarised and reinforced with the help of another worksheet.

Although the following three contributions all implement phenomenon research and are based on the same data, they differ considerably in interpretation as well as methodology. This section of the book thus follows on from a strand of research in history didactics which, with this comparative approach, strives both to sharpen the theories and methods and to provide new insights into the object of research (Meyer-Hamme et al. 2012). These 'crossed glances' result in a more colourful and detailed picture, which is certainly stimulating if not free of contradiction.

*Barbara Christophe's* contribution on 'Selecting, Stretching and Missing the Frame: Teachers and Students from Germany and Switzerland Making Sense of the Cold War', compares two introductory lessons on the Cold War held in two year-10 classes in western Germany and Switzerland. From a theoretical perspective her analysis is inspired by memory studies; methodologically she draws on a discourse-based frame analysis. Focusing

on rich points, on moments when something unexpected is of particular relevance to processes of framing and interaction, the paper raises three questions. It explores (i) to what extent frames offered by the teachers are shared or contested, (ii) how coherent these frames are and (iii) how frames established by teachers and students interact. Christophe arrives at three conclusions: She shows that both teachers mobilise two clearly recognisable, if opposing, frames, both of which have political implications. She also demonstrates that they 'stretch' and 'bend' their preferred frames in order to integrate all the details they wish to mention. And she argues that students regularly miss the frames offered by their teachers by either failing to recognise their narrative and political logic or by tacitly resisting them. Discussing these empirical insights against the backdrop of debates in memory studies and history didactics, Christophe argues that the misunderstandings we observe when teachers and students negotiate the meaning of the past as representatives of different generations appear to be an important third pattern in communication about memory beyond the alternatives of consensus and conflict often discussed in theoretical debates. Moreover, she contends that by missing the chance to explicitly recognise the political character of Cold War memory, teachers contribute to the likelihood of persistent misunderstandings.

In their chapter, 'Learning from Others: Considerations within History Didactics on Introducing the Cold War in Lessons in Germany, Sweden and Switzerland', *Peter Gautschi* and *Hans Utz* compare the four different lessons in which teachers are confronted with the same challenge, namely how to begin teaching a subject such as the Cold War when the teacher is not only an educator but also a witness of the conflict itself, for which there is no universally accepted master narrative. The chapter is structured around basic didactic questions such as: What is taught in the introductory lessons on the Cold War? How do teachers structure the lessons? What is the learning objective? At the end of the chapter the authors recommend that, when teaching contemporary topics, teachers should teach history while consciously broaching the issue of memory. If successful then history education will be instrumental not only in building knowledge but also in constructing identity and developing critical thinking.

In his chapter 'Pedagogical Entanglements and the Cold War: A Comparative Study on Opening History Lessons on the Cold War in Sweden and Switzerland' *Robert Thorp* analyses the two lower-secondary



school opening lessons on the Cold War from Sweden and Switzerland. The opening lessons are analysed according to the content covered, the educational media used, and how the teachers interact with their students. The study finds that the opening lessons vary to a great extent. Whereas the Swiss lesson predominantly focuses on establishing a critical narrative of the origins of the Cold War conflict, the Swedish lesson disseminates what could be considered a traditional narrative of the Cold War. The lessons also differ in terms of the different forms of educational media employed by each educator. While the Swiss teacher makes use of caricatures to instigate pupil-oriented discussions about what caused the Cold War, the Swedish teacher uses personal analogies and a video during class. The study, however, finds that neither teacher engages with the contingencies of history culture that affect historical content and how we approach it; instead, both disseminate a closed rendering of the history of the Cold War.

Although the three contributions examine the same introductory lessons on the subject of the Cold War in very different ways, there are some important *common insights*: First, life experiences, memories and teachers' beliefs shape their teaching activities decisively. Second, the situations in which individuals engage with the past, i.e. the persons they talk to, the media they use but also the political issues that dominate in the present moment, all these situational factors have an influence on practices of teaching the past. When we place emphasis on these factors, we construe teaching and learning history as memory practices.

Third, rendering these processes explicit reduces the risk of misunderstandings in history lessons. Being reflective about the contingency of one's own approach to the past is thus not only a requirement of fairness in the plural societies of today; it also enhances cognitive understanding. At the same time, reflection on the contingency of one's own approach to the past appears to be a rarity in societies considered established nation states. When common-sense assumptions are strong and socially effective, the work they perform tends to be invisible. As many studies show (Psaltis et al. 2017; Bentrovato et al. 2016), this contrasts sharply with the conditions of teaching history in post-conflict societies where everybody is painfully aware of the political involved in debates about the past. This leaves us with the insight that history can indeed 'bite' or 'bore', depending on the specific context. It can suffer from both the disappearance and from the overwhelming presence of the political.

The fourth common insight is that the theories, methodologies and convictions of scholars used for teaching research shape their results largely, and finally, all three studies recognise that adherence to these insights reduces the risk of absolute conclusions.

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