

## Requirements of Initial Training of History Teachers

### 1. A Structure of Purposes of ITT

In the following suggestions all remarks about questions of organization have to be excluded. The duration of teachers' education, the proportion of different topics, the sequence (or parallel structure), the institutional conditions, the number of school subjects taught by a teacher, the overlapping of history with geography and/or civic education cannot be discussed in detail. The conditions in the countries participating will be very different in all those points.

Much more important is the fact that any history teacher has to be introduced to three interdependent fields on two levels.

<b>Fields/ Levels</b>	<b>Historical Science (Research and Presentation)</b>	<b>History Didactics or Methodology of History Teaching and Learning</b>	<b>Educational Science, Pedagogics</b>
<b>Theory</b>	e.g.: the process of nation building in South-east-Europe, the First World War, gender history, pictures as primary sources	e.g.: theory of historical consciousness and identity, national cultures of history, curriculum study, textbook analysis, production of teaching units	e.g.: psychology of learning, theory and laws of schools, punishment as a problem of education, class-room management
<b>Practice</b>	e.g.: work in an archive, visiting a museum, writing a newspaper article, preparing a documentary film	e.g.: observing teaching, interviewing children, preparing and administrating history lessons	e.g.: travel with a class, project week against racism, work with handicapped children

Some additional remarks are important in respect to this figure. First, "academic" must not be identical with "theory"; universities have to transport practical knowledge and abilities as well.

Second, a certain overlapping exists between theory and practice: "History textbook-analysis"

is more practical than "theory of identity", but more theoretical than "preparing a lesson about Alexander the Great". In some cases, the "notions" or "words" themselves make a problem. Thus "didactics of history" and "methodology of teaching (and learning) history" are used in the same

way. Both expressions have their problems and often cause misunderstandings or prejudices.

Anyway: What I intend is more than "methods of history teaching"; it includes a lot of "epistemological theory of historical thinking and researching", of "culture of history" (i.e. official and public use of history) and of "theoretical concepts and empirical studies of historical consciousness".

I want to use a common metaphor: Didactics of history may serve as a bridge in the double sense of combining history and education and theory and practice: Thus it may constitute the complex and manifold unity (integration) of the whole training of history teachers. Thinking didactically automatically includes reflecting the special conditions and needs of the learners and the logic of the topic (subject matter). The teacher has to be an expert in both fields and to combine them. E.g., his work helps the pupils to learn historical insights. But still, educational science is necessary for teachers as well - and must not be forgotten during initial teacher training! Teachers are educators - more and more even substitute parents - in many difficult cases and situations, like drug abuse, vocational selection, health education. This educational part has vital connections to history as well (e.g. mental history, history of childhood and genders).

The bridge "history didactics" can be drafted and realized in different manners (like hanging bridges or arc bridges). In some countries, rather stable systems already exist. In others, methodology of history teaching and learning has not been elaborated to high perfection. It is a bridge under construction only, and unfortunately, in an epoch of radical cutting down of finances. Nevertheless, the vitally important bridge "history didactics" should not be offered to the future teachers too late, in order to give them a realistic picture of their future job and obligations in time.

## **2. A Grammar of Historical Thinking**

At least in the German perspective, the main goal of teaching and learning history is not knowledge of main historical facts but achieving a grammar of historical thinking. The simple cause is that history is endless and open. We cannot really prescribe authoritatively what the main facts are but only argue and discuss about different criteria of selection, of ascription and of interpretation, in respect to varying interests, standpoints and theories. In a democratic society, this cannot be ordered, but only communicated and bargained about.

In fact, if history is handled with intellectual properness, it gains a multiperspectival, controversial and pluralistic structure. This has to be described and explained in detail:

- *Multiperspectivity* of information means the use of primary sources from different - and even opposing - groups, the reconstruction of many contemporary perceptions, views and opinions, even hypothesis about those, which are badly represented because of "destruction" or "silence". This includes a careful search for voices of "the others", even "the enemies" of the own social, linguistic, "national", or ethnic "ancestors".
- *Controversy* of interpretations means the consequent consideration of contrasting modern (and traditional) narrative syntheses from diverging scientific and popular viewpoints. The best known, "common" or "self-evident" version can be controlled - and has to be controlled - by the neighbour states' history textbooks or by opposing minority scholars, e.g. feminist views or Non-European contributions. A controversy is not a rare marginal phenomenon with tiny problems mentioned but the normal structure of history in its main fields.
- *Plurality* of orientations means the structure of the application of history to the present and the future. Unconsciously or consciously, history is told with a message to the public anyway. This message - explicit or suggestive - has to be discovered, examined and - after careful revision or change - be stored and internalized. In pluralistic and democratic conditions, this is a job for the pupils themselves; thus the teachers have to present and to offer varying proposals with different logic structure (following the "traditional", "exemplary", "critical" or "genetic" logical pattern) to the students earnest weighing and own judgement.

If this is accepted, the consequences for the organization of teaching and learning history are important: The lessons do not need only an orientation towards primary sources (first focus), but an orientation towards a narrative synthesis (second focus); they must learn the methodical control of ascriptions of causality, of generalizations, of theories used and so on. In Germany, this was often forgotten during the last decades. After having detected the necessity of "(primary) source orientation", the necessity of "(narrative) sense production" was omitted. Often, primary sources were simply reduced to a basis of "information extraction". If the process of responsible retrospective interpretation and contextualisation – in the deep understanding - is skipped, the use of primary sources may simply be means of indoctrination. This deficit of the past has to be avoided in the future.

The use of primary sources remains mainly a method and is no goal in itself. It clarifies that historiography is impossible without primary sources. This is very important to know. Nevertheless, the normal handling or dealing with history by citizens is not reading source-books or work-

ing in archives. In everyday life, in the mass media and in the public, history is always told in already perfected versions of stories (books, films, exhibitions, memorials) which are consumed (or avoided). Students - as future citizens - have to be enabled to judge and decide about those offers on a "history market".

This demands not only the production of historical presentations (narratives), but also the examination of historical presentations of all kinds (films, books, series of pictures, monuments) during the history lessons at school. In other words: historical de-construction has to be introduced and exercised in addition to historical re-construction.

Selectivity, perspectivity and dependence from theories are absolutely central insights and preconditions of dealing with history. In the practical course of researching and describing history they are often forgotten or hidden, even in the case of historians who know about this but do not explicitly explain it to their readers. Unfortunately, an illusionary completeness, an unquestioned convention about the importance (relevance) of so-called "facts" and an undisputed (traditional) consent about interpretations and judgments are often silently insinuated (pretended) and suggestively transmitted to the adolescents.

### **3. History and Identity**

Teachers are not obliged to know innumerable details of history (in fact nobody in the world is able to do so), but they have to know epistemology, structures and functions of the subject matter. Why history? A famous answer reads: "*History has to tell us, how we became, what we are.*" But: Who is "we"? Who are "*the others*"? In fact, the sentence has to be completed: "*History has to show, how 'we' became 'we', how 'the others' became 'the others', how the limit between 'us' and 'them' evolved and changed in time and what is common to 'us' and 'the others' in spite to all 'otherness'.*"

That means: History is written or told for special groups; Jan Assmann calls it: "*History is characterized by 'particularity of identity'*". It is intentional and obligatory. It includes self-affirmation and self-examination, self-definition and self-reflection. But again: Who is "we"? "We" is not only the collective group of "state nation" and "nation state", rather young and newly invented since the nineteenth century (and often even later). "We" is also regions, religious communities, city populations, age groups, genders, linguistic communities or minorities. The pupils sitting in front of us in our classes are manifold group members and growing up individuals, not only

small Germans or Croatians.

They always have different identities in different collectives at the same time. They are members of privileged and discriminated groups; this unavoidable inequality and injustice should not be copied and repeated and strengthened by history teaching, but made aware, reflected on and worked through. Again: History is particular and obligatory for identity groups; it is transferred and handed down by professional specialists (in our case history teachers). At least this is the result for Jan Assmann; but it is true for highly hierarchical, traditional and authoritarian societies like Ancient Egypt (Assmann's speciality). What is the case in modern European countries? What has changed during the last 5.000 or 15 years?

- History has become a "science", though not as "objective" as natural sciences. That means a rational and humanitarian claim, not only a technique of seeking and interpreting primary sources, but also a promise of intellectual honesty, impartiality (though not lack of any perspective and interest), argumentation, exchange with other languages, nations and cultures, and listening to objections. This can only be realized in a climate of openness and preparation to revise weak positions. When history was made scientific (in the eighteenth and nineteenth century), this seemed to be compatible to nationalism and chauvinism; but this is no longer true. Scientific historiography has to look for the "others" position and its - relative - legitimacy.
- Meanwhile the idea of "human and civil rights" has been evolved, That means a claim to equality and justice of everyone. We all know that this was invented by rich white males in the late eighteenth century who never imagined to expand this concept to the poor, to coloured people or to women. But in the long run, the process gained its own logic; any exclusion today is an "regression". If injustice against a group is forbidden, this must be true in history lessons as well. If the missing of female experience and efforts in history does hurt girls interests, we cannot responsibly skip women's history any longer. We cannot argue that the weighing of men's and women's history would be too complex for the adolescents; for we cannot inflict disadvantage to one gender in favour of the other.
- Our societies are in-homogenous and characterized by diversity. If we want to live in peace, we have to be at least "tolerant" in politics, in everyday life and in history as well. We know cases when a war has begun in the writings of intolerant historians. But tolerance is not enough: this principle was invented in the seventeenth century between the religious parties in Central

Europe. It follows the logic: *"It has proved by experience that it is impossible to convince all of you peacefully or to kill all of you in wars. Thus we have to tolerate that you live aside from us and go to hell but after your death."* Tolerance is condescension also; what we need today, is more, is *"mutual acceptance and mutual acknowledgement"*. That is the principle: *"Let us listen to each other and learn from each other, though we are different. Perhaps you are partly correct."*

- National sovereignty has been questioned and reduced from both sides, by UN and Europe and by region and community. Thus, history has to be taught differently in all countries in all parts of the countries, but not without connections and regards to other countries and other parts. The classical "nationalistic legendary stories" and "master narratives" of late nineteenth century nations fade away, some rather quickly and others remarkably slowly. But a restoration would be unlikely and dangerous.

#### **4. Learning History**

History and history didactics cannot be separated, if they are understood in a correct way. We only have to keep in mind a certain differentiation in focus. Historians concentrate more on specialized details of content, didacticians more on the learners' conditions and interests, on the societies' needs and practices, on the generalizations and logical patterns. Thus, history didacticians are something like experts of consciousness and self-reflection, but they have to leave the main work to historians and educators.

- The fixation and proof of historical detail (often called "facts") and its storage as knowledge is not enough. The process of mental working through, of examining the relevance for the society and the self is as important. That is some social psychology and some political science in addition to "historical science" in the traditional narrow sense of "positivism". Interpretations and judgements (including selection of standpoints, decision about generalizations, ascription of causalities, choice of theories and comparison of consequences) have to be included. They cannot be ordered or prescribed in a suggestive way, but only offered, uncovered, and discussed. Anyway, the majority of pupils will acquire the conventions of the country (or the minority), already because of their families' influence.
- Learning history is more - and at the same time less - than a preparation or exercise of historical science. Our purpose is not to educate little university professors of history. If we de-

mand an orientation towards "historical science", we stress other points. Learning history has to be a *critical introduction* and preparation to "historical thinking" and "historical culture" (that means the use and communication of history in the state and the public, in mass media, arts and literature). And "critical" is not meant as "destruction", but as "examination", "evaluation" and "decision". The end of criticism can be to adopt or internalize an offered solution with good argument and deep conviction or with minor intelligent changes.

- Now I have to mention the problem of chronological classification and the method of teaching history in the way of a chronological progression. On the one hand, chronological classification is a bare self-evident necessity in history, which should be perfected by a printed full line of time and histories (with many pictures) on the wall of the classroom. This can be used by the teachers of other subject matters as well - and for comparisons with and hints of history to the other subject matters. This is not really doubted. But on the other hand, "chronology" is not a sufficient structure of history and even less of historical learning. The early parts of history are not "easier" than the later "more difficult" parts. And previous events are not a necessary precondition of understanding subsequent events (otherwise any historian had to begin his/her books with Adam and Eve!). Learning history in an intelligent and successful way needs another model of "learning progression"; this can be called a graded or spiral model of "historical competencies and sub-competencies".
- Many historians will not accept this conclusion, because they trust in "chronology as structure". But in fact, the "important facts", even if we could agree on them, would - as Lévi-Strauss already stated in 1952 - belong to completely different classes of information (e.g. politics or economy, Germany or Russia, workers or soldiers, gender-relations or environmental damages). Temporal closeness is by no means causal connection. In fact, history is a very complex - and merely hypothetical - network of examined, weighted and generalized observations and conclusions. The number of dimensions in it is nearly unlimited, and sheer course of time (called "chronology") is only one dimension - and a dangerous one additionally, because of the common illusion of completeness that causes people to stop thinking. It is not by chance that the new "science of culture" attaches history no longer to "chronology", but to places (or spots?) of memory (in French "*lieux de mémoires*", in German "*Erinnerungsorte*"), some of them real topographic places like Vienna and Hastings, others metaphoric symbolic places like "expulsion 1945/47" or "Volkswagen".

Again: Chronology is very important and unavoidable as background and classification system. But it is inadequate as the main and foreground structure of learning. In this function, "development', 'change' and '(r)evolution'" (and their whole semantic field) are the better notions. What is really important?

- History has to begin in the *everyday-life* ("Lebenswelt") and the *experiences* of pupils. It has to clarify riddles and mysteries in the pupils' world, it has to help them understand their own life, difficulties and joys by giving historical explanation. Many things can only be understood historically. Otherwise pupils will get the impression that history is useless and boring.
- *Change, evolution* and *acceleration* determine the life of young people. There are "modern" human beings for 40.000 years, agriculture for 10.000 years, writing for 5.000 years, global connections between Eastern and Western hemispheres for 500 years, industries, nation-states, and democracies for 200 years and television, computers and the internet for 50 to 10 years. That's a chronology as well, and a very useful one, by the way.
- History is a combination of "*understanding oneself*" and "*understanding the other*". For the first of these two goals, "*introspection*" (including distance and a look from outside) is the most important instrument, for the second goal, "*empathy*" is decisive, which means hypothetical and systematic exchange of perspectives and roles ("de-centration" in the sense of Piaget also).

What does that mean for the Initial Training of History Teachers? The scarcity of time and place makes it possible to go more into details. Therefore, a short and provocative balance of results is enough:

1. *"History teaching" is not the transference of a national legendary hero-story or a traditional "canon" of "facts" and "valuations" to the next generation, but a common search movement with the next generation (including the relations to neighbours and minorities). This makes it necessary to know uses and abuses of history in the society, but also the difficulties and patterns of learning history. Teachers need knowpre-conceptions, mis-conceptions and alternative conceptions in the students' minds (produced partly by different influences of society and partly by the attempts of the students to construct a sense-making model). An ability of sensitive observation and helpful diagnosis is very important for their future success.*
2. *The subject history at school has no monopoly of presenting history, not at all; but only at school, history is dealt with and negotiated about (a model of mutual communication and search for agreement). This is a chance of handling conflicts and of coping with burdening hi-*



*story, e.g. burning injustice (mass crimes) committed by or suffered by the "own collective group". This demands a more discussing, reflexive and conscious style of teaching, exchanging criteria of selection and search for identity. At least in this deep sense, the teaching of history at universities has to adopt a more didactical structure itself.*

*3. History teaching has to be inter-cultural, because peacefully dealing with diversity is one of the main topics in the future of Europe, not only in the "old" countries of the West with their high proportion of immigrants respectively their children and grandchildren and their complete freedom of settling down, but in the relatively new "nation building" states of the Southeast as well (e.g. because of their formerly hostile neighbours, their territorial changes/struggles and their ethnic minorities). In order to prepare this, history teaching at universities has to become more inter-cultural too, even if students are not able to read all primary sources in the original languages.*