



## Historical consciousness, knowledge, and competencies of historical thinking: An integrated model of historical thinking and curricular implications<sup>i</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Comparative and reflection on history education across national and cultural boundaries has shown that regardless of different traditions of history education, legislative interventions and research, some questions are common to research, debate and development, albeit there are both differences and commonalities in concepts and terminology. One of the common problems is the weighting of the components “knowledge”, “historical consciousness”, and “skills” or “competencies” both as aims of history education and in their curricular interrelation with regard to progression. On the backdrop of a long standing debate around German “chronological” teaching of history, making use of some recent comparative reflections, the article discusses principles for designing non-chronological curricula focusing on sequential elaboration in all three dimensions of history learning.

### KEYWORDS

Historical consciousness, Uses of history, History education, History didactics

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## Introduction: History education between knowledge, consciousness and competencies

History Education has – in many countries – undergone a long and deep, but incomplete and apparently infinite transformation since roughly the middle of the last century. The classical concept of endowing young members with a concept of belonging and temporal orientation, mainly by presenting them with a comprehensive and integrated common (mainly national) master narrative, purporting to refer to (but in fact constructing) a given common identity and its moments of “pride and pain”, has been challenged in many ways, and has been complemented with several additional conceptions of the purpose and logic of institutionalised history teaching and learning. These are of quite different nature and refer to a variety of aspects of history. Within this course, many important ways of addressing sections of the past not only in and for themselves, but for making learners aware of their relevance and significance for today’s societies and their futures have been developed. What is missing, though, is a model for long-term-disciplinary curricular progression across several years of historical learning, which addresses the challenge of developing students’ learning process in a multi-dimensional systematic disciplinary way. In this article, I outline a model of three dimensions of historical learning as the basis for a curricular structure which goes beyond a mainly chronological arrangement of subjects as it is still common in Germany, suggesting an interconnection of three dimensions of historical learning, namely knowledge, competencies of historical thinking, and historical consciousness.

Taken together, the three dimensions of developing historical education through learning and teaching can be characterised as follows: When learners enter formal schooling, they will be no *tabulae rasae* with regard to addressing aspects of past reality and representations of it. They will have both insights, concepts and procedures or operations at their disposal and also knowledge. Although these might (or will) have their function and value in the learners’ strive to make sense of whatever information they encounter about times before their own in which things seemingly have been different, they will in most cases be still erratic, conceptually unrefined, incoherent, unstable over time etc., and therefore will not only be still incomplete, but also not favourable for further exchange with both their peers, the adult society, and the host of information about their ancestors’ experiences with the past and constructed sense about it. Furthermore, they will both be based on and in turn reinforce equally unrefined and clarified attitudes and dispositions as well as convictions about the past.

For the purpose of learning, I suggest, that it is not so much the students’ concrete ideas, conceptions, fantasies as well as modes of explaining alterity and weird characteristics – these will widely differ, depending on specific cultural, societal and individual conditions and experiences. What unites young learners’ ideas and conceptions is there as yet unclarified and unrefined character. Learning in history, then, mostly should consist not mainly in exchanging these young individuals views with ready-made (yet elementarised) versions of the adult society’s most-accepted versions, but rather a process of cumulative (1) confrontation with new, different and information and concepts, and (2) their presentation with a host of new concepts, perspectives, categories, values and methods – both challenging and underpinning the previous ways of knowing and thinking, and allowing for their complementation, structuring and transformation into new forms which can relate to societal knowledge and be related to by society. At later stages of such a learning process, the mode will have to shift from mainly complementing and transforming the students’ conceptions with societal versions to encouraging and enabling them to not only use them to critically reflect on the past and one’s own prior knowledge and images, but also on these concepts themselves, in order to become a participating member of a society collective making sense of the past by research and discussion. As such, this process is simultaneously one of socialisation and individuation with regard making sense of the past.

Following a (by no means comprehensive) contextualization of the problem within a spectrum of History Education developments, the three dimensions are discussed in order to distinguish unsuitable from viable conceptions of both their respective “nature” and of related learning,

before an equally brief sketch of their interrelation is presented and some conclusions for curricular planning are discussed.

In the following, I suggest a tripartite model of “history education”, taking up central concepts and categories discussed in the field, mainly in Germany, but also in the anglophone debate. I then sketch both established and possible concepts of learning trajectories for each of these dimensions, focusing on both strengths and limitations. Apart from all non-disciplinary purposes and stances, such as endowing learners with a concept of identity, a sense of belonging and affiliation, fostering their identification with a national (or other) imagined community (Barton & Levstik, 2004, 45ff), their inclination to critically evaluate their society (Kuhn, 1977), or their general potential of critical thinking (Wineburg, 2016), mainly three disciplinary *aspects* of Historical Learning can be distinguished and combined: The (1) acquisition of a body of knowledge about the past, (2) the development of (a) historical consciousness, and (3) the acquisition or elaboration of a set of competencies of Historical Thinking.<sup>ii</sup> In the following, I argue that these three do not only form self-contained components, which can be arranged in arbitrary order of separate units, but rather mutually entangled dimensions, which are neither just following along a single line of development nor are independent of each other.

Curricular planning, therefore, needs to take into account interactions of three distinguishable, but interacting forms of not only cognitive development.

## Three dimensions of learning history

### *Substantive knowledge: The construction of a historical universe*

In many discussions on History Education in the last decades, a kind of dichotomy has arisen or been created between mainly two components of History Education. Even though the concrete terms and concepts applied for both sides of the juxtaposition vary to a considerable degree, a not only lightweight uneasiness of many protagonists with any focus or stress on abstract, and transferable aims of learning, such as “abilities”, “skills”, and “competencies”, but also “categories” is apparent. While there surely are a considerable differences between most of these positions, these positions are united by a certain degree of stress on the “content”-aspect of history. It is not merely a question of “knowledge”, for not only recent debates have shown that any reduction of the concept of “knowledge” to the disposition of “dates and facts”, but also of specific (not only master) narratives, interpretations and evaluations does not meet the point. Neither is knowledge restricted to this allegedly “factual” dimension of history (the mastery of procedures and concepts also entails knowledge), nor can knowledge only be acquired in complete-ready-made and subsequently unchanged form. What is at stake in these debates and what distinguishes the positions, rather is a stance as to whether and how a specific form of knowledge about things past is to be considered as a necessary *fundamentum* or rather a result of (more or less individualised) processes of historical thinking and learning – or in fact, whether it needs to be considered as having both functions.

It may well be that within these discussions about the relative values and dignity of knowledge about things past and abilities or competencies (but also historical consciousness), from the positions promoting a focus on the latter two, the first aspect has indeed been undervalued or understressed. In a dimensional concept of history education, however, the binary and relational questions of priority (both in terms of importance and order) in learning processes can be overcome in favour of a concept of mutual development of students’ disposition alongside each other.

This does, however, require to dismiss certain conceptions learning trajectories, above all the usage “parts of past reality” as topics and their chronological order. This concept, still very strong in many curricula and materials (textbooks) at least in Germany, works on the premise that knowledge of a past context can be acquired not only in relative isolation from the discussion of

other contexts, but also in substantially one single learning process. Applying a chronological order of topics, therefore, imitates a long-time telling of a single story. It does not so much put students into a rather receptive position, for they can be (and often are) assigned tasks of gathering information from material, interpreting sources (primary and other) on the background of the given context and to evaluate. What chronological teaching hampers or even impedes, however, are informed connections of the topics and questions under study both back- and forward in the diachronical, but also across in sectoral dimensions. It is this feature which causes the learning to remain mainly within the pre-defined box of the master narrative, and which renders the whole of the historical learning course a (more or less sophisticated) transmission of a singular-perspective master narrative.

What is more, though, is the disciplinary blindness of chronological teaching for the cognitive and emotional development of the learners across the years-long learning trajectory. Of course, many teachers very expertly reflect on this development and adjust their topics and tasks according to quite valuable concepts of appropriateness to the learners age. In combination with the chronological order, however, this effects to distant times and “epochs” to be addressed in much more elementarised (if not trivialized) form, and the application of more abstract and sophisticated concepts, methods and reflections to more recent topics only. Of course, this is not only a problem for the conceptual side of history education (and therefore) for the other dimensions, but also for the emerging image and understanding of the past.

Strict chronological ordering of historical topics, still structuring the “backbone” of most curricula and textbooks in Germany, fails to address the challenge of systematic progression across formative years for development of understanding. The often cited argument that learners (specifically young ones) need the chronological order to hold on to in the complexity of the past neglects that it is specifically the chronological order which prevents such temporal orientation by presenting the grid only bit by bit. It is this same feature which hinders comparisons “ahead” (“we will cover that in a few years”) and complicates those “backwards” to topics covered long ago (“remember, we did this years ago”). Furthermore – and maybe more crucial – it suggests a single, linear, if not necessary, development,<sup>iii</sup> counteracting reflection on “cause and consequence” (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Furthermore, it requires to arrange early, more distant epochs in different, more elementarised (not to say: trivialized) form – a pedagogical necessity which doesn’t fit historical insights into the alterity of especially these pasts at all.<sup>iv</sup> The long temporal gaps and sectoral switches in the actual “chronological” narratives testify to the faultiness of the belief in knowledge about earlier times, conditions and developments being necessary for the understanding of later ones (even without having been determined by them). Finally, one may hint to the insight that whatever form of learning about chronology, this central concept of the discipline of history, is deemed appropriate or necessary, it will be rather hindered that fostered if chronology is used as the unvoiced structure rather than a topic to be progressively addressed itself.

The main argument in our context is, however, that whatever progression in conceptual understanding, proficiency, and insights is gained in chronological learning – it cannot be caused by the chronological order, but must be added to it by other logics.

It is specifically in the interest of the acquisition of valid and resilient picture of “the past” that learning in this dimension should not take the form of reception of more or less finished sets of knowledge across time, but rather a form of internal mental construction and re-construction of a “historical universe”. Such a conception furthermore takes into account that however young learners are when a topic is addressed in formal instruction, they already have – from exposition to historical information, meaning-making and discussion at home, in their peer-groups and in their mediated world – a wealth of information and “knowledge”. What it might – and certainly will – lack, however, is not only any degree of “completeness”, but structure, terminological (rather: conceptual) clarity, stability and validity, and both valid and relevant inter-connections between the different aspects.

The recent conceptualization of disciplined knowledge as specifically “powerful” in the sense that – in contrast to the classical cultural canon (“Future 1”) and knowledge which is focused on learners’ immediate social situation only (“Future 2”) – helps students go beyond the latter and connect to worlds and perspectives outside (“Future 3”; cf. Young & Lambert, 2014; and now Chapman, 2021) indeed yields a certain criterion for establishing the role and function of substantive knowledge in the curriculum. The idea, though, that this kind knowledge for schools is to be established by disciplinary experts, does not suffice. What is needed for school, to my view, is a concept of substantive knowledge facets of the past and of disciplinary (conceptual and procedural) knowledge as *relational* between different forms in which such knowledge is present, mainly (a) academic/disciplinary knowledge, (b) occupational and institutional knowledge, and (c) everyday knowledge, much as Tilman Grammes has sketched for social science education (Grammes, 1998, p. 70; see graph x). School’s task, then, is to endow students not so much with the best thought (experts’) knowledge in each field (only), but to enable them to interrelate between the different forms and usages – and at best not in one-off ways, but increasingly via several years’ trajectories.

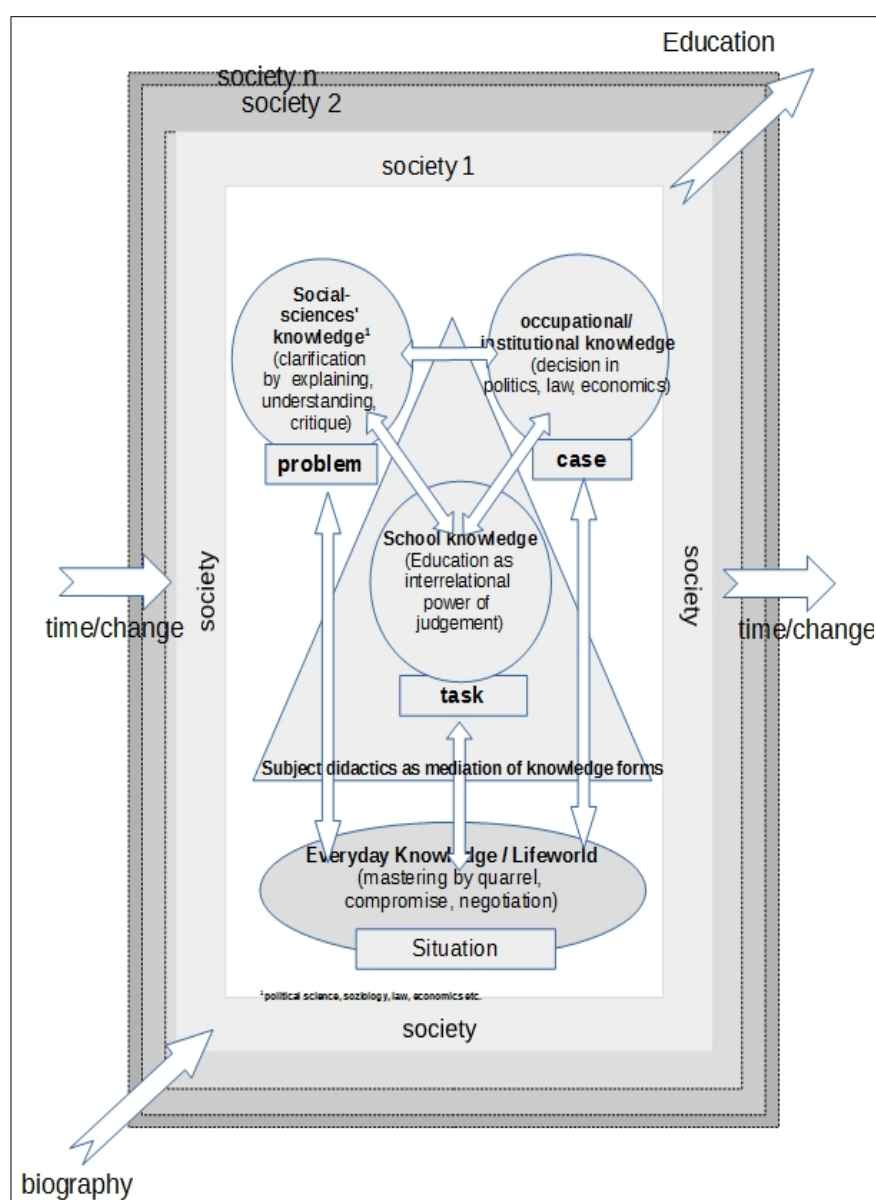


Figure 1. Knowledge forms after Grammes, 1998, p. 70.



If history education is multi-dimensional – as suggested above –, then curricula should not only contain specifications in all dimensions but also give indications on learning progression in all dimensions. While in theory it may still be possible to postulate a dominance of one dimension of the other, curricular clearness requires to at least indicate the relation of progression in the non-dominant dimensions of the others. It seems to be more advantageous, though, not to suggest one dimension as dominant and prescriptive for the identification and ordering of topics, aims and methods, but to reflect on a general concept of progression, governing all dimensions.

“Content-Learning” as a dimension of History Education should therefore be conceptualised not as the original acquisition of information, but rather as their differentiation, elaboration, arrangement and abstraction. The main concept here is that students come into learning not mainly void of information, but rather with a wide array of information on things past that is inconsistent in a spectrum of ways – not only with regard to “factual” incorrectness. The “Knowledge” students have, can (and will to different degrees) be of quite different conceptual quality, e.g. without apt distinction between (a) concrete and abstract, (b) substantive, interpretive and judgemental statements, (c) statements relying on very different theoretical and ideological bases, etc. In particular in the early years, but also later, they will apply and mix vernacular (everyday) and disciplinary concepts and language etc. “Content”-learning in history therefore should not strive to *replace* students’ prior knowledge and ideas with “scientific ones” by way of transmission, but rather to relate their individual (vernacular), societally available and “academic” or “scientific” knowledge in way which enables them to both add to and re-structure their own “historical universe”.

### **Historical thinking competencies**

#### *Theoretical background: Historical thinking – Unnatural act or anthropological necessity?*

The term “historical thinking” has been prominent in several lines of research into History Education in different countries. What is denoted by it, however, differs to a certain degree. While David Rosenlund's recent claim of a deep divide between a British-American “disciplinary” and a continental European “orienting” approach (Rosenlund, 2016), is too strong, given that the latter also is fundamentally based on disciplinary reflections and theory (Rüsen, 1983, p. 48; Rüsen, 2015). To a certain degree, these differences may be responsible for the seemingly contradictory qualification of Historical Thinking as either an “unnatural act” on the one hand (cf. Wineburg, 1999; Wineburg, 2001), and as an anthropological necessity, deeply rooted in human nature on the other (Rüsen, 1983, p. 48; Rüsen, 2015). A comparison may help.

Wineburg’s approach can be characterised as a “methodic constructivism”, if not a “methodical historicism”. In his understanding, Historical Thinking is the comprehensive term for the set of operations and concepts needed for “making sense” of the “strange past” (Paul, 2015, pp. 23–25) in or outside the academy. His conception that this set is not naturally given, but must be learned by acquiring professional procedures like *sourcing, contextualization and corroboration* (Wineburg, Martin, & Monte-Sano, 2013) in a way mirroring approaches discussed in Germany under the term of “Methodenorientierung” since the 1980s, has been criticised even within this framework of what Historical Thinking ultimately is about (e.g. succinctly by Levisohn, 2017). In a quite different way, however, Rüsen’s understanding of Historical Thinking transgresses its being “unnatural”, in not only focusing on procedures for and criteria of understanding “the past” in a correct way, but also on the “narrative” forms of making such insights into the (strange or similar) relevant, significant and meaningful for the present and the future.

In this narrative sense, Historical Thinking in general is “natural” – but not all forms and efforts are necessarily elaborated and viable. They can (and need to) be elaborated, not so much to match that of professional expertise but also in their everyday function of making sense of the past. Historians’ expertise lends concepts and insights, but not the full set of abilities. This approach

ranked high in German history didactics since the 1970s (cf. Barricelli, Hamann, Mounajed, & Stolz, 2008).

Seen from this perspective, it is not so much an integration of "two halves" in Rüsen's own model ("historical discipline and life experience") which is called for (Monte-Sano & Reisman, 2016), but rather an integration of the different models focusing each on specific aspects of historical thinking. This seems to be especially sensible to do, since one recent Wineburg-articles' title and another one's main focus (Wineburg, 2016; Wineburg & McGrew, 2016), as well as some passages in his book, indicate that in the end it is more the intellectual training in general than the referencing to the past, which is at the centre of his concerns. It surely is exaggerated but not totally false to claim that the domain of history is a means to the end of fostering critical thinking as a part of citizenship education. In Wineburg's concept there is a strong focus on knowledge about the past as the aim of the operations he advocates on the one hand, and a legitimization referring to the present, on the other hand, the gap between those two "poles" in his concept, viz. the conscious, methodically controlled and responsible reflection on the function and patterns of "using" history, can be filled based on the narrative approach of e.g. Rüsen and other concepts based on it.

Historical thinking may be conceived of as both an anthropological necessity (and therefore "natural") in its orienting function and in the interest in interlinking past, present and future, *and* at the same time "unnatural" in that it requires the acquisition of counter-intuitive routines of questioning the "obvious", the seemingly natural, the quick, and a high degree of discipline.

A close inspection of this "compromise" between the two qualifications will, however, show that what Rüsen qualifies as "natural" is mainly the basic function, not the forms it has to take in order to be fully functional – especially in a modern, heterogeneous and dynamic world. His postulation of a hierarchy of different "types of sensemaking" (Körber, 2015, 9ff) already indicates that in this narrative realm cognitive elaboration above the "natural" niveau is highly called for. The "unnatural" nature of historical thinking, Wineburg stresses, then refers to this elaborated quality of processes, which in themselves are quite natural. And that may even more stress its importance, because there is an "easy" way to perform it, which may, however, be not fully functional.

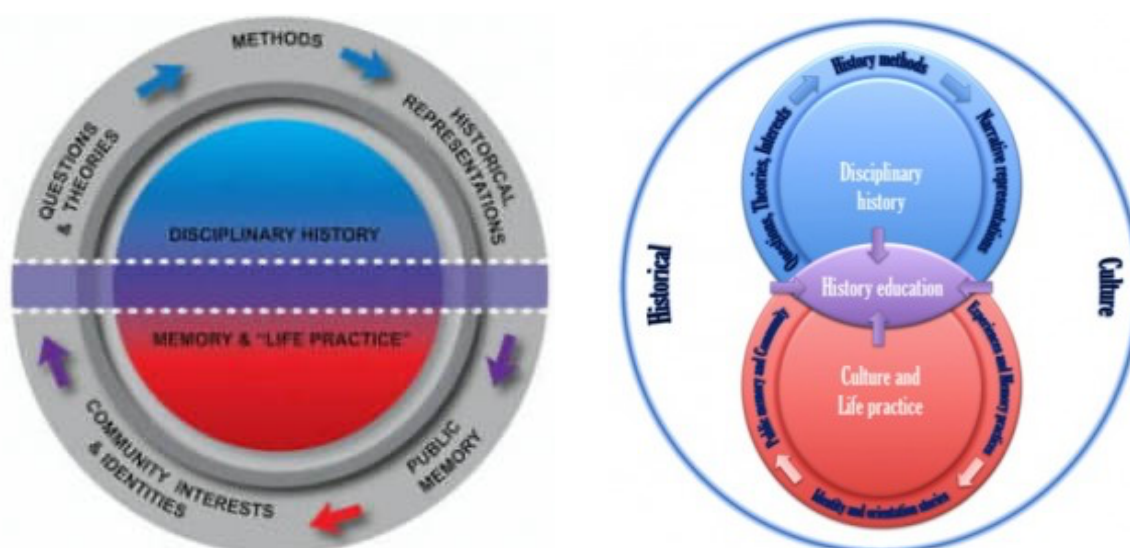


Figure 2. Left: Peter Seixas' Matrix (Seixas, 2016); right: Stéphane Lévesque's Matrix (Lévesque, 2016)

But how can the integration of the two (and more) concepts of historical thinking can be conceptualised? In recent times, there have been two suggestions published on "Public History Weekly", one by Peter Seixas under the title of "A History/Memory Matrix for History Education" (Seixas, 2016), and the other one by Stéphane Lévesque, titled "Going beyond 'Narratives' vs. 'Competencies': A model of history education" (Lévesque, 2016). Both differentiate a blue "disciplinary" history from a red form encompassing "memory" (Seixas) resp. "Culture" (Lévesque) and "life practice" and place a circular model like in Rüsen's disciplinary circuit around each one. The overlap between these two histories, purple in both models (in Lévesque's case explicitly labelled to that effect), is identified as the centre of/for history education.

But do these models already integrate the two or more "philosophies" of history education – the "disciplinary" one, focusing on the epistemology of the academic discipline as the basis for elaborating students' own historical thinking expertise in getting clarified knowledge about the past, and the "orienting" or "narrative" one, focusing on the reflection of how insights about the past can be connected to the present? In their present status, they rather mark the growing insight that historical learning needs to take up and reflect (and elaborate) elements of "both" realms.

Seixas' model, e.g. explicitly takes up Rüsen's initial circuit model of 1983 (which in the article is presented next to it). Because of his borrowing the procedural "rim" on the outside, as well as the placing of "academic" and "life practice", his graph seems to imply, as did Rüsen's graph of 1983, that interests and identities are the domain of the "life practice", whereas questions and theories, methods and representations belong to academe. When Rüsen published the model in 1983, some academic historians took it as an ill-guided demand that it was their task to work on questions not defined in academe itself, but in society (life-practice). On the other hand, both Rüsen's and Seixas' graph may be interpreted to imply that procedural historical thinking, "research" in its widest sense, was reserved to the domain of academe, whereas in "life-practice" memory had a totally different nature. Taken this way, Seixas' graph might indicate the demand for history education (in the violet middle bar) to take up both the different logics of "public memory" and "academic historiography", to make students aware of these different logics and to enable (and empower) them to actively integrate them in their orientation.

However, this model does also have its shortcomings. In the ultimate consequence, it would either deny people outside academe the participation in historical orientation or draw a strict line, postulating a qualitatively different logic of historical thinking in academy and "life-practice", not a kind of advantage rooted in methodical control. Lévesque, on the other hand, places both domains, disciplinary history and culture and life practice, into a broader circle of "history culture", thus marking that both share a common background of how a society addresses the past, and (what might be more important) designs two circles of orientation, which originate in and lead back to the purple area of history education. This might signify that historical orientation is neither dependent from academic research nor from "vernacular" ways of historical thinking, either, but that each of them serve the same purpose.

According to a model by Andreas Körber (2015, 27ff), historical thinking in "life-practice" and "academe" are not following different but the same logics, while the specific quality of the latter is gained and secured via following strict methodological rules and criteria. This understanding has several advantages: It does not deny vernacular competencies of historical thinking, it allows to understand historical thinking in both domains (everyday life and academe) as ultimately serving the same purpose, namely individual and societal orientation. Furthermore, it allows for querying into the inter-relation of these two realms and their ways (and results) of historical thinking, and for educational and didactic planning taking up students' own ("life-practical") ways of historical thinking and trying to enhance it by importing methodical insights and control to it – this would be where Wineburg's approach fits into the central realm.

In the following, I will try to take up Chauncey Monte-Sano's and Abby Reisman's suggestion, cited above, that the so-called "FUER-model"<sup>v</sup> of historical thinking competencies might "bridge" the two "halves" – even though not *within* Rüsen's model, but rather between the two approaches.



Based on Rösen's circuit of historical research (referred to also by Seixas), the FÜR-model uses Wolfgang Hasberg's and Andreas Körber's "process model" (Hasberg & Körber, 2003, p. 187; cf. Körber, 2015, p. 41) to exemplify in a graphical manner the process of historical orientation, containing a 6-field-matrix is inserted, which differentiates two central operations and three "foci" of historical thinking (cf. Figure 1 above). Using this model, the distinction, but also the complementary character of both Wineburg's and Rösen's approach can be visualised:

- Wineburg's concern (crosshatched in Graph 5) is mainly with the reflection of the methods which are applied for gaining reliable information on the past in the first place, mainly in a re-constructive way (6a-b), but in thorough reflection of what the temporal position the historian resp. the historical thinker does to this process. This does not imply, that Wineburg were in any way a proponent of an "objectivist" epistemology. He rather can be qualified as a "reflective historicist" or "methodical constructivist" in that he not only elaborates the methods and operations for securing reliability of information gained about the past, but also reminds the learners that the result is dependent on the circumstances and on the thinking itself.
- Rösen's (and Hasberg/Körber's as well as the FÜR-model's) concern, on the other hand, lies mainly in the narrative interconnections of a) insights into things past with the future (6/7 a-c), and in the usage of these for orientation (1-11; blue circuit), and the rational elaboration of patterns and methods of constructing such narrative patterns of temporal continuity – what Rösen also calls "sense-making" (symbolised here by blue arrows).
- This former's focus of concrete methods of sourcing, contextualizing and corroborating, is, on the other hand, not very strictly elaborated upon in Rösen's work.

These two approaches to historical thinking, can, therefore, be understood as complementary. Wineburg's concepts of sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, reading the silence etc., can be regarded as parts of what the FÜR-model calls "methodical competence" (Körber, 2015, p. 40). What both models do not satisfactorily address, however, is the question of differentiation of levels or niveaus of mastery of historical thinking, and of a logic of progression in acquiring the respective competencies of historical thinking (re-constructing the past and making rational temporal connections).

Jörn Rösen postulates in the new version of his model, that the different patterns of constructing continuity, represent different niveaus or levels of historical thinking, the "genetic" type, reflecting directed change in the course of history, being the most modern, complex and therefore most elaborate one, whereas the two other patterns, namely the "exemplary" one which aims at insight into "rules" of social logic by analysing past examples, and the "traditional" one, seeking to establish knowledge about the origins of valid structures, mark older, less complex and minor one (Rösen, 2013, p. 215; engl. Rösen, 2017).<sup>vi</sup>

### *Learning progression in historical thinking competencies*

What is needed, then, is an understanding of historical learning in both foci of re-constructing the past and of sense-making, reflecting different levels and niveaus of it, as indicated in the following graph (see figure 3), which may also be considered a conceptualisation of learning progression. This model suggests that both the operations focused upon by Wineburg, i.e., among others, sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, reading the silence etc., as well as the competencies of constructing historical sense or meaning focused upon by Rösen, are not skills which are acquired in a single step and which afterwards stay unchanged, but that they can be elaborated in different niveaus. It also suggests that more basic, inferior abilities to perform the respective operations are in specific ways "imperfect", but still fulfil their general function. What could this look like? A very short sketch may suffice (Körber, 2016; Table 1):

... Niveau (Level) of ...	... Wineburg's Historical Thinking	... Rösen's Historical Thinking
... Elaborate	... when establishing reliability of material, the criteria are applied flexibly and reflected upon as to their applicability	... Narratives are constructed in a way which is reflective to the applicability and scope of the patterns at hand.
... Inter-mediate	... For establishing reliability of material, standard concepts are applied, e.g. "originality",	... narratives are constructed by applying standard patterns, which are chosen from a supply, but not reflected upon as to their scope and logic.
... Basic	... questions about origins of material (sources) are put without consistency;	... narratives are constructed without consistent application of clarified concepts

Table 1. Niveaus (Levels) of competence in the FUER-Model (Körber 2007).

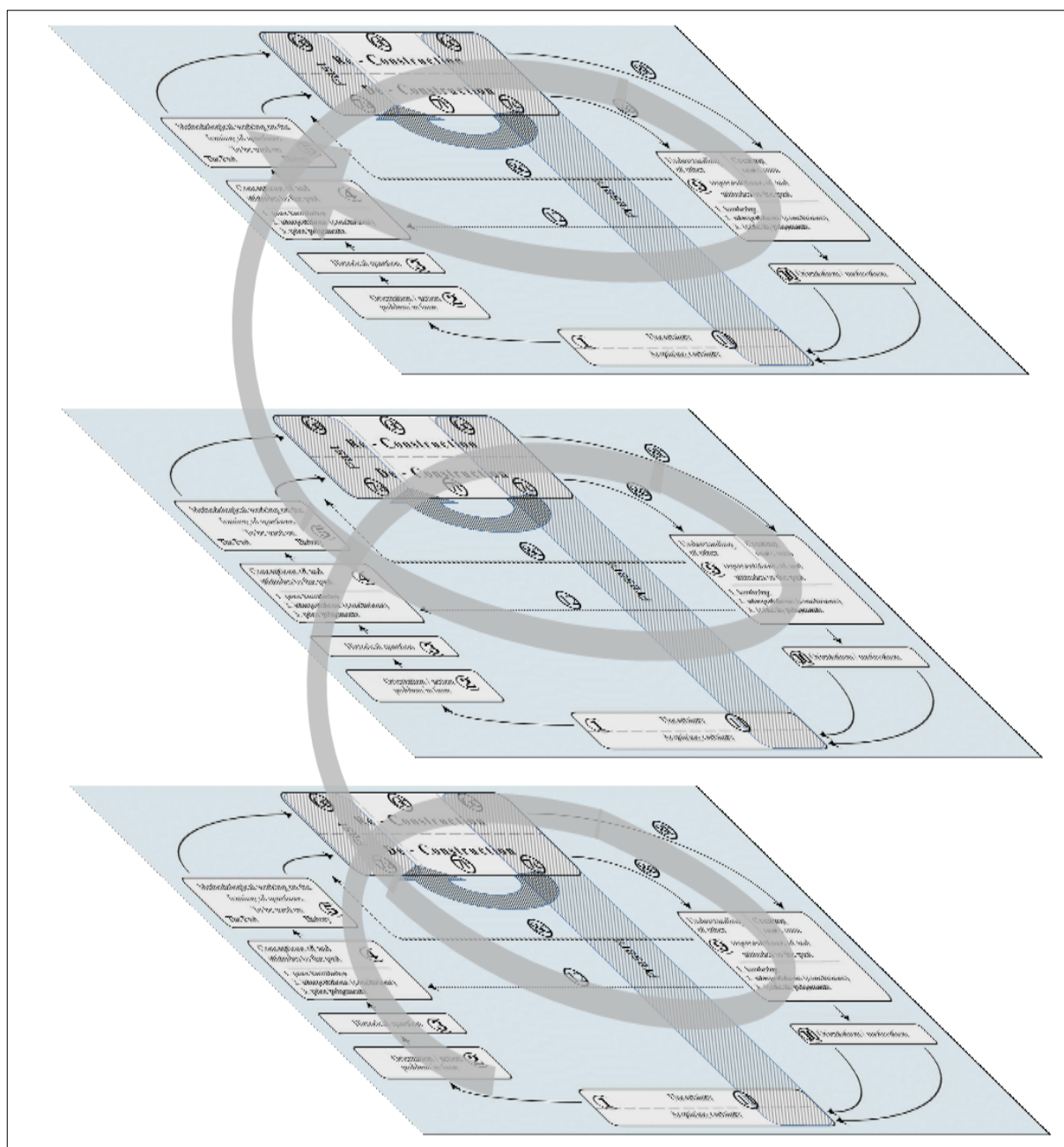


Figure 3. learning to Think Historically as the gradual elaboration of (the ability) to responsibly perform operations

*Competencies of Historical Thinking as a learning dimension*

The second dimension of History Education intricately entangled with the construction of an internal “Historical Universe”, then, is the acquisition and elaboration of competencies of “Historical Thinking” – in over recognising and overcoming of laymen’s/novices’ deficits, but more so as a process of reflection and elaboration of different concepts and performances.

To a certain degree, the concept of Historical Thinking used here thus draws consequences from the insight that experts represent only one position in the context of societal debates about history, even though their versions of operations are in fact “superior” to laymen’s in that they are based on a specific disciplinary methodology and control. Academic/scientific expertise and research does, therefore, in fact provide disciplinary concepts, methods for the learning processes, but not as the aim of such learning, but as a relevant pole in a multipolar field.

In the present model, thus, the thinkers’ (and learners’) present perspective onto the past does not so much figure as an obstacle to historical understanding, but rather as a necessary component of it. Since all historical knowledge is perspectival and narrative, i.e. interrelating past(s), the present and future(s) (Barricelli et al., 2008), historical thinking rather requires to become aware of one’s own (present) perspective and to reflect on its effects on the resulting narratives than to overcome it. In a certain sense, Jörn Rüsen’s as well as Hasberg/Körber’s conception of historical thinking (cf. Körber, 2015, 20ff), includes Wineburg’s and Seixas’ conceptions of getting insight into the past in its (relative) alterity, but surpasses it in stressing the orientational function of such thinking for the present.

This concept is specifically apt for historical learning which is not conceptualised as a training of imitating experts (in what ever elementarised way), but rather as an elaboration of something which students (as everyone) always does and even do before they enter school. As was the case with the “content”-dimension, again, one premiss of the current model is that students’ don’t learn “from scratch” at school, but that they bring some (sometimes even extensive) abilities to these learning processes. But such extensive experience with addressing past phenomena and/or their representations in current “history culture” does by no means guarantee that their abilities, concepts etc. are (a) valid, consistent, and stable by disciplinary criteria and (b) allow them to both understand other members and institutions in their society and be understood by them. History Education in this dimension, then, requires to (1) accept and recognise students’ own positions, interests, perspectives, questions and results from earlier addressing the past, and to (b) gradually enable them to elaborate their own ways of thinking so that they can inter-relate to other members and society at large – including the discipline.

Again, this conception allows (and calls) for learning trajectories which do not primarily present “ready-made” substantive knowledge about a certain portion of the past after the other, each in one go, but rather addresses substantial spans of time (or examples of certain classes) several times, under varying thematic perspectives and with increasing elaborations of the cognitive instrumentarium.

“Competencies” in this sense, are not merely formalised skills, or techniques, but complexes of general abilities and concrete techniques, combined with the disposition of first- and second order (as well as meta-cognitive) concepts on different (and increasing) niveaux. Competencies transgress skills (cf. also Case, 2020; Körber, 2007; Körber, 2015) in that they not only enable a person to carry out some specific task promising a high-quality outcome in an experienced and economic way (saving energy and time by e.g. routine), but to responsibly reflect and decide on how and even whether (or not) to carry out a task, on its prerequisites and implications. Furthermore, the proof of competencies is not only being able to execute a known task without help, but to apply and adapt procedures, principles, criteria to new, unknown tasks in truly autonomous way, which does not so much lie in having routine but in being able to break a routine in favour of reflection. Thus, they include both entitlement and responsibility for applying techniques or *skills*, promising sustainability in unpredictable changes. On the other hand, in the light of high (and increasing?) degrees of human and societal interaction not only in matters of



physical (re-)production, commerce, etc., but also in political, ethical, and temporal, orientation, competencies of historical thinking need to include not only abilities in addressing the past individually, but also of mastery and critical reflection of societally established concepts, notions, beliefs, procedures, etc.

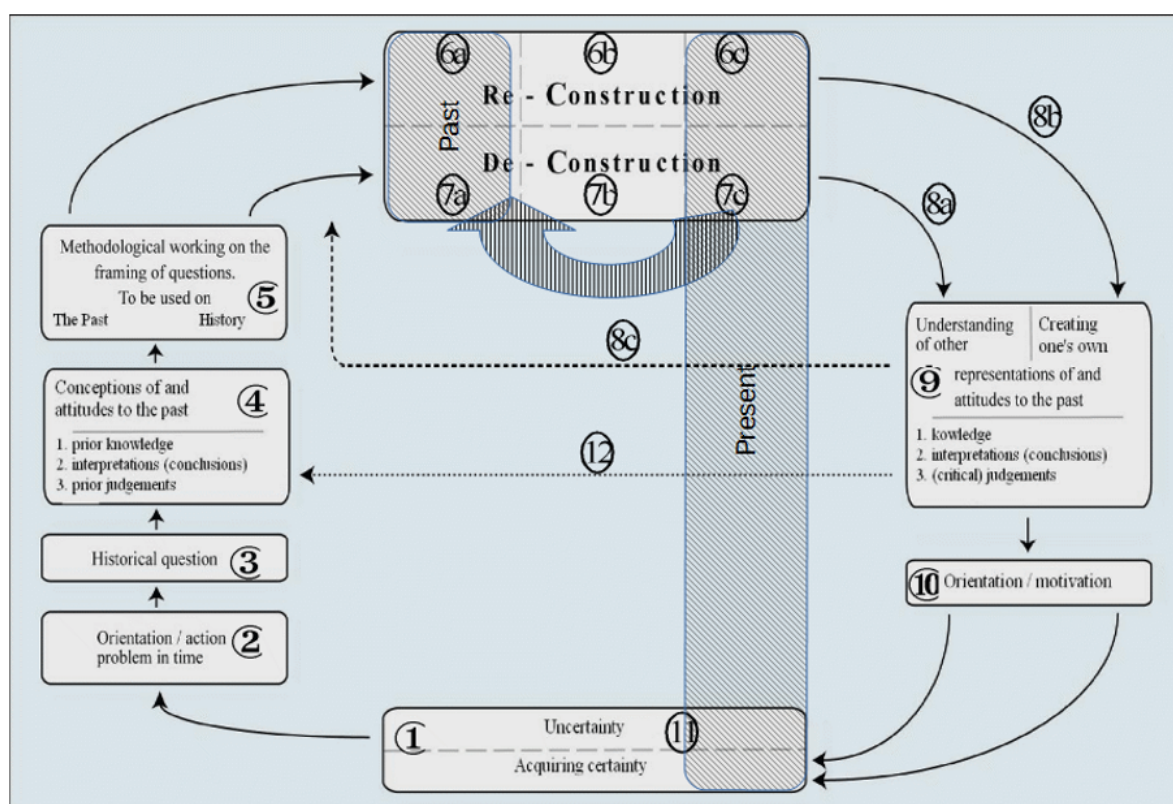


Figure 4. Process Model of Historical Thinking after (Hasberg & Körber, 2003, p. 187) with additional marking of Historical Concept of Historical Thinking as focused in Wineburg's concept.

For explanation of the numbers see (Körber, 2015, 24ff).

The place of knowledge about past conditions and occurrences is marked with (6/7 a), about the present in 6/c, while (1/11) marks the equally present position of the person thinking historically.

This focus on the mastery of concepts (both narrowly disciplinary and general) also sheds a light on how progression this dimension needs to be further developed. A mere replacement of vernacular ("alternative" or even "flawed concepts") concepts and terminology with "scientific" one, as it is underpinning a specific cognitivist concept of conceptual change will not suffice here for the same reason that expert operations and performance can not just be the model for students. More modern, situationist, versions of "conceptual change" which do not seek replacement but complementing students vernacular concepts with scientific ones so that they can switch between and interrelate them (Günther-Arndt, 2006), are more apt, but still lack the component that students do not only need to master the better versions themselves, but that they must be able to reflect on the premisses, strengths and limits of a variety of concepts which they encounter in their society. (Limón, 2002; Günther-Arndt, 2006) "Conceptual change", finally, still carries a notion of deficit-orientation rather than progressive elaboration of what students already dispose of. A logic of progression in this dimension of competencies, therefore can again be conceptualised along the differentiation of niveaus defined in the German FUEr-model (Körber, Schreiber, & Schöner, 2007; cf. Körber et al., 2007, p. 35; cf. Table 2).

The teaching and learning in the competency-dimension of History Education therefore is, in this model, neither conceptualised as the original introduction into some fundamentally alien way of thinking from a *"tabula rasa"*, nor as an abatement or containment of fallaciously unreflected habits of thinking. Instead, it is viewed as the elaboration of "original", "natural" and/or forms of

historical thinking which have been developed in and therefore are limited to specific situations and groups, with the aim to enable the individual to intensify their reflective mastery of their ways of thinking and to render such thinking *relatable to their society*. Even though this model accords to Rösen's understanding of historical learning as the process of elaboration (and maybe refinement) of processes already available to the individual in more in-elaborate forms, it differs from his concept that learning is not understood as the acquisition and usage of a set of narrative forms in a given order (from "traditional" via "exemplary" to "genetic"; cf. Rösen, 2017, pp. 193–202), but rather as the elaboration of the learner's disposition and mastery of these forms as well as other concepts, operations and criteria by way of simultaneous but increasing acquisition, distinction, differentiation, and reflection (cf. Körber, 2016; Körber, 2015, p. 41).

All in all, learning in the competence-dimension of historical thinking can be conceptualised as the successive and gradual elaboration of students' abilities, skills and preparedness to perform their own historical thinking in increasingly reflected and societally connectible ways. Again – as it was the case in the "content" dimension – this will entail that especially in earlier years of learning, students will not yet dispose of concepts which others (and esp. their books, museums, etc.) also use. It will be part of the interaction between "content" and "competencies" dimension to (1) accept students' own questions, interpretations and judgements, even if they are formulated in situated, non-consistent language and terminology, revealing lacking mastery of reliable concepts, and (2) introduce them to a variety of concepts and differentiations which they can (are supposed to) use in their own historical thinking. By introducing them not only to "substantive" knowledge about things past (see above), but also to categorial, conceptual knowledge, to reliable "scripts of procedures etc., not only "the past" itself and their own relation to it. The transgression via the boundaries of their lifeworld, powerful knowledge promises (Young & Lambert, 2014; see above), should not so much one "into the past" (which is unattainable; Paul, 2015, p. 27), but one into the different ways and forms, society interrelates both with its pasts (in the plural) and the plurality of the meanings within it – towards partaking in its history culture.

### ***Historical consciousness as state and process***

The construction of a historical universe and the elaboration of competencies of historical thinking does, however, not suffice. The orientational function included in the circular model of historical thinking by Hasberg/Körber (Hasberg & Körber, 2003, p. 187; cf. Körber, 2015, p. 41; based on Rösen, 1983, p. 48) relates to more than to cognitive insights into conditions and occurrences of the past and their differences from today's life, but does constitutively affect and shape a set of characteristics of individuals' ways of understanding both themselves and their world (with regard to the temporal dimension of diversity and change). History Education and historical learning then is not only about enabling the individual to perform reflections on these elements themselves in a reflected way, but also about their (more or less systematic) elaboration. Historical education does not only enable learners to reflect, but also changes them. How can such change be considered a progression?

Among the properties both necessary for and affected as well as changed by historical thinking are (among others) (1) attitudes towards a series of dimensions of human (individual and societal) life (in past and present), such as norms, values, convictions, (2) convictions about one's own affiliation and belonging (identity) both with regard to present groups and cultures, but also as to their inter-relation to such group in the past, etc., (3) conceptions of and insights into general aspects of human life informed by experiences in the present and information about the past, and (4) conceptual ideas about the nature, purpose and function of history as a dimension of human life and orientation ("historicity"). These characteristics form a complex of dispositions towards "the past" and history as well as the tasks of historical thinking, which is more abstract than concrete images and interpretations of specific occurrences and conditions in the past and also than concrete procedures of orientation, but which underpins them and is discernible in the concrete versions a person might hold and perform. Actual manifestations of these dispositions



can (and for the purpose of History Education), then must be considered as a kind of momentary state of these characteristics, which are equally influenced in their individual form by processes of historical thinking and orientation, and by systematic learning processes. Forming an abstract set of dispositions underpinning their beholders' individual conclusions and orientations from interrelating (concrete) interpretations of the past, experiences of the present and expectations, as well as their subsequent processes of such historical thinking, the complex of these dispositions can be called "historical consciousness". Given its complex nature, its intricate interrelatedness not only with individual acts of historical thinking but also with cultural and social backgrounds and conditions, developmental models of historical consciousness cannot consist of rather concrete descriptions, but must differentiate a rather abstract development.

In 1988, based on 100 interviews with people of all ages, Bodo von Borries (Borries, 1988, p. 12; translations from Körber, 2015, p. 8) suggested development of historical consciousness not as an additive cumulation of new aspects, but as a series transformations of people in four dimensions of their addressing history. Level 0 is given when cognitive unawareness (A0) and subsequent indifference (C0) leads to an inevitable because unconscious determination by the past (B0), in which all belonging to groups is via present emotional bonds. A first developed stage (1) then figures a more aesthetic concept of affiliation with groups transgressing one's own present (e.g. family' ancestors; D1) based on attained information still unquestioned and legend-like (A1), whose relevance and significance is felt rather than known (1B) and onto which meanings are projected unconsciously (1C). Level 2 then includes substantiated knowledge (2A) which allows for conscious recognition (and rejection) of facets of the past (1C) and their acceptance (and rejection) as significant (1B). The last level (3) then is characterised by abstraction and integration of knowledge into insights, the ability and readiness to actively and critically relate to the past, and to clarify one's own inadvertent and willing connections to it (1C), enabling members of society to responsibly act within historical culture (1D).

Stage		0	1	2	3
Trajectory					
A	Form and logic of (disposition of) knowledge	"historical ignorance", i.e. unawareness	"historical legend", i.e. mostly unquestioned images of a non-categorical and non-distinct "past",	"historical knowledge", i.e. substantiated and differentiated information	"historical insight", i.e. abstracted, interconnected and integrated as well as reflected forms of cognitive take-aways.
B	Personal relation to the past	"determination by history", "inevitable" inawareness (see above)	perception of being "fraught" with [still rather abstract] history, of it having influence and meaning [without any perception of having an own agency towards it]	perception of tradition, i.e. the acceptance of a specific connection with the past	"critical reflection" [– not so much the ability, but the stance to be both entitled and able to actively relate to both the past and its references in the present.]
C	Conceptions of relevance	"pre-conscious indifference"	"sub-conscious projections"	"conscious recognition"	"coming to terms" by "working through"; [i.e. active and critical confrontation and analysis]
D	Identity/identification	emotional belonging to a certain group	"aesthetic apperception" of affiliation (and differentiation)	"moral judgement"	"responsible action"

Table 2. Aspects and stages of progression of historical consciousness after von Borries 1988, 12.

The concept clearly shows a mutual interconnection of the four aspects and a development from a mental "*tabula rasa*"-stage which nevertheless is free from influences ("inevitable determination"), via a stage (1) of rather dependent cognition and attitudes, towards two stages which are characterised by a conscious personal relation, of which the first is marked by rather separated and non-interconnected, the second by a form of critical agency and judgement. Surely,

learners starting school will already have transgressed the initial *tabula rasa* stage, but in how far they already have gained substantiable and substantiated knowledge or even abstract insights resp. to what degree they still hold – at least in part – concepts of a holistic and rather mythical past, needs to be determined. For our context, the model proposed by von Borries suggests that in this dimension of learning also, learning should neither just follow and reinforce the suggested logics of relating to the past nor try to overcome them in favour of “correct”, adult-style conceptions and attitudes, but rather to provide opportunities for students to become aware of different, more complex and powerful relations, to reflect and to develop them

## Curricular implications

Possible curricular consequences of such a concept of history education are numerous. Among the main ones is a re-conceptualization of the principles for ordering topics of history lessons. Neither their cross-grade arrangement along the chronology nor any unorganised assembly of cases studies which allow for not much more than binary connections to or comparisons with the present will allow to systematically foster a development of understanding as a series of systematically arranged “longitudinal cuts” may do which a) do not each cover the whole “historical universal” but rather considerable spans of time, space and sectors, and b) sequentially build on each other with regard to the degree of differentiation, the level of detail of the periodizations used, and the number and type of varieties and alternatives offered, as well as with regard to an increasing selectivity and clarity as well as differentiating reflection of concepts and terms, an increasing systematization of positions and perspectives taken into account, etc.

This type of curricular arrangements also gives teachers and students a chance to “hook up” on prior knowledge (both from pre- and outside school and from earlier topics) and to both elaborate, sort and narratively interlink them (Figure 5). As a consequence, therefore, topics should be defined by (more or less) comparative perspectives onto a set of historical conditions and occurrences, *in principle* (if not in reality) spanning the whole or a considerable spread of time, so that differentiations of topics, language, methods etc. with regard to age-adequacy do not affect the presentation/thematization of specific eras only. Conceptualizing curricula as series of “longitudinal cuts” (or studies) thus offers the chance to re-address the individual historical era or context several times under new aspects and with elaborated methods and concepts, and therefore to re-arrange “images” of times. Lastly, main classes of topics (such as political history of power and dominion, economic, everyday history, mentalities etc.) should be addressed several times across the learning trajectory of several years, so that again, elaboration both of images of “content” and of concepts, methods etc. is possible.

As can be seen, such a concept of substantive history learning consisting of series of longitudinal studies, each addressing substantial spans of time, allows to overcome some of the main shortcomings of chronological teaching without giving in to unstructured arbitrariness. Furthermore, it allows for the definition of a plural of non-content-based progressions of History Education, but it also requires them to be explicit. Here, the links to progression in the other dimensions are to be placed. What it also requires, though, is a certain submission of expectations for learning outcomes to gradual elaboration. Whatever historical epoch or context has been addressed, after each longitudinal study, it will be furthered, but it will be non “complete” in the classic (?) sense that students had acquired a version of “academic knowledge” about it. Especially with regard to the earlier years, it may well be (and would be required) that students have gained new insights and knowledge, even though they may still express them in terms and with concepts which might seem “deficient” to the historian. But then, that would be a feature, not a bug: Acquisition of “knowledge about the past” not as a series of portions each to be taken in one go, but rather as a slow but reliable elaboration.

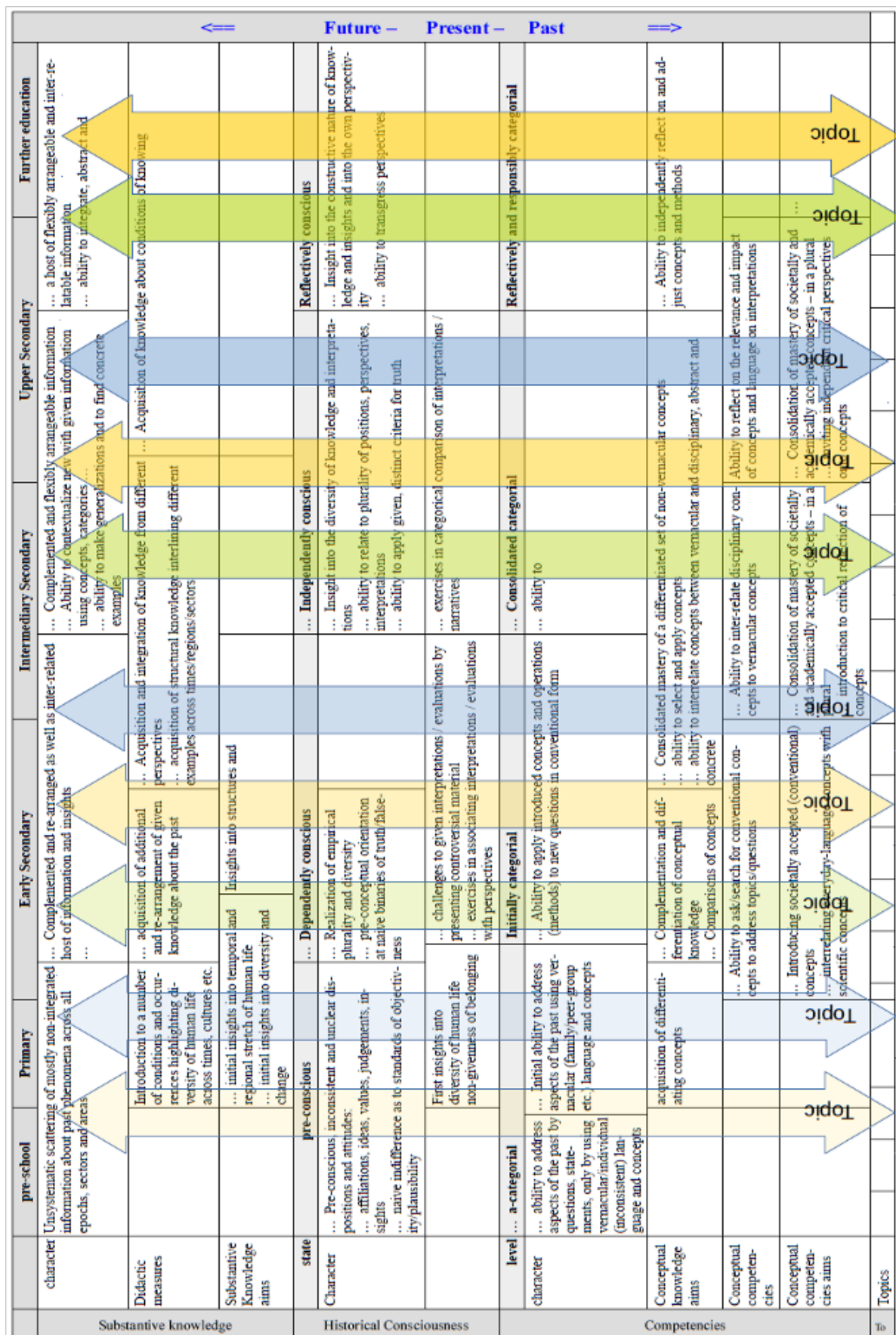


Figure 5. The integrated model of long-term curricular progression.

Each of these covering topics should cover a considerable span of historical time, as well as include examples from different regions, and cultures, rendering possible both the perception of alterity of human life conditions and forms compared to the present, but also their mutual diversity, and therefore the elaboration of questions not only about any individual past, but also about their interrelation, comparison, about possible connections, dependencies, and – at later stages of the development, resp. on higher niveaus – about criteria for such comparisons and sensemaking and their limits. It may not be necessary that each subject covers the same (or even the ‘whole’) span of historical time and space, but taken together, a rather wide focus and considerable overlaps should be given both at early, intermediate and later stages.

Topics themselves should be taken from a set of different sectors of historical study, such as everyday life/material culture, political, cultural, social history etc., – each repeatedly addressed after a few years on a new level of abstraction (see the colours in Figure 5).

Both their definition/formulation as the mode of their addressing in teaching should progress in a series of ways:

- At the early stages of learning, the overlapping topics as well as the concrete examples/questions addressed within them, may be rather concrete, e.g. taking up aspects of everyday life and (material) culture, expressed in rather vernacular language (such as “living”, “travel”, “family”). They may (and should) also take up aspects which are abstract by nature (i.e. “beliefs” and “superstition”, “law and crimes”, “violence”, “migration”), but both relevant for young learners in concrete forms (“witches”, “pirates”). What is necessary, then, is to present examples from a greater span of time (e.g. texts about piracy in antiquity, middle ages, Caribbean pirates and modern forms), in order to allow for (a) their temporal / spacial placement, (b) the formulation of questions as to commonalities and differences, thus (c) enabling questions about their (temporal) interdependence, and thus to (d) challenging vernacular, a-historical conceptions present in present popular culture (e.g. about “witches”, “kings”, “migrating” etc.).
- Towards the intermediate stages, their selection should increasingly refer to disciplinary concepts (“social groups”, “power”, “religion”), taking up insights as well as questions formulated at the earlier stages, and refining them both with regard to their conceptualization, but also by using increased methodology.
- Towards the late stages, topics should considerably shift towards a focus on the concepts and categories by which occurrences and conditions in different past times are grouped to topics and perspectives, interlinked and compared.

Each of these topics, each covering considerable and overlapping spans of historical time, and progressing in several dimensions, such as (1) concreteness/abstraction of depiction of conditions and events, (2) reference to ideas of causation and modes of explanation, (3) coherence and consistence of concepts, (4) controversy in society. Independently from the concrete subjects, but used for addressing them, progressions need to be implemented with regard to several sets of both methodical and conceptual insights and abilities. Since, e.g. students might come into formal learning without any concrete idea about how knowledge about the past can be gained, at early stages of learning, they must be presented with a variety of different such sources, such as oral information from parents and relatives, books, films, objects etc. These should increasingly represent further differentiation, such as information from the time under study (“primary”) vs. retrospective (“secondary”) accounts, originals vs. replicas, but instead of expecting full-fledged insights into the epistemological quality of material (“source” or “evidence”) from all students, it might suffice for initial stages that students are able to express latent insights into as well as questions about some forms of differentiation, even though using vernacular language (e.g. is information from “old” books “better” than that from “new books” – or vice versa?). Similarly, lots of these initial reflections will only require to rather generously



distinguish between times and epochs, starting maybe with “here today” vs. “back then” or “in the past” – but the initial courses should offer students initial categories of differentiation.

At later stages, these initial conceptualizations then will need to be both differentiated and complemented. e.g. by exercises to differentiate between relevant types of “books” (“diary” vs. “memoir”) and reflection on their respective implications for our knowledge. Similarly, students’ conceptions of time should be both differentiated and added to, e.g. by complementary concepts of periodization (art-historians’, non-Christian, non-European, etc.), further on, to more abstract concepts of temporal relations, and of course – finally – to reflecting approaches as to such temporal concepts, their advantages and limitations.

To list all possible (and necessary) “lines” of progression will transgress the space of this article, but it should be noted, that they don’t need to be implemented into the sequence of “topics” only, but also to be applied to the methods applied in addressing them. Here, equally, a maybe intuitive trajectory from more “knowledge-based” to more enquiry-based pedagogy seems to be problematic. Instead, progressions need to be defined, reflected as to their validity (not only) from a subject-specific point of view, and empirically tested. Some suggestions may suffice here:

In addition to (1) a planned growth of “knowledge about the past”, this requires (2) a structural change in the linguistic, i.e. conceptual as well as sentence and text-linguistic forms of their presentation and (3) an equally conscious and planned differentiation of the subject-specific thought processes to be opened up to the learners and also to be demanded later.

Whereas the conventional, chronologically organised practice of history education is of ultimately additive character, presenting students with series of new cases and information but lacking a systematic progression of the way they are addressed and interpreted, the model presented here offers a combination of supplementation and differentiation as well as transformation of the knowledge stocks within a reference framework which is built from the beginning, but extended and differentiated along the way (across the longitudinal cuts) with regard to the sectoral, spatial and scale dimension of history.

The progression of the linguistic dimension will have to draw on concepts and perspectives from research into the development and promotion of linguistic ability and understanding, while at the same time keeping in mind the specificity of historical thought operations. It cannot be assumed that in the course of such an intentional learning progression, simply “false” and/or “alternative” concepts, which moreover often take on everyday or colloquial language forms, will be successively replaced by scientific variants coded in educational and technical language, so that the former would be overcome in the sense that they would no longer be available. Rather, it can be assumed that, by making people aware of the particular characteristics of different and differently complex forms of basically comparable operations, including their respective services, prerequisites and limits, it is possible to increase competence in the sense of more independent and conscious use of different and situationally appropriate forms, and to shift performance in favour of more complex, more reflected forms.

This also means that neither the operations of historical thought nor the language actions associated with them are acquired or could be acquired in an additive sequence, as the widespread learning progression model of Bloom resp. Anderson and Krathwohl (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2009) suggests. The operations distinguished there (especially in the revised version by the latter two authors), from reproduction to evaluation, would thus not be seen in a sequence with respect to their acquisition, so that first the reproduction, then the analysis, etc., and only at the end the evaluation would be acquired directly in a valid form. Rather – so my hypothesis – it can be assumed that all learners carry out all these operations from the very beginning, and that in the course of a consciously progressive learning process they should all be promoted in terms of their quality – that is, both in terms of their demands on them and their reflexivity. Here – as a suggestion – the graduations from the FUER-model could present a model: If “novices” are expected to reproduce as well as analyse and evaluate in a “basal” form, i.e. with terms and formulas that are more likely to be used in everyday language, bound to a specific situation,



inconsistent across situations and con-texts, and often not conscious of the scope and connotations of the terms and formulas used – but not fundamentally dysfunctional – teaching should be geared towards enabling the learners to do so first, to carry out the whole spectrum of these operations of historical thought with the help of other members of society known, and thus connectable and recognised terms and concepts and formulas – i.e. with regard to the "thinking" and "language witnesses", but not in terms of content conventionally – and finally also to critically reflect on these conventional instruments and procedures themselves and thus to develop a "sovereign" disposition over them.

The extent to which this basic perspective can also formulate a progression of the language material to be used or processed in this process – i.e. texts, oral statements and tasks – would have to be further explored in a collaboration between history didactics and linguistics. To what extent, for example, it may be possible to use more "basal" forms of the operations of historical thought with less abstract and complex tasks (or with more explicit support of complex but not linguistically complex tasks by more concrete, "lower" functions of text comprehension and historical thinking) and by means of texts that are explicitly aimed at comprehensibility, but in later phases of a progression to add less "optimised" and "trimmed" materials (also because the teaching should also enable the students to independently deal with non-didacticised forms of historical thinking and handling in historical culture) and to reduce the small-step support?

Is it conceivable, for example, that within the framework of such a notion of progression at the "lower" levels of the "novices" it is also possible to work with "simpler" (more commonplace) linguistic forms of tasks and at the same time also accept the results of the processing of the tasks by students with linguistic imprecision, because the focus does not have to be that the resulting statements about the past must be conclusively "correct" and sufficiently complex, but rather that they are the starting point of a development, an elaboration? For example, it would then not be important that a statement made by a student in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade on a question of medieval history could lead to a "successful adoption of perspectives" in the thinking of the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Rather, it would represent – in comparison with those of other students\* and those offered by text-books and teachers – the operation of recognizing temporal (and other) perspectives in such a way that (1) in a later renewed thematization of the historical object, more differentiated thought processes can be expected, and (2) the fundamental insights gained would also be transferred and further developed in subsequent units on other objects and topics.

Against this background, turning away from the chronological arrangement of the historical "material" may not be absolutely necessary, but it does make sense: If the individual lessons do not focus on a progressive conception of historical thought, in order to ensure that the past is presented in a (sufficiently) complex and correct way, because there can be no new discussion (except in a very late second session in the upper school), but rather on the promotion of historical thinking to a next level, which should not be final, but rather further elaborated, then recurring (rough) topics in a series of longitudinal sections are recommended.

The demand on the linguistic progression of the requirements (tasks) of history lessons and the materials used would then be to address the "next" stage of progression of the mental performance to be promoted (and demanded), its linguistic coding etc., not to encourage the pupils to formulate statements about the past that are as valid as possible. It would then be possible to use the diversity of student work on open learning tasks to reflect on the respective achievements and limits, on the orientation function as well as on the linguistic form of such statements. Projective tasks in particular, which require students to put themselves in the position of a historical person (often fictional or not concretely imaginable), could then be presented more honestly intellectually (or historically) and demanded more honestly from students: Which teacher, which contemporary researcher could ever say when a perspective adoption has "succeeded": "Like a 10<sup>th</sup> century monk" or a Japanese samurai, none of us can think and/or assess a situation. No one will have a "fully valid" answer to a corresponding task – and no teacher can decide which achievement is "right". Nevertheless, such tasks are not nonsensical. They are not at all about (unfairly) demanding something more or less spontaneously from the students (the

temporal understanding of past actions), which is still the subject and task of extensive research today. Rather, such tasks actually aim to make plausible the demand for abstraction from the present perspective and the resulting otherness of perception, interpretation and decision. The criterion for the success of such tasks is thus neither to have actually come mimetically close to the past person, nor to have stripped off as completely as possible one's own present positionality and perspective, so that one simply argues "as strangely as possible" and then passes this off as proof of successful adoption of perspective. Rather, the aim of such tasks is to help students recognise that and to what extent they have to abandon the present self-evident in order to somehow "do justice" to a past perspective. It does not depend on the coherence of the individual result, but on the recognition and meaning of the claim of historical thinking: Whoever judges and evaluates the (sufficiently complex) cognitively presented past situation as he/she would do from the present without any difficulty, shows just as little historical understanding as someone who presents and evaluates everything as differently as possible, but cannot say at all to what extent this should be appropriate to the concrete situation. It is only in talking and discussing about the respective (and preferably different) "solutions" (or better: treatments) that the individual students have already understood, but the potential for the actual learning process actually lies. The original processing of the task is therefore wrongly used as proof of the fulfilment of a requirement. Such tasks must not be understood as achievement tasks, but must be learning tasks in so far as they produce the material for the actual process of historical thinking and learning.

In this respect, one could (also) make a methodological borrowing from the foreign-language didactic principle of "task-based learning" in so far as the processing of a task by students is subjected to reflection in a focus on (here now:) history phase, in which historical thinking (and language) is made explicit, and precisely in this process newly acquired or differentiated concepts, terms, methods, etc., which are more abstract and provided with a reflexive index, are thematised and progression is expressly promoted (cf. Körber, Gärtner, Stork, & Hartmann, 2021).

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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> A very short German version has recently been published as (Körber, 2021)

<sup>ii</sup> For a differentiation of “competencies” from “skills” see below

<sup>iii</sup> Cf. Barricelli (2012, p. 205): “In the [...] chains of events, the (past) present becomes a product of (even older) past: at a certain point in time, things were exactly the same because they had been exactly the same and the same before.” (transl. A.K.).

<sup>iv</sup> Cf. e.g. recent archaeological findings indicating beliefs and social actions of Neolithic people totally weird to us (e.g. Spatzier and Bertemes (2018)).

<sup>v</sup> FUER is a German acronym for “Research in and Fostering of Historical Consciousness” – the project’s title.

<sup>vi</sup> He also postulates that the competence of historical thinking is acquired and elaborated by passing through this circuit (Rüsen (1994, 64ff)).