

HISTORY DIDACTICS

Elisabeth Erdmann

Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen – Nürnberg, Erlangen, Germany

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Summary

Starting with the meaning of the word “didactics” in all its theoretical and practical aspects the chapter deals with the history of History Didactics and its evolution as an academic discipline. Finally, the chapter discusses whether History Didactics is part of either the History or the Pedagogy department or whether History Didactics functions as a bridge between these disciplines. The definition of History Didactics and its varying scope of tasks are presented as various definitions of “History Consciousness” followed by a demand for a new debate about how to conceptualize History Consciousness. Then, the term Historical Culture is presented before the chapter discusses the controversial issue of whether Historical Consciousness should remain the fundamental category of History Didactics or whether it should possibly be replaced by Historical Culture. Again, different theoretical concepts are presented. Problems and scope of tasks are defined for the practical aspect of History Didactics. The requirements as set out by standards and competences of History Didactics are dealt with in more detail, and conclusions for History Didactics are drawn. The chapter concludes by pointing out that despite all linguistic difficulties it is very necessary to take cognizance of international research results.

1. General Introduction

1.1. What Does Didactics Mean?

What does the word didactics actually mean and what are its etymological roots? In Greek, we find the verb *dídasko* which can be translated as to teach, to communicate, to learn. We also find the adjective *didaktós* which means either teachable, communicable, announceable or taught, communicated. This adjective is used especially in respect to didactic poetry, a wide-spread form of poetry in ancient times. Hesiod, who lived and wrote in Greece around 700 BC, may serve as a good example for two types of didactic poems: the first deals with how to cope with practical life via empirical experience and is represented in Hesiod's "works and days" (*erga kai hemérai*). The second type is about theoretical ontology which is represented by his "theogony" (teachings about Gods). Both the practical and the theoretical aspects are important for the definition of didactics.

In 1638, the educationalist John Amos Comenius (Jan Amos Komenský; 1592-1670) finished his famous "Great Didactic" (*Didactica Magna*), which was written in Latin. However, it was not printed before 1657 in the "*Opera didactica omnia*". This fact is explained by Klaus Schaller, an expert and well-merited researcher of Comenius' complete works: Comenius wrote the *Didactica Magna* expecting that using both a new method and more effective teaching media would make it possible to teach everyone everything (*omnes omnis*) both quickly and effectively. Later, Comenius doubted that the pedagogical commission should in fact be fulfilled as soon as everything had been learned. He thought that teaching was more about "...some kind of knowledge that would accept the amelioration of the human condition as well as the well-being of mankind, things and other beings as the human measure for any action made possible by knowledge" (Schaller, p. 78). In the following years, didactics became one of the central terms in educational theory. Today, general didactics are understood as a branch of Pedagogy.

1.2. The Beginnings of History Didactics

There has always been a didactic dimension to History: whenever history was told, written down or researched it was done for a specific purpose. History is a discipline with great effects on society's consciousness. For that reason, History needs to be published and made available to everyone and must not be restricted to specialists (Rohlfes, 1986, 9f.). According to Hans-Jürgen Pandel, people in the last thirty years of the 18th century had been thinking along the lines of History Didactics. By that he understands particular ways of mind and opportunities to make both historical knowledge and thought relevant to processes of everyday life. It is important to note that general educational thinking was no longer simply applied to the Science of History. Instead, the concept of History Didactics evolved within History (Pandel, 1982, 108ff.). However, the following years saw the differentiation of History and the evolution of Didactics within Educational Studies. These two phenomena lead History Didactics to be ground "between the total lack of didactics in the Science of History and the pedagogues' incompetence in subject-based Didactics (Pandel, 1982, 129)".

History was established as subject at universities in the early 19th century although events had, of course, been recorded before and historiography as well as verification of sources had existed before. In Europe, history at school gained general acceptance during the 19th century at higher as well as lower schools (among the latter for example in Germany: “*Volksschulen*“, *Höhere (Higher) Volksschulen* and “*Bürgerschulen*”). However, younger noblemen and future regents had already been taught History long before the 19th century.

2. The History of History Didactics

Ever since History has been taught at school or university, consideration has been given to how and why History should be taught. For a long time, History was seen as the great teacher of life (see for example Cicero’s “*Historia vitae magistra*“ [de oratore II 9, 36]). In 1681, Bossuet put it in a similar way in his introduction to “*Discours sur L’Histoire Universelle*” (Bossuet, 659ff.). In the first half of the 19th century, it was believed that it was sufficient – at least at schools for lower education – to use History for the needs of the present and draw (practical) morals from it. It was also believed – especially for higher education schools – that the idea of History in its various forms should be made distinguishable by comparing the various epochs in order to come to a critical evaluation of one’s own life. However, at the time, these concepts were not clearly separated. “In practice, differences were blurred and it was believed that it was possible to combine all ways indicated regardless of their different origins. Thus, it was impossible to convincingly articulate the aims of History education and to mediate a safe methodological way.” (Hoffmann, 184). Up until well into the 20th century, basically until around 1970, Germany and other European states saw a similar development (Erdmann/Hasberg part 1, 2).

In the 1920s, it was, as Bernd Mütter continued to point out, especially the educationalist Erich Weniger with “The Basics of History Education” who provided an academic justification for History Didactics as a separate discipline according to educational principles. In contrast, Wolfgang Hasberg perceived these years as the crucial period of Prefiguration for an academic History Didactics because in addition to Weniger other new approaches were developed that would have their breakthrough in the 1970s (Hasberg 2005, 30).

After the Second World War, Germany did not opt for a completely new start with no connections to the past, “but looked rather for historical orientation backwards as well as pioneering sketches for the future. History Didactics approaches of the Weimar Republic suggested themselves.” (Süssmuth 1991, 18). Thus, Weniger’s justification of History Didactics established itself in post-war Germany (West) as one of the major theories with considerable influence until curriculum theory appeared around 1970 (Mütter, 1997, 334).

Even though History Didactics had been established as a subject at teacher colleges and some universities after 1945 and even though different positions existed, History Didactics in the 1950s and 1960s basically meant how to teach History at school. This consensus was further strengthened since education towards the integration into society was regarded as compulsory goal of History classes. The psychological justification of

History classes was still based on older concepts of developmental psychology (Roth, Küppers). The focus was on History classes while History outside the school was not noticed at all (Kuss, 741ff.).

3. History Didactics as an Academic Discipline

Social and political changes imposed new requirements on academics, teachers and the education system, which, around 1970, caused History at universities and schools to experience a crisis. For some years, the progress in education and learning theories had been considerable and it seemed possible that History Didactics would be left behind. At the same time, History Departments conducted a discussion on general principles within their subject.

The evolution of History Didactics as an academic discipline is closely linked to the development in both Education and History departments.

After 1970, a “new History Didactics” had evolved. It was built on learning and curriculum theories as well as on ideas of society and theoretical history. “At the same time, different levels of thought define the points of departure for different, and still existing, concepts of History Didactics. These are (1) the critical communicative concept as supported by Annette Kuhn, Klaus Bergmann and Hans-Jürgen Pandel; (2) the approach according to academic guidelines as supported, and rather differentiatedly so, by Karl-Ernst Jeismann, Jörn Rüsen, Hans Süßmuth, Uwe Uffelman and Siegfried Quandt; (3) the educationalist concept as developed by Joachim Rohlfes, Rolf Schörken and Bodo von Borries; (4) the concept that focuses on actual History classes and is linked inextricably to Kurt Fina, Heinz-Dieter Schmid, Margarete Dörr and Wolfgang Hug; and finally (5), the empirical approach of Peter Schulz-Hageleit, Peter Knoch and Hans Pöschko.

The Marxist-materialistic view as proposed by Horst W. Jung and Gerda von Staehr has never been of any influence to the History Didactics debate.” (Kuss, 752f.) There are, of course, common elements shared by more than one conception of History Didactics.

However, clear distinctions became evident when guidelines were set up in Hesse with the following issue at stake: whether ideas of History Didactics should start from a theory of society or from a theory of history. The “critical History Didactics” followed the idea of emancipation strictly and thus chose the selection of contents. The other side rallied behind the so-called “*Wissenschaftsdidaktik*” (scientific didactics). This label, however, is not altogether correct, because while it does define History including its methods, theories and research as the point of reference, this reference to the academic subject does not imply some kind of representational didactics.

The depicted development did not take place in Germany only, but also, quite similarly, in other countries as well. A survey by Piet Fontaine is characteristic of History Didactics establishing itself as an academic subject everywhere.

Fontaine, a professor at Utrecht University and member of the initiative group that initiated the founding of the International Society for History Didactics in 1980, wanted

to know exactly what History Didactics was and from 1986 to 1988, wrote letters to the members of the International Society for History Didactics. He asked 25 members of 14 countries to give their definition of History Didactics in not more than 15 lines. Despite many differences in their answers a great deal of agreement showed in the following points:

- 1) History Didactics is an academic subject.
- 2) History Didactics is relevant not only for school but for the entire society.
- 3) History Didactics is connected to and deals with Historical Consciousness.

These three points of consent can also be found in Karl-Ernst Jeismann's definition of History Didactics (Jeismann, 1977).

4. The Position of History Didactics between Pedagogy and Historical Sciences?

Before we turn to the definition of History Didactics, it is necessary to know its place. "The new History Didactics that has evolved in West Germany since 1970 features learning and curriculum theories as well as thoughts on social and historical theories as their inextricable part." (Kuss, 1994, 752). Since the end of the 1970s, the view gained acceptance that Historical Consciousness in society is the subject of academic History Didactics.

It was Karl-Ernst Jeismann who defined Historical Consciousness as the central category of History Didactics. 'Historical Consciousness' includes both teaching and learning History not only at school but also in general contexts. Furthermore, the term describes the mental capacities to be formed and shaped during the learning process as well as its predispositions due to its social environment.

Finally, it contains the aims, contents, methods and effects of mediating historical ideas. 'Historical Consciousness' analyses past processes and conditions categorizing and explaining them within their historical contexts. Finally, the past will be judged and evaluated from a present perspective and linked to perspectives of the future (Jeismann, 1977, 14; Jeismann 1980, 165 ff.).

The concept of 'Historical Consciousness' has provided History Didactics with a sound academic basis. At the same time, this defining of goals allowed History Didactics to be rediscovered as an aspect of History alongside the Science of History and Historical Theories.

Once History Didactics had been defined along these lines as a proper part of History, it was no longer necessary to substantiate the discipline any further. Accordingly, Jeismann mentions as related subjects to History Didactics both Empirical and Historical Educational Sciences; further mentioned are Educational Anthropology, Educational Psychology, Learning and Social Theories, empirical Social Sciences, Theory of Societies and Theories of Education and Culture (Jeismann 1978, 74). Bernd Mütter coined the phrase "*Integrationsmodell*" (model of integration). However, it needs pointing out that different opinions of History Didactics and its place within History have existed until today.

If the Science of History and History Didactics are perceived as related but separated disciplines with some common goals, Mütter calls them parts of the “*Überlappungsmodell*” (model of overlap). If, however, History Didactics is an independent subject with the same status as the Science of History and Educational Studies, Mütter named it “*Eigenständigkeitsmodell*” [model of independence] (Mütter, 1986, 37). On the other hand, History Didactics has long been considered as either part of Educational Studies or an aspect of the Science of History, while today many History Didacticians emphasize its bridging functions between History and Educational Studies. „Nobody would seriously deny that History Didactics does not belong to either the Education or the History department.” (Rohlfes, 1986, 17. Schönemann, 2003, 21).

Recently, Mütter assumed both General Didactics and History Didactics as bridging disciplines relating and integrating vastly different subjects. According to him, they are no longer related to each other in a stable and schematically fixed proportion, but hover constantly in a complex and ever-changing field of interaction. Thus, Mütter hopes to allow for a better contact between the theory of didactics and actual teaching (Mütter, 1997, 601, 610).

Despite these competing positions it is undisputed that History Didactics is particularly closely related to the Science of History. This in turn means that History Didactics cannot do without approaches, methods and results of the Science of History. This is completely different from the so-called “*Abbilddidaktik*” (representational didactics) which confines itself to having the Science of History dictate its contents and reformulate their results *ad usum delphini* only.

Examining these dispositions’ effects on the structuring of disciplines at universities, however, it is evident that many universities assign History Didactics to the History department. There are chairs for History Didactics within the History department as well as chairs for branches of History plus History Didactics. A different solution is to subsume all Didactics chairs in either one Didactics department or one faculty of Education.

In fact, both variations do exist even within one federal state of Germany. This can only be explained by differing historical evolutions and the individual university’s setting of academic focuses. In addition, some countries have *Pädagogische Hochschulen* (tertiary education institutions for teacher training), pedagogical universities, teacher colleges or similar institutions with similar names. There, most but not all future teachers for elementary and secondary schools (both modern and intermediate secondary, but not grammar schools) are trained and qualified.

Other countries have elementary teachers study at so-called pedagogical colleges. Professors at these institutions are responsible for both their subject as well as its teaching, i.e. Didactics. Consequently, chairs are only offered for History and History Didactics combined, while they will be advertised as Medieval or Contemporary History chairs. In countries with *Pädagogische Hochschulen*, where future grammar school teachers choose to study at university, History Didactics at university is sometimes taught only via *Lehraufträge* (occasional and low-paid seminars that are not taught by professors cf. Erdmann/Hasberg, 2011).

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Pandel H.-J. (1991). Dimensionen und Struktur des Geschichtsbewusstseins. Süßmuth H. (ed.): *Geschichtsunterricht im vereinten Deutschland. Auf der Suche nach Neuorientierung*, part I, II, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, part. I, p. 55 – 73: [This article is a slightly revised version of Pandel's article published 1987].

Pandel H.-J. (2005). *Geschichtsunterricht nach Pisa. Kompetenzen, Bildungsstandards, Curricula*, 157 pp. Wochenschau Verlag, Schwalbach/Ts. 2nd ed. 2007: [In chapter 2 of this book Pandel replaces the term consciousness of historicity by consciousness of change].

Pellens K./Quandt S./Süßmuth H. (eds.) (1994, first published 1984 in German). Historical Culture – Historical Communication. International Bibliography. Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, Frankfurt (Studien zur Internationalen Schulbuchforschung, vol. 83). 396 pp.: [The editors published articles from authors all over the world. The articles give an overview about History Didactics in their country and then a bibliography. In the articles Historical Culture has remained a term rather than a category].

Popp S./Schönemann B. (eds.): *Historische Kompetenzen und Museen*, 337 pp. Schulz-Kirchner Verlag, Idstein 2009: [This book is the documentation of the conference about historical competencies and museums held in Munich in 2007. It was organized by the KGD (= Konferenz für Geschichtsdidaktik)].

Popp, S. (2009). Historische Bildung und Kompetenzmodelle. In: Popp S./Schönemann B. (eds.): *Historische Kompetenzen und Museen*, Schulz-Kirchner Verlag, Idstein 2009, pp. 24 – 37: [Popp sees in the debate about standards and competences an orientation of the education policy towards outcome and output. In this situation she reminds History Didactics to keep the contact with all institutions of History as Science and of Historical Culture].

Rohlfes J. (1986). *Geschichte und ihre Didaktik*. 419 pp. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen: [An overview about the theoretical and practical aspect of History Didactics as well as about History and Pedagogy. The 3rd edition 2005 has only some changes in the last chapter of the book, but the number of pages didn't change].

Rüsen J. (1988). Für eine Didaktik historischer Museen. Idem/Ernst, W./Grütter, H. Th. (eds.): *Geschichte sehen. Beiträge zur Ästhetik historischer Museen*. Centaurus Verlag, Pfaffenweiler (Geschichtsdidaktik. Studien, Materialien. N. F., vol. 1). pp. 9-20: [Rüsen insists that we need a didactic of museums. In connection with this he speaks about historical culture, which consists of history science, policy and art].

Rüsen J. (1994, first published 1982). Geschichtsdidaktische Konsequenzen aus einer erzähltheoretischen Historik. In: Idem: *Historisches Lernen*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln, Weimar, Wien, pp. 25 – 63: [Rüsen deduces from the Theory of History consequences about the narrative structure of Historical Consciousness].

Rüsen J. (1994, first published 1991). Geschichtsdidaktik heute – Was heißt und zu welchem Ende betreiben wir sie (noch)? In: Idem: *Historisches Lernen*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln, Weimar, Wien 1994, pp. 122 – 138: [Here Rüsen develops historical culture as the outside of historical learning and as category of Didactics of History].

Rüsen J. (1994 a, first published 1992). *Geschichtskultur als Forschungsproblem*. In: Idem: *Historische Orientierung*, Köln, Weimar, Wien 1994, p. 235 – 245: [Rüsen develops Historical Culture as fundamental category].

Rüsen J. (1994 a, first published 1993). *Was ist Geschichtskultur? Überlegungen zu einer neuen Art, über Geschichte nachzudenken*. In: Idem: *Historische Orientierung*. Böhlau Verlag, Köln, Weimar, Wien 1994, pp. 211 – 234: [Rüsen deepens the description of Historical Culture and defines it as a practical and effective articulation of Historical Consciousness in the life of a community].

Rüsen J. (1997). *Historische Kategorien*. In: Bergmann K./Fröhlich K./Kuhn A./Rüsen J./Schneider G. (eds.): *Handbuch der Geschichtsdidaktik*, Kallmeyer'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Seelze-Velber, 5th rev. ed., 1997, pp. 147 -150: [For Rüsen are historical categories indispensable part of Historical Science in the frame of Theory of History and of Historical Learning].

Rüsen J. (2004). *Historical Consciousness: Narrative Structure, Moral Function and Ontogenetic Development*. In: Seixas P. (ed.): *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto, Buffalo, London 2004, pp. 63 – 85 [Rüsen reinforces his ideas about the narrative structure of Historical Consciousness].

Sauer M. (2001). *Geschichte unterrichten. Eine Einführung in die Didaktik und Methodik*. 296 pp. Kallmeyersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Seelze-Velber : [Sauer gives a concise introduction to history education].

Schaller K. (2004). *Johann Amos Comenius. Ein pädagogisches Porträt*. 140 pp. Beltz, Weinheim, Basel, Berlin (UTB 2447): [A concise and excellent biography about Comenius].

Schönemann B. (2000). *Geschichtsdidaktik und Geschichtskultur*. Mütter B./Schönemann B./Uffelmann U. (eds.): *Geschichtskultur. Theorie – Empirie – Pragmatik*, Deutscher Studien Verlag, Weinheim (Schriften zur Geschichtsdidaktik vol. 11), pp. 26 – 58: [Schönemann discusses the ratio between Didactics of History and Historical Culture. He extends the three dimension of Rüsen by another four dimensions: the institutional, the professional, the medial and the addressee's or audience-specific dimension].

Schönemann B. (2003): *Geschichtsdidaktik, Geschichtskultur, Geschichtswissenschaft*. Günther-Arndt H. (ed.): *Geschichtsdidaktik. Praxishandbuch für die Sekundarstufe I und II*, Cornelsen Verlag Scriptor, Berlin, pp. 11 – 22 [Schönemann gives an overview about History Didactics, Historical Culture and Academic History].

Schörken R. (1972): *Geschichtsdidaktik und Geschichtsbewusstsein*. *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 23, pp. 81 – 89: [Schörken was the first who spoke about historical consciousness not only concerned on history education and its importance for political activities].

Schreiber W. (2002). *Reflektiertes und (selbst-)reflexives Geschichtsbewusstsein als Qualitätsmerkmal von Geschichtsunterricht aller Schulstufen und Schularten*. Schönemann B./Voit H. (eds.): *Von der Einschulung bis zum Abitur. Prinzipien und Praxis historischen Lernens in den Schulstufen*, Schulz-Kirchner Verlag, Idstein, pp. 19 – 47 [Waltraud Schreiber shows how to support reflected and self-reflexive Historical Consciousness].

Seixas P. (ed.) (2004). *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*. 255 pp. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London: [Peter Seixas collected the contributions of a conference. The authors have not the same understanding of Historical Consciousness].

Süssmuth H. (1991). *Geschichtsdidaktik und Geschichtsunterricht 1945 – 1990*. The same (ed.). *Geschichtsunterricht im vereinten Deutschland. Auf der Suche nach Neuorientierung*. Nomos Verlag, Baden-Baden, part I, 17 – 29 [An overview about the development of history education and didactics of history after WW II].

Weymar E. (1982): *Dimensionen der Geschichtswissenschaft. Geschichtsforschung – Theorie der Geschichtswissenschaft – Didaktik der Geschichte*. *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 33, pp. 1 – 11, 65 – 78, 129 – 153 [An overview about the ratio between history as science and history education, theory of history and didactics of history].

YEARBOOK of the International Society of History Didactics (2011 ff.) (ed. by Popp S.), Wochenschau Verlag, Schwalbach/Ts. [This is the Yearbook of the International Society for History Didactics, founded in 1980, see <http://www.int-soc-hist-didact.org/> (1.4.2012)].

Biographical Sketch

Elisabeth Erdmann (*1942) Professor emeritus Dr., Studies in History and Latin in the University of Tübingen, 1965 first, 1967 second examination for teaching in secondary schools, Doctorate at the University of Konstanz in Ancient History 1971, academic employee at Konstanz University 1969-1973 for the excavations in Old-Paphos/Cyprus. 1967-1968 and 1973-1975 grammar school teacher, 1975-1993 assistant, then Oberstudienrätin at the Pedagogical University of Freiburg i.Br. for Ancient History and History Didactics, habilitation in History Didactics at Dortmund University 1991, guest professor for History Didactics at Humboldt University Berlin 1993-1994, since 1994 until 2007 chair for History Didactics at Erlangen-Nürnberg University.

Selected Publications:

Die Römerzeit im Selbstverständnis der Franzosen und Deutschen. Lehrpläne und Schulbücher aus der Zeit zwischen 1850 und 1918. 2 vols. Bochum: Universitätsverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1992; ed. Verständnis wecken für das Fremde. Möglichkeiten des Geschichtsunterrichts, Schwalbach/Ts: Wochenschau, 1999; ed. Thematische Längsschnitte für den Geschichtsunterricht in der gymnasialen Oberstufe. Neuried: Ars Una, 2002; ed. Mensch - Natur - Technik. Perspektiven aus der Antike für das dritte Jahrtausend (with Kloft, Hans), Münster: Aschendorff, 2002; ed. Geschichtsunterricht international - Bestandsaufnahme und Visionen (with Maier, Robert and Popp, Susanne), Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2006; Fenster zur Vergangenheit. Bilder im Geschichtsunterricht, 2 vols. Bamberg: Buchners, 2004 and 2009 (with Buntz, Herwig); ed. Facing – Mapping – Bridging Diversity. Foundation of a European Discourse on History Education (with Hasberg, Wolfgang), 2 parts, Schwalbach/Ts: Wochenschau, 2011.