History Education as Active Learning of Historical Thinking
=> Using (digitally archived) Resources (?)

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- Intro

- Our task today

- History Education/Teaching: Several (selected) Concepts

- History in Today's Societies: Multiple Histories in need of Critical Analysis and Appreciation

- Learning to Think Historically?

- A (one of several) model for Historical Thinking Competencies

- Questions to our conference's focus

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Concept of Learning History	Methodical Basis	Material Basis	Conceptual Basis/DImension	Procedural Basis/Dimension
Imparting fixed knowledge about the past ("basic knowledge")		Fixed lists of events, names, structures	• Mostly substantive concepts (Power, reign, winning/losing) • Some fixed second order concepts (truth)	• telling/listening, re-producing • (taking a pre-defined perspective as given)
Creation of community by conveying a common picture of history (chronological; monoperspective)	• (vivid) telling affirmative histories • Researching with given materials	• A single („master") narrative • Closed sets of selected documents (primary) focusing on a society's own development, „pride and pain", successes, etc	• listening/reading • „re-"researching, creating own versions of given story	Blanking out different perspectives, groups, experiences
Promotion of a critical attitude towards society / state, ect.	• (vivid) telling of critical counter-stories to established master narratives; of victimization etc.	• Closed sets of selected documents (primary) • focusing on negative facets of a society's development, actions	• listening/reading • „re-"researching, • creating own versions of given story	
Development of "historical consciousness" (a.o. Rüsen 2004, Adriaanssen 2022) Enabling students to think historically themselves, to partake in the societal discussion of history and its meaning	• Interpreting primary and secondary material (narratives) • From different perspectives	• original documents of different perspectives • existing narratives from society	• Narrative structure, relevance/significance (Seixas), reference to the present, perspective, multi-perspectivity statement, conclusion, judgement	• Questioning, interpreting, re- and de-constructing /analysing, reflecting on (different/multiple) meaning • Reflecting on one's own (possible multiple) perspectives • Identifying and reflecting on one's own concepts, attitudes,

Characteristics of the latter form(s)

- „History" is not equal to "the past", but a (narrative) reference to it – with a certain perspective, values, interest, etc.

- History exists in the plural only – and legitimately so.

- Histories are produced and distributed ("told") by a wide spectrum of agents/institutions within society – including, but not restricted to academia and schools (a.o. Jensen 1994)

- There is not only one valid history, but many,

- However, not all histories are valid

- Histories within a society need not (and should not) be identical/monolithical/uniform, but *compatible*

- The plurality of histories in society calls for competencies of a society's members in historical thinking

- „Historical Thinking" is a buzz word in the field of history education in the last ca. 20 years.

- There are, however, different concepts of what it entails.

- Each of these poses some different demands on
  - students knowledge/abilities (skills)/insights
  - Materials to be used /made usable
  - Teaching practices / pedagogy

Historical Thinking – different concepts

- Sam Wineburg (Stanford; 1999ff):

  – „an unnatural act"

  – overcoming „natural" presentism in favour of appreciating the alterity of the past

  – … „like a historian"

  – Sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating

- Peter Seixas (Vancouver; 2000sff)

  – Mastery of „Big 6 Historical Thinking Concepts":

    - Historical Significance / Evidence/ Continuity and Change/ Cause and Consequence / Historical Perspectives / The Ethical Dimension

Historical Thinking – different concepts II

- [Carla van Boxtel / Janet van Drie (Amsterdam; 2018): Historical Argumentation]

- Jörn Rüsen => Körber/Schreiber et al 2007 („FUER"; English: see Körber 2015)

  - a *natural* operation, all of us do it

  - It is about orientating in time: our identities, our actions (hopes, expectations, plans, etc)

  - but: it can and needs to be fostered/educated

    - in order to be more powerful

    - In order to enable people to link their own historical thinking to that of others

      - „passive": Making use of concepts established and accepted

      - Recognizing (and appreciating) other people's concepts, ideas, etc,

      - „active": communicating their historical thinking to others

- Historical Thinking in this understanding serves a purpose for individuals and collectives: to orientate in the temporal dimension, namely to

  – „place" their own identity / identities: "Who am I /are we (and others) in the light of what has happened before and the development since"?

  – inform their aims /fears / expectations: What can we expect to be possible / likely in the present and future,

  – Guide their plans: What can/should we do /avoid in the light of this... ?

- Historical Thinking of this kind requires and bestowes competence to individual members of society

  – In the meaning of abilities and skills

  – In the meaning of entitlement and responsibility

- History therefore is a mental (individual) and communicative (societal) mode of orientating individual and societal identities and actions in the temporal dimension

- Historical Thinking is the set of operations required to partake (not only participate) in this venture / task

- A History Culture is an complex arena of

  – different actors and institutions

  – different histories (narratives, statements etc.) in

  – different media

- Members of a societies need (at least to be able) to partake (not only participate) in this History Culture, i.e. they need to be able to

  – produce valid and meaningful historical statements (narratives)

  – Communicate their own historical narratives/results to others

  – Identify and understand the stories of others, „negotiate" (compare, distinguish and connect, evaluate ...) them

- "Media" can have two meanings / functions and usages

  – Means to an end, esp. to communicate/transmit something (e.g. an information, a story) that is given independently of them,

  – The set of conditions in and by which a society , encodes, stores, communicates, perceives, discusses … information, interpretations, etc.

- In "Cultures of Digitality" (Stalder 2017), histories and Historical Thinking serves the same individual and societal function as in pre-digital (oral, scriptural) societies – but under quite different conditions of storing, communicating, accessing, processing …

Digital Societies II

- In *Digital Societies*, media function differently – also with regard to history

  - more people (possibly anyone) can be author of narratives / claims / histories (e.g. on the internet)

    - => people need to be able to tell/write histories

  - there are little to none institutionalized professional gatekeepers to distribution

    - => people need to be able to understand and analyse histories

  - meaning/significance of history is discussed / debated on a broad (societal) arena

    - => people need to be able to communicate *about* history/ies.

- Wineburg („Why learn history when it's already on your smartphone?", 2018) by and largely focuses this question to that of detecting "fake information" on the internet, advocating „lateral reading"

- This approach cannot convince, for several reasons:

  - Wineburg relinquishes his own expertise-focus (by showing that Historians are not better trained for it;

  - The approach is mostly non-historical (cf. Wineburg 2016)

  - The task of historical thinking in societies which are diverse and complex is not to „filter out" the „fake" information and then to rely on the rest, but rather to

    - Analyse and evaluate both forms, and to appreciate what is valid, orientating, significant, in them and what they are presented for.

- Claims: In digital societies, people

  - can have access to more („all") narratives available, not only to gatekept master narratives;

  - can recognize / become aware of different forms of history/ies, of histories of different perspectives (even such not avaliable/silenced) before,

  - need to be able to do this thinking and discussing themselves

- The demand on historical competencies in digital societies is higher than in oral/book societies
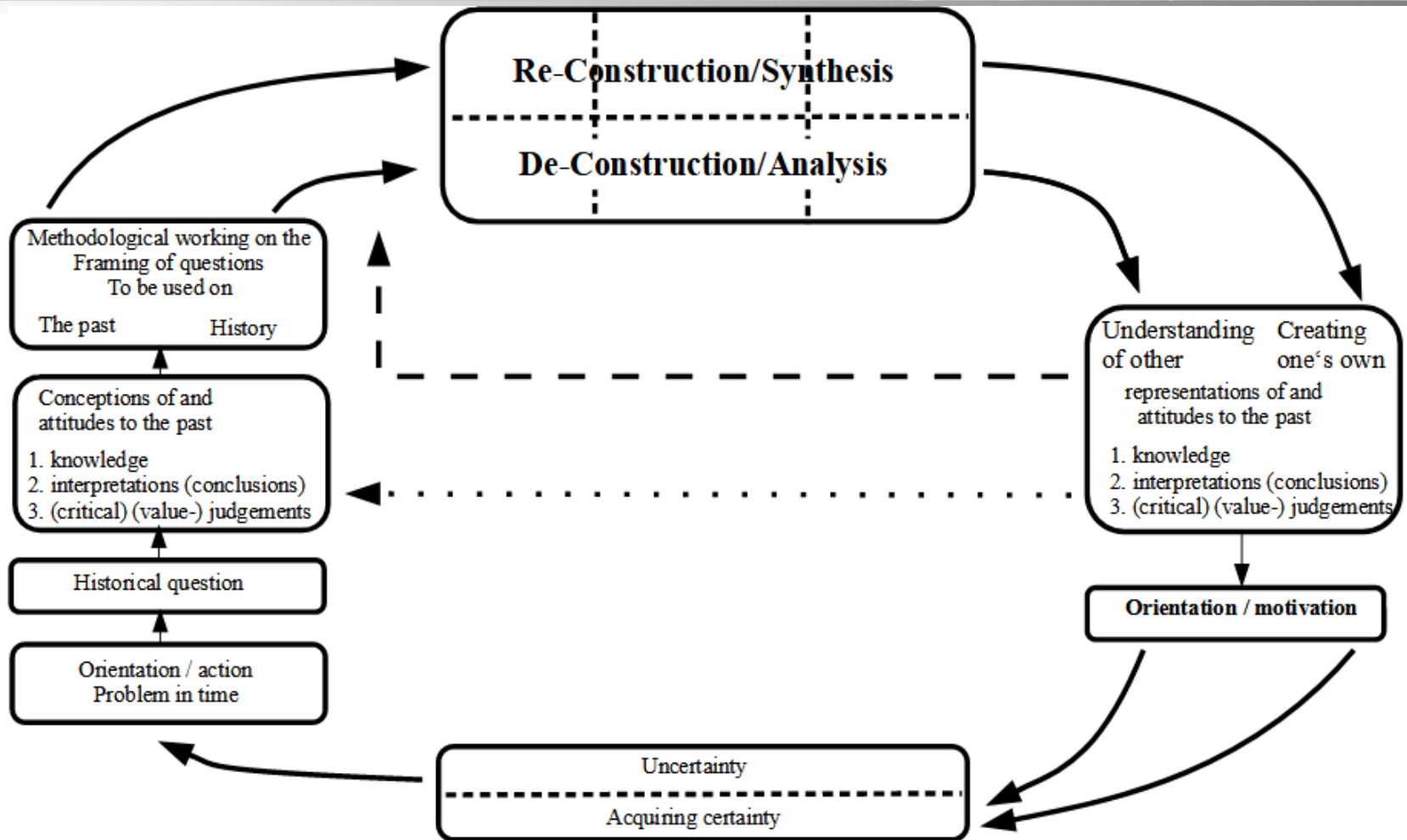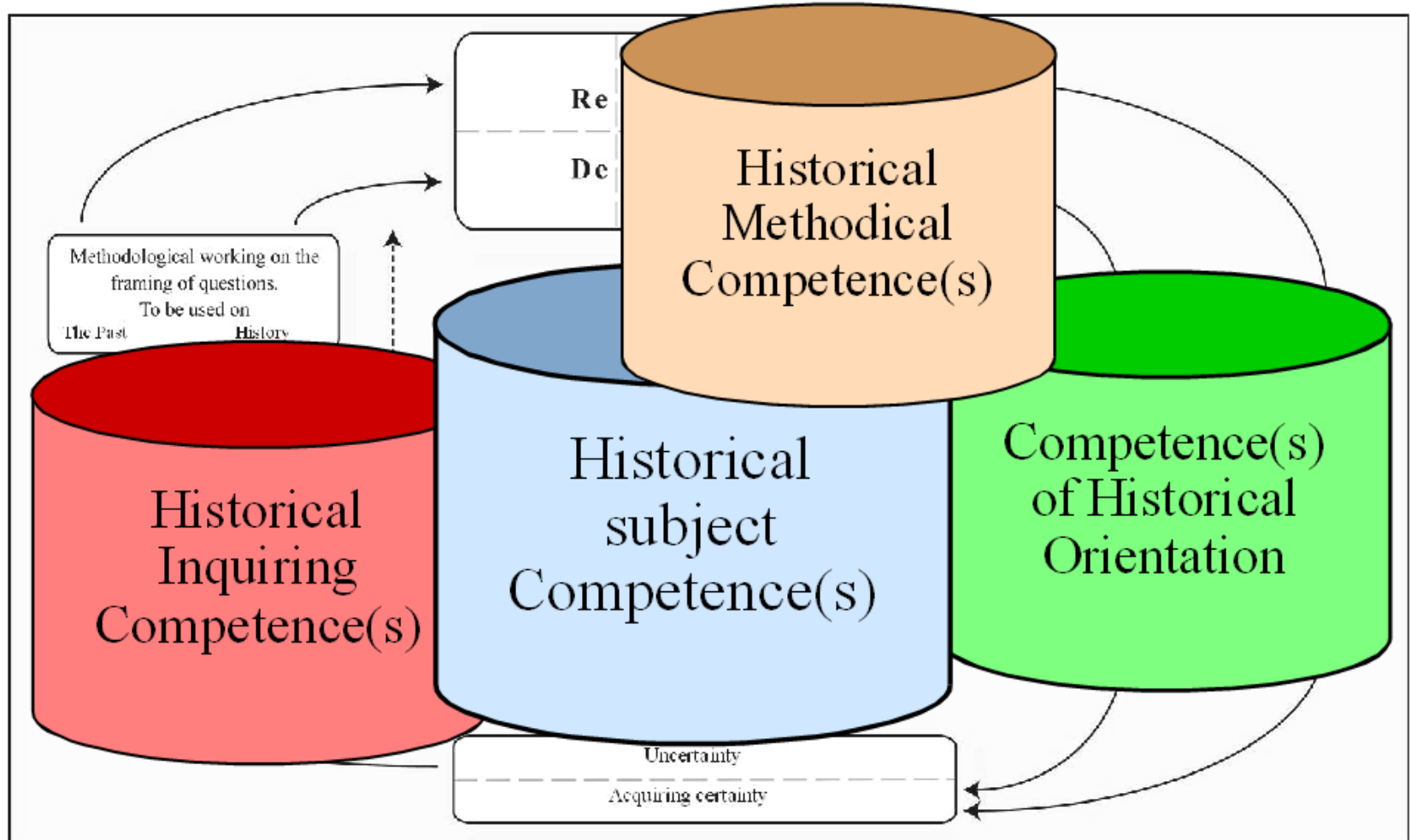
- It is not so much a matter of the uniformity and identity of the emerging stories, but rather of their compatibility with each other, i.e., that they can be a) mutually understood and b) recognized in their diversity as meaningful orientation services with meaning (significance) in the present.

- This means,

  – that history/ies within society are not arbitrary, but can be analyzed and assessed on the basis of criteria (which can also include the rejection of individual stories as false due to error, lie, or as irrelevant, not orienting),

  – socially available histories are not automatically "equal", but are permeated by power relations in terms of presence possibilities, interpretation patterns, speaker positions, etc., so that

  – historical learning should enable and encourage to enable dealing with the diversity of social histories in a way that perceives and at the same time acknowledges and reflects it.

- In the analytical (de-constructive) direction, this entails to be able to identity, assess, evaluate, appreciate histories in a great variety of forms, not only books, films, newspapers, old people telling, but increasingly in immersive AR / VR applications, simulations, computer games, Facebooks „Metaverse", etc.

- If historical competencies are comprised of abilities /skills /readiness

  - to form inquiries (from interests in orientation)

  - to apply methods

    - synthetical: finding, analysing material, extracting, interpreting, discussing, re-arranging information, narrating

    - analytical: identify and evaluate the logic and quality of given narratives

  - to argue implications conclusions for one's own (society's) orientation (significance, meaning)

  - to elaborate one's own conceptual repertoire

- then what kind of concepts can / should

  - we expect / require students to learn in order to sucessfully fulfil these operations

  - Managers of repositories of material use in order to enable students to succesfully link to these materials
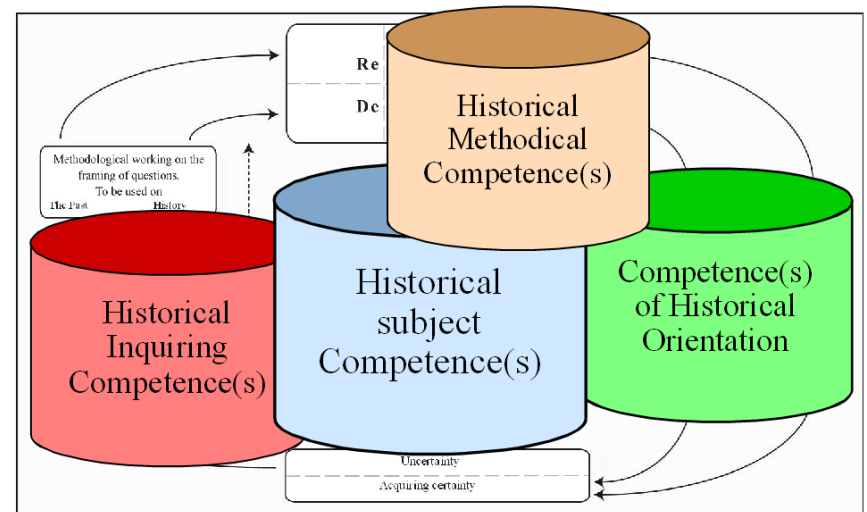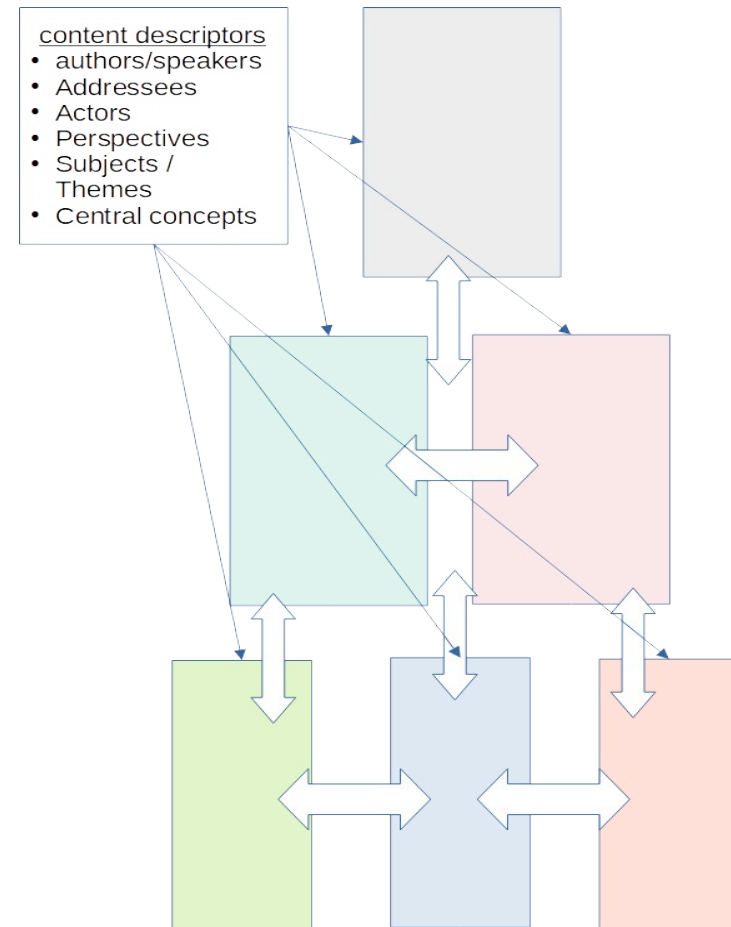
- Develop (increasingly)

  - Attitudes

    - insights into the significance of their own interests/questions

    - recognition of the legitimate multiplicity of histories

    - encouragement to formulate own/different interpretations / hypotheses and to put them to discussion

    - recognition of the need to evaluate and assess other / justify the own statements

  - sets of concepts of

    - The nature of history /ies

    - its functions (including memory culture)

    - Historical materials: primary/secondary sources, narratives, narrative abbreviations (e.g. monuments) and their characteristics

    - Perspectives represented /to be identified in materials

    - Narrative Patterns (e.g, sensu Rüsen 1982, 2004, Pandel 2002, Wertsch, e.g. 2004)

    - Actors (from individually to collectively human, abstract …)

    - Criteria of plausibility (e.g. sensu Rüsen)

  - Insights into the meanings and functions of narratives/stories

- Develop (increasingly) differentiated

  - personal corpuses of concepts which the (digital/analog) society uses for classifying material and the contents, e.g.

    - flexible and interrelated wordfields for searching databases

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- Cater for different audiences
  - of diff. professionality /specialization
  - with diff. languages/cultures
  - with different purposes / questions
- for identifying/distinguishing e.g
  - perspectives
    - cultural, social, political …
    - types of material (and their traditional characteristics)
    -

content descriptors
- authors/speakers
- Addressees
- Actors
- Perspectives
- Subjects / Themes
- Central concepts

Thank you

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