



Teachers and the Epistemology of History

Edited by
Henrik Åström Elmersjö
Paul Zanazanian

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Editors

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ISBN 978-3-031-58055-0 ISBN 978-3-031-58056-7 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: The Epistemology of History and the Realities of Teaching

Henrik Åström Elmersjö

The epistemology of history is often considered more challenging than the epistemology of other subjects that are taught in school. The reason for this is probably mostly based on the idea that history does not have a corresponding reality with which to verify the knowledge it produces. There are no experiments in history, because the past is already gone, no matter how hard we try to hold on to it. The subjectivity of knowing is also double in history; there is both the subjectivity of the knower, stuck in their own subjective perspective and predispositions, and the subjectivity of the evidence used to gain knowledge (see, e.g., Maggioni's chapter in this book). All documents we read to establish historical truths are written by someone, in a specific context from a certain perspective, making objectivity not only dependent on the knower, but also on what is possible to gain regarding objectivity from different sources.

However, there is also yet another complexity when it comes to the epistemology of this subject: history is always about some cultural context.

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H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_1

History is inevitably a group-making project since all history is about some group of people, and what is made significant—out of all the past events to choose from—is based on the culturally significant questions that are asked about the past. Knowing history is mostly about knowing about specific highlighted events and how these events—instead of others—fit into culturally specific contexts, that is, into narratives written about ‘us’. In some sense, mathematics and physics are also contextually bound by theoretical paradigms that are not void of cultural heritage, but the argument could be made that these are not *intentionally* cultural. The outspoken perspective of these disciplines is universality, while the perspective of history is always particular, even if there have been several bids to write a more universal history. These could however be criticized for either not writing human history, like so-called Big History (e.g., Christian, 2018), or for concealing the cultural perspective from which it is written (e.g., Fukuyama, 1992).

These issues make teaching about history especially problematic, epistemologically. The already problematic epistemological basis of the subject might have become more challenging for teachers given the renegotiation of the history subject’s objectives that has been ongoing since (at least) the interwar period, accelerating in the second half of the twentieth century. This renegotiation, stemming from problems seen in nationalistic sentiment in education in general and in school history in particular leading to two world wars (Marsden, 2000; Siegel, 2004; Gasanabo, 2006; Elmersjö & Lindmark, 2010), tended to refigure the once obvious objective of the history subject as taught in schools—to promote national cohesion—and expand it with other objectives. When curricula and syllabi in many countries now seemingly tend towards multi-perspectivity, while maintaining a nationally inclined promotion of culturally significant perspectives of certain events, it might be especially challenging for teachers to comprehend the subject’s epistemology. School history seems to have many objectives that could be seen as epistemologically contradictory: fostering critical thinking, maintaining a cultural heritage, promoting the ability of viewing historical events from multiple perspectives, and even deconstructing the very same narrative that is also supposed to be maintaining the cultural heritage. The question becomes: what is knowledge in history?

The chapters of this book investigate history teachers’ epistemologies; how they can (or cannot) be measured, how they might (or might not) influence teaching, and how they are formed, maintained, and changed. This could be considered a very focused scope and it is the intention of the editors to create a more or less open space for researchers in this rather

narrow field to investigate this subject from different perspectives, with different intentions, utilizing different concepts. This means that we have not tried to make this book even more focused, beyond the relatively narrow scope itself (history teachers and the epistemology of history), by imposing specific definitions of concepts, or forced theoretical constructs for all chapters. Instead, our intention has been to create a book that does justice to the field by showcasing its diversity, within its limited scope, by giving the talented researchers invited the freedom to present the subject in their own way, amended to fit the context they describe. In turn, this leads to a book where different chapters present the problems, the concepts, and the solutions in quite different ways. We truly believe that this is the best way to present this field of research, where it has been, where it is, and where it might be going.

One consequence of this is that authors in this book make different use of important concepts. While there is a rich literature on the difference between ‘beliefs’ and ‘cognition’, and also between ‘epistemic’ and ‘epistemological’, these concepts are deployed differently in many of the chapters. One way of differentiating between ‘epistemic’ and ‘epistemological’ is to recognize the meaning of the extra syllables. When the word *episteme*, meaning knowledge, is prolonged with ‘-ic’ it means ‘regarding knowledge’, but when it is prolonged with ‘-ological’ it means ‘regarding a theory of knowledge’. This subtle difference can mean a lot, but it can also mean quite little, depending on the context. When talking about how teachers discuss, view, or understand the knowledge claims possible in history textbooks or their own teaching, the teachers could be said to verbalize a view ‘regarding knowledge’. However, most of the time they verbalize—at least parts of—an entire theory of knowledge, one that they subscribe to and that is present in the way they express their view. For this reason, the words ‘epistemic’ and ‘epistemological’ are often used interchangeably in the chapters that follow, even though some chapters also discuss the difference.

When it comes to ‘beliefs’ and ‘cognition’ there might be more graspable differences put forward in literature. Talking about ‘epistemic cognition’ tend to draw attention to the cognitive processes going on when understanding knowledge or a comprehensive theory of knowledge. An ‘epistemic belief’ rather denotes the underlying principles that guide epistemic cognition. Therefore, beliefs about epistemology can be inferred from epistemic cognition, but at the same time, one could argue that epistemic (and epistemological) beliefs come out of epistemic cognition

(see, e.g. VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016; Stoel et al., 2022). This double connection between the two terms makes it somewhat difficult to distinguish between them when research is being reported. Some of the chapters, however, make clearer distinctions than others.

While we recognize that it is important to distinguish between different key concepts, it could also be an impediment for the discussion if concepts are too rigidly defined making them unsuitable for differing contexts. Each author is therefore responsible for the definition of key concepts in each chapter. Since there does not seem to be a consensus on exactly how to define these concepts, we believe that it is better for the discussion to not impose potentially unfit definitions.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD

The field of research that is interested in the epistemological considerations, cognition, and beliefs that teachers hold is of course very much related to the field of epistemic cognition in general and the field of epistemic cognition in history in particular. Within these fields there have been ongoing discussions for several decades about how people make sense of knowledge and knowledge claims (e.g., Perry, 1970; Kuhn et al., 2000; King & Kitchener, 2002; Maggioni, 2010). It has been a prominent debate within these fields whether epistemic cognition is to be understood developmentally, that is, if cognitive abilities regarding the comprehension of knowledge construction develop from one stage to another, or if epistemic cognition is to be understood as predominantly situated, or dimensional (Hofer, 2016, see also Nitsche et al., 2022). A variety of descriptions and labels for different types of epistemic understandings have been forwarded, and the one that most of the chapters in this book refer to in one way or another is the three level stances forwarded by Liliana Maggioni in an attempt to integrate models for epistemic cognition in general forwarded by Marlene Schommer (1990), Deanna Kuhn et al. (2000), and Patricia M. King and Karen S. Kitchener (2002), but also the studies centred on the understanding of history by Peter Lee and his colleagues (Lee & Ashby, 2000, Lee & Shemilt, 2003; Lee, 2004). The journey towards this model is also elaborated upon by Maggioni herself in her chapter in this book.

The three-level-model of stances that Maggioni favoured were the copier stance, the borrower stance and the criterialist stance. This model had an immense impact on both the field as a whole, and also on the

conceptualization of new ways of thinking forwarded in this book. Therefore, they will be briefly elaborated on here. A person taking the copier stance believes that history provides a copy of the past. Therefore, history would also be fixed (since it is a copy of something that has already happened) and good sources, that are not forged or apparently biased, are considered objective vehicles to the past itself. A person taking the borrower stance, on the other hand, would subscribe to the notion of history being subjective, but would not differentiate between different opinions about it in terms of validity of explanations and interpretations. Instead, they would borrow from those sources that fit their own view of a valid narrative. A person holding a criterialist stance would see history as interpretative and dependent on what questions it tries to answer. The criterialist would also utilize disciplinary criteria to establish valid narratives and distinguish them from invalid narratives. This is of course a developmental model that indicates the objective (for history teaching) of going from lower to higher modes of epistemic beliefs.

One of the more prominent features of research on history teachers' epistemological beliefs is the apparent predominance of inconsistencies in teachers' (and students') ways of thinking about knowledge and knowledge claims, especially when researchers use the three level stances, or other ways of measuring epistemological beliefs (for other measures see, e.g., McCrum, 2013; Elmersjö, 2022). A lot of research has shown that teachers and students do not seem to hold consistent epistemological beliefs based in firm principles (see, e.g., Perry, 1970; Maggioni et al., 2009; Mierwald & Junius, 2022; Miguel-Revilla, 2022; Stoel et al., 2022). This means that, if the developmental model is taken seriously and these inconsistencies in epistemological beliefs are also prominent and considered an undesirable feature, there seems to be a double challenge for teachers and teacher trainers in establishing both consistent beliefs in the minds of students and teachers, and also in pushing those consistent beliefs towards more nuanced understandings, in an upward trajectory in the developmental model.

Empirical studies on the epistemology of history and how teachers interpret that epistemology indicate a few areas that need to be more thoroughly researched. For one thing, research into teachers' epistemic beliefs about history has highlighted that it is difficult for researchers to distinguish between teachers' thoughts about epistemology and their thoughts about pedagogy and learning in general (see, e.g., Maggioni et al., 2009; see also Elmersjö & Zanazanian, 2022; Stoel et al., 2022). How

epistemology is constructed and understood by the teacher might be very important in regard to how students navigate this difficult landscape of knowledge (McCrum, 2013; Mathis & Parkes, 2020; Elmersjö et al., 2017). At the same time, there could also be reason to question the straightforward connection between teachers' epistemological beliefs and their teaching practice, and that is also a part of the research field that needs to be further investigated. This holds true especially for the situational context—where history is taught—which needs to be taken seriously as an influential part of teachers' epistemologies (Gottlieb & Wineburg, 2012; Wilke et al., 2022).

The inconsistencies in history teachers' ways of discussing the epistemology of their subject can also—at least in some cases—be traced back to the difficulties in establishing *the* objective of history teaching (see, e.g., Halldén, 1986; Evans, 1989; Seixas, 2000), difficulties that in turn may be attributed to the weak classification and weak framing of the subject (Bernstein, 2000; Ledman, 2014). History is a subject that does not have a strong and clear boundary towards other realms of knowledge (i.e., weak classification) and it is also a subject where the sequencing of knowledge is often unclear, as is the teacher's control over what the students are learning.

Taking where the field is at as an inspiration and a departure point, the chapters of this book engage in conversations with the empirical issues that have been raised and discussed, and also the theoretical, and methodological problems that have been pointed out. The inconsistencies in teachers' epistemological beliefs; the issue of how teachers' beliefs relate to their teaching; and how methodology in measuring, labelling, and framing epistemological beliefs that teachers hold might influence our view of the field, are all issues that the chapters of this book engage with.

THE PARTS OF THE BOOK

As stated, the chapters of this book engage with teachers' epistemologies in a few different ways and define concepts in ways that are both contextually and theoretically induced. One concept, which almost all chapters address in one form or another, is the earlier-mentioned 'wobbling', or 'inconsistency' in teachers' thoughts on the epistemology of history, or 'inconsistencies' that are brought to light when comparing thought and practice. Since inconsistencies in epistemological thought seem to be at the heart of the field, and perhaps the key challenge in bringing the field

forward, some comments need to be made regarding how ‘wobbling’ or ‘inconsistencies’ might be deployed in the chapters. Some of the chapters relate teachers’ epistemological wobbling and inconsistencies to a lack of epistemological understanding. This lack of understanding might be caused by either an inability to grasp basic ideas about epistemology, or by a lack of foundational ideas, leading to different notions of epistemology being deployed in different situations without any clear or elaborated principles behind them. One way these inconsistencies might manifest themselves is as differing conceptualizations regarding how the past itself is related to histories about the past, depending on what question is being asked or on what context is being discussed.

Other chapters relate wobbling and inconsistencies in epistemological thought to a problem based in language and knowledge. Without a proper education regarding the epistemological nature of the subject or how this nature has been and can be viewed, teachers might have trouble expressing consistent foundational principles regarding epistemology. Without the proper language to express them, their statements seem to be inconsistent. A third, and related way of discussing wobbling is to focus on how teachers might have difficulty navigating and coordinating history’s simultaneous subjectiveness and objectiveness. When expressing this simultaneousness, inherited in history writing, the teachers have difficulty coordinating them in a coherent manner, which comes off as an inconsistency in their epistemological positioning. A fourth way of viewing wobbling is more related to a different concept—‘epistemic switching’—where teachers, knowing full well what they are doing, switch epistemic principles to fit different contexts or different practical situations related to what they are teaching and who is being taught.

Exactly how teaching contexts (student population, curricula, and syllabi) influence teachers’ wobbling, could be described differently depending on how ‘wobbling’ is defined. How wobbling is viewed, as a problem, or as a natural way of talking about knowledge in different contexts, also influences researchers in the discussion. The reader of the chapters therefore needs to be observant of these definitions. Nevertheless, wobbling in all of these forms is evidently an important part of research about teachers’ epistemologies.

This book is divided into three parts, each with its own theme, addressing different parts of the challenges the field is facing. However, since it is already a relatively focused topic for the book as a whole, there are substantial overlaps between the themes. In the first of these three parts,

Epistemology and Context, we have gathered chapters that engage with different contexts and how they might have implications for teachers' epistemologies. Robert Parkes addresses the problem of epistemic wobbling and identifies the cultural context and the academic context of teachers as being responsible for different sets of epistemic directions. He theorizes that these directions might also be deployed differently in a historical and a didactical setting, resulting in epistemic inconsistencies. Parkes proposes the fostering of an epistemic reflexivity among teachers hopefully resulting in what he calls 'epistemic fluency', related to knowledgeable professional action; meaning that teachers who possess such fluency might be able to identify when their own position, or other positions are being challenged. A research agenda connected to this proposition, might make way for changes in teacher education and teachers with apt practical tools to face the challenges of fake news, historical denial, and problematic pasts.

In the only genuinely historical chapter of this book, Johan Samuelsson analyses Swedish elementary school teachers' ideas and perspectives on history during the first half of the twentieth century. He shows that while there is some merit to the idea that teachers' epistemological notions about the subject were naïve and objectivistic before the latter part of the twentieth century, it is still an idea that needs to be nuanced. Utilizing 600 teachers' own accounts of their teaching, collected in 1946 and describing teaching from 1920 to the end of the Second World War, Samuelsson can identify that several epistemic perspectives were practiced in parallel also in the interwar period. This goes to show that the diverse palette of epistemological ideas identified in schools today are not entirely connected to shifts in the aims of the history subject from the last 30–50 years, but actually has a longer history.

In their chapter, Johan Wassermann and Kate Angier discuss findings from a collaborative case study where South African teacher students' ideas about the history subject and its epistemology come to the fore. While the authors see a mosaic of different considerations emerging from their material, they focus their chapter on two components that may be seen as extremely important in the context of post-Apartheid South Africa: history as present and personal, and history as an African endeavour. This chapter is a good example of the meaningfulness of equipping the concept of epistemology with different connotations depending on the context that is being researched. Given the complex educational context of post-Apartheid South Africa, what history can be, is very much a question of the relationship between being here and now, and being in the past. That

is, do we create distance, or proximity to history, and what does it mean when we do one or the other? The authors also recognize that their ideas on epistemology might not ‘fit neatly into the existing scholarship on epistemology and history from the Global North’, and by doing that they also point to the importance of incorporating many perspectives in research on epistemology to make sure it moves forward.

Sarah Godsell also provides a South African perspective on epistemology in her chapter. By drawing on the ‘both sides of the story’-concept (forwarded by Chana Teeger), Godsell explores how pre-service teachers position themselves on neutrality and historical ‘truth’. By connecting the idea of copier, borrower and criterialist stances with the ‘both sides of the story’-approach, the author can show that even criterialist teacher students latched on to the idea of ‘both sides of the story’ as a necessity in history teaching in the context of the disputed history of South Africa, even though its aim to balance two narratives must be considered a distortion of the unbalanced reality of the country under Apartheid. Godsell concludes that teaching history is ‘slippery’, and that conflict in the mind might be a prerequisite to understand history, both for teachers and students.

In a chapter on history teaching in the context of multi-ethnic classrooms, Simon Lundberg specifically addresses the issue of epistemic expressions, as one core feature in unravelling what the context of a teaching situation does to the meaning and aim of the subject itself. The study is based on interviews with 15 teachers who teach in Swedish multi-ethnic classrooms, and Lundberg specifically analyses four of these teachers who showcase relatively consistent epistemic ideas about the history subject. The author then shows how the teachers’ view of the relationship between the past itself on the one hand, and the histories about that past, on the other, makes the intentions for their teaching, while familiar to the naked eye, divert when filtered through their epistemic lens. Lundberg concludes that this might lead to differing functions for the history subject in a multi-ethnic society, dependent on the teacher’s epistemic beliefs.

In the second part of the book, *Professional Development and Reflections on Applied Epistemologies*, the common theme is the issue of how different developmental programmes, collegial initiatives, and contextual changes that force epistemological overviews might be influencing teachers’ epistemological beliefs. Kenneth Nordgren’s chapter utilizes teachers’ collegial planning of lessons to penetrate their epistemological considerations. The focus of the chapter is on how the act of recontextualizing subject

matter force epistemological beliefs to come to the fore, since the process of making specialized knowledge accessible for learners is epistemologically challenging. The chapter is based on a longitudinal study that followed teachers in different subjects that had formed subject specific planning teams. Nordgren comes to the conclusion that disciplinary understandings of epistemology are entangled with practical contexts and didactical experiences, and this indicates a need to understand this entanglement. The relationship between beliefs about epistemology—based in ideas about the discipline—and specific tasks related to the performative act of planning and carry out lessons, therefore needs to be further researched. This also indicates that teaching is an epistemologically demanding profession, and that teachers need epistemic communities based in collegial cooperation.

In a chapter focusing on Dutch elementary school teachers, Yolande Potjer, Marjolein Dobber, and Carla van Boxtel point to the problematic situation that elementary school teachers are in with regards to epistemological beliefs. Since elementary school teachers often are generalists, and not schooled in a specific subject, they are probably less equipped to handle issues of epistemology beyond what is presented in textbooks. By utilizing examples from a two-year development programme called ‘the History workplace’, the authors argue that teacher preparation and professional development play a key role in making teachers thoughts and beliefs about history more nuanced. Since elementary school teachers have limited training in specific subjects from their formal teacher education, professional development is one way to make sure that these teachers also get an opportunity to advance their thoughts on what historical knowledge is, and how it is obtained. Through development programmes, these thoughts can also be tied closer to the act of teaching, making sure newly found nuanced beliefs can be translated into classroom instruction.

Taking practical changes to history teaching—and its assessment—in Quebec during the Covid-pandemic as a point of departure, Catherine Duquette, Marie-Hélène Brunet, Arianne Dufour, and Benjamin Lille discuss how changes in assessment forced teachers to reposition themselves when it came to their understandings of the nature of history. Through collaborative research the authors can show how participating teachers developed a more critical view of the subject, moving away from a positivistic stance, as they were forced to move away from teacher-centric teaching to more student-focused and interpretative teaching in order to meet new demands from assessment. However, while moving away from

declarative knowledge towards favouring procedural knowledge, teachers did not abandon or even question the content of the narrative itself. This result leads the authors to theorize about epistemology being layered, and that changes to one layer, might not necessarily change another layer.

Marjolein Wilke and Karel Van Nieuwenhuysse explore the link between teachers' epistemological beliefs and the character of their teaching. Based on an interview study, the authors identify discrepancies between how teachers view the epistemology of history themselves, and their instructional practices. This perceived disconnect might shed some light on how ideas about inconsistencies in teachers' epistemic stances relate to different situations. Wilke and Van Nieuwenhuysse offer three potential explanations for this discrepancy. The first explanation is centered around ambiguity about what we are actually measuring when we make statements about teachers' epistemological beliefs. The second explanation is related to the relatively limited knowledge we have regarding the link between epistemological beliefs and other factors, such as educational beliefs and curricular requirements. The third explanation is a methodological one, suggesting researchers' measurements of epistemological beliefs might be flawed in one way or another.

By asking 15 history teacher candidates about the relationship between what historians, history educators, and history students do, Richard Hughes and Sarah Drake Brown show that teacher students seem to differentiate between historians, teachers, and students in rather superficial ways. The teacher candidates seemed to be able to document and convey their own understanding of history, and also utilize this understanding in the planning of lessons. However, they also seemed to differentiate between acquired knowledge about what history is, and how it works, on the one hand, and their practical interactions with students on the other. For epistemology, this shows the distance that seemingly exist between theoretical and practical understandings of the history subject's epistemology. Hughes and Drake Brown analyse their results utilizing the concept of metaphor and puts forward the notion of metaphors as potential instruments in understanding the perceived disconnect between theory and practice. They put forward the conceptual metaphor of *architecture* to capture the liminal spaces where this disconnect might occur, in moving from one context to another.

Antoine Gauthier-Trépanier addresses the epistemological issues involved in teaching world history. The movement towards global perspectives on history is taken as a point of departure and the author utilizes

history teaching in the Quebec college system as an example. Because of a curricular change in favour of global history this context might be considered an opening into the study of the epistemological implications of such changes. The author further emphasizes that since history is a subject with political implications, a curricular change is always debated along political lines. At the same time, such a curricular change also involves teachers, who might see their epistemological ideas challenged by change. At least, it challenges teachers to re-evaluate their views on historical knowledge, what it is, and what it should accomplish. This chapter aims at, and concludes with, a discussion about what curricular change, with epistemological implications, actually does to the subject's foundations.

In the last part of this book, *Reflections on Measurements and Instruments*, attention is turned to how we measure epistemological beliefs and epistemic cognition. Because of its impact in the field, a lot of attention in this section is on the two questionnaires developed by Maggioni and colleagues (Beliefs about learning and teaching history questionnaire, BLTHQ and Beliefs about history questionnaire, BHQ). What better way to begin this part of the book than by letting Liliana Maggioni herself contemplate the journey behind thoughts surrounding the development of these questionnaires? Maggioni describes a personal journey in understanding concepts, and developing the tool, that has been used and discussed in the last 10–15 years. By going back to the early works on epistemology and teaching, Maggioni shows how different lines of thought have influenced research in the field in different ways, how meaning-making of the human experience comes into play, and how feelings play a major role in shifting epistemological thought in relation to the human condition. Maggioni delves deeper into the ideas of William Perry, and especially Robert Kegan, and how they influenced the establishment of the questionnaires. She also shows how the field of research interested in epistemic thought in education is based on perspectives forged in developmental studies of epistemic cognition, influenced by insights from the literature formed around historical understanding. Maggioni also brings ideas about how development in epistemological thought might be supported in different ways.

Martin Nitsche offers a way of moving forward. He argues for an integrated perspective in questionnaires, taking both developmental as well as contextual aspects into consideration when researching teachers' and prospective teachers' epistemological beliefs. The results from the studies that Nitsche present could be considered a comprehensive argument against

research that tries to establish fixed stances based on the development from lower to higher complexity. The author also calls for the integration of different perspectives when discussing epistemological ideas and for more research in the field addressing exactly how teachers' epistemological beliefs influence teaching, since this is something that seems to be unclear (as many of the chapters in this book also show).

One way the cultural context may be addressed is by adapting questionnaires to specific cultural domains. That is what Erkan Dinç and Servet Ützemur try to accomplish in their chapter on the adaption of the BHQ for Turkish culture. The authors point to the traditional way of teaching history in Türkiye, based in memorization of unchanging facts, as one factor to take into account when utilizing an instrument forged in another context where historical thinking skills are more prominent.

Chih-Ching Chang's chapter is more focused around a particular study and the methodology of studying epistemological development. Chang analyses the trajectory of teachers' epistemic beliefs, with an emphasis on personal epistemological development. By utilizing epistemic network analysis, the complexity of personal epistemology is presented in a more illustrative way. Over the course of an academic year, seven teachers were followed, and while there were substantial discrepancies between epistemological perspectives and teaching practices, the study also shows development in teachers' thinking during the year.

Vojtech Ripka, Pavla Sýkorová, Jiří Münich, and Edita Chvojka look to reimagine epistemic wobbling as situational states of epistemological beliefs. Taking the Czech initiative *History+* as a point of departure the authors build on insights from the project and subscribe to the notion that epistemic wobbling is based in differing situational contexts and that instruments of measurements tend to be less accurate in distinguishing between general and situational epistemologies. Teachers who display epistemic inconsistencies might be indistinguishable from a teacher with an advanced epistemic understanding set in certain contextual conditions. If this assertion holds, the authors point to the need to create conditions for teachers to teach on what they see as an advanced epistemic level, rather than try to educate epistemologically sophisticated teachers. Giving teachers the tools to become more advanced in their thinking regarding epistemological issues might not be successful if their teaching will be set in circumstances where they are forced to switch to a less advanced mode of epistemic thinking.

Based in the BLTHQ, but taking its results further by qualitative interviews, the study presented by David-Alexandre Wagner, investigates the Norwegian context and how eight prospective history teachers who had taken the BLTHQ understood it. The interviews revealed some misunderstandings that could be the result of ambiguities in the questionnaire itself, but also how national context seems to influence understanding, when comparing the Norwegian results to previous studies from other national contexts. In line with how many of the chapters in this book explain and discuss inconsistencies in teachers' ideas and beliefs the author points to both intrinsic and extrinsic ambiguity. That is, the method itself is problematic because there is ambiguity in the measuring statements themselves, but there is also an extrinsic ambiguity, based on the prospective teachers' own view of the subject, making them misunderstand as a consequence of their own thought. Confirmation bias also comes into play, when interviewees interpret statements as being closer to their own thought, than they actually are.

In the concluding chapter, where he offers a commentary on his reading of all the contributions to this book, co-editor Paul Zanzanian identifies two main areas of reflection that emerge, along with two concomitant tensions that consequently arise and require a response. In relation to the first area of reflection, to what historical knowledge is, he pinpoints a clear overreliance on history-as-discipline for viewing history and thinking about its workings, which given its predominance in the field seems to be problematic because it can blind us to other perspectives and new avenues of thought. Regarding the second, how to best teach history and why, he highlights the further assumption of a direct influence between pre- and in-service teachers' epistemological beliefs about (disciplinary) history and how it should be taught in schools. To address both tensions, he suggests questioning and reflecting on the unintentional preferences and normative assumptions that we—as researchers in the field—may hold about what we seek to find. Calling for a self-reflexive approach to problematizing our thinking patterns, he promotes the espousal of an everyday, practical life approach to not only perceiving and teaching history, but to also considering it as perhaps a new starting point for better understanding teachers' own gained practical wisdoms on how to teach the subject. This greatly contrasts with the generalized taken-for-granted reliance on history-as-discipline for understanding what history is and how and why it should be taught.

We hope that this contribution, as a whole, also inspire for further research in the field, unravelling not only new answers, but also new questions about the relationship between the epistemology, understanding, and teaching history.

Acknowledgements This book was made possible as part of a research project financed by the Swedish Research Council (grant number 2018-03787), which have also provided the funding for making the whole volume open access.

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PART I

Epistemology and Context



CHAPTER 2

Epistemic Fluency and the Pedagogical Challenge of Fake News, Historical Denial, and Rival Histories

Robert J. Parkes

INTRODUCTION

History teachers are today faced with the task of stewarding their students through critical engagement with fake news, historical denial, and rival histories of their nation's past. The ubiquitous nature of this challenge is arguably a specific characteristic of contemporary postmodern culture, where the line between fact and fiction has been questioned, and is often deliberately blurred in reality television (Hill, 2005), pseudo-scientific documentaries (Wallace, 2019), infotainment (Photiou et al., 2019), and through the necessary but distortive conventions of historical film (Rosenstone, 2006); not to mention the tabloidization of current events (Sparks, 2015), varieties of historical denial (Taylor, 2008), the circulation of conspiracy theories (Peters & Johannesen, 2020), and the deliberate use of post-truth propaganda in political power games over the internet

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H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the Epistemology of History*,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_2

and social media (Fuller, 2018). Likewise, the emergence and recognition of “rival histories” of the nation have become a matter of public debate, and curricular concern, in many contemporary societies (Elmersjö et al., 2017), not the least in my own home environment, Australia (Clark, 2004, 2008; Parkes, 2007, 2009, 2011; Taylor, 2004, 2009). In this challenging context, the development of media literacy in social studies education (Journell, 2017; Manfra & Holmes, 2018), and historical thinking skills (Siebörger, 2017; Wineburg, 2018), have strong advocates. Such advocacy reflects an international consensus around the importance of adopting a disciplinary approach to history teaching that first emerged in the 1970s as part of the social history turn (Mathis & Parkes, 2020; Parkes & Donnelly, 2014), and has since been promoted using notions such as *historical thinking* (Peck & Seixas, 2008; Seixas & Morton, 2012; Seixas & Peck, 2004), *historical understanding* (Ashby & Lee, 1987; Lee & Ashby, 2000), *historical reasoning* (Martin et al., 2021; van Boxtel & van Drie, 2004; Voss & Carretero, 1998), *historical competencies* (Körber, 2007, 2014; Körber & Meyer-Hamme, 2015), and *historical literacy* (Virta, 2007). While these various notions are not identical, they do share a relationship to the idea that school history should encourage students to practice and appropriate analogues of the intellectual workings of professional historians (Shemilt, 1987; VanSledright, 1996; Wineburg, 2001), though historical competencies may certainly have a broader agenda around historical sense-making that goes beyond the disciplinary frame (Körber, 2016). Certainly, developing epistemological beliefs that are consistent with an “understanding of history as a disciplinary form of knowledge, with specific procedures for ascertaining the validity of historical claims” has become important to the research field (Stoel et al., 2017, p. 120). Of course, in order to facilitate such development in students, history teachers themselves arguably need to hold sophisticated or “nuanced” epistemological beliefs about the nature of historical knowledge (Maggioni, 2010; Maggioni et al., 2009; Stoel et al., 2017), else be trapped in simply rehearsing and reproducing the knowledge of the powerful (dominant discourses), rather than fostering powerful knowledge (disciplinary thinking) in their students, to use the distinction proposed by the educational theorist, Michael Young (2007).

Studying the epistemological beliefs of history students and teachers has led to a common finding that both students and teachers often “wobble” between epistemic stances (Stoel et al., 2017; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014). VanSledright and Maggioni (2016) suggested that the “wobbling”

they observed most likely resulted from a difficulty their participants had in navigating the objective and subjective aspects of history. Elmersjö (2022) has speculated that “epistemic inconsistency” (p. 829), may be the result, not of an inconsistency in teachers’ beliefs about history, but between their thinking about history and how they think the school subject should be taught to particular students (p. 835). This concurs with my own suspicion, and suggests the influence of at least two intersecting cultures within which the history teacher must operate: (1) the *historical culture* that has shaped their epistemological beliefs about history, that includes both the *mnemonic communities* they have grown up within (Wertsch, 2002), and the *epistemic communities* they may have been inducted into within their academic education (Holzner, 1972); and (2) the specific *pedagogical culture/s* within which their *curriculum ideologies* have been formed. History teachers’ epistemic beliefs about history were originally studied with a view to determining their influence on their classroom practices (Maggioni, 2010), and has continued with a concern focused on teachers’ beliefs about the nature of historical knowledge; the impact these beliefs have upon history teaching; and what the implications of these are for history teacher education (Nitsche et al., 2022). However, it may be more productive to approach the issue of epistemic inconsistency from the perspective that history teachers work within a series of overlapping and intersecting cultural fields, each shaping their beliefs and practices in specific ways. This is where an approach that takes seriously the influence of curriculum ideologies (Schiro, 2013), as pedagogic epistemologies that shape classroom practice, and the concept of historical consciousness as understood within the Germanic tradition, “as a coherent set of mental operations that define the peculiarity of historical thinking and the function it plays in human culture” (Rüsen, 1987, p. 284), may prove particularly useful to this discussion.

HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, HISTORICAL CULTURE, AND THE HERMENEUTIC CHALLENGE

The notion of “historical consciousness” was first presented to the Anglophone history education research community through Peter Seixas’ (2004) edited collection *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*. Inspired by, including, and historically indebted to, the work of German scholar, Jörn Rüsen (1987, 1989), this collection marked the beginning of the serious

consideration of historical consciousness in scholarship outside of the German-speaking and Nordic world, where it was already well-established as a concept within the *didaktik* literature (Ahonen, 2005). My own approach is to understand historical consciousness beyond simply the contents of memory or a form of “disciplinary subject matter” common to some of the Anglophone literature (as also observed by Zanazanian & Nordgren, 2019, p. 773), and instead understand historical consciousness as our sense of temporal orientation and awareness of ourselves as historical beings. In this I take up a position aligned with the distinctions offered by Körber (2016). Despite the definitional challenges, the wide-spread up-take of historical consciousness as a concept within the history education research field is clearly evidenced by two additional edited collections that followed Seixas. Firstly, published the year after Seixas’ collection, Jürgen Straub’s (2005b) *Narration, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*, adopted a psychological approach to the subject, and drew together work on historical thinking, narrative psychology, moral consciousness, and historical consciousness, with the explicit aim of bringing psychological insights into the study of historical consciousness, and envisioning a research program that *comparatively* and *ethnologically*, explores how people “actually think historically, and which acts are or were once guided by such [historical] thought” (Straub, 2005a, p. xiv).

More recently, Metzger and McArthur Harris’ (2018) edited collection *The Wiley International Handbook of History Teaching and Learning* included several discussions of historical consciousness. Likewise, Anna Clark and Carla L. Peck’s (2019a) *Contemplating Historical Consciousness: Notes from the Field*, demonstrated just how important the concept of historical consciousness had become to the academic research field, traversing the domains of history education, public history, memory studies, and heritage studies; and shifted the focus to how “peoples and communities engage with and produce history” (Clark & Peck, 2019b, p. 2). Rightly, they announce this research focus as being driven by a concern with “historical culture” or the

histories produced by public institutions, bureaucracies, curriculum developers, governments, and professional and academic historians, as well as quotidian historical discourses of the everyday ... public and private histories as well as academic historical scholarship. (Clark & Peck, 2019b, p. 2)

This borrows from the Germanic concept of *geschichtskultur* (history culture) and its take up in the Nordic *didaktik* tradition, where as “historical culture” it is understood as the encounters that individuals, groups, institutions, and societies, have with the past in the form of history; and influenced European history education and research, with a shift of focus to the public uses of history (see the discussion in Zanazanian & Nordgren, 2019). As Sjöberg (2011) has argued:

While historical consciousness is better understood along the lines of individual construct, historical culture offers the possibility to move beyond the confines of individual experience, memory, or “consciousness” to the public sphere. (p. 8)

Thorp (2016) notes that historical culture “deals with how history is disseminated and how knowledge, attitudes and values about history provide individuals with meaning” (p. 24), and argues that while we are born into a historical context that precedes us, we never experience history directly, but “it is rather experienced through historical accounts that are disseminated in speech, writing, or through customs and cultural habits” and we thus “never encounter history nakedly but always through a cultural or social environment” (p. 24). For Rüsen (2012) “[t]he work of history didactics cannot be understood or pursued without an awareness of its role in the historical culture of its time” (p. 520). As Lévesque (2016) has argued:

We need to (re)conceptualize the development of students’ historical consciousness, not exclusively as a practice of public memory or a set of scholastic competencies, but as the effective result of the interplay between historical culture, public memory, practical life, schooling, and the practice of disciplinary history.

Thus, the historical narratives we encounter through the historical culture/s of which we are a member, both produce and are produced by historical consciousness, or our awareness and embrace of ourselves as historical beings; and it was this understanding, and the capturing of the *zeitgeist* it reflected, that led to the establishment, and arguably significance, of *Historical Encounters*, a journal I founded in 2014 as a venue for scholarship that explored in various ways, the relationships between historical consciousness, historical culture, and history education.

Within the German philosophically oriented hermeneutic tradition from which it emerged, the concept of historical consciousness was described by Gadamer (1975) as “a full awareness of the historicity of everything present” (p. 8). Grever (2019) notes, that Gadamer’s hermeneutics emphasizes “the *historicity* of human beings”, and understands that “the world is historically effected” and thus “always situated in time” (p. 225, emphasis in the original). Importantly, Grever (2019) clarifies that from within the hermeneutic tradition:

historical consciousness implies an awareness of the fundamental historical character of human behavior, knowledge, institutions, events, and developments in the world, including one’s own position ... a temporary outcome of a changing *state of mind* concerning orientation in time of human beings who are involved in transforming, sometimes overlapping mnemonic communities. (p. 225, emphasis in the original)

Historical consciousness, in a Gadamerian sense, is thus

the realization that all knowledge is incomplete because it is situated in, is a function of, and is therefore made possible by a horizon of historically mediated meanings which constitutes the unavoidable platform from which we, via our interpretative existence, make our way through the world and history. (Van Niekerk, 2005, p. 235)

Gadamer’s understanding of hermeneutical activity represents a reaction against a transcendental notion of reason, “the idea of an unsituated reason” (Van Niekerk, 2005, p. 236), that sits beyond the influence of historical influences. Taken seriously, this understanding of historical consciousness challenges any notion of a history discipline that operates with a set of unchanging methodologies or cognitive operations that somehow sit outside of historical time. Instead, it becomes imperative, especially as teachers and students of history, to always draw attention to “what conventional and methodological practices, whose discourse, whose standards, [and] whose past” are in play, recognizing that the discipline itself is socially constructed (Segall, 2006, p. 138), or as Zanazanian has argued, requires the learner to engage in a self-reflexive move that acknowledges the conceptual frames they are deploying and connects them with the broader social, cultural, and historical context from which they have emerged that he calls history-as-interpretive-filter. Elsewhere, I have

argued that it is precisely this kind of turn towards teaching history as historiography—where we are encouraged to adopt a historiographic gaze towards any of our own or others’ historical knowledge claims—that is required if we take history, and ourselves as historically effected beings, seriously (Parkes, 2009). Thus, for Gadamer (1987) historical consciousness is

a reflexive position concerning all that is handed down by tradition. Historical consciousness no longer listens sanctimoniously to the voice that reaches out from the past but, in reflection upon it, replaces it within the context where it took root in order to see the significance and relative value proper to it. (p. 89)

Understood in this way, historical consciousness can be conceived as both a general human capacity or tendency to orient ourselves in time, “giving practical life a temporal frame and matrix” (Rüsen, 2004, p. 67), and the achievement of a certain “psychological competence” (Straub, 2005c, p. 49), or mode of awareness, or a kind of epistemic reflexivity (Mathis & Parkes, 2020), or historical (self) consciousness (Parkes, 2022), in which we appreciate the historicity of ourselves and all forms of human culture and tradition.

NO OUTSIDE TRADITION OR THE IMPORTANCE OF EPISTEMIC COMMUNITIES

In my book *Interrupting History: Rethinking History Curriculum After “the End of History”* (Parkes, 2011), I proposed that the history educator needs to adopt a historiographic perspective that “extends the gaze of the historian to everything, even themselves, revealing the historical specificity of all forms of historical knowledge and practice” (p. 102). In extending the historian’s gaze to themselves, I imagined the historian or history educator as starting to function as a kind of historiographer. My argument was that when the idea of historicity is taken seriously, the gaze of the historian become panoptical, forcing “history into a painful reflexivity that paradoxically provides the possibility for the historian (or history student) to disengage from historical discourse as a result of historicizing historical representation” (p. 130). In Nietzschean fashion, I argued that through its encounter with the historiographic gaze, historical discourse is interrupted, resulting in a type of critical hermeneutic distance that can disrupt

the effects of a limiting historical narrative (see Nietzsche, 1874/1983). I concluded by arguing that we needed to “teach history *under erasure*”, where “the end of history” comes at the hands of the historiographer’s gaze, and where we subsequently conjure a pedagogical situation in which histories, as spectres that haunt our lives, are both presented and deconstructed in the same lesson. The idea of the historiographic gaze placed historical representation at the centre of the curriculum and aimed to provoke an understanding that historical representations emerge from within—feminist, Marxist, social, intellectual, cultural, and many other—historiographic traditions, and hence are marked historically by the methodological biases of those traditions. In Gadamer’s hermeneutics, the act of historical interpretation relies on the prejudices or pre-judgements we develop through participation in one or more historiographic traditions. The concept of the historiographic gaze called upon the history teacher to recognize that our own acts of reading and interpretation are prejudiced by the methodological biases of the historiographic traditions we have been initiated into, and thus alludes to the importance of understand historical thought and narrative, including history teachers’ epistemic beliefs, in the contexts of their use and production.

Two decades ago, Catherine Harris-Hart (2002) found that during a period of syllabus change in New South Wales, the strongest mediating force on history teachers’ practice was the culture of the faculty or subject department. This suggests that rather than an exclusive focus on individual epistemic cognition, it may be useful to engage in the exploration of school-based history departments as *epistemic communities*. I take two obvious starting points for this suggestion. The first starting point for this line of inquiry is James Wertsch’s (2002) work on “mnemonic communities” and “narrative templates”, already taken up by Zanazanian (2015, 2017, 2019) in various novel and generative forms. According to Wertsch (2012) “the narrative tools we employ to make sense of the past introduce a particular perspective” or “ethnocentrism” that motivates us to view the past in a biased way (p. 11). He claims that our appreciation and comprehension of the past is at least partially formed through our ethnic group identifications; and that these “tribal” affiliations and ethnic commitments, that make us participants in particular mnemonic communities, affecting the way we read the narratives we encounter. He notes that rival “mnemonic communities routinely spar over ‘what really happened’ in crucial events from the past” (Wertsch, 2008, p. 145), and that many of the collective memories shared within the mnemonic community are

underpinned by a common “narrative template” (a kind of regularly appearing archetypal storyline) that acts as a cultural tool, shaping perceptions of the past, and is relatively resistant to change (Wertsch, 2002). We only have to think about Donald Trump and his supporters, and the American election in 2020, to see an example of this in practice. As Journell (2017) argues, Trump’s logic leads to the understanding “that any information contradicting one’s ideology is automatically illegitimate, or fake” (p. 8). Likewise, Trump and his administration frequently demonstrated their willingness to promote “alternative facts” whenever reality did not support their political agenda (Journell, 2017, p. 9). This puts in doubt that simply teaching historical thinking skills alone will be sufficient to encourage their universal deployment, and underscores the strength of the mnemonic community’s influence on individual epistemology.

The second point of reference for a concern with the influence of epistemic communities on individual epistemic beliefs is the study conducted by Gottlieb and Wineburg (2012). This study offered a definitive example of “epistemic switching” among religious historians that was dependent on the kind of text (secular or religious) they were given to analyse; which was not evident among the non-religious historians in the study, who applied the same historical thinking mindset to both sets of texts. Nitsche et al. (2022) see this as indicating “that epistemic cognition in history is situated in context” (p. 3). In his seminal work on *epistemic communities*, Burkhard Holzner (1972) contrasted epistemic communities of specialized workers, with ideologically united communities of the faithful (Holzner, 1972, p. 122). In Gottlieb and Wineburg’s (2012) study the application of different sets of epistemological criteria was mediated precisely by the “the allegiances [to epistemological and ideological communities] triggered by the document under review” (p. 84). Zanzanian (2019) drawing on Wertsch’s (1998, 2002) concept of narrative templates, and Rösen’s (2005, 2017) anthropocentric approach to historical consciousness, has argued that certain epistemic positions on the nature of history itself work as filters that operate as “a cultural tool that mediates individuals’ historical sense-making process” (p. 865) and cut “across objectivist, subjectivist and nuanced approaches to making sense of social reality” (p. 850).

In the mid-seventies, drawing on Foucault’s (1966/1994) notion of the *episteme*, “a shared worldview that derives from their mutual socialization and shared knowledge” (Cross, 2013, p. 10), John Gerard Ruggie (1975) argued that epistemic communities share intentions, expectations,

symbols, behavioural rules, and points of reference that arise from “bureaucratic position, technocratic training, similarities in scientific outlook and shared disciplinary paradigms” (pp. 569–570). The definitional criteria for what constitutes an epistemic community were presented by Haas (1992) as follows:

[A] network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain or issue-area ... [who] have (1) a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for social action ... (2) shared casual beliefs ... derived from their analysis of practices leading or contributing to a central set of problems in their domain ... (3) shared notions of validity ... in the domain of their expertise; and (4) ... a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which their professional competence is directed. (p. 3)

Haas (1992), distinguished epistemic communities from the professions and disciplines that house them, because

[a]lthough members of a given profession or discipline may share a set of casual approaches or orientations and have a consensual knowledge base, they lack the shared normative commitments of members of an epistemic community. (p. 19)

Haas gives an example to make this clear:

While economists as a whole constitute a profession, members of a particular subgroup of economists—for example, Keynesians ...—may constitute an epistemic community of their own and systemically contribute to a concrete set of projects informed by their preferred views, beliefs, and ideas. (Haas, 1992, p. 19)

In the discipline of history, this might lead us to think of *reconstructions*, *constructionists*, or *deconstructionists* (Jenkins & Munslow, 2004), or using a different schema, *empiricists*, *Marxists*, *feminists*, *postmodernists*, etc. (Green & Troup, 1999); and within the curriculum field, *academic-disciplinarians*, *techno-rationalists*, *vocationalists*, *progressivists*, *developmentalists*, *reconceptualists*, and *social reconstructionists* (Adamson & Morris, 2007; Aoki, 2005; Kliebard, 1987; Marsh & Willis, 2003; Schiro, 2013).

For Haas (1992) utilizing the concept of epistemic communities is useful for focusing on the “process through which consensus is reached within a given domain of expertise and through which the consensual knowledge is diffused to and carried forward by other actors” (p. 23). Cross (2013) echoes Haas, describing epistemic communities as “networks of experts who persuade others of their shared causal beliefs and policy goals by virtue of their professional knowledge” (p. 5). While Sethard Fisher (1969) added that “[o]nce epistemic communities become established as power structures, they regulate members’ orientations” (p. 562).

As has already been argued, subject departments are a potential shaping force on the practical epistemologies that teachers adopt around history teaching, and may contrast with the formal epistemologies a teacher holds around the nature of history itself (Wilke et al., 2022). Thus, in cases where a consensus around practice emerges in a particular subject department, its members may begin to function as a type of epistemic community; and thus, to understand an individual history teacher’s epistemic cognition it would become advantageous to explore their beliefs in the context of their professional setting. Within the curriculum studies field, it is theorized that various ideologies and epistemologies shape teachers’ pedagogic practices. Schiro’s (2013) work on teachers’ curriculum theories stands out within this literature, not only for the clarity of its framework that proposes four dominant curriculum ideologies, but particularly for its original contribution to the discussion on how teachers navigate conflicting ideologies. For Schiro, an ideology is “a collection of ideas, a comprehensive vision, a way of looking at things, or a worldview that embodies the way a person or group believes the world should be organized and function” (p. 8). He also notes that it is a word that describes “how cultures are structured in ways that enable the group holding power to have the maximum control with the minimum of conflict” (p. 8). Thus, Schiro seems to be saying that *ideology is an epistemology that is shared through the exercise of power*.

Schiro’s curriculum ideologies each involve particular epistemologies that drive curriculum design, pedagogical practice, the classroom disposition of the teacher, and the purpose and modes of assessment. Schiro firstly identifies the *Scholar Academic Ideology*, representing a belief that “over the centuries our culture has accumulated important knowledge that has been organized into the academic disciplines found in universities” and that education’s goal should be “to help children learn the

accumulated knowledge of our culture: that of the academic disciplines” (p. 4). In this way of thinking, an academic discipline functions as a hierarchical community that is constituted by

inquirers into truth (the scholars at the top of the hierarchy), teachers of the truth (those who disseminate the truth that has been discovered by the scholars), and learners of the truth (students whose job it is to learn so they become proficient members of the discipline). (p. 4)

The ultimate goal of the academic ideology is to transform the learners into scholars, through the mediation of the educators (at both school and university levels). This view is dominant within universities, and has certainly influenced school history. The second curriculum ideology Schiro identifies is the *Social Efficiency Advocate*, who seeks to find ways of efficiently meeting the needs of contemporary society by a focus on training the youth of society in the specific skills, competencies, activities, and procedures it is anticipated they will need in the adult workplace. Social Efficiency style instruction structures the learning sequence towards clearly defined behavioural objectives, and is built around the achievement of competencies required by the workforce. This is the dominant curriculum ideology of the vocational education and training sector. The third position Schiro identifies is the *Learner-Centred Ideology*, which privileges “the needs and concerns” of the student over the needs of society or the specificities of the subject matter (p. 5), aiming to assist individuals to achieve their full intellectual, social, emotional, and physical potential. We see this most strongly in the Early Childhood Education and Care sector. The final position that Schiro identifies is the *Social Reconstructionist Ideology*. According to Schiro, “social reconstructionists are conscious of the problems of our society and the injustices done to certain of its members” on the basis of categories such as race, class, gender, sexuality, or ethnicity (p. 6), and utilizes education as a tool to facilitate and advocate for a new and more just society. Within schools it is most often associated with Humanities and Social Science subjects. Not only are some subject areas, and certain types of institutions, more disposed to certain curriculum ideologies over others, but different ideologies may be found within the same subject area.

Where Schiro’s work may become particularly useful—to borrow an idea from the epistemic cognition literature—is in his exploration of teachers’ ideological switching or wobbling between different curriculum

ideologies. Schiro noticed that the teachers he studied demonstrated inconsistencies in the curriculum beliefs they held, both across the span of their career, and even at different points in time during a particular day (Schiro, 2013, p. 256). In his exploration of these inconsistencies, Schiro found teachers adopted one of four different dispositions. The first disposition he noticed was a *dualistic* attitude found among teachers who “believe, understand and value only one ideology”, and who see “those curriculum beliefs that are in agreement with their own as right ... and those that are different as incorrect” (p. 256). The second disposition Schiro identifies as a *relativistic* attitude, held by teachers who give equal value to each of the curriculum ideologies, holding none as better than any other. The third possibility Schiro calls a *contextual* attitude, held by teachers who adopt the curriculum approach that “they believe is best for accomplishing certain goals or purposes” (pp. 256–257), switching “their ideology depending on the nature of the curriculum task they are engaged in, or the ideology of the group or individual with whom they are speaking” (p. 257). The final possibility Schiro identified was a *hierarchical* attitude that differentiates “between a variety of well-defined, viable ideologies while making a personal and thoughtful commitment to only one” (p. 257).

Schiro notes that “educators who take a relativistic or contextual posture toward the existence of different ideologies can believe in more than one simultaneously, and can combine ideologies in unique (and often inconsistent) ways” (p. 257). While educators who take a hierarchical posture are often capable of using different ideologies “in the service of promoting a single ideology” (p. 257). Those who take a dualist position, are the ones who most closely match the singular dispositions Schiro identified in his work, and are the ones who are often involved in curriculum debates over issues like skills versus content. In investigating history teachers’ epistemic beliefs about both history and history pedagogy, it is precisely this type of relational framework that may provide a useful heuristic for thinking through the questions around epistemic switching, epistemic wobbling, or the “epistemic double standard” that has been a concern in the literature (Maggioni, 2010, p. 310). At the very least, this might offer an explanation for mismatches between what Wilke et al. (2022) label an individual history teacher’s formal and practical epistemologies.

Finally, I’d like to us to remember that pedagogical techniques are themselves the product of particular epistemic communities, and arguably operate as forms of embodied epistemology. Like “concepts”, I would

argue that “techniques” or “practices” are subject to what Koselleck (2000, 2018) described as *Zeitschichten* (time strata, the sediments or layers of time). That is, they carry layers of meaning that accumulate like sediments from their utilization within different *epistemes*. An education example might be something like project based learning, which was originally advocated in the 1930s by John Dewey, and was situated within the epistemic communities of the American pragmatists and progressivists. Today, that same type of pedagogical approach has been recontextualized within a twenty-first-century skills paradigm. Thus, project based learning may be inflected with layers of meaning from both periods. If we were to find this to be the case, then this would be a good example of *Zeitschichten* at play. In order to determine such sediments of time, Koselleck (2018) encourages us to think in terms of the “repetition of structures” looking “simultaneously [for] both historical change and historical persistence” (p. 18), for both the replication of the old, and the implementation of the truly original and unique. This adds yet another temporal dimension to the study of teachers’ practical epistemologies.

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS AN EPISTEMIC FLUENCY

I will conclude by noting that, from the perspective of both research and training, it is useful to remember and approach history teachers as always a member of mnemonic communities by virtue of their birth within a particular culture and society; and their membership of one or more epistemic communities by virtue of their academic education within particular historiographic traditions; and as inheritors of epistemically loaded pedagogical practices through their exposure to, and adoption of different curriculum ideologies, during their teacher education program, participation within particular professional associations, and location within specific subject departments. The epistemologies circulating within each of these communities are all likely to have purchase on a teachers’ beliefs and practices. Likewise, history teachers may have varying degrees of loyalty or commitment to specific communities and their epistemological beliefs; and within an educational context, it would certainly be useful to understand if the epistemic beliefs of one form of community out-weigh the other. Certainly, what we might want to note is that the ability to apply the historical thinking competencies of a specific *tradition*, is undoubtedly a sign of *historical literacy* (see Mathis & Parkes, 2020, p. 192); and those teachers “who are flexible and adept with respect to different ways of knowing” or in this

case different schools of historical thought, might “be said to possess *epistemic fluency*” (Markauskaite & Goodyear, 2016, p. 1), which has been argued to be “a capacity that underpins knowledgeable professional action and innovation” (back cover). Thus, rather than simply determining a history teacher’s epistemic stances, or their degree of switching and/or wobbling, there may be some promise in assisting them to develop an *epistemic fluency*, so that the formal and practical epistemologies they adopt are not simply the artefacts of fate, but become resources with which to explore historical discourse in the classroom, with critical insight, and empathy, arising as a result of their historical (self) consciousness.

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CHAPTER 3

Elementary School Teachers' Perspectives on History, 1920–1946

Johan Samuelsson

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on Swedish elementary school teachers' perspectives on history in 1920–1946, a period characterised by the democratisation of Swedish society and education. This process saw challenges to the history subject, which up to then had been central to citizenship education. The perceived conservative nature of the subject was deemed a core problem: Many pointed out that a subject designed to transfer traditional norms and values of the past could hardly contribute to the education of independent citizens in the democratic society of the future. The epistemic character of the history subject thus seemed close to what some would term “a copier stance”, in which the role of history teaching is to reproduce the past (cf. Stoel et al., 2022). Previous research has, mainly through studies of political debates, curricula and textbooks, highlighted these aspects of the role and character of the history subject in the interwar period (cf. Englund, 1986). However, in this chapter, I aim to nuance

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© The Author(s) 2024
H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_3

these views through empirical studies of teachers' perspectives on teaching. By contextualising and analysing teachers' teaching in relation to perspectives on knowledge and the history subject's role in fostering citizenship, I discuss how the view of knowledge must be related to what was conceived as the role of the history subject in a changing society.

An overall starting point is the assumption that teachers usually have varying views of what is central to teaching and what the central epistemic knowledge is (Cuban, 1993; Nygren, 2009; Elmersjö, 2021). My analysis of epistemic perspectives is inspired by Sven Sødtring Jensen and Wolfgang Klafki. Sødtring Jensen (1978) discussed the view of historical knowledge from a historical perspective, which makes this theory relevant in this context (cf. Klafki, 2001). They used the concepts of objective, formalist (*formell* in Swedish) and categorical views of history. In summary, the objective view is close to the "collective memory approach", while the formalist perspective, focusing on the form of learning, has more of a progressive view of the history subject in which historical knowledge is closely associated with students' actions and interests (Fallace, 2010).

My broader research interest is in early twentieth-century Swedish teachers' perspectives on history in the context of the democratisation of Swedish society. More specifically, my aim is to identify the types of epistemic perspectives of history taught in Swedish elementary schools (years 1–7), as manifested in teachers' accounts. The material used in this chapter thus consists of a large collection of 600 teachers' descriptive accounts of teaching collected in 1946 through a government inquiry. These descriptions clearly reflect the perspectives that the teachers had on historical knowledge and the history subject. The presentation of the analysis is based on a selection of teacher accounts, with references to contemporary norm-setting texts in connection with various statements made in those accounts.

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

The time after the 1920s in Sweden was marked by radical modernisation, as characterised by progressive proposals in housing and social politics. In the interwar years, there was also discussion of reforming what many saw as an obsolete parallel school system of a six- to seven-year elementary school for workers and farmers, and a grammar school for the bourgeoisie. The importance of elementary school is evidenced by the number of pupils and teachers. In the 1940s, there were around 25,000 elementary school

teachers and approximately 500,000 pupils in Sweden. In comparison, there were 2700 grammar school teachers at the beginning of the 1940s, and around 4000 school graduates received their matriculation certificate from grammar schools at that time (*Statistisk årsbok för Sverige 1950*, 1950). Elementary school was the predominant form of education all over Sweden in major cities, as well as in towns and rural areas (Richardson, 1978).

The democratisation of Swedish society influenced the view of how teaching should be conducted. A pupil-centred perspective was, for example, considered to be more in line with a democratic society, and after World War I, Swedish education was therefore gradually adapted to such a perspective on education and teaching (Popkewitz, 2005; Samuelsson et al., 2022). The view of history and history teaching also underwent changes in Sweden in 1920–1950. At the general curriculum level, the main purpose of the history subject—to foster citizenship—was questioned. With the democratisation of society, its conservative and nationalistic character seemed problematic—a subject that promoted citizenship needed a different orientation. Ultimately, this led to a change in the curricular nature of history as social science perspectives were given more attention to make the subject more socially relevant (Englund, 1986; Samuelsson, 2021).

In addition, pupil-centred approaches and methods became increasingly important. Altogether, this resulted in the emergence of a new view of the epistemic nature of the history subject. From a topic involving the conveying of an objective, material and firm ground of “historical granite”, aspects of “making history” now received greater emphasis and gained ground (Samuelsson, 2021; Sødning Jensen, 1978). In terms of present-day historiographical perspectives, there was a transition from a reconstructive to a more constructive perspective (Elmersjö, 2022).

The period primarily treated in this chapter was, in short, a breaking point in the Swedish character of the history subject, which meant that teachers were situated between a traditional view of the subject and a view emphasising the interests of pupils.

EPISTEMIC PERSPECTIVES ON THE RECENT PAST

The Swedish interwar debate on the epistemic character of the history subject was lively and can partly be connected to discussions about knowledge, as initially implied in the introduction. Criticism emerged towards not only the subject's content but also the character of the knowledge

allegedly conveyed by history. Researchers have stated that a modern *Bildung* perspective must acknowledge the importance of using knowledge in real life; specifically, dead knowledge unusable in daily life is rather meaningless (Cassel, 1942). Possibly, this is a violation of history, but this more pragmatic view of knowledge is not far removed from more critical and deconstructive perspectives in its emphasis on knowledge as socially relevant, re-assessable and usable.

Current research has also referred to “a copier stance”, meaning that history is an objective reproduction of the past and, when applied to education, requires pupils to be informed about this past. The concept of a “criticalist stance” can serve as a kind of antipole to the copier stance and is close to the constructive perspectives which regard historical knowledge as an interpretative activity to be understood in relation to contemporaneity (Elmersjö & Zanzanian, 2022; Stoel et al., 2022). When addressing epistemic issues in the field of history education, this is mostly done in relation to contemporary circumstances. As my interest concerns the recent past, other perspectives on history and historical knowledge are more relevant. In this chapter I thus rely on perspectives involving both an interest in the epistemic character of history and a rejection of it as merely a subject fostering citizenship in a historical context. The Danish history education researcher, Sven Sødtring Jensen, as inspired by Wolfgang Klafki, developed a history teaching typology which in many contexts has been applied to historical material. This typology has often supported the history of education studies on the subject’s development in the twentieth century. Specifically, Sødtring Jensen (1978) linked these perspectives to societal development and the mission of schools in this process of change. The typology contextualises historical content, teaching methods and views pupils in relation to societal development, which makes the perspectives relevant to this article’s context.

Sødtring Jensen (1978) further highlighted some central perspectives on history education, namely, material, formalist and categorical ways of viewing the subject. In the *material* conception, history is regarded as a kind of neutral observation of the past. According to Sødtring Jensen, history in this perspective is a collection of “granite stones” in the terrain, and it is the teacher’s job to transfer knowledge of this collection to pupils. There is no need to problematise or discuss the past (Ammert, 2008; Sødtring Jensen, 1978).

This perspective also has a sub-category that Sødtring Jensen (1978) termed *classic history teaching*, which combines the fostering of national

citizenship and the transfer of a national canon. Classic history teaching is characterised by a focus on education for subservience and national pride, which is achieved through cautionary tales with contemporary relevance.¹ Methodically, narration has a strong position, and the teacher is the national educator whose task is to foster national unity. History primarily deals with the growth of the nation, often in terms of political and territorial perspectives. Contrary to the objective conception, however, the teacher is obliged to make a selection of stories and examples from history that may function as inspirational and didactic examples (Karlsson, 1987). This perspective is close to the copier stance, as the essence of the subject is to capture events of the past, and through teaching, pupils can take part in that past through memorisation (Stoel et al., 2022).

History teaching emphasising *formalist* aspects takes the pupil's needs as the starting point, with the central aim of developing knowledge and skills for a present or future society. Through source criticism, for instance, the history subject can develop competencies relevant to contemporary citizens. Source critical studies, in combination with other parts of history teaching that train pupils to discuss and adopt different perspectives, are assumed to enhance a critical mind useful in modern and democratic societies (Sødring Jensen, 1978). The development of a more formalistically oriented history teaching has been argued to be the result of the fact that the classic conception is no longer considered socially relevant in modern societies.

These two perspectives also have different views of pupils. The material perspective centres on content and societal interest, while the formalist variety is concerned with pupils and their ability to function as citizens in a future society. But these perspectives also include various approaches to historical knowledge. Material perspectives are close to reconstructive perspectives on history and historical knowledge in stressing their static nature and immutability and history as something that is created and changed. In turn, the formalist perspective has certain similarities with the constructionist position, as history is not primarily an objective phenomenon to be learnt; rather, the emphasis is on the interpretive aspects of the subject (Elmersjö & Zanazanian, 2022).

Lastly, the *categorial* conception is an attempt to make content aspects relevant while considering pupils' interests and questions. Relevant

¹ *Relevance* is understood here to mean exemplary actions performed by great personalities. Historical narratives about such figures were considered of didactic importance to pupils.

historical content is that which contributes to pupils' knowledge development in a way deemed beneficial to them. As in the formalist perspective, the categorical conception emphasises the role of the pupil in teaching, but this is combined with an interest in the contents' aspects. Central to this approach is that education should provide the tools required for pupils to understand society by creating time and space coherence. Content, methods, pupils and society are aspects to consider in teaching. In the choice of content, it is crucial to consider its contemporary relevance to the pupils, so teaching content that may only possibly become relevant in the future should be excluded. In this category, the goal of teaching is to ensure that pupils are equipped to understand the present situation and critically approach it, all while pointing out means of future improvements. History also becomes a highly critical social science subject, as it is aspects of society that are to be made comprehensible in time and space. Thus, historical content has no intrinsic value (Klafki, 2001; Sødning Jensen, 1978).

FOCUS, MATERIAL AND METHODS

Defining teachers' and pupils' attitudes to epistemic issues is complex, as pointed out in several studies. One challenge is the relation between what teachers say that they do and what they actually do in the classroom (Sendur et al., 2022; Wilke et al., 2022). Another is studying the epistemic perspectives emerging among teachers and in classrooms from historical perspectives. However, through extensive source material, there is an opportunity to get close to how Swedish teachers viewed historical knowledge in their teaching during the first half of the twentieth century. The material used in this chapter is a product of a call issued by a government inquiry in the 1940s: the 1946 Schools Inquiry Commission (SOU 1948:27, 1948; Minutes no. 14, February 27). Approximately 600 elementary school teachers responded to the call. The investigation formed the basis of the political decisions that led to the new compulsory education for every child. The inventory of teachers' practice was intended to ascertain "to what degree reform pedagogical activities were currently taking place in Swedish schools", and teachers were encouraged to submit their accounts via teacher training colleges, inspectors and teacher unions (Minutes no. 14, February 27). Of the accounts, 360 represented teaching practices in the "theoretical subjects" (Swedish L1, Christianity, mathematics, natural science, history, local history and geography).

From these accounts I chose examples that represent different perspectives on history and teaching. My analysis was theoretically driven in the sense that I was inspired by the perspectives of others, such as Sødning Jensen and Klafki. Here, I also present relatively detailed descriptions of norm-setting texts, such as curricula and methodological literature on history teaching in elementary schools. In several cases, my analysis of teaching was linked to specific textbooks that the teachers explicitly referred to in their accounts. This involved a certain degree of interpretation of how the textbooks were used, but through this complementary addition, a broader description of their teaching could be provided.

The material gives insights into the teachers' perspectives on teaching and historical knowledge. But, as mentioned before, a challenge is the possible variation between what teachers say and what they actually do. Educational history studies have also shown that written reports from teachers can be subjective (Nieminen, 2018). Objections can thus be made to this material, but I would like to emphasise some of its strengths. Notably, the teachers described the teaching they conducted or had recently conducted at the time of the call, so the accounts are not a form of retrospective life story at the end of their careers. The material is extensive, and as far as I know, it is an unparalleled collection of accounts of actual teaching practices in twentieth-century Sweden. Another aspect is the importance of taking the stories of separate individuals seriously. In this case, it is ultimately about seeing teachers as experts and authorities (Thor Tureby & Johansson, 2020).

MEMORY, SCIENCE AND POETRY: THE IDEAL HISTORY SUBJECT IN NORM-SETTING TEXTS

In early twentieth-century Sweden, there were guidelines on how the teaching of history should be conducted. The concept of “direct instruction” was used in the national curriculum, along with “silent exercises” (*Undervisningsplan för rikets folkskolor 1919, 1923*, pp. 17–18, 100–109). In history, narration had a strong position, and it was through the “teacher’s oral narration” that history was conveyed. The curriculum also emphasised that narration should be “detailed and vivid” and designed to capture the pupils’ interest. Poems (with historical topics, presumably) were also mentioned as teaching resources in history, along with the surrounding community. Old roads, bridges and fields which “have yielded crops since

time immemorial”, as well as ancient monuments, were examples of material resources. Immaterial historical legacies such as local customs and legends could also be advantageously used. Regarding poems, the intention was to create an emotional atmosphere and add “life and colour to the historical presentation”. Previous research has described the purpose of the history subject in line with the concept of nineteenth-century material classic history. However, changes were made after 1919, when the national subservience aspects were toned down in favour of the social aspects (Englund, 1987).

In 1928, Nordlund, Sörensen and Wikberg, prominent figures in Swedish education, published a norm-setting textbook, *Arbetsättet i folkskolan: metodiska uppsatser* (*The Way of Working in Elementary School: Methodical Essays*) on history methods designed for teachers and teacher training (Nordlund, Sörensen, & Wikberg, 1928). The school subject described was multifaceted and held a broad spectrum of methods, content and approaches to teaching. Historical content was important, but history could not involve “a great number of historical items and dates swotted with sweat and toil”. Even so, history education for adults involved providing perspectives and seeing context and development. Pupils also required the opportunity to experience history in the same way as they read a fairy tale or fantasy, meaning adventure was an important element. Teaching thus demanded drama, contact with historical items and lively narratives. The teacher was to be “a magician breathing life into dead bones” and also, without underrating the subject content, “a scientist and a poet”: The ideal teacher had a scientist’s sharp eye for historical context and rich knowledge, in combination with a poet’s ability to add “life and must and colour to the material” (Nordlund, Sörensen, & Wikberg, 1928, pp. 191–225).

Instruction had to involve several methodological approaches as well. The book mentioned that the “antiquated” narrative method was self-evident, but besides the narrating teacher, pupils should be given the chance to work on their own. Epochs could be a natural starting point for pupils, and their presentations could incorporate other themes, such as the principles of power distribution between the Parliament and the King. Statistical assignments could be based on tables created by the pupils themselves, with themes of emigration, iron production, trade or population development. Historical monuments in the pupils’ surroundings provided an excellent method of study as well, just as did collecting Stone Age remnants, which were also recommended teaching elements.

Content-wise, Nordlund, Sörensen and Wikberg (1928) advocated a relatively classic view of history, and the curricular content suggestions were to be seen as a “stockpile” rather than a given canon to walk through. The more modern society-related part of the subject was also emphasised, since knowledge of municipal responsibilities and organisation appeared. Methods familiar to a social science expert were also discernible in the book’s suggestion of simple graphs and columns; columns could, for instance, display information about grain production and trade.

TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR TEACHING

The epistemological perspectives on history emerging from these curricula and norm-setting texts demonstrated a relatively broad view of the essence of the history subject—even though part of it was a kind of “historical granite” to be transferred to pupils. However, these perspectives were complemented by content and methods that highlighted pupil activity and social relevance.

In the following sections, I treat some parts of the teaching reported primarily in terms of content and method, which are clearly manifested in the material.

HISTORICAL GRANITE

In the teachers’ accounts, the historical granite, or traditional history content, is the basic frame of teaching. In one sense, this matches what can be called a classic material teaching conception, or an objective perspective (cf. Sødning Jensen, 1978).

There are some recurring content themes, of which one is hardly surprising: national history with a focus on prominent personalities and central events. One example comes from Erik Westerdahl of Kölleröd’s elementary school. He was aware of the lack of time and therefore used intensive study in his teaching. Westerdahl’s annual planning showed that his teaching centred on clear classic content. For example, King Karl XII’s various battles and wars were referenced as the battle of Poltava and the capitulation at Dnjepr (account by Erik Westerdahl, 1946).

A material- and classic-based history teaching normally rests on textbooks, as the transfer of the material is supposed to take place via the textbook. However, textbooks in the interwar period could also reflect more formalist and constructivist perspectives of history, and in the

material, there are indeed a number of references to different books. One example is Sjöholm and Goës's *Arbetsövningar i historia* (*Exercises in History*; 1930), an exercise book in several parts and a contemporary sell-out at a million copies sold, according to the publishers (Åkerlund, 1948). It is impossible to know exactly what the books the teachers referred to contained, but this exercise book included exercises with links to a nationally focused "history of kings" (account by John Winkvist, 1946). The exercises, to which I later return, were representative of classic history through, for instance, "cut and paste" exercises involving kings.

Annie Lindahl, an elementary school teacher with experience at several schools in Sweden, also relied on the historical granite in her teaching. Her pupils studied runic stones and remains of hill forts (account by Annie Lindahl, 1946). Lindahl also used the textbook *Sveriges historia för folkskolan* (*Sweden's History for Elementary Education*), which contained aspects of Swedish history in line with a Swedish classic teaching tradition, such as Vikings, Ansgar, Gustav Vasa and the Thirty Years' War (Wahlman & Rosén, 1937).

Teaching content with a clear classic orientation had an obvious position in teaching and was in concord with the subject's selective traditions and the curriculum at the time (Englund, 1987). However, there was only content bordering on a formalist progressive and contemporary history subject (cf. Fallace, 2010; Sødtring Jensen, 1978). Besides national history, there were also substantial elements of content linked to the pupils' surroundings. One example can be found in the teaching of Lindahl, mentioned above, in which older history was linked to the immediate surroundings of the school. In the town of Nora, for example, Sven Ringström used the benefits of a local and regional connection by basing his teaching on the mining and metallurgic industries in the district of Bergslagen. Additionally, when his students were studying Gustav Vasa, he utilised the "Dalecarlian Woman's Song of Gustav Vasa" (account by Sven Ringström, 1946).

FORMALIST AND SOCIALLY RELEVANT PERSPECTIVES

Although classic content dominated in the teachers' accounts of their teaching, there were other elements more suggestive of modern history. Some classrooms involved aspects of economics, for instance. Sven Ringström dealt with the importance of Bergslagen for economic development, while other societal aspects and institutions were treated in

connection with civic education (account by Gunnar Olofsson, 1946). In the textbooks referenced in the accounts, there were recurring elements of a socio-historical character (e.g. Stone Age food habits and daily life in a medieval town; Hagnell & Olander, 1947; Sjöholm & Goës, 1930). Likewise, a more social science-oriented subject emerged in some teachers' accounts. For instance, Hilding Sahlen in the town of Ljusdal introduced these aspects of history when teaching themes of industry and governance (account by Hilding Sahlen, 1946).

There were also examples of teachers with the ambition to develop their pupils' ability to see historical developments in terms of cause and effect. In the municipality of Korpilombolo, for example, Edvid Jawert had hopes that delaying history teaching would make the pupils mature enough to apply cause/effect concepts to history (account by Edvin Jawert, 1946). In elementary schools, history could in fact be more than a narratively reconstructed subject, as suggested in various support materials. The importance of the use of source collections is highlighted, for example, in Ahlberg and Lindälv's *Sveriges historia i bilder* (*Swedish History in Pictures*; 1941), which primarily reproduced objects, buildings and art.

There are also examples of teachers letting pupils become mini historians who unveil the past, as in Lindahl's aforementioned teaching. Her pupils acted as cultural heritage conservators and school archaeologists after Lindahl discovered that there was a burial ground in the vicinity of the school, where she found runic stones and menhirs. With rakes she and the pupils started to clean up the area, as she also used to conduct history lessons outdoors, weather permitting. The pupils filled in the runic stones with chalk and made sketches of them. They also interpreted them with the help of an archaeologist's notes and were asked to sit in the field and ponder "what it had looked like here". In connection with their excavations, the pupils discovered a coal layer and pieces of flint in the soil, as well as stone axes that they took care of. With the help of legends collected from their families, they could identify with life in the parish (account by Annie Lindahl, 1946). Lindahl's teaching thus offered a more formalist perspective on history, as it encouraged a high degree of pupil activity.

MANY ROADS LEAD TO ROME: A MULTITUDE OF PERSPECTIVES

Previous studies have tended to emphasise the link between “what” and “how” (Sødring Jensen, 1978). The classic conception, for instance, holds that teaching is narrative and teacher-centred, with passive pupils. This reflects the role and function of history to foster national subservience, according to previous research (cf. Englund, 1986). In simplified terms, one could say that teaching traditional and nationally fostering content, such as the fate and adventures of Gustav Vasa, would require a method in which teaching is characterised by a teacher’s narration rather than a pupil’s activity. However, the teachers’ accounts of their teaching inform that this was not necessarily the case.

One example can be found in the town of Falun, where Anja Nyblom, a teacher at Falu Östra Elementary School, let her pupils work with exercise books and classic content. Nyblom had been inspired by progressive methods in the early 1930s, but she also underlined the importance of a broad range of teaching methods, because “where children’s education is concerned, many roads lead to Rome”, as she put it. She also added examples of good methods, such as “individual tasks, group work, whole class instruction, silent work, intensive detail swotting and elaborate narration”. Pupils could also be activated by letting them dramatise history. How Nyblom accomplished this is not clear, but in the textbook she referred to *Arbetsövningar i historia*, which could be a simple design based on traditional content. A task in the book entitled “A Short Play About the Grey Coat [King Karl XI]” suggested that with the help of the book *Läsebok för folkskolan* (*Elementary School Reader*), pupils could stage a simple dialogue between the wife of a parish priest and the King (account by Anja Nyblom, 1946). Even if Nyblom did not explicitly mention this, it is reasonable to assume that dramatisation was a way to activate pupils while stimulating affective and sensory abilities. One possible argument is that Nyblom had a “wobbling” view of teaching and the kind of historical knowledge to focus on, but there is no denying that several other researchers have shown that teachers had a broad teaching repertoire and that context played a role in the kind of history that happened to be central (cf. Cuban, 1993; Elmersjö, 2021).

In the town of Hälsinborg, Tora Sannel had, since the 1920s, used “the school as workplace” method in history, combined with reading quizzes. According to Sannel, the memory of historical knowledge was often

“poor” but something everyone needed, and if teaching was too “free”, this knowledge was at risk. Sannel emphasised that the ideal was to “soften the old methods with the school as workplace idea” (account by Tora Sannel, 1946). In practice, Sannel’s idea of how modern pedagogy should be enriched with traditional teaching was also applied by many of the teachers who had submitted accounts to the commission. Several teachers referred to exercise books such as *Arbetsövningar i historia*, with readers (i.e. pupils) first introduced to a given epoch via a timeline containing central processes, events and persons. There were a number of pictures and exercises to be solved individually or in groups. Each epoch concluded with review exercises, recalling pupils’ memory linked to the respective heading (e.g. “What should I remember about the Kalmar Union?”).

A common feature is that teachers and textbooks often “wobbled” between different epistemic approaches (cf. Elmersjö, 2022). But this must not be understood as an inconsistent approach; rather, it indicates a broad professional knowledge base and ability to adapt teaching to context, which also means that these teachers adopted different approaches to historical knowledge in their teaching.

SUMMARISING CONCLUSIONS: A CLASSIC HISTORY SUBJECT WITH ELEMENTS OF FORMALIST AND CATEGORIAL PERSPECTIVES

Studying teachers’ own perspectives on knowledge and teaching broadens our understanding of what kind of history students were offered. But this study also shows that the subject of history prepared students for a democratic society to a greater extent than previous studies have noted (cf. Englund, 1986).

As it emerged from the teachers’ accounts of their teaching, the history subject in early twentieth-century Swedish elementary schools was certainly ingrained in the historical granite, but this granite came to be a teaching resource for more formalist perspectives, such as dramatisation of the lives of Swedish kings and individual exercises based on traditional content. This teaching praxis also reflects an epistemic perspective aligned with a copier stance or a reconstructivist perspective (cf. Stoel et al., 2022; Elmersjö, 2021). At the same time, local resources such as churches, heritage sites, ancient monuments and museums were used in teaching. In addition, the history subject that emerged in the accounts has striking

elements of a material conception of history, even a reconstructive conception, which is supported by studies of curricula and textbooks (cf. Englund, 1986; Elmersjö, 2017). But what is also typical of “the epistemic game” (or teaching) is the epistemic wobbling between different perspectives on historical knowledge (cf. Elmersjö, 2022; Cuban, 1993). This can be understood in relation to the conditions under which the teaching was conducted. There were general expectations that education should be democratised during Sweden’s inter- and post-war periods, and using pupil-active methods was a means to this end. This involved dramatisations and individual work, or pupils becoming mini historians who unveiled history themselves. This should also be understood in relation to the practical problems teachers had, such as teaching several classes at the same time, meaning that some classes had to work independently while others received instruction and enjoyed narrated teaching (Samuelsson et al., 2022). Within the scope of a teaching period, several epistemic perspectives could be at work. The varying views of historical knowledge represented should, then, be related to contextual factors as well as the subject tradition of classic history teaching.

Also evident in the teachers’ teaching, and in parts of the literature they were informed by, is the creation of a formalist and possibly categorial subject. Pupils worked with statistical yearbooks, visited social institutions and independently worked on various tasks, which can all be seen as enhancing useful abilities for future citizens in a democratic society. History became a relevant contemporary subject, as it gave students tools to function as members of the new modern Swedish society. Even if the presence of such elements should not be exaggerated, they were there. This representation of the history subject is close to Sødtring Jensen’s (1978) deliberation on the function of history for a democratic society. The role of the subject in a democratic society also coincides with a view of historical knowledge that is not restricted to reproducing an objective past. In relation to epistemic perspectives on historical knowledge, there are elements of constructivist perspectives, as the pupils in some cases had the opportunity to develop skills in compiling information, thinking about causal links and seeking out historical artefacts themselves. A recent survey of teachers’ epistemic perspectives on history showed that it can be difficult to straightforwardly identify and categorise teachers’ views of historical knowledge. However, the study also indicated that the predominant perspective is reconstructivist in nature, followed by the constructivist perspective (Elmersjö, 2022). The same tendency was evident in the teachers’

accounts from the 1940s, even if the reconstructivist elements were more frequent.

This chapter focused on the history teaching encountered by most pupils in Sweden in the early twentieth century. However, a minority moved on to grammar schools, where several epistemic perspectives were practised concurrently, but with a considerably higher degree of formalist and perhaps categorial perspectives present (Samuelsson, 2021). This shows that historical contextualisation is also important in studies of epistemic perspectives.

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The Epistemic Considerations of Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)-History Students: A South African Case Study

Johan Wassermann and Kate Angier

INTRODUCING THE CASE

Much has been written about the epistemic considerations of history teachers who are both in- and pre-service in the Global North (Stoel et al., 2017). However, very little research of a similar nature has been conducted in the Global South. A particular blind spot in the existing literature is the epistemological considerations of school history held by Post-graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students who embark on

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© The Author(s) 2024
H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_4

their teacher training. This chapter takes as a case study a single cohort of the PGCE-History students enrolled for the methodology course¹ at the universities of Cape Town and Pretoria, two historically White institutions. The former is characterised historically as “English and liberal” and the latter as “Afrikaans and conservative”. Both universities are now racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse and draw students from across southern Africa.

The post-apartheid South African world is filled with ambiguities and contradictions in which the voices of PGCE-History students, the teachers of tomorrow, are important but rarely heard. Given that teacher purpose has been shown to influence pedagogy (Evans, 1990) and, in turn, student understanding of both history and society, we consider it important to understand the epistemological considerations with which students enter our university classrooms to be trained as history teachers. Ours is a work in progress that was born out of our responsibility as university teachers to know our students better, to work more productively with the diverse resources they bring to class, and to co-construct our knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning history in what is an epistemological “contact zone” (Pratt, 2012).

Both authors are teacher educators based at the universities of Cape Town and Pretoria and are responsible for initial teacher education programmes and the teaching of PGCE-History methodology courses. As middle-class, White scholars teaching in elite institutions in a context of coloniality, we are conscious of our positionality, which has shaped our access to knowledge and ways of seeing and understanding the past. We are mindful that we occupy positions of power in the classroom space for multiple reasons, including age, status, race, and wealth. Importantly, our positionality requires that we develop our critical reflexivity on and in practice and examine our epistemic considerations about the nature of school history.

¹The methodology course within the PGCE-History module is expected to prepare students as high school history teachers. It is neither a “pure” history content nor a classroom “tips and tricks” course, but rather is intended to focus on developing pedagogical content knowledge for the domain of history. Entrance requirements for this course, which are governed by national policy (NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT 67 OF 2008 POLICY ON THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS), require that PGCE-History students have studied History for a minimum of two years in their undergraduate degrees.

The students who enter our PGCE-History classes are racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse and have experienced a wide range of school and university contexts. This heterogeneous cohort was “born free” in post-apartheid South Africa, a constitutional democracy, and yet one of the most unequal societies in the world in terms of wealth. Systemic and social injustice still shape and reshape every aspect of contemporary experience and life chances. These injustices influence identity formation and memory, all of which position students in relation to our understanding of the past. Our lived reality is one in which the legacies of a colonial and apartheid past are powerfully present, and “coloniality” hangs heavily in the very air we breathe. It is maintained alive, as Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 243) explains, “in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, [and] in aspirations of self”. It is also embodied in the national school History curriculum which we are preparing our students to teach.

Importantly, the students in our study are becoming teachers in turbulent times. Nationally, the miracle of a post-apartheid “rainbow nation” has faded or been exposed as little more than a mirage, and the real threats of economic collapse, global epidemics, and climate catastrophe have left young people asking how this present was brought into being. Furthermore, the past decade in South Africa has witnessed a rising tide of anger and frustration with the slow pace of societal transformation. Students entering our PGCE-History classes in 2022 did so after a period of intense student activism driven amongst other issues by calls to decolonise the curriculum and the inadequate funding of higher education.

A case in point is the #RhodesMustFall campaign, which started in early 2015. Triggered by calls for the removal of a statue of the imperialist Cecil John Rhodes prominently positioned on the University of Cape Town campus, students aligned with worker activists to highlight the lack of post-apartheid transformation, the perpetuation of White privilege, and the legacies of colonialism experienced most especially in our former White universities. As a result, late 2015 saw the birth of the #FeesMustFall movement, a successful countrywide student-led protest aimed at preventing universities from increasing fees and for the state to increase its financial support to students. These fallist movements served to foreground debates on decoloniality and Afrocentrism and shift the discourse around knowledge production in higher education. Notably, in relation to curricula, it posed questions about epistemicide, understood as the epistemological marginalisation of African-centred intellectual traditions in formal

education. Questions were also posed about epistemic harm caused in the past and what would constitute epistemic justice. In the process, generative dialogue and the re-working of the curriculum in many of our academic spaces were encouraged (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2016).

Concurrently, however, accusations were made in public and political spaces that the youth were ignorant of their history and needed to be re-educated on the liberation struggle against colonialism and apartheid (Wassermann, 2018). Deep concern was expressed about the palimpsest national school History curriculum, which, despite several revisions since 1994, retains much of its “colonial grammar” (Cutrara, 2018, pp. 250–275), visible in its overtly Eurocentric content and methodology, as well as its failure to tackle the depth of trauma experienced by Black South Africans under colonialism and apartheid. Concerns were also expressed that the analytical and disciplinary nature of the History curriculum, which foregrounded the development of historical thinking skills, did not adequately teach the “real” story of South Africa (South African Democratic Teachers Union, 2014). In an important scholarly addition to what has tended to be a curriculum war played out in the media, Maluleka and Ramoupi (2022, p. 65) argue that the school History curriculum, which the PGCE-History students participating in this study studied at school, “continues to undermine indigenous ways of knowing and being” and must go “beyond inclusion”. Furthermore, these “marginalised intellectual projects must form part of the nervous system of a decolonised school history (sic) curriculum” (Maluleka & Ramoupi, 2022, p. 78).

The outcome of the public debate over the school History curriculum was the appointment of a Ministerial Task Team in 2015, whose brief included the review and strengthening of the school History curriculum. At the time of writing this chapter, the curriculum writing process is ongoing. However, it is anticipated that the new school History curriculum will be African centred in content and decolonial in spirit and will pay particular attention to Africa’s long pre-colonial past by drawing on African philosophical traditions as well as its material culture, orality, and language as sources of historical knowledge (Ndlovu et al., 2018). This will be the national school History curriculum that the PGCE-History students who enrolled in 2022 will teach in the future.

Meanwhile, calls to decolonise the curriculum have resonated with and conscientised high school learners, most notably those in the former White schools where policy and practice have been slow to transform. More broadly, in many of the History classrooms in which we observe and our

students teach, the celebratory narrative trajectory articulated as the official school curriculum 20 years ago has given way to a more critical discourse—from the “miracle” to the “myth” of the “rainbow nation” and from “Mandela the Hero” to “Mandela the Sell-Out”. We hear the widespread disillusionment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, once the international poster child for restorative justice, and the frustration at the inadequate redistribution of land and wealth. In this context, where the past is present and shaped by lived experiences, teaching and learning the official History curriculum of colonialism and apartheid as a “scientific” or “cognitive” discipline can be difficult and evoke strong emotions of anger, hurt, guilt, and shame (Keynes, 2019).

The post-apartheid South African History classrooms, particularly those like ours in Historically White Institutions, are, therefore, an epistemological battleground filled with ambiguities and contradictions best understood as contact zones, which Pratt (2012, pp. 33–40) describes as those “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they lived out in many parts of the world today”.

For the class of 2022 and those of us who taught them, existing asymmetries of power were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant that the students did not attend face-to-face classes for the best part of two years during the course of their undergraduate studies. And, while all our PGCE-History students have studied History in their undergraduate degrees, this happened in the context of online and remote teaching, where the debates, discussions, social interactions, and the construction and deconstruction of historical knowledge that go hand-in-hand with the contact zone of studying history at the university level were very differently, and inequitably, experienced.

It is from within the borders of these ambiguous spaces that we are rethinking how to prepare our students, with all their different knowledges and experiences, to teach the national school History curriculum. It is against this backdrop that the process of constructing what Connell (2015, pp. 49–66) calls “mosaic epistemology”, a conception in which separate knowledge systems sit beside each other like tiles in a mosaic, each based on a specific culture or historical experience, started. This concept has been criticised for essentialising and rendering epistemologies static and for inadequately addressing the power relations which shape knowledge production (Bakare-Yusuf, 2004). However, we have found it

useful for thinking about differences with connection, for unique “ways of knowing” being able to co-exist without compromising their integrity. And, perhaps idealistically, the mosaic picture created from diverse fragments offers some hope of fulfilling the South African national motto, *!ke e: /xarra //ke*, written in the Khoisan language of the /Xam people and meaning diverse people unite.

THE METHODOLOGICAL MOVES WE MADE

The epistemic beliefs about the nature of the subject held by history teachers have been identified as an important element in understanding the pedagogic choices they make to facilitate student learning and their development as analytical and disciplinary historical thinkers in the classroom. Innovative research conducted in the past decade has resulted in the development of a domain-specific framework for analysing these ways of knowing, namely the Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ) (Maggioni et al., 2009). This questionnaire categorised historical thinking into three stances: “copier” (which views the aim of history to reconstruct an accurate picture of the past), “borrower” (which views historical interpretations as constructed from source materials with selections made on the basis of opinion), and “criterialist” (where the contextual, contingent nature of historical interpretation is recognised, and disciplinary criteria are used for evaluating the validity of claims). While empirical research conducted using the BHQ has been valuable and revealing, interventions attempting to develop more sophisticated epistemological stances in pre-service teachers have identified “epistemic wobbling” (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014, p. 63). This is explained as students having “difficulties in coordinating subjective and objective aspects of history” (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016, p. 140).

These findings raise important questions for teacher preparation about when and in what contexts teachers are able to engage with history as an objective and disciplined study of the past and when the personal and political identities of teachers make such distancing too difficult. In the South African context, where the past is not past and its legacies are still very much present in lived reality and experience, we considered it more valuable to first explore the place from which history education students think about the past and its relationship to school history and then illuminate the beliefs, values, and cognitive understanding of the discipline that our students brought with them to class.

In light of the above and to generate a range of data, we asked our students to tell us through their narrative life stories about their experiences of learning history and their journey into teaching. The PGCE-History students, through their responses to an open-ended survey, class discussions, and semi-structured interviews, were given opportunities to explore their purposes for teaching history in post-apartheid South Africa and to consider what should be taught and how it should be taught. By adopting a discursive approach, inductive reasoning, and grounded theory, we allowed diverse personal philosophies of teaching history to surface. At the same time, we hoped to create spaces to explore different epistemological considerations towards history and develop the epistemic reflexivity we believe is vital for all educators to cultivate throughout their careers.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL MOSAIC OF OUR STUDENTS

The PGCE-History students who enter our classes have studied history for at least two years at university and have followed a national school curriculum which foregrounds as its specific aims the development of historical knowledge—conceptual, procedural, and substantive. Few, however, identified the development of a cognitive, “disciplinary”, epistemological orientation towards history when discussing their own sense of purpose or that of school History more generally. A mosaic of epistemological considerations emerged from our data analysis. However, in this chapter, as part of a work in progress, we present two pieces of the epistemological mosaic. These are: history is about the present, and it is personal; and history is African in perspective.

Mosaic Piece 1: History Is About the Present and It Is Personal

Emerging overwhelmingly from the student responses was a sense of the presence of the past in the present, which intersected with the personal. History is here and now, not past and distant, and their purpose as history teachers was explained in terms of helping learners to better understand “why things are the way that they are” (SUCT2).² This purpose was

²The data were coded as follows during the analysis phase using the codes UCT = University of Cape Town and UP = University of Pretoria. S meant survey, I meant interview, and B meant autobiographies. The numbers referred to the coding attached to each participating student.

expressed in a variety of ways, some generic, such as to understand “the world we live in today” (SUCT4) or “current problems” (SUCT11) while others expressed the purpose more specifically. For instance, they spoke of the need to analyse the “current dynamics of politics, religion, race, [and] gender” (SUCT28) and “why poverty, sexism, and homophobia exist within our world” (SUCT7). Succinctly put, the PGCE-History students reasoned that history should help learners know the world they live in, why it is the way it is, and how it came about. History was, therefore, viewed as being of foundational importance in making sense of the contemporary South African world. It was also seen as necessary “to explain contemporary life in South Africa” (SUP6) or to ask poignant questions, such as “Why are things like this now, or has there been a transition? How do things transition? How do we come about? Why are citizens? Why is the school system like this? Why am I finding it hard to do this, and this because of certain beliefs that were there or like how does it work in particular?” (UPI2).

The epistemological considerations held by the PGCE-History students were that history is personal and emotional and not merely an intellectual or cognitive process of meaning-making. Central to the PGCE-History students’ understanding of the past was embodied knowledge gleaned from their own and their family’s lived experiences of apartheid and its legacies (UPI3, UPI4, UPS6). It was thus argued by the students that “studying history ... helps [us to] understand who we are, our religions, our culture, and it brings families together” (BUP7). Through an understanding that “individuals are shaped by the history of their families, cultures, [and] spaces”, learners can “begin to conceptualise why things are currently the way they are” (UCT27). Others expressed this connection more keenly as the need to “give learners a background of where they come from. Make them aware ... of the struggles of our ancestors” (UCT10). The sense of a personal connection with the past was made visible through the frequent use of personal pronouns. The students felt that it was important to make clear the connections between the present situation in which “we” live and past events. They spoke of the past and present in the possessive terms of “us” and “our” rather than through a passive, distancing voice.

Furthermore, the PGCE-History students felt that this past needed to be approached with “sensitivity” (UCT3, UCT9, UCT22) and “open-minded, understanding towards other people’s histories” (UCT4), and a “safe space” should be created (UCT29) where learners could “gain

confidence and ... have respect for others" (UCT33). Teaching and learning history was not perceived as a cognitive endeavour alone but as relating to positionality in the present and to self-identity and having the potential to cause an emotional response.

While the students foregrounded perspectival presentism and a sense of the affective nature of learning history, a sense of the future was significant in its absence. The student responses were largely silent about longer-term purposes, be they personal, national, or global. We had expected there to be far more than just the two students who responded that "knowing" history would "create awareness" and enable learners to "learn from mistakes" or "not allow the past to repeat" (UCT18, UCT24). Only a few took a critical stance hoping that an understanding of the past would enable learners to "challenge the norms" of the present (UCT9) and that it would prepare them to make more "informed decisions" (UCT18), facilitate "social (re)imagination and change" (UCT20), and "fight back" (UCT25). For the majority, however, there was little sense of teaching and learning history as part of a collective social project.

When researching his History students' statements of purpose in 2009, the first author noted the strong statements made in support of "democratic citizenship". Education, they claimed, should play a role in "social transformation" and contribute to "moral regeneration" while building "values, morals, [and] norms" (Wassermann, 2009, pp. 77–91). By contrast, not one of these "civic-minded" words occurred in the responses more than a decade later, although some had a general feeling that learning history might "enable learners to be more sensitive to the diverse communities and situations they may find themselves in" (UCT22). The extrinsic purpose of teaching history for nation-building or the belief that school History could or should play a role in the construction of the post-apartheid South African national identity or participatory democracy was entirely absent. This is particularly noteworthy given the ongoing popular belief that school History can contribute to social cohesion and transformative justice.

Although all our students are post-graduates and have studied history at the university level, they do not consider their engagement with the past as merely an intellectual or cognitive process of meaning-making. To them, it is both a personal and emotional endeavour. Surfacing far more frequently than a responsibility to develop their learners' cognitive historical thinking skills was a concern that it was important to make the connections and continuities between the present situation in which "we" live

and past events clear for the learners. Our students' impulse as they entered our classes was to use history to develop their learners' historical consciousness, a concept with which the South African school curriculum does not engage explicitly.

How do we make sense of this present–past orientation? Writing what he titled “a polemical perspective” on the pursuit of the past, Torpey (2004, p. 242) made the statement that “when the future collapses, the past rushes in”. He wrote this in 2004 in the wake of the collapse of communism and what he interpreted in that context as the decline of the nation-state. The post-Cold War “end of history” did not play out quite as imagined by some historians such as Fukuyama (1989), but Torpey's statement gives pause for thought. The PGCE-History students who participated in this study were newly emerging into public spaces after the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented world event. Most were back on campus, albeit initially mask-to-mask, for the first time in two years. As discussed earlier, political corruption, climate catastrophe, and economic crisis were their context with an upsurge in student mental health issues across our university campuses. Meanwhile, we were awash in popular culture urging mindfulness, to be present, to be in the “now”, so it is perhaps not surprising that these young people were struggling to imagine a future purpose for their teaching about the past and were, instead, approaching the past as a “personal history of the present”.

Mosaic Piece 2: History Is African in Perspective

History for our students was present, it was personal, and it was also African in perspective. Based on the telling of the PGCE-History students who participated in this study, the fulcrum around which history should come together was “Mayibuye”, meaning “come back, Africa” in isiZulu. The longing to study more African history emerged from across the spectrum of participating PGCE-History students. A general sentiment called for teaching a “more diverse African history” (UCT6) and “an Afrocentric expression of history” (UCT3). More specifically, it was proposed that pre-colonial African history (SUP1, UIP4), the history of Central and North Africa (UPI3), of “marginalised people” (SUP4) and not only African leaders like Shaka (UPI3), King of the Zulu Kingdom from 1816 to 1828, should be studied. Others urged a more explicit focus on African history in a pan-Africanist manner (UPI2).

The rationale offered by the participants for studying a more African history was multifarious. It included the necessity to do so by dint of being “an Africa child”, because that is “our own history, our own identity” (UPI1) and because an “Afrocentric curriculum is the most realistic way to get your nation to understand the nation’s history and to collaborate with each other” (UPI3). However, caution was also expressed that it could be “dangerous to create a curriculum that is too Afrocentric because countries do communicate with each other, and you do need to understand the larger global image and history in order to collaborate” (UIP3).

How African history should be studied was also foregrounded, and caution was expressed that it should not happen by using a Eurocentric lens. In this regard, a student (UPI2) made it very clear that it should include a process of decolonisation and not merely “ascribing to the same traditions” as before. It must be “African history or history from an African perspective” (UPI4). Moreover, it must be studied using appropriate methodologies such as “listening to my grandmother when she told us about our history, how things were in their time” (BUP1) since such stories “gives more insight” into African history (BUP5). What many of the PGCE students were gesturing towards was a provincialisation of the Global North and a shift in a vantage point in favour of the teaching of “African history or history from an African perspective” (UPI4) in a pluralistic manner alternating between historical accounts from the archive as well as vernacular recounts from social memory (UCT20).

Why, then, are there strong sentiments for African history to be studied from an African perspective at the school level and for it to be studied more deeply than how it is covered in the South African national History curriculum, especially when not long ago African history was viewed as unimportant (Wassermann, 2017, pp. 17–18)? Several reasons can be advanced for this, including that those students who have only known the post-1994 “new South Africa” have a greater sense of originating from Africa than their parents who experienced apartheid-induced isolation from the rest of Africa. At the same time, the contemporary challenges facing South Africa have probably eroded earlier ideas of South African exceptionalism (Mamdani, 1999, pp. 51–54) and birthed a sense of being similar to other African countries. At the same time, prominent public debates about decolonisation and the work of the Ministerial Task Team, which has publicly foregrounded ideas on a new Afrocentric school history curriculum, has also contributed to a point being reached in the quest for epistemic freedom that opposes the idea that European knowledge is

more absolute than other ways of knowing history (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). A case in point is the student who argued for epistemic justice by stating, “We are so focused on Europe, and we are so focused on America and so focused on certain individuals that we forget about the bigger [African] picture” (UPI3).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While accepting that our understanding of the precise epistemological orientations of the students who participated in this study remains partial, as embodied in the two mosaic pieces unpacked in this chapter, what is clear is that it does not fit neatly into the existing scholarship on epistemology and history from the Global North (Stoel et al., 2017, pp. 120–134). In this regard, the epistemological orientations of the PGCE-History students who participated in this study form mosaics that are at once entangled and emergent, sophisticated and simplistic, cognitive and spiritual, and public, practical, and personal. For us as teacher educators, these ways of engaging with the past are more generatively understood as knowledges, resources, and repertoires than positioned as disciplinary misunderstandings.

The PGCE-History students demonstrated diverse understandings of the past and its relationship to history, suggesting that they bring with them to the PGCE-History course an epistemological “mosaic” informed by their lived experiences, their disparate education pasts, and the range of ideological and subject positions that they hold. Noteworthy, however, are their commonalities which include the belief that studying history draws on the personal, enables an understanding of the present, and has a shared sense of frustration that, despite post-apartheid reform, the national school History curriculum has largely failed to shift to an African-centred orientation beyond the existing “settler grammar” (Cutrara, 2018, pp. 250–275).

In many ways, what our PGCE-History students told us speaks to a pluriversal world where the past comes together with the present in an omnipresent manner. As such, the past (especially the apartheid and colonial pasts) with all its horrors is not gone and cannot be distanced by disciplinary thinking. It is constantly present in people’s personal lives and in the fleeting moment that is the present intertwined with history in a post-conflict society (Morgan, 2022, pp. 1–10). To the PGCE-History students from the class of 2022, history then is a companion that transcends

the classroom; it must help by providing a yardstick on how people can live together and navigate and understand the here and now. History is also a practical undertaking to deal with complex personal lives lived in the shadow of the apartheid past and a declined “new South Africa” framed by debates about decolonisation and Africanisation.

This relationship between the past and the present in a contemporary South African context is usefully grasped by the idea of a “historical Sankofa”, as explained by Morgan (2022, pp. 1–10). Drawing on this Ghanaian concept, Morgan, in the light of recent experiences of Black people in the United States, rejects the long-standing critiques of presentism and argues that “the realities of the past continue to materially inform the lives of real people in the present”. The above stands in stark contrast to the intended epistemological stance adopted in the national school History curriculum, which seeks primarily to distance the past through a process of historical thinking (Sexias, 2000).

How then can we understand this epistemological mosaic in the context of the existing literature? Revilla et al. (2021, p. 113) offered a possible explanation:

The way students and educators think about this discipline seems to be related not only to historical understanding or reasoning, but also to the social and practical dimension of history. In this regard, epistemological conceptions about how the past is represented from a disciplinary point of view not only have a connection with historical thinking, but also with historical consciousness.

In sum, to the PGCE-History students from the class of 2022 who participated in this study, history is a companion that transcends the classroom; it must provide an explanation of and guidance on how to navigate the present. Teaching history is, therefore, both a cognitive and practical undertaking to deal with complex personal lives lived in the shadow of the apartheid past and the faded rainbow of the “new” South Africa.

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“Both Sides of the Story”: The Epistemic Nature of Historical Knowledge as Understood by Pre-service History Teachers in a South African University

Sarah Godsell

INTRODUCTION: TEACHING HISTORY TO PRE-SERVICE HISTORY TEACHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Students often react strongly to the idea that historical narrative and knowledge is always made up of choices: what is taught, and what isn't taught. This makes concepts of truths messy, where students can prefer ideas of a neat “two-sided” history, which suggests that the nature of historical knowledge is easily tamed into truths that can be taught in the classroom, rather than the “messy”, multifaceted nature of history.

This chapter explores the terrain of the epistemic understandings of history in pre-service teachers through an example of an engagement with the concept of “both sides of the story” as laid out by Chana Teeger in her

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H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the Epistemology of History*,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_5

paper “Both Sides of the Story: History Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa” (Teeger, 2015). The common understanding of “both sides of the story” becomes particularly attractive for students, even as it is particularly this concept that Teeger disrupts. This chapter aims to examine how students’ responses align with Maggioni et al.’s categories of “copier, borrower, criterialist” (Maggioni et al., 2009). This alignment shows the importance of understanding the contexts in which students work, exist, and think, and how these concepts impact epistemic stances.

The historical and present context in which history is taught contributes to the epistemic stance, as discussed by Sakki and Pirtilla-Backman (Sakki & Pirttilä-Backman, 2019). In painful historical contexts, some students display a desire for a simpler history that would not cause pain. Neutrality, as a pedagogical concept, plays an important role in this for the students as they see in it an illusion of a refuge from which to expound a pseudo-balanced, non-disruptive history. However, others want to use the concept of neutrality specifically to encourage critical thinking. The epistemic approaches these students use to justify their context-driven pedagogical choices shift and do not simply occur as a progression.

To grasp the spaces of epistemic understandings I am working with, it is necessary to have some background on the difficulties and sticking points of teaching history in secondary and tertiary institutions in South Africa.

Post-apartheid South Africa is still plagued by many legacies of the brutal apartheid system, as well as legacies of the colonial domination in which apartheid was rooted. These legacies form a large part of the context for our education system (Kros, 2010). This can be seen in the geographies of inequality in the country. There is a vast discrepancy between lavishly resourced and run private schools (with their own theatres, for example) and under-resourced schools, which may not have books, desks, or even classrooms. This disparity is the result of the legacies of apartheid and colonialism, coupled with continued difficulties in the post-apartheid era. The students are still living the oppressions of their histories, and what they are being taught in class can—if taught well—have particular resonance with their present-day lives. This makes history very emotive, as well as very important, to learn and teach, as it can provide ways of understanding the present, as well as the past.¹

¹This is borne out in the current debate in South Africa about whether the subject should become compulsory and what curriculum will be taught if it is compulsory (see Davids, 2016; Nussey, 2018; Van Eeden & Warnich, 2018).

The students in the classes (pre-service teachers, Bachelor of Education students) where this study was carried out are from a very diverse set of circumstances. The gender balance of the class shows more women than men, and the class is composed mostly of Black students,² with 4 white students out of 59 students in total. Within this racial breakdown, there are students from a variety of different social situations: ranging from poverty-stricken households to households that are comfortably wealthy. This has dramatically impacted their life experience. This diversity of background is notable in the classroom discussions. These diverse circumstances mean that students relate to history content and method in a range of specific ways. History as narrative, history as constructed, history as “neutral”, or history as “truth” become important to them because in many instances this impacts their own histories and presents. This is an almost embodied aspect of history teaching in South Africa, and this becomes—consciously and unconsciously—important for my students, as it introduces an element of their own, and their peers’, lives into the history classroom. Living in these complicated legacies and seeing their own lives as integrated into, or erased from, their history lessons can be challenging. Thus, teaching history has complicated levels of awareness about “truth”, accuracy, erasure, and what history is. The nature of epistemic understanding of history has to be explored on various levels: student, student-teacher, and also on an embodied level of the personal impact the histories have on student and student-teacher.

A NOTE ON METHODS

The research explored here is qualitative, with data drawn both from my own classroom experiences and written work from my students in one specific course³ (Bhattacharya, 2017). This process of gathering allows the reflections to be immersed in the narratives arising from the class (Ashwin et al., 2015). The course I draw on is a Bachelor of Education classroom at a university in South Africa in 2022. The course is a history methodology course where we examine history pedagogy for high school. Students are either third- or fourth-year students, meaning that they are in their pre-final or final year respectively. These students have chosen history as their major or sub-major and have had one year of history methodology

²I am using Black in the Black Consciousness sense, as conceptualized by Steve Bantu Biko. This includes people who identify as Coloured or Indian.

³Ethics permission for this study was obtained with Ethics Protocol Number H18/10/10.

prior to this course. They are committed to history as a subject choice and are not new to history methodology. Some students have specifically asked to be named in this chapter, rendering themselves visible as people and not just data. In these cases I have used initials, allowing identification while addressing the issue of informed consent (as students may not want to be identified in the future). Otherwise, pseudonyms have been used.

EPISTEMIC APPROACHES TO HISTORY: FOUNDATIONS

Epistemic cognition is a developing field but with some key theoretical advances that are important for this chapter. Maggioni and VanSledright combine two different levels of epistemic cognition, respectively drawing on Kuhn and Weinstock, and are able to compare and use both approaches usefully (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016).⁴ Their conceptions of “absolutist/pre-reflective” and “multiplist/quasi-reflective” epistemic understandings of history are helpful to follow the adaptation to epistemic positions in history (Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002). Applying the concerns of this chapter, the key characteristics of these epistemic positions are as follows: absolutist/pre-reflective show an understanding that there can be right or wrong accounts of the past, but an inability to overcome uncertainty about the most plausible narratives. Thus “Whenever uncertainty cannot be overcome, knowledge is deemed impossible; therefore, beliefs are defended as a matter of personal opinion” (Maggioni et al., 2009, p. 192).

This becomes important in the “both sides of the story” narrative when students weigh a “right” and a “wrong” narrative against each other and use, rather than the available evidence, distorted ideas of “fairness”, or the desire to protect the classroom space from emotion to choose what to teach. In this false equivocating, the context—historical, current, emotional—becomes important for students deciding on historical “truth” (Sakki & Pirttilä-Backman, 2019).

The “multiplist” or, as equated by Maggioni and VanSledright, the “quasi-reflective” approach entails “a period in which individuals realize that knowledge claims have an element of uncertainty, attributed sometimes to a lack of evidence or methodological problems and sometimes to

⁴I am aware that “epistemic cognition” is different from “epistemic understanding”, but I argue in this chapter that the epistemic understandings order around absolutist notions of truth and interpretation versus nuanced understandings of historical truth, fact, and interpretation. This aligns with two of the positions taken by Maggioni et al. (2009).

the unavoidable filtering of evidence by an inquirer” (Maggioni et al., 2009, p. 192). This dovetails with the students’ understanding that they, as inquirers, will influence the way in which history that is “told” (taught). Then their ideas of “fairness” come into play. These ideas are in turn influenced by the context in which they learn, live, and grow.

I argue these are epistemic understandings that are influenced not only by cognitive development with regard to history (as students are capable of the nuanced evaluation of a criterialist stance) but also by context. The epistemological approach is influenced by historical and present context as interpreted and lived by an individual. This can be displayed through an understanding of ethics such as fairness, systemic oppression such as white supremacy (and how that has played out in the situation and in the individual), or entrenched ideas of what “fairness” looks like. There is also an element of fear of presenting a painful or disruptive truth in a classroom.

Maggioni and VanSledright construct their own terms for epistemic stances, combining the categories elucidated above. The copier, true to the name, believes history is an exact copy of the past (Maggioni et al., 2009, p. 194). The “borrower” tries to put together a good account of history from various (often casually chosen) witnesses, but rather than applying historical thinking and disciplinary tools to the evidence, they “borrow” bits and pieces from instinctive choices of accounts. The “criterialist” is able to wield the historian’s tools and apply criteria to choices they make about the sources from which they construct their account. While this, for many historians, presents as a “correct” way to approach history, it in itself is also an ideological position. The position taken is that history is multiply and constantly constructed and that we, as historians and history teachers, construct it through our choices. I do however take this stance to be the most advanced stance in terms of historical understanding.

These explorations and terminologies are very helpful in understanding the epistemic stances taken by my students in response to the Teeger article. However, my students also showed inconsistencies in stance: known as epistemic “wobbling” (Elmersjö, 2022; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). This wobbling suggests tensions between the stances and perhaps the need for a contextually influenced stance. What kind of epistemic stance is required to construct a narrative whose point is to appease, and de-escalate, and remove the relation between the past and the present? A stance that involves negotiation with the nature of truth is necessary to “balance” an unbalanceable history.

“BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY”: AN OUTLINE
OF THE ARGUMENT

Chana Teeger investigates how history teachers navigate the history classroom when teaching apartheid, a painful history that still reads closely onto a painful present in South Africa. The links between the present and the past are both obvious and glossed over in South Africa, and this has implications for epistemic understandings of history in history teachers. In her paper Teeger makes arguments about the narratives that are taught in history classrooms and the reasons for this (Teeger, 2015). Teeger argues that the teachers she observed, in different classrooms in South Africa use a narrative Teeger labels “both sides of the story” (Teeger, 2015, p. 1176). Teeger notes “how a variety of micro-social dilemmas lead teachers to weave a narrative into their lessons that limits students’ abilities to connect the racialized past to the racialized present” (Teeger, 2015, p. 1176).

The resultant narrative distorts historical and present realities by claiming that in South Africa not all Black people were victims during apartheid and not all white people were perpetrators. While there is evidence behind the statement—some Black people were beneficiaries, and some white people resisted apartheid—it is not representative of the larger evidentiary-based history that the majority of Black people were oppressed and the majority of white people were beneficiaries. It is this larger reality that has built the present conditions in South Africa, in which history teachers and pre-service teachers live. Teeger explains that this narrative makes it difficult for students to navigate and understand their present realities, which stem from that history.

The narrative is presented in the telling of what purports to be “both sides of the story”—a “balanced” and “truthful” history which does not favour one side over the other. Of course in attempting this (which is not actually the purpose of the *both sides of the story* narrative, according to Teeger), this narrative distorts the histories to try and balance two unequal sides and in doing so renders the present, as well as the history, nonsensical. It is this rendering the present nonsensical that Teeger particularly stresses as one way in which the “both sides of the story” narrative is most dangerous. Teeger points out that this history becomes about individual choices, rather than the systemic oppression and privilege that being one race or another affords or imposes.

Teeger argues that teachers are specifically not making the connection between past and present, not reading racially coded (in)equality in present-day South Africa into the past. Teeger describes the history classroom as a space where these takes on the history of the country are transferred, perpetuated, and enter society. “the article offers an account of the emotional and interpersonal considerations that play into the reproduction of racial ideologies—in particular, in an institutional context where ideas about race and inequality are transmitted to young people” (Teeger, 2015, p. 1177). History teachers in particular, she argues, attempted to minimize conflict with the “both sides of the story” narrative. “Teachers managed the potential for conflict by introducing narrative lines that limited students’ ability to make connections between past and present” (Teeger, 2015, p. 1185).

Teeger’s argument takes into account the relationship between history, historical narrative, power, society, positionality, and pedagogy. It is this nuanced take that I wanted to introduce to and discuss with my class.

“BOTH SIDES OF THE STORY” ARGUMENT IN THE CLASSROOM: NEUTRALITY, BIAS, DESIRE

The history method (FET) course is intended to delve into issues and debates around history methodology, as we work with the content from the FET (Grade 10–12) curriculum. Themes in the course include decolonisation, neutrality and bias in teaching history, teaching difficult topics, and historical thinking skills, among others.

We use a dialogic approach, encouraging intensive discussion with readings to ground it, drawing on Freire’s concept of praxis (Freire, 1996).

I prescribed Teeger’s article to my classes specifically to approach these issues of positionality, and multi-perspectivity, often framed as “neutrality” and bias, that history teachers are faced with daily. These form the basis for the micro-social negotiations that Teeger argues history teachers make in their teaching. Up to this point in the course, most students had shown “criticalist” engagements with history. While some students participated critically and comprehensively with the article, engaging the questions and arguments that Teeger poses, many of the students latched onto the phrase “both sides of the story” as a good, and necessary, position for any history teacher, linking it to the multi-perspectivity that we had established was important in the course. I was at first very taken aback by this, challenged

by these readings of the article and what they did to the classes.⁵ However, in subsequent discussions and tasks, it began to emerge that this reading was in fact a defensive reaction to a core difficulty in teaching history: teaching the painful past in a present rendered painful by the past's continued presence.

One of the concepts which preoccupies the students in this class is neutrality. Even after the discussion on the illusory, and damaging, nature of the concept "neutrality", it seems to provide them with some respite from the emotions and painful micro-social negotiations that are involved in teaching history in a South African context. Neutrality is seen to provide a way out from these micro-social negotiations, and the complexities of multi-perspectivity. Neutrality and bias are constant points of debate—students want to know how to be "unbiased", as if we do not all carry our own conscious and unconscious biases. Students seem to desire "neutrality" as if this were a space safe from the painful truths and consequences of the history they teach. This demonstrates the complexities and difficulties that these students—pre-service teachers—have to work with in the classroom and their different ways of responding to that. Some students desire the history to fit neatly into a narrative that lends itself to "neutrality" and a so-called balanced "both sides of the story", rather than a complex, painful, multi-perspectival history. However, some remain critical of this position and call for critical lenses on how history is produced, precisely to understand the present. This kept the dynamic in the class productive, as different views were fiercely defended. This demonstrates interesting subtleties of how epistemic stances were held and shifted. A position in which neutrality is possible, or valuable, suggests a "borrower" stance, which presents cases of epistemic wobbling where students had already been thinking from a criterialist stance.

I will quote some student responses to a discussion forum below. Neutrality was seen along a spectrum ranging from a safe to a dangerous space from which to teach: it provided a way to quell disruption or to present a distorted history (in fact it does both). Ideas of neutrality impacted (or were impacted by) the students' epistemic position on history. Neutrality was added as an analytical measure, like a criterion, to the

⁵ It is possible that the misreading was in fact a non-reading of the article and a response to just the title and the concept of "both sides of the story". This does not shift the interesting process with which the students defended the idea of "both sides of the story", as a key concept for teaching history.

knowledge that is to be taught. While this might seem to support the criterialist position, it does not, as neutrality is not part of historical thinking, and can in fact detract from it. Some students seemed to believe neutrality can allow you to balance historical truth between two sides (borrower stance). Others guarded against neutrality, which they see as, even as it calls for “balance”, distorting historical truth (criterialist stance). Sometimes these positions were mixed. One student expressed it thus:

The importance of attempting neutrality within history teaching is that it would allow for students to see through a fair point of view a story. The story is trying or aiming to show the best angle of a story without taking sides on which one suffered more, or why the situation occurred. The dangers of attempting neutrality within history teaching is that it does not show the side of the story whereby the people struggled. It does not show how exactly who was wrong and who was right as the main aim is only for telling the story and not taking any part.—KN

The first part of the quote reads into the “both sides of the story” as if neutrality can support a simple, two sides stance, which is fair or unbiased. The second contradicts this with saying (more closely aligned to Teeger’s article) “neutrality” can obscure some sides of the story or obscure historical evidence pointing to different narratives. The weighing up of two different aspects of neutrality shows critical engagement—but the concept of fairness still remains as if the students’ choices about what knowledge to bring into the classroom also had to be guided by that, rather than concerns of historical validity. While this is a criterion, in terms of epistemic stance it wouldn’t fall into the “criterialist” approach, because the criterion was chosen not from historical thinking but was influenced by the present context and so did not stand up to historical scrutiny. The idea of “telling the story” suggests more of a borrower approach.

In their capacity as student teachers, students defended the use of “both sides of the story” as if the alternative was a one-sided history, rather than historical narratives with and from multiple perspectives. Implicit in the defence was the argument that the narrative used by the teachers to minimize conflict in the classroom presented a reliable historical narrative. It just presented a narrative that was less painful and controversial. This is a misunderstanding of the point of the article, but also an interesting approach to historical narrative, and historical truth, at once acknowledging the power of the history teacher and imagining the possibility of a “balanced” history. The misunderstanding of the article and the

subsequent attachment to “both sides of the story” present an opportunity to see the concerns of students before they go out into their teaching context: if a “both sides of the story” narrative is possible, it can protect from painful and sticky moments in the classroom.

I encountered this nuanced and complex defence of “both sides of the story” in two spaces: in class debates and in written assignments, the assignment generally following the debate. The classroom debates were vociferous, with even previously quiet students ending up voicing theories and ideas. There were two main points of contention that emerged in the debates: firstly, what “both sides of the story” means and secondly whether “both sides of the story” was necessary in the history classroom. These ideas are interlinked and present epistemic attitudes towards history and historical truth which will be explored in the next section.

EPISTEMIC APPROACHES TO HISTORY IN MY CLASSROOM

When the students discussed what “both sides of the story” meant, it was often a simple error of reading the statement and not engaging the argument of the article. This in itself displays an epistemic approach to history. The approach that “both sides of the story” is important for “fairness” (a misreading of the term) suggests a “borrower” approach rather than the “criterialist” approach. Notions of the complexity of historical truth and historical fact were mediated by an ideological approach to fairness which, ironically, distorted the “fairness” of the actual historical approach.

This occurred in my classroom for several reasons. Teaching history in South Africa in 2022 is a very tricky process, as many historical narratives that exist are ideologically charged. However, we aim for a commitment to teaching a critically engaged and multi-perspectival history. This approach is solidified and built on throughout the year. The concept “both sides of the story” proves creatively disruptive idea of how to think about perspectives and narratives rather than a “balanced” history.

One of the epistemic approaches used by students lies somewhere between the “copier” and the “borrower”. The approach shows an idea that history is a reflection of the past, that the truths of the past are what make up history—but also taking different sources which are not chosen randomly but ideologically chosen rather than chosen by historical criteria. This is seen in the students who defended the “both sides of the story” in a straightforward manner, arguing that both sides exist and must be

equally valued—and this again speaks to their ideas about the realities they will face in the classroom. However, often the defence was more nuanced. Although the following comment promotes teaching historical thinking, it promotes an epistemic approach to history that suggests the epistemic criteria could change when something is controversial or creates strong opinions. Even if this is just to stress that historical thinking may be more difficult in the midst of controversy, it highlights the importance of context:

Every individual can have an opinion and feel a certain way about something, it would be an educator’s job to promote thinking for the entire class when a controversial or even opinionated comment arises.—LJ

The student is promoting critical thinking, but the student is also in support of the “both sides of the story” concept:

This is how we develop critical thinking and seeing both sides of a story.—LJ

Here, “both sides of the story” stands in for a multi-perspectival approach. This student is critically aware of the nature of historical knowledge in a “criterialist” approach; however, the attachment to the “both sides of the story” means the student has not grasped the danger of a “balancing” history.

This pushes me to consider if there might be other types of epistemic approaches to history: that of the “neutralist” and the “ideologue”, perhaps. While these would need to be put through rigorous scrutiny to be weighed for this. What happens when the idea of what history is curtailed by the desired or unwanted effect that history would have on certain people?

It is important to think with the circumstances around within which epistemic choices are made and to understand the impact that these circumstances have. How much does this impact the epistemic approach? Pre-service teachers have a specific lens on what history is to teach, which impacts their epistemic understanding. Their understanding of their role as history teachers is also impacted by our current context and their own positionality. There is a visible grappling with this impact on their view of both knowledge and pedagogy:

But as a teacher it's not my job to feel guilty—it's my job to teach my students the way apartheid has actually impacted the world, and how it continues to impact it to this day, no matter how difficult we find it.

But the Teeger article does show how difficult that is because we don't want to rile our students up because of the emotional nature of the work.—BF

This should set up a conflict between the epistemic stance and the practice, but in the answers from my students, they often become entwined. This obscures the role of the history teacher in selecting (and so impacting) the historical narratives in the classroom. Maggioni et al., in their questionnaire, added questions that cover this under “borrower”—choosing from narratives without applying historical thinking skills. However, the realities in South Africa in 2022 complicate this. I tried to guide students towards a multi-perspectival history, rather than a false balancing of what would be a two-sided history. This was also conflated with neutrality, although critical thinking and using criteria were also invoked:

I believe explaining all narratives of a historical event, along with providing no personal input or opinion is how to teach in a neutral way. This also then engages the students more, engages their critical thinking, introduced them to the idea of different narratives, and allows them to understand history in a new light. It encourages students to ask more questions, challenge narratives, and be more active in research and participation.—VM

The above student is challenging my own view on neutrality and in so doing also showing how they would introduce a criterialist epistemic stance to their learners. This shows that even neutrality can be a malleable and changeable concept, filled with students' own understandings and desires of what history should be. It only becomes dangerous when neutrality becomes synonymous with an uncritical “both sides of the story” approach, where the potential subjectivity is invoked as the danger, even as specific ethics and morals are called on to teach the “correct” moral standpoint.

Neutrality is the idea of presenting both sides of the story concerning a particular historical event. The importance of neutrality is that it can help to minimize the subjective nature of the teacher, as a person, when teaching a historical event; however, that should be carefully applied and that neutral stand must align with the ethics and morals that the teacher wishes to

convey, do you want your learners to be apartheid sympathizers, which would be very unbecoming for a teacher to do that in any part of the world, or do you want your learners to be critical of the apartheid regime. I think morally speaking you'd want your learners to be critical of the apartheid government because it was an evil system.—JP

The nature of truth itself is called into question, in what students “want” their learners to be. Rather than locating this in an epistemic stance, or as critical thinkers, this student applies the specific scenario and the expected moral outcome. I encourage criticality in the class, and critique of historical atrocities is part of this. It is the framing however that I am calling into question, that a teacher can be both “neutral” and convey specific morals. My approach to neutrality is that striving for it can lead to a covering up of one's own implicit biases, often colonial and societally constructed. I am influenced by Walsh's pedagogy of “walking and asking” (Walsh, 2015) as well as the pedagogies of Freire and hooks in this regard (Freire, 1983, 1996; hooks, 1994). “Neutrality” is not sought in any of these pedagogies, especially in hooks, where you acknowledge yourself in your teaching (hooks, 1994). Rather, a critical lens is applied to the world, and criteria used to decide what the best historical narratives are, aligning with a “criticalist” stance.

Teeger could be read as showing that “borrower” stances are used in schools specifically to manage painful and potentially disruptive context and content. Teachers would do this in their own borrower stance, no matter whether they had previously demonstrated “criticalist” stances in class.

The idea of sources being either neutral or biased also arises in examining epistemic stances. This accords with the “borrower” stance as, although criteria are enacted upon the stances, the “either/or” makes it clear that the understanding is of two sides, rather than a multi-perspectival history, with complex narratives.

[Understanding] Bias [as] a future history teacher: this is important as it would allow me to use both neutral and bias sources. Bias when showing the people of the time who went through the situation or who wrote it from interpreting one side. Neutral when the class should see both sides without judgements which should help them guide their answers or a more independent way on what they understand/interpret of the situation.—KN

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Seeing the positions that students in my course took, aligning them often with the “borrower” stance (Maggioni et al., 2009) spoke back to my teaching on the course. Critical thinking, critical stances, and deep debate are a fundamental part of my teaching philosophy, as is keeping the class learner-centred. I teach Seixas’ “Big Six Historical Thinking Skills” at the beginning of the course, with the idea that they are foundational for the rest of the course (Seixas & Morton, 2012).

I also have reflection as a central element in the pedagogical construction of the course and expect my students to reflect on their journey in the class: their learnings, their positions, their difficulties, the debates. In this I expect critical thinking to be foundational to their experience of the class, and I expect this to be one of the things modelled that will be taken into their classrooms as teachers.

I had expected that this critical thinking would automatically translate into a “criterialist” epistemic stance, and often, in classes, it did. However this specific discussion about “both sides of the story” showed that many students “wobbled” to the borrower stance when the context and content became “sticky” (Ahmed, 2004). This suggests, too (Maggioni et al., 2009), that the epistemic stances are not necessarily a developmental pathway (although much more and larger research would need to be done to confirm this). Sakki and Pirtilla-Backman also suggest that context impacts the epistemic approach, which is important for this chapter (Sakki & Pirttilä-Backman, 2019).

What does this suggest for pedagogy moving forward? My impulse is towards explicit content discussing different epistemic stances, as well as a clear focus on historical thinking skills, as the inclusion of these skills is so crucial to the “criterialist” epistemic stance. Introducing historical thinking skills to pre-service teachers as purely content, rather than theory, runs the risk that pre-service teachers experience them as content and tools to teach their learners, rather than tools to use to develop their own thinking.

This meta level of awareness is necessary in teaching history teachers, as becoming aware of their epistemic positions can help guide a lecturer in their students’ preparedness.

CONCLUSION

Teaching history is slippery, and the criteria, conscious and subconscious, that we create for teaching history are complex. This is evidenced in students wobbling between epistemic stances, according to the topic they are teaching, or who they are teaching it to. Each country or space will have its own form of historical and present context that ties the multiple functions of history in the classroom, the community, and the country. Unless taught from a complete “copier” standpoint, history will always be complicated to teach and to learn. History teachers need to be able to manage conflict in their own minds as well as in their classrooms. This means an awareness of the criteria used to impact epistemic stance, including historic and present-day context, difficulty, and controversiality. This chapter has shown the importance of understanding the contexts in which epistemic positions are produced and used pedagogically. Following this, the argument is made that in order to properly prepare our future teachers, those in Higher Education need to give them skills around history epistemically, and pedagogically, in a way that will allow them to deal with the contexts of their various classrooms.

This study has limitations. The data gathered is not a representative sample; rather it is qualitative data gathered through my own teaching practice, over time, and through months of student interactions. The arguments are intended to trouble and open up discourse around epistemic approaches to history, rather than provide a clear way forward.

Guiding students towards “criterialist” epistemic approaches to history and historical knowledge can help them apply their historical thinking skills in ways which will assist them in their future classrooms. This can function pedagogically as well as epistemically. It will require that historical thinking skills are taught as theoretical tools for teachers, as well as to be taught to students. Exploring epistemic approaches explicitly can assist students and lecturers grasp positions that are often not made explicit. The complexities of this continue in students’ minds, showing different stances in one statement, as shown in the words of student MF:

A safe place, a negotiation space, a debate, a telling of the truth no matter my feelings or bias, a pedagogy that does not delude or misinform your students, a lesson that allows for thinking skills where students are presented with the opportunity to think for themselves and become aware of the inequalities in society, who they are, who other people are, what happened in the past, and what they can hope for or work towards in the future.

Ultimately, we work towards the critical complexities of the past in the present, towards many hopes and many futures.

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The Meaning of Multi-Ethnic Classroom Contexts in Light of History Teachers' Differing Epistemic Expressions

Simon Lundberg

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the end of the Second World War, Sweden has been gradually changing from a relatively ethnically homogenous society into an increasingly multicultural one.¹ Compared to other EU member states, Sweden had one of the highest percentage of its population born outside the European Union (15,2 per cent) in 2023 (Eurostat, 2024), and in the same year, 20 per cent of people living in Sweden were born abroad (SCB, 2024). In my research about what multicultural contexts mean for history

¹The word relatively is used to avoid the reproduction of a myth about a homogenous past. This myth ignores Sweden's national minorities and migration and their influence on social, political and cultural development long before the Second World War.

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© The Author(s) 2024
H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_6

teaching, teachers' epistemic expressions have come forth as an important dimension in understanding teachers' visualisation of specific context-bound meanings. Earlier research has emphasised that the Swedish curriculum for upper-secondary school (Lgy11, 2011) includes tensions between mono-culturalism and interculturalism² and observes that the history syllabi contain underlying tensions between objectivistic and (de) constructivist approaches. The constructivist approach, with its demands for multiperspectivity, dominates the history syllabi, but the Swedish curriculum never makes its epistemic ground explicit, and different perspectives are intertwined, which makes it possible to read passages in line with differing epistemic stances (Elmersjö, 2021; Nordgren, 2006; Samuelsson, 2017). Despite the notion of the importance of multiperspectivity and intercultural history teaching (Nordgren & Johansson, 2015; Wansink et al., 2018), the steering documents do not provide an unambiguous answer to the normative question "How should the subject of history be taught in today's multicultural society?"

This chapter is based on interviews with history teachers who have a shared experience of teaching in multi-ethnic classrooms.³ Based on the teachers' experience and the epistemic concepts "*objectivist expressions*" and "*critical expressions*", my overarching aim is to explore teachers' perceptions of a multi-ethnic context's meaning for their history teaching. In this chapter, I elaborate on the potential correlation between teachers' epistemic expressions and the way they identify and describe the meaning and consequences that a multi-ethnic classroom has for their teaching.

EARLIER RESEARCH

The literature concerning the epistemic ideas of teachers includes examples of teachers as learners, whereas other research has examined how epistemic beliefs relate to various dimensions of teaching (Buehl & Helenrose,

² Different views of what intercultural education represents have been discussed extensively within research. Although it lacks a common definition, it has been described as an umbrella term for an education in which the representative's teaching focuses on the dynamic relationship between social groups (Mikander et al., 2018, pp. 41–42, 51). "Intercultural" is sometimes described as the ability to relate to, and communicate effectively within, situations involving a diversity of cultural contexts (Lorentz, 2007, p. 121).

³ Multi-ethnic classrooms are understood as classrooms where the students come from different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. It also contains the fact that students can have multi-ethnic identities.

2016). This chapter relates to the latter field. Drawing on the ideas of Barbara Hofer, the term “epistemic” refers to beliefs about knowledge and knowing (Hofer, 2016). In research on history education, there has been a growing interest in the epistemic cognition of teachers and its significance for history teaching (Stoel et al., 2022; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Studies conducted in the 1970s viewed a person’s epistemic development as a context-independent process. With time, however, this idea has been nuanced in different ways, for example, through Gottlieb and Wineburg’s ideas about teachers’ “epistemic switching” and other studies that have addressed the influence that contextual and learning environments have on teaching beliefs (Gottlieb & Wineburg, 2012; see also Buehl & Helenrose, 2016; Voet & De Wever, 2016). Various studies in various national contexts have discussed the tendency of teachers to engage in “epistemic wobbling” (Elmersjö & Zanzanian, 2022; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014). One suggested explanation for this widespread phenomenon has been teachers’ lack of knowledge and education about the history subject’s epistemic basis (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Other researchers have suggested that there is not necessarily a clear-cut relationship between an expressed epistemic stance and a given approach to teaching, because unlike historians, teachers are dependent on what works in the classroom; teachers think of history not as historians, but as teachers of history taking pedagogical realities into consideration, where their epistemic stances might interfere with their pedagogical beliefs, didactic perspectives, or other contextual factors (Elmersjö, 2022; Wansink et al., 2018; Wilke et al., 2022). This pattern has been described as teachers holding a “double epistemic standard”, which refers to situations where teachers are aware of a subject’s interpretative nature, but still take a single narrative approach (Maggioni & Parkinson, 2008). One such pedagogical reality is teaching history in a multi-ethnic classroom. History teaching in a multicultural society is a vital subfield of its own, including such topics as the role that ethnicity plays in the perception of historical significance, history teaching in ethnically diverse societies/classroom and models for developing an intercultural history teaching. My intention in this chapter is to contribute knowledge about how epistemic stances and wobbling connect to ideas about the multi-ethnic classroom.

VARIOUS WAYS OF TALKING ABOUT EPISTEMIC BELIEFS

Both generic and domain-specific models have been developed to capture progression in epistemic beliefs, often in three or four stages (Stoel et al., 2017).⁴ Models of epistemic beliefs in history have often focused on ideas about how historical knowledge is constructed, although it is possible to talk about teachers' epistemic stances without focusing on either conceptualising the construction of historical knowledge or epistemic progression by focusing on teachers' different expressions concerning the relationship between the past and the history of the past. Maggioni et al.'s (2009) commonly used, three-stage model is useful for analysing epistemic progression, but a weakness is that the most developed level in the progression scheme—called a “criterialist stance”—risks to some degree downplaying the relationship between the past and the history of the past, or, in the words of Elmersjö and Zanazanian, a criterialist “might hold the belief that history, when done right, actually takes you to the past itself” (Elmersjö & Zanazanian, 2022, p. 183). Another possible outcome is that a criterialist might conclude that a historical account, as understood by Hayden White (1999), is logical and coherent, but is still only one story among others. In other words, it is possible for the criterialist to accommodate both modern and postmodern conceptions about the relationship between history and the past.

My focus on teachers' expressions of epistemic beliefs looks at the implicit or explicit views that teachers have about the relationship between the past and the history of the past. Teachers' views about whether it is necessary to deconstruct their own understandings of complex developments (an ability Robert Parkes (2011) has called a *historiographic gaze*) could be said to constitute an epistemological line of demarcation between the positions (Jenkins & Munslow, 2004), although it is not always easy for the researcher to detect this line, especially when taking into consideration that teachers often are unaware of their beliefs and therefore may find it difficult to articulate them (Voet & De Wever, 2016). For that reason, in similarity to Elmersjö (2021), I primarily base my analytical framework on two categories: first, an objectivist position expressing the view that “history can tell us the truth about the past”; and second, a critical position highlighting the complexity of the relationship between the

⁴Stoel et al. refer to models by King and Kitchener (1994, 2002), Kuhn and Weinstock (2002), and Kuhn (1991).

past and narratives about the past, a complexity that might even make it impossible to bridge the gap between history and the past itself in any meaningful way.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

This chapter is based on semi-structured interviews with 15 lower secondary school (students aged 13–15) and upper-secondary school (students aged 16–19) teachers with experience of teaching history in multi-ethnic contexts. The participating teachers had at least three years of experience working in schools where 30–96 per cent of the students have a foreign background. The lower limit of three years teaching experience guaranteed that the participants had had the opportunity to reflect and act upon their teaching beliefs in relation to classroom experiences. In the interviews, where the teachers elaborated on what an ethnically and culturally diverse context meant for their teaching, epistemic expressions among the teachers could be identified. Earlier research has shown that teachers are often unaware of their implicit beliefs, which might make it difficult for them to express their ideas in a direct way (Stoel et al., 2017; Voet & De Wever, 2016); this is a backdrop to the approach taken here, thus the epistemic beliefs must often be inferred. The presence of epistemic reasoning among a few teachers—without the interviewer directly asking for it—can be seen as a sign of its importance for their teaching, as they do not just provide “school-book-answers” to questions that have little impact on their thinking regarding a multi-ethnic context’s impact on their teaching. On the other hand, not having deliberately asked the teachers to develop their epistemic approaches has its limitations. One limitation is that it can be even more difficult to separate epistemic beliefs from other beliefs, resulting in the omission of many participants. From the 15 interviews, I selected excerpts from four interviews with upper-secondary teachers where epistemic beliefs were clearly identified. Two of these teachers expressed objectivistic beliefs, while two expressed critical beliefs. Two of the teachers were contacted for a shorter follow up interview regarding some clarifying questions. The requirement for relatively clear epistemic expressions means that teachers who expressed their epistemic beliefs less clearly in their description of teaching have been excluded. Assuring the participants that the data would be kept confidential and pseudonymised was one way to create an environment in which the teachers could feel safe

Table 6.1 Teachers in the study

<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Years as a teacher</i>	<i>Epistemic expressions</i>
<i>Nils</i>	4	Objectivistic
<i>Gustav</i>	10	Objectivistic
<i>Jakob</i>	15	Critical
<i>Gabriella</i>	16	Critical

to talk freely about their teaching; hence, the names I use are not the teachers' real names (Table 6.1).

OBJECTIVISTIC EXPRESSIONS

The teacher I call Nils expressed an objectivistic epistemic approach in his description of the importance of focusing on analytical tools, source criticism and explanations of how the past has shaped today's reality. A major aim for his teaching was to develop his students' ability to conduct unbiased analyses, making them independent and analytical thinkers. He underlined the importance of providing students with perspectives to challenge them and help eliminate close-minded and biased historical understandings. His emphasis on perspectives should probably not be taken for a critical position—about an unbridgeable gap between the past and history—but could be better described as a pedagogical strategy making his students better prepared to receive or be open towards “the most likely truth”. In several statements, he outlines a view that history done right can tell the truth about the past: “It is the most likely truth—what we talk about in history is the most likely truth or most credible facts which have to be accepted [...]. It is really what has happened, our common history and it cannot be changed [...].” (Nils, interview, September 21, 2021). Nils describes that his teaching is not about memorising dates and simple facts, but rather about questions concerning historical processes, like “Why is the West richer than Africa?” and “Why did the industrial revolution happen in Great Britain and not somewhere else?” (Nils, interview, September 2, 2021). An idea about national cohesion—fostering an “inclusive nationalism” and a “sense of belonging to the Swedish welfare system”—made content about Swedish emigration and the development of the welfare state important for his teaching in an ethnically diverse context. His historical explanations about the development of

Sweden from a poor country to a welfare state seem to be in line with his explicit aim of getting his students to support the ideas behind the welfare system, namely: “Hard work is rewarding”. His fostering attempts are explicit; however, at the same time, he regards content within the frame of his fostering attempts as important and possible to treat in an “objective” way (Nils, interview, September 21, 2021).

The teacher Gustav describes rather different aims for his teaching, and his objectivistic expression is embedded differently in comparison to Nils. Gustav sees the development of his students’ historical consciousness and their understanding of the present as the history subject’s major aims.⁵ For Gustav, history is about enabling his students to explain the present and today’s society through a logical, historical chain of events. He defines historical consciousness as an understanding of how everything is connected through history and your own place in it. His objectivistic expression can be illustrated by his description of a final course exam, in which the students were given the task of establishing a chain of logical understanding leading from events in thirteenth century Europe to Donald Trump’s election in 2016. Taking this approach implies that the chains of events, in his mind, are there to reconstruct the past, rather than to construct it. He expresses these ideas by omitting questions of a constructivist nature: the chain of events seems to be something that can be found in a direct encounter with the past. Another important aim where the epistemic expression is visible comes to the fore in Gustav’s description of an attempt to foster students’ tolerance of other students’ views. This is described as important in his multi-ethnic classes where students might belong to, or identify with, rival sides in historical and ongoing conflicts. He mentions the risk of accentuated conflict-ridden relations among Kurdish and Turkish students, students from Iran and Iraq and differing “groups” of Afghan nationals while addressing certain historical content in class. Gustav strives to convey the understanding to his students that they are like “dominoes” placed in the general flow of historical events, which form their attitudes (Gustav, interview, April 14, 2021). Gustav’s ideas exemplify how aims of fostering can be carried out in line with an objectivistic expression. His emphasis on giving space to students’ different perspectives could easily have been seen as an expression of a critical rather than objectivistic approach. However, according to him, the

⁵The Swedish history syllabi describes a “developed historical consciousness” as an overarching aim.

students' present values, and different groups' views of past events, can be historically explained by logical chains of events.

Gustav describes how he addresses his students with a call to see the logic in the explanations he presents (Gustav, interview, April 14, 2021). Despite an orientation towards "multi-perspectivism", logic and objectivity are still important guidelines towards what seems to be an attempt to present value-free logical narratives about past realities and their role in the formation of values.

CRITICAL EXPRESSIONS

The teachers Jakob and Gabriella expressed a critical understanding of history. For Jakob, this is manifested in his view that the past can be described from different perspectives and that one perspective is not necessarily more right or wrong than another. In some regards, the critical Jakob and objectivistic Nils, who talk about challenging students' perspectives, were seemingly similar; however, Jakob's critical position is explicitly expressed as an aim to make his students aware of the gap between the past and the history of the past. This aim was not at all present in Nils' statements. Jakob considers it important to make his students aware of the history subject's dependence on present day circumstances, that it is not possible for history teaching to be free of values; therefore, he sees an objective transmission of the past as an impossibility (Jakob, interview, May 28, 2021).

His reasoning should not be understood as a relativistic view that all stories are equally good, because he emphasises the importance of having a scholarly perspective and challenging the students' sometimes very simplistic, emotional understandings. However, instead of discussing a given historical truth, he describes the aim of his teaching in terms of broadening perspectives on identity and society, exchanges of experiences and *bildung* in the sense of developing as a human being. Jakob perceives tolerance as a potential indirect positive result of the cultivation of understanding the history subject's constructivist dimensions (Jakob, interview, May 28, 2021). The teacher Gabriella also mentions perspectives and history's significance for students' identity as an important aim and frames it in terms of a developed historical consciousness. For Gabriella, history always is about uses of history or differing perspectives. In her teaching, she finds it important to make her students aware that teaching can always be conducted from another perspective and that it is possible to talk about

historical times in terms of contradictions rather than as a straight story (Gabriella, interview, January 26, 2022). In other words, according to Jakob's and Gabriella's approach, the relationship between the past and the history about the past is complex with a gap between them impossible to bridge.

A MULTI-ETHNIC CONTEXT'S MEANING IN LIGHT OF OBJECTIVISTIC EPISTEMIC EXPRESSIONS

Nils' and Gustav's descriptions of a multi-ethnic context's meaning for their teaching took rather different forms despite similarities in epistemic expressions. This can partly be explained by the fact that Nils' ideas about fostering national cohesion made him see history education about the students' "own country" as counterproductive. Gustav, on the other hand, viewed historical content close to the students' ethnic and cultural affiliations as necessary for a more successful transmission of historical understanding and his attempts to foster tolerance. Nils described the multi-ethnic context, and its meaning for his teaching, in challenging terms. In general, a multi-ethnic student group—according to his experience—makes it more challenging to reach an "unbiased mindset" among his students in relation to certain content. According to Nils, many of his students with multi-ethnic backgrounds tended to use racism as an historical explanation too readily, while students with a Swedish ethnic background tended to utilise critique against religion in the same way. He thinks it is important to challenge his students' understandings and in different ways described students' ethnic and religious affiliations/identities as a problem for his aim to have "openminded" discussions. He exemplifies how he finds it important to bring up the realities of the Muslim expansion and Muslim atrocities in addition to the Christian crusades—not to excuse the latter—even though according to him it can be tough for students with a Muslim identity when, for example, the history of Islam is mentioned in the classroom (Nils, interview, September 2, 2021). Even if Nils underlines that he considers it important to be able to discuss everything, he thinks that an overly narrow focus on a subject like the dark side of the welfare state does not necessarily have a constructive outcome. It might result in judgmental conflict-ridden positions between his "ethnic Swedish students" and "multi-ethnic students", prejudicing discussions that risk dividing rather than uniting the classroom (Nils, interview,

September 21, 2021). For Gustav, the multi-ethnic context has other implications for his teaching, namely that in his view, successful realisation of teaching is based on finding historical content that can be fitted into his students' diverse frames of references. For example, the Cold War took place in many global arenas, and he thinks that it is important focusing, for example, on Afghanistan and Iran to better relate to the students frames of references. For Gustav, it is important to be neutral as a teacher and not take sides in historical conflicts—especially in a classroom where the students feel that they belong to different sides of a conflict. This indicates a view that the neutral, value-free, objective position is possible. Gustav is also somehow striving towards developing an openminded approach among his students. He maintains that the focus on fostering an unbiased understanding of the—from the student's perspective—other side's historical experiences is a strategy to ease conflict-ridden positions among students in class. In Gustav's mind the students should have the right to express different opinions about past processes, actors and events but he finds it important to use history to explain the historical background behind their differing views (Gustav, interview, April 14, 2021). Even if their fostering attempts are different, the objectivistic expressions are visible in both Gustav's and Nils' description of a multi-ethnic context's meaning for their teaching.

A MULTI-ETHNIC CONTEXT'S MEANING IN LIGHT OF CRITICAL EPISTEMIC EXPRESSIONS

Jakob likens history teaching to dancing: “You always need to think of who you are dancing with” (Jakob, interview, May 28, 2021). According to him, it is always important to adapt teaching to the students' sense of belonging, and he underlines that an ethnic dimension is part of that belonging. His critical epistemic view opens opportunities to adapt his teaching to his students with no requirement to be “objective”—which he sees as impossible—or present supposedly logical representations of how everything is connected. As mentioned, he finds it important to make his students aware of the gap between the past and the history about the past. Other aims related to historical consciousness, and what Nietzsche so famously called a life-affirming history (Nietzsche, 1874/1998), are seemingly attached to context-bound considerations, which have

implications for his ideas about developing a scholarly awareness among his students.

Jakob thinks that history—regardless of context—should relate to where his students come from, and according to his experience, he often meets individual students who are proud of their national history in classrooms where students have backgrounds from different countries. He gives one example of a student who had great pride in Assyrian history, with visions of an Assyrian heyday. Jakob thinks it is important to meet the students' wishes about historical content: first, because it is a way to show your students that you see them, and second, because it is an opportunity to cultivate the ability to resist an overly romanticised historical understanding of something important to you. He describes it as central to balance between cultivating resistance to historical myths—without necessarily dissecting them—and thus draining them completely of meaning:

But then comes another problem with this. The balance between a critical myth-revealing perspective and offering opportunities for meaningful stories. [...] I remember a student who came from Iran and was thinking something like: "Iran was amazing". Then we must help him—or at least offer the opportunity—to critically review. A lot of people come up with a kind of mythology that is not necessarily true—but they have never felt the need to critically examine it, and it can be very sensitive. (Jakob, interview, May 28, 2021)

According to him, a part of doing history is to construct a context that both arouses emotions and at the same time can be relatable to one's identity. The act of offering opportunities to critically examine myths can, according to Jakob, be especially challenging in classrooms encompassing students holding rival mythologies as true. In a multi-ethnic class, Jakob believes that problematisation of the division of European historical epochs should be given a more prominent place. He illustrates this with questions like "Where does Muslim expansion come in? Is it part of the Middle Ages?"

Gabriella, in comparison, brings up consideration, emphasising the context-bound need problematising Eurocentric concepts like "the post-war period", especially when nearly all her students have a non-European background. European history is still important for Gabriella, so her students are excluded from learning that history, which could be seen as especially important when many of her students do not learn about

European history from their families. Both Gabriella and Jakob mention history in terms of a difficult subject in relation to the students' young age. For example, Gabriella mentions the risk of presenting "the Enlightenment" as a prescription for modern society that ends up in a "development thought" (Gabriella, interview, January 26, 2022). In her classes, where many students have poor Swedish language skills and/or lack of earlier school-knowledge about European history, she considers theoretical reasoning as even more challenging but points to the fact that history teaching could still never just be an unproblematic transmission of historical knowledge of European history. This idea can be illustrated in her own words: "I can still use it [the concept of the Enlightenment], but thoughtfully, so that you don't shove it down their throats [...]" (Gabriella, interview, January 26, 2022).

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I have not strived to give a complete picture of the individual teachers' context-bound teaching in all its complexity. Still, I have illustrated how teachers expressed many different aims for their history teaching, such as developing students' analytical skills, tolerance and historical consciousness. Examples of other identity-related teaching intentions were to strive for national cohesion or increase students' sense of belonging. Based on the interviews, it is not possible to connect a specific epistemic expression with specific educational intentions. In contrast, the study highlights examples of how teachers expressing different epistemic beliefs (understood as an objectivist or critical approach to the history about the past) can express similar intentions with their teaching. However, a conclusion only drawing on similarities in intentions would ignore how conceptually similar teaching intentions are filtered through teachers' differing epistemic beliefs. My focus on teachers who express relatively clear epistemic beliefs make such an approach possible but has other limitations. One limitation is that I cannot contribute to the discussion about the prevalence of epistemic wobbling or to what degree teachers' wobbling can better be understood in terms of what Maggioni and Parkinson (2008) called holding a "double epistemic standard".

Previous research on pedagogical beliefs has shown how teachers' acquisition of new knowledge is filtered through personal epistemic beliefs or epistemologies (Kagan, 1992). Instead of focusing on how knowledge is filtered, I have exemplified how different teaching intentions are

filtered. I argue that when the teachers' intensions are filtered through their ideas about the epistemic nature of the relationship between the past and the history about the past, it leads to very different functions of that teaching, even if it was conceived with the same intensions. In other words, differing epistemic stances between teachers will lead to different functions of teaching, even when teachers agree on intensions.

For example, tolerance according to Gustav (a teacher expressing objectivistic beliefs) is about showing how the past shapes the understanding of individuals and groups; in his description of the power of the past, he metaphorically compares students to "dominoes" in a historical flow of time. In Gustav's eyes, developed tolerance means an increased understanding of how processes of the past form different groups and individuals depending on their background and historical experiences; the dominoes behind one student will push her in one direction, while the dominoes behind a different student will push him in another. Jakob (a teacher expressing critical beliefs) also strives for tolerance, but his critical epistemic filtering results in a view that tolerance develops through an understanding that history is something that is created in the present and through an awareness of how history is always associated with construction.

Nils (a teacher expressing objectivist beliefs) and Gabriella (a teacher expressing critical beliefs) had, despite epistemic differences, similar intentions in creating an understanding of historical processes with direct influence on the present. Both believed that multi-ethnic classroom contexts could be associated with special requirements to fulfil this stated aim. According to Nils—who had experiences of handling conflicts within student groups, sometimes along ethnic and religious lines—diversity could make it challenging to develop an unbiased mindset among the students in relation to certain parts of the past. Gabriella (and the same applied to Jakob), on the other hand, emphasised the importance of creating understanding by increasing students' awareness of how narratives and concepts carry ideological undertones. In that sense, ethnic and religious heterogeneous classroom contexts could fill the function of a reminder concerning how their own stereotypes and concepts might express an unwanted socialisation.

The functional outcomes can be seen as significant factors in the formation of knowledge about the meaning of a multi-ethnic context. This reasoning assumes that teachers develop their teaching in relation to the context (Kagan, 1992) and is in line with Dewey's transactional

epistemology, which emphasises that context must be understood in relation to action. In other words, knowledge is a construction, but not a construction in our head, but in “transaction”—in meeting and acting with the world (Biesta, 2020). One outcome of this view is that it seems difficult to uphold a separation of research with a focus on epistemic issues for teachers as learners, on the one hand, and epistemic beliefs in relation to various dimensions of teaching on the other; the border is somewhat blurred and perhaps that is something desirable.

Another concluding remark is that Jakob’s aims—seemingly inspired by Nietzsche’s life-affirming history—sometimes made it necessary to balance a myth-revealing approach with giving his students opportunities for maintaining meaningful stories. The last example from Jakob—who was explicit in his critical position—indicates that certain aims of school history related to, for example, identity development might create a need for an intricate balancing act within the boundaries of a critical position. Nils’—in comparison—lack of consideration regarding this balancing act could partly be explained by his objectivistic position and foothold in a disciplinary tradition; students’ biases—reinforced by heterogeneous views—logically become more threatening when the overarching aim is to prepare the students to develop an open-mindset in order to be able to convey the most likely truth. Overall, the results of this study indicate that research interested in history teaching in relation to ethnically and culturally diverse contexts would benefit from paying attention to the epistemic dimension of teachers’ thinking, in a sense that goes beyond how historical knowledge is constructed and questions about epistemic progress. The categories “objectivistic approach to the past” and “critical approach to the past” have proved to be a useful conceptual tool in such an enterprise.

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PART II

Professional Development and
Reflections on Applied Epistemologies



Mapping Teachers' Epistemic Beliefs in Collegial Planning

Kenneth Nordgren

The term *epistemology* is a conjunction of the Greek words *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (reason). Hence, *epistemology* is about how we conceptualize and justify our beliefs about the nature of knowledge. Consider this analogy from the thirteenth-century Dominican friar and philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas, where his thoughts on salvation can be read as an epistemological relation: salvation, he argued, requires knowledge of three things—what one ought to believe, what one ought to desire, and what one ought to do. Aquinas's topic was theology, discussed in a time profoundly different from ours; however, his line of argument illustrates quite well the three basic features of epistemic thinking in education. A teacher must have perceptions about the object of teaching (*what*), the goal or purpose of teaching (*why*), and how to promote learning (*how*). Worth noting is that Aquinas places agency as an epistemic relationship with an external goal—the ultimate goal of reaching salvation. Teaching, we can argue, is in itself an epistemic craft with the goal to impart knowledge and growth.

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H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_7

When, as researchers, we take a specific interest in history teachers' epistemic cognitions, we assume that there is a specific link to their professional conduct. That is, teachers' beliefs about historical knowledge (what it is and why it is important) intersect with their notion of how this knowledge should be taught (what it is to teach and learn history). Studies have identified that such connections might "influence (although do not determine) constructs, such as goal setting, teaching orientation, epistemic strategies, and outcomes of historical reasoning" (Stoel et al., 2022, p. 28). However, it has proved difficult to go beyond establishing what seems to be an obvious link between thinking and doing. In fact, it has proven difficult to conceptualize and methodologically explore the complexity of epistemic thinking and its influence on teachers' choices and activities (Stoel et al., 2022).

This chapter aims to explore teachers' epistemic beliefs as a performative engagement in planning and preparing lessons, and to discuss the empirical findings of a long-term study on teachers' subject-specific planning teams (PTs). The chapter will give a brief quantitative and qualitative overview of a series of planning sessions. The epistemic web that they expose is described and graphically illustrated in three figures. Thereafter, a shorter planning session is used to discuss shifts in teachers' epistemic positions. First, we need to frame the research problem a bit more clearly and elaborate a bit more on the epistemic concepts.

FRAMING THE PROBLEM

The term epistemic has already been combined with *cognition* and *beliefs*. These terms have different nuances, where the former is more associated with reflexivity and theory, and the latter with intuition and practice. Maggioni and Parkinson (2008) explain epistemic *cognition* as the mental process in which people engage while considering the nature and the justification of knowledge. In other words, this is active reflection on the idea of knowledge and "on the warrants for calling these ideas about the world knowledge" (p. 446). Epistemic *beliefs* are not distinct from cognitions but encompass more tacit or opinion-based assumptions. Beliefs about knowledge are an integrated part of identities and emotions and therefore assumed to be slow-moving and hard to change (Maggioni & Parkinson, 2008). Accordingly, this chapter uses *cognition* when teachers directly reflect on their beliefs and *beliefs* as the more intuitive and overarching descriptor.

Research has generally theorized teachers' beliefs about knowledge and knowing as individual psychological constructs. Methodologies are dominated by self-reports, such as questionnaires to measure variations and interviews to examine in-depth cognizant reasoning. A large bulk of research has tried to categorize teachers' responses against a set of epistemic stances, based on typologies from naïve to nuanced beliefs, and link them to pedagogical practices (Stoel et al., 2022). Hence, teachers with naïve objectivist beliefs are assumed to favor more non-dialogic forms of teaching, while teachers' who hold complex views on history should be more inclined to engage students in inquiry and interpretations.

However, it has been difficult to establish such unambiguous correlations (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Gottlieb and Wineburg (2012) remind us that belief systems about a specific disciplinary field or learning context are usually not coherent, but instead comprise assumptions that can switch between logics. Most often, people do not work out a coherent epistemic system or even pay much attention to why they take some claims as more significant and trustworthy.

Bråten (2016) argues that there is a methodological problem here, as self-report examines the phenomenon outside of its practice. Kelly (2016) underlines that psychological approaches downplay the significance of the situational and of interactions with others. Hence, here seems also to be a theoretical problem. Teaching and learning do require the commitment of the individual teacher and learner, but both are practically situated in a social context. Regarding teachers' professional learning, we know that teachers are influenced by traditions and school culture, and that professional development benefits from collegial collaboration (Lave & Wenger, 1999).

Hence, there are several good reasons to explore teachers' practical epistemologies as situational and social dependent. Wilke et al. (2022, p. 213) argue, "[R]ather than focusing on general epistemological beliefs, future research might benefit from concentrating more on teachers' practical epistemologies." By exploring epistemic beliefs through teachers' collegial planning, I want to discuss how beliefs about the nature of historical knowledge interplay with the practical and performative side of teaching. The following discussion in this chapter is centered on two problems. One concerns the intersection between discourses of domain-specific epistemologies and teachers' individual beliefs. Disciplines have different epistemic constructions, and their specific norms of specialization have a socializing effect on teachers' thinking (Sandoval, 2016). We

also know that there are individual variations in the interpretations of these knowledge structures. This highlights an intricate intersection of the disciplinary bases of teaching, individual conceptions, and specific educational context. The question explored here is this: To what extent do the discipline and the educational context frame the individual variations of teachers' epistemic beliefs?

A related problem concerns the epistemological interplay between history teachers as they are planning lessons. To teach history is to make epistemic considerations about what qualifies as historical knowledge and what it is that signifies that learning has occurred—even if its results do not necessarily correspond with its intentions. What do the performative enactments of such notions indicate about history teachers' epistemic beliefs?

DOMAIN-SPECIFIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

When planning, teachers make a multitude of strategic decisions that affect students' learning, but how does this craft bring together beliefs about the nature of domain-specific knowledge and teaching practice? The relation between what Nitsche (2019) calls theoretical and didactic beliefs is intricate and complex. Maggioni and Parkinson's (2008) research overview covers involvement of domain-specific discourses, teaching experiences, interaction with students, and cultural, political, and pedagogical beliefs.

Hofer (2016) notes that the conception of a discipline is often not made clear in epistemic research. From a psychological perspective, it is the individual's beliefs that vary and change, while the knowledge domain is the constant entity (cf. Stoel et al., 2022; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Less attention has been given to how a discipline tends to socialize those who practice it. According to Bernstein (1999), disciplines are social and historical constructs. However, this does not mean that they are arbitrary or volatile, but based on systematized knowledge that forms specialized discourses. On the one hand, disciplinary borders can reproduce social exclusion (Bourdieu, 1988), but on the other hand, they are powerful tools to think beyond one's own immediate context. In this respect, access to specialized knowledge is also a question about equity and democracy (Young & Muller, 2016).

In order for specialized knowledge to be accessible for students, its discourse needs to be recontextualized. This process is epistemically

challenging and presupposes knowledge and skills to cross-disciplinary and didactical discourses (Bladh et al., 2018; Nordgren, 2021). Disciplinary and curriculum discourses need not only to be reformulated for students to decode but also to be recreated as liminal space for students to engage with learning as a process (Johansson, 2021). In other words, epistemic cognitions and beliefs are part of teaching—sometimes as meta-reflections on professional challenges, but mostly as performative interventions in the intermediate between knowledge and knowers, since this is the position where teaching begins (Clément, 2016). We can think of several ways of empirically exploring epistemic beliefs within the context of social and historical movable knowledge domains: as a comparison over time (see Samuelson's chapter in this book) or between national cultures (e.g., Åström Elmersjö & Zanazanian, 2022), or as a comparison of disciplines.

In a longitudinal study, we followed teachers from four different subjects who had formed subject-specific PTs that met weekly to plan their teaching. This project was conducted at an upper-secondary school in Sweden. The school was in a mid-sized city (90,000 inhabitants) and had about 2000 students and 250 staff members. The PTs represented history, mathematics, technology, and physics. Each PT comprised two to four consenting participants. The project sought to establish a collegial planning infrastructure rather than testing a specific planning model. However, teachers were encouraged to specify objectives and goals, perform pre- and post-tests, and formatively reflect on lesson outcomes. Data were collected from audio-recorded PT meetings. Each PT recorded and uploaded its own data. A total of 140 hours of meetings was recorded and coded in NVivo.

Teachers' collegial planning was analyzed using a modified version of Tyler's (1950) model of the basic principles of instruction, which included such factors as setting goals, choosing and sequencing teaching and learning activities, and evaluating outcomes (Table 7.1). The modifications allowed for the analysis of the formative process of teaching, as well as on the teachers' reflections on their collegial cooperation. Individual audio recordings were analyzed using deductive coding and thematic analysis to map the analytical framework, which is presented in Table 7.1.

The relative amounts of time that the history, mathematics, and Swedish language PTs spent on different dimensions of the modified model were compared to explore discipline-related connections. What we found was a pattern with domain-specific elements, indicating that teachers have different kinds of challenges depending on their subject. The history PT

Table 7.1 Analytical framework for teachers' lesson planning

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Swedish</i>
P1	Infrastructure of the planning teams	11	20	18
P2	Infrastructure around the planning teams	7	18	3
R1	Reflection	8	8	17
T1	Overarching learning outcomes	28	0	6
T2	Defined learning outcomes	14	5	14
T3	Choice of activity	14	13	25
T4	Sequencing	6	7	4
T5	Summative assessment	9	1	2
T6	Formative teaching	3	28	11

allotted much time to discussing overarching knowledge goals and subject content and defining learning outcomes (T1 & T2: 42%). The mathematics team barely discussed this theme (5%), while the Swedish team spent a considerable amount of time discussing defined learning outcomes (14%). In contrast, the mathematics team focused much more on formative aspects (T6: 28%), while the history PT rarely addressed this dimension (T6: 3%); again, the Swedish team fell in between these (11%). The Swedish team focused more on choosing activities (T3: 25%), which was more than the history (13%) and math (14%) teams used (Randahl et al., [in press](#)).

It seems that what is epistemically challenging in the recontextualization process differs among subjects. Roughly, for history, it is a question of selection and significance—what history should be about. For math teachers, the main challenge seems to be giving feedback on assignments and tasks, while teachers in Swedish and literature struggle with choices of activities. The history teachers stated that they needed time to negotiate decisions on content and goal settings, while these issues seemed to be more consensus-based for the mathematics teachers.

This outcome is not particularly surprising. The results support previous findings that the fundamental aspects of teachers' epistemic beliefs are domain-specific (Muis et al., 2016). Mathematics and science are developed paradigmatically by integrating lower to higher forms of knowledge, while the structure of history is horizontal in that scholars can work in parallel with different ontological assumptions (see Bernstein, 1999). To master history, no obvious trajectory of principles has to be followed; rather, a historical perspective must be developed—that is, familiarity with

legitimation and justification within the discipline. This historical gaze, as Bertram (2008) explains, encompasses the ability to understand the past in its own context and to approach the past with empathy and imagination.

This quantitative approach can still offer insights into how knowledge structures trigger specific epistemological behavioral patterns. Different domains have different epistemic challenges that are important to be aware of in both quantitative and qualitative analysis. For a subject such as history, the epistemic problem of selection and significance is familiar to history-specific research. However, the question that this investigation presents is this: To what extent do disciplinary and curriculum regimes frame teachers' beliefs? Therefore, the next step is to go deeper into the planning process and listen to what the teachers themselves have to say.

Mapping the Epistemic Web

This section will report on three planning sessions by the PT study's history teachers. The history PT consisted of four male teachers. They were all experienced teachers, but they were unaccustomed to planning their teaching together. To make these sessions work, they had to verbalize an activity that was normally tacit. Thematic content analysis was applied to this process using audio-recorded planning meetings. Then, analytical themes from the modified Tyler model (Table 7.1) were used to visually map the discussions (see Figs. 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3).

Session 1: Identifying Lesson Content

The four history teachers decided to plan a common series of lessons. They began by raising two questions almost simultaneously: What should the lessons be about? (T1) and How much time can be set aside for each? (T4). They quickly agreed on "The Age of Revolutions," a common history lesson topic in Sweden (Eliasson & Nordgren, 2016), and they decided to dedicate themselves to using six weeks with two to three lessons per week, including a summative test (T6). Then, the teachers sketched out the thematic content and learning outcomes (T2) related to the terminology for historical thinking (see Fig. 7.1). Hence, the teachers approached the task from a content-oriented perspective. When the main theme and the time frame for teaching it were set, the next question was: Which revolutions should be highlighted? Consensus immediately settled on the Industrial, American, and French Revolutions. The selection of

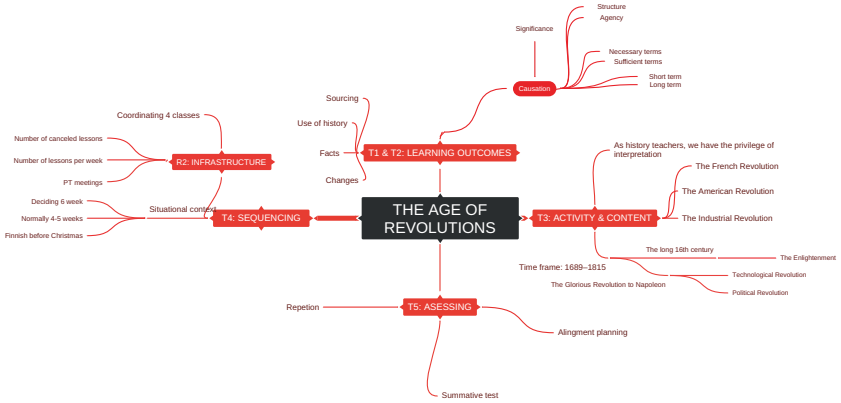


Fig. 7.1 Planning session 1. Map based on audio file 190826B. The figure describes the first session when four history teachers plan a series of lessons about “The Age of Revolutions.” They raised questions simultaneously about overarching learning outcomes (T1) and sequencing (T4). They decided to examine the students by a summative test (T6). Next step for the teachers was to sketch out the thematic content and learning outcomes (T2)

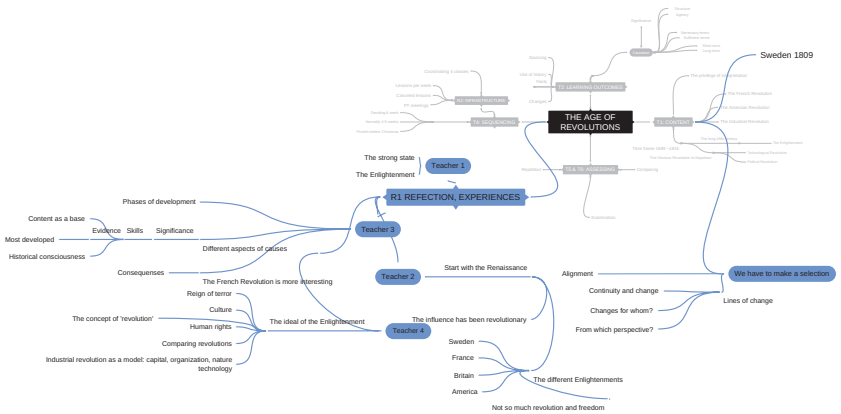


Fig. 7.2 Planning session 2. Map based on audio file 190902A. The figure describes the second planning session. The four history teachers used this session mainly to share their experiences in teaching “The Age of Revolutions” (R1)

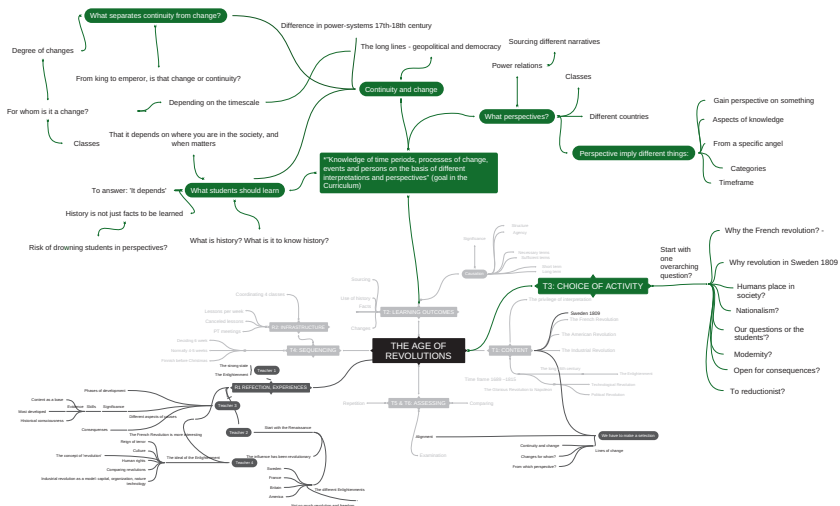


Fig. 7.3 Planning session 3. Map based on audio file 190902B. The figure describes the third planning session. The teachers discussed in more detail their overarching and defined learning outcomes (T1 & T2) and choices of learning activities (T3)

these events as the most significant appeared to be unproblematic and almost obvious to the four teachers.

Building on this content foundation, they started to discuss possible learning outcomes. Hence, working from the perspective of a historical theme, they discussed how to work with second-order concepts such as causes and sources as well as meta-perspectives on the public uses of history. Alongside this, they also became more specific in respect to first-order concepts as they discussed temporality and epoch shifts.

Session 2: Sharing Experiences

A week after the first session, the teachers met for another planning session, which lasted around one hour. They used this session mainly to share their experiences in teaching the theme (R1). Through this conversation, they naturally related to and built on each other’s remarks (see Fig. 7.2). Teacher 1 shared a societal perspective on the historical process, stressing changes in political power and relating them to the emergence of strong states. Teacher 2 applied narrative cohesion and emphasized connections

from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment's diverse expressions across countries over time. Teacher 3 verbalized an analytical ambition, emphasizing the students' need to discern between historical phases and use explanatory models and sources. Teacher 3 was also very interested in Napoleon. Teacher 4 emphasized the history of ideas and how traces of Enlightenment ideals can be found both in ideas of human rights and in defenses against terrorism. The teachers were interested in comparisons and in the connotations of *revolution*.

These testimonies expressed not only the teachers' individual epistemic beliefs but also their commonalities. They were all familiar with historical dimensions and traditions. Their different voices had similarities with Evans's (2012) categorization of teachers as the *storyteller*, the *scientific historian*, or *the relativist/reformer*. In this case, Teacher 2 emphasized long storylines, and Teacher 3 stressed research-based methods. Teacher 1 talked about societal causes and consequences, while Teacher 4 highlighted cultural dimensions of changes and continuities.

According to Berg (2014), it is possible to discern individual preferences regarding educational purposes, but Berg also notes that history teachers' conceptions are complex and eclectic and changing over time. Exploring teachers' PT further deepens this complexity. All of the participating teachers expressed a multifaceted understanding of history as a discipline and a school subject. Teacher 1 initially emphasized political changes but then followed up on Teacher 4's remarks by demonstrating how art can help students access a period's zeitgeist. Similarly, Teacher 4 first advocated the history of ideas and culture and later shared examples of analytical models for students to use.

Session 3: The Curriculum

After spending one hour discussing previous experiences, the teachers took a short break before settling on their learning goals (T1 & T2) for "The Age of Revolutions" (see Fig. 7.3). They began with the curriculum's overall goals for history teaching. Their conversation indicated that they normally did not start planning by reading the curriculum. However, they all appeared familiar with this text. During the session, they focused on the curriculum's first of five goals: "Teaching history should provide students with the skills to develop knowledge of time periods, processes of change, events, and people, based on different interpretations and perspectives." They discussed how this goal alone raises endless epistemological considerations since it presupposes that it gives teachers the responsibility

to decide on specific content as well as procedural dimensions. Discussing how this goal could be applied to their historical theme led to considerations about continuity and change, and it can be difficult to distinguish between them. For instance, it must be considered whether the advent of Napoleon was a change in or a continuation of the ancient regime and if changes in some parts of society did not necessarily affect ordinary people's lives. This discussion led to a digression about the extent to which they talk with their students about what history is.

Another dialog concerned the concept *perspectives*. Teacher 4 argued that the concept is tricky and quickly listed five nuances: perspective can be about gaining distance from something; it can be one aspect of a complex body of knowledge; it can be an opinion from a specific angle; it can be an analytical categorization; and it can be an overview of a period. This observation triggered a discussion about how to avoid teaching history as a collection of facts, or as a multitude of perspectives among which students have no means to navigate. Finally, they settled on applying continuity and change to the historical theme, and from there began outlining specific content and learning activities as well as exploring the pros and cons of designing an overarching question for the theme.

To summarize, the teachers could easily agree on a common theme for their teaching. The choice to teach “The Age of Revolutions” from 1689 to 1815 was content-driven, and they obviously had a shared understanding of the canon of historically significant events and processes. They accomplished this framing simultaneity by setting a time plan for the lessons. Throughout this, an awareness of students' abilities and needs was a present undercurrent in their discussion and decisions. Hence, the planning sessions built a complex web of both theoretical–historical and practical–instructional epistemological reflections.

DISCUSSING THE EPISTEMIC WEB

The planning sessions unfold a web of epistemic decisions: So what can this web tell us about teachers' epistemic beliefs? Initially, this chapter asked how domain-specific contexts frame teachers' epistemic beliefs, and if planning lessons can be explored as a performative enactment of epistemic beliefs. These questions obviously call for more research, which underlines Nitsche and Waldis's (2022) suggestion to explore epistemic beliefs in situ. Nonetheless, the short sequences reported here indicate a

pattern that can be summed up in a few observations that may be valuable for a continued exploration of teachers' performative epistemology.

First, we should appreciate the multitude of decisions that teachers need to take just to plan one lesson. Further, we can observe that these decisions are not generated randomly, but based on ideas of what history is and how it should be taught. While teachers have different opinions and make different interpretations, they also share epistemic discourses. As disciplines are structured by specific logics, the challenges of recontextualizing them also differed. While mathematics has a strong grammar, history has few cogent principles for selection and progression. Appreciating the socializing effect, and the specific didactical challenges that disciplinary structures generate, opens the research field to teachers' recontextualization. This insight can generate a basis for complementary approaches to the dominant psychological perspective and add a contextual perspective on teacher's cognitive processes.

Second, we noticed how the teachers started their planning sessions by selecting a content-based theme—The Age of Revolutions. Åström Elmersjö and Zanazanian (2022) remark that school history is predominated by core master narratives. In history education research, content matters tend to be contrasted to, or even conflicted with, disciplinary thinking, deconstructing skills, student-centered learning, and inquiry-based teaching. However, in the planning sequences content does not equal a closed narrative. Content matters triggered reflections on the nature of history. As planning progresses, first- and second-order concepts become closely intertwined, and it is on this basis they problematize the ahistorical dimension of second-order concepts such as continuity and change. This observation calls for caution when categorizing teachers' epistemic understanding. What may appear to be a native retelling may be entrances to meta-reflections.

Third, we are reminded that it is the need to interconnect theory and practice that not only drives the planning sessions forward but also is the spark for all epistemic considerations in the first place. In other words, to recontextualize historical knowledge into learning objects accessible to students is the practice that makes them teachers. In the performative act of planning, teachers' beliefs about *the nature of knowledge* do not seem to precede beliefs about *how it should be learned* in any linear way. To further explore how the collegial setting can offer insights into correlations between epistemic beliefs and instructional practices, a short excerpt section is included here. It is the same group of history teachers about a year

after the meetings discussed above. The teachers were planning a short epochal overview, in accordance with the Swedish history curriculum that prescribes the European classification of periodization from a chronological perspective as well as a critical perspective on such classifications. The teachers started by identifying three overarching goals, using an alignment strategy; they identified expected learning outcomes in order to select appropriate learning activities:

Teacher 1: If we look at those three points we wrote up earlier and that we think [students] should be good at, it was epochal knowledge, a few facts and stuff and then some causation.

Teacher 2: That almost felt like three grades. Yes, the last one really requires nuanced knowledge.

Teacher 1: Yes, and here we could formulate a question that becomes a bit more of an open-ended question, an essay question, where [students] can answer: simply, comprehensively, and nuanced [these adjectives refer to the grading criteria in the Swedish curriculum].

Teacher 3: Yes, it does not have to get too advanced. So, here [students] can give simple examples of things if they are at that level.

Teacher 2: Yes, exactly. We have to show breaking points where it changes because that's what becomes the nuance or the problematization, Or, yes, it's also problematic to point out continuity as well, at least in a nuanced way.

Teacher 4: I think we have to be a little realistic, and if we have that kind of slightly larger essay question, then [the students have] to be able to discuss and explain causes and reasons. This requires a lot of factual knowledge, and what we found is that we do not have time to give them that much factual knowledge.

Teacher 3: I have started a little bit from a different end with just this thing of change and continuity. First, I gave the students texts, and they would identify what it was about: "Is this about a change or continuity?" And then they would highlight what it is that makes us see this as an epoch. "Was there a change that initiated the epoch, and did a new change occur that ended this epoch?" They could describe the epoch as, "During this epoch, we had this continuity that held the period together." The prehistoric time is an epoch because we have no narrative sources. This is a continuity throughout this era. The advanced students then start poking in, "Well, okay. When does the line go, then?" and conclude that, "Yes, but an archaeological find can throw us thousands of years back in time and change the prehistoric epoch." They really had to choose for themselves.

Teacher 1: Something like this, then? They choose an epoch first. "I have chosen Antiquity." Then, we ask something like, "What is continuity during

this epoch?” Yes. Then they get to bring up something: “This has been pretty much the same.” Yes. Okay. Good. What are the changes? Then, they get to say something about that. This is still within the same epoch. Then, we ask, “From the ancient times and onwards, is there any continuity if we look back to the 1600s, and if so, what? And explain why.” Something like that?

Teacher 3: Yes, “The means of production were the force that drove the development of society,” or something like that.

[Laughter].

Teacher 1: Yes, how nice. It’s not just me who’s a Marxist, no, not Marxist, historical materialist.

In a condensed way, this short section summarizes epistemic challenges in the planning of a specific segment. The curriculum goal has to be broken down into specific contents, sequences, exercises, tests, and so on. Teacher 1 started by referring to epochal knowledge as a “few facts and stuff.” Teacher 2 talked about what needs to be pointed out, and Teacher 3 suggests “fairly simple examples.” This dialog might indicate a naïve or objectivist understanding of history as a simple reconstruction that students are expected to reproduce. However, that would be a premature judgment. First, we need to look behind the professional jargon and be cognizant that lessons fulfill several simultaneous needs, such as creating space for in-depth studies as well as proving a cohesive narrative.

The overall goal of the teachers was to equip students with resources to question the certainty of epochs, and the dialog was anchored in concepts, such as causation, continuity, change, and scientific findings, as Teacher 3 remarked, “[A]n archaeological find can throw us thousands of years back in time and change the prehistoric epoch.” Hence, rather than falling into boxes of fixed stances, the web of planning unfolded epistemic waves of varying complexity (see Maton, 2013). The session started with simple concepts and moved on to those of a higher density. Ambitions were negotiated with reminders of basic conditions, and goal setting moved on to teaching methods and then to possible learning outcomes. The section ended with a meta-joke between Teachers 3 and 1, indicating an awareness of history as a theoretical and ideological construct. This was also an example of collegial planning as a professional interaction with a limited need for contextualization.

DISCUSSING THE STANCES

Typologies can be useful for creating an index for synchronic and diachronic comparisons. Yet, such a project might be risky due to the danger of making categorical mistakes (see Greene, 2016). This risk is not negligible when categorizing something as complex as epistemic beliefs. The typologies used to categorize epistemic stances fall back on philosophical archetypes, denoting universal non-historical notions about the nature of knowledge (Stoel et al., 2022; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016).

Such a universal index can be problematic as what is explored and categorized is not timeless ontologies, but beliefs about knowledge held by specific professionals (teachers) working within specific educational contexts (history curriculum). Such notions cannot be purely psychological, as they are socially constructed within particular cultural and historical conditions (Maton & Moore, 2009). Take the stance of the objectivist/positivist as an example. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Bourdeau (2021) notes about the founder of positivism, Auguste Comte (1798–1857), that “it is difficult today to appreciate the interest Comte’s thought enjoyed a century ago, for it has received almost no notice during the last five decades. Before the First World War, Comte’s movement was active nearly everywhere in the world ... none of this activity survived.” Hence, educated history teachers in the twenty-first century are likely not positivists in the same way as, for instance, this British Empiricist. Similarly, a timeless subjectivist position would imply the same sets of beliefs as, for example, ancient Sophists, Russian nihilists in the late nineteenth century, and the verity of positions within the postmodern or cultural turn. The criterialist stance is defined in line with disciplinary historical thinking. Sandoval (2016) reminds us that scholars also have epistemic controversies linked to questions on objectivity and spectra of constructivism and therefore warns against simplistic typologies and sharp demarcations between more and less sophisticated beliefs.

Questioners and interviews have provided results pertaining to several indicators and therefore placed the respondents in multiple categories—some of which may even theoretically conflict with each other (Stoel et al., 2022). VanSledright and Reddy (2014) argue that people tend to be inconsistent and “wobble” between epistemic positions. Even teachers who hold criterialist views can, according to Åström Elmersjö and Zanzanian (2022), take an objectivist view and “hold the belief that history, when done right, actually takes you to the past itself” (p. 184). It is

probably in the nature of belief systems to be more or less fluid and situational, not least about a non-paradigmatic subject like history. However, it does not seem likely that such wobbling takes place without social and historical boundaries.

For Arendt (1993/1961) the new secular way of understanding history was as something that separated the modern age from earlier understandings of the past on a level deeper than any other individual idea. Chakrabarty (2018) has argued that the recent insight that humans have become a natural force affecting living conditions on a planetary scale challenges our modern understanding of human history as separate from natural history. This is not the place to explore historical regimes; the point here is just to remind us that epistemic thinking is framed by culturally contingent meta-perspectives.

Hence, the epistemic beliefs expressed by the teachers in the planning sessions (see Figs. 7.1, 7.2, and 7.3) cannot in any meaningful way fit into universal archetypes that might situate them outside a modern understanding of the discipline. Planning is an epistemic social activity that amalgamates disciplinary content and skills, lesson time, textbooks, students, curriculum goals, examinations, long-term progress, second-order concepts, content, other educational considerations, and more.

If a teacher literally believes that history equals the past, or that all statements about history are relative, they do not reach the minimum norm of the discipline. Torstendahl (1981) distinguishes between minimum demands, as the limited set of rules that demarks a disciplinary field such as methodology, transparency, and self-criticism, and the optimum norms that are the normative ideals of what the discipline should be about. As history is a non-paradigmatic discipline, there are no objective principles to define a good history (beyond the minimum norm). The advantages of this approach are that it first draws the line between what is not good enough and what has to be, in a general way, acceptable as it is within the borders of the school subject. Second, and more importantly, it directs the research to explore teachers' epistemic beliefs in relation to norms of good teaching. That is, explicit normative goals.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The first conclusion is that when exploring teachers' epistemic beliefs, professional situatedness has to be key. Disciplinary understanding is of course relevant but is entangled with and affected by didactical experiences.

Several researchers have pointed out the importance of exploring epistemic beliefs as contextual and situated (see Chinn & Rinehart, 2016). In history education, there are few such empirical studies, as most research is based on self-reports (Stoel et al., 2022). This chapter gives a glimpse into how to explore teachers' collegial planning as a performative epistemic craft. This underlines the recommendation to explore epistemic beliefs inside the context of ongoing task performance (Bråten, 2016; Chinn & Rinehart, 2016; Kelly, 2016). However, such methodological recommendations come with theoretical consequences, which lead to a second conclusion.

If we understand knowledge building and teaching as sociocultural activities, then we should assume that most teachers operate within a social context that essentially meets an epistemic minimum standard of their school subject. When this is the case, typologies of epistemic stances seem too crude and static—and perhaps even redundant (assessing individual suitability is not a research task). Wilke et al. suggest that researchers might

start from the assumption that teachers will bring their didactic context into play, making it difficult to measure something as complex as epistemological views using general statements. Precisely because such statements fail to capture the mediating role of teaching contexts and other beliefs in the translation of teachers' beliefs into their practice, they appear to be poor predictors of that practice. (p. 213)

The interesting research problem is, as Nitsche and Waldis (2022) also suggest, to analyze epistemological beliefs in relation to specific tasks and historical content. This is to say, to explore how teachers' epistemic beliefs support or hinder a normatively defined goal, operationalized in planning, teaching, or assessing—and this is crucial—teachers in the research must be aware of any normative goal. If good teaching is assumed to be based on inquiry teaching, then participating teachers need to be aware of this normative assumption. If the exploration is about epistemic beliefs in relation to intercultural learning, the Anthropocene, critical thinking, sourcing, and so on, teachers need to be involved in the conditions as well as the goal of the intervention. This is not only an ethical question, but here, above all, a theoretical one based on the assumption that epistemic thinking is situational.

Teachers' epistemic beliefs mold the relation between knowledge and knowers, and in the performative act of planning lessons, planning comes

forward as an epistemic craft that derives from crossroad where disciplinary knowledge, students' needs and expectations, curricular aims and demands, and the teachers' own interest and pedagogical content knowledge meets (Nordgren et al., 2021). A third conclusion, which may be self-evident, but necessary as a reminder, is that teaching is an epistemically demanding profession—just as quality in research presupposes access to a research community, epistemic communities are needed around subject teaching. If we look more closely at the web of teachers' didactic considerations and put this in relation to the pursuit of good teaching, a need for collegial cooperation emerges, and the need to think of epistemic cognition as a social activity.

St. Thomas Aquinas's take on the classical didactical relation—what, why, and how—suggests that epistemic beliefs evolve in a practical engagement in such a relation. The nature of the knowledge is interconnected with the reason to know it and the methods to teach and learn it. Taking teachers' epistemic beliefs as relational and activity-based opens the possibility to explore how beliefs are shaped and possibly changed in the contextual production of teaching.

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CHAPTER 8

“I Never Thought About History This Way”: The Development of Elementary Teachers’ Beliefs About History and How a Professional Learning Community Can Influence These

Yolande Potjer, Marjolein Dobber, and Carla van Boxtel

INTRODUCTION

Tara is an experienced grade-6 teacher who participated in our professional development program. In the interview before the start, she shared her frustration that she did not really know how “to teach history differ-

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H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_8

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ently from the old-fashioned, teacher-in-front-of-the-classroom-telling-about-the-past-style, that she was taught in herself,” although she liked history a lot and even believed it to be one of the more important subjects in the curriculum. It frustrated her because she was quite experienced in setting up inquiries with students in science lessons and she did not understand why she struggled so much in organizing inquiry in her history classes. The quote shows that, although one can be familiar with instructional strategies for inquiry, having skills specific to the discipline of history is essential in organizing inquiry-based teaching in history. The objective of this chapter is to explore how epistemic beliefs about history of elementary school teachers influence their teaching and how professional development programs can influence these beliefs in such a way that teachers develop a richer picture of what inquiry-based history teaching focused on historical reasoning can look like.

Elementary school teachers are mostly trained as generalists and, therefore, have had much less domain-specific training in each subject than subject teachers in high school (Hultén & Björkholm, 2016; Levstik & Thornton, 2018). Their ideas about what history is are generally formed by how history is presented in the textbooks they learned from as a student, in popular culture, and in the schoolbooks they use in their classrooms (Gibson & Peck, 2020). Where history education researchers emphasize the importance of inquiry and historical reasoning activities in teaching history (e.g., Gibson & Peck, 2020; Levstik & Barton, 2015; Levstik & Thornton, 2018; Van Boxtel et al., 2021; Wissinger et al., 2021), elementary school history lessons mostly focus on the transfer of information, reading and understanding schoolbook texts. One of the challenges may be that teachers can only teach students a disciplinary way of working with history if they themselves master these disciplinary skills to a certain extent. Provisional for this is that the beliefs of teachers are in line with the chosen pedagogy. Beliefs that teachers hold about the nature of history and the construction of historical knowledge significantly influence what they perceive as relevant content and how they teach the subject (Maggioni et al., 2004, 2009; Stoel et al., 2022).

In this chapter we first discuss challenges related to teaching history in elementary schools and how epistemic beliefs of teachers may influence their teaching approach. We then describe several strategies that are employed to chart epistemic beliefs of teachers in teaching history and zoom in on an empirical study about the professionalization of a group of Dutch in-service elementary teachers. From this, we deduct examples of activities that promote development of more nuanced epistemic beliefs

about history. Finally, we formulate implications for prospective professional development programs and elementary teacher education and describe challenges for future research. With this, we join conversations about the professionalization of elementary teachers in the field of history education, and in particular, how participation in professional development programs focusing on historical reasoning influences teachers' epistemic beliefs.

CHALLENGES WITH TEACHING HISTORY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

In their conceptualization of important elements of elementary school history education, Levstik and Thornton (2018) describe time on task as the most important factor challenging history education in elementary schools. While time on task is the most important factor in the learning of children, in different parts of the world the amount of time allocated to history education is declining in favor of other subjects, like language, mathematics, and STEM education. Also, and partly as a result of this decreasing time, schools experiment with combining history with social sciences or other subjects. Especially in countries where history education starts relatively late, like the Netherlands where it starts at age 8, this can lead to a shallow understanding of historical time and fragmented historical knowledge (Béneker et al., 2020).

The second challenge is how history is taught in elementary schools. In many countries, elementary school history lessons focus on the transfer of information, either by reading and understanding schoolbook texts and making accompanying assignments or by listening to stories and explanations by the teacher (McCrum, 2013). Even in countries where historical thinking has become part of the standard curriculum and teaching materials on historical thinking and historical inquiry are available, like Canada and the United States (e.g., the Historical Thinking Project, n.d.; Stanford History Education Group, n.d.), historical inquiry has not yet become standard practice (Von Heyking, 2004; Martell, 2020).

In elementary schools in the Netherlands, the core objectives prescribe that students learn how to use simple historical sources, but do not specify historical reasoning skills. Teachers teach a ten-era framework illustrated with events and persons from the Dutch Canon (Kennedy, 2020; Wagenaar, 2007). Schools sometimes experiment with inquiry-based

learning, but this often proves difficult, because teachers can only teach students a disciplinary way of working with history if they themselves master these disciplinary skills to a certain extent. In general, however, elementary school teachers in the Netherlands are unfamiliar with historical inquiry. Thus, we observe that when teachers do choose for an inquiry-based approach in teaching history, students commonly gather information on the Internet and present what they found to their classmates. Since there is no or limited modeling of historical inquiry and historical reasoning, students' understanding of history remains limited (Béneker et al., 2020). This can reinforce the naïve belief, both in teacher and in students, that history is a single story, based on a series of facts (Van Boxtel et al., 2021).

This leads to a third challenge in history education in elementary schools: teachers' beliefs about history. Teachers' beliefs impact their choices of what is taught and how it is taught and can even be a “stumbling block to reform” (Richardson, 2003). The beliefs a teacher holds develop early, often before they start teaching. Sears (as cited in Peck, 2014, p. 249) states that most student teachers “have a strong cognitive frame that history teaching essentially involves the passing on of historical information and not the fostering of historical thinking.” These beliefs are generally formed during their own school time and teacher education. Where focus in elementary teacher education traditionally lay on narration skills and knowledge transfer, this last decade, as a result of history education research, saw a shift toward the use of primary sources and inquiry learning (Koutsianou & Emvalotis, 2021; Martell, 2020; Peck, 2014). But this does not necessarily lead to teachers who want to and can implement this more disciplinary approach to history. Especially not when methods courses do not provide students with much exercise in designing and experiencing inquiry lessons and when the examples of history teaching they see in training schools are not oriented toward inquiry and historical reasoning. These challenges make it interesting to dive into the beliefs that elementary teachers might have about history and teaching history, and ways to enrich these (Martell, 2020).

Beliefs About History and History Teaching

History is about the “conceptual analysis of how human beings relate to the past” (Paul, 2015, p. 14). In historical research, epistemic beliefs form the basis of every question, hypothesis, and analysis. In this chapter,

epistemic beliefs are defined as “psychological understandings, premises or propositions felt to be true” (Richardson, 2003, p. 2). Epistemic beliefs about history focus on the understanding of what history is: the relationship between past and history (Elmersjö & Zanazanian, 2022). Not only historians, but also teachers teaching history are consciously or subconsciously confronted with the inherent epistemological question “what is history?” A certain epistemology lies at the basis of every teaching approach. Epistemic beliefs about history can take the form of two opposing understandings of the nature of history: the first understands history as “the study of the past which results in the past as it was” (Wansink et al., 2017, p. 12). The second understands history as subjective by nature, as only traces of the past are left to study and this study is done by individuals with “individual perceptions at different times and places” (Wansink et al., 2017, p. 12). As we described, history teaching often focusses on master narratives that fall in line with the first understanding: history is seen as stories about the past that seem to be beyond doubt and cannot be challenged, even more so in elementary education.

Epistemic beliefs about history are closely connected to beliefs teachers have about history teaching and learning and are often analyzed as a subset of epistemic beliefs (Stoel et al., 2022, p. 17). Beliefs about what should be taught and how it should be taught filter through in the goals teachers formulate and in the teaching strategies they choose. Several studies (e.g., Levstik & Barton, 2015; McCrum, 2013; Wansink et al., 2017; Wilke & Depaep, 2019; Wilke et al., 2022) relate goals of critical reasoning and multiple perspectives and interpretations to student-centered and constructivist beliefs about teaching and teachers who have nuanced beliefs about history. In inquiry-based education, the learning process is designed in a way comparable to the empirical research cycle and students engage in a social process of co-constructing knowledge under guidance of the teacher (Dobber et al., 2017). Teacher-centered approaches, on the other hand, related to transfer of factual knowledge and history being a single narrative, have been connected to teachers with naïve beliefs in these studies. In a study on beliefs about history of a group of teachers in secondary school, McCrum (2013) describes a teacher whose emphasis on knowing a substantive body of knowledge made her choose a teaching method that focused on the acquisition of knowledge. Another teacher, viewing history as a construction, preferred learning activities where the students were actively working in groups, inquiring into historical sources. The study of Voet and De Wever (2016), on the

other hand, shows that there is no one-on-one relation between epistemic beliefs and pedagogical choices. In their study, experienced history teachers who had nuanced ideas and were in favor of a more student-centered approach emphasized content knowledge and only a few mentioned learning goals that focused on the development of historical reasoning skills. Wilke et al. (2022) discuss possible explanations for a mismatch between teachers' epistemological beliefs and instructional practices that are mentioned in the literature. First, teachers may make a distinction between disciplinary knowledge and "school knowledge" (fixed and complete). Second, teachers may have a poor understanding of historical thinking and reasoning. Third, teachers' competence in designing activities and materials that reflect the understanding of history as interpretation might not be sufficiently developed. Fourth, contextual factors (e.g., time, curriculum requirements) may play a role.

MAPPING TEACHERS' EPISTEMIC BELIEFS ABOUT HISTORY

Building on the work of King and Kitchener (1994) and the levels of epistemic reflection by Kuhn and Weinstock (2002), Maggioni et al. (2004) were one of the first to conceptualize different epistemic stances for history teachers. Where King and Kitchener (1994) distinguished pre-reflective, quasi-reflective, and reflective reasoning about processes of knowing, and Kuhn and Weinstock (2002) discern realist, absolutist, multiplist, and evaluator perspectives, Maggioni and her colleagues developed their model of teacher thinking about the nature of history into three stances of teacher beliefs: the copier stance, the borrower stance, and the criterialist stance. Characteristic for the copier stance (also referred to as the objectivist stance) is a view of history wherein the teacher believes history to reflect the past and therefore history and the past are the same, like an object. At the borrower stance (also referred to as the subjectivist stance), the teacher realizes that most of the sources that remain of the past are based on human witnesses and that there may exist different interpretations. However, teachers in this stance are not yet (fully) aware of the disciplinary tools historians use to evaluate the quality of historical interpretations. Therefore, they see history as a series of subjective opinions, and they *borrow* from the testimony that seems to be closest to their image of reality in the past. At the criterialist stance, history is understood as an interpretation of the past and the methods of historical investigation are tools to question and analyze historical sources and evaluate historical

interpretations. They possess “the ability of historical thinkers to use the disciplinary tools and criteria for historical inquiry and to focus on a multiplicity of particulars without losing the capacity to perceive a broader view” (Maggioni et al., 2009, p. 195).

In their review on conceptualizations of epistemic beliefs, Stoel et al. (2022) describe two frameworks that can be recognized in studies on epistemic beliefs of history teachers. The research of Maggioni and colleagues falls within the developmental framework, where students’ or teachers’ beliefs develop in a stage-like pattern, although this does not imply that an individual is “in” a specific stance at a given moment. Other studies, for example Wansink et al. (2017), use a dimensional framework. In this approach to epistemic beliefs there are various dimensions that define epistemic beliefs, for example, “the critical/explanatory objective” or the “perspective-taking objective” (Wansink et al., 2017). An important result of these studies is the insight that teacher’s development on these dimensions is not straightforward, but takes a different path and its own time for each of the dimensions (Stoel et al., 2022, p. 17). A combination of the two frameworks was proposed by Barzilai and Weinstock (2015), including dimensions related to, for example, the certainty of knowledge, the source or justification of knowledge, and epistemic perspectives (absolutist, multiplist, and evaluatorist) to describe students’ epistemic beliefs. Also, Koutsianou and Emvalotis (2021) use a combined approach of four dimensions and three perspectives to show how elementary school teachers’ subject-specific epistemic beliefs relate to specific positions toward inquiry-based learning.

Maggioni et al. (2004, p. 190) described that development through the stances is “not unidirectional.” More specifically, Wansink et al. (2017) explained how individuals can simultaneously hold opposite beliefs and can switch between epistemological stances, usually when confronted with history that is connected to personal identity or religion. Elmersjö and Zanzanian (2022) delineate how the borders between positions are diffuse and even in a criterialist position, one can still have the unconscious belief that, when done right, history takes you to the past itself. Stoel et al. (2022) mention temporary relapses that teachers can experience in a dimension, while they are overall increasing their understanding about the nature of history in the context of professional development activities. In conclusion we see that there is general agreement that teachers are not “in” one specific stance, but that generally their beliefs contain characteristics of several stances or dimensions.

THE POTENTIAL OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Adopting a perspective on history that focusses on historical inquiry and reasoning requires a new vision on what students need to learn in the history classroom, how lessons can be organized, and what competencies teachers need. Professional development programs can help teachers develop beliefs about history and teaching history that foster inquiry into historical sources and historical reasoning. Such programs should focus on informing teachers about historical inquiry and reasoning and let them experiment with this way of teaching and learning. According to Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), change in knowledge, beliefs, and attitude triggers change in teachers' practice when they engage in professional experimentation. Teacher beliefs can also change by experimenting with new approaches and reflecting on the effects on student learning and learning outcomes. Likewise, Richardson (2003) describes that professional development programs and teacher education programs incorporated investigation into beliefs to promote development and change in teacher beliefs.

In previous research on teacher beliefs about history, attention has been paid to how epistemic beliefs of teachers in middle and secondary schools influence their choices in teaching history (Voet & De Wever, 2016; Wilke & Depaepe, 2019) and how pre-service teachers' beliefs about history develop (Gibson & Peck, 2020; Wansink et al., 2017). Maggioni et al. (2004) describe developments in elementary teachers' epistemic beliefs during a professional development program on content and methods of teaching American history. In their study, the shifts in epistemic beliefs after the program were limited and suggested relative stability in teacher beliefs. Movement in beliefs was seen in different directions, including from criterialist to borrower ideas about history, making the researchers reflect on the risks of enhancing naïve ideas about history in teachers who are unknown with disciplinary methods. A reason for the limited shifts could be that the program did not specifically target participants' beliefs, nor their knowledge about disciplinary methods of historians and how these translate to the classroom. This is in line with Van Uum et al. (2021) who concluded that the development of epistemic knowledge takes time, that an implicit approach is less effective, and that epistemic beliefs should receive specific attention.

Studies on effective and sustainable teacher development point to several characteristics of professional development programs that promote effectiveness. Effective programs aim to develop pedagogical content knowledge and are perceived as relevant and useful to participants' daily work in the classroom. They encompass activities where participants actively work together. Also, these programs span a longer period (Van Veen et al., 2012). Van Boxtel et al. (2021) describe several elements of professional development programs that can prepare teachers for inquiry-based learning in history lessons. Engagement in historical inquiry was found to improve understanding of history, as well as positively affect teachers' beliefs about learning outcomes of inquiry-based history learning. Modeling is important, because observing and participating in inquiry gave teachers ideas for their own classrooms. Receiving information about learning effects of inquiry on history learning, about misconceptions, and information about the effect on, for example, literacy skills were also important for teachers to see the benefit compared to traditional teaching approaches.

DEVELOPMENT OF DUTCH ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' EPISTEMIC BELIEFS ON HISTORY DURING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

An example of a professional development program where the development of teachers' knowledge of the nature and construction of history played an important role was the two-year professional development program “The History Workplace” that focused on historical reasoning in inquiry-based history lessons. In this paragraph we shortly describe the program and how beliefs of the participants developed. Aim of the program was to prepare teachers in grades 3–6 (students between 8 and 12 years old) to engage students in historical inquiry and reasoning and develop teachers' own historical thinking and reasoning skills and their design skills to develop such lessons. Nine teachers from six elementary schools in the Netherlands participated in this program. One of the studies connected to the program focused on the development of epistemic beliefs of the participants (Potjer et al., [in press](#)). During each meeting, the development of pedagogical content knowledge was encouraged through offering theoretical background about historical reasoning and inquiry learning. In addition, participants engaged in collaborative inquiry

Table 8.1 Content of the professional development program

	Pedagogical content knowledge
Year 1	Introduction of historical reasoning framework Use of primary historical sources Types of inquiry-based learning Historical contextualizing: what, how, when? Dealing with students' misconceptions
Year 2	Generating historical questions Searching, choosing, and adapting primary historical sources Scaffolding historical reasoning activities Thinking like a historian Role of teacher in lessons: coaching skills Enhancing historical argumentation in classroom discussion
	Historical reasoning activities
Year 1	Responses to the Spanish flu and COVID-19: identifying similarities and differences Cinnamon trade in Sri-Lanka (Ceylon): identifying causes and consequences Resistance to slavery in the Dutch West-Indies: identifying similarities and differences Labor conditions in textile factories in the nineteenth century: identifying multiple perspectives Promoting students to ask historical questions: photos and paintings
Year 2	John Smith on Pocahontas: corroborating historical sources Mad Tuesday: identifying causes and consequences Revolt of the Batavi: adapting textbook lessons to include historical reasoning The betrayal of Anne Frank: analyzing steps in historical research Floodings in Dutch history: use of eye-witness accounts Dutch response to the independence of Indonesia: causes and consequences, multiple perspectives, and change and continuity

activities. An overview of the content of the course and the inquiry activities is provided in Table 8.1.

During each meeting of the professional development program the teachers worked on an inquiry activity using primary sources. The assignment was discussed afterwards. Although development of epistemic beliefs was a goal of the program, the nature and construction of historical knowledge were not a separate topic for discussion during the professionalization meetings. In discussing the different topics concerning historical reasoning and inquiry in history, however, the interpretative nature of historical narratives and the disciplinary method, criteria, and tools of historical inquiry were elaborated on. Characteristic for these activities was that (1) the inquiries are based on rich historical questions, (2) in the activity's

introduction the facilitator provided a rich context, (3) various historical sources were provided for the inquiry, and (4) worksheets helped the sourcing and historical reasoning process. These align with the elements that Popp and Hoard (2018) describe as support for sourcing by elementary students.

In a few of these inquiries, the nature and construction of historical knowledge were explicitly discussed. These activities were responses to the Spanish flu and COVID-19, labor conditions in nineteenth-century Dutch textile factories, the activity on John Smith and Pocahontas, and the review of newspaper articles on the betrayal of Anne Frank. Participants identified similarities and differences in reactions of people and governments during the Spanish flu pandemic and the COVID-19 pandemic. In this exercise we discussed the importance of knowing the context when interpreting historical sources, how difficult it is to reconstruct a situation based on a few sources, and the risk of interpreting sources from our own time and situation. In the activity about the working conditions of nineteenth-century laborers in the Dutch textile industry, participants analyzed the differences between how factory owners and factory laborers described the working conditions in the factories and how such different points of view could come about. We also discussed the pitfall of saying that the factory owners lied (a response that students often give).

In the inquiry into two narratives by John Smith, about his hostage-taking by the Powhatan native American people (Stanford history education group, n.d.), political and personal motives play an important role.

Evelyn: I noticed that the first document is very positive and the other is very different, although it is written by the same person. [...] What we did not really understand is that, when you look at the timeline, she [Pocahontas] married a totally different John.

Jack: It seems as if the account was made more positive for the public compared to how it actually was.

Facilitator: Do you mean he added some drama?

Jack: Yes. And it does not become clear in the source itself if it is historically correct. [...] Well, it says 'true information', so he probably tried to describe what really happened.

Facilitator: Could you explain that, based on what happened between 1607 and 1608?

Oscar: I think we should look at what they wanted, which was to attract new colonists. So, then you have to show there is peace between the local inhabitants and the colonists.

[...]

Jack: Pocahontas is not mentioned in the first source.

Kathie: She was 10 years old when he was held captive.

Facilitator: Is it likely that a ten-year-old would save this man and fall in love with him?

Jack: Not if we reason from our norms and values.

Kathie: But she did marry at a young age.

Jack: Yes, she was 17 years old when she married that John Rolfe.

Facilitator: What may have changed, as a result of which it became less important to describe everything so positively? And instead, like it says here, that he was sentenced to death. What made him want to write Pocahontas into his history?

Rose: Maybe because she was popular. Show that they [the native inhabitants] could convert to Christianity. If she was popular and he was saved by her and they married, he was famous too.

Oscar: I think it is more likely that this was used as legitimization. A person like Pocahontas is convenient. [...]

Jack: Maybe also to show the native people as kind of wild people that could easily smash your brains. But also, as Oscar says, to legitimize war. Something like: the others are aggressive and we will have to defend ourselves.

Facilitator: So, can we answer the question? Did Pocahontas save John Smith or not? Based on the sources.

Jack: With these sources we cannot answer that for sure.

Rose: Probably not, because if he wanted to write a positive story in the first document, he would definitively have written this.

Facilitator: Others? Can we find arguments in the sources?

Kathie: Well, he wrote the second book after Pocahontas died. It remains a strange story and she could not contradict it. The timeline really helps, but what is the source of the timeline?

To identify development in participating teachers' beliefs about history and history education we collected data using an individual in-depth semi-structured interview and the Beliefs About Learning and Teaching of History (BLTH-)questionnaire (Maggioni et al., 2004). The three main categories for coding the interviews were (1) beliefs about the nature of history and historians' research method, (2) beliefs about general goals of teaching elementary school history, and (3) beliefs about goals and experiences with inquiry-based history teaching activities. The interview data were supplemented with data from the BLTH-questionnaire.

Participants in the program developed more nuanced beliefs about history and their thinking about history teaching became more oriented toward historical inquiry. Changes in the number of teachers who in the interview reported on the nature of history and the historical research method were most apparent. Where in the first interview six out of nine participants pronounced copier beliefs about history and the nature of historical knowledge, none pronounced such ideas after the program. This shows that over the course of the program, participants came to realize that history is not a series of fixed facts. Clearly standing out as well was the increase of participants outing beliefs connected to a criterialist stance, from three during the first interview to six during the final interview. There was, however, also an increase in expressions coded as borrower stance ideas about the nature of history, from two participants in the first to five participants in the final interview. These results indicate that the program made participants realize that analysis of historical sources is important in historical research, that many sources remaining of the past are based on human witnesses, and that opposing testimonials exist. However, most participants appeared not fully aware of the disciplinary tools historians use to analyze historical sources and build evidence. Two participants expressed both borrower and criterialist ideas in the post interview. Furthermore, the descriptions became richer and more detailed, indicating a better understanding of the concepts used.

The results of the BLTH-questionnaire showed that the development of participants was not unidirectional. For all participants the general score on statements connected to criterialist stance beliefs about history and teaching history was, at all three measurements, highest of all stances. Borrower stances beliefs, although decreasing with some participants, increased with others, sometimes even quite sharply. The complexity of coming to understand the nature of history was shown in the final interview, where four participants remarked on the activity in the second year of the program where newspaper articles that were read about the research process and conclusions reached about the betrayal of the hiding place of Anne Frank's family. From these articles, participants were asked to deduce the steps of historical research. These were discussed and compared with the step-by-step plan of classroom inquiry. Kathie, a grade-4 teacher, says:

I became aware of how everything that is written down is the product of research of someone who studied certain sources. Also, by reading certain articles, like the news about the research into Anne Frank's betrayal. That

makes you think: there are different approaches to this research. I never thought about history this way. Your idea about history really changes. I became more aware of this. It was written down once and you have to realize that most of it was true, but also that you cannot be sure of it for some part.

In the professional development program we not only focused on developing participating teachers' historical reasoning competences and a better understanding of the nature of historical knowledge, but they also experimented with developing activities and materials for inquiry-based learning in history lessons and implementing these in the classroom.

In another publication (Potjer et al., [in press](#)) we discuss how participants reflected on the development of inquiry-based history lessons. Participants indicated that developing such lessons is challenging, especially finding suitable historical sources and gaining the level of subject knowledge needed to design an inquiry lesson. Most participants indicated that they preferred ready-made historical inquiry lessons so when preparing, they could focus on their role in guiding the inquiry. On the other hand, developing such lessons themselves seemed to be important for the professional growth of participating teachers.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter we described how epistemic beliefs about history of elementary school teachers influence their teaching and how professional development programs can influence these beliefs in such a way that teachers become more open to inquiry-based history teaching and historical reasoning. The challenges with implementing an inquiry-based learning approach in teaching history in elementary schools originate mostly in the fact that domain-specific attention for subjects is limited and that many teachers have beliefs that emphasize history as one true story and see the aim of history education as passing on a specific body of knowledge. We know from research by Levstik and Barton (2015), McCrum (2013), and Wansink et al. (2017) that beliefs about what should be taught and how it should be taught filter through in the goals teachers formulate and in the teaching strategies they choose. Goals of critical reasoning and multiple perspectives and interpretations have been found to link to student-centered and constructivist beliefs about teaching and teachers who have nuanced beliefs about history.

Teacher preparation and professional development play a central role in the development of nuanced beliefs about history. In elementary teacher education teachers are prepared for all different subjects taught in elementary school, with specific attention to reading, writing, and mathematics. Due to limited time on task in teacher education, prospective teachers' beliefs about history are not always challenged and often remain naïve. On the other hand, teacher education programs have often incorporated teaching of inquiry-based lessons where students engage in co-constructing knowledge under guidance of the teacher educator and where pre-service teachers learn to develop lessons and guide the learning processes themselves (Dobber et al., 2017). In some elementary teacher curricula, insights from research into history and experiences with historical reasoning in secondary education have been incorporated. However, if teachers hold less nuanced beliefs about history themselves, it is unlikely that they can cultivate more nuanced beliefs in their students.

Our empirical study into a professional development program aimed at historical reasoning in inquiry-based history lessons for elementary teachers provides implications for professional development programs and future research. Our professional development program had a number of special features. On the one hand we focused on developing a better understanding of historical inquiry and historical reasoning through active engagement in inquiry-based learning tasks. On the other hand, participating teachers focused on the development and implementation of lessons in which students engage in historical inquiry and reasoning. Participants' beliefs about history became more nuanced during this program and more favorable toward inquiry-based learning. Of the professional development activities that influenced this development, participants indicated that the historical inquiry activities they performed themselves and discussing these were most powerful. These inquiries, based on rich historical questions and using various historical sources, were preceded by an introduction by the facilitator providing a rich context and supported by worksheets that facilitated the sourcing and historical reasoning process. What marked the discussions was the insight that doing historical inquiries raises a lot of questions and that discussing these takes time. Participants also realized how difficult it can be to work with only a few sources and that it is challenging to analyze what happened.

Future professional development programs may combine the same activities as we did, mainly because we know that developing epistemological views alone is not sufficient and attention should also be paid to

understanding historical reasoning and competences to design inquiry-based lessons (Wilke et al., 2022). This might be supplemented by modeling by the teacher educator and providing information about learning effects of inquiry on history learning, about misconceptions, and information about the effect on, for example, literacy skills, because these are found to be important for teachers to see the benefit compared to traditional teaching approaches (Peck, 2014; Van Boxtel et al., 2021). Maybe most important is that both in-service and pre-service teachers need to experiment with implementing historical inquiry lessons and develop skills to guide this inquiry as a teacher and provide a learning environment in which historical reasoning skills can grow.

Future programs could, however, pay more *explicit* attention to the role of epistemological beliefs, as is suggested by several researchers (Maggioni et al., 2009; Peck, 2014; Van Uum et al., 2021). Professional development programs and history methods courses in elementary teacher education can be advanced by the insights from empirical studies, for example by discussing with both pre-service and in-service elementary teachers the epistemic stances and elaborating on the relation between nuanced beliefs about history and the method of historical inquiry and historical reasoning. As engagement in historical inquiries by teachers and discussion afterwards were found to improve understanding of history and impact teachers' beliefs (Potjer et al., *in press*), these elements could play a more central role in these programs.

Future research can focus on the question which elements in professional development programs enhance sustainable implementation of newly learned skills. New skills need to be practiced on a regular basis and teachers' beliefs and capacities can better translate into classroom instruction when contextual factors, such as the curriculum, available resources, support, and collaboration within the school, are supportive.

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CHAPTER 9

Going Beyond the Scoring Grid: How the Topic of Assessment Can Promote Reflection on Epistemic Beliefs and Agency in History Education

*Catherine Duquette, Marie-Hélène Brunet,
Arianne Dufour, and Benjamin Lille*

INTRODUCTION

Of all Canadian provinces, Quebec is the only one that imposes on students a mandatory examination in the field of history. Completed in their 10th year of mandatory education, students must get a passing grade to

This chapter was in part made possible by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada through the Partnership Grant for the project *Thinking Historically for Canada's Future* and by funding from the research committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. We also wish to extend a very special thank you to Tifanie Valade, Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Education, for her amazing work of editing and layout, and thoughtful comments.

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© The Author(s) 2024
H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_9

obtain their High School diploma.¹ Yet, a study of the success rate pre-Covid shows a high level of failure (around 30%), which is a cause of stress for both students and teachers alike (Blouin, 2020; Pageau 2023; Pr sum  & Brunet, 2022). During the last two years, because of the world-wide pandemic, schools have been given a short respite from the provincial examination as learning and teaching conditions were deeply affected by sporadic school closures and a shift to online learning. Without this sword of Damocles over their heads, teachers started to design their own assessments. Among them, a group from the F d ration des  tablissements d' ducation Priv e (FEEP) of Quebec led by Benjamin Lille, a pedagogical councilor, decided to build a new model of assessment, one that would better reflect the demands of the history curriculum. Our research team was tasked to assist this group and document the process of creation, so that we might better understand how teachers navigate the complex act of assessing students' knowledge. To our surprise, the discussion around assessment soon turned toward questions of epistemology, as teachers realized that their understanding of the discipline differed from that of their colleagues. It was only when teachers, after much debate, had reached a common, and more nuanced, understanding of what educational history is, that the assessment model was created. This paper aims to discuss how the relationship between assessment and epistemology might prove an interesting path to enable teachers' reflections on their personal understanding of the discipline. To do so, we will first offer a description of Quebec teachers' epistemological beliefs as portrayed in research, as well as the influence of these beliefs on their assessment practices. It is through this analysis will we explain what is, in our eyes, the epistemology of history. Following a brief description of the research methodology, we will

¹This research has been made possible by the Social Studies and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC/CRSH) partnership grant for the Thinking Historically for Canada's Future project.

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illustrate how our research brings a new perspective in the study of epistemological understandings in the field of history education. This will lead us to a discussion of how assessment forced our participants to reposition themselves in relation to their understandings of the nature of history, and how this affected their teaching. Implications of this realization for future research will then be highlighted. Finally, questions on the possibility of epistemic layers in history education will be explored.

TEACHERS' EPISTEMOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO ASSESSMENT

History as a scientific discipline can be approached through different approaches: positivist, postmodern, hermeneutic are but a few perspectives found in the literature (Gadamer, 1969; Maza, 2017). Ministries borrow from these different approaches to build curriculums, while teachers develop their epistemological understanding of the discipline through training and experience. Their sources of information being different, curriculum authors and teachers do not always see eye to eye when it comes to what history should be, what its function is, and what should be expected of students (Gignac, 2022). The imposition of a competency-based curriculum in 2006 in the province of Quebec is a good example of this tension, as many teachers rejected the curriculum because it clashed too violently with their epistemological understanding of History (Demers, 2011; Moisan, 2010). The new curriculum favored the teaching of an interpretative past using inquiry-based pedagogy through the construction of three (now two) competencies (MEQ, 2006). Teachers were portrayed as guides to help students in their construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of plausible narratives (Duquette, 2011). However, research on teachers' social representations of history has shown that most teachers at the time relied on a more positivist understanding of the discipline, and viewed their role as storytellers helping students learn a more traditional narrative that was necessary for the construction of students' identities (Demers, 2011; Moisan, 2010). Left to themselves with little to no help from the Ministry of Education,² many teachers went back to a more traditional model of teaching history focused on the memorization of facts, thus forsaking the aims of the new curriculum (Gignac, 2022).

²This situation is now changed as the Ministry of Education has since then become more involved in teachers' professional development.

Teachers felt supported in this choice by the requirements of the provincial mandatory examination, which put, and still puts, much emphasis on the memorization of content knowledge (Déry, 2017; Duquette et al., 2020). Assessment therefore acted as a justification for rejecting the pedagogical demands of the new curriculum. This event portrayed the stability of history teachers' epistemological beliefs (Demers, 2011), demonstrating the difficulties they experienced in shifting from a positivist approach to a more critical mindset (Maggioni et al., 2009).

It is only recently, almost twenty years later, that we are starting to observe a slow change in teachers' epistemological understanding, that demonstrates an openness towards the teaching of a more hands-on history (Lanoix & Moisan, 2022). In this way, assessment methodologies are starting to be questioned. Other studies focusing on the experiences of student teachers (Boutonnet, 2019; Brunet & Demers, 2018) show that during their initial training preservice teachers are open to the importance of critical thinking skills, and to revising narratives to include more diverse voices and perspectives. These approaches often concord, to some degree, with their preliminary epistemological beliefs. However, their practicum experiences often lead to perceived profound contradictions between what they learn in their university courses and the constraints and demands of classroom realities. Moreover, they are confronted with in-service teachers' epistemic beliefs that differ from their own (Demers, 2011). As one of the student teachers from Boutonnet's (2019) study points out: "In practice, it's just that the environment swallows you up and forces you to teach the ministry program in a very industrial way. So you end up [...] with not enough experience or energy to manage [critical thinking competencies]" (our translation, p. 92). This situation is notably correlated by Boutonnet's research participants, with the constraints of evaluation. Assessment is viewed as a hurdle to innovation, instead of as a justification for keeping to a more transmissive style of teaching history. Whatever its role, assessment appears to be tightly bound to epistemology in the act of teaching.

In a two-year project, Monney et al. (2021) found that depending on the level taught, teachers did not enter the act of teaching through the same "door". High school teachers (in Quebec, students enter what is called *école secondaire*, in *secondaire 1*, or grade 7, when they are 12 years old) seemed to "enter" the act of teaching through their understanding of the discipline, while elementary school teachers entered through their understanding of pedagogy, most notably through planning (Monney et al., 2021). Figure 9.1 illustrates the different "doors" through which teachers entered the act of teaching.

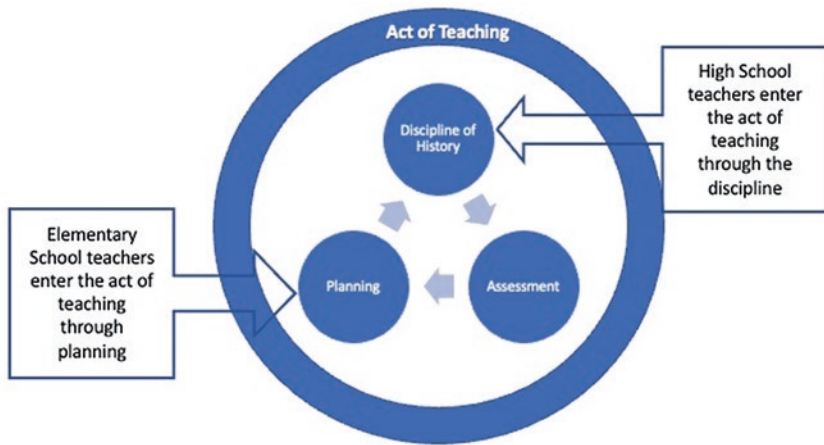


Fig. 9.1 Simplified version of Monney et al.'s (2021) model representing the act of teaching

Thus, according to this model, entering through their understanding of the discipline, high school teachers' epistemological choices affect both their planning and assessment. For example, if a teacher understands history as a specific narrative to be memorized to create social cohesion, the same teacher will probably plan their teaching around the acquisition of said narrative, and their assessment will be aimed at observing whether or not students have memorized it. However, no research to our knowledge has verified if the opposite is true, if entering the act of teaching through a reflection on assessment might impact one's epistemological understanding. When Benjamin Lille and a team of six high school teachers reached us asking for assistance in the elaboration of a competency-based assessment model, we felt it was the perfect situation to observe whether entering Monney et al.'s (2021) model through the door of assessment could influence, in return, one's epistemological understanding of the discipline. Would teachers' notions of history be transformed following their work on assessment? Would, on the other hand, their epistemological understanding be so stable as to block any innovation in the assessment tool they wished to create? It is with these questions in mind that our team undertook this project.

METHODOLOGY

Based on a collaborative research methodology (Desgagné, 1997), this project started in the fall of 2021 and was composed of six working meetings. Collaborative research seemed to be the most suited approach for our needs as it is: “a mediation between two knowledge cultures that need to be reconciled, i.e., the culture of ‘knowledge of action’ and the culture of ‘scholarly knowledge’” (Desgagné et al., 2001, p. 37, our translation). Thus, our team composed of six Quebec Secondary III (Grade 9) teachers (here known as teacher-researchers), a pedagogical advisor, two researchers, and a research assistant, completed seven working meetings during the 2021–2022 school year. Over the course of the project, the creation of an overarching assessment model and three distinct examinations were completed and tested in the teacher-researchers’ classrooms. Data was collected during meetings, which we, for research purposes, called focus groups. Each focus group was then analyzed using the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo. We also coded students’ graded papers ($n = 44$) with the aim of distinguishing the characteristics of the students’ responses based on the grades assigned to them.

It should be noted that the assessment model created by the teacher-researchers was inquiry-based and relied on students’ ability to use historical sources to support their opinions (Gibson & Miles, 2020). More specifically, students had to answer a historical prompt such as “Jacques Cartier’s voyages: success or failure?” by presenting an argument in the form of a text supporting their opinion. To solidify their arguments and include relevant elements in their answer, students had access to a documentary file containing historical and contemporary sources ($n = 10$). Answers were kept short at around 200 words. Teacher-researchers used a four criteria grid to assess the exam, with the criteria being: (1) quality and proper use of historical thinking concepts, (2) quality of facts selected, (3) proper utilization of historical sources, and (4) coherence in the general argument.

Much discussion was needed during the focus groups before teacher-researchers were able to draft their assessment model. Of all six focus groups, the second and third meetings were the moments where we were best able to observe how assessment practices confronted teachers’ epistemological understandings of history. What are the aims of educational history? What do we want to achieve with our students? What’s important? All these questions had to be answered before any significant work could be done on the assessment model.

TEACHERS' COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS OF ASSESSMENT

When building the assessment task, teacher-researchers had several conversations on its structure and its aim. One key topic was transposing the complex nature of historical thinking competencies in the form of an examination. In this case, the competencies were drawn from the current history curriculum which asks students to: (1) characterize a period in the history of Québec and Canada, (2) interpret a social phenomenon (Ministère de l'éducation et de l'enseignement supérieur, 2017). None of the teachers objected to the idea of integrating competencies in their assessment model. The key question was how to observe the evolution of students' historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013), seen here as key components of the competencies, during a set period. Teacher-researchers first turned toward what was done in the earlier grades for an answer. As many elementary schools use competency-based rubrics in their assessments, doing the same at the high school level appeared to be a natural continuation. Teacher-researchers felt that such rubrics would potentially reduce the negative impacts of assigning a grade out of a hundred, or a pass or fail grade. The rubrics would need to target criteria which allowed both students and teachers to observe improvement over time. In this way, the goal of the assessment was to show progress in the competency, rather than demonstrating the memorization of declarative knowledge. Because they focused on progression over time, assessments could share the same structure and thus be more holistic in nature. This idea brought teacher-researchers to reflect on an assessment model that could evolve and, above all, be transferred from one year to the next so that students' progress could be observed throughout their studies. To do so, they turned their attention to the structure of the examination.

The structure of the examination was widely discussed by the teacher-researchers. Among the many proposals put forward, an inquiry-based structure finally gained approval. This type of task where the students had "to argue" was seen to increase the level of commitment and involvement in class. This opinion was later confirmed after the first prototype was completed by the teacher-researchers' own students. They noticed that students felt more in control and, as one of the teacher-researchers said: "Students received the task very, very well, they even felt really involved since the answers came from them and they were the ones who had to choose and explain it" (Teacher-Research (T-R) 4, Focus Group (FG) 2). Furthermore, the inquiry-based structure of the assessment allowed the

teacher-researchers to observe how students made sense of the past, giving them the chance to rectify afterwards any incomprehension or incoherence. In fact, teacher-researchers seemed to recognize that an inquiry-based task allowed for the development of all the historical thinking skills, with an emphasis on historical significance (Seixas & Morton, 2013). As one teacher-researcher noted: “It really brought them [the students] into this kind of process where they have to select and argue ideas that they feel are really the most important” (T-R 3, F-G 2). This impacted teacher-researchers planning strategies as they felt it was necessary to give students sufficient practice before conducting the examination, so that students would feel comfortable with the aims and structure of the assessment.

With the overarching structure decided, it was now time to create specific evaluative tasks. Teacher-researchers recognized that the inquiry-based assessment structure allowed them to propose tasks of varying complexity, and that the challenge was to gauge the correct level of difficulty for their students. This was made more complex by their desire to integrate the ethical dimension of historical thinking (Seixas & Morton, 2013) so that students could be brought to answer questions such as: “Why does this population live this way instead of that way? What does the territory offer to the population today compared to yesterday?” (T-R 2, F-G 2). Students could therefore propose ethical judgments about past events by considering their historical context, and reflecting on today’s society’s historical responsibility. Teacher-researchers reaffirmed their need to establish some continuity between proposed tasks, i.e., offering the same set of historical sources for two different examinations. This would allow students to potentially measure the consequences of longer-term events. Competencies were viewed in a broader perspective as teacher-researchers wished for students to discover and develop them “by using a variety of work methods that are not just related to history” (T-R 1, F-G 2). We thus observed a shift from the centrality of declarative facts, to an emphasis on historical methodologies and critical thinking skills. It is because of their agreement on the importance of the historical method over the memorization of declarative knowledge, that most teachers agreed to forego a recapitulative examination at the end of the year that would go back over all the content seen during the year. Reasons for this, according to the participants, were that such a mandatory examination risked “putting a lot of pressure on the child”. (T-R 2, F-G 2) and that “a recap of the whole year’s [declarative knowledge], it doesn’t make sense” (T-R 5, F-G 2). Although less central, declarative knowledges still had to

be considered within the tasks, as the latter still had to align with the demands of the curriculum. This brought teacher-researchers to look for moments in the curriculum where the topic studied could give rise to potential inquiry questions. A set of questions were then drafted, and teacher-researchers assessed their difficulty through the lens of their professional experience. In this way, teachers adapted the curriculum to their evaluative needs.

Having decided on a structure and a set of tasks, teacher-researchers finally turned their attention toward the assessment grid. They wished to create something that would allow them to “determine the level of competency [each student] had reached” (T-R 1, F-G 2). One of them proposed the creation of a global grid that could be presented at the beginning of high school and where one or more criteria could be worked on gradually throughout the years. Competency-based assessment would therefore become familiar to students as: “He or she would be able to say to himself or herself ‘in history, we do it always in the same way’” (T-R 6, F-G 2). Yet, it was clear for the teacher-researchers that this grid had not yet been created, a task which they decided to attempt. Because the same grid would be used throughout high school, the importance of factual knowledge had to be very limited as course content changes each year (ex: year 7 or *secondaire 1* focuses on Antiquity until the Middle Ages, and year 8 or *secondaire 2* on the Renaissance until present times). The grid also needed to turn students away from memorization, and instead value the historical method as a form of transversal learning. It was by reflecting on the characteristics of what makes a “good” historical argument, that teachers came up with four criteria to assess students, one associated with the validity of the historical information and three others concerned with historical thinking skills: use of evidence, establishing causality, and explaining significance. Again, the willingness of the teacher-researchers to favor procedural knowledges to better grasp the aims and intention of the competencies was a key element in the creation of the assessment protocol.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DISCIPLINE

Throughout the project, teacher-researchers’ epistemological conceptions of the discipline were made manifest during the numerous conversations recorded. At first, a general sense of surprise could be perceived when participants realized that they didn’t all share the same understanding of the discipline and its teaching. Little by little, and through the work

surrounding the assessment model, teacher-researchers came to agree on a common understanding of how one should teach history and what narratives should be taught.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY

Working on the assessment protocol brought teacher-researchers to reevaluate their understanding of how the discipline is taught. As assessment and teaching must be in coherence with one another, teacher-researchers naturally reviewed their pedagogical practices and their overall role in their students' education, so that they matched with the objectives of their new assessment model. This work brought them to reconsider their role as teachers. Overall, they felt that history teachers should guide students in their path to knowledge by providing engaging activities aimed at developing students' historical thinking skills. They also agreed that they had the responsibility to give students the tools to become independent and critical citizens. Engaging with the discipline of history was understood as an interpretive process that requires students to make connections between what they know and what they are learning. All assessments should reflect this goal. The language of history was also important as one of the teacher-researcher mentioned that choosing the right words would: "guide the use they [the students] will make of the historical sources afterwards" (T-R 2, F-G 3). Even if students were seen as more active in their learning, the teacher-researchers wanted to remain in control of what happened in their classroom. Thus, the assessment tool created had to provide them with information on students' ability to use historical thinking skills in the framework prescribed by the curriculum. Students' epistemological understanding of the discipline was, however, of little concern to the participants as it is not included in the said curriculum. Still, using Maggioni's model (2022), it is possible to note a change in our participants from a more positivist approach to an emerging critical stance as they move away from a teacher-centric teaching of history to a more student-focused and interpretative pedagogy.

Yet, this move is not perceived by the teacher-researchers as something that is easy to achieve or even encouraged by their peers. On the contrary, they used an "us versus them" (us being the study participants and them being colleagues not participating in the research) approach when discussing their view on the discipline and its teaching. They recognized themselves as a "special" group brought together by their shared desire to

witness the modernization of history education. Colleagues were seen as resistant to this change, unwilling to embrace a new method of teaching history. This resistance was also described as the fuel for passive-aggressive interactions where the teacher-researchers were singled out for wanting to do things differently.

Another element that made changing approaches a difficult process was, for the participants, the potential rejection of the assessment model by their students and to some extent by the students' parents. When proposing their new type of assessment in class, teacher-researchers felt that for some learners moving away from memorization was a difficult process to accept. It caused, at first, much turmoil in class: "Students also put pressure on us. If I don't present a study plan with information to be learned by heart, well, that's the end of the world. They're not used to it" (T-R 4, F-G 2). In this way, students felt lost, as the path to success had changed. Teacher-researchers explained that the principal and the students' parents were also concerned by the change, not so much because it fostered a different understanding of history but mostly because it might have an impact on students' grades. Teacher-researchers agreed that students and parents were easier to calm once the novelty wore off and students demonstrated a continued ability to get good marks. Yet we do not know if this acceptance was a sign of a profound change in students' understanding of the nature of history, or just their acceptance of a different assessment structure.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND NARRATIVE

If working on their assessment model brought teachers-researchers to question and change their pedagogical approach to history education, it didn't bring them to reconsider the narrative that was being taught. Teacher-researchers showed a preference for a rather traditional understanding of the national narrative to be shared with students. In Grade 9, the curriculum proposes to study Quebec and Canada before colonization, then to focus on the period of New France and finally the English colonization period up to 1840. Pre-colonization Indigenous history was seen as the least inspiring period by some teacher researchers. The theme would be, for them, more engaging if Europeans settlers were included because it allows the addition of multiple perspectives (T-R 3, F-G 3). Generally, teachers find that focusing on politics and economic aspects of a society makes for a more interesting class than social topics. Social and

cultural questions are thought to be too simplistic for high school students. This interpretation of what constitutes meaningful topics and less interesting topics is surprising to us as it seems it clashes with the fact that the same teacher-researchers were seeing themselves as “progressive” in their comprehension of teaching history by proposing a more active and student-centric pedagogy. However, they seemed reluctant to question how their own identities influenced their decisions on why certain topics are seen as relevant while others are considered irrelevant. This tendency has also been identified in other studies. Scott and Gani (2018) have highlighted how teachers consistently discharged themselves from the responsibility of teaching Indigenous histories and harbored Euro-centric biases. Other studies (Barton, 2012; Levstik & Groth, 2002) show that teachers and students alike tend to see social history or history of marginalized groups (e.g. women, Indigenous peoples, Black Canadians) as deviating from what constitutes “real” history in their eyes (more than often political, androcentric, settler-colonial narratives of history). In terms of epistemology, these representations of what is significant and non-significant in the eyes of teachers might play a role not only in how they chose to build their assessment, but also in possible biases incorporated in every step of the evaluation process. As the question of narratives was not central to our initial questioning, and with our willingness to keep the group interested and motivated in the collaborative task, this was not addressed directly with teacher-researchers during the focus groups.

This reflection on the place of narrative should by no mean be seen as a critic of the work of the teachers-researchers, but more of an occasion to appreciate the complexity and effort associated to the process of moving from one epistemic positioning to another. It shows that such a move does not only involve taking an intellectual stance, but also making important modifications in both pedagogical practices and content knowledge choices that may or may not be welcomed by peers. Moreover, this study seems to point out this move is not linear or all encompassing. In this case, change in teacher-researchers is perceived at the pedagogical level but not when it comes to the choice of narrative. Thus, a single teacher could be considered as having a critical stance when it comes to their pedagogy, while taking a more traditional approach when it comes to the content taught. The coexistence of multiple positionings within a single individual might be a factor explaining why moving from a positivist approach to a critical one proves to be difficult. Moreover, exterior factors such as peer pressure or parents’ expectation also play a role in promoting or restricting

epistemic growth. This conclusion leads us to wondering how, in such a context, one can foster a deeper understanding of the discipline in teachers? The field of assessment might be a path worth exploring.

ASSESSMENT AS THE ROAD TO MOVE AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL TEACHING OF HISTORY

Although this text, for the purpose of clarity, portrays the work of the teachers as a coherent and flawless process, it was, in truth, a chaotic experience full of back-and-forth. Leadership of the pedagogical consultant was the key to the success of the enterprise as he avoided tangents and gave time to “empty” a topic of discussion before moving on. Teacher-researchers were pleased by the final product as they felt the assessment model better reflected their epistemic positioning. In this way, this study suggests that the analysis of assessment practices is a conducive environment for observing and influencing one’s understanding of history. Because assessment serves as a tool to verify learning, the nature of the learning itself must be clear. Because not everything seen in class can be assessed, working on assessment models forces teachers to identify what is essential and what is secondary. Because there must be coherence between assessment and teaching, building assessment models influences how content is delivered in the classroom. Entering the act of teaching (Monney et al., 2021) through the door of assessment provides a natural space for reflection on epistemic considerations.

Although promising, the interaction between assessment and epistemology did not bring teacher-researchers to reflect on the content of the narrative, as they still favored a more traditional story that supports a political approach to history (Barton, 2012; Levstik & Groth, 2002). Still, their teaching of the discipline was significantly changed as they moved away from a focus on content knowledge to a teaching of historical thinking skills (Seixas & Morton, 2013) or in other words, toward a teaching of procedural knowledge. This situation was surprising as we originally thought that by moving from declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge, teachers would have naturally come to reconsider the nature of the narrative taught. Yet, this aspect of their epistemic positioning was left unchanged. Reflecting on this, we feel that one’s epistemic understanding of history might be better expressed in the form of layers where change in one layer does not necessarily impact the others. Three layers could come into play: (1) the intention layer associated with the role of educational

history in students' education, (2) the narrative layer associated with the choice of the narrative layer associated with the choice of representations included in the narratives promoted in class, and (3) the methodological layer associated with how history is constructed. These layers, in turn, could be used to observe the movement from a teachers' understanding of history as a science, to its adaptation into a school subject. While assessment, as a context that fosters movement between layers, could be used to obtain a better understanding of criteria necessary to create epistemological wobbling (Maggioni, 2022). In other words, assessment as a research context can go far beyond the scoring grid.

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Examining the Relative Importance of History Teachers' Epistemological Beliefs in Shaping Their Instructional Practices

Marjolein Wilke and Karel Van Nieuwenhuysse

INTRODUCTION

History education curricula increasingly emphasise the importance of introducing students to the interpretive and constructed nature of historical knowledge. The extent to which teachers succeed in doing so is assumed to be connected to teachers' own epistemological beliefs (e.g. VanSledright, 1996; Wansink et al., 2016; Yilmaz, 2008). In reality, however, studies examining this relationship do not always find such a connection (e.g. Voet & De Wever, 2016; Wilke et al., 2022). Departing from this observation, this chapter sets out to explore how important teachers' epistemological beliefs actually are in shaping their instructional practice and how researchers can adequately include them in future studies.

In a qualitative research with history teachers, we presented 21 teachers, among others, with a case study about conflicting causes for the spread

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of agriculture across Europe ca. 6000 BC, during a one-on-one interview (Wilke & Depaepe, 2019; Wilke et al., 2022). Teachers were first asked to choose between a number of options in response to this case study, such as “both explanations can be correct” or “only one explanation can be correct” and subsequently to explain their answer. When reasoning about the case, one participant with seventeen years of teaching experience stated that both explanations could be correct and explained why scholars put forward different, even contrasting, causes for this historical phenomenon as follows:

This is probably due to the background of these historians, or archaeologists in this case. That is already one aspect. Also, they will probably have had other source material. Those are, I think, the two main reasons. (...) Depending on your background alone, if one scholar is from Romania, and the other is from Belgium, you are already going to have a different background, you are going to have different things, different sources probably, and you are going to have a different outcome.

The case study was discussed as a way to capture teachers’ epistemological beliefs about history. It was part of a study examining the role of different factors in shaping teachers’ instructional practices. In order to broadly explore the influence of a wide range of factors, we gathered data via several instruments. Teachers first completed a questionnaire exploring their views on various aspects of history teaching. In a subsequent semi-structured interview, their answers were discussed and explored in more detail. Teachers were also asked to present concrete didactic materials from their teaching practice, exemplary of their approach to history teaching. These materials were discussed in a second interview. One factor that was given a prominent place in this study were teachers’ epistemological beliefs, meaning their views on the nature of knowledge and processes of knowledge construction in the discipline (Buehl & Alexander, 2001). Those beliefs were mapped extensively, among others, via the case study introduced above.

In this particular case, the participant’s response pointed to the role of the scholars’ background and the sources they studied in explaining why scholars sometimes disagree on the most likely explanation for certain historical phenomena. In so doing, the teacher implicitly referred to the interpretive and constructed nature of historical knowledge and therefore reflected advanced epistemological beliefs about history. He understood

that historical knowledge is constructed, based on historians' interpretations of the available sources, and that historical knowledge can therefore be debated and is subject to change. The teaching materials developed and used by the teachers, however, show an entirely different picture: one consisting of a single, closed narrative. His teaching practice did not mention the existence of historiographical debates, nor did it encourage students to critically think of historical sources as anything other than direct reflections of the past. Contrary to this teacher's apparent advanced epistemological beliefs, his teaching materials actually seemed to reflect—and potentially promote—rather naïve beliefs about the nature of history and historical knowledge. The inconsistency between the participant's private understanding of history and how he presents it to his students is surprising in light of the common assumption that teachers' epistemological beliefs have an important role in shaping their teaching practice (e.g. VanSledright, 1996; Wansink et al., 2016; Yilmaz, 2008).

Throughout various existing models describing epistemological beliefs, both on a general and domain-specific level (e.g. Lee & Shemilt, 2003; Maggioni et al., 2004; Nitsche, 2016; King & Kitchener, 2002; Kuhn et al., 2000), three prototypical epistemological stances regarding history come to the fore. These stances are characterised by distinct ideas about the nature of historical knowledge and about the processes of knowledge construction in history (Buehl & Alexander, 2001; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Stoel et al., 2017). In a first prototypical stance, historical knowledge is considered as fixed and singular, ready to be uncovered by the historian. Historical sources are considered to be literal mirrors of the past. A second stance emphasises the subjective and uncertain nature of knowledge about the past. Historical representations and sources are regarded as completely subjective, even merely a matter of opinion. Every representation, as well as every historical source, is then considered equally valid. A third stance recognises the inherently interpretive and constructed nature of historical knowledge, yet understands that the quality of historical representations is *not* equally valid. It is understood that historical representations can be evaluated using disciplinary criteria, for instance related to argumentation and to weighing evidence by judging the trustworthiness of historical sources (Maggioni et al., 2009; Stoel et al., 2017). The first two stances are generally considered to be rather “naïve” views about history, in the sense that they do not accurately reflect disciplinary practices of knowledge construction, while the latter is considered more advanced.

With regard to history teachers, it seems self-evident that teachers holding advanced epistemological beliefs are most likely to design teaching practices that allow students to equally gain a thorough understanding of the discipline of history. To date, however, research on this relationship has found conflicting evidence. Yeager and Davisz (1996) found that teachers who perceived history as a construction were more likely to adopt teaching practices reflecting this view, such as historical analysis and interpretation. However, in our own research with 21 history teachers, as introduced above, we regularly noted an inconsistency, even a disconnect between teachers' (advanced) epistemological beliefs and their teaching. In fact, while the vast majority of participants in our study demonstrated advanced epistemological beliefs, only a fraction of them designed instructional materials that aligned with such beliefs (Wilke et al., 2022). Other scholars came to similar findings (e.g. Hartzler-Miller, 2001; VanSledright, 1996; Voet & De Wever, 2016, 2019). VanSledright (1996), for instance, described the struggles of a history teacher navigating between their position, and related epistemological beliefs, as a historian versus a history teacher, thereby observing several factors hindering this teacher's translation of their knowledge "from discipline to school" (p. 282). Voet and De Wever's (2016) more recent research with 22 history teachers in Flanders (Belgium) equally demonstrated that a profound understanding of the discipline of history did not guarantee that teachers' instructional practices would better reflect history's constructed and interpretive nature.

This shows that designing instructional practices that allow students to gain a thorough understanding of the discipline constitutes a huge challenge. The ability to do so has become of crucial importance in light of history education's shift towards historical thinking. With the introduction of historical thinking as a main goal for history education across several countries (Lévesque & Clark, 2018), history education no longer aims to present students with a single historical narrative, but rather to introduce them to the interpretive and constructed nature of history. This requires teachers to design practices that provide students with knowledge about the past, as well as introduce them to the methods of professional historians (Lee, 2004; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008). Therefore, it becomes all the more pressing for history education scholars to discover what role teachers' epistemological beliefs actually play in (designing) their practice. The lack of clear data linking these beliefs to practice, however, raises questions about their importance in shaping teachers'

instruction, but also regarding how scholars attempt to capture these epistemological beliefs in research.

This chapter outlines three potential explanations for the observed disconnect between teachers' epistemological beliefs and their practice. The first two are related to the nature and functioning of teachers' epistemological beliefs. The third explanation concerns methodological issues associated with accurately capturing these beliefs. Finally, ramifications for future research on teachers' instructional practices and for teacher training programs are explored.

ISSUE 1: WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE MEASURING? CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE INHERENT COMPLEXITY OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS

A first reason for the absence of a clear connection between teachers' epistemological beliefs and teaching practices seems to be related to the complexity of these beliefs. Three particular challenges can be identified in this regard: the phenomenon of epistemic wobbling, the distinction between formal and practical epistemologies and the notion of a double epistemic standard.

To illustrate epistemic wobbling, consider the following reasoning provided by a history teacher with more than twenty years of teaching experience when discussing the same case study about the spread of agriculture as introduced earlier:

Respondent: Ok, this is my spontaneous reaction. Both explanations can be correct, but one can be more correct than the other.

Interviewer: Ok, could you explain your reasoning?

Respondent: Because maybe there will be evidence that shows this, I think?

Interviewer: That one is more correct than the other?

Respondent: Yes (...) until it is investigated, until is it definitively investigated, there can be two explanations that are correct, I think.

The teacher's initial response came rather quickly and intuitively, and seemingly pointed to advanced epistemological beliefs. However, when she was asked to further explain, she really started to consider the case at hand and became more hesitant and questioning. Rather than explaining why both explanations could be correct, and connecting this to the interpretive and constructed nature of history, she presented them as working

theories existing alongside each other until the definitive answer was found. Her answer thus gradually shifted, making it more difficult to distinguish the underlying epistemological beliefs. A similar ambiguity was visible in this teacher's responses to another measure for epistemological beliefs that was included in our study: a questionnaire, consisting of a set of statements where teachers were asked to indicate, on a 6-point Likert scale, to what extent they agreed or disagreed with them (Stoel et al., 2017). The questionnaire included a number of statements indicating naïve beliefs about history, such as: "You cannot write well about the past when sources contradict each other" or "Because the past is gone you cannot adequately assess the reliability of historical accounts", and statements indicating more advanced beliefs about history, such as: "In history education it is important that you learn to support your reasoning with evidence". Strong disagreement with the first type of statements, indicated by a low score on the Likert scale, combined with a strong agreement (i.e. high score) with statements from the second type would point at advanced epistemological beliefs about history (Stoel et al., 2017). In this teacher's case, the ambivalence present in her reasoning about the case study was also present in her responses to the statements. She tended to agree with statements indicating nuanced beliefs, but also agreed with some of the naïve statements, indicating that perhaps the advanced epistemological beliefs were not fully developed.

When participants' scores on a measurement instrument show inconsistencies, an obvious response would be to question whether the instrument is sufficiently reliable. Although this is indeed something to consider—we will elaborate on this further in the chapter—we should also explore whether perhaps these inconsistencies simply reflect the reality of teachers' epistemological beliefs. We are strengthened in this idea by the findings of Stoel et al. (2017). In a series of studies intended to validate their measurement instrument for epistemological beliefs about history, these scholars found that expert historians and high school students responded differently to the statements. Professional historians, whose epistemological beliefs can generally be considered as advanced, strongly agreed with nuanced statements while strongly disagreeing with the naïve ones. Some students, however, agreed with both the naïve and advanced statements. They described this phenomenon as "procedural objectivism" indicating a stance whereby students "value historical thinking skills because they believe that these skills make it possible to separate true and false sources and could generate true and fixed knowledge" (Stoel et al., 2017, p. 131).

In our research, we found several cases of teachers who appeared to be procedural objectivists, such as the teacher introduced earlier in this section. Rather than indicating a deficiency of the measurement tools, these inconsistencies in respondents' beliefs may suggest that their understanding of history is still developing and that they are in the middle of a transition from naïve to more advanced beliefs, also referred to as epistemic wobbling (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014).

Another challenge relates to the question of which epistemological views we are exactly mapping. Some researchers suggest to distinguish between formal and practical epistemologies (Sandoval, 2005; Sinatra & Chinn, 2012). Formal epistemologies are general ideas about “characteristics of knowledge and its justification in a particular field” (Sinatra & Chinn, 2012, p. 264) and can be evaluated using general questions about a respondent's views on knowledge (construction) in the discipline. Practical epistemologies refer to those epistemological beliefs that are activated when confronted with concrete, discipline-specific tasks (Barzilai & Weinstock, 2015; Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002). These two types of epistemologies do not always align as beliefs about knowledge in general may not match the epistemic practices used in a specific situation. Existing research, however, often does not explicitly state at which level it is measuring, but it seems that most studies on teachers' epistemological beliefs and instructional practices focus on the formal rather than the practical level (e.g. McCrum, 2013; Voet & De Wever, 2016, 2019). It thus remains unclear how these two levels relate to each other, as well as to teachers' instructional practices. Our research therefore combined both. The abovementioned case study was used as a measure of teachers' practical epistemological beliefs, inspired by the instruments developed by Kuhn et al. (2000) and Barzilai and Weinstock (2015), as it asked teachers to reason about a discipline-specific task. The questionnaire consisting of a set of statements gauged teachers' formal epistemologies. Based on this study, it appeared that teachers' formal and practical epistemologies are indeed not always aligned and that practical epistemologies are a better predictor for teachers' instructional practices, than formal ones. In future studies, it is important for researchers to make a deliberate choice regarding which level(s) to measure, and to be explicit about this. This will allow researchers to gain a better and more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between various types of epistemological beliefs and practice.

What makes the study of teachers' epistemological beliefs even more complicated is that teachers sometimes struggle to navigate between their

role as historians and history teachers, particularly regarding how to present historical knowledge (construction) to their students. For several reasons, which will be explored in the next section, teachers willingly or reluctantly opt to present history as a fixed narrative in their practice, even though their private epistemology as trained historians is different (e.g. VanSledright & Limón, 2006; Wansink et al., 2016). In a review study on teachers' epistemological beliefs, Maggioni and Parkinson (2008) noted that this phenomenon occurred in several disciplines. They explain how teachers can have a “double epistemic standard” (Maggioni & Parkinson, 2008, p. 453) meaning that their views about the nature of disciplinary knowledge are not aligned with their views about the nature of school knowledge. In our own study (Wilke et al., 2022), we found several examples of teachers making a clear distinction between their epistemological beliefs as historians and as history teachers. One teacher, for instance, stated explicitly that he did not consider it worthwhile to introduce students to different views on the past. As a history teacher, he argued, it was his task to think about “what is the most probable at that point in time and then to present it clearly as a univocal, structured account”. If not, he stated, things would get too complicated for his students. This shows that the teacher makes a conscious choice to present history differently to his student than he understands it himself. This decision points to a distinction between this teachers' epistemological beliefs about the nature of disciplinary and the nature of school knowledge. In this case, this distinction seemed to be informed by other factors, namely the belief that his students did not have the ability to comprehend history when presented as interpretive. These other factors provide a second explanation for the regularly observed disconnect between teachers' epistemological beliefs and their instructional practices.

ISSUE 2: HOW DO WE CONCEPTUALISE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS AND THEIR PRACTICE? CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER FACTORS

While it seems evident to assume a direct, linear relationship between teachers' epistemological beliefs and their instructional practice, this relationship seems to be impacted by a number of other factors. The case of another teacher from our qualitative study provides a very clear example of

how different factors mediate the aforementioned relationship. This teacher had three years of teaching experience and had obtained a PhD in history alongside his teaching degree. The interview with this teacher as well as his discussion of the case study and his responses to the statements all clearly pointed to the existence of advanced epistemological beliefs, as could be expected from someone with a PhD in history. As an example of his teaching practice, this teacher presented an assignment on the fall of the Roman Empire, asking students to compare the evidence and arguments regarding the role of Christianity in its demise. The teacher explained that he was inspired by the recent publication of a new book by a British historian to design an assignment that would allow his students to think about how history can be interpreted in different ways, that historical knowledge is never “complete” and that new insights can always come about. The assignment in itself was well-designed and indeed encouraged students to think about the interpretive nature of historical knowledge, while also stressing the importance of weighing evidence and arguments when comparing various historical representations. The teacher, however, also pointed out that this assignment was not an accurate reflection of his teaching practice, as he offered such assignments only rarely. In reality, he explained, he mainly aspired to reach other goals through his teaching, such as providing students with a historical frame of reference, generating interest in the past and allowing students to orient themselves in the present world. The reasoning exhibited by this teacher was not uncommon. In fact, we encountered multiple cases of teachers who had advanced epistemological beliefs but did not consider it their task to introduce students to the interpretive and constructed nature of history and therefore did not design their practice in such a way. These teachers often pursued other goals in their teaching practice, similar to the ones mentioned above. This illustrates how teachers’ practices are determined not only by their epistemological beliefs, but also by other considerations.

Overall, three main factors shaping teachers’ instructional practices can be derived from the existing research (e.g. Barton & Levstik, 2003; Hicks et al., 2004; Van Hover & Yeager, 2003; VanSledright & Limón, 2006; Voet & De Wever, 2016, 2019; Wansink et al., 2016). One influential factor consists of a number of teachers’ beliefs. These include epistemological beliefs, but also educational ones, for instance related to students’ abilities. Teachers are reported to have different perceptions of their students’ cognitive abilities (e.g. Voet & De Wever, 2019). Some consider it too difficult for their students to understand the interpretive nature of historical

knowledge, and therefore ignore the issue. Other educational goals that impact teachers' practices include their beliefs about the goals of history: to what extent do they consider it important to pay attention to the nature of historical knowledge. Beliefs about the teaching and learning of history also play a role: teachers have different views on how students learn and progress in history, and on the most appropriate teaching styles. For instance, some teachers favour a directive approach, focusing mostly on the transmission of knowledge, while others prefer to design instructional activities encouraging students to gain knowledge and skills in a more self-guided manner (e.g. McCrum, 2013; Voet & De Wever, 2016). Contextual factors also play a role. Aspects such as the available time, access to didactic resources, curricular requirements and the presence of standardised tests influence the shape of teachers' practice (e.g. Hicks et al., 2004; VanSledright & Limón, 2006; Voet & De Wever, 2016). These beliefs and contextual aspects should not be seen as separate elements each influencing teachers' practice in an isolated manner, but rather as a complex web of connected elements interacting with each other. In our research, for instance, we encountered a teacher who barely addressed the interpretive nature of historical knowledge due to a complex interplay between several of these factors (Wilke & Depaep, 2019). Although this teacher acknowledged the importance of teaching students about the interpretive nature of history, he had very distinct ideas about how to do this. He believed that this could only be achieved via extensive group work based on inquiry activities which he considered to be completely unfeasible for his students within the available time. Moreover, he strongly disliked organising group work as he liked to maintain control over the classroom. Therefore, he pragmatically chose not to pursue this goal, but to focus on offering his students a historical frame of reference.

This example illustrates how various teachers' beliefs, as well as the contextual factors, all need to be aligned in favour of designing instructional practices presenting history as interpretive and constructed. Even when this is the case, however, teachers still do not always manage to put this into practice. A final important factor in shaping teachers' instructional practices is related to teachers' ability to design instructional materials that accurately reflect the nature of the discipline. In our qualitative study, we noted remarkable differences between teachers' reported learning goals for particular instructional materials, and what materials actually allowed students to learn. Such differences were most prominent in instructional materials containing source work. Teachers sometimes reported designing

instructional materials centred around critical source analysis, specifically with the aim of introducing students to the practice of historians. Questions accompanying the sources, however, then only aimed at the content of the sources or presented critical source analysis as a mechanical process whereby students were invited to look for straightforward “true” versus “false” information, to be discerned based on a fixed set of questions. Hence, instead of promoting advanced epistemological beliefs, as these teachers intended to do, these materials were more likely to strengthen students’ naïve beliefs about history. In another qualitative research, Voet and De Wever (2016) similarly found that teachers’ practices misrepresented the practice of historians to such an extent that they gave their students “the false impression that historical reasoning is mainly a matter of looking up information, or mechanistically assessing the reliability of sources” (p. 65). This contrast between teachers’ intended and actual practice shows that, regardless of teachers’ beliefs and contextual factors, teachers also need to have a profound understanding of the notion of historical thinking and of how to foster it among students, in order to be able to design high-quality teaching materials.

For researchers, the interconnectedness between these different factors makes it very difficult to isolate the distinct, individual influence of a single element, such as that of teachers’ epistemological beliefs. Although the development of advanced epistemological beliefs evidently plays an important role in teachers’ understanding of historical thinking, understanding why teachers do or do not reflect this in their practice, becomes all the more complex.

ISSUE 3: HOW DO WE MEASURE EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS? CHALLENGES RELATED TO METHODOLOGY

The issues presented above showed that mapping teachers’ epistemological beliefs is not an easy endeavour. They revealed that teachers’ epistemological beliefs are complex and therefore difficult to capture, and that different measurement instruments can yield different results. In our research, we therefore chose to include more than one measure of epistemological beliefs and to discuss the results with the participants. We asked teachers to complete a questionnaire, containing statements intended to capture their formal epistemological beliefs (Stoel et al., 2017). Subsequently, we presented them with a case study as a means to capture

their practical epistemologies and discussed the results of both instruments with the respondents in an interview. This allowed us to compare the different instruments but also to obtain a comprehensive view of the participating teachers' epistemological beliefs as well as their influence on teachers' practices, besides that of other beliefs and factors.

If we assume, as we have argued earlier, that teachers' epistemological beliefs are sometimes inherently inconsistent, then we need measurement instruments that allow us to capture these beliefs in all their complexity in order to draw meaningful conclusions. Doing so requires additional insight into the respondents' thoughts, which can be acquired, for instance, via interviews. All of this calls into question whether we can expect to capture the complexity of epistemological beliefs in a single, straightforward instrument. In our study, the interviews brought forward much more variation in respondents' epistemological beliefs than appeared to be present based on the initial measurement instruments. They therefore offered a much more accurate view of these beliefs. It hence seems that epistemological beliefs are not easily captured by relatively simple instruments, which might explain why some studies did not find a clear connection between teachers' beliefs and practices. Although time-consuming, interview data can provide a much richer picture of the full complexity of an individual's epistemology.

Another difficulty which has already been touched upon briefly is related to the question of what exactly we are measuring. In discussing the measurement instruments in our study with the participants, we noticed that teachers often answered statements differently from the way they were intended. In particular, they answered these statements through a didactical lens, not as historians, but as history teachers. For instance, when clarifying why she agreed with the statement that "You cannot write well about the past when sources contradict each other", a teacher explained that she mainly found it difficult to *teach* history when sources contradict each other, because this was hard for her students to understand in the limited time available for history education. This teacher's answer can be seen as an expression of a double epistemic standard, but it urges us to question the validity of this type of measurement instrument. Rather than measuring teachers' epistemological beliefs about the nature of disciplinary knowledge, we might instead be measuring their epistemological beliefs about the nature of school knowledge. If we want to draw meaningful and valid conclusions about (the role of) teachers' epistemological

beliefs, it is important to carefully distinguish between the two. However, the existing measurement instruments do not yet allow for this.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Recent shifts in history education curricula, towards historical thinking as a main goal, have made it even more important for teachers to develop instructional practices that allow their students to understand the interpretive and constructed nature of historical knowledge. It seems self-evident that teachers who have nuanced epistemological beliefs will be more likely to do so. In reality, however, studies often report that teachers' epistemological beliefs do not always align with the way that they present the nature of the historical discipline in their practice. This chapter set out to explore various explanations for this inconsistency. It discussed how the complexity of teachers' epistemological beliefs as well as the influence of other factors make it difficult to establish a clear connection between teachers' epistemological beliefs and their practice. The chapter also explored the role of methodological issues in capturing teachers' epistemological beliefs.

How can these considerations inform future studies into teachers' epistemological beliefs and practices? First of all, the findings discussed in this chapter by no means intend to disregard the importance of teachers' epistemological beliefs and of the need to strive for the development of advanced epistemological beliefs among (future) history teachers. They should, however, encourage a reassessment of the importance of these beliefs in shaping teachers' practice. While they do play a role, they are not the sole or even best predictors of how teachers will present historical knowledge in their practice. Not only do other factors have an important impact in this regard, they also directly affect the relationship between teachers' epistemological beliefs and their practice. Therefore, we recommend that future studies looking to comprehend, explain and potentially even alter teachers' instructional practices should take into account a wide range of aspects. These include teachers' educational beliefs, the role of contextual factors and teachers' didactic expertise related to cultivating students' historical thinking.

Mapping teachers' epistemological beliefs in an accurate way remains challenging as epistemological beliefs are complex and sometimes inconsistent. Although this chapter offers no clear-cut solution to these challenges, it does suggest that a rich data collection is required in order to get

a complete picture of teachers' epistemological beliefs. It is also important for future researchers to think of and be explicit about which epistemological beliefs they want to study. Our research findings suggest that mapping practical epistemologies provides a more varied and hence a more accurate depiction of teachers' beliefs, that is more closely related to the epistemological beliefs that are reflected in their practice. Moreover, considering that teachers, deliberately or not, sometimes make a distinction between their epistemological beliefs about disciplinary and school knowledge, it might be beneficial for future researchers to try to capture precisely those epistemological beliefs about the nature of school knowledge. These beliefs may already integrate some of the educational beliefs that are known to be influential in teachers' practices, such as those about students' abilities or about the goals of history education. As these beliefs reflect how teachers think about the nature of the historical knowledge that they are presenting to students, it is quite plausible that they will be far more impactful in their instructional practice, compared to their beliefs about disciplinary knowledge.

Besides offering suggestions for future studies, this chapter's findings are also of relevance for pre- and in-service teacher training programs. Considering the various factors that inform teachers' instructional practices, they suggest that these programs should aim to provide teachers with a profound understanding of the nature of historical knowledge and knowledge construction, but should also address other beliefs that might otherwise impede teachers from designing instructional practices that foster historical thinking. By doing so, they can ensure that teachers' epistemological beliefs about school knowledge are aligned with their epistemological beliefs about disciplinary knowledge, and hence, with history education's goal of fostering historical thinking. Moreover, teachers will benefit from concrete instruction and support on how to translate these nuanced epistemological beliefs into educational practices. In order to overcome a disconnect between teachers' intended learning goals and the instructional materials that they design, teachers will have to be supported in developing the necessary skills to design instructional practices that actually foster a thorough understanding of the nature of history and historical knowledge among their students.

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Searching for Metaphors: Exploring Teacher Candidates' Epistemological Frames

Richard Hughes and Sarah Drake Brown

Working in history teacher education in the United States can be a humbling experience. Each semester faculty introduce their students to a discipline-specific pedagogy reflective of the burgeoning recent scholarship in the field. Teacher candidates read literature on the nature of historical thinking and the importance of providing opportunities for secondary students to engage in historical evidence and develop the cognitive skills of historians. Emerging teachers encounter innovative curricula that promote the integration of historical content and skills such as the well-known *Reading Like a Historian* materials from the Digital Inquiry Group. They craft lesson plans aligned to historical inquiry (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2013). Some teacher candidates read Bruce Lesh's (2011) *Why Don't You Just Tell Us the*

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Answer?, a secondary teacher's personal account of "reinventing" his classroom to make "historical thinking a reality." Most content methods professors' intent is that such formative experiences will establish an epistemology of history teaching that empowers emerging teachers—from the moment they enter the classroom—to build an approach to teaching history more reflective of the discipline and consistent with both recent scholarship and current best practices for instruction.

However, research has documented that large gaps often exist between what teacher candidates say they will do in the classroom and the practices they actually demonstrate (Fehn & Koeppen, 1998; Hartzler-Miller, 2001; Van Hover & Yeager, 2003). How might their epistemological understandings and assumptions about the distinct roles of historians, teachers, and students shape the countless decisions of classroom teachers and impact student learning? This chapter uses a study of the perceptions and classwork of history teacher candidates to argue the evolving epistemic stances of emerging teachers are crucial to understanding the limited impact of scholarship in history education in the United States. While scholars have made significant strides in assessing the historical thinking of students and teachers, the unique position of teacher candidates as they encounter the profession highlights important origins of the persistent gap between theory and practice. This chapter underscores the need for scholars to create better metaphors that illustrate the crucial yet problematic development of emerging teachers and the impact on their transitions on classroom instruction and the professional identity of history teachers. Such efforts are critical for improving history teacher education and creating future classrooms that reflect the discipline.

We investigated teacher candidates' epistemological frames and what they do when provided with opportunities to incorporate their grounds of knowledge in the discipline of history and their perceptions of the work of teaching history. To organize our own understanding of this process, we draw upon multiple metaphors that provide the unique and seminal context for teacher candidates' grounds of knowledge in history and in doing the work of teaching history. While scholars have largely focused on the historic cognition of practicing teachers and students, the evolving epistemological understandings of novice teachers as they transition from secondary students to history majors, teacher candidates, and ultimately professional educators have been relatively unexamined. These developments, which often occur in only a few short years, are valuable as researchers attempt to better understand how rigorous scholarship and calls for

substantial change in history education over the last fifty years have led to only limited pedagogical and curricular reform in the United States. The experiences and perceptions of teacher candidates highlight the tensions within history education and illuminate the persistent gaps between theory and practice as novice teachers' epistemologies emerge. To what extent do the epistemological understandings of teacher candidates, who are uniquely situated at the intersection of secondary schools, teacher education, and the profession of classroom teaching, present limitations and opportunities for lasting reform?

The Amherst Project in the 1960s underscored this enduring gap between the ideal of historical inquiry and the reality of American classrooms. The project brought historians and classroom teachers together to create history curriculum materials centered on historical inquiry. Richard Brown, the director of the program, used the metaphor of the *frontier* to argue that history educators needed to embrace inquiry-based learning to avoid the "extinction" of the discipline in schools on the frontier of educational reform (1972). It was here, according to Brown, where students would encounter the "historian's craft" and learn to interrogate evidence and raise meaningful questions rather than simply absorbing facts and the conclusions of historians. Through the Amherst Project, history teachers and historians worked together to forge an epistemological understanding of how to teach the "doing" of history.

Brown's choice of language may have been unavoidable, as the concept of the frontier has been enormously important to historians in the United States since Frederick Jackson Turner (1894) presented what has come to be known as the Turner Thesis. Speaking in 1893, Turner argued that American democracy and the distinctive character and "intellectual traits" of Americans stemmed not from European culture but from decades of encountering the frontier of the American West which, by the 1890s, the United States Census Bureau officially described as closed. While Turner's theory elicited widespread support and, especially in more recent decades, substantial criticism, the compelling notion of the frontier as a crucial location of contested encounters, difficult transitions, and emerging identities, not to mention more than a little heroic success and frustrating failures, remains appropriate for the state of American history teacher education in the twenty-first century.

The Amherst Project fizzled out in the 1970s, and nearly fifty years later the frontier of historical inquiry in the classroom remains elusive. Many teacher candidates today complete their education with a lengthy

clinical experience in a secondary school and implement classroom instruction that, disappointingly, would be quite familiar to earlier generations of history teachers and students (Cuban, 2016). They often develop and implement lessons centered on delivering essential historical narratives and measure student learning with assessments focused on the memorization of names, dates, and other historical facts. Secondary textbooks, deeply problematic in terms of both historical content and skills, remain ubiquitous, and success in teaching is often measured by classroom management and the coverage of historical content. To continue Brown's metaphor and align it further with Turner's thesis: For these teacher candidates and their students, the frontier of historical inquiry has closed.

Outside the classroom, a substantial recent survey published by the American Historical Association suggests that much of the American public retains its perception of history as an array of discrete facts and an antagonistic stance toward "school history" (Burkholder & Schaffer, 2021). Increasingly politicized debates over the teaching of history in schools are limited to arguments over what narratives and perspectives students should encounter as Truth rather than the nature of the discipline. In the 1990s, debates focused almost exclusively on the impact of contested narratives, from the uproar over the voluntary National Standards to outcry over a museum exhibit centered on the *Enola Gay*, the U.S. airplane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945 (Linenthal & Engelhardt, 1996; Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 1997). More recently, the role of race and racism in U.S. history has become a focal point. The presidency of Donald J. Trump altered what Americans consider to be acceptable public discourse and provided avenues for increasingly hostile confrontations about what can and cannot be taught in the history classroom. Conflicts involving such curricular efforts as the 1619 Project, Teaching Hard History, the Zinn Education Project, and the College Board's creation of an Advanced Placement African American Studies course, as well as purposefully manufactured fears about the teaching of critical race theory, reflect much older debates over the role of race in American society (Hannah-Jones, 2019; Schwartz, 2023; Shapiro, 2021; Wallace-Wells, 2021). Similar arguments over historical monuments in the United States such as statues of Confederate leaders echo these debates with an emphasis on what historical figures should, or should not, occupy our collective memory (American Historical Association, 2017).

However, despite the culture wars associated with such protracted debates, advocates on both sides ground their position on the same crucial

assumption that history education is, first and foremost, about the power of essential stories that children learn rather than historic cognition and methodology. As historian Daniel Immerwahr commented in 2020, “the point of learning history isn’t to get students to love or loathe their country. It’s to prepare them to live in it” (2020, para. 15). Contemporary arguments about historical significance, historical perspective, and contested narratives matter. While these arguments actually tie directly to historical methodology, public debates about history education in the United States often suggest that learning to live in America does not require citizens to think historically. Historical knowledge is “knowing” the “true” narrative. Metaphors equating history to Truth continue to dominate many realms of U.S. society.

Although scholars have made significant progress in exploring and even quantifying the historical thinking of teachers and students, the complexity at the heart of developing emerging history teachers and reshaping classroom learning continues to be challenging, especially in the current American context. One valuable way to illuminate both this complexity and possible solutions is to build on the idea of the “frontier” of history education with an exploration of the frequent use of metaphors in the field.

METAPHORS AS CONTEXT: THE LITERATURE OF HISTORY EDUCATION

Historians have often looked to metaphors to describe the abstract nature of history and the work of historians. As historians Daniel Little (2009), Luise Fast (2021), Charlotte Lerg (2022), and Grace McNutt (2022) have recently argued, metaphors associated with history such as a flowing river, the branches of a tree, detective work, or even time travel are common. Each metaphor, including others related to statues such as “set in stone,” has its limitations, especially in terms of its ability to adequately convey the fluidity and contested nature of the discipline. As a result, Little prefers the idea of history as a series of pathways while McNutt finds the metaphor of weaving the most adept in illustrating how historians use evidence to make sense of the past.

Scholars in history education have also embraced Lerg’s (2022, para. 3) assertion that “a well-chosen image enables us to grasp otherwise complex ideas” as colorful metaphors dominate much of the literature in the field. Often these metaphors, as if to emphasize the arduous journey, are kinetic

such as “walking on the borders” (Maggioni et al., 2009), “walking backwards into tomorrow” (Lee & Shemilt, 2004), “catwalk across the great divide” (McDiarmid & Vinten-Johnsen, 2000), “breaking the ice” (Podesta, 2016), and “moving from the periphery to the core” (Sears, 2014). Bruce VanSledright and Lilliani Maggioni (2016) referred to the “hurdles,” both pedagogical and intellectual, teachers face when they attempt to reconcile their traditional history classroom with professional training aimed at promoting historic cognition. Other scholars have chosen spatial metaphors to describe efforts to address differences between the work of historians and the teaching of history such as “into the breach” (Bain, 2000) or “bridging the gap” (Harris & Bain, 2011). Visual metaphors such as viewpoint and perspective have long been part of historians’ work, and scholars have described efforts to understand historic cognition as “trying to see things differently” (Barton & McCully, 2012) or “peering at history through different lenses” (Wilson & Wineburg, 1988). Another researcher, building on a long tradition of historians using auditory language such as voices, referred to “articulating the silences” to describe how teachers and students think about historical significance (Levstik, 2000). Finally, in an attempt to describe the fluid and imprecise nature of historical thinking within individuals, others have chosen phrases such as “epistemic switching” (Gottlieb & Wineburg, 2012) or “epistemic wobbling” (Vansledright & Reddy, 2014).

In the United States, the context of history teacher education consists of two pieces: narrow debates about the purpose of history in schools and scholarship on historical thinking that relies on metaphors. To untangle the complex relationship between the research in history education and history classrooms, we need a better understanding of the development of teacher candidates. Americans often base their understanding of the practice of teaching on the experiences they encountered as students (VanSledright, 2011) as they engage in incremental change in the quest for “utopia” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Having studied history, to varying extents, in elementary and secondary schools, many Americans believe that they know and understand what history is, and the majority consider it an “assemblage of names, dates, and events” (Burkholder & Schaffer, 2021). Mapping the epistemological beliefs of history teacher candidates compelled us, as researchers, to consider candidates’ understanding not only of what history is but their understanding of what historians, history teachers, and history students do. Previous research has drawn connections between teachers’ beliefs about history as a discipline and their beliefs

about the teaching of history (McCrum, 2013; McDiarmid, 1994; Voet & De Wever, 2016). We situate our work in that context, and in order to explore beginning teachers' emerging epistemology pertaining to teaching the doing of history, we posed three questions to teacher candidates: What do historians do? What do history teachers do? What do history students do? Our slight wording adjustment (in comparison to prior research in this area) enabled us to emphasize candidates' beliefs about the *actions* of historians, history teachers, and history students and connect these emerging beliefs to their depiction of their own actions via selecting artifacts to include in a portfolio. This work is situated squarely in research that has called for scholars to gain a better understanding of beginning teachers' epistemological stances pertaining to history and the teaching of history (Van Hover & Yeager, 2003).

INVESTIGATING EXPERIENCES ON THE FRONTIER

Fifteen teacher candidates who were enrolled in a secondary history teacher education program participated in our study. The curriculum in this program emphasizes disciplinary thinking and consciously uses disciplinary concepts and teachers' development of pedagogical content knowledge as the basis for its two content methods courses. As researchers, we collected data in two sets. We intended for Data Set 1 to help us uncover teacher candidates' epistemological stance on the roles and relationship between historians, history teachers, and history students. This data set consisted of information collected from participants' experiences in content methods courses on campus and included responses to three questions: (1) What do historians do? (2) What do history teachers do? (3) What do history students do? During the teacher candidates' first methods course, participants were given 10–15 minutes to respond, in writing, to these three questions. We limited participants' response time in order to capture participants' frames of reference, rather than responses they might provide after significant reading and conversations with peers. The second set of data (Data Set 2) consisted of artifacts from portfolios created by these same teacher candidates. The candidates assembled these portfolios over the course of several weeks. We analyzed candidates' justification for their selection of artifacts to include in the portfolio. In doing so, we considered how their written explanations might provide information about their epistemological stances with respect to teaching the doing of history.

In order to establish an initial understanding of the teacher candidates' developing epistemology, we turned to Data Set 1. We found that in Data Set 1, question 1 ("What do historians do?") elicited the most detailed and descriptive responses from participants. Our analysis indicated that teacher candidates believe historians' work focuses on providing the public with an understanding of the past. According to the participants, historians engage in this process by analyzing primary and secondary sources, creating narratives, and asking questions to help the public link the past to the present. In their written responses, candidates did not emphasize particular disciplinary concepts or provide specific information about content in historical narratives. We wonder if, given the broad nature of the question, teacher candidates answered the question with a response that was equally broad in nature.

When responding to question 2 in Data Set 1 ("What do history teachers do?"), participants used words abundantly, but we found it challenging to derive meaning from their words alone or to see patterns. For example, "history," "historians," or "historical" appeared frequently (seventy-seven times) in their collective responses, and five of the fifteen participants referenced preparing students for "citizenship" as the role of the history teacher (but none of the participants who referenced citizens or citizenship explained their understanding of this concept). We therefore turned to the nine Teaching Practices for Historical Inquiry in Fogo's (2014) Delphi survey as a lens through which to read the responses to question 2. We acknowledge that our use of this framework reflects our epistemological understandings of history teaching. Within the context of this framework, we were better able to derive meaning from and see patterns in the participants' statements. For example, participants emphasized explaining and connecting historical content (specifically by writing about describing, understanding, relating, or giving content to students). The teacher candidates also frequently mentioned selecting historical sources; they did not address adapting such sources. While they mentioned using historical questions, it was much less frequent than their focus on content and sources, and they acknowledged but paid even less attention to employing historical evidence and facilitating historical discussion. The participants made no mention of the other four teaching practices from the Delphi survey (these practices include modeling and supporting historical reading skills, using historical concepts, modeling and supporting historical writing, and assessing student thinking about history).

When we consider questions 1 and 2 together, a picture of the teacher candidates' developing epistemology emerges. We noted a potential relationship between teacher candidates' articulation of their understanding of history as a discipline and their understanding of the work of history teachers. For example, their emphasis on historians' task of using primary sources to build narratives to help the public understand the past connects to candidates' emphasis on teachers selecting sources to "give" content and make it "consumable" for their students.

While question 3 ("What do history students do?") focused on the actions of students in the history classroom, we designed this question to implicitly address the role of teachers, acknowledging that students will often engage in tasks (or resist tasks) that teachers set out for them. Therefore, in responding to a question that asked them to articulate what history students do, our participants were further explicating the work of the history teacher. While a clear common theme was that history students "learn," we used close reading and pattern coding and saw that four areas served as participants' points of focus: The use of questions, sources, citizenship, and "understanding" the content emerged as the identified actions undertaken by students in history classes.

Three of these four actions also aligned with what participants claim historians and history teachers do. The relative consistency of these outcomes became clearer to us when we created Table 11.1.

To continue our investigation of candidates' developing knowledge base for teaching history, we examined the artifacts they selected for inclusion in teaching portfolios and their written rationales for including these artifacts as representations of "who they are" as history teachers. Candidates were instructed to include in their portfolios artifacts that showcased their pedagogical content knowledge as history teachers, and the instructor of

Table 11.1 Common practices among historians, history teachers, and history students

<i>Practice</i>	<i>Mentions for historians</i>	<i>Mentions for history teachers</i>	<i>Mentions for history students</i>
Understanding content	7	12	11
Using primary sources	8	8	5
Questioning	4	4	2

the course directed them to organize their portfolio artifacts in four categories: (1) representing history, (2) transforming history, (3) attending to students' ideas about history, and (4) framing history (Monte-Sano & Budano, 2013).

Because of teacher candidates' emphasis in Data Set 1 on "understanding content" as a primary contribution made by historians and history teachers and as an action taken by history students, we decided to focus on artifacts submitted in categories 3 and 4 of the portfolio. We selected category 3 (considering and responding to student thinking) because participants identified understanding content as a key responsibility of history students. We wondered how the teacher candidates would select and explain artifacts in which they were assessing their students' historical understandings. We selected category 4 in the portfolio (framing the past for understanding) because it aligned specifically with the candidates' responses to questions 1, 2, and 3 in Data Set 1. Candidates overwhelmingly focused on understanding or connecting content as a primary task of historians and history teachers.

When addressing student thinking (category 3) in the portfolio, ten of the fifteen participants selected the same artifact—an assignment from their first content methods class. In this assignment, candidates traveled to a local middle school and engaged an assigned student in a "think aloud" activity with primary sources (Wineburg, 2001, pp. 89–112). The candidates were asked to instruct their students to read a primary source out loud and to stop and explain their thinking. Candidates took detailed notes and then wrote an essay in which they analyzed the thinking of the student.

Of the other five participants, two selected artifacts that were assessments they designed. While these assessments provided purposeful opportunities for students to engage in disciplinary thinking, the assignments had never been administered to students. Rather, they were part of lesson plans that the participants had designed in the content methods courses. Two of the remaining three participants selected artifacts that they had created as part of their field experience courses. The artifacts selected by all three of these participants reflected a general approach to considering and responding to student thinking; they focused on note-taking, a discredited "learning-style" self-assessment, and an assessment that focused on general literacy categories. Based on the participants' descriptions, it was not clear if these assessments had been used with students; no analysis of student thinking was included in the portfolio.

Table 11.2 Framing the past for understanding

<i>Disciplinary concept/practice</i>	<i>Number of times candidates emphasized this concept</i>
Focusing on cause	5
Building a narrative	5
Emphasizing historical significance	3
Focusing on chronology	1

When addressing framing the past for understanding (portfolio category 4), twelve of the fifteen participants included artifacts that related to this category, and these artifacts consisted of lesson plans. Artifacts submitted by the other three participants were not considered in this analysis because they did not meet the criteria in the category. In the rationales that participants wrote to explain why they selected these artifacts for this category, all twelve focused on specific concepts that relate to the discipline of history and how the lesson plans emphasized these concepts. Table 11.2 depicts the ideas expressed by candidates in the portfolio.

EPISTEMOLOGY: AN OPEN OR CLOSED FRONTIER?

The teacher candidates in this study were able to articulate fairly clearly what historians do. While their ability to express their understanding of the work of history teachers and that of history students was not as developed, grounds of knowledge for teaching the doing of history were emerging when they began their content methods courses and responded to the three questions in Data Set 1. Based on the artifacts these candidates included in their portfolios (Data Set 2), their emerging epistemological frames for teaching history had not yet developed into actions. The outcomes of this case study align with the findings of previous researchers (McCrum, 2013; McDiarmid, 1994; Voet & De Wever, 2016) in suggesting that changing the teaching practices of beginning educators remains a challenge. Importantly, this case study also adds potential insight into the actions, or lack thereof, of teacher candidates. The participants here included artifacts in their portfolios that suggest their epistemic understandings of teaching history might not include thinking about students in substantive ways. Various examples support these conclusions.

When examining the artifacts participants included in their portfolio, we noted that of the total artifacts submitted by all fifteen teacher

candidates, 49.5% of the artifacts came from candidates' clinical experiences. Even though the portfolio was presented to teacher candidates as their opportunity to demonstrate "who they are" as teachers, only half of the items they collected as a whole came from interactions with students. When we considered portfolio artifact selection by individuals, no one candidate selected more than four of the required seven artifacts from their field experiences, and four candidates included only one or zero artifacts that demonstrated their work in classrooms. Candidates understood that their portfolios were meant to highlight their pedagogical content knowledge as history teachers, but a significant number of candidates selected artifacts that reflected only their planning and their thinking; the artifacts did not demonstrate a key aspect of teaching—interactions with actual students.

Our analysis of artifacts from Data Set 2 suggests that teacher candidates can articulate their own disciplinary understandings and can design lesson plans that incorporate disciplinary concepts into their framing of history. They incorporate such concepts as cause, historical significance, and chronology, and they emphasize the role that narrative construction plays in history as a discipline. Importantly, the lesson plans that they included in their portfolios in this category were largely designed in the content methods courses. Overall, the teacher candidates did not include plans that they had designed for or used with their students.

We noted that, when demonstrating their ability to consider and respond to student thinking, ten of the teacher candidates selected artifacts that accurately reflected the requirements of the portfolio, and they wrote rationales that demonstrated that they understood how to consider and respond to student thinking. However, the artifact selected by all ten of these candidates was highly directed by the content methods course instructor and was designed as an introduction to learning about and from student learning, occurring in the first weeks of the content methods course sequence and not in the capstone clinical experience where candidates had daily interactions with students. In addition, this example represented a single interaction with students. Teacher candidates experienced sixteen weeks of clinical experiences and daily interactions with students, but when asked to identify artifacts that represent how they consider and respond to student thinking, twelve of the fifteen candidates did not pull examples from their work with students in extended clinical experiences. Furthermore, the examples of the three candidates in no way reflected assessments designed to engage students in disciplinary thinking in history.

Because of the complexity of the act of teaching, challenges remain when attempting to draw conclusions about the relationship between teacher candidates' epistemological understandings and the work they do with students when teaching history. Participants in our work demonstrated their ability to document their own understandings of history as a discipline and their ability to incorporate these understandings, albeit in a limited way, into their planning. When working with students in clinical experiences and having the opportunity to engage in the "frontier" of history teaching, candidates did not select artifacts that demonstrated interactions with students; they seemed to divorce their acquired pedagogical content knowledge from their work with students. In the portion of the portfolio where candidates were to submit artifacts demonstrating their ability to respond to student thinking, twelve candidates contributed artifacts that were not linked to extended field experiences, and three candidates contributed artifacts that represented a retreat from disciplinary thinking. The paucity of artifacts that candidates selected that come from field experiences overall suggests that the work that teacher candidates deemed the most meaningful to them and the most representative of "who they are" as teachers did not come from interactions with students. According to the teacher candidates (Question 2, Data Set 1), history teachers are supposed to frame content for their students, engage students in asking and answering questions, and assist students in analyzing primary sources. Likewise, history students are to "learn" this content by asking questions and analyzing sources. While the teacher candidates are able to frame content for students in planning and can explain, using disciplinary concepts, their reasons for doing so, the candidates chose not to provide evidence that would demonstrate how they—on a daily basis—consider and respond to student thinking as it pertains to the discipline. While our data is limited, the candidates in this case study did not appear to include interaction with students in their epistemology for teaching history.

We consider this finding significant because it suggests that the challenges that continue to plague history teacher preparation, namely a lack of change in teaching practices in spite of years of research and a plethora of curriculum materials designed to promote the teaching of historical thinking, will continue unless purposeful alterations are made in teacher candidates' clinical experiences. Teacher candidates in this study clearly faced challenges when transferring the knowledge and understandings they had gained in the content methods classes to their daily practices with

students. This finding is not surprising given that the field experiences were not aligned closely with discipline-based approaches to teaching. Emerging epistemological frames need to be allowed to develop and nurtured purposefully in clinical experiences. The candidates in this study were comfortable with expressing their epistemological understandings as they applied to history as a discipline (Question 1, Data Set 1) and as represented in the classroom by preparing lesson plans that focus on concepts in the discipline (Portfolio Section 4, Data Set 2). However, they were not as adept when articulating their grounds of knowledge pertaining to the actions and purposes of history teachers (Questions 2 and 3, Data Set 1) or when documenting how they attended to students' thinking in history (Portfolio Section 3, Data Set 2). Twenty-one years ago, Van Hover and Yeager (2003) called for long-term mentoring for beginning history teachers. In addition, perhaps more purposeful and discipline-based field experiences, in which history departments play a clear and defined role, will provide the support teacher candidates need to enable them to overcome the fissure that exists between coursework taken to prepare them to teach history and the opportunities these candidates see to enact these practices with their students.

SEARCHING FOR AND ENACTING METAPHORS

None of the metaphors addressed in the literature pertaining to history as a discipline and to teaching explain why American schools, despite significant efforts for more than half a century, have failed to embrace history education that better reflects the discipline. More precisely, while the metaphors employed by scholars serve as a sort of vivid testimony about the complexity of historical cognition, such rich choice of language provides little in explaining what happens when teacher candidates develop their historical thinking and then enter the K-12 classroom as emerging teachers. There teachers face school cultures shaped as much by educational materials, curriculum demands, and assessment practices as commitments to promote and measure historical inquiry. In other words, we need a metaphor that helps us comprehend how teachers whose approach to history reflects the *criterialist* epistemic stance often create and maintain professional teaching careers and classrooms that mirror *copier* or *borrower* positions regarding the discipline (Maggioni et al., 2009). There are no progression models capable of explaining this relatively common trajectory (Lee & Shemilt, 2003).

Just as importantly, we need a metaphor that helps those who work in history education create educational climates that make this phenomenon less common. As Suzanne Wilson and Sam Wineburg (1993, p. 764) concluded over thirty years ago, “setting new standards for teachers is one thing; providing the conditions for their attainment is quite another.” We suggest the use of *architecture* in two important ways. First, the notion of architecture is related to Brown’s framing of history education as a frontier through the concept of *liminal spaces*. For architects, these spaces are most often transitional areas such as hallways, stairways, lobbies, and bridges that connect other functional spaces (Betsky, 2015). They are usually public spaces that, despite being overlooked or underappreciated, link together private areas and foster movement, interaction, and community. They can also be sites of conflict. The field of history education needs to build on what Bruce Vansledright and Liliana Maggioni (2016) identify as “technocratic education” to examine just those areas of transition where epistemic stances of both teachers and students collide with the larger institutional, social, political, and cultural forces that provide both opportunities and limitations to classroom instruction. These areas begin as early as when future teachers enter the “frontier,” transitioning from secondary to college history courses, often dominated by lectures, and continue through higher education as history majors simultaneously completing original historical research in undergraduate seminars while participating in field experiences that provide a starkly different version of the discipline. Liminal spaces shape our sense of identity and community and deserve our attention as we strive to reshape what it means to be a history teacher.

Of course, for years researchers have explored the important use of space in education, what Torin Monahan (2002) refers to as “built pedagogy.” Focusing on the design of built spaces, Monahan (2002, p. 1) argues that schools and classrooms are “architectural embodiments of educational philosophies” that shape teaching and learning. Academic journals such as the *Journal of Learning Spaces* and *Learning Environments Research* are predicated on the belief that the design and use of space have important implications for instruction and student learning. However, our growing interest in the epistemology of history teachers and students suggests that the relatively new concept of *choice architecture* may better represent a solution to the challenges facing history education. Curriculum, classroom instruction, teacher education, and even broader educational policies are a result of countless decisions. Social scientists use the concept of choice architecture to describe how the design of processes of decision

making is never neutral and has a significant yet relatively unexamined impact on the choices of individuals and institutions (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). For example, the design of options for important decisions such as employee retirement programs or participation in organ donation is greatly affected by how policy makers structure the default options. Not unlike how the architecture of public spaces both reflects and promotes larger ideas about human behavior, *choice architects* design processes to make decisions associated with other positive outcomes more likely.

The behavior, perceptions, and decisions of teacher candidates, a reflection of evolving epistemic stances, remain central both to this chapter and to understanding and addressing the limited impact of reform efforts in history education. Occupying an underappreciated but crucial transitional space between K-12 schools and the teaching profession, novice history teachers develop professional identities within a field that has demonstrated impressive resistance to change. The concept of choice architecture illustrates the need to reexamine the intended and unintended consequences of history curricula, teacher education, and educational policy on the decisions and behavior of educators and students. In other words, design helps us understand change and, perhaps more importantly, inertia. It is not sufficient to understand and measure the epistemic stances of teachers and students, we need significant progress in evaluating and re-designing the liminal spaces of schools, classrooms, and teacher education programs to challenge the inertia that dominates much of history education and limits the influence of the scholarship in history education. How do these relatively unexamined spaces vary according to country or within countries and what challenges and possible solutions do history educators share with others? Such efforts would illuminate an evolving and contested field dominated by metaphors and create meaningful and productive connections between the promising scholarship on historical epistemology and the daily experiences of teachers, teacher candidates, and their students working on the frontier of history education.

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Epistemological Issues in Teaching Global History

Antoine Gauthier-Trépanier

INTRODUCTION

One of the first things that students of history or history education confront in their academic career is the question of historical knowledge. What is history? Is history a construct of the present? Does history provide direct access to the past? For some, the act of asking this question is an epiphany, and for others, a disenchantment. Studying and teaching history is not merely about memorizing stories and being good at telling them. Recent research in the field of history teaching suggests that history is much more than a mere repository of the lessons of the past (Baildon & Afandi, 2018). Learning history also means dealing with representations of the past constructed by historians and learning to construct one's own representations of reality to gain a greater understanding of the present (Martineau, 2011). It involves “admitting the presence of the past still there, in the present” (Falaize, 2020, p. 57). These visions of history teaching correspond partly to what Peter Seixas calls history as a means of

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H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_12

knowledge corresponding to the disciplinary approach (history as a way of knowing), but also to the postmodern approach and its various issues (Seixas, 2000). Several authors have dedicated themselves to the question of the evolution of historical knowledge and its meanings in the context of more diversified societies such as the United States, England, and Canada. A school of thought has thus developed around the concept of historical thinking, directing the issue of history teaching toward the question of transposing this knowledge into the classroom to deal with the dual challenge of a historical education with scientific claims that is nonetheless subject to influences from the political sphere (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

History is invariably seen as a politicized subject because of its role in shaping national identity and social cohesion (Harris & Graham, 2019). Its changes can be met with varying degrees of hostility (Nakou & Barca, 2010 in Harris & Graham, 2019; Dagenais & Laville, 2014) and controversy (Lemieux, 2021). However, Barton and Levstik (2004) point out that if we hope to change the nature of history teaching, then we might have a greater impact by “focusing on teachers’ purposes than on their pedagogical content knowledge” (p. 258). According to Audigier (1995), the purposes associated with history teaching fall into three broad categories. First is the patrimonial and civic aims, in which a shared representation of the past is transmitted through facts and results, and students are expected to adhere to this. Second is intellectual and critical purposes, where the discipline can also allow training the mind through the initiation of a scientific method, and a form of adhesion is expected as the information transmitted is based on a scientific consensus. Finally, in its practical purposes, unless one becomes a historian, the discipline can only be useful if political and civic purposes are added, and knowledge must, therefore, serve a purpose in social life. Therefore, if the purpose associated with the teaching and learning of a discipline gives it meaning, the question of historical knowledge is thus central for the teachers involved in any changes concerning history education.

However, since the 1990s, there has been a significant shift in how history is approached, moving toward a global perspective in the teaching and learning of history (Maurel, 2013). Originating from British historiography, this approach aims to promote a broader and more balanced understanding of history, encouraging exploration of the connections and interactions between different regions of the world (Stanziani, 2018). The term “global history” is often used to describe nonnational history (Girard & McArthur Harris, 2018). This raises questions about knowledge,

sources, methodologies, and the objectives of teaching history in such a connected manner.

The recent reform of history education in the social sciences and humanities program at the college level in Quebec, Canada, reflects this shift. Instead of focusing solely on the history of Western civilization (Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the modern and contemporary periods), the new curriculum encompasses the history of the world from the fifteenth century onward. Therefore, my study aims to examine the relationship between teachers and historical knowledge in the context of this curricular change. I will discuss the national context of my study and the specific curricular change, as well as the opposition it faces. Furthermore, I will describe the key characteristics of global history, its different approaches, and its epistemological implications. Finally, I will outline how my ongoing project allows us to understand the relationship between teachers and knowledge, as they serve as intermediaries in the changes implemented in history education.

CANADA'S NATIONAL CONTEXT

According to Sears (2017), as cited by Harris and Reynolds (2018), the debate between competency-based and knowledge- or content-based teaching is universal, but the solutions are embedded in national or regional contexts (p. 139). Thus, the approaches to teaching and learning history vary internationally (Vinuesa, 2012; Nygren, 2011; Elmersjö & Zanazanian (2022); Girard & McArthur Harris, 2018), but more importantly, they depend on the needs of each society and its capacity to develop its own curriculum. In Canada, education is under provincial jurisdiction, meaning that each province and territory (13 jurisdictions) organizes its own education networks and creates its own programs based on linguistic contexts, the presence of minority groups, and their respective historical trajectories. There are two dominant narratives, one centered on the Franco-Catholic experience in Quebec and the other on the Anglo-Protestant experience in Canada (Clark and Levasseur, 2015). In addition to these narratives, the Indigenous experience is also seeking greater representation within existing programs (Vallée-Longpré & Stan, 2022). Within this context, representations of the past are strongly influenced by the specific experiences of the different groups currently inhabiting Canadian territory, as well as the disciplinary and social context. According to Moisan (2010, p. 10), the vision of history and its teaching at any given

time is closely linked to the way history is constructed in that period and the conception of citizenship that is shared. In this regard, if “all history is contemporary,” as each generation interprets the past according to its own concerns (Stanziani, 2018), those guiding the modification of the history curriculum are particularly concerned with the phenomenon of globalization and the need to move away from a Eurocentric perspective in teaching history.

MY STUDY: HISTORY TEACHING IN QUEBEC’S COLLEGE SYSTEM

Unique to Quebec (in its form, see Grégoire, 1992), college education has been in place since 1967, following the compulsory primary and secondary schooling cycles. Its purpose is to prepare students for the labor market or further university studies (Ministère de l’Enseignement supérieur du Québec, 2020, p. 1). Within this educational network, approximately 24% of students opt for the pre-university social sciences and humanities program (Ministère de l’Enseignement supérieur du Québec, 2021). As the name suggests, this program serves as a stepping stone for various university fields of study in Quebec, such as humanities and social sciences, and law, without offering specific career pathways upon completion.

The program consists of four components: general training that is common to all study programs (French, English, philosophy, physical education), program-specific general training (history, economics, psychology), specific training (which varies locally), and complementary training (courses outside the field of study). Although the program was initially introduced in 1991 and revised in 2001, it underwent further review in 2015 to update its content. This review process aligns with the broader context of updating college programs, as guided by the Ministry of Education and the recommendations put forth by the Higher Education Council. However, the revision process and the new draft program have not received unanimous support. While the goals and objectives of the program have been well-received, the proposed competencies have sparked heated debate, particularly due to their aim of avoiding disciplinary specialization at the request of universities (Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur, 2017). In essence, pre-university college education must align with university requirements. The previous competency,

“Recognize the essential characteristics of Western civilization from a historical perspective,” was criticized by the working group responsible for making recommendations, stating that it did not allow for a comprehensive approach to historical reality, which involves multiple contributions from various civilizations. Therefore, it was recommended to replace it with a competency that focuses on a specific time period rather than a geographic region. Eventually, the competency “Explain the foundations of world history, from the 15th century to the present day” was included in the new program after a process marked by a second proposal on North American history.

Then, on August 28, 2020, in response to the process of updating the new pre-university humanities curriculum at the college level, an opinion piece entitled “Pourquoi amputer l’histoire de l’Occident?” (“Why amputate the history of the West?”, 2020) was published. In this article, a doctoral student in ancient history strongly criticized the modification of the history competency embedded in the new social sciences program, which led to a polarized debate with two main perspectives. One article on Radio-Canada highlighted a teacher’s concern about the formation of “cultural illiterates” (2020), while an influential sociologist questioned, “How can we understand Western civilization without going back to its sources?” (2020). On the other hand, supporters of the curriculum change welcomed the revised competency and criticized the lack of understanding or even distortion of the updating process by the opposing camp. Teachers described the process as long in the making and part of the broader redesign of the social studies program that began five years ago, with extensive consultation with stakeholders. A teacher and lecturer reminded us that the process primarily aims at updating knowledge and teaching in the humanities and does not specifically target the history course. However, due to the lively nature of the debate, the Minister of Higher Education finally issued a press release announcing the addition of a sub-element of competence that relates to the connections to be made with Antiquity and the Middle Ages. This addition aims to complete the world history course from the fifteenth century to the present day. What does this debate mean for our subject? According to Montreuil (2022), four oppositions or “common objects” emerge from the arguments of both sides. These include the spatiotemporal dilemma (in reference to discussions on competencies with geographical or temporal markers), the opposition on the pedagogical purpose of history (humanistic tradition or civic and professional), the question of identity (the identity function of transmitting

history), and the opposition on the utilitarian function of history (teaching history in service of the present) (Montreuil, 2022). The vitality of the media debate generated by the change in competency underscores the social importance of history and the central role of its teaching in Quebec. Many studies have focused on the various controversies related to the curriculum in different national contexts, but I believe it is relevant to focus on the knowledge in tension and the epistemological implications for teachers. Within the two perspectives, there are also different positions regarding the teaching of history and the relationship to knowledge, which may lead to postures of resistance or acceptance of the latest reform of the social studies curriculum and its new world history-oriented competency. Presumably, teachers are not yet willing to let go of the history of the West.

TEACHING WESTERN HISTORY IN QUÉBEC: FROM PLATO TO NATO

As mentioned earlier, in Canada, education is a provincial jurisdiction. In Quebec, courses on Quebec and Canadian history are mandatory for secondary education. In 2006, the introduction of a program considered too multiculturalist sparked a major controversy as it excluded certain historical content related to the national question (Bouvier, 2008). On the other hand, for some educators, the question of content must be approached with an inclusive, open, and critical objective for citizenship education (Moreau, 2017). Opponents of the program argued that one does not necessarily exclude the other. As a result, the program's content was revised in 2017 to reconcile a scientific approach with a "heritage" role (Éthier et al., 2017). However, some argue that the curriculum's efforts to create a national identity and collective memory undermine the interpretive and critical aspects of history teaching (Baildon & Afandi, 2018), as it tends to "favor unreflective identification with a predefined community" (Éthier et al., 2017, p. 54). While the teaching of national history continues to be debated in Québec, the history of the West itself had not been questioned until the aforementioned debate, despite being taught in Quebec schools. The Secondary Two curriculum has included a general study of Western history since 1982, and its revised version in 2006 offers a two-year course (Secondary One and Two) focusing on the history of Western Europe and North America (Éthier et al., 2017; Lemieux, 2021).

It can be said that the history of Western civilization has always had its place in Quebec curricula, firstly, with the (historical) aim of fostering “pride in Catholic and French origins” (Éthier et al., 2017, p. 50) and, secondly, based on different pedagogical and civic purposes, to cultivate an attachment to the framework of Western civilization. The teaching framework for history and the resulting knowledge logically follow a curriculum path that introduces this general framework and then situates the more specific framework of Quebec and Canadian history. The compulsory Western history course in the humanities program discussed in this chapter was introduced in the 1990s. Initially, it sparked some discontent, summarized by a teacher as the history of the West “from Plato to NATO,” emphasizing the tremendous challenge of covering Western history from Antiquity to the contemporary period, in only 45 hours!

In my view, the new history course from the fifteenth century to the present falls under the so-called global history approach, which considers historical phenomena on a scale that encompasses the local, national, and international levels (Maurel, 2014; Stanziani, 2018). This approach connects local history to global dynamics and provides students with the opportunity to study a less Eurocentric curriculum. The report preceding the current redesign of the history course at the college level recognized the need for students to “differentiate major historical periods and utilize factual information related to international, Western, and national history to contextualize a situation” (Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur, 2017, p. 23). Moreover, the compulsory study of history in the social sciences and humanities curriculum was emphasized to facilitate the understanding of global dynamics specific to other disciplines while also acknowledging the “risk” of over-specialization (Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur, 2017). Consequently, the working group responsible for redesigning the social sciences and humanities curriculum initially focused on a competency in North America and the world, then expanded to cover the world from the fifteenth century onward (Ministère de l’Éducation supérieure, 2020), and finally integrated the foundations of Western culture from Antiquity and the Middle Ages into the world history perspective (Ministère de l’Éducation supérieure, 2021). In addition to adopting a global perspective, the new course also incorporates many related to the practical purposes of Audigier (1995). Several competency elements in the new course reflect this, such as “identifying the characteristics of historical knowledge construction,” “formulating a historical explanation,” and “interpreting a contemporary issue from a historical

perspective” (Ministère de l’Éducation supérieure, 2021). Thus, the introduction of the new course is a response to the contextual logic of a “program approach” where the knowledge acquired in core subjects (history, psychology, economics) supports the learning of other humanities courses in the program (geography, anthropology, sociology, etc.). This logic aligns perfectly with the goals of the global history project, which promotes interdisciplinary openness and highlights the educational challenge of responding to the phenomenon of global globalization in humanities education.

Finally, the new competency, its sub-elements, and performance criteria have been announced. However, it is up to the teachers to determine the content indicators that will identify the key concepts to be addressed in the course and the didactic sequence of its teaching. In this context, what are the implications of introducing a global perspective to history teaching from an epistemological standpoint? To answer this question, it is important to examine the advocates of this historiographic trend and then consider how teachers translate official policies into curricula or content (Harris & Reynolds, 2018).

WORLD HISTORY, GLOBAL HISTORY...

How are these two terms similar? Osterhammel distinguished the world and global history as follows: “World history is the history of different civilizations and their comparison, while global history is the history of contacts and interactions between civilizations” (Osterhammel, 2005 cited by Grosser, 2011, p. 15). According to Clarence-Smith et al. (2006), it is specifically the examination of the process of globalization that differentiates global history from world history. But what globalization are they talking about? According to Stanziani (2018), specialists of the nineteenth century, the Renaissance, the Middle Ages, Antiquity, and even the Neolithic are entitled to identify their own globalization phenomena according to their respective frameworks, but I will not settle this debate here.

Faced with the need to draw a line in the intellectual claims of these specialists, Stanziani (2018) puts forward the question of sources as a criterion. It is not enough to say that one is doing global history to do so, but the objectives, methodology, and conclusions must be oriented toward particular ends. However, there is a certain methodological vagueness about the methods, which can be explained in part by the currents of

interest in the 1990s (Stanziani, 2018; Maurel, 2018). Indeed, it is customary to trace the questioning of global history back to the currents of comparative history and its first roots in the development of the social sciences and then to the methodological criteria that Marc Bloch attempted to provide (Maurel, 2018). The limits of comparative history lie, however, in the need to know several languages and master several historiographies at the same time, but above all, as Maurel (2018) points out, in the methodological vagueness that has not, despite all of Marc Bloch's attempts, been completely resolved. Other authors propose different approaches in universal history, in historical sociology, and, of course, in economic history.

Thus, what characterizes the project of global history is probably the need for a more comprehensive history in the context of the study of globalization in the humanities. To understand a world in which the Western world is no longer the center, the humanities must be open to different perspectives to understand world dynamics (Metro, 2020). Since the study of this globalization requires markers, it also requires the restitution of the dynamics at the origin of the phenomena studied in the field of the respective disciplines making up the humanities in Quebec (geography, anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics). To this end, global history seems to me to respond to a need to build networks of knowledge from which to connect the study of different subjects in a so-called program or global approach to pre-university education in the humanities.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

On the side of French historiography, the publication of Patrick Bucheron's "Histoire mondiale de la France" (2017) has recently raised a significant media debate. As with the reactions to curricular change in Quebec summarized in the introduction, the perspective of a world history of France is perceived as a way of bypassing or contesting national identity (Bucheron quoted by De Baecque and Ion, 2018), reflecting the idea of Girard and McArthur Harris suggesting that global history is often perceived as non-national history (2018). But is it? Cadpuy (2015) reminds us, however, that "global history does not eclipse other histories, revolutions, genres, beliefs." On the other hand, the "principles of global history have a relevance that extends far beyond" (Testot dir., 2015, p. 244). Indeed, it might be a step forward to do away with the so-called national novel, but not necessarily with national history which, in a world history teaching

scenario, is still a point of reference from which it is possible to establish connections between societies in other geographical areas.

Without a doubt world history, global history, and even connected history share several aims, those of “decompartmentalising, reframing, reconnecting, stepping aside, and thinking in equal parts” (Capdepuy in Testot *dir.*, 2015, pp. 245–246). All these aims imply drawing on the method of scholarly history while adopting various perspectives to break with a ready-to-teach history. Finally, for the historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam (2014, p. 2), in his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France on the origins of global history:

It turns out that in today’s world there is a growing interest and curiosity in this type of history, which is not, however—and this is my deep conviction—intended to replace history done on a regional, national, or continental scale but to complement it. I am also convinced that new synergies can even be found by combining these varieties of history under one roof.

This perspective is shared by Laurent Testot (2015, p. 12), for whom the project of global history is to “connect and put into comparative perspective all these national histories, which have been severely compartmentalized until now, in order to bring out an invisible substance, made up of interactions, migrations, and exchanges.” This perspective has also been severely criticized in Quebec, where global history is welcomed as a thumb in the eye of national history. However, as Stanziani (2018) argues, I believe that it is the complementarity of these views and epistemologies that makes it possible to account for the real complexity of the issues and realities of the world today.

In sum, the shift toward global history in the teaching and learning of history brings about significant epistemological implications. It challenges traditional Eurocentric perspectives and encourages a more inclusive and interconnected understanding of the past (Metro, 2020). Global history seeks to break down the boundaries between national narratives and explores the interdependencies and exchanges between different regions and cultures (Maurel, 2013). By adopting a global approach, historians aim to overcome the limitations of a narrow focus on individual nations or regions and instead examine broader patterns, networks, and flows of historical events and processes (Stanziani, 2018).

TEACHING GLOBAL HISTORY, A CONTEXT FOR REFORM

Considering ... how does the global history project serve as an epistemological critique of the writing and teaching of history within the framework of college studies in Quebec? I have already addressed this question to some extent, but I would like to attempt to answer it by focusing on the teachers, as intermediaries between the political and the curriculum.

Given that history is a subject with political implications, it is expected that a reform would immediately reflect the aims and objectives of the education system (Harris & Graham, 2019). Teachers serve as intermediaries (Harris & Reynolds, 2018), and their interpretations of a curriculum can vary (Lanoix, 2015; Spillane et al., 2002). The actual implications of such a change ultimately involve an adherence to a specific historical perspective that can be interpreted in different ways within a non-prescriptive curriculum where teachers are largely responsible for the content. The spatiotemporal dilemma arising from the choice of the course's timeframe highlights the importance of connections from the fifteenth century onward, while also necessitating an awareness of the Eurocentric nature of history education. As Brian Girard and Lauren McArthur Harris state (2018, p. 255), "Teachers may recognize Eurocentrism but not know how to avoid it." The recent curricular change in history education in Quebec reflects the broader shift toward global history. Moving from a focus on the history of Western civilization to a more encompassing history of the world, this change challenges teachers to reevaluate their relationship with historical knowledge and adapt their pedagogical practices accordingly. It requires them to familiarize themselves with new content, methodologies, and perspectives and to develop strategies for teaching global history effectively. Thus, a critical epistemology of history and its teaching is emphasized through this course. I believe that it is precisely this aspect that encounters resistance, as the knowledge typically associated with the discipline, especially its study from the origins of human civilizations, is questioned in some way. Since teachers are ultimately seeking a form of balance in their profession (Lanoix, 2015), it would be interesting to better understand how they adapt to these changes through the examination of their representations and beliefs about the subjects of global history and its teaching.

The shift toward global history in the teaching and learning of history represents a significant departure from traditional national and Eurocentric

frameworks. It promotes a broader and more interconnected understanding of the past, emphasizing the importance of historical knowledge and the mechanisms of historical production. In the Canadian context, the recent curricular change in Quebec reflects this shift and raises important questions about teaching methodologies, epistemological implications, and the role of teachers as facilitators of this change.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the curricular change in Quebec toward the teaching of global history reflects a critical approach aimed at better preparing students to navigate the complexities of a globalized world. By incorporating global perspectives, the curriculum acknowledges the interconnectedness of societies and the importance of understanding historical dynamics beyond national boundaries. However, critics argue that this shift may lead to a neglect of pivotal periods such as Antiquity and the Middle Ages, which are crucial for comprehending the development of Western civilization. While teachers are trained to recognize and incorporate the contributions of non-European civilizations, avoiding a Eurocentric perspective requires additional epistemic knowledge and understanding. It is important to note that while certain phenomena are experienced globally, the solutions and adaptations to global history teaching are likely to be shaped at the national and local levels. Each society must determine its own response to the challenges of globalization, drawing upon updated knowledge to develop new history curricula. Overall, the introduction of global history in Quebec's curriculum reflects a critical epistemology that challenges traditional approaches to history teaching. It calls for a broader understanding of historical dynamics and encourages educators to explore new perspectives and knowledge to better equip students for an increasingly interconnected world. By examining the national and epistemological context, as well as the experiences of teachers, I think we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with teaching history from a global perspective. Understanding their perspectives will help identify potential areas of support and professional development needed to enhance the quality of history education in this new framework.

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PART III

Reflections on Measurements and
Instruments



Why Does Epistemology Matter? A Personal Journey

Liliana Maggioni

Whether known or unknown, what happened in the past sets the stage for the present, but it is only by entering people's awareness, that is, by becoming knowledge, that the past contributes to framing their understanding of the present and of themselves. The lively debates concerning what should be fostered as the content of such awareness often focus on which specific events, people, and trends should be taught in history classrooms, displayed in a museum, memorialized in the public square, or recalled as a mark of national identity. In other words, the focus is on what stories about the past should be told.

Less discussed are the criteria that may enable individuals to evaluate the saliency, veracity, and accuracy of the events described, the cogency of the relations identified, the plausibility of the meanings suggested, and the strength of the arguments proposed. Maybe even less reflection is devoted to the nature of historical knowledge, the degree of certainty that it allows, and its suitability for change. Yet, I propose that it is precisely at this level that inquiries about the past may powerfully contribute to personal

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development. More specifically, reflection on how the process of knowing occurs may foster the ability to critically evaluate the knowledge of the past that one is able to generate or that others may propose, while an understanding of the nature of historical knowledge may favor an appreciation of its possibilities and limits, together with a more appropriate and useful conceptualization of what facts and interpretations are and what their relation may be.

Conversely, when devoid of criteria that can aid the evaluation of inquiries about the past, decisions about the *what* of history tend to rest uniquely on present concerns or personal preferences; the past, rather than contributing to an understanding of the present, is then used to bolster interpretations of the present in line with one's ideology, interests, or culture, and history easily becomes a font of division and partisanship, a powerful tool for justifying specific political views or even wars, a means for demonizing what is perceived as different and "other" rather than the occasion for enriching one's understanding of the features of our shared humanity and of oneself through an encounter with the "otherness" of the past.

The influence that domain-general epistemic beliefs have on learning and teaching has been explored in the cognitive literature for several decades. Much more recent is the study of how beliefs about the nature of knowledge and the process of knowing in specific disciplines influence their teaching and learning. The Beliefs about Learning and Teaching History Questionnaire (BLTHQ; Maggioni et al., 2004, 2009) and the Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ; Maggioni, 2010) were born as an attempt to develop an assessment of epistemic beliefs in history and thus offer a tool for studying their relation with teaching and learning history and their eventual change over time.

Since their publication, these tools have been used to study students' and teachers' epistemic beliefs in history in a variety of contexts and with different degrees of success (Stoel et al., 2022). The outcomes of the studies have sometimes suggested modifications of the questionnaires and raised the issue of the suitability of these or other quantitative questionnaires for the study of epistemic beliefs. This body of research has also been enriched by qualitative studies and studies using different quantitative tools. Overall, as a field, I believe that we have gained important insights about the role that epistemic beliefs play in learning and teaching history. At the same time, as some of the studies included in this volume also illustrate, we have been puzzled by some of the findings, which have opened new questions and challenged our methods.

In this chapter, I hope to contribute to this work by briefly reviewing the theoretical principles underpinning the BLTHQ and BHQ and focusing on two findings that have been corroborated by several studies and have often emerged in the experience of teacher educators. I also want to propose an interpretation of these findings in light of Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental framework (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and derive a few suggestions for pedagogical practice.

BLTHQ AND BHQ THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The BLTHQ and the BHQ built on the educational psychology research on epistemic beliefs and, more specifically, on Marlene Schommer's idea to assess them with the aid of a quantitative measure (Schommer, 1990). At the same time, these questionnaires tried to overcome the dichotomy between naïve and sophisticated beliefs that characterized Schommer's work and, more specifically, the idea that beliefs that acknowledged the role of the knower in the generation of knowledge, including those compatible with an "anything goes" view, were sophisticated, while beliefs that granted any role to the object of knowledge were naïve. I was especially worried by the educational and, more broadly, social implications of this view, where little to no space was accorded to evidence in the generation of knowledge.

In addition, such a dichotomy did not seem to reflect the epistemic status of history, even after acknowledging the quite wide range of views among professional historians. On one hand, the generation of knowledge about the past requires a willingness to submit one's insights to the test of the archive and of other available remnants from the past. On the other hand, subjectivity plays a key role in history not simply at the level of the knower, that is, of the historian whether professional or not; a degree of subjectivity is also present in most of the remnants of the past that mediate the knower's access to that past.

A rough comparison with the physical sciences may help me to clarify what I mean. A scientist who studies a part of the physical world brings to that study her own questions, theories, prior understandings, and hypotheses, that is, her subjectivity; in this respect, epistemologically speaking, the situation she faces is not much different from the one faced by a historian. Yet, the part of the physical world that constitutes the object of the scientist's study does not have its own subjectivity. The scientist will certainly interpret that reality, but the subjective factor will reside only on the

“knower” side of the relation that makes knowledge possible. In contrast, the historian who studies a particular letter or diary that may shed light on the question of her interest is dealing not only with the subjectivity that she herself is bringing to the enterprise but also with the subjectivity inherent in the object she is studying, which includes the perspective, aims, and context of its author. This double level of subjectivity makes the epistemological landscape of history especially complex and the claims of what can be known about the past quite humble and often conditional; yet, it does not imply that any claim will do or that no (lower-case “t”) truth about the past can be found. I will return to the pedagogical implications of acknowledging this double level of subjectivity toward the end of this chapter.

Schommer’s (1990) framework was not the only one used to approach the study of epistemic beliefs. Besides other attempts to develop questionnaires addressing various dimensions of epistemic beliefs, researchers had also focused on the development of epistemic cognition. I found that developmental approaches to the study of epistemic development, and especially the work by Kuhn and her colleagues (2000), were mirroring quite nicely the developmental progressions described by Lee and his colleagues in relation to epistemically charged concepts such as historical evidence and historical accounts (Lee, 2004; Lee & Ashby, 2000; Lee & Shemilt, 2003). The theoretical descriptions of the Copier, Borrower, and Criterialist stances were based on the integration of these models (Maggioni et al., 2004, 2009). These frameworks and progressions were also compatible with a conceptualization of knowing that acknowledged the role of the knower without discounting the contribution of the reality studied, thus overcoming, at least in my mind, the naïve/sophisticated dichotomy underlying most of the extant questionnaires assessing domain-general epistemic beliefs.

The BLTHQ was built on this initial insight. Since we needed to use this questionnaire to measure eventual changes in the epistemic beliefs of elementary teachers participating in a professional development program, we decided to “translate” theoretical epistemic beliefs about history into statements regarding its learning and teaching. We later realized that this choice might have elicited beliefs about pedagogy or general beliefs about learning rather than epistemic beliefs about history to a greater degree than we had envisioned. It also turned out that some items in the questionnaire did not seem to contribute to explaining differences among individuals or align with any of the theoretical stances we had used to design

the questionnaire. Thus, after additional refinement, we decided to drop some of the original statements and tried to focus more squarely on beliefs about history as a discipline. I called the revised questionnaire the BHQ.

As this volume illustrates, I believe that, as a community of researchers and history educators, we have learned quite a bit in these past years, although our instruments may still be too rough for capturing the nuances of epistemic thinking and its changes, nuances that often emerge more clearly from qualitative studies. The next sections discuss two findings that emerged across a broad range of studies and their implications for pedagogical practice.

EPISTEMIC INCONSISTENCY AND EPISTEMIC WOBBLING

The first finding points to the phenomenon of epistemic inconsistency and epistemic wobbling. I encountered it very early in my research, but it was only after digging into different bodies of literature and several years spent listening to many different people interacting with epistemological statements that I became quite convinced that epistemic inconsistency is not merely an artifact of an unrefined measure, but an actual phenomenon, which has been observed across different countries, populations, and with the use of different instruments and research methods (for a review, see Stoel et al., 2022).

The interesting and pedagogically relevant questions for me then shifted toward understanding what factors and ideas are especially hindering consistency within what I believe are more adaptive epistemic stances, and what pedagogical moves and didactic tools can best support individuals facing such epistemic stumbling blocks. Why one stance should be considered preferable to another may rightly raise a question.

The reasons why I believe that fostering consistency with what we have described elsewhere (Maggioni et al., 2009) as a Criterialist stance is a worthwhile goal can be summarized as follows: first, this set of beliefs favors historical understanding by placing the knower in a position that facilitates her grappling with the epistemological challenges typically encountered in learning about the past. In addition, the habits of mind typical of the Criterialist stance can also be very useful for fostering a critical approach to present-day issues. For example, checking the reliability of one's sources of information in relation to a specific question of interest and corroborating across them can be very helpful for coming to well-grounded, justified conclusions.

Second, consistency within the Criterialist stance presupposes the habit of acknowledging the role and the responsibility of the knower in the generation of historical knowledge, while favoring a gaze that embraces the otherness of the past that comes to us through its remnants.

Third, experiencing and reflecting on what making meaning may look like and feel like when these beliefs are espoused in relation to the process of historical understanding (i.e., in relation to an important, but limited aspect of one's experience) may facilitate generalization of the principle that is at the root of such beliefs to arrive at a way of understanding and relating to oneself and to the world that is more capable of withstanding the demands of modern life (Kegan, 1994).

In what follows, I delve more deeply into this last reason by briefly summarizing the insights I gained from the literature with regard to epistemic inconsistency, especially in relation to the development of adolescents, young adults, and adults. In re-reading more carefully Perry's work (1970), which is often cited as one of the founding studies of epistemic development, I noticed that such inconsistency had emerged also in his pivotal study, but it got buried in a footnote and mostly ignored by further research. More specifically, he had found that the college students he studied tended to interpret different sectors of their experience (e.g., academic, religious, career) on the basis of beliefs typical of different epistemic positions. In other words, epistemic positions seemed to be contextual and multiple positions could be manifested by the same individual at the same time. Since his focus was on tracking development, assigning each individual to the level of epistemic development that was demonstrated in most instances seemed an acceptable way of tracking development over time, while simplifying the scoring of the interviews without lowering interrater reliability.

A similar occurrence was also noted by King and Kitchener (2002). For this reason, they characterized epistemic development as the movement of a wave embracing at any time a number of beliefs belonging to different stages. Within the developmental psychology perspective, I have always found the work on women's ways of knowing (Belenky et al., 1997) and the work by Robert Kegan (1982, 1994) especially enlightening. These lines of research explored the connection between epistemic development and the self and further characterized epistemic inconsistency as part of one's developmental journey.

I was drawn to these lines of research because I had noted that individuals can be very uncomfortable when they realize that they entertain

inconsistent beliefs, but are unable to reconcile them. In my research and teaching experience, these reactions usually surfaced after students or teachers were asked to reflect on epistemically charged statements (e.g., the ones comprised in the BHQ) or as the outcome of learning experiences purposely designed to foster an emergence of student epistemic beliefs. When asked to articulate their thinking, students' and teachers' response to the realization that the epistemic views they entertained had been challenged, together with their inability to effectively address the challenge, usually had a strong affective connotation. It was quite evident to me that these students and teachers were not dealing with abstract, far-away ideas; what they felt to be at stake was deeply personal.

It is at this level that I have found the work of Robert Kegan (1982, 1994) very useful. I am sharing here the insights I have gained, with no pretense to convey the breadth and depth of his research; those who finds these brief remarks enticing may want to read his work directly. Building on Piaget's (e.g., 1952, 1954) and Perry's (1970) work, and more generally on the main tenets of constructivism and developmentalism, Kegan proposes a view of the person as an evolving, inherently meaning-making being. It is only within this meaning-making context that what happens to the person becomes an experience, a feeling, a perception, a thought. Meaning-making embraces both the process of developing a logical, predictive theory about the world and the more existential process of dealing with questions and answers about the meaning (or meaninglessness) of life, which guide one's commitment. According to Kegan, *how* a person makes meaning across a variety of contexts depends on the specific principle of mental organization that characterizes her development at a certain point in her lifetime.

More specifically, the way in which people think about their own thinking, their feelings, their relating to others, and their inner experiences depends on the specific principle that guides the organization of meaning across these different contexts. It is this principle that develops across time and characterizes the mental capacity of the person. In his work, Kegan explores how the principles that inform how people construct meaning develop over the lifespan, together with the transformations in consciousness that occur over time. In doing so, he extends prior developmental research by looking at adulthood as comprising a variety of capacities of mind, rather than being the end-point of personal development.

For example, elementary/early middle school children have usually reached what Kegan (1994, pp. 28–30) calls a second order of

consciousness, and tend to organize their experience according to the “durable categories” principle. In talking about the past, they can link one event to another and build a story, but only in concrete terms, without organizing it under an abstract theme, although they can identify simple relations of cause and effect. In the context of learning history, and in line with prior research in the domain (Lee, 2004), this principle suggests that these students can understand and use primary concepts (i.e., peasants, king) and learn narratives that may include relations of cause and effect, but they will struggle to understand the different nature of colligatory concepts, such as the Middle Ages or the French revolution, and thus the more explicit role of the historian in the generation and ordering of historical knowledge.

By the end of adolescence, a person tends to develop what Kegan (1994, pp. 28–32) calls a third order of consciousness, characterized by the cross-categorical meaning-making principle (socialized mind). Not only can the person recognize her own point of view, she can also acknowledge other people’s point of view. Further, she can internalize the values and rules of her group or society, which become her own. From the point of view of history, adolescents can understand *how* history is written and internalize the “procedural rules” of the historians’ community. They can also identify the themes and values expressed in a particular narrative of events. Yet, at this level of development, adolescents are not able to step out of the system of rules and values provided by the community (the disciplinary community, in this case). Thus, they have not developed a personal criterion (or set of criteria) to decide whether a certain narrative may be preferable to another one, as long as both respect the procedural rules established by the community.

What happens when a person at this level of development is confronted by the possibility that the story validated by her community conveys only a limited view of the past, even if it was produced in accordance with the procedural rules of the disciplinary community? How to decide about other complementary or alternative views? In pondering these questions, she may realize that the principle that informs her meaning-making leaves her at a loss. She may also realize that the disequilibrium is not circumscribed to making sense of the past, but she may feel that it challenges the very principle organizing her whole experience, including her relationships, the values she holds, and the way in which she sees herself. If the textbook, even if good, does not tell the whole and true story about the past, and the history teacher (i.e., the authority) does not have certain and

complete knowledge either, what about the knowledge that she has thus far borrowed from other books or other authorities? Far from being a mere theoretical business, her very self and the way in which she has thus far made sense of the world are at stake. If a person does not flee from this realization, the position in which she finds herself is vertiginous.

In order to make meaning out of the challenging experience described above, a person would need a move toward the development of what Kegan (1994, pp. 92–95) calls a self-authoring mind (fourth order of consciousness), that is, she should become able to look at the values and rules she has received from her group and allow herself to evaluate them. She would come to see that there are different historical theories and historiographic traditions, each one with its own values, interests, and merits, but she would retain the responsibility to evaluate them and to contribute her own voice. Yet, developmental research suggests that such a move does not tend to happen till later in adulthood, and not for everyone.

Although I believe that Kegan's third and fourth order of consciousness provide especially useful insights for phenomena observed in research on learning and teaching history, this is not the end of the developmental story. For example, in order to realize that each theory and tradition, actually each discipline, offers just a partial way of understanding reality, a person would need to develop what Kegan calls a self-transforming mind (fifth order of consciousness; 1994, pp. 290–291). Only by relativizing the kind of knowing experienced by the person within any particular system (e.g., a disciplinary community), can the person become able to reflect critically on the systems (e.g., the disciplines) themselves. Not only does she become able to conceive that others may have a different set of values and opinions that make sense within their own system of reference, but she also embraces the difference and potential conflict as what may enrich and transform her own way of understanding, precisely through the encounter and exchange with what is other.

Within this framework of developmental theory, I think that epistemic wobbling can be understood as the growing pains of an evolving mind, challenged to make meaning out of an experience that is, for its present way of thinking, quite over its head, just to cite Kegan again (1994).

For example, I have found in my research and, more generally, in my teaching experience that people tend not to welcome the complexity of the epistemic landscape of history. As soon as they realize that the past and history are not isomorphic and that history cannot grant certain and exhaustive access to the past, they tend to find the kind of epistemic

quagmire that ensues not pleasant at all. I have seen this discomfort emerging especially when people are asked to justify their degree of agreement or disagreement with statements describing specific epistemic beliefs. I also saw it emerging clearly in working with teachers during different professional development programs, and also in my social studies methods classes when teacher candidates were challenged, maybe for the first time, to think deeply about the nature of the knowledge they possessed about the past.

The discomfort that the epistemic nature of history introduces is not merely cognitive; rather, it tends to evoke strong feelings. Developmental considerations aside, I wonder if this may result from the fact that past events and people have deep significance for our lives as individuals and as societies, with their history based on and conveying values and meanings that matter deeply for our lives today.

By reflecting on epistemological statements or maybe after an experience with historical sources that did not nicely align with each other, people may come to realize that a degree of subjectivity is inescapable in knowing about the past; what should they do, then, with all the facts that they have thus far believed and that play a significant role in their personal identity and choices? Doubting all of them may likely be overwhelming, especially if individuals are not equipped with the kind of epistemic thinking (i.e., an organizing principle, in Kegan's framework) that could be helpful for overcoming the impasse. Their mind may be a socialized mind, but not ready to become a self-authoring mind, yet. My hypothesis is that, at least in the short term, epistemic inconsistency, though painful when squarely faced, may allow the self to continue making sense of her experiences, while providing the space for working on the disequilibrium.

Taking up the responsibility for one's own knowledge implied by a self-authoring mind may feel scary, as one of the students in one of my studies told me. She stated that she did not want to be taught to deal with conflicting evidence because, and I quote, "Then you have to think and to be like 'Oh, what is, which is right?' And then you can make the mistake of being wrong and then you'll tell everyone the wrong thing and change what really happened" (Maggioni, 2010, p. 221). Conversely, I have also witnessed the satisfaction of those who, after reflection, capture a glimpse of how liberating and empowering such a new way of thinking could be.

DEVELOPING (OR NOT) THE CAPACITY TO THINK HISTORICALLY

The second finding that I want to recall here regards the implementation of curricula aiming to develop historical thinking. In the past decades, several history curricula have explicitly listed among their goals an introduction to historical inquiry, which includes the analysis of primary and secondary sources, and heuristics such as sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration. More rarely, reformed curricula have focused on the development of historical questions—which is telling, but unfortunate in my view, since such a move would enable students to experience some explicit agency in what historical knowledge is generated and thus contribute to their epistemic development.

Teacher education has likewise tried to prepare teachers for this task. New didactic tools have been developed and tested, and several studies have reported on their preliminary effects. Some lines of research and some curricula have broadened this aim, making the point that thinking historically cannot be reduced to a set of strategies or heuristics. Terms such as “historical understanding” or “development of historical consciousness” hint, in my view, at such a broader conception of what history is and should accomplish in the curriculum and in the education of the whole person.

As a result of these new goals and pedagogical approaches, students have been introduced to the use of multiple sources and, more generally, to some form of historical inquiry, but rarely has attention been given to their simultaneous epistemic development. I believe that it is mainly for this reason that thinking historically has often been reduced to its procedural component, which comprises strategies that can be singled out and applied to the “problem” at hand. Rather than being used as a means to illustrate the epistemic nature of history and thus equip students with a lens necessary for a critical understanding of the past, often exercises with multiple sources tend to be just that, an exercise in problem-solving.

The results of this approach are mixed at best because, together with heuristics that could potentially serve them well, students also develop habits and ideas that actually hinder historical understanding. For example, the idea that there are always two sides to every story. Why only two, and how to choose among them? Or the idea that reliability is an inner, absolute quality of a source, independent of the question it can help to explore. Another problematic idea is that “the truth” regarding a

particular event or question can be reduced to a quantitative problem and thus identified with the narrative supported by the higher number of sources, irrespective of their reliability. Even sourcing, that is, considering the author of a specific source, its context, and audience, tends often to be conceived and practiced as an end in itself, rather than serving as an aid to the interpretation of the source.

A corollary is that texts (whether written or otherwise) are conceived as mainly authorless, and reading is often reduced to extracting “the” meaning or “the” main idea from the text, not engaged in as a dialogue between a writer and a reader, in which both of them contribute their voices. The confusion between bias and perspective and the dichotomy of facts versus opinions are additional examples of potential stumbling blocks.

In other words, once translated into pedagogical practice, an education to thinking historically has often been detached from the kind of epistemic development that it requires. Going back to Kegan’s framework for development, it seems to me that thinking historically would require at a minimum a self-authoring mind, while most high-school students are still struggling with developing a socialized mind. Note that the way of thinking afforded by a socialized mind allows for internalizing the procedural rules of the disciplinary community and the values and themes expressed by a particular narrative, but it still does not enable the person to “step out” of the rules of the community and express her own voice. Note also that, based on developmental research, many adults do not manifest the features of a self-authoring mind in making sense of their experiences. As a result, there is likely a mismatch between the goals listed in the history curricula and the students’ (and most teachers’ or aspiring teachers’) epistemic development.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

I suggest a few pedagogical implications of these findings and understandings, together with several questions that I hope will be useful for future research and reflective practice.

First, if sense is not found ready-made in the world or in the past, but we make sense of the world and of the past, historical understanding implies being able to reflect on the criteria guiding our own constructions, so that the encounter with the past is marked by the empathy necessary for understanding. Yet, this implies a level of epistemic development that does not characterize adolescents and is still foreign to many adults. Can we

foster such development, and if so, how? If not, what curricular goals could be propaedeutic to such a move, while also creating the conditions for historical understanding?

Second, we often ask students to be self-directed learners, and, even more so, we hope to educate teachers who are self-directed learners. In so doing, we are asking students to distinguish between what they should do (i.e., their understanding of what they are expected to do) and what they want to do, but this may not be a distinction readily understandable by a socialized mind. According to that way of thinking, what the society wants (i.e., the teacher, the authority) is what I want. The oxymoron, “The teacher wants us to be self-directing,” suggests what students may hear when they are asked to take charge of their own learning. “Why doesn’t the teacher just tell us the answer?” illustrates the gap between well-intentioned pedagogical practices and students’ development.

I believe that we, as educators, need to be aware that, by advocating for self-direction, we are expecting students and certain teachers to change the way they understand themselves, the world, and the relation between the two. We are also asking them to risk the loyalty they may have toward authorities; even if we are not asking them to change such loyalties, we are asking them to relativize them, to alter their relationship to them, to go back to them, if they so choose, as actors and not as subjects. To a socialized mind, this move often feels more like a frightful path than an exciting discovery of new possibilities. Even when people embrace it, their steps in the new landscape may be plagued by the worry that their trust in themselves and their own questions and goals is misplaced.

What features may characterize a space that is felt to be safe enough for exploring how the world would look if one let herself grow into this new way of thinking? I have found that just letting people know that they may feel uncomfortable or confused as a result of what I am going to propose and that such feelings may be a good sign that they are working on their own growth goes a long way in creating a facilitative climate.

Third, it is not impossible, in my view, to introduce students to the discourse typical of the disciplines even if they keep thinking according to the principles of a socialized mind, since this way of thinking enables them to join a community and espouse its rules and values. They would follow those rules (or apply the strategies and heuristics) because the community tells them to do so. These strategies and heuristics will enable them to deal with the level of subjectivity that, in history, is inherent in the object of knowledge; for example, they will learn to consider the perspective of a

source and use it to sharpen their interpretation of that source. Yet, we would not enable students to be critical of what they are being socialized into; that is, we would not enable them to fully evaluate the level of subjectivity that is proper to the knower. The authority/teacher would retain the ultimate responsibility for the rules of the community; for example, the teacher will remain in charge of what counts as a good historical question worthy of exploration.

These rules may be benign and even necessary in consideration of the students' level of development; I could even envision them as stepping stones on the way to development of historical understanding. Yet, as educators striving to foster the development of the whole person, we need to be aware that people not educated in looking critically at the kind of discourse that regulates a community (be it disciplinary, ideological, cultural, religious, or other) will not be equipped to critically evaluate the discourse of less-benevolent communities they may be socialized into. We are back to the difference between training and education, or learning and knowing. Yet, even if, as educators, we aim for the development of critical thinkers, we need to meet students and teachers where they are and accompany them while they develop a more complex and comprehensive way of thinking. What would such an accompaniment look like?

In other words, and this is my last point, how can we foster and support such development, which is painful because it springs from the awareness that one's current way of seeing and experiencing is limited? This may be the one-billion dollar question. In concluding, I share four suggestions that seem in line with the developmental literature.

First of all, we need to propose inquiries that cannot be exhausted too quickly, together with creating a safe and supported space in which their complexity can be explored. I have found that it is very easy to err in both respects: aiming too low, and proposing pseudo inquiries that may build the content knowledge decided on by the teacher or the curriculum, but fail to prompt epistemic development, or aiming too high, by exposing students to the indeterminacy of historical inquiry without providing at the same time the support, encouragement, and understanding they need.

Second, we need to help students to use these inquiries as a means to explore their own way of thinking, to identify their own limits and, yes, their inconsistencies, and to develop a more adequate way of thinking. Fostering a culture in which reflection and a spirit of humility are valued may be important steps in this direction. Providing time and a safe and welcoming space for reflecting on the ideas that most commonly act as stumbling blocks has proved often useful in my work as teacher educator.

Third, we need to look at and evaluate the steps taken by each person within the context of their own overall developmental trajectory, allowing each one the necessary time to grow and meeting each one where they may be. In this context, well-designed instruments for the assessment of student epistemic beliefs become important pedagogical tools for accomplishing this work.

Finally, given the key role played by the written text in history, we need to pay attention to the teaching of reading in the context of other disciplines and academic subjects, and especially, I believe, in language arts. Unfortunately, several well-established reading pedagogies are grounded in learning theories that are at odds with the kind of epistemic development discussed in this chapter and include practices and ideas about text and learning from texts that may gravely hinder historical understanding (Maggioni et al., 2015). Again, being aware of where our students happen to stand at a certain point in time and how they think may be a very wise pedagogical move.

Acknowledgments I would like to thank Dr. Emily Fox for her editing work on this chapter and even more so for her insights shared during our cherished walks.

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Why an Integrated Approach Matters: Searching for a Way to Understand the Formation of Prospective History Teachers' Epistemological Beliefs

Martin Nitsche

INTRODUCTION

Drawing on theoretical considerations and empirical studies, this chapter argues for an integrated approach to epistemological beliefs in order to illustrate what avenues of research in history education might be fruitful in exploring how prospective history teachers' epistemological beliefs are shaped during history teacher training. This seems important because scholars since the 1970s have articulated goals for history education at the

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H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_14

epistemological¹ level, calling for an interpretive or constructivist understanding of history, a mastery of epistemic concepts such as evidence or accounts, and of epistemic procedures like historical thinking and reasoning (e.g., Stoel et al., 2017b). In short, it was about learning the logic of the historical discipline. One associated hope is to prepare students for democracies that require “citizens to know how to weigh evidence before they participate in democratic decision making” (VanSledright, 2011, p. 57). For this purpose, these goals need to be addressed in the context of history teacher education so that teachers can achieve them in the classroom. To do so, they need to reflect on the process of historical knowing and characteristics of historical knowledge, since research in science education found that epistemological beliefs related can influence teaching and learning (e.g., Voss et al., 2013). Many history educators assume that beliefs associated with an interpretive or constructivist understanding of history should be developed because they form the basis of the above goals (Stoel et al., 2022; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016).

However, the existing literature at the school and university levels indicates that epistemological development is a challenging task. For example, the groundbreaking “CHATA” project with British school students showed that the “ideas that some seven year-olds have [...] will be the same as those found among most fourteen year-olds [...], while a few will already be at the level we would expect our A2 students to reach.” This suggests that epistemological progression is not simply age-related (Lee & Shemilt, 2003, p. 16). Following the “CHATA” framework and literature from educational psychology, Maggioni was the first to study the extent to which the epistemological beliefs of students in the context of U.S. high school history classes changed over the course of one semester. Using her “Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ)”, she aimed to explore students’ epistemological development from copier (e.g., history as a copy of the past) to borrower (e.g., people choose their preferred facts) to criterialist stance (e.g., history as a process of inquiry). Although she was able to detect changes in the students’ beliefs, they were not statistically significant. Maggioni attributed this to the fact that learners’ epistemological beliefs were inconsistent, as they held contradictory beliefs or wobbled between the stances. She also suggested that history teachers in the classroom failed to reflect on epistemological aspects with their students.

¹“Epistemological” means here regarding a theory of knowledge and knowing, while “epistemic” means regarding knowledge (Gottlieb & Wineburg, 2012, p. 88).

Finally, she pointed out “that the culture at large and the specific culture in which each student lives play an important role in epistemic development” (Maggioni, 2010, p. 333). Consequently, Maggioni concludes that appropriate tasks and interventions need to be constructed to support students’ epistemological development. However, she does not draw any theoretical conclusions for revising her model of developmental stances in relation to the context.

Meanwhile, several studies have modified Maggioni’s BHQ to show that it is possible to intentionally promote epistemological beliefs in the context of history instruction (Stoel et al., 2022). One proposes theoretical conclusions. The intervention by Stoel, van Drie, and van Boxtel with Dutch students in Grade 11 showed that explicit teaching of epistemological ideas in the context of a writing tasks led to higher agreement with both subjectivist—the borrower stance of Maggioni—and criterialist beliefs. The authors, therefore, suggested “that development in epistemological beliefs in history is more adequately conceptualized as a movement along two dimensions—[...] weak or strong emphasis on disciplinary criteria—instead of in three distinct stances” (Stoel et al., 2017b, p. 330). Thus, they indicated that epistemological development in the context of history classes cannot be understood solely on the basis of a developmental model, but also in terms of specific dimensions, as previously pointed out in educational psychology (Hofer, 2016).

At the higher education level, few studies had highlighted the importance of domain-specific courses as a contextual factor. For example, VanSledright and Reddy (2014) found challenging shifts of U.S. preservice history teachers during a one-semester course in history education. Some students wobbled between subjectivist and criterialist stances, while others switched between objectivist and subjectivist ones. Comparable results exists for experienced teachers in the U.S. (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Contrary, Mierwald et al. (2016) found that German master’s students hold fewer objectivist and more criterialist beliefs than first-semester students. In addition, their study points to a more systematic development, as it suggested that the group difference is related to the learning opportunities during the teacher education program in history.

Overall, previous research suggested that the formation of epistemological beliefs cannot be described solely as a development in stances. Rather, it can also be interpreted in terms of epistemological dimensions. In addition, the intervention studies, and inconsistent findings at the higher education level from different national contexts suggest that the

instructional context may be important. Finally, research from a variety of fields has suggested that further characteristics, such as the educational level or age, may influence the formation of epistemological beliefs (Hofer, 2016).

Against this background, this chapter argues for an integrated approach of developmental, dimensional, and contextual perspectives to understand, through empirical research, how the epistemological beliefs of pre-service history teachers might be shaped during history teacher training. For this purpose, an integrative framework of epistemological beliefs is presented along with related empirical studies to highlight strengths and weaknesses of the approach. A discussion of challenges and future directions concludes the chapter.

AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS IN HISTORY

It was Hofer (2016) who systematized the research on epistemic cognition in the field of educational psychology into the three approaches mentioned above: developmental, dimensional, and contextual. In the field of history, the *developmental approach*, has been elaborated by Maggioni and colleagues (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). It posits, as mentioned above, a progression of epistemological beliefs from naive (e.g., history as a copy of the past) to sophisticated (e.g., history as interpretation) and is the most common in history education research today (Stoel et al., 2022). However, in addition to the challenges mentioned above, Maggioni's approach could be problematized on a theoretical and methodological level. Theoretically, the authors conceptualized the stances in terms of educational psychology (e.g., criterialist), even though they contrasted them with a domain-specific stage model of the CHATA project. Later, they contextualized their framework within discussions of historical theory, but without revising it (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). However, a domain-specific framework should not rely only on research in history education and educational sciences if history education aims to learn the logic of the discipline. Since historical theory is that part of historiography that aims to reflect on the logic of history in epistemological terms, its discussions should be included. They have indicated that epistemological aspects should be seen as a matter of perspective rather than distinct stances, because even historians hold different epistemological positions.

For example, Lorenz (2011) pointed out that at least three ideal-typical positions can be distinguished, which should be used to construct positions closer to the logic of the discipline: positivism, skepticism, and narrative constructivism (see the framework below).

Methodologically, Maggioni's approach also proved challenging. The problem was that the three stances could not be clearly distinguished empirically using the BHQ because only two factors representing the stances were found. This was also the case in other language contexts (e.g., Stoel et al., 2015). In addition, she used consistency instead of mean scores in her studies to assess the degree to which students hold coherent stances. Such an approach suggests that there are correct and incorrect answers. This only seems plausible if epistemological assumptions would be defined as knowledge because "a claim to know is a special type of claim, different from a claim to believe and requiring justification in ways that beliefs do not" (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 30). Thus, it seems questionable whether it is plausible to describe and assess the formation of epistemological beliefs in history in terms of distinct stances.

The *dimensional approach* has been proposed in educational psychology to describe naive and sophisticated epistemological beliefs in detail. For example, Hofer and Pintrich distinguished beliefs about the nature of knowledge (certainty of knowledge, simplicity of knowledge), and the nature of knowing (source of knowledge, justification for knowing) (Hofer, 2016). Stoel and colleagues followed this approach in the field of history, applying a revised version of the BHQ. Based on survey responses from Dutch high school students and historians, they divided epistemological beliefs into naïve and nuanced beliefs regarding the three dimensions of historical knowledge, knowing, and methodological criteria. However, the authors found that the "experts varied strongly on these items—possibly as a result of real differences in philosophical thought about the nature of history" (Stoel et al., 2017a, p. 131).

Another reason for this variation—and the "epistemic wobbling" of students and teachers—may be explained by the *contextual approach*. Because of the methodological difficulties mentioned, numerous learning psychologists have argued that the activation of certain epistemological assumptions may depend on the experiences that subjects have had in different sociocultural situations and on the present context of activation (Hofer, 2016). Gottlieb and Wineburg (2012) also demonstrated this fact for history in their think-aloud study and showed that religious historians switched between academic (e.g., plausibility) and religious beliefs (e.g.,

personal faith) when they were asked to interpret of historical or religious sources, while non-religious historians did not. It became clear that the situatedness of epistemological beliefs in context must also be considered in the field of history education.

Based on the literature discussed, epistemological beliefs in history are defined as subjective assumptions about historical knowledge and knowing (Nitsche, 2017). Inspired by the contextual approach (e.g., Gottlieb & Wineburg, 2012), the construct was differentiated not in terms of stances but as perspectives or positions that individuals are likely to hold in relation to or activated by different contexts. To address the conceptual and measurement issues discussed, three epistemological perspectives were elaborated by revising Maggioni's work with the help of historical theory, and the dimensional approach (Table 14.1).

From a *positivist perspective*, history and the past are synonymous terms and knowledge is directly accessible in sources and accounts. Therefore, the structure of knowledge is conceptualized as a picture of the past while knowledge seems certain and objective. Consequently, there is no need to

Table 14.1 Model of epistemological beliefs in history

<i>Domains & Positions, and Dimensions (e.g., Hofer, 2016)</i>	Educational Psychology (Maggioni, 2010)		
	Copier	Borrower	Criticalist
	Theory of history (e.g., Lorenz, 2011; Rösen, 2017)		
	Positivism	Skepticism	Narrative Constructivism
<i>Concept of history</i>	Past = history	History = present	Past ≠ history
<i>Origin of knowledge</i>	Directly in sources	Individual understanding of media	Reconstruction through individual and joint interpretation
<i>Justification for knowing</i>	Not needed	Matter of individual understanding	Matter of shared reasoning
<i>Structure of knowledge</i>	Picture of the past	Individual story	Historical narration
<i>Certainty of knowledge</i>	Objective	Uncertain	Socially controlled perspective
<i>Application of knowledge</i>	Explain how it has been through laws	Form individual opinions	Orientation in time

Note: Adopted from Nitsche (2017, p. 95)

justify historical knowledge. Moreover, knowledge is used to explain what the past was like and how changes occur through general laws. In contrast, from a *skeptical perspective*, history is a construct of the present and therefore indicates an individual understanding of historical sources and accounts. It follows that history is a matter of opinion and that there is no method for justifying historical knowledge. History, thus, appears to be an individual narrative that is uncertain. It is used as a vehicle to express individual opinions. From a *narrative-constructivist perspective* history is distinguished from the past. It assumes that individuals structure their knowledge of the past as a historical narrative. However, because humans develop narratives based on individual and joint interpretations of historical sources and accounts, historical knowledge is expected to be a reconstruction of the past that can be justified through argumentative reasoning in the context of sources, theories, and values. In doing so, socially shared perspectives justify the certainty of knowledge that provides both individual and social orientation in time.

A SERIES OF STUDIES

To test the framework an interview study was conducted with a German history teacher in 2013. In the same year, 105 prospective history teachers in German-speaking Switzerland were asked in an open-ended task to explain how historical knowledge is created and can be characterized. Both studies stressed like Stoel et al. (2017a) for school students that also prospective teachers' beliefs could be interpreted in terms of dimensions (e.g., concept of history, origin of historical knowledge). In addition, some participants tended to hold beliefs associated with a particular position, while others expressed the beliefs of different positions in terms of dimensions. This illustrates the analytical potential of the framework for qualitative research, as it helps to go beyond the developmental approach in terms of stances, because the particular beliefs about the origin of knowledge, etc., their relation to the positions (e.g., positivism), and their coherence became visible (Nitsche, 2017).

Because this approach could not be used to assess the effects of the teacher training context on prospective teachers' beliefs, the "Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire in History (EBQH)" was developed, which

included modified items from Maggioni's BHQ² and new ones related to the dimensions of the framework (Table 14.1). However, a first pilot study with 49 prospective Swiss German history teachers in 2014 indicated that no clear structure of their beliefs could be found. Based on the literature of educational psychology, it became clear that it was necessary to decide whether the questionnaire should measure positions or dimensions (Hofer, 2016). This indicates that it is difficult to capture epistemological dimensions *and* positions at the same time with statistical methods. Due to the lack of a domain-specific dimensional questionnaire at this time, the EBHQ was revised in terms of positions. Following feedback from experts in history didactics, 194 prospective history teachers from four Swiss and one German university completed the questionnaire. In contrast to Maggioni, responses were treated as means rather than as coherence scores because this allows participants to hold multiple positions simultaneously, which is more consistent with the definition of beliefs described above. Statistical analyses suggested that the three expected positions could be modeled, but the corresponding scales still showed insufficient reliabilities (Nitsche, 2017).

After the final revision, the EBQH was used in the main study to estimate effects of context aspects of history teacher training on the epistemological beliefs of 177 prospective history teachers from all universities in the German-speaking part of Switzerland that offered history teacher training during the academic year 2014–2015 (Nitsche, 2019). The study proofed construct validity and acceptable reliability of the questionnaire. The Fig. 14.1 summarizes the effects of courses in history and history didactics after controlling for background aspects (e.g., age). The analyses indicated contradictory results because the number of history courses the students took did affect their agreement with the positivist *and* narrative constructivist position. Moreover, no effects of courses in history didactics could be found. One possible explanation is likely rooted in specific course contexts and may involve university teachers' epistemological perspectives. In history courses, students may have been influenced by historians, since even experts disagree about whether historical knowledge is objective or uncertain (e.g., Lorenz, 2011). The lack of course effect in history didactics can perhaps be explained by the fact that Swiss German history didacticians do not seem to share a common narrative-constructivist

²Items not related to historical learning were chosen because beliefs about learning and teaching history were also examined in a second questionnaire.

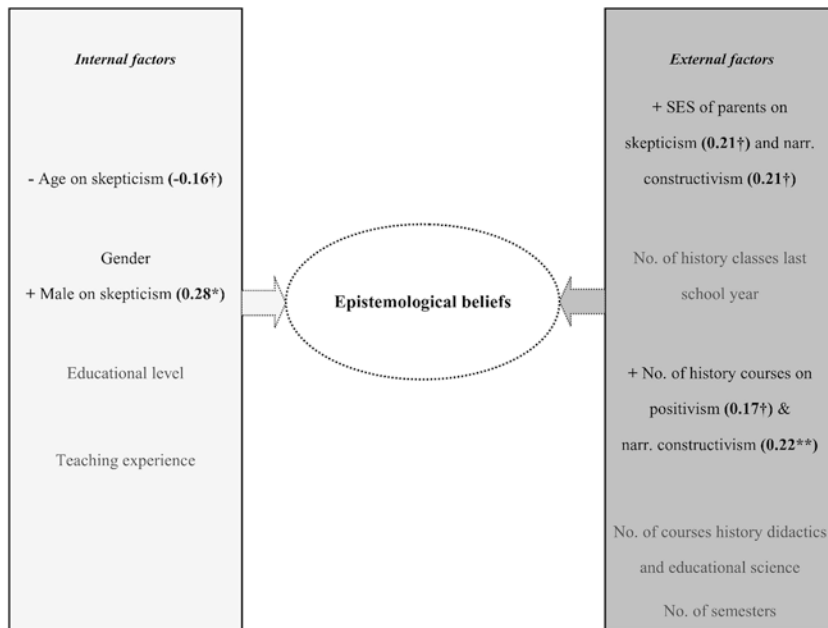


Fig. 14.1 Impact of courses in history and history didactics. (Note: Adopted from Nitsche (2019, p. 278); † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$; Printed coefficients = standardized coefficients of a structural regression model (0.1–0.3 = small effect); SES = socioeconomic status)

understanding, as a recent study suggests, even though it is the most common approach in German-speaking history didactics (Ziegler & Nitsche, 2021).

To go beyond these findings and to relate students' shifts to concrete course contexts in history didactics, a group comparison was conducted between six introductory courses in history didactics which based on data collected before (t1) and after (t2) the summer or winter semester of 2018. Due to panel dropout (Table 14.2), the final sample consisted of four courses³ taught by four history didacticians at two Swiss-German universities of teacher education and one German university.⁴ Students and

³ Course 1 was taught by the author.

⁴ For one course, data were completely missing at t2. Therefore, only complete cases were used.

Table 14.2 Descriptives of Scales

<i>Scales</i>	<i>No. Items</i>	M_{t1}	SD_{t1}	α_{t1}	M_{t2}	SD_{t2}	α_{t2}
N_{total}				109			
$n_{t1, t2}$		103			56		
Positivism	4	1.84	0.53	0.67	1.55	0.52	0.75
Skepticism	4	2.66	0.60	0.77	2.78	0.65	0.73
Narrative Constructivism	6	3.37	0.34	0.60	3.54	0.32	0.58
Course quality (structure, classroom management)	5				3.12	0.56	0.72
Constructivist design of courses	6				3.34	0.64	0.85
Topic: theory	4				3.24	0.57	0.86
Topic: instructional strategies	3				3.16	0.64	0.78

history didacticians were asked to answer the EBQH (see Nitsche & Waldis, 2022 for the English translation), questionnaires about the degree of constructivist design (adapted from Braun & Hannover, 2009), and the topics of the courses. Students were also asked to complete a survey on course quality (adapted from Wagner et al., 2013). All questionnaires based on a four-point scale coded between 1 to 4. Students' characteristics such as age, number of semester or visited courses in history and history didactics were requested. To obtain qualitative insights into course design and topics, history didacticians were asked to provide their course syllabi, which were paraphrased. To check the quality of the questionnaire data, statistical analyses (e.g., *Scale Analyses*) were conducted (Table 14.2).

The differences in the raw means of students' epistemological beliefs between the beginning and the end of the semester ($n_{t1 \leftrightarrow t2} = 49$, $M_{Age} = 23.64$, $SD_{Age} = 4.45$; female = 28) show trends in the expected direction: A small decrease in positivist beliefs ($M_{t1} = 1.87$, $SD_{t1} = 0.54$, $M_{t2} = 1.56$, $SD_{t2} = 0.54$) a small increase in skeptical beliefs ($M_{t1} = 2.61$, $SD_{t1} = 0.60$, $M_{t2} = 2.77$, $SD_{t2} = 0.67$), and in narrative constructivist beliefs ($M_{t1} = 3.42$, $SD_{t1} = 0.33$, $M_{t2} = 3.54$, SD_{t2}). To examine the statistical effects of the course context, analyses of covariance were applied with epistemological positions as the dependent variable, adjusting for repeated measures for the longitudinal data and controlling for constructivist design, topics, and course quality. Background characteristics (e.g., age) were also included.

Even before the semester began, a group difference between the courses for narrative-constructivist beliefs indicated that students held different

Table 14.3 Effects of courses in history didactics ($n = 49$)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Positivism</i>		<i>Skepticism</i>		<i>Narr. Constructivism</i>	
	<i>F</i> (53, 1-3)	η_p^2	<i>F</i> (53, 1-3)	η_p^2	<i>F</i> (53, 1-3)	η_p^2
Model	3.67	0.82***	3.91	0.83***	4.79	0.85***
Groups	1.97	0.14	0.44	0.04	0.80	0.06
Time t_1 & t_2	17.26	0.28***	4.47	0.09*	7.41	0.14**
Group by time	7.04	0.32**	1.82	0.11	3.69	0.20*
Constructivist course design	0.39	0.01	17.14	0.28***	10.92	0.20**
Courses in history	2.03	0.04	4.89	0.10*	9.78	0.18**
Teaching experience	7.88	0.15**	6.27	0.13*	3.39	0.07†
Age	0.07	0.00	0.33	0.01	0.16	0.00
No. of semester	1.60	0.04	0.48	0.01	0.92	0.02
Teaching diploma (sec. I, II)	1.62	0.04	2.05	0.05	2.95	0.06†
Courses in history didactics	0.05	0.00	0.57	0.01	0.28	0.01
Course quality	0.05	0.00	0.89	0.02	1.19	0.03
Theory	0.34	0.01	1.88	0.04	0.05	0.00
Instructional methods	0.54	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.18	0.00
Adj. R^2	0.59		0.61		0.67	

Note: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

beliefs before coming to the courses ($F(3, 3) = 2.9$, $p < 0.5$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.16$). The results of the longitudinal group comparisons (Table 14.3) show moderate to large effects (η_p^2) between the beginning and the end of the semester, indicating significant changes for all epistemological positions. Moreover, the changes of positivist and narrative constructivist beliefs are related to the courses that the students attended. In addition, the results of the control variables show that the constructivist design of the courses perceived by the students was important for the change in skeptical and narrative constructivist beliefs. Finally, the number of history courses attended was a significant predictor for the change of skeptical and narrative constructivist beliefs, while teaching experience seems to affect the responses regarding positivist and skeptical beliefs. Regression analyses based on the same variable design suggest positive effects of constructivist

Table 14.4 Differences in course effects in history didactics ($n = 49$)

Course	Positivism		Skepticism		Narr. constructivism	
	$F(45, 4, 1)$	$t_2 - t_1$	$F(44, 4, 1)$	$t_2 - t_1$	$F(44, 4, 1)$	$t_2 - t_1$
1	0.65	-0.11	0.32	-0.09	2.33	0.11
2	7.72	-0.39*	3.67	0.30	14.96	0.29***
3	0.40	0.10	0.23	0.08	1.01	-0.09
4	31.81	-0.81***	5.66	0.38†	1.89	0.11

Note: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; Bonferroni-adjusted

design and history courses, while the amount of teaching experience had a negative effect on positivist beliefs and a positive effect on skeptical beliefs.

While these analyses indicated effects of the course context in general and of additional contextual aspects (constructivist course design, history courses, teaching experience), the results of the post hoc tests, provided insight into the differences between the courses between the beginning and end of the semester (Table 14.4). The results show the strongest significant shifts in course 2: a decrease in agreement with positivist beliefs of about 0.4 points and an increase in agreement with narrative constructivist beliefs of about 0.3 points. The largest decrease in positivist beliefs is seen in course 4, by about 0.8 points, with a small, almost significant increase in skeptical beliefs. Students in course 1 shifted in the indented direction, however, all tendencies are mild to tiny and not significant as in group 3, where no systematic changes could be found.

How can these trends be explained beyond the effects mentioned? Arguing from a developmental perspective, and as the above analyses of group differences in students' narrative constructivist beliefs at the beginning of the semester indicated, it depends on the individual formation of beliefs of students when they enter the courses. Moreover, a comparison of raw means of t_1 suggests that students in course 2, who showed the greatest shifts, were less likely to agree with narrative constructivism ($M_{t1} = 2.23$, $SD_{t1} = 0.29$) than students in the other courses ($M_{t1} \geq 3.39$). Thus, the changes depend on the beliefs the students have developed when they come to the courses. Arguing from a contextual perspective, the beliefs of the history didacticians in the context of courses also seem to be important. They tended to agree on narrative constructivism and reject positivism. However, unlike the history didacticians of courses 1 and 3 ($M \leq 2.5$), those of the courses 2 and 4, where students' changes were

significant, not only strongly agreed with narrative constructivism, but also moderately agreed with skepticism ($M \geq 3.0$). Perhaps a more balanced approach to narrative constructivism *and* skepticism is helpful in activating students' beliefs and supporting their changes. This is emphasized by the fact that no significant correlations were found between students' beliefs and history didacticists' beliefs at the beginning of the courses, while at the end of the courses there are moderate positive correlations between students' and history didacticists' skeptical beliefs ($r = 0.39, p < 0.01$) and negative correlations between students' positivist beliefs and history didacticists' skeptical beliefs ($r = -0.50, p < 0.001$).

Further contextual aspects become apparent when course design is related to students' shifts. A look at the syllabi of history didacticists' (Table 14.5) reveals three aspects. First, it seems to be important to combine topics from history theory and history didactics, because only in such courses significant shifts could be found (*italics in* Table 14.5). Second, it

Table 14.5 Topic design of courses in history didactics

<i>Course 1</i>	<i>Course 2</i>	<i>Course 3</i>	<i>Course 4</i>
(1) <i>Students' concepts of history and history education</i>	(1) <i>What is history? What is history didactics?</i>	(1–14) Topics regarding lesson planning (e.g., unit of lessons, assessment, internet services)	(1) <i>Time, history, narration, and construction</i>
(2) <i>Historical competences: models and diagnostics</i>	(2) <i>Basic concepts</i>		(2) <i>History, living environment and historical culture</i>
(3) <i>Historical learning: goals and principles</i>	(3) <i>Narration, construction, interpretation</i>		(3) <i>Historical consciousness, competency, and historical learning</i>
(4–13) Topics regarding lesson planning (e.g., curriculum, learning tasks)	(4) <i>Historical knowledge, pre-concepts, and consciousness</i>		(4) <i>Multiperspectivity, controversy, plurality</i>
	(5) <i>Historical culture and politics</i>		(5) <i>Alterity and present references</i>
	(6) <i>Essay</i>		(6) <i>Essay, Learning requirements and conditions</i>
	(7–14) Topics regarding lesson planning (e.g., goals, example lesson planning)		(7–14) Topics regarding lesson planning (e.g., topic selection, goals, learning tasks, lesson intros)

Note: Session of courses 1 & 3 = 90 minutes; 2 & 4 = 180 minutes. *Italic* = topics related to historical theory

seems that students' shifts depend on the amount of content on historical theory, since most of the time spent on such topics was in courses 2 and 4, where changes became significant. This suggests that more time spent on historical theory may also allow more time for epistemological reflection. Third, the total time of the courses seems to be important, since the Swiss-German courses, where no significant changes were found, lasted 90 minutes per session, while the German courses lasted 180 minutes per session. This indicates that the effects of the courses depend on structural aspects such as the length of the courses, which is related to the curriculum of each German-speaking university. Thus, the broader institutional context of teacher education may also be important.

The last study presented is limited by panel mortality, the small number of courses and participants and some statistical issues (e.g., low reliability of one scale, lack of control for the different course length (180 vs. 90 min per session)). Nevertheless, it provides initial evidence to support the assumption that the context of teacher training also matters in the field of history education. The series of studies generally shows that an integrated approach of developmental, dimensional, and contextual perspectives could be fruitful for understanding the forming of epistemological beliefs of (prospective) history teachers, although combining all approaches in one research instrument proved challenging.

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Theoretically, the chapter argued for integrating the developmental, dimensional, and contextual perspectives to better understand how epistemological beliefs are formed by prospective history teachers in the context of teacher education. It has been shown that conceptualizing the formation of epistemological beliefs in terms of coherent stances based on concepts from educational psychology is not theoretically plausible, because historical theory shows that even historians have different positions (Lorenz, 2011), which is also known from empirical research in history education (Stoel et al., 2017a). Rather, if the goal of teacher education in history is to prepare teachers to improve their students' understanding of the logic, concepts, and methods of the discipline (VanSledright, 2011), it seems more appropriate to ground epistemological perspectives also in historical theory. In addition, studies in educational psychology and history education have shown that a dimensional approach clarifies epistemological beliefs in detail, for example, regarding the structure of (historical)

knowledge (Hofer, 2016; Stoel et al., 2022). Research on the contextual approach showed that epistemological beliefs are formed based on experience and activated in specific situations related to context, such as the inquiry of sources (Gottlieb & Wineburg, 2012). Since the developmental and dimensional approaches do not take this into account, it has been proposed here to conceptualize epistemological beliefs as subjective assumptions about historical knowledge and knowing in terms of perspectives (e.g., positivism, narrative constructivism) rather than stances that individuals are likely to hold in relation to or activated by different contexts. With the help of dimensions such as the concept of history, positions can be contoured more precisely.

Empirically, the qualitative studies showed that participants' epistemological beliefs can be mapped using the integrated framework in terms of positions, related dimensions, and their coherence (Nitsche, 2017). The results of the studies could be interpreted as an argument against a purely developmental view that assumes fixed stances. Since the study of context-relatedness in terms of effects is a challenge when using qualitative methods, the EBQH questionnaire was developed with the aim of assessing the construct combining positions and related dimensions. However, during this process, it became clear that linking both approaches in one questionnaire is challenging for methodological reasons (e.g., survey design). Thus, the EBQH was revised in terms of positions and used to study the context effects of teacher training courses in history and history didactics on prospective history teachers' epistemological beliefs. On this basis, the first study with German-Swiss participants showed conflicting effects of history courses and none of history didactics courses (Nitsche, 2019). To go beyond these findings, a longitudinal group comparison was conducted using a sample of participants who had taken courses in history didactics at universities in Germany and German-speaking Switzerland. The results showed that the epistemological positions that individual students hold when they enter the courses and the specific contextual characteristics of the courses (e.g., topic, design, didacticians' beliefs) are important. However, due to the challenges mentioned above, the studies presented here have not yet combined the developmental, dimensional, and contextual approaches in a single study.

In general, this approach could be applied to address what is probably the most important task for the future: To prove the assumption of the introduction that epistemological beliefs are relevant to the teaching of history, and thus to teacher education, as suggested by studies in other

fields (e.g., Voss et al., 2013), but disputed by history education research, which has found gaps between teachers beliefs and history teaching (Stoel et al., 2022). Future research applying the integrated approach can address this issue in three methodological ways.

To investigate the role of (prospective) history teachers' epistemological beliefs in learning of teaching with the help of qualitative methods, a design such as Gottlieb and Wineburg's (2012) could be used. The aim would be to examine teachers' epistemological beliefs in action while they were asked to complete common teacher education tasks for learning teaching strategies (e.g., planning, reflection on lesson videos). Interpreting the results with the integrated approach would not only allow for a detailed analysis of the beliefs, but also prove whether the developmental or dimensional aspects of the framework are more helpful in understanding the contextual relationship of the construct.

For the same purpose, existing developmental or dimensional questionnaires could be modified along the lines of contextual instruments for school students (Stoel et al., 2022). For example, the questionnaires could be combined with the same or different teaching situation (e.g., lesson planning, preparing source-based material) to examine whether the dimensional or developmental survey provides a better insight into the contextuality of epistemological beliefs or which beliefs are activated by different scenarios. Afterward, perhaps, ways could be found to make the integrated approach fruitful for the development of a combined single questionnaire.

To examine the relationship between the individual beliefs with which students enter the courses, the overall course design, changes in students' beliefs over time, and the specific learning opportunities in the courses, quantitative and qualitative methods may also be combined. For example, and as in the last study presented, students' changes in epistemological beliefs over the course of a semester could be compared and related to course design. At the same time, participants would be selected based on their questionnaire responses at the beginning of the course (e.g., extreme values, percentiles) to observe them as they are asked to solve different tasks from the course contexts.

It may sound trite to conclude that focusing on one approach and its associated methods likely to depend on the research questions of future studies. Nevertheless, it seems most fruitful for future studies to integrate the approaches when trying to understand the role of the formation of (prospective) history teachers' epistemological beliefs in the context of history education.

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Adaption of the Maggioni’s BHQ into Turkish Culture and the Testing of Its Validity and Reliability

Erkan Dinç and Servet Üztemur

INTRODUCTION

The effects of epistemology, which is accepted as an important branch of philosophy, on different disciplines have always been a matter of curiosity. Especially in the discipline of history, where abstract concepts are more involved and the process of knowledge construction is monopolised by experts (historians), epistemology-centred discussions are remarkable. Discussions on the nature, construction process and reliability of historical knowledge have been conceptualised as “epistemic cognition in history” (Maggioni et al., 2009; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). What kind of pedagogical effects teachers’ epistemic beliefs in history have is also a matter of curiosity. From this perspective, we aimed to adapt the Beliefs About History Questionnaire (BHQ) scale developed by Maggioni (2010) to the Turkish language and culture to determine teachers’ epistemic cognition in history. The starting point of this study was the lack of any study on

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© The Author(s) 2024
H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_15

epistemic cognition in history in the Turkish context. Considering that studies on epistemic cognition in history have emerged in the last 20 years (Stoel et al., 2022), we think that determining the historical epistemic cognition of individuals and especially educators in different cultures will contribute to this field. In addition, this study aims to reveal the ways in which the theoretical model proposed by Maggioni (2010) finds meaning in Turkish culture. In the following sections, information about the theoretical framework for epistemic cognition in history is given and the process of adapting the scale to Turkish culture is mentioned.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Epistemology deals with the source, possibility, structure, limit and value of knowledge (Hofer, 2000), while epistemic beliefs are individuals' cognitions and beliefs about what knowledge is, how it is acquired, its certainty and limits (Schommer, 1990). Educators show great interest in this field because epistemic beliefs are influential in many variables such as teaching-learning, decision-making and so on (Hofer & Bendixen, 2012; Schraw, 2013). In contemporary history teaching practice, history teachers are expected to have factual and conceptual subject knowledge as well as expertise of the epistemology of history as a discipline (Mathis & Parkes, 2020). History educators, especially in the last 20 years, have generally sought answers to the following questions to reveal how and how learners justify the accuracy of historical knowledge: (i) What is the nature of historical knowledge? (ii) What is the role of historians in producing such knowledge? (iii) Are historians merely couriers who bring information from the past to the present? or (iv) Is the past just narratives produced by historians? (v) Does historical evidence act as a tool to transfer the past into the present? (vi) Can historical evidence be considered as it is independent of the historian? (Lee & Shemilt, 2003; Maggioni et al., 2009; VanSledright, 2002). To bring logical and coherent explanations to these questions, the basic arguments of general epistemic belief models (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002) are integrated into the discipline of history, and various theoretical frameworks and understandings including historical contextualisation, historical evidence and interpretation (Lee & Shemilt, 2003; Wineburg, 2001). As a result of a series of empirical studies (Maggioni et al., 2004; Maggioni et al., 2009), which are all based on Lee and Shemilt's (2003) six-stage development model, Maggioni (2010) developed a measurement tool consisting of 22 items

related to this model. Her instrument involves three different stances (criterialist, borrower, copier) related to the nature, source and role of the knower. She then named this instrument the BHQ.

Individuals who take the copier (objectivist) stance cannot comprehend the difference between fact and history and they evaluate historical information as objective and fixed. The purpose of history is to obtain a copy of the past and catch what happened in the past as it was. Historians are the intermediaries that carry the objective and accurate information they have obtained from historical sources to the present day. Making history is also like printing out a copy of the arguably only true piece of information (Havekes et al., 2012; Stoel et al., 2017). Students in this stance are unaware that historical information can change over time due to the different perspectives and the historians adopting different ways of asking questions. The focus or tendencies of the societies that make history may change over time (Seixas, 2004).

According to individuals who take the borrower (subjectivist) stance, historical knowledge and historical sources are not fixed but have a subjective structure. History is ultimately a matter of opinion and is influenced by the historian's personal preferences and views. What counts as history all remained in the past and it is impossible to reach the whole truth about them. For this reason, individuals having this perspective only accept the historical accounts that are suitable for their logic and only borrow from historical sources that are suitable for their historical narratives (Maggioni et al., 2009; Mierwald & Junius, 2022). From this point of view, it can be said that they are deprived of applying certain procedures such as thinking skills specific to the discipline of history and transforming the source into evidence.

According to individuals who take the criterialist stance, historical sources are not entirely objective or subjective. Historical sources are interpreted according to the questions asked and the context in which they are transformed into historical evidence. To arrive at a valid and accurate point of view reflecting multiple perspectives on the past, it is necessary to make evaluations according to the criteria (evidence, argument) based on the discipline of history. In the process of creating historical accounts and evaluating their validity, discipline-specific criteria and strategies are employed (Maggioni et al., 2009; Stoel et al., 2017).

It has been observed that the number of studies examining individuals' and groups' epistemic beliefs about history using BHQ has been increasing gradually (Mierwald & Junius, 2022). On the other hand, it has been

reported that the three-factor structure of the scale is not supported by data and the reliability coefficients are low, both in the preliminary studies in the development process of the scale (Maggioni, 2010; Maggioni et al., 2004; Maggioni et al., 2009) and in the adaptation studies conducted in different cultures (Miguel-Revilla et al., 2017; Stoel et al., 2015). The psychometric structure of BHQ in Turkish culture is a matter of curiosity. In addition, no study has been found in the Turkish literature dealing with epistemic beliefs in the field of history. Based on this standpoint, this study aims to adapt BHQ into Turkish culture and assess its validity and reliability.

METHOD

The Participants

The study was carried out with 264 student social studies teachers studying at three different universities in Türkiye. 53.7% of the participants were women. It can be said that there is a balanced distribution in terms of the participants' grade levels (First grade: 27.3%, Second grade: 26.5%, Third grade: 24.6%, Fourth grade: 21.6%).

The Instrument

To examine the participants' epistemic cognition in history, the 22-item BHQ in the 6-point Likert type developed by Maggioni (2010) was adapted into Turkish culture.

The Process

In the first stage, the scale was translated into Turkish by the authors. Then, an expert translation evaluation form containing both Turkish and English versions of the scale was prepared. This form was presented to two experts specialising in translation/interpretation studies between English and Turkish languages. After the Turkish form of the scale was finalised in line with the suggestions from the language experts, the scale was translated from Turkish into English by another language expert, this translation was compared with the original version of the scale, and the scale was given its final form. To reveal the compatibility of the scale with the Turkish context, the scale was examined by three history education experts

working in Türkiye. Their opinions were received, and necessary alterations/corrections were made on the scale. Before the main data collection phase, the opinions of four student social studies teachers who were not included in the study sample were taken with the think-aloud technique and then the final version of the scale was obtained.

In the second stage, the 6-point Likert scale was converted to a 5-point Likert type. Since most of the studies conducted in the context of Türkiye use the 5-point Likert type, this form was preferred in this study as well. Accordingly, the answers given to the items were transformed as 1: “strongly disagree”, 2: “disagree”, 3: “undecided”, 4: “agree”, 5: “completely agree”.

In the third stage, SPSS and AMOS programs were used to analyse the data. Normality tests and missing value analysis were performed to make the data ready for analysis. Seven scale forms filled incorrectly or incompletely were excluded from the analysis process. By performing multivariate normality and extreme value analysis, 13 extreme values with significant Mahalanobis D2 distances ($p = 0.01$) were extracted from the data set (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The remaining 244 returned forms were taken into consideration. Explanatory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were performed, respectively, to determine the construct validity and cultural adaptation level of the scale. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was reported to reveal the reliability of the obtained structure. For compliance of CFA, the values of the division of chi-square by degree of freedom (χ^2/df), standardised root mean square residual (SRMR), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), incremental fit index (IFI), comparative fit index (CFI) and goodness of fit index (GFI) were taken as criteria (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016).

FINDINGS

Before the EFA, the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) sample adequacy coefficient and the Barlett Sphericity test significance values were calculated to determine the suitability of the data set for factor analysis. The KMO sample adequacy coefficient was calculated as 0.712 and the result of the Barlett Sphericity test was also significant ($\chi^2 = 811.154$, $df = 136$; $p < 0.01$). According to these results, it can be said that the data set is suitable for EFA (Field, 2013) Factors with an eigenvalue of 1 and above in principal component analysis and varimax were preferred in rotation.

At the first stage, it was found out that item 14 “It is impossible to know anything for sure about the past since no one of us was there”, which was in the subjectivist sub-dimension in the original scale, is related to both the objectivist and the subjectivist sub-dimensions. It was seen that factor loads in these two dimensions (0.452 and 0.487 respectively) were close to one another and the difference between these factor loads was not more than 0.10 (overlapping). As a result, this item was excluded from the scale and the analysis was repeated. In the second stage, Item number 22, “*There is no evidence in history*”, which was in the subjectivist sub-dimension of the original scale and located in the objectivist sub-dimension after this stage, was removed from the scale because it had a low factor loading (0.32). Then the analysis was repeated. In the third stage, six different sub-dimensions emerged after the rotation. When the resulting structure was examined, it was seen that the sub-dimensions were in three separate groups each one containing two sub-dimensions. For this reason, the number of sub-dimensions was reduced to three, and the analysis was repeated once again. In the fourth stage, the item “Students need to be aware that history is essentially a matter of interpretation” was excluded from the scale because it was included in the criterialist sub-dimension. Similarly, while they were supposed to be in the criterialist sub-dimension as in the original scale, item 3 “A historical account is the product of a disciplined method of inquiry” and item 11 “History is a critical inquiry about the past” were removed from the scale.

It was observed that all the remaining items were theoretically compatible with the sub-dimensions they belonged to. The factors obtained as a result of the analysis are shown in Fig. 15.1.

The examination of Fig. 15.1 reveals that although there are five different sub-dimensions with eigenvalues higher than 1, it does not seem possible to obtain a realistic interpretation from the scree plot graph in line with reducing the number of factors to 3. The eigenvalues and variances of the dimensions reached as a result of EFA are shown in Table 15.1.

It is seen from Table 15.1 that the scale consisting of three sub-factors explains 41.57% of the total variance. Kline (2011) asserts that the total variance explained in scales consisting of more than one dimension needs to be 41% or above. As a result of these findings, it can be said that the explained variance is at a sufficient level. The factor loadings of the scale items and their distribution according to the factors are shown in Table 15.2.

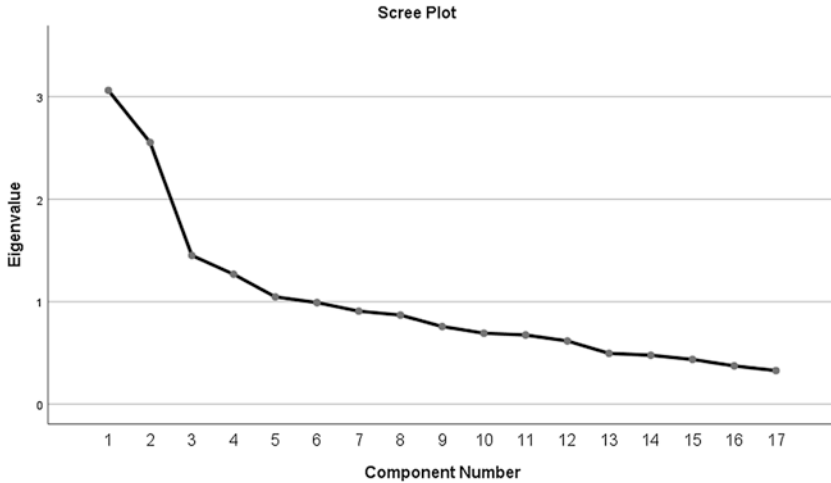


Fig. 15.1 Scree plot chart showing the number of factors in BHQ

Table 15.1 The factorial structure of the BHQ after the rotation

<i>Factors in order</i>	<i>Factors</i>	<i>Factor's Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Variance (%)</i>	<i>Cumulative variance (%)</i>
1	“Criterialist”	2497	14,690	14,690
2	“Copier (Objectivist)”	2377	13,985	28,675
3	“Borrower (subjectivist)”	2193	12,898	41,573

As can be seen in Table 15.2, the factor loads of the items forming the list of criteria vary between 0.70 and 0.46. The items that form the objectivist dimension vary between 0.77 and 0.49, and the items that form the subjectivist dimension vary between 0.67 and 0.48.

Using the same data set, a CFA was applied to the structure that emerged as a result of the EFA. As a result of the CFA, item 1 in the criterialist sub-dimension was excluded from the scale because the factor load was low (0.27). The CFA results with the remaining items were consistent with the results obtained from EFA, and the fit indices (excluding CFI and IFI) were at acceptable levels ($\chi^2 = 209.267$ $df = 99$, $p < 0.01$, $\chi^2/$

Table 15.2 Items in each factor and factor loads of the scale

<i>Sub-factor</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>First factor</i>	<i>Second factor</i>	<i>Third factor</i>
Crtiterialist	“13. Comparing sources and understanding author perspective are essential components of the process of learning history”	0.700		
	“15. Knowledge of the historical method is fundamental for historians and students alike”	0.695		
	“21. History is the reasonable reconstruction of past occurrences based on the available evidence”	0.659		
	“7. Students need to be taught to deal with conflicting evidence”	0.650		
	“1. It is fundamental that students are taught to support their reasoning with evidence” ^a	0.493		
	“18. Reasonable accounts can be constructed even in the presence of conflicting evidence”	0.467		
Objectivist	“20. Teachers should not question students’ historical opinions, only check that they know the facts”		0.778	
	“19. Even eyewitnesses do not always agree with each other, so there is no way to know what happened”		0.708	
	“16. The facts speak for themselves”		0.655	
	“9. Good general reading and comprehension skills are enough to learn history well”		0.555	
	“5. Disagreement about the same event in the past is always due to lack of evidence”		0.498	
Subjectivist	“12. The past is what the historian makes it to be”			0.671
	“6. Good students know that history is basically a matter of opinion”			0.671
	“4. Students who read many history books learn that the past is what the historian makes it to be”			0.598
	“2. History is simply a matter of interpretation”			0.546
	“8. Historical claims cannot be justified, since they are simply a matter of interpretation”			0.529
	“10. Since there is no way to know what really happened in the past, students can believe whatever story they choose”			0.482

^a Subtracted from the scale after CFA

df = 2.114, RMSEA = 0.06, AGFI = 0.86, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.83, IFI = 0.83, SRMR = 0.07).

The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as 0.67 for the criterialist sub-dimension, 0.64 for the subjectivist sub-dimension, and 0.68 for the objectivist sub-dimension. Accordingly, it can be said that the reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions are reasonably reliable even if they are not at a high level (Cortina, 1993).

DISCUSSION

This paper examines the psychometric properties of BHQ in Turkish culture. Research results showed that the three sub-dimensions in the original scale were also obtained in the Turkish version. On the other hand, as a result of validity and reliability studies, five items were removed from the Turkish version of the original 22-item scale. The CFA results reveal that while the general fit indices were at an acceptable level, it was reported that the fit indices such as CFI and IFI were low. Similarly, it can be interpreted that the reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions of the scale are not very high. These results are consistent with empirical studies reporting that BHQ has some problems in terms of validity and reliability (Hamer, 2016). Mierwald and Junius (2022) argue that this might have been caused by errors in translation into different languages, the cultural contexts, the educational levels of the participants and the terminology used in the writing of the items.

The detailed examination of the Turkish version of the BHQ revealed that the objectivist sub-dimension was clearly differentiated from the other dimensions. This means that the data collected in the Turkish context supports the clear distinction between an objectivist stance, which interprets the historical knowledge/information detached from its context, independent of its author(s)/makers and disconnected from learners' past experiences and perspectives emphasising the interpretive nature of historical knowledge. So, this can be considered an empirical result supporting the theory (Maggioni et al., 2009; Stoel et al., 2017; VanSledright, 2010). On the other hand, one item that should theoretically be included in the subjectivist sub-dimension is located in the criterialist sub-dimension, while two items in the criterialist sub-dimension are included in the subjectivist sub-dimension. These results indicate that the limited number of student teachers who participated in this study had already developed an awareness of the interpretive and subjective structure of historical knowledge.

Nevertheless, they could not make a clear distinction between the subjectivist stance and the criterialist stance, which indicates the importance of discipline-specific criteria and historical research strategies. According to Stoel et al. (2017), this may be arising from the theoretical ground of BHQ. As a result of their empirical studies, the authors revealed that the items reflecting the subjectivist stance were located in both the objectivist (naïve) and the criterialist (nuanced) dimensions. It is accepted that the theoretical framework developed in the US context assumes that having a subjectivist perspective is of a lower level than adopting a criterialist stance. On the other hand, whether this may also be applied to history teachers and students living and working in different parts of the world it is a matter of question. Is the process of transforming historical sources into evidence (doing history) by means of reflecting a criterialist stance given enough space in history curricula around the world? Or, the purpose of history teaching is to transfer factual information and concepts in teacher-centred classroom contexts to raise a desired type of citizen, in which there is no room for discussion and/or inquiry? The answers to such questions differ in accordance with the epistemic beliefs of teachers as a reflection of the missions imposed on teacher education, especially in relation to the differing understandings (contextual factors) of history teaching adopted by countries or educational systems (Stoel et al., 2022). As a matter of fact, the study by Sakki and Pirttilä-Backman (2019) revealed that socio-cultural contexts affect teachers' epistemic beliefs. In some countries (Netherlands, Austria, Germany), for example, critical thinking is at the forefront, while some countries (Estonia, Belarus, Serbia) give importance to patriotism and moral values. It has been emphasised in the relevant literature that variables such as school culture, centralised nationwide examinations, limited class time, the structure of the relevant curricula and social expectations prevent teachers to engage in questioning activities that may develop students' epistemic beliefs in history. This situation may also force history teachers to head for a content-based learning environment (van Hover & Yeager, 2004; Voet & de Wever, 2016; Wansink et al., 2016).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

Considering the Turkish context, it is natural that there is not a clear distinction between subjectivist and critical perspectives. This situation is closely related to the developmental process of history education in Türkiye. For many years, history teaching in Türkiye has been based on

factual knowledge and rote learning (Simsek & Yazici, 2013). As a result of this situation, history courses were perceived by students as a boring course disconnected from daily life (Ozkal et al., 2004). It can be said that this phenomenon is still valid today. In the study conducted by Dinç and Üztemur (2017) with Turkish pre-service social studies teachers, the participants stated that secondary school social studies courses consisted of complex, boring and clichéd subjects and that these subjects were far above the level of students. As a matter of fact, although a small number of studies (Aktekin et al., 2009; Uztemur et al., 2019) aimed at preventing this perception with a student-centred history approach stand out, it can be said that there are still very few activities for making history in history lessons. In addition, history teachers' self-efficacy in implementing doing history activities (working with first-hand sources, developing historical thinking skills, doing activities that emphasise that different perspectives can also be valuable in history, practices aimed at developing historical perspective, historical contextualisation and historical empathy skills, studies that emphasise that history and the past are not the same things and that the historian cannot be separated from the society he/she comes from, etc.) should be improved. A qualitative study conducted by Yilmaz (2008) with Turkish social studies teachers revealed that the participants had a naïve and realist epistemic belief in the nature of history, never mentioned the role of historians in the process of constructing historical knowledge, were unaware of the distinction between past and history and believed that historical knowledge was objective. When all these results are considered together, it would not be wrong to position a history teacher with a subjectivist perspective in the Turkish context closer to a relatively sophisticated historical epistemic belief. It does not seem possible to change the traditional history teaching in Türkiye, which is based on the memorisation of unchanging information and facts, quickly. Changing the belief and perception that history textbooks are unchanging and uncritical texts like sacred texts is a process that requires some time. Considering the fact that historical thinking skills and history making methodology are not addressed much in history teaching, it is natural that some items from subjectivist and critical perspectives are intertwined in the present study. As teachers' historical epistemic beliefs become more sophisticated, they will move away from a teacher-centred and rote-based history teaching approach and become aware that history has its own methodology (criteria and strategies) in history courses. For example, in a mixed-design study conducted by Dinç and Üztemur (2017) with Turkish pre-service social

studies teachers, it was observed that participants with more sophisticated epistemic beliefs opposed teacher-centred social studies lessons in the classroom, emphasised authentic learning and mentioned the importance of out-of-school learning.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study found that the three-dimensional structure of BHQ emerged in the context of Turkish culture. It can be said that there are some problems in terms of validity and reliability. As a result of CFA, some fit indices (IFI, CFI) were low. This may be due to the fact that CFA was not performed on a different data set. Due to the limited number of participants in the study, all analyses were performed on a single data set, which may have caused some problems related to validity and reliability. In addition, the relatively small number of participants might also have been reducing the power of representation. The removal of some items from the scale and the results indicating that contrary to the theory some items are located in different factors may be caused by contextual factors. To fully understand the factor structures of BHQ in Turkish culture, in-depth interviews and studies using the think-aloud technique might be helpful. Additionally, quantitative studies carried out on large samples may produce more accurate findings. Another limitation of the study is that the reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions of BHQ were relatively low. Although the reliability coefficient was found to be low in studies in the literature, in which BHQ was adapted to different cultures (Hamer, 2016; Mierwald & Junius, 2022), studies should be conducted on different samples and comparisons between sub-dimensions should be done to find out whether this situation is specific to Turkish culture. Although the literature on epistemic beliefs in the field of history has expanded especially in the last 20 years, the present study is the first one addressing this issue in the Turkish context. In this respect, it can be said that the present study has an exploratory aspect. In Türkiye, further studies are required to assess the epistemic beliefs of teachers and students in the field of history and to reveal the effects of these beliefs on the teaching-learning processes.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the psychometric properties of the BHQ in Turkish culture were analysed. The results showed that the three-dimensional structure of the scale was supported in Turkish culture. Considering that the original dimensions of the scale were not supported in adaptation studies conducted in different cultures, it can be said that the results of the current research are significant. Another important result of the study was that the objectivist sub-dimension was clearly separated from the other sub-dimensions. This means that the data collected in the Turkish context supports the clear distinction between an objectivist stance, which interprets the historical knowledge/information detached from its context, independent of its author(s)/makers and disconnected from learners' past experiences and perspectives emphasising the interpretive nature of historical knowledge. These results are noteworthy in that the findings from the Turkish context support the theory.

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Exploring Taiwanese History Teachers’ Epistemic Beliefs about History

Chih-Ching Chang

INTRODUCTION

The study of history, especially within the East Asian cultural context, presents a unique intersection of traditional narratives and evolving pedagogical practices. Since 2019, Taiwan has been at the forefront of this evolution with its recent curriculum reform, aiming to deepen the development of historical thinking in education (National Academy for Educational Research, [NAER], 2018). Central to this transformation is not just the facts of history, but the beliefs and epistemologies that underpin them. This chapter sets an objective: to explore the personal trajectory of Taiwanese high school teachers’ epistemic beliefs towards history as a discipline, embedded within the broader East Asian cultural milieu.

The significance of understanding teachers’ epistemic beliefs cannot be overstated (Maggioni et al., 2009; Stoel et al., 2022). As the recent curriculum reform underscores in Taiwan, fostering historical thinking among students is intricately linked with the interplay between epistemological

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beliefs, pedagogical practices, and the cultural narratives that influence them. Achieving this aim requires a deep dive into how Taiwanese teachers, situated within the East Asian cultural context, perceive, internalise, and transmit history.

Contributing to this multifaceted academic conversation, this chapter introduces fresh insights through the lens of the Epistemic Network Analysis (ENA, Shaffer, 2017). By employing ENA, this chapter offers an integrated discussion on the shifts in teachers' historical epistemic beliefs throughout one academic year. Significantly, this research introduces a pattern-based model, presenting a novel methodological approach that deviates from conventional developmental stage-like models. Moreover, by delineating four distinct patterns of historical epistemic beliefs and emphasising their cultural nuances, we aim to enrich the existing discourse and set a foundation for future research implications.

Thus, this chapter not only delves deep into the realm of teachers' beliefs but also positions itself within the broader dialogue on historical education in Taiwan, adding layers of methodological, analytical, and cultural insights to the discussion of this ongoing topic.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF RESEARCH ON EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS

Perry's (1970) seminal longitudinal study at Harvard was the bedrock of personal epistemology, charting students' intellectual and ethical development across four broad phases: *dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment within relativism*. This classification was drawn from a decade of open-ended interviews with a cohort of nearly 150 undergraduates. Expanding on this foundation, King and Kitchener (2001) concentrated on the concept of epistemic assumptions, particularly reasoning. Over fifteen years, they used interview studies to build the Reflective Judgment Model, examining three levels of epistemological progression and how individuals justify beliefs surrounding complex problems. Shifting the lens slightly, Kuhn (1999) opted to study everyday reasoning with ill-structured problems across a more varied demographic.

These models mentioned above share similar assumptions and illustrate similar trajectories of development. On a different track, Schommer-Aikins (2004) placed her focus on independent beliefs and proposed a model that sees epistemic beliefs as a spectrum, not static stages or positions. She

reshaped Perry's work into the Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire, a significant milestone providing a comprehensive tool for exploring how epistemological beliefs relate to learning. The four factors in this model are characterised as Certain Knowledge (knowledge is certain or evolving), Simple Knowledge (knowledge is isolated bits of information or highly interrelated concepts), Quick Learning (learning occurs in all-or-nothing situations or as a gradual enterprise), and Fixed Ability (intelligence is fixed or incremental) (Schommer-Aikins, 2004).

Taking a divergent path, Hofer and Pintrich (1997) put forward a model with four dimensions of epistemology: certainty of knowledge, simplicity of knowledge (clustered into the area of 'the nature of knowledge'), source of knowledge and justification of knowledge (clustered into the area of 'the process of knowing'), highlighting the variability of epistemic beliefs across different disciplines. Their approach spurred more research into discipline-specific personal epistemology, particularly within mathematics (Corte et al., 2002) and science (Bell & Linn, 2002). Yet, a significant gap remains in the discipline of history.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL BELIEFS ABOUT HISTORY AS A DISCIPLINE

The aforementioned research offers a wealth of insights for Maggioni et al. (2009) as they delve into the interplay between epistemic beliefs and historical thinking, taking inspiration from studies on personal epistemology such as those by King and Kitchener (2001). Upon resolving the measurement challenges associated with employing traditional written tools (Wood et al., 2002) that have been derived from the Reflective Judgment Interview (King & Kitchener, 2001), Maggioni et al. (2009) put forward a novel instrument: The Beliefs about Learning and Teaching of History Questionnaire. The intention behind this questionnaire is to provide an easily manageable, domain-specific, and objectively scorable tool (Maggioni et al., 2009).

This methodology led to the identification of four distinct epistemic profiles: *dichotomous thinkers* (who believe 'the unmediated nature of historical knowledge accompanies a view of history as prevalently subjective'), *naïve realist* (characterised by 'the belief in a perfect correspondence between the past and history'), *relativist* (whose emphasis is on 'the subjective nature of historical knowledge' but 'the historical method is not deemed an effective tool to deal with problems of conflicting or missing evidence'), and *criterialist* (referring to the attempt to 'search for the best

explanation through the patient's weaving together of the best evidence and the best argument available') (Maggioni et al., 2004). Each profile represents a unique perspective on the nature of historical knowledge and the methodologies for its interpretation. Such an approach provides a nuanced framework for domain-specific measurements of epistemological beliefs, fostering a more profound understanding of the progression of historical thinking. Furthermore, the findings underscore a crucial pedagogical implication: the necessity for explicit instruction and exposure to the heuristics of history to facilitate the evolution of teachers' and students' domain-specific epistemic beliefs. However, this research provides limited guidance on how to implement a Teacher Professional Development (TPD) intervention concerned with the evolution of epistemic beliefs.

Furthering the investigations into domain-specific epistemic beliefs (Maggioni et al., 2009) and integrating with van Drie and van Boxel's (2008) structure of historical thinking, Havekes et al. (2012) introduce a conceptual model on the interactions between students' epistemic positions and the processes of understanding and practising history. This framework identifies three distinct epistemic positions, namely: *copier stance* (referring to students who believe an exact copy of the past could be produced), *borrower stance* (students in this stance understand that the past cannot be copied exactly, which requires using sources to reconstruct but they also believe that the fixed procedure of doing history is possible), and *criticalist stance* (in this stance, students not only ask critical questions and engage in historical sources to construct the past but also understand that both knowing and doing history are not fixed but debatable). Importantly, these stances do not exist in isolation; rather, they intersect and interact with all other aspects of understanding and practising history.

TEACHER'S PERSONAL EPISTEMOLOGY AND TEACHING

Research on teachers' personal epistemic beliefs and teaching practice has largely focused on preservice teachers' beliefs about knowledge. For instance, Sinatra and Kardash (2004) found that the epistemic beliefs of preservice teachers could be used to predict their openness to new metaphors of teaching. Brownlee et al. (2001) investigated how preservice teachers' personal epistemology changed during the course of the one-year teaching programme, and they proposed a conceptual framework. Highlighting the role of teachers' epistemic beliefs and motivations, Patrick and Pintrich (2001) emphasise the need for beliefs to be

challenged and openly discussed. Regarding domain-specific epistemic beliefs in history, Bouhon (2009) characterises three types of teacher beliefs: (1) *exposition-recital*, which considers transmitting historical knowledge as the main purpose of instructions; (2) *discourse-discovery*, which focuses on knowledge acquisition and the training of historical thinking; and (3) *apprenticeship-research*, builds historical consciousness and an understanding of historical research. Similarly, McCrum (2013) divides history teachers into two broad categories: *teacher-centred* and *pupil-centred*, which can result in different preferences for pedagogical instruction.

Drawing on the literature, VanSledright and Reddy (2014) proposed an interventional Teacher Professional Development (TPD) for prospective history teachers to influence their epistemic beliefs. The intervention consists of a series of sessions (14) in which epistemic beliefs about history are explicitly introduced and a set of teaching-learning strategies designed to reveal prospective teachers' epistemic beliefs and open them up for consideration and discussion. The Beliefs about History Questionnaire (Maggioni et al., 2009) and interviews were employed to explore the trajectories of epistemic beliefs. The results indicate that some of the preservice teachers remained unaffected by the course, whereas others changed dramatically due to the difficulty of 'working out a successful coordination between themselves as knowers and what can be known about the past through its remaining objects' (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014). However, the study fails to explain how the interventional TPD could be improved since the programme played a crucial role in the research.

In a more recent study, Wilke et al. (2022) explore 21 history teachers' personal epistemology in Flanders. This research suggests that while nuanced epistemological beliefs are crucial for interpretive history teaching, they are not sufficient. It underlines the importance of other beliefs, contextual factors, and teachers' competency in creating materials that enhance students' historical thinking and epistemological reflection.

Overall, the review reveals that only limited research has paid attention to addressing teachers' epistemic beliefs before implementing a new pedagogical approach in class.

UNDERSTANDING TAIWAN AS THE RESEARCH CONTEXT: THE NATURE OF HISTORY IN EAST ASIAN CONTEXT

Taiwan remains steeped in shared Chinese cultural traditions, especially Confucian traditions. Throughout China's history, discussions on history's nature and purpose have been dominated by the ruling class, who sought guidance from past events for political decision-making. For instance, in the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE), a historian, Zhou Gong (周公), proposed history education for emperors, advocating learning from past dynastic errors to bolster the empire. This perspective was later embraced by Confucius, who integrated history into his private school curriculum using his compiled texts, such as the Spring and Autumn Annals (「春秋」). Confucian teachings emphasised history education's dual purpose: guiding rulers towards virtue-driven governance (「仁政」) and fostering societal order through cultural heritage preservation.

The same approach was employed by Emperor Taizong of Tang (唐太宗, 598–649 AD), who once famously stated that using history as a mirror allows one to see the future trends. The explicit analogy of history as a mirror later became an implicit preconception about the nature of history subscribed to by many (Lee, 2007) and later integrated into Sima Guang's (司馬光, 1084) influential work, *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* (「資治通鑑」) (Lee, 2007). Sima's work informed Zhu Xi's (朱熹, 1130–1200 AD) philosophical shift in the purpose of history—moving from governance structure maintenance to moral decision—using history as a moral compass for judgements (Lee, 2009).

During the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912), history education became institutionalised as moral education. The classics, including *The Analects* (「論語」) and *I Ching* (「易經」), became pivotal for history instruction. Any divergence from the established historical interpretation was severely penalised (Lee, 2007).

However, with the establishment of a modern nation, the Republic of China (ROC), Western influences reshaped the education system, using history to cultivate a patriotic citizenry. After relocating to Taiwan, the ROC employed history education to consolidate its power and forge a Chinese identity (Shi, 2014; Du, 2009). With Taiwan's democratic evolution, history education reforms have emerged, focusing on concepts like historical thinking and consciousness, informed by Western scholars (e.g., Lee, 2005; Seixas, 2017; Wineburg, 2010; Hsiao, 2009; Huang et al., 2011).

STUDY OVERVIEW

Seven teachers from three different schools were recruited in this study. The teaching experience of the teachers ranged from two years to more than 20 years ($M = 11.8$). In order to explore teachers' epistemic beliefs in depth, the method of interviewing is desired as one which provides access to the context of people's behaviour, and consequently, researchers could have a better understanding of the meaning of that behaviour (Seidman, 2006).

Typically, researchers use ill-structured problems to probe interviewees' reasoning and code their response into different stages (e.g. King and Kitchener's (2001) Reflective Judgment and Kuhn's (1999) six levels of epistemological thinking). Hence, informed by their work, the semi-interviews of this study consisted of two parts: (1) Part 1: Questions about the nature of history, such as 'How would you describe history as an academic discipline?' and 'Do you think that one historical theory can be superior to another? Why (not)?' (2) Part 2: Here, interviewees will be given two conflicting accounts of a historical event and asked questions such as if the accounts were different and, if so, how?; and can both accounts be correct or is one account 'more true' than the other? (See also Lee (2005) and Hsiao (2009) for the use of conflicting historical accounts in interviews.). Two sets of interviews were conducted before and after one academic year to explore the trajectories of teachers' personal epistemology about history.

USING EPISTEMIC NETWORK ANALYSIS TO EXPLORE PERSONAL EPISTEMOLOGY

In this study, Epistemic Network Analysis (ENA) was employed to analyse the complexity of personal epistemology (Shaffer, 2017). Networks are visualised using network graphs where nodes correspond to the codes, and edges reflect the relative frequency of co-occurrence, or connection, between two codes. The result are two coordinated representations for each unit of analysis: (1) a plotted point, which represents the location of that unit's network in the low-dimensional projected space, and (2) a weighted network graph. The positions of the network graph nodes are fixed, and those positions are determined by an optimisation routine that minimises the difference between the plotted points and their corresponding network centroids. In this study, ENA was used to explore how the

participants' epistemic beliefs connected are shown in their discourse during interviews.

To conduct ENA, a coding framework to code the data from interviews is needed. Relevant literature has been reviewed and reconceptualised into the coding framework of this study. This presented framework (see Appendix 1, also see Table 16.1 for a brief overview of the initials of code names) is the product of a research project conducted in Taiwan, which has been under development through an iterative process of application and refinement. The proposed framework is broadly divided into two overarching categories: the nature of knowledge and the process of knowing (Schommer-Aikins, 2004). The first category delineates into two dimensions: the certainty of knowledge and the simplicity of knowledge, while the latter encompasses the source of knowledge and the justification of knowledge (Hofer, 2001, 2004a, 2004b). Furthermore, each dimension can be approached from both objective and subjective perspectives, as discussed by Maggioni et al. (2004). Therefore, this coding schema for epistemic beliefs comprises a total of eight codes, as illustrated in Table 16.1 and Appendix 1. In order to ascertain the inter-rater reliability, an entire transcript from one of the interviewees was independently coded by both me and a secondary researcher. This other researcher had been thoroughly briefed about this coding system's theoretical underpinnings and conceptual architecture. Each code was analysed in terms of presence (1) and absence (0) and then calculated by using Cohen's kappa (κ) performed on SPSS (v.25). A few codes (e.g. SiKO and SoKS) with value <0.5 have been

Table 16.1 An overview of the acronyms of code names with the inter-rater reliability

<i>General Areas</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>Cohen's kappa (κ) value</i>
The nature of knowledge	Certainty of knowledge	Objective	CKO	0.881
		Subjective	CKS	0.796
	Simplicity of knowledge	Objective	SiKO	0.689
		Subjective	SiKS	0.721
The process of knowing	Source of knowledge	Objective	SoKO	0.763
		Subjective	SoKS	0.659
	Justification of knowledge	Objective	JKO	0.827
		Subjective	JKS	0.756

refined and discussed within coders to investigate the disagreement of the scheme.

After data from interviews had been coded with the framework above, the Epistemic Network Analysis was then run to generate the results (see Appendix 2 for all figures). The resulting networks are aggregated for all lines for each unit of analysis in the model. In this model, networks were aggregated using a binary summation in which the networks for a given line reflect the presence or absence of the co-occurrence of each pair of codes. The final model had coregistration correlations of 0.98 (Pearson) and 0.97 (Spearman) for the first dimension and coregistration correlations of 0.99 (Pearson) and 0.98 (Spearman) for the second. These measures indicate a strong goodness of fit between the visualisation and the original model. For each teacher, the figure on the left-hand and right-hand side illustrates the pattern of his/her historical epistemic beliefs before and after one academic year respectively.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF EXPLORING TEACHERS' HISTORICAL EPISTEMIC BELIEFS

The result of ENA indicates that Teacher Chou, among other teachers, saw the most significant changes in her epistemology throughout the year. To explore further, a fine-grained qualitative analysis was conducted in complement to the statistical analysis. In the analysis of the first set of data, the strongest connection between SoKS¹ and JKO ($M = 0.23$) suggests the teacher has a clear and firm understanding of what she believes the nature of history to be. Like any other well-trained history expert, Chou often cited various scholars (e.g., Ranke) and literature (e.g., *The Historian's Craft* by Marc Bloch, 1953) to support her argument when required regarding conflicting historical sources (Wineburg, 2010). Chou also suggested that, when using sources, students should be cautious about not only the content of the sources but also the contextual background of the authors (Wineburg, 2010) to develop more in-depth and critical thinking ($M/SiKS-JKO = 0.28$). For instance, regarding the subjectivity of sources, she argued, '*because these sources were selected actively by the historians who always have their own agenda, you have to take that into account*' (interview data²). However, this constructivist perspective

¹Please see Table 16.1 or Appendix 1 for the references for all the codes.

²Interviews were conducted in Mandarin and later transcribed and translated into English.

regarding epistemic beliefs does not quite reflect her teaching practice. In her classroom, from my observation, a substantial amount of time (95%) was devoted to Chou's own monologue, lecturing students about the historical facts from the textbook they used. In her interview, she admitted, '*most of the time, I'm just spoon-feeding them the knowledge they need to know...because we don't really have much time for discussion and you know there's lots of content to catch up on before the exams*' (interview data) (*CKO-SiKO*, *mean* = 0.69).

In the postinterview, the changes were transparent in these aspects. Firstly, when asked about the nature of the discipline, Chou responded by highlighting the importance of '*inquiry [into] the truth*' (interview data). This belief influenced her pedagogical approach this academic year via a transition to a more inquiry-based teaching practice ($M[SoKS-JKO] = 0.36$) to accommodate the new curriculum. Secondly, she also emphasised teaching contextualisation as one of the main goals of history education, by which students can develop their historical empathy and '*become a person with more compassion and warmth*'. Chou concluded that her belief regarding the nature of history is twofold: one, a more external purpose is to understand the disciplinary approach, and the other is a more intrinsic aspect to '*know humans and oneself more deeply*' (interview data) ($M[SiKS-SoKS] = 0.33$). Finally, these changes were not only apparent in the analysis but also clear in her teaching practice, in which she adopted a more dialogic approach to co-explore historical inquiry (Lévesque & Clark, 2018) with the students to accommodate the latest curriculum (NAER, 2018). She also placed greater emphasis on developing the students' historical thinking, such as contextualisation and historical empathy (Seixas, 2017).

FOUR KEY PATTERNS OF HISTORICAL EPISTEMIC BELIEFS

In this study, ENA was employed to analyse teachers' epistemologies of history as a discipline. Using ENA enabled the analysis to generate a model in accordance with the coding instrument, which was reconceptualised and synthesised from previous literature (e.g., Maggioni et al., 2004; Schommer-Aikins, 2004). The model, as stated in the research aims, is not an attempt to provide a developmental category for each individual's epistemic beliefs (e.g., see King & Kitchener, 2001; Kuhn, 1999); instead, this study aims to provide a conceptual model for exploring the complexity and nuances in personal epistemologies with visualised patterns from

ENA. In the rest of the chapter, I discuss some key patterns that emerged from the results of the analysis.

Pattern 1: 'Mirror' belief (CKO-SiKO-SoKO) (Fig. 16.1)

The first key pattern found in this study aligns with what Kuhn (1999) refers to as *absolutist* and Maggioni et al. (2004) identified as *naïve realist*, which means the individual believes that knowledge is certain and there is a perfect correspondence between the past and history (the connection of CKO-SiKO). This perspective was reinforced by an unquestioning belief in the authoritative voice, such as those in textbook narratives or from certain historians (CKO-SoKO). Individuals with this pattern of beliefs had very rigid, dichotomous thinking, with their judgement confined to what they had learnt from the experts (SiKO-SoKO). This perspective

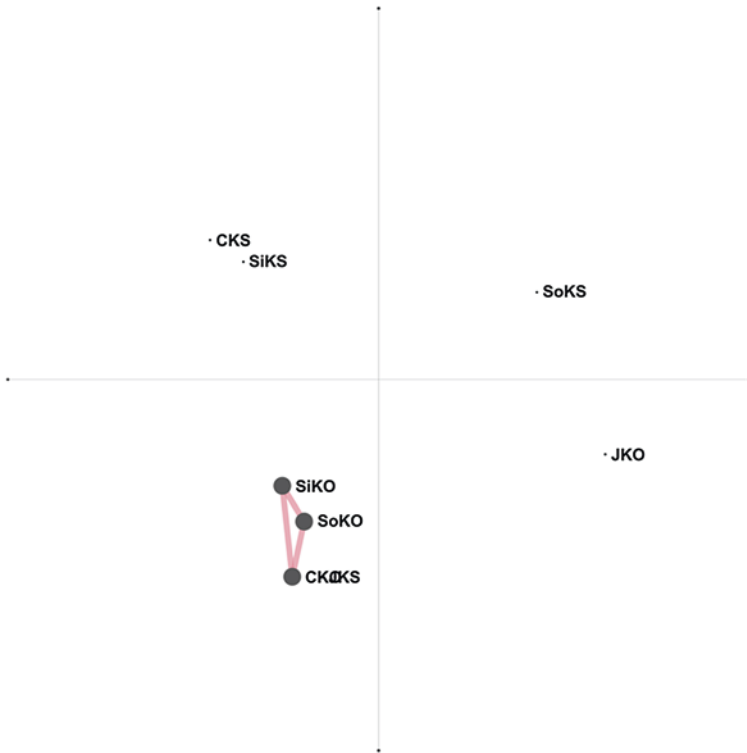


Fig. 16.1 The pattern for 'Mirror-like belief'

reflects the traditional Chinese view of history as a ‘mirror’, which can be used as a lesson and moral compass for judgement (Wang, 2015). The explicit analogy of history as a mirror later became an implicit preconception about the nature of history (Lee, 2007).

Pattern 2: Multiple and relativist beliefs (CKS-SiKS-JKS) (Fig. 16.2)

In the second key pattern found in the analysis, the strong connections between CKS, SiKS, and JKS indicate that, in contrast to the first pattern, some individuals held a subjective perspective about historical knowledge. The findings suggest that individuals with this pattern usually believed in the uncertainty of historical knowledge for two reasons. First, they were sceptical about the absolute truth about historical accounts because no historians witnessed the incidents, meaning they could not know nor

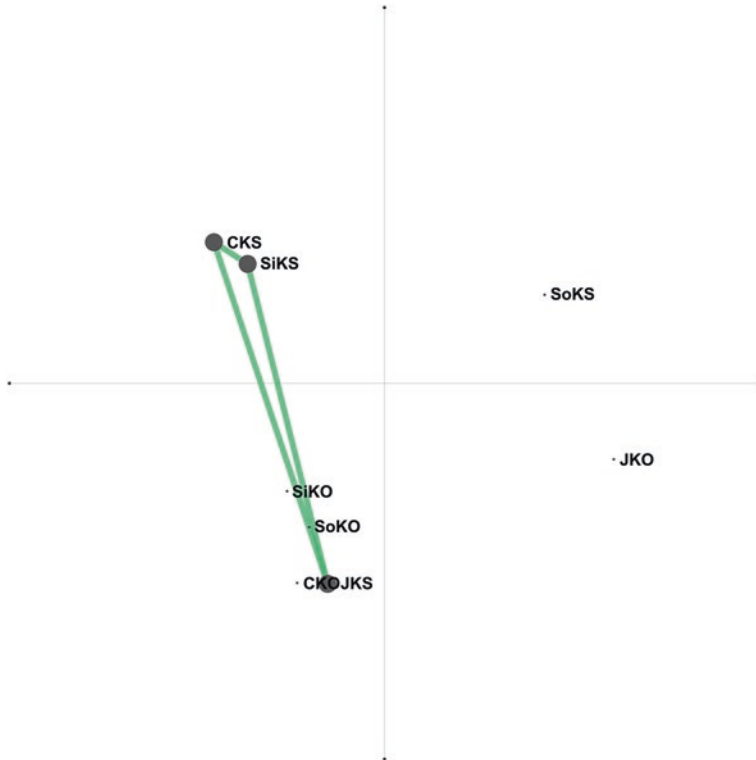


Fig. 16.2 The pattern for multiple and relativist belief

figure out everything from the past. Since historical knowledge is too uncertain and complex to be judged right or wrong, the teachers also tended to believe that every opinion and theory proposed by historians is equally valid and valuable (CKS-SiKS-JKS). This pattern is similar to what Maggioni et al. (2004) refer to as relativist, and it is a vital transition to a more advanced epistemic stance (Kuhn, 1999).

Pattern 3: Absolute and constructivist beliefs (CKO-SoKS-JKO) (Fig. 16.3)

The third key pattern from the findings suggests that teachers held an objective perspective about the certainty of historical knowledge, meaning believing in the existence of absolute truth (CKO). However, unlike other patterns and findings from relevant studies (e.g., Havekes et al., 2012;

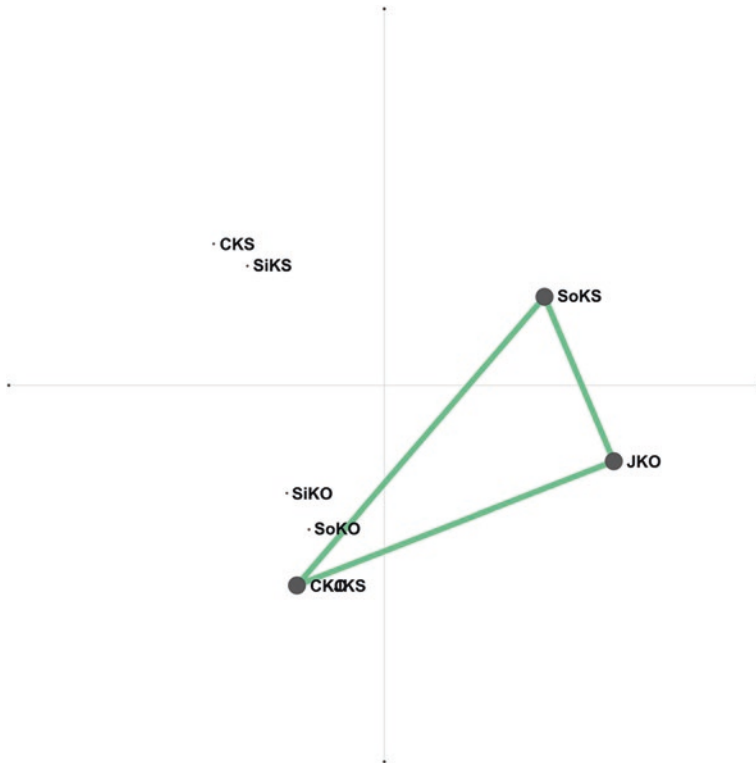


Fig. 16.3 The pattern for absolute and constructivist belief

Hsiao, 2009; Maggioni et al., 2004), individuals with this pattern also believed that history is constructed by a group of people, including oneself (SoKS). Therefore, to reach a consensus, certain criteria should be met to make an objective judgement (JKO). It is noticeable that this is the first pattern in which individuals started to acknowledge the importance of evidence-based arguments, and historical interpretations were required to be examined carefully using historical sources, either firsthand or second-hand (van Drie & van Boxel, 2008, 2018).

Pattern 4: Expert-like beliefs (SiKS-SoKS-JKO) (Fig. 16.4)

The final key pattern indicates more sophisticated epistemic beliefs, described as *criterialist* by Maggioni et al. (2004; see also Havekes et al., 2012 for similar findings on the notion of a *criterialist stance*). Individuals

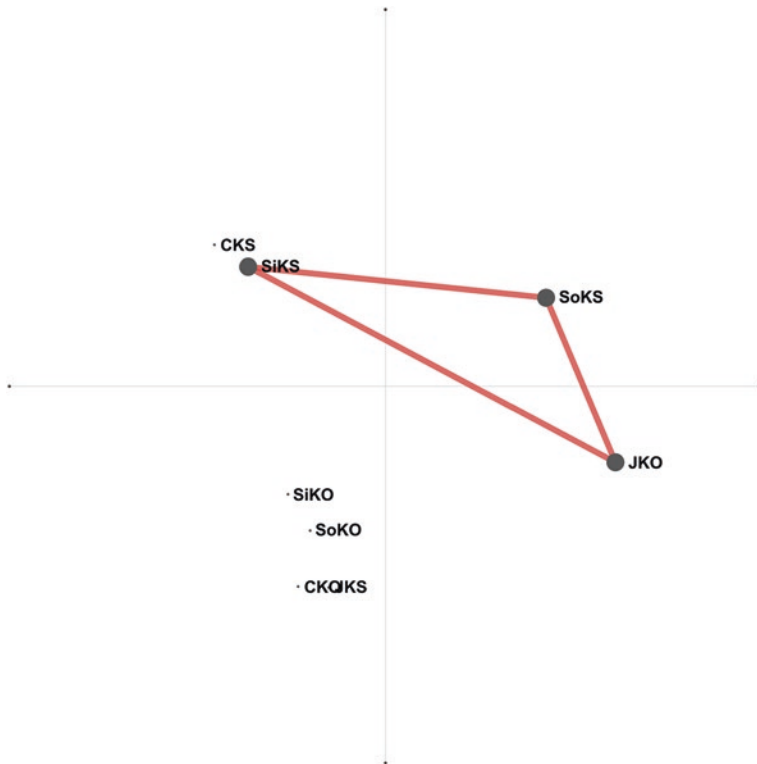


Fig. 16.4 The pattern for expert-like beliefs

with this pattern were usually teachers with high-level historical knowledge. These individuals acknowledged that history is a complex set of inter-related accounts situated in a specific historical and cultural context (SiKS); however, they also emphasised the importance of how evidence, such as historical texts, construct more objective historical knowledge, which should also be evaluated and carefully examined using a rigorous historical research methodology (SoKS-JKO). Having a well-developed understanding of history as a discipline, these individuals often cited well-known historians as examples to provide the theoretical foundation for their own responses. A few individuals even demonstrated holistic viewpoints on some well-debated topics in historiography to provide a clear and impartial argument. For instance, when asked about the nature of history, Teacher Lin started to introduce the comparison between Western and Chinese traditional views on history and discussed the inevitable subjectivity involved in history writing, using a famous quote from the Italian historian Benedetto Croce. This finding echoes Wineburg's (2010) study on the differences between experts' and novices' historical thinking (see also VanSledright, 2002).

These four key patterns emerging from the findings provide a potential and more nuanced model for analysing teachers' historical epistemic beliefs using quantitative analysis. However, as emphasised above, this study is not an attempt to generate a category-like model in which each individual's personal epistemology can be clearly categorised into a box. The main purpose of presenting these four patterns is to illustrate the complexity and subtlety through visualisation in the course of analysing epistemic beliefs. This model could be used to identify the major dimension of an individual's epistemological stance by examining the pattern-matching. The pattern-like model could also deeply explore the nuances and diversity of an individual's historical epistemic beliefs, even the contradictory ones. Finally, this model could be used to form an illustrative 'picture' of the trajectory of change in teachers' epistemic beliefs over a certain period. This 'picture' contains rich information about a person's personal epistemology, and it is easy to perform a comparative analysis with other 'pictures' via both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

CONCLUSION

The central rationale of this chapter was to understand the nuances and trajectories of Taiwanese high school teachers' epistemic beliefs about history, especially within the cultural context of East Asia. This exploration is premised on the belief that teachers' epistemological stances significantly influence the pedagogical practices of historical thinking. Utilising the Epistemic Network Analysis (ENA) and a pattern-based model, this research presented an alternative perspective, diverging from traditional stage-like developmental models. The findings not only reinforce established literature (e.g., Havekes et al., 2012) but also, through the prism of ENA, offer richer insights into individual belief nuances.

A critical revelation was the disconnect between teachers' strong convictions about history and their self-awareness of these beliefs. This disconnect underscores the potential challenges in cultivating advanced historical thinking in students.

Given these insights, there's a pressing need for further research. Validating the patterns and framework introduced herein is essential, emphasising the intertwined relationship between epistemic beliefs and history education, especially within specific cultural contexts.

APPENDIX I: CODING FRAMEWORK FOR HISTORICAL EPISTEMIC BELIEFS

<i>General Areas</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
The nature of knowledge	Certainty of knowledge	<p>Objective: In this category, the individual believes in the existence of absolute historical facts. Past could be 'copied' to the present. History is past as a fixed story.</p>	CKO	<i>'History is like an old story, which we can learn some experiences and lessons from'.</i>
		<p>Subjective: Individual realises there is the uncertainty of historical knowledge and that the past could not be exactly copied. There are many factors that could have an impact on historical facts, such as historians' perspectives.</p>	CKS	<i>'Historical facts are like... maybe... written by many historians, and then they judge which one might be correct'.</i>
	Simplicity of knowledge	<p>Objective: Historical knowledge is a simple and unchanged truth as the existence of concrete knowledgeable facts.</p>	SiKO	<i>'It's his (historian's) job to tell us what people in the past do and let us know it'.</i>
		<p>Subjective: Individual views historical knowledge as a complex continuum consisting of various interrelated concepts and needs to be situated in context.</p>	SiKS	<i>I should know more about the context, like the background, of this historical event'.</i>

(continued)

(continued)

<i>General Areas</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>Examples</i>
The process of knowing	Source of knowledge	<p>Objective: Knowledge exists outside of individuals and could be found in historical sources. It is also possessed by the authorities, such as historians, history teachers and history textbooks and can be transmitted to the ignorant.</p> <p>Subjective: Knowledge is constructed by a group of people, including one's self. At the same time, an individual would be more sceptical about the authorities who claim to possess the knowledge.</p>	SoKO	<i>'Ah! We can know the history from the historical texts!'</i>
	Justification of knowledge	<p>Objective: The construction of historical knowledge should be supported by historical sources, which should also be evaluated through different criteria. Also, arguments proposed by historians should also be examined with certain criteria.</p> <p>Subjective: Every opinion is equally valuable and valid. There is no right or wrong or good or bad. Everyone is entitled to their opinions. Therefore, the historical facts are simply personal interpretations.</p>	SoKS	<i>'Yes, and the nature of history is through research, but we don't really do that (at school). We just study and memorise from somebody's work'.</i>
			JKO	<i>'I think it really depends on individuals, but it should be rigorous and could be jus... justified'.</i>
			JKS	<i>'I think you know... everyone has their own opinions about one thing, so... no right or wrong'.</i>

APPENDIX 2: RESULTS OF ENA (ALL FIGURES)

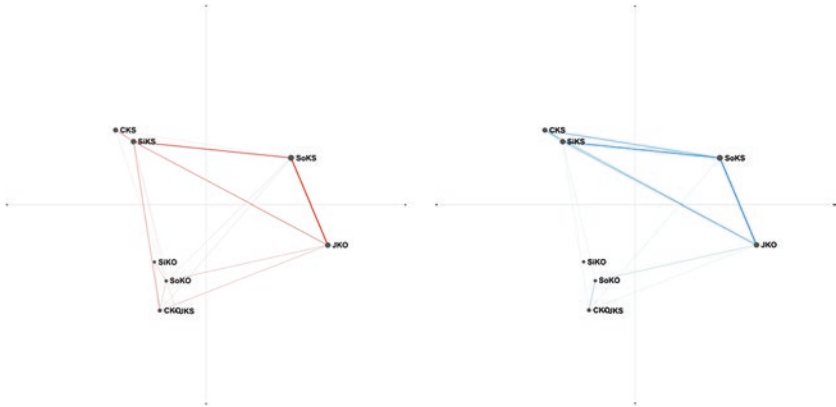


Fig. 16.5 The ENA result for Fang

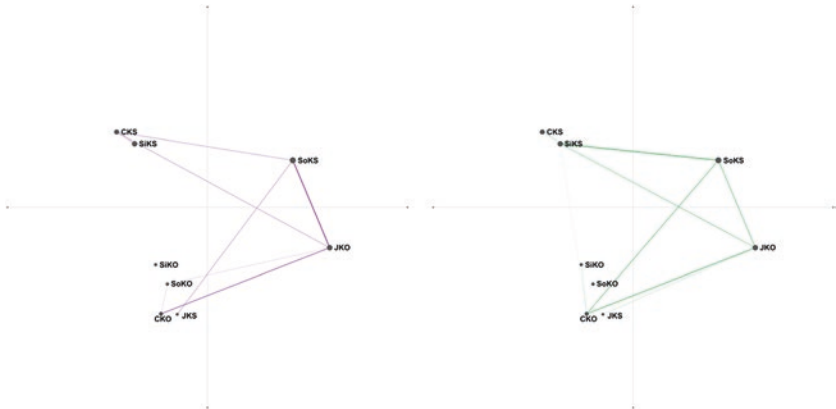


Fig. 16.6 The ENA result for Hsu

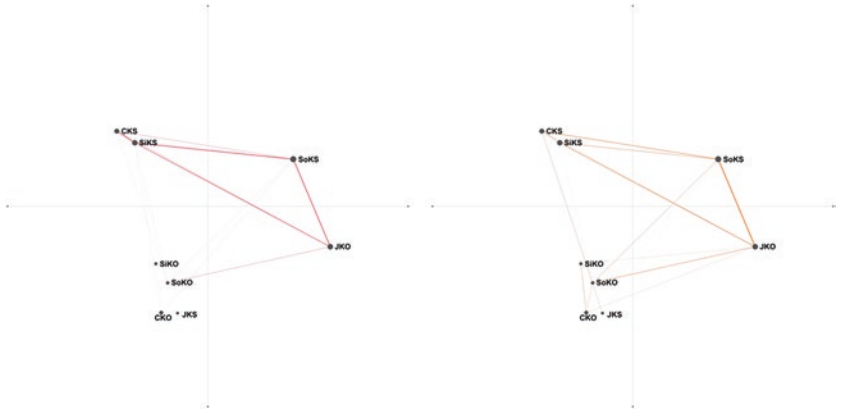


Fig. 16.7 The ENA result for Wu

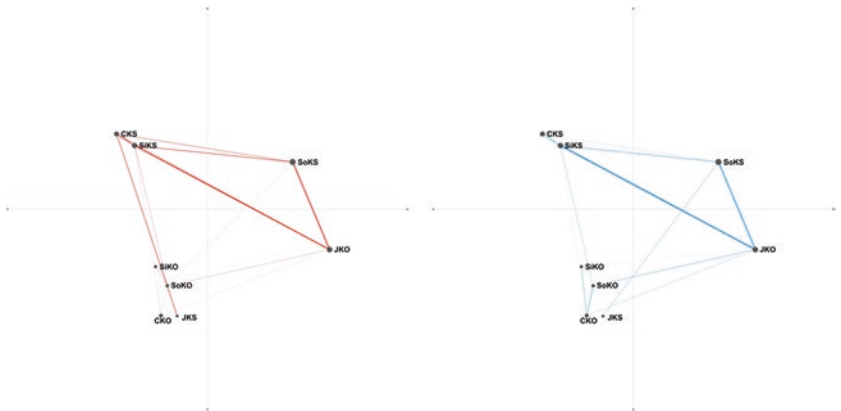


Fig. 16.8 The ENA result for Lin

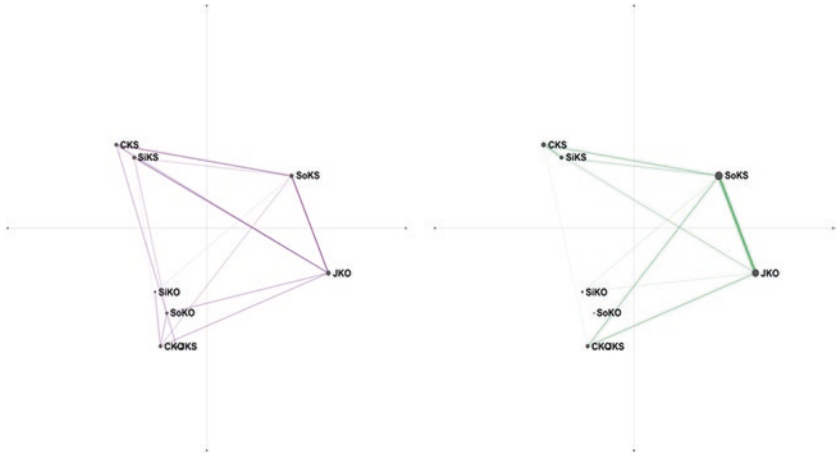


Fig. 16.9 The ENA result of Chen

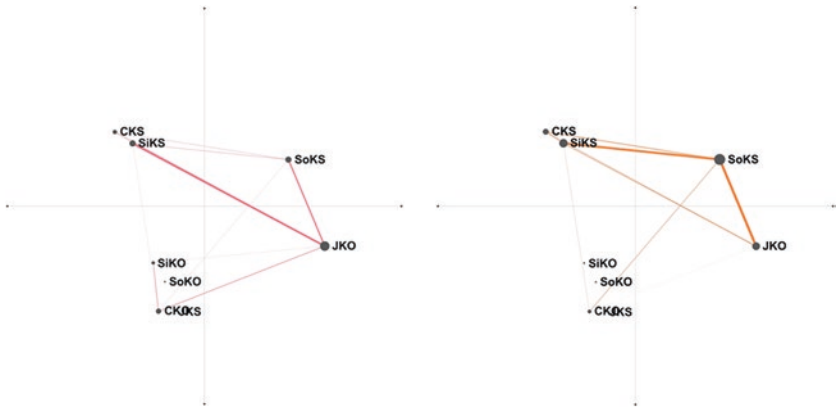


Fig. 16.10 The ENA result for Chou

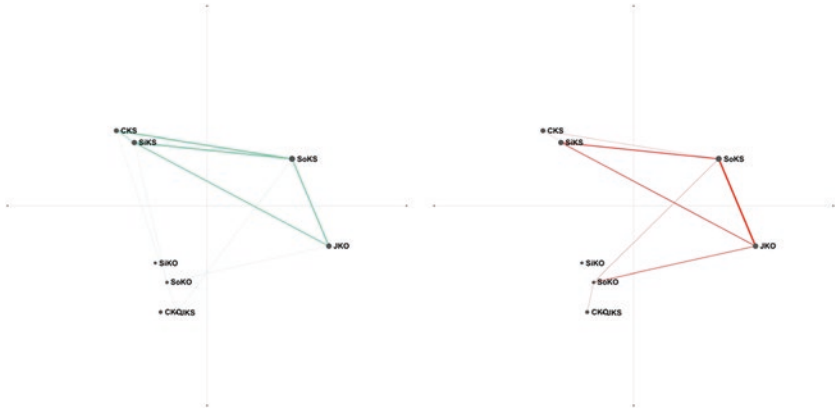


Fig. 16.11 The ENA result for Huang

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Epistemic Cognition Triangulated: What Can We Learn about the Theory of Epistemic Beliefs in History from Reassessment of Its Measurement

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INTRODUCTION

Maggioni's theory of epistemic beliefs in history underlined the rationale and the corresponding evaluation of History+, a large-scale intervention in Czech history education. During the first year of the intervention, we faced several challenges with the theory and the theory-based measurement tools, including inconsistencies in the epistemic beliefs of the

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participating teachers. The puzzling issue of epistemic wobbling has garnered the attention of many researchers (e.g. VanSledright & Reddy, 2014; Wansink et al., 2017; Miguel-Revilla et al., 2021), including Maggioni herself (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016, pp. 139–141). Maggioni identifies “objectivist”, “subjectivist”, and “criterialist” types of beliefs (2010, pp. 129–133) and equates them to corresponding dimensions in the Beliefs About History Questionnaire (BHQ). For objectivists, history is a mere copy of the past. Subjectivists see history mainly as a matter of unconstrained accounts of different historians. Criterialists see history as a product of authors who build their accounts of the past following certain procedural principles. An epistemic wobbler, however, may endorse both criterialist and subjectivist or objectivist items.

In this chapter we expand the understanding of epistemic wobbling by rephrasing epistemic beliefs as situational states. We suggest that an individual can hold some epistemic beliefs on a personal level and use others in their professional life and even occasionally shift between beliefs within these domains as the situation in which they are activated changes. To empirically assess how teachers’ epistemic beliefs operate in the context of their work, we also propose construction guidelines for a new measurement tool. As we illustrate in the following sections, a good understanding of the wobbling phenomenon constitutes a crucial prerequisite for drawing valid conclusions from interventions grounded in Maggioni’s theory.

HISTORY+ AND THE CZECH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

When seen through the lens of epistemic beliefs, Czech education leans heavily towards epistemic objectivism. History education largely relies on the transmission of facts. Textbooks are an irreplaceable didactic tool, particularly in lower secondary schools (Labischová & Gracová, 2016). There

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is also a gap between the skill-based character of the general curricula, which teachers embrace only with reservations, and teachers' practice. This gap exists both on the general level (Janík et al., 2020, p. 151) and specifically in history education (Ripka & Hoření, 2017). Despite these hindering characteristics, the Czech general curriculum covers the development of epistemic cognition. The curriculum comes in the form of guidelines, and the introduction states: "*The students are led to realise that history is neither a confinement of past times, nor it is a conglomeration of facts and final answers. History is rather based on posing questions through which the present inquires about the past to learn about its own nature and possible future*" (MŠMT, 2017, p. 51). The educational content of the curriculum describes expected outcomes and subject matter. School curricula follow the national general curriculum when specifying school educational programmes. Individual teachers' teaching plans further specify these. Schools generally enjoy a high degree of autonomy, while teachers' autonomy depends on the leadership style within the school (Greger & Walterová, 2018; Herbst & Wojciuk, 2014).

Czech experts in history didactics have expressed a consensus for reform towards criterialist, inquiry-based learning and a more active role of students in developing their own historical thinking and inquiry skills. However, despite the demand for change, such reforms have yet to take root. To address this, a consortium of Czech institutions¹ developed the first national intervention, History+.

The Organisation of the Intervention

History+ aims to transform history education on a large scale. The trial period started in September 2021 and continues at the time of writing this chapter, in late 2022. The intervention runs for two school years and has two primary goals: to introduce inquiry-based learning methods that foster historical literacy in students and to test a professional learning community framework for facilitating teacher cooperation and innovations.

History+ worked with 208 lower secondary teachers of year nine students.² Additional 50 upper secondary teachers joined on demand. Each

¹The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes; the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic; National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic.

²Year nine is the last year of ISCED 2.

teacher brought a participating class. Altogether, 241 mostly lower secondary teacher-class dyads received the complete treatment since 17 teachers left the programme after the first term. Participating teachers formed 40 learning communities (five to eight members), each led by a local coordinator.

The intervention³ has built upon the HistoryLab framework by Činátl et al. (2021), who have iteratively developed it for over six years within the related project. HistoryLab builds upon Seixas' and Morton's Big Six Historical thinking concepts (2012) with emphasis on evidence and the conceptualisation of inquiry methods by FUER (Körber, 2011) and SHEG (Wineburg et al., 2011). In year nine, history education typically covers post-1918 Czech and world history, with about fifty lessons of 45 minutes. The sample material consisted of seven mandatory lesson plans (six with set content and one elective). The lessons were given once monthly, excluding the months of pre- and post-tests (September and June). Regional and local coordinators disseminated the lessons to the learning communities. The coordinators also planned the lessons and moderated post-lesson feedback sessions. Akin to the German SINUS model of teacher development (Ostermeier et al., 2010), the lesson plans included a designated space for teachers' adaptation. Each lesson fitted a standard class (45 minutes), but many teachers extended it over two standard classes. On average, each teacher taught slightly fewer than six lessons. Thus, some teachers did not give all the mandatory lessons, and the elective lessons were scarce.

In this chapter, we build upon the selected insights from the project's first year and propose adaptations to the theory of epistemic beliefs. We first review the literature on the phenomenon of epistemic wobbling. After the discussion of epistemic identity switching, we arrive at the understanding of epistemic beliefs as discrete states that change based on the situational context. We also propose construction principles for an instrument for the study of situational epistemic beliefs and thus give additional leverage to the existing tools to measure the epistemic beliefs of history teachers.

³The framework is available in the evaluation OSF repository at <https://osf.io/vkwnx>. The key datasets of pre- and post-treatment surveys on epistemic beliefs and the general profile of the teachers are available at the Czech Social Science Data Archive (Ripka et al., 2024a, b).

KEY FINDINGS ABOUT EPISTEMIC BELIEFS IN HISTORY+

The theory of epistemic beliefs in history (EB) has been applied multiple times in the History + project. This section provides a brief example of the theory's application (see Ripka et al., 2022, for a detailed summary and results of the analyses), together with two critical findings attributed to the epistemic wobbling phenomenon. This phenomenon provides a conceptual basis for the following discussions.

To examine the participating teachers' epistemic beliefs and assess the project's progress towards its goals, we used the Czech adaptation of the BHQ questionnaire by Říčan et al. (2022). Our analysis showed that the clustering of the BHQ items did not align with the theory. Subjectivism and Objectivism items were strongly related and intertwined to the point that they could not be considered separate constructs, and this finding was consistent with Říčan et al.'s earlier results. Furthermore, Criterialism items formed a separate cluster that was minimally related to Subjectivism items, implying that some teachers may endorse both Criterialism and Subjectivism at the same time.

The theory was also applied to observe the epistemic cognition of teachers in action by analysing how the teachers adjusted the lesson plans to suit their teaching style and classroom. We monitored how teachers accepted and modified the prepared inquiry-based lessons. A qualitative analysis of the lesson plans revealed a case of a sample lesson plan that teachers extensively modified. The lesson dealt substantively with anti-Soviet uprisings in Poland and Hungary and their suppression by the army of the USSR. Initially, the lesson plan heavily featured an activity where students combined multiple historical sources representing varying perspectives to reconstruct a past event. Some teachers modified the activity so that the students would need to select a single historical account and interpret it as an accurate ("reliable") depiction of the past event. This shift indicates dualism on the part of the teachers: the tendency towards identification of right or wrong accounts (VanSledright & Reddy, 2014, p. 34).

In the project, we observed teachers that endorsed theoretically incongruent epistemic positions and those who turned a Criterialist historical inquiry exercise into an objectivist, dualist information retrieval. These two key observations motivate the following sections. We first explore the case of multiple epistemic stances and review existing literature on epistemic wobbling (inconsistency in epistemic beliefs). We extend the theory

of EB in a way that explains why teachers may endorse both Criticalist and Subjectivist/Objectivist items.

We then explore the proposition that BHQ may fail to capture the situational expression of EB. To capture the distinction between general and situational, the EBs need to be separately operationalised within the context of teacher action, for instance, in terms of preferences in lesson planning. While the personal epistemic beliefs might primarily reflect thoughts about one's subject as historians or graduates of history (education), EBs in the professional context might reflect the teaching setting, including, but not limited to, the expectations of the (current) students' capabilities.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF MULTIPLE EPISTEMIC STANCES

Understanding the seemingly contradictory BHQ responses requires first assessing the potential causes of this contradiction in the underlying structure of teachers' true epistemic beliefs. Both general (Hammer & Elby, 2002) and domain-specific literature (Maggioni, 2010, pp. 291–301; Stoel et al., 2022, p. 13) have used the term 'wobbling' to refer to epistemic inconsistency. Wobbling translates to holding a set of inconsistent or outright contradictory claims. The literature on epistemic beliefs and cognition frequently uses the term in discussions about the incongruence between theoretical epistemic belief types and sets of beliefs identified in questionnaire data, interviews, or teachers' statements. Maggioni and VanSledright consider wobbling a norm (2016, p. 141).

Since wobbling often describes an incongruence between theory and observed data, one way to approach it is to dismiss it as an artefact of data collection caused by the limited validity of instruments. Maggioni suggested this may be the case with BHQ, as a modified questionnaire version failed to produce reliable scores for the copier (subjectivist) dimension of epistemic cognition (2009, p. 208). However, she later developed a consistency score to capture the extent of wobbling in the data (2010, pp. 138–139).

Suppose we thus assume the phenomenon to be real. In that case, it can be described and understood primarily in two ways: either as a transitory state between developmental stages or as a set of conflicting beliefs that imply identity and context-related problems. We propose the reduction of this distinction to an underlying assumption about the ontology of epistemic beliefs. The beliefs can either be continuous constructs resembling

traits that can be held and combined to a varying degree or discrete qualitative states, and a person can only hold one at a given time in a given situation.

When seen as a continuous trait-like construct, wobbling would emerge as mixed or incoherent beliefs that have risen from an incomplete transition caused by an external force, an impulse that blew the prior, less developed epistemic beliefs off the course (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Miguel-Revilla et al. (2021) offer an example of this perspective. They found that pre-service teachers' beliefs tend to become more consistently criterialist with more disciplinary training and thus stronger academic background, which hints at the potentially beneficial role of instruction.

More or less developed beliefs imply that different people assume different positions alongside a continuum. Wobbling can then translate to an indeterminate position on this continuum, which is unlikely in people with highly developed beliefs. A fully developed Criterialist is unlikely to display wobbling, and a wobbler should not display fully developed Criterialist thinking.

Seeing epistemic beliefs as discrete states confined to a moment offers a different perspective. Maggioni (2010) suggests that wobbling might stem from unstable coordination between everyday epistemic beliefs and the professional beliefs of historians, which are also predominantly taught to university students. She thus rephrases Carl L. Becker's "For each of us [professional historians] is Mr. Everyman too" (1932, p. 232). Many other authors tackled the claim that the same person can hold one set of epistemic beliefs in one situation and a very different belief set in another. Elmersjö and Zanzanian (2022) examined possible divergence between teachers' statements about the principles underlying their teaching practice and their self-perceptions as historians. Similarly, Mierwald and Junius (2022) expressed doubts about simultaneously investigating teachers' pedagogical and historical beliefs, a step taken by Maggioni in BHQ development (2009). Furthermore, Maggioni has elsewhere provided an illustration of epistemic inconsistency when an otherwise criterialist historian relies on their objectivist fact-based epistemic standard in an educational environment (2010, p. 310). Gottlieb and Wineburg (2012, p. 98) identified "epistemic switching" characterised by two simultaneous commitments. In their work, an academic historian also held a religious identity. A concept of double epistemic standards exists outside history education (see Maggioni & Parkinson, 2008, pp. 352–354 for review).

Some authors have attempted to disentangle the inconsistency following Maggioni's proposal on testing the nature of wobbling, especially by methodological triangulation (2009). Nitsche's (2019) study of prospective history teachers employed two different questionnaires to discriminate between history-teaching beliefs and beliefs about history by employing two different questionnaires and found no correlation between these two types of beliefs, which suggests that two clashing identities might cause inconsistency. Gottlieb and Wineburg's (2012) qualitative exploration of multidimensional identities and their relationship to epistemic cognition revealed that identity-related material might cause switching between a historian and non-historian personal identities. Wansink et al. (2017) administered a document-based questionnaire and open-ended questions to Dutch prospective history teachers and found inconsistencies in epistemic beliefs regarding history education. Wansink et al. see the perceived inconsistency as a result of switching between multiple epistemic standards that correspond to the roles in the school environment—one of the historian and one of the teacher. Gottlieb et al. used divisive, national, or religious identity-related stimuli in their measurement. They expected the switch to occur, especially when confronted with such polarising stimuli.

Since both teachers and experts seem to alternate their beliefs under different circumstances, we find it unlikely that wobblers are merely stuck on a continuum between two clear epistemic positions. We, therefore, advocate approaching wobbling as a transition between states, conditional on the context of an individual. A wobbler can be a discrete criterialist in one situation and a pure objectivist in another. Unlike in the continuous interpretation of EB, wobbling does not preclude a clear epistemic position. Under certain classroom conditions, a wobbling teacher can work in a manner indistinguishable from pure criterialists.

The current form of BHQ does not align with this perspective. The questionnaire does not consider the situational determinants of time and place. If epistemic beliefs can switch between situations, people can base their responses on the performance of multiple identities and contexts. The incongruence in responses may simply result from the multitude of situations imagined by the respondent. An instrument placed in a more concrete situational context and the respondent's identity might result in more distinct stances. The following section shows that our conceptualisation of wobbling can result in testable hypotheses about the distinction between the continuous and discrete accounts of epistemic beliefs.

THE HYPOTHESED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERAL AND SITUATIONAL EPISTEMIC BELIEFS

An operational definition of epistemic beliefs is necessary to test whether a discrete situational account of epistemic beliefs can explain patterns in BHQ that we attribute to wobbling. An important feature of this operationalisation is whether a questionnaire asks about a specific situation. A questionnaire is situation-specific when relevant aspects of the situations are clear to the respondent.

Research on psychological situations might offer some structure for these considerations. For instance, Rauthman et al. (2014) developed an eight-dimensional taxonomy of psychological situations. The eight dimensions represent different situational characteristics an individual might (or might not) see. In such a framework, a teacher might see teaching in a classroom as involving the dimension of *duty* (“*A job needs to be done*”, “*Being counted on to do something*”); discussion with colleagues as high in *sociality* (“*Close personal relationships are present or could develop.*”) or *adversity* (“*Being criticized.*”) and a debate with professional historians high in intellect (“*Situation affords an opportunity to demonstrate intellectual capacity.*”).

In a hypothetical scenario, respondents could go through a questionnaire (for instance, BHQ), item by item, and rate the situation they imagine when answering on the dimensions of *duty*, *sociality*, *adversity*, etc. The questionnaire could only be situation-specific if these ratings were similar across both items and respondents.

Specific epistemic beliefs only relate to a particular setting, and their operationalisation should present a particular context. However, we argue that BHQ assesses general (not situation-specific) epistemic beliefs about history. Similarly, the three categories teachers fall into, objectivists, subjectivists, and criterialists reflect general epistemic beliefs. When answering, respondents recall different situations and contexts relevant to the content of the items across space and time, both on an individual level and the level of the whole sample. In the following subsection, we take a brief intermezzo to describe an example instrument more adequate for capturing situation-specific epistemic beliefs:

Testing the Situational Aspect of Epistemic Beliefs

An instrument measuring specific epistemic beliefs needs to constrain the context from which the respondent samples their answers into narrow confines. These constraints leave little room for imagining a wide array of situations. In an example of such an approach below, we set the respondent into the role of a teacher designing a lesson with specific content—the Munich crisis of 1938.

We illustrate the measurement of situational epistemic beliefs on an example where we constrain the context by setting the respondent into a teacher planning an inquiry-based lesson on the Munich crisis of 1938. The international crisis of 1938 is a pivotal moment in Czechoslovak history. It became one of the most important Czech sites of memory and still holds a correspondingly prominent place in the history curriculum. All teachers, we believe, will find the items relevant and have a sufficient understanding of the significance of cases presented in the items.

A set of vignettes introduces the teacher to items that probe their thoughts on three essential components of history education: historical evidence, inquiry, and knowledge. Specifically, we ask the teacher to provide examples of relevant historical evidence, classroom activities that facilitate historical inquiry, and what they see as an apt illustration of historical knowledge. For illustration, we include a vignette and an item about historical evidence:⁴

Imagine you are preparing a lesson about the causes of the Munich crisis. To what extent do you find the following illustrative cases to effectively demonstrate what constitutes historical evidence for students in such a lesson?

1.1 An excerpt from a collection of opinion essays discussing the history of relations between Czechs and Germans, written in Czechoslovakia between World War I and II.

Each item is accompanied by a rationale describing principles that allow for the formulation of similar items in other contexts. These principles follow a series of contrasts between Objectivist-Subjectivist and Criterialist positions listed in Table 17.1. The Objectivist-Subjectivist approach is based on an accurate representation of past events based on reliable information and provides a streamlined account of how things happened. The

⁴A detailed description of the remaining vignettes and items is on an OSF repository: <https://osf.io/ptbdg>

Table 17.1 Principles of epistemic positions

<i>Criterionalist</i>	<i>Objectivist-subjectivist</i>
Historical perspectives	Unreliable opinions of historical actors
Studying the mediality of political expression	Avoiding political speeches because of an inevitable bias
Avoiding the uncritical use of pre-processed knowledge	Using valuable historical synthesis to recreate the past
Triangulation of past events from multiple sources	Assessing the prima facie truthfulness of a source
Value of revisiting known sources and accounts of new methods	The impossibility of producing novel historical knowledge without novel historical evidence

Criterionalist approach analyses and compares different perspectives. It constructs a narrative of the past by considering different sources which are relevant due to their learning content rather than the mere truthfulness of their prima facie content. According to Mierwald (2020, pp. 232–234), multiperspectivity is key to fostering criterionism.

Despite the situation-specific context, teachers' responses may still be biased by classroom circumstances not accounted for in the wording of the vignettes. Teachers might consider an activity or source ill-fitting because it does not align with their students' current progress, not because it challenges their epistemic beliefs as a teacher (e.g., *Is X a good example of historical inquiry activity for such a lesson?* instead of *Is X a good choice of activity for my students right now?*). These concerns might be difficult to capture with simple additions to the vignettes. To control for this inherent threat to validity, we propose to include a measure of teacher expectations about their pupils as a covariate. For instance, the first application of this questionnaire in the project also included questions on the proportion of students the teacher considers capable of such things as formulating an evidence-based argument.

Specific Hypotheses about the Nature of Epistemic Beliefs and Situational Factors in Wobbling

With both instruments at hand, the consistency—or lack thereof—between teachers' responses to the general BHQ and a situational-specific instrument can help us decide between a continuous-trait and discrete-state accounts. We present two hypotheses that make specific predictions about

the Wobblers, whom we define as teachers who score high on both criterialism and subjectivism-objectivism. The first hypothesis predicts the distribution of Wobblers' responses. The second one draws expectations about the role of situational context in wobbling. We hope that testing these hypotheses can become one of the next steps to disentangle the long-lived debate about the nature of epistemic beliefs.

H1: The Distribution of Wobbler's Responses The first hypothesis tests whether epistemic beliefs in a given situation are discrete or continuous. Suppose the continuous account is true; the beliefs of Wobblers lie between Criterialism and Objectivism. In that case, the scores in both general and specific epistemic beliefs contexts should reflect the same observation: Criterialists score on average the highest on Criterialism, Objectivist-Subjectivists the lowest, and Wobblers fill the space in-between.

However, if the discrete account is true, we would expect a different outcome for Wobblers. Instead of one neat average on the situation-specific measure between Criterialists and Subjectivist-Objectivists, we would expect a bi-modal distribution with one group of Wobblers scoring very close to Criterialists and another very close to Subjectivist-Objectivists.

H2: The Role of Situational Factors in Wobbling The second hypothesis tests the role of situational factors in wobbling. We predict an interaction between situational context and the general epistemic belief group membership. Criterialists and Subjectivist-Objectivists should be consistent across situations and show little effect of varying contexts on their situational-specific epistemic belief scores. Conversely, Wobblers should show much greater differences in situation-specific epistemic beliefs based on the differences in the provided context.

While the *continuous trait* conceptualisation of epistemic beliefs does not preclude contextual effects, we believe this effect would be uniform across general epistemic belief groups if the continuous account were true.

DISCUSSION

In this essay, we have discussed the phenomenon of epistemic wobbling and its consequences for Maggioni's theory of epistemic beliefs in history. We argue that if certain assumptions hold, the ontology of wobbling reduces to a question about the underlying nature of epistemic beliefs. If

epistemic beliefs are discrete situational states, then wobbling is merely the reflection of varying contexts under which the people express them. Therefore, we focus on whether this account of epistemic beliefs is tenable.

While the literature has not reached a consensus, the evidence seems to lean towards the discrete account of epistemic beliefs. The discrete account of epistemic beliefs can work in an analogy to human motor development. At a certain developmental phase, a child transitions from only being able to sit to walking. While there can be unsuccessful walking attempts during the learning process, the transition is rather binary—at one point, there is a crawler, and at another, a walker. However, the breaking point precludes neither the underlying continuous development of pre-requisite capabilities, such as muscle strength or spatial orientation, nor the ability to revert to sitting or crawling under certain conditions. In line with the analogy, people may first need to acquire and develop underlying capabilities before thinking as criterialists. Once able to do so, people either “walk” like criterialists or “sit” like subjectivist-objectivists, as there is not much between the two. Nevertheless, while there are times to walk briskly, there are times to sit down calmly. The ability to be criterialists may go hand in hand with being something else whenever we deem it appropriate.

Understanding epistemic beliefs is essential for both theory and practice of teaching history. It emphasises future research and synthesis directions for theoretical purposes, such as prerequisites to develop criterialist abilities. We should treat the emotional, cognitive, and social precursors of criterialism as *necessary but not sufficient* conditions to develop the criterialist capability. Suppose the discrete account of epistemic beliefs is true. In that case, it is equally important to study contexts that make an individual “sit” or “walk” at any given moment—what triggers the existing capacity for criterialism and what suppresses it. Such contexts may include psychosocial factors like identity or tolerance for uncertainty and selected practical factors in the teacher’s decision-making, like classroom settings, students’ abilities or the school climate and culture.

For practical purposes, understanding epistemic beliefs has major implications for designing interventions and teaching materials that promote inquiry-based teaching approaches. A key takeaway of our proposed approach is that *wobblers* might not necessarily be *unreliable in-betweens*. Wobblers could be indistinguishable in their practice from full Criterialists in certain conditions. Thus, instead of educating wobblers towards criterialist thinking, we should create such proper conditions so they start teaching as Criterialists. Seeing the teaching context as a trigger for full

criticalist thinking might lead to carefully designing lesson plans and teaching materials geared towards students' needs and cultural backgrounds of specific communities.

While our perspective might present opportunities, it also warns that a wrongly conceived lesson might make a criticalist teacher switch to a pure subjectivist-objectivist. Earlier in the text, we introduced a situation where teachers adapted a criticalist lesson plan about the Soviet interventions in Poland and Hungary into a subjectivist-objectivist exercise about identifying *the right* resources. Certain factors might have led the teachers to abandon their otherwise criticalist thinking. They might have felt the task's difficulty not matching their students' skills. Alternatively, they might have felt a connection between the lesson content and the Warsaw Pact intervention during the Prague Spring in 1968, which made them switch a teacher's perspective to that of a national site of memory almost as prominent as the Munich crisis. Either way, the lesson in question might have had an undesirable effect that a less intense, yet still criticalist, lesson plan would not have.

It might be tempting to avoid topics with increased potential to trigger subjectivist-objectivist (in our analogy sitting) beliefs both in measuring instruments and in the field. As our experience with the anti-communist uprising and its depiction of topical media messages and the previous research of Gottlieb and Wineburg (2012) and Wansink et al. (2017) suggest, collective identity issues such as religion or migration might make criticalist, interpretive historical thinking suppressed and overridden by an objectivist drive. However, can (and should) history education easily dismiss collective identity issues and objectives? The current general Czech curriculum sets critical reconceptualisation of collective identity as one of its goals. It thus seems neither feasible to call for narrowing down history education to safer, less identity-laden content more prone to criticalist, inquiry-based methods, nor is it reasonable to avoid identity-laden topics in training and testing, as they might become an essential part of the history-related post-schooling life. We assume a sensible solution lies in two principles: sequencing identity-related training material and acknowledging the borderline character of culturally specific, collective identity topics in the interpretive frame for the analytical results.

From a research perspective, identifying such shift-inducing boundary conditions could be key to understanding the situational nature of epistemic beliefs. The comparison of answers to the questionnaire about a Munich crisis lesson and answers to a similar questionnaire based in, say,

local history unrelated to grand national narratives could show teachers who are more or less persistent in their situational criterialism than others.

Another implication we draw in the context of History+ is that a one-size-fits-all approach to designing similar interventions is better accomplished when the intervention targets a homogenous population of teachers and students. In the Introduction, we outlined the decentralised system of Czech education with many schools that enjoy extensive autonomy in implementing the national curriculum (Herbst & Wojciuk, 2014). Given this variability in school culture and leadership styles (as well as major inequalities in socio-economic settings, Greger, 2015), it is important to consider whether the materials that trigger proactive criterialism in some might activate defensive subjectivism-objectivism in others.

In this chapter, we shared selected highlights from a national intervention into inquiry-based learning of history framed by the theory of epistemic beliefs. Based on our experience, we suggested a specification of the theory's assumptions that may open new directions in research on epistemic beliefs and topics in discussing the design and future of our and similar interventions. To facilitate these changes in thinking, we proposed two hypotheses whose testing may deepen our understanding of the nature of epistemic beliefs.

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Why Are They Inconsistent? Discussing Norwegian History Student Teachers' Understanding of the *Beliefs about Learning and Teaching History Questionnaire*, Through Cognitive Interviewing

David-Alexandre Wagner

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this chapter is to shed more light on the problem of epistemic inconsistency, that is often encountered when using questionnaires to investigate people's epistemic beliefs about history. It presents the results of cognitive interviews performed with student teachers after they completed an adapted version of the BLTHQ (*Beliefs about Teaching and Learning History Questionnaire*).

Reflections about epistemology, and history as a discipline, are age-old, and have occurred since the dawn of academia. Interest towards epistemic beliefs regarding psychological and educational research, however, has

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© The Author(s) 2024
H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanzanian (eds.), *Teachers and the Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_18

particularly grown since the 1970s (Hofer & Bendixen, 2012; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Epistemic beliefs are widely recognized as bearing significant influence on metacognitive learning and teaching processes, and on levels of critical thinking in different domains of knowledge (Buehl & Alexander, 2001; Hofer & Bendixen, 2012; King & Kitchener, 2002; Kuhn, 1999; Stoel et al., 2022). On a larger scale, having societies of people with advanced epistemic beliefs is central to creating healthy democracies which are able to adapt and face both contemporary and future challenges (Garrett & Weeks, 2017).

This growing interest has been embodied by a large body of research, notably concerned with how to assess and map epistemic beliefs, through domain-general or domain-specific criteria and instruments in different disciplines, such as mathematics, science and history (Hofer & Bendixen, 2012; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). Different methodologies have been used, but self-report instruments largely dominate the body of the studies conducted, often for practical and economic reasons (Muis et al., 2014).

Self-report instruments—i.e. questionnaires using scales in response to pre-set questions—are usually very valuable to gauge respondents' thoughts, intentions, attitudes or beliefs. Nonetheless, they still face several issues, such as having little internal consistency and poor factor structure, and issues related to conceptual and theoretical challenges. Further issues include the complexity of epistemic beliefs “per se” for informants and researchers, the domain-specificity of epistemic beliefs and the influence of external factors related to the educational and national contexts (DeBacker et al., 2008; Hofer & Bendixen, 2012; Muis et al., 2014; Nitsche, 2019; Sakki & Pirttilä-Backman, 2019; Voet & De Wever, 2016; Wansink et al., 2016). A way of better understanding and overcoming these challenges is to conduct cognitive interviews with a limited number of participants (Karabenick et al., 2007), asking them to recall how they understood and answered the different questions. There is, however, a relative lack of such studies (Muis et al., 2014).

In history education, the different self-report instruments used to investigate epistemic beliefs—often adapting versions of Maggioni and colleagues' BLTHQ and BHQ (*Beliefs about History Questionnaire*) (Maggioni, 2010; Maggioni et al., 2004; Maggioni et al., 2009a) to different languages and national contexts—have not been spared of these problems. One of the main issues identified is epistemic inconsistency, or “wobbling” (Maggioni, 2010; Stoel et al., 2022; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016).

Epistemic inconsistency is not a new phenomenon; Perry (1970) already noted that interviewees could hold different positions according to the different sectors implied in his research (academic, religious, extra-curricular, vocational or interpersonal); and King and Kitchener (2002) asserted that a certain variability of stage reasoning was actually normal. Within history education, epistemic inconsistency, or “wobbling”, has been brought to light by Maggioni and colleagues (Maggioni, 2010; Maggioni et al., 2010; Maggioni et al., 2009b; VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016). A significant number of students and teachers who filled out the BLTHQ or the BHQ agreed (or disagreed) simultaneously with (seemingly) contradictory statements. They “wobbled” between objectivist and subjectivist stances, sometimes between subjectivist and criterialist stances, or even between the three different stances. The same phenomenon of epistemic inconsistency has been identified in other studies (Elmersjö, 2022; Mierwald et al., 2017; Miguel-Revilla, 2022; Stoel et al., 2022; VanSledright & Reddy, 2014; Wagner & Dettweiler, 2024).

The explanations given for epistemic inconsistency are varied.

A general idea is that epistemic beliefs are complex ideas that require a certain degree of awareness to be properly verbalized. As such, they are generally only held consistently by experts. These ideas are most often too complex to be well-integrated, i.e. being well defined and understood, amongst non-experts, whether that be students or teachers (Elmersjö, 2022; Maggioni, 2010; Maggioni et al., 2010; Maggioni et al., 2009a; Mierwald & Junius, 2022).

Another explanation is due to the epistemic ambiguity of many individual items (Elmersjö, 2022; Maggioni, 2010; Mierwald & Junius, 2022; Stoel et al., 2017). Although self-report tools like the BLTHQ have been validated by experts, they fail to grasp non-experts’ epistemic beliefs, because some of their items are understood in different ways, and associated with other stances than the one they are intended to belong to. Moreover, this suggests that context plays an important role, either because informants related their beliefs to memories and experiences in their daily life (Mierwald & Junius, 2022; Muis et al., 2014); or because they responded according to what they thought their students needed to be taught, and not only according to their own epistemic beliefs (Elmersjö, 2022).

Mierwald and Junius (2022) identified two other explanations: one related to the length and comprehensibility of certain items; the other related to irritating references to the school context, an idea also put forward by Miguel-Revilla et al. (2020).

These explanations need further confirmation and investigation in other contexts. Although the investigation of Mierwald and Junius (2022) was informative, it was limited to just four German high school students responding to an adaptation of the BHQ.

Following their work, this article intends to present the results of cognitive interviews we conducted with history student teachers to validate a Norwegian version of the BLTHQ (Maggioni et al., 2004; Maggioni et al., 2009a) that we used in a wider study (Wagner & Dettweiler, 2024). Overall, we hope to contribute to the body of case studies investigating epistemic beliefs about history in different contexts, and we hope to further clarify the problem of epistemic inconsistency.

METHOD

We recruited eight respondents (three males, four females, one other) from 176 Norwegian history student teachers that had answered our Norwegian version of Maggioni's BLTHQ (Wagner & Dettweiler, 2024). They volunteered, just after completing the questionnaire, to participate in an individual interview that would investigate their understanding of the questionnaire.

Our BLTHQ in Norwegian is a translated and slightly adapted version of the original 21-item questionnaire, respectively split between an objectivist, a subjectivist and a criterialist stance (see Table 18.2). The order of the different items was randomly set (see each statement's number) and the respondents answered following a six-point Likert scale system (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Somewhat disagree; 4 = Somewhat agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly agree). Moreover, we added a final question to identify which stance each informant felt closest to. Through an exploratory factor analysis based on the 176 respondents (Wagner & Dettweiler, 2024), we managed to extract a three-factor solution, where each factor clustered items from the same stance and showed acceptable levels of reliability. Factor 1 gathered criterialist items ($\alpha = 0.78$), while Factor 2 gathered objectivist items ($\alpha = 0.74$) and the less explaining Factor 3 cumulated the subjectivist items ($\alpha = 0.67$). However, the three factors stood only for a total of 32.4% of the variance and the p value of the Chi-squared test was significant ($p < 0.001$), which indicates that the model does not fit optimally. Further, items 6, 8 and 21 had loadings below 0.400.

The individual interviews were performed within a week and lasted an average of 56 minutes (the shortest at 32 minutes, and the longest at

72 min). All interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. To begin with, participants were told that the main aim of the interview was to ensure the quality of the questionnaire for further studies, by investigating in greater depth whether each statement was clearly understandable, and how they understood them. They were asked the same questions about each statement: Was it clear and easy to understand? Was it easy to answer? And how did you interpret it? Did you understand the intention behind this statement, what it is aiming at? Each interview followed the same semi-open structure, with the respondents invited to develop their thoughts, if necessary, to clarify their (epistemic) understanding of each statement.

We performed a content analysis of each interview, focusing on the student teachers' comments about each statement, but also drew on principles of discourse analysis (Gee, 2014) to interpret how each informant positioned him/herself towards the different epistemic stances. Following Mierwald and Junius (2022), we reduced their seven categories to six categories to code the informants' problems of understanding for each statement (Table 18.1).

Table 18.1 Coding categories for the interviews

<i>Category</i>	<i>Subcategory</i>	<i>Description</i>
Understanding difficulties	Words and notions	Specific words or terms are difficult to understand or unknown by the informant (No = 0; Yes = 1)
	Misunderstanding	The informants say they experienced parts of the statement as unclear. They understood some of it, but are not sure about the statement as a whole (No = 0; Yes = 1).
	Incomprehension	The informant say they did not understand the statement at all (No = 0; Yes = 1).
Reply difficulties	Reply format	The informants experienced difficulties to answer, because of the item's format (e.g. double negation, contradicting parts) or the scale gradation (No = 0; Yes = 1).
	Uncertainty of response	The informants say they are unsure of their answers to the item because their opinion is unclear (No = 0; Yes = 1).
Understanding of the intended meaning		The informants give clear indications that they understood the statement as intended by the corpus of research (Yes = 0; No = 1).

VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND ETHICAL RULES

Our sample is a convenience sample that is both geographically and genderly with four women and four men studying at the same university in Norway. However, it is limited to history student teachers in their first semester of study, who volunteered to be interviewed, which may constitute bias regarding their prior interest in History and their self-confidence. Furthermore, our study is qualitative and thereby not representative and generalizable, but performed on a sample that is large enough to reflect the problems of understanding generally faced by Norwegian history student teachers with the BLTHQ.

Although we are aware of the risk that participants might have been unwilling to openly display “too much” lack of understanding in front of an interviewer that they may consider to be an expert/authority, we are confident that the openness and the face-to-face setup of the interviews have given us a fair picture of their thoughts.

We complied with the formal ethical rules of confidentiality and personal data protection endorsed by the Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research, and the respondents mentioned in this paper are anonymized. We randomly named them Camilla, Erik, Esteban, Kim, Malin, Martin, Mary and Siri.

FINDINGS

Most Problematic Statements vs. Less or Unproblematic Statements

As shown in Table 18.2, all participants experienced problems of understanding with the questionnaire. However, five statements were entirely unproblematic (i.e., no student teacher experienced problem with the statement), eight statements elicited difficulties for few respondents (one or two respondents). Eight statements elicited difficulties for many respondents (three or more respondents) and cumulated the highest number of problems. Furthermore, we noted that the subjectivist stance comprised most of these problematic items for more than two respondents (6 items), while the objectivist stance had two (items 6 and 15) and the criterialist statements had none.

Most problems were due to misunderstanding the intended meaning of the statements, followed by difficulties to choose an answer (reply format and uncertainty of response), and general misunderstandings. Going

Table 18.2 Number and nature of the problems experienced by student teachers with the BLTHQ in Norwegian

Statement/item	Understanding difficulties				Reply difficulties			Total number of problems
	Total number of informants with problems	Words and notions	Misunderstanding	Incomprehension	Reply format	Uncertain of response	Intended meaning misunderstood	
<i>Criteria list scale</i>								
8. Knowledge of the historical method is fundamental for historians and students alike.	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
14. Comparing sources and understanding author perspective is essential in history.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19. Students need to be taught to deal with conflicting evidence/sources.	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
20. It is fundamental that students are taught to support their reasoning with evidence and sources.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Subjectivist scale</i>								

(continued)

Table 18.2 (continued)

<i>Statement/item</i>	<i>Understanding difficulties</i>					<i>Reply difficulties</i>			<i>Total number of problems</i>
	<i>Total number of informants with problems</i>	<i>Words and notions</i>	<i>Misunderstanding</i>	<i>Incomprehension</i>	<i>Reply format</i>	<i>Uncertain of response</i>	<i>Intended meaning misunderstood</i>	<i>Total number of problems</i>	
1. Students who read many history books learn that the past is what the historian makes it to be.	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	3	
5. Students need to be aware that history is essentially a matter of interpretation.	6	0	2	0	1	0	5	7	
7. In reading a history book, it is more important to pay attention to the perspective of the historian than to his or her reasoning on the evidence discussed.	7	1	1	0	2	4	4	12	

<i>Statement/item</i>	<i>Understanding difficulties</i>				<i>Reply difficulties</i>			<i>Total number of problems</i>
	<i>Total number of informants with problems</i>	<i>Words and notions</i>	<i>Misunderstanding</i>	<i>Incomprehension</i>	<i>Reply format</i>	<i>Uncertain of response</i>	<i>Intended meaning misunderstood</i>	
11. Since there is no way to know what really happened in the past, students can believe whatever story they choose.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13. Teaching/learning that one particular interpretation is better than another is usually inappropriate in history.	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	4
17. Good students know that history is basically a matter of opinion.	6	0	1	0	2	1	5	9
18. History should be taught like a story. Some things are true, but some others are just a matter of personal opinion.	5	0	1	0	1	1	5	8

(continued)

Table 18.2 (continued)

Statement/item	Understanding difficulties				Reply difficulties			Total number of problems
	Total number of informants with problems	Words and notions	Misunderstanding	Incomprehension	Reply format	Uncertain of response	Intended meaning misunderstood	
21. Teachers need to make all historical interpretations available and let the students construct their own understanding of them.	5	0	1	0	1	1	4	7
<i>Objectivist scale</i>								
2. The facts speak often for themselves in history and do not need to be discussed or debated.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3. In learning history, summarizing is more important than comparing.	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	5
4. Students who are good at memorization learn history quickly.	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	5

Statement/item	Understanding difficulties				Reply difficulties			Total number of problems
	Total number of informants with problems	Words and notions	Misunderstanding	Incomprehension	Reply format	Uncertain of response	Intended meaning misunderstood	
6. Good general reading and comprehension skills are enough to learn history well.	6	0	3	0	1	1	5	10
9. Teachers need to avoid giving students conflicting sources, since it makes historical investigation impossible.	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
10. Students who know their textbook well will be good at history.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
12. To learn history means mainly to study many facts about the past and commit them to memory.	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

(continued)

Table 18.2 (continued)

Statement/item	Understanding difficulties				Reply difficulties				Total number of problems
	Total number of informants with problems	Words and notions	Misunderstanding	Incomprehension	Reply format	Uncertain of response	Intended meaning misunderstood	Total number of problems	
15. Corroborating evidence and identifying sources are important learning strategies in history, but only after mastering the basic facts.	4	0	0	0	3	2	2	7	
16. Teachers should not question students' historical opinions, only check that they know the facts.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	8	2	16	0	14	14	38	84	
Summarizing question									
22. Which of the following alternatives is closest to your own conception of history as a discipline?									
(a) History is mainly about what is true and false; to find out what actually happened and why. One has to be as objective as possible, which is a difficult task, but one has to try.									
(b) History is about understanding the past, based on different sources and remains available. It is about assessing perspectives and methods used to produce the most likely and trustworthy interpretation.									
(c) It is actually impossible to know anything for sure in history, because everything is subjective, relative and hinging on perspectives and points of view. One shall only understand the different perspectives, preferably without taking sides.									

forwards, we will investigate the problems associated with the eight most problematic items, following their order of appearance in Table 18.2: the subjectivist items 1, 5, 7, 17, 18, 21 and the objectivist items 6 and 15.

The Subjectivist Items

Item 1—“Students Who Read Many History Books Learn That the Past Is What the Historian Makes It To Be”

For Malin, Esteban and Siri, the main problem was that they interpreted the statement from the students’ point of view and partially oversaw that at its core, the statement was about what historians do when they write history, and not about what students do. They cannot really be blamed for this understanding, as the subject of the statement is “students” and not “the historian”. As such, we can gather that the two-part structure of the sentence has been confusing; a more direct statement would have been easier to answer.

As a result, Malin overly focused on “Students who read many history books”; she stressed that it was ambiguous since it depended on *how* students were reading these books. Esteban was also confused by the first part of the statement but still understood the intended meaning of the statement. He did, however, express doubts about the reply format. As for Siri, the sentence led her to (mis)understand the statement as exclusively centred on the students’ point of view, as if it meant that reading many books is positive because it offers students a multiplicity of different perspectives on a historical topic.

Item 5—“Students Need to Be Aware That History Is Essentially a Matter of Interpretation”

This statement was hugely illustrative of “wobbling” due to epistemic ambiguity. Five student teachers read it as a criterialist item, and not a subjectivist one. As Martin put it, in dialogue with the interviewer:

I understand this question as... how we look at history today and what we think about the past is something that is interpreted, it is something we have discussed and agreed upon. Because, there is a lot we don’t know. There are many holes that are difficult to know about. So, we must discuss to try to find out how to fill these holes with the sources we have

- But, in the way the question is worded, would you interpret it as if this was about opinions?
- No, not necessarily opinions, rather interpretations, that is how people discuss and make sense of what is most probable.
- So, you see history as something that is...
- Worked with and discussed.

The same kind of epistemic ambiguity was expressed by Camilla: “*Interpretation* will be how you personally see it, but also how historians interpret it”.

For both respondents, in this statement, *interpretation* is interpreted as a well-grounded understanding constructed by an academic community of historians according to different sources and perspectives.

As such, we must hold that the epistemic ambiguity here is due to the wording: The item is not formulated precisely enough to belong exclusively to the subjectivist scale, and can be read as a criterialist item.

Item 7—“In Reading a History Book, It Is More Important to Pay Attention to the Perspective of the Historian Than to His or Her Reasoning on the Evidence Discussed”

Interestingly, the student teachers’ reactions to this statement were unambiguous. They saw both parts of the sentence as interdependent, or closely connected, and difficult to separate, which made it tricky to answer. Thanks to Siri’s explanation, we understand that the historian’s subjectivity is seen as an inevitable problem:

It’s two different things, but they are depending on each other. If a historian has a perspective/Perspective X, he will construct his reasoning (...) around it. [...] They are two different things, but they work together.

Or, like Erik, some participants asserted and defended their refusal to see *perspective* and *reasoning* as different elements, due to personal ways of thinking. It was also a sign of poorly integrated epistemic beliefs:

I think they are both important. I don’t think... For me, it’s not relevant if one thing is... if it is more important to summarize than compare, or if perspective/Perspective is more important than the reasoning. I don’t think that way. I feel it is unnecessary to think like this, actually. Both are important to get the whole picture, you see?

Mary had a similar attitude. She upheld that she could not/would not choose between the *historian's perspective* and *how s/he built his/her reasoning*, because she considered both parts to be equally important. To her, therefore, to choose between them would be wrong. Further, when confronted with the fact that one part of the sentence could hold history as subjective, while the other part could represent a more reflective/interpretative way of thinking about history, she confirmed her own wavering position by replying: "History is both, isn't it?"

On one hand, we can categorize her answer as within the criterialist position, considering that historians seek the most likely interpretation, whilst well-aware that they still have their own subjectivity to deal with. On the other hand, like Erik, her unwillingness to choose between the two terms is also a clear sign that her epistemic belief on this was not well established. This demonstrates and underscores the difficulty of establishing straightforward, and unambiguous statements for all respondents.

Item 17—"Good Students Know That History Is Basically a Matter of Opinion"

With statement 17, we observed two different problems.

The first one concerned the (school) reference to "good students", which was considered somewhat misleading, and better to avoid. Kim wondered whether the statement was about the nature of history, or about the nature of "good" students. And good students according to whom? In which context?

Because, good pupils, is it...? (he hesitates). Does it mean that heedful students see that history is often very subjective? Or does it mean that good pupils are subjective? Because it can be unclear (...) Then, one version is that subjectivity is good, while the other means that subjectivity is bad.

The other problem was concerned with the epistemic ambiguity of the sentence, and it was declined in two different versions.

For example, for Martin and Malin, their own preconceptions affected their understandings of the statement. They read the item through the lens of their own criterialist understanding of history. Malin interpreted it as: "Good students understand that history is the product of different subjective sources and interpretations", while Martin explained the item as follows:

There are lots of sources; History as a whole will be how we interpret them. It will influence points of view, but it's not only points of view [...] because history is how we've agreed to use the sources, and it's often stuff that has been discussed a lot... that must be approved by other scholars to be accepted.

Esteban, on the other hand, demonstrated a meta-understanding of the questionnaire, and described the statement as epistemically ambiguous, since it would be answered similarly by people with different understandings of history. Demonstrating that the questionnaire was meant to spot three different groups, he clearly identified what he called “interpretive people” and “subjective people” as groups that would both agree with the item:

It is mostly the interpretive people that come forward here, I feel, because different points of view are taken into account in a big stew, and then maybe the truth will rise from the steam. But also the subjective people, they are into points of view, them too; and every individual point of view, that's what matters in their interpretation of history.

Item 18—“History Should Be Taught Like A Story: Some Things Are True, But Some Others Are Just a Matter of Personal Opinion”

With this we noted both the problem of epistemic ambiguity, and with the length of the statement.

For Siri and Malin, the (seemingly) opposed nature of the two parts of the sentence made it paradoxical and difficult to answer. Malin wondered how one could simultaneously argue that “facts are truth” and that “things depend on perspectives”. Siri held that “what is based on the sources” is truth, whilst personal opinions were “what they have imagined”—something separate from the sources. Siri and Malin’s preconceptions of the nature of history appeared to impede and influence their understanding of this (subjectivist) item.

On the other hand, Camilla, Martin and Esteban did not see the item as ambiguous, but interpreted it as a criterialist one, and then agreed with it. They looked past the adjective in “personal opinion” or understood “other things” as different sources that had to be assessed and discussed between historians.

Item 21—“Teachers Need to Make All Historical Interpretations Available and Let the Students Construct Their Own Understanding of Them”

Again, the same misinterpretation of the item led most student teachers to read the statement as a criterialist one. They read it according to their own preconceptions about knowledge in history—as an interpretation of sources and theories that are discussed within a community of inquiry. They did not understand it as if the students were “left alone” to construct their own (undiscussed) understanding.

On the other hand, Mary felt that the two parts of the sentence were contradictory and made it tricky to answer. As she agreed with the first part and disagreed with the second part, she could select both “partly agree” and “partly disagree” for this statement.

The Objectivist Items

Item 6—“Good General Reading and Comprehension Skills Are Enough to Learn History Well”

The problems encountered regarding this statement, which is meant to represent an objectivist stance, were interesting, as they were very varied.

A common problem has been that respondents usually ignored the “general” nature of the skills referred to in the statement (as opposed to “specific” or “disciplinary”). Some student teachers also focused on “reading” and neglected the “comprehension” part. As such, Siri, Erik and Martin saw reading as an important part of an historian’s job and a “basic” skill that would give access to a certain level of understanding. As Siri put it:

As we were told on the first day [at university], history is a discipline where one needs to read a lot. So, it’s an advantage to be able to read well, in a sense, (...) it helps to be able to read, in history, when there are so many written sources.

In contrast, for Kim, the problem was to do with the notion of “comprehension”, which he deemed too vague: Comprehension of what? Facts or more complex things? And how much/what is “enough” to learn “well”, he wondered. As such, he struggled to answer the question.

And finally, for Malin, she misunderstood it in its entirety, because, in addition to these two problems, she understood “general reading and

comprehension skills” as contrary to cognitive reading and learning difficulties, like dyslexia. She understood the statement as suggesting that not having any cognitive difficulties to read or understand was an advantage to learn history well.

Item 15—“Corroborating Evidence and Identifying Sources Are Important Learning Strategies in History, But Only After Mastering the Basic Facts”

Here, again, as with item 7, the general issue was the difficulty to prioritize one of two skills that student teachers felt were equally important. As a result, Mary, Erik, Camilla said they were uncertain about how to answer, and that they would have chosen either “partly agree” or “partly disagree”. Obviously, this is a case of poorly integrated epistemic beliefs; the informants did not have a clear idea of what they would or should prioritize and preferred not to.

On the other hand, Martin demonstrated that the statement could also be “misunderstood” by a criterialist, which is the stance we place him within. He read the hierarchy between the two elements as chronological and not in terms of importance. His answer was:

This is not the easiest question to answer, it is not, because you need some basic knowledge in order to build a good argument and to know what to find in sources. Because, if you don’t know who Napoleon was and what kind of reforms he performed, then it will be difficult to search sources about these reforms or the codes he issued and stuff like that. [...] So, I would answer “partly agree”. It is important to master basic facts, but you need also to be able to check sources, and identify and verify them.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our goal was to untangle the problem of respondents’ epistemic inconsistency when using a self-report questionnaire like the BLTHQ. We confirmed the explanations from prior studies and distinguished three main sources of problems: an intrinsic epistemic inconsistency; an extrinsic epistemic inconsistency; and respondents’ own uncertainty about their epistemic beliefs.

However, our results are different to those found by Mierwald and Junius (2022), and are difficult to compare, mainly because of two variables: Mierwald and Junius investigated the understanding of the BHQ,

while we tested the BLTHQ; and our respective samples of respondents are qualitatively very different: they selected four German high school students, while we interviewed eight Norwegian university student teachers in their first year of history, i.e. more informants and potentially more problems regarding understanding, and informants with a supposed notable interest in the discipline. Further, we had no way of choosing in advance to interview student teachers that had experienced problems with understanding or demonstrated epistemic inconsistencies. It would have been more appropriate to directly interview selected student teachers, but it would have been difficult because of resources and in terms of data protection in Norway (since it would have made the respondents identifiable). We did not apply for this opportunity when we designed our study.

Mierwald and Junius's (2022) study had a lower proportion of problematic items, and these were evenly split between the three stances, whilst in our study, criterialist items were unproblematic; the problematic statements were mostly the subjectivist items, along with two objectivist items. Still, considering how the BHQ and the BLTHQ share a number of similarities, this confirms that national context and the profile of the participants play an important role in the assessment of epistemic beliefs.

Moreover, our investigation corroborates the explanations given for epistemic inconsistency in prior studies. However, it helped deepen the understanding of two of them: the epistemic ambiguity of certain statements; and the fact that some of the participants' epistemic beliefs are not well-integrated (VanSledright & Maggioni, 2016), i.e. well-defined.

The problem of the items' epistemic ambiguity seems twofold: an intrinsic and an extrinsic/perceived epistemic ambiguity.

On one hand, the intrinsic epistemic ambiguity is due to an ambiguous formulation of the problematic statements. The statement is ambiguous "per se" and can be answered similarly by proponents of different stances. In other words, the item was not formulated precisely enough to be clearly understood and associated with the stance it was meant to represent. As shown above, this is the case for items 5, 17, 21. In these cases, the wobbling is not due to the informant's own inconsistency. The solution is to further clarify these statements by improving their wording and by sharpening their association with the intended stance.

On the other hand, the extrinsic or perceived epistemic ambiguity is due to the participant's misunderstanding of the item. In some cases (items 1, 7, 18 or 21), the item is a longer sentence composed of two propositions or of different elements. Some informants scrutinized each

proposition/element separately, instead of considering the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Alternatively, they focused mainly on one part or certain elements of the statement. It seems that introducing too many subtleties and nuances in the statement is likely to invite different interpretations and to divert the respondents from the main meaning of the item. As a result, they grow indecisive, potentially inciting “wobbling”. Parts of statement that are not strictly necessary and related to the item’s core meaning should be removed. For example, statement 1 should be shortened from “Students who read many history books learn the past is what the historian makes it to be” to “In history books, the past is what the historian makes it to be”.

In addition, our examples also illustrate the great variety of possible interpretations and misunderstandings due to the inherent polysemy of language (item 6).

Further, some student teachers’ interpretations of certain items are biased because of their own epistemic beliefs, especially if these items are epistemically close. As shown with statements 17, 18 and 5, student teachers who are more criterialist tend to interpret subjectivist items as criterialist. They (mis)understood the statement as fitting their own epistemic beliefs about history and, as a result, answered somewhat inconsistently.

The issue of wobbling due to extrinsic epistemic ambiguity is tricky and has no clear solution. In fact, it confronts the respondent’s own subjectivity and potential misinterpretations of a questionnaire. There are potential solutions, however, such as reformulating the statement, avoiding lengthy sentences and statements beginning with a negation, or containing a double negation, as advocated by Mierwald and Junius (2022). That said, the variation in focus and understanding of the same statement by different individuals, as shown in some examples above, will probably always be a variable to deal with.

Finally, in many cases, our results support that student teachers wobble because their own epistemic beliefs about history are not well-integrated. In several cases (items 7, 15 and 18), they did not have a firm grip of what they believed. This issue is difficult because there seems that there is little to do about it. One could add an “I don’t know” alternative to the range of answers. But that offers an easy way out each time the respondents experience uncertainty or discomfort about a question. These answers will still be difficult to interpret and might also distort the results. Alternatively, it may be worth increasing the number of items dedicated to each stance, which may reinforce the internal consistency of the different factors.

In a wider perspective, our study confirms that assessing epistemic beliefs about history deals with complex ideas that require a high level of expertise, awareness and steadiness about one's own beliefs, to be answered reliably. Obviously, many young participants cannot be expected to have this level of awareness and understanding. If the questionnaire is made to be reliably answered only by experts that comprehend it fully, then we face a precarious task. Further, one could argue that the developmental hierarchy between the three stances potentially questions the validity of the answers of respondents belonging to the "lower stances", which here are the objectivist and subjectivist stances. In other words, how can we be sure that making the informants aware of statements that they would otherwise not have expressed by themselves may not make their answers to these statements biased? Certain subjectivist and criterialist items may sound wise and easy to agree with, even for an informant who is an objectivist.

The implications of our findings and reflections are multiple.

Firstly, one may still wonder if trying to synthesize such complex ideas into one general stance (out of three, or more) is the right way to go. Defining/Breaking historical thinking into several tasks/dimensions and examining the different ideas about each of them can form a more precise and reliable tool with which to evaluate people's epistemic beliefs. However, a longer test, including various tasks and dimensions, will raise new challenges and require more time and resources. Further, evaluating how a student teacher solved these tasks will not be easy either. The whole test will still face reliability issues.

Secondly, if one still defends the intentions of establishing a reliable quantitative tool to assess epistemic beliefs about history, an obvious option is to try out a questionnaire with more and sharper formulated items for each stance, in order to increase the validity of the tool. Another possibility is to ask the respondents to additionally hierarchize the different items according to importance. The different items will be weighted according to their given importance, which will align with the developmental hierarchy between the three stances and potentially mitigate the problem of wobbling.

A final alternative is to accept the fact that such a questionnaire, in all its imperfection, is just an approximative tool with which to gauge complex epistemic beliefs, which must be treated as such: a rough indicator, more suited to assess student teachers' progress over time than an accurate measurement of people's epistemic beliefs.

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Concluding Remarks



From the *Ideal-Type* Historian and its Associated Conceptions of Teaching History to a More Embodied and Practical Life Approach

Paul Zanazanian

The chapters in this book address two important questions, what knowledge in history is, and how and why we should teach it. As key similarities arise across many of the chapters, at times, perhaps, with minor specifications that underscore different focus points, two main tensions nonetheless come to the fore. If left unanswered, these tensions, I believe, run the risk of confusing the ways in which we come to understand pre- and in-service teachers' epistemological beliefs about history and their epistemic uses of it in their teaching. The first tension relates to what appears to be an inadvertently strong (over)reliance on history-as-discipline for understanding what history is and what knowledge in history looks like, as opposed to a more experiential or practical life approach, which is also

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© The Author(s) 2024
H. Åström Elmersjö, P. Zanazanian (eds.), *Teachers and the
Epistemology of History*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-58056-7_19

evident but much less present and articulated. The second tension challenges the assumption that a direct influence exists (or should exist) between pre- and in-service teachers' epistemological beliefs about history and how they (intend to) teach the subject. This understanding contrasts with what seems to be a more practice-oriented idea where pre- and in-service teachers' reliance on their hands-on knowledge, or practical wisdom, when teaching should matter more and should consequently form the starting point of our reflections on how to teach history.

As these two tensions speak to potential gaps in our understanding, an even more fundamental question comes to light, one where our positionalities and perhaps even our unintentional preferences and normative assumptions about what we seek as researchers come into view. At play here is the importance of creating the proper conditions for our work to flourish as expansively as possible and to result in its most productive outcomes. It is perhaps uncontested that, as history educators and researchers, we seek to better grasp history's deep worth as a subject and to better define its role and purpose as something useful or valuable to transmit to learners and to somehow employ to transform them and the world we live in for the better. With this footing, some key questions I ask are the following. What interpretive lens do we—as researchers—employ when we think about history, its epistemology, and its transmission in schools? Does how we view the world, and history more specifically, influence what we seek to understand and how we go about analysing and interpreting our data? Ultimately, what is it that we aim to do with history and historical knowledge? Why do we believe we need history, and based on this, what is it that we must do to transfer its gained wisdoms to newer generations?

Given my own interests in historical consciousness and the sociocultural workings of our sense-making, I believe one main approach for engaging in this kind of work is to do so self-reflexively (Zanazanian, 2010, 2015, 2019, 2025). Identifying gaps in our knowledge as researchers and how we can overcome them can perhaps contribute to finding new starting points for moving forward in ways that are conducive to finding solutions or pathways for novel ways to engage in our work. By looking at how our own historical sense-making influences the positionalities we hold, we can better understand the kinds of mindsets and incognizant thinking that influence and impel us to engage in the actions that we do, and, more specifically, to examine the kinds of guiding questions we raise for our empirical investigations of what history is and how we should teach it (Zanazanian, 2019, 2025). Acquiring knowledge of the pre-given

understandings we employ for addressing the problems we seek to resolve would be key, particularly if we are able to analyse and to come to terms with how our sense-making works. By being more transparent with how we position ourselves and approach our research, we may perhaps decide to alter habits and can thus come to better articulate the different ways we seek to make change and to do so in a more positive and rewarding way. What we can gain is a broadening of horizons and the development of newer understandings of what history is and what it can do.

In what follows, I outline the two main areas of reflection that emerge from the chapters in the book, which I depict with some key themes that consequently arise, focusing on their specificities. I then describe the two tensions that seem to also surface. I offer a brief discussion to elaborate and follow through with some core questions that I raise for moving forward in our field. Given our already complex and increasingly interrelated, mutually dependent, multicultural, digital world, which is currently facing such challenges as climate change and a clashing of knowledge systems and ideologies, these kinds of questions I believe are important for finding ways to adapt to our rapidly changing realities. In ending with Canadian history educator, Roger Simon's (2004, 2005) approach to *historiographic poetics* where lived testimonies are central for exercising our reflexivity, I put forward a strategy that we—as researchers—can perhaps use for making what is integral to us become an object for critical thought and transformation.

TWO BROAD AREAS OF REFLECTION

As mentioned above, two broad areas of reflection seem to arise from the collection of the chapters in this book. The first area of reflection relates to *how to best capture and account for both the process and outcomes of pre- and in-service teachers' interactions with historical knowledge*. The concern here is to better comprehend these actors' key understandings of what historical knowledge is, what its main purposes are, and how it can or should be employed. The second area of reflection relates to *how to best recognize and foster the acquisition, integration, and accumulation of historical knowledge in teachers and learners, and, ultimately, to what ends*. This, in turn, invokes the means and reasons for transmitting understandings of historical knowledge and its workings.

Important similarities arise across these two areas, at times, perhaps, with minor specifications that highlight small differences. These similarities are more justly located along different continua, surfacing variously at

a conceptual, contextual, methodological, and practical level. For the first, at a conceptual level, it goes without saying that all authors in the book see history as something highly complex. In doing so, most of them tend to particularly equate history and historical knowledge with history-as-discipline or with what professional historians in academic settings do. Based on this comprehension, some authors seem to want to have teachers and student teachers attain a certain level of historical understanding and thinking that is reflective of how academic historians think and engage in their craft, which they would transmit in their own teaching when in the field. Advocating the importance of these skills, some authors tend to further believe that the ability of capturing or attaining this level of thinking can be done through the development of different stages of sense-making. Although many are careful to not see this approach as a completely linear process, there nonetheless seems to be a normative understanding, where one level of thinking is better than the other, each leading progressively to the type of thinking that can be found in the *ideal-type* historian's mind. The best form of thinking that is evoked here is that of a criterialist's mindset, where students are to ultimately weigh between distinct options and to decide upon the better (historical) argument or perspective through the analysis of source-based evidence. In recognizing reality's complexity, the underlying objective is for students to treat knowledge with nuance and care and to essentially take critical distance from the consequent claims they put forth. In contrast, other authors in the book seem to problematize this developmental approach (but not necessarily the contents of what different emerging stances mean). They, in turn, tend to perceive epistemic beliefs or stances as being multiple and working simultaneously in people, including pre- and in-service teachers, depending on the context they are in and the issue they are dealing with. For example, someone may exhibit more of a criterialist attitude regarding a particular issue but then may be more relativist or realist for another, especially if their emotions and moral reasoning are involved or questioned. Some may even be in between stances, which is how the case of wobbling is seen by a few authors. Perhaps in viewing these emerging stances as ideal-type tendencies, as I suggest, we would be less distraught or perplexed by our findings in accepting that the reality of people's epistemic beliefs is fundamentally located in the cracks between them. This understanding contrasts with attempts to try and fit different people (with varying subjectivities and life experiences) into neat boxes according to each stance's ideational criteria.

Building on this idea, at a contextual level, practically all authors agree that some key factors come into play in shaping pre- and in-service teachers' beliefs about history and its teaching. Nearly all would concede that work-related factors are important. These include issues related to time, curricular demands and objectives, the impact of teaching to the test or standardized exams, as well as teachers' own views on students' cognitive development and varying capacities for understanding history as subject matter. Other influential factors refer to teachers' various lived experiences, ranging from their prior and on-going teaching experiences, their prior educational experiences, their personal life experiences, and the wider, historical experiences of their communities, cultures, and epistemologies of belonging that continue to impact them in their present lives. These latter experiences particularly relate to the different degrees of attachment people may have to these identities and their varying levels of influence on their sense-making. Forming "knowledges, resources, and repertoires", Johan Wassermann and Kate Angier, for example, state how their student teachers' "epistemological orientations [constitute] a mosaic that is both entangled and emergent, sophisticated and simplistic, cognitive and spiritual, public, practical and personal". To my liking, both Wassermann and Angier, as well as Robert Parkes, particularly focus on pre- and in-service teachers' historical consciousness, the influence of their various historical cultures, as well as the sway of their pedagogical cultures of belonging. As teacher intentions, which result from these influences, play an important role, so do the current-day politics of pre- and in-service teachers' respective societies and communities of practice, including their own ideologies regarding the kind of world they want to create, and their respective positionalities that arise as a result.

At a methodological level, key ideas emerge regarding the capture, reading, and interpretation of teachers' epistemological beliefs about history. Some authors offer input into better ways of eliciting the requisite information for empirical study and analysis. They highlight the importance of grasping epistemological beliefs through examining pre- and in-service teachers in action, through doing or accomplishing a task. Catherine Duquette and her colleagues, for example, suggest executing such investigations through analysing teachers' assessment practices, where, in thinking through doing, teachers are given the opportunity to reflect on their own epistemological understandings of history and its disciplinary nature. Kenneth Nordgren, in turn, proposes extracting and studying teachers' epistemological understandings of history within the

context of ongoing task performances, such as when they plan and prepare lessons. Taking a long-term view, Sarah Drake Brown and Richard Hughes suggest looking at the liminal or the in-between spaces of pre-service teachers' trajectories from high school to college or university, their teacher education programs, to in-service teaching. From a more conceptual angle, others, such as Martin Nitsche, underscore the importance of looking beyond the developmental workings of pre- and in-service teachers' historical sense-making, and to also investigate their epistemic beliefs in terms of dimensions, context, and situatedness. Similarly, Vojtech Ripka and his colleagues highlight the need of distinguishing between general and situational beliefs, where they discuss the importance of considering teachers' situatedness in their sense-making. Moving beyond the developmental approach, Chih-Ching Chang mentions grasping pattern-based models of epistemic beliefs, whereas Marjolein Wilke and Karel Van Nieuwenhuyse put forth the idea of mapping practical epistemologies, believing that it provides more varied and hence more accurate depictions of teacher beliefs. Some authors like David-Alexandre Wagner even question and highlight the challenges of self-reporting instruments, such as questionnaires for measuring pre- and in-service teachers' epistemic beliefs. Because one main outcome that emerges is the notion of wobbling, or epistemic inconsistencies, he suggests viewing questionnaires as approximative tools, and hence "a rough indicator" of "student-teachers' progress over time" as opposed to "an accurate measurement of people's epistemological beliefs". Most authors in the book also mention the importance of bringing in a mixed methods approach, where questionnaires are used in conjunction with (semi-structured) interviews. Others particularly highlight the importance of gaining qualitative input.

At a more practical level, some authors in the book also offer suggestions for teacher preparation and professional development programs. Of importance is the idea of encouraging pre- and in-service teachers to become more self-aware of their thinking, highlighting the necessity for reflexive thought. Self-awareness of their criteria for constructing historical knowledge is put forth, as is self-awareness of their own epistemologies regarding second order concepts. Awareness of the impact of past histories on one's current day experiences and sense of belonging is also considered, which can influence how teachers come to understand and appropriate historical thinking in their practice. The aim here is to promote self-reflexivity (either aimed towards a better self-understanding or towards gaining disciplinary based knowledge) to the ends of developing and

contextualizing mindsets. Of importance here is history's importance for making sense of life experiences as well as of consequent teaching practices. One main result could be what Robert Parkes describes as epistemic fluency (of different schools of historical thought) where teachers are "flexible and adapt [...] to different ways of knowing", as an expanded form "of historical literacy", which they would then bring to their teaching. Others still suggest the need to find ways to align epistemological beliefs about school knowledge with disciplinary knowledge, and to moreover create the proper conditions to start teaching as criterialists. On top of fostering reflexive mindsets and attitudes, themes related to classroom management also surface, particularly the idea of maintaining proper conditions for handling conflicts. Given pre-service teachers' preference for "neutrality" or for promoting "both sides of the story", which serve as "a refuge from which to expound a pseudo-balanced, non-disruptive history" in South African classrooms, Sarah Godsell suggests that "history teachers need to be able to manage conflict in their own minds as well as their classrooms". The idea is to create safe spaces for reflexive practice, and to foster learning through employing "skills around history epistemically and pedagogically", so that they can navigate such difficulties.

TWO KEY PARALLEL TENSIONS

It is through building on these broad strokes that the two key tensions emerge. They arise in parallel to the areas of reflection listed above. These tensions mostly concern us, as researchers in the field, but they can also be extended to the pre- and in-service teachers we work with. The first, in relation to what knowledge in history is, touches upon the overreliance on history-as-discipline for viewing history and how it should be taught. Do we automatically view historical knowledge as knowledge gained through the historical method, as practiced by the academic historian? Do we automatically see historical knowledge as constituting a unique mode of thought that seeks and better grasps, albeit plausibly, how things could have transpired in former times? Do we consequently see history as a corrective of sorts to people's general tendencies to misread or misinterpret the past, as can easily happen with the reiteration of common stories of the past, as they emerge from prior experiences? Based on the chapters of this book, I would argue that most authors do. At the same time, a move in a new direction seems to also be emerging, one where discussions of historical consciousness and culture, reflexivity, mnemonic communities of

belonging, implications of ongoing lived histories, or *Sankofa*, form part of the décor. From a sociocultural perspective, these latter ideas point to the belief of how different lived and inherited experiences come to affect us and continue to impact us in many ways, influencing how we make sense of historical knowledge and employ it in our everyday endeavours. In a manner that may not readily nor customarily come to mind, history, in this view, is internal and intertwined within us, or even more so, it is *us*, it is our *being*. It constitutes the background to our meaning-making, and fundamentally forms who we are and what we embody as knowledge through our various lived realities that genuinely mark us through our different gained inheritances, developed by our dealings with what is handed down by means of our many processes of socialization.

In favour of a more embodied or practical life approach to history, and perhaps because of my own interests in historical consciousness and its sociocultural workings (Zanazanian, 2025), I wonder whether the variations in pre- and in-service teachers' epistemological beliefs, such as epistemic wobbling and switching, as they are believed to be impacted by these actors' own subjectivities, could be better understood from the perspective of the overarching presence of their lived and embodied histories? Perhaps a fair share of these actors' challenges in grasping history-as-discipline's epistemological workings arises from the bigger impact of their lived and embodied histories on their everyday sense-making? Maybe their embodied histories creep into the picture and complicate the somewhat linear and modernist understandings of what we—as researchers—may believe history is, how it is done, and what, how, and why it should be transmitted? If our normative assumptions or taken-for-granted views of history emerge from a potentially automatic association with history-as-discipline, which is then consequently seen as a corrective to people's subjectivities, would that not taint our expectations of what we would like to see or promote? Is this interference of actors' embodied histories the reason why we still have a hard time in getting pre- and in-service teachers to think in a criterialist manner? Could it be because discrepancies between these actors' guiding embodied histories and our expectations arise in our attempts to measure their mindsets and thinking? If the variations that surface in pre- and in-service teachers' beliefs stem from their own embodied histories and historical knowledge, should we not perhaps stop for a second and wonder whether we should be looking at things differently? Should we not also reflect on what our own embodied histories are telling us and suggesting what we do? In following American social historian Carl

Becker's (1932) logic when describing the notion of *living history* from nearly a century ago, can we ever really escape from our ordinary, practical life uses of history for making sense of time's flow? If we accept that people's everyday, common-sense, and intuitive understandings and uses of history hold a strong pull over them, as these very understandings and uses also possess a firm grip over the work of professional historians, should we not start to think of teacher's epistemic beliefs of history and its teaching differently?

Intertwined with this all-encompassing presence of our embodied histories, and even perhaps resulting from it, is the second tension. Arising at a practical level in some of the chapters of this book, it refers to the degree of the direct influence of epistemological beliefs about history on pre- and in-service teacher's pedagogical practices and questions whether these beliefs directly impact their teaching. Some authors seem to assume this link exists without question, others, assigning a certain degree of importance to this link, also point to other factors that come into play, while others still, in a smaller number, suggest that it is rather teachers' pedagogical beliefs that are ultimately the main source of how pre- and in-service teachers envision teaching history in schools. Despite these variations, there still seems to be a reliance on history-as-discipline as the norm of what historical knowledge is and how it is constructed that the authors constantly invoke, even if the idea of practice over theory in their analysis of pre- and in-service teachers' practices is central. To inform best practices, Wilke and Van Nieuwenhuyse, for example, recommend equipping teachers "with a profound understanding of the nature of historical knowledge and knowledge construction" and to "ensure that teachers' epistemological beliefs about school knowledge are aligned with their epistemological beliefs about disciplinary knowledge", despite the admitted complexity and difficulty in establishing "a clear connection between teachers' epistemological beliefs [about history] and their [teaching]".

While this suggestion, from the perspective of our general governing norms of what (disciplinary) history is and how it should be taught, makes perfect sense, it, however, also raises interesting questions about the kind of value we assign to pre- and in-service teachers' practical wisdom when it comes to teaching history. Do gained wisdoms of teachers' practical knowledge of their profession matter, and should they matter more than our concerns for directly connecting their practice to history-as-discipline? Should their practical epistemologies instead constitute starting points for examining their beliefs about history to see what emerges and what is done in terms of knowledge transfer? If we introduced an embodied or

practical life approach to history, would we not be able to connect with and develop these wisdoms even more, in tandem with their ordinary, common-sense, intuitive beliefs about history and its workings? In having teachers and learners reflect on and understand the workings of these connections, would such an approach not set the stage to moreover help them nuance their sense-making, especially if they were given the tools to self-reflexively analyse their own thinking patterns and to then perhaps get them to understand the sense-making of their peers? Would such a focus not help them learn to take critical distance from the knowledge claims they make and to handle their assumptions about the world with nuance and care? Would this then not form a basis for engaging in mutual dialogue and exchange with others who are different from us, and would it not then form an important part of reflexive listening and deliberating, much needed for the betterment of our societies and their democratic functioning? If the thinking done by historians is “counterintuitive” or “unnatural” and is thus difficult for teachers and learners alike to grasp (Wineburg, 2001; Lee, 2005; Wilschut, 2019), would it then not make sense, in light of the two tensions that arise in this book, to commence our thinking about history and its teaching from a more natural, intuitive, or everyday standpoint, mirroring the gained wisdoms of everyday practical life as they impact pre- and in-service teachers’ historical sense-making and the way they envision teaching history? This overall questioning, as I try to argue here, should be cultivated further to carve out an area of investigation that I believe is largely understudied and underdeveloped and that requires our attention.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Based on the foregoing discussion, I wonder whether there is room for us to decentre ourselves from the main norms and assumptions that seem to reinforce visions of the ideal-type historian in the work we do. This questioning is not to say that the latter understanding of history is wrong or bad, but to simply view it as one cultural approach of doing history among several others, and to thus open ourselves up in terms of the expectations we seem to anticipate from the research we conduct and the pre- and in-service teachers we work with, and whose teaching we examine and evaluate. What I suggest is to focus on a more self-reflexive approach, as some of our authors mention, and to do so in terms of our own theoretical and empirical research. I argue that we should reflect on our thinking and

figure out what we are lacking, and why, and to fundamentally account for it. This requires reflection on whether history as done by the historian is what we immediately view as being history and whether there aren't other forms of history from which we can draw some inspiration for helping students to understand what history is and what it can do for our present-day societies. Perhaps there are other forms of doing history that constitute part of our cultural memory and that can be brought to the fore.

Although elements of a shift in how we both view history and the knowledge it produces can already be seen as gradually emerging in the field, they nonetheless seem to be undervalued (Zanazanian & Nordgren, 2019). This underestimation is clearly visible in how historical consciousness is conceived of in the teaching of history. Academic history is quite predominant as a guiding framework for conceptualizing historical consciousness and the rationale for its pedagogical uses. It is seen possibly in contrast to everyday life's embeddedness in our different ways of making sense of time's flow, which seems to be associated negatively with people's many lived subjectivities. When following a modernist, disciplinary understanding of history, these subjectivities are contrasted with the adoption of a more objective approach for interpreting time's flow. What is left out is an understanding of how our self-identification and lived experiences form an important part of how we develop standpoints and engage in reflexive thought necessary for broadening horizons and evolving as individuals and members of wider society.

Implicit in history's objective approach is the need for a formal, codified, and structured way of knowing that is perceived to be ready to rigorously prepare its recipients for future life in a complex and ever-changing world. As the way the ideal-type (modernist) historian thinks and engages in their practice is widely believed to hold such an ability, the historical method is seen as providing learners the ability to view the past on its own terms, free, at best, of any biases that may consequently arise. The anticipation is to somehow superimpose this approach on learners' everyday historical sense-making, with the aim of *attaining* a desired historical consciousness that, in turn, would help them to better engage with social reality (Grever & Adriaansen, 2017, 2019; Wilschut, 2019; Seixas, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). Learners are to thus develop an inquisitive mind that questions and seeks plausible "truths" of what actually happened. At the very least, such an historical sense is to be employed as a sort of measuring rod for gauging the extent to which "correct" or less "subjective" engagements have taken place, which in turn are to serve in countering

emotional and less critical and analytical interactions with the past (Jensen, 2009; Clark & Peck, 2019; Clark & Grever, 2018; Grever, 2019). Underlying this pull is mainly a modernist approach to producing historical knowledge and its inherent embrace of a linear understanding of time, guided by such structuring notions as development, progress, and change.

One important result of such an embrace, however, is the dismissal of the experiences and wisdoms of alternative epistemological knowledge systems. Examining these latter approaches to historical sense-making, I argue, could better democratize our uses of history in schools and make room for new ways of knowing the world that could only empower our newer generations, more so than they already are with the current disciplinary model in use. Looking to alternative systems of thought and more embodied approaches to sense-making could help open the teaching of history to explore wider cultural, ethical, and temporal implications for what history is, how it works, how it should be employed, and how it should be taught. It can also consequently come to better foster learners' own growth and development through their inner expansion, helping them excel as talented humans ready to be a part of and to contribute to the world and its many societies and cultures.

CONCLUSION

With these perspectives in mind, I wonder whether we should constantly problematize our own understandings of historical knowledge self-reflexively to specifically raise awareness of our (and others') ongoing engagements in epistemic sense-making. Doing this would particularly enable us to reflect on our evolving positionalities and to continually account for our consequent knowledge claims when seeking to make a difference through our work and to attain different forms of positive social change. The purpose of this task would be to allow us to embrace and account for our subjective experiences and beliefs, and to see how it can help us to attain our objectives, while being responsive to the needs of others, especially in our times of rapidly changing world realities. Underlying this approach, I argue, is an overall process of exploration, self-discovery, and personal expansion, permitting us, as researchers, to evolve at our own pace, according to our own needs and abilities for constructing and acting upon the historical knowledge we create and use.

As reflexive thinking provides much-needed openness for self-reflection and change, its relevance lies in our ability to constantly question our positionality and to take critical distance from the very knowledge we

create and use. This course of action involves asking questions about what we hear or read as well as being able to reflect on our own thinking, on why we ask the questions that we do, and on why we react in certain ways when we get the answers that we seek. In thinking about what this process says about us and our interactions with others and our surroundings, it moreover entails trying to understand different points of view, while being alert to our own outlook and keeping an open mind to the possibility of broadening our horizons. Ultimately, reflexive listening speaks to the need of reading in between the lines and trying to grasp the logic of what is being said or presented and basically being done.

In building on the ideas of Canadian history educator, Roger Simon (2004, 2005), we can perhaps proceed in this form of engagement by considering and carefully listening to pre- and in-services teachers' lived realities and experiences in teaching history as testimony. Listening attentively, or rather self-reflexively, in following Simon's line of argument, requires paying attention to our urge to ask difficult questions (even unanswerable ones) that press for answers that seemingly promise help in deciphering what is to be heard in the testimony we listen to. The key here is to look for absences in the testimony that solicit questions, which if known would provide a fuller picture. Double attentiveness, according to Simon, is thus needed; that of listening to the testimony of the one who is speaking and that of listening to the questions we find ourselves asking when we face this testimony. This mental space is where we could ask questions about our own questions, aiming to better understand why the information we seek is important. Although Simon's ideas relate to testimonies of the past, we can still receive what we hear through our research as counsel and use that to decentre ourselves from ourselves, from our own egos, to then open up and revise our current positionalities in ways that can be beneficial for the pre- and in-service teachers we work with and their students, for our field of interest and research, and for the wider communities and societies we belong to.

What I thus suggest, in response to the two tensions that arise in the chapters of this book, is for us—as researchers—to reflexively *listen* to our peers' and students' lived testimonies regarding history and its teaching and to ask ourselves: Why are these key actors saying what they are saying? If I view their feedback as counsel, what are they requesting me to do? What is it about my research or practice that reinforces the status quo? What can I do to help make change, hopefully for the better? In sharing the different ways in which we voice our concerns, it is hoped that a greater understanding will emerge of both the challenges that pre- and in-service

history teachers face when understanding what history is and seeking ways to teach it, and, more specifically, the main problem areas that particularly make it hard for our field of research to find consensus on. Only by undertaking this reflection can we move the conversation forward in a way that is open and inclusive of the demands and needs of the pre- and in-service teachers we work with.

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