

## **Workshop Report *History of Knowledge in History of Education***

by Ina Hasenöhrl (University of Zurich), Fanny Isensee (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin) and Daniel Töpfer (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

From September 12 to 14, 2024, the ISCHE Standing Working Group “History of Knowledge in the History of Education” met at the University of Zurich for an authors’ workshop in preparation of an edited volume with the preliminary title *The History of Knowledge and Education: Sources and Methods*. Over the course of two and a half days, the authors presented the pre-circulated drafts of their chapters and engaged in lively discussions about their work. The benefits and drawbacks of a history of knowledge approach in the history of education were explored. It was discussed how the chapters related to the history of knowledge, and in what ways they presented insightful empirical case studies for this approach.

All papers addressed in varying detail questions about sources and/or methods in relation to the history of knowledge. A third topic that emerged during the workshop concerned the question in which way a history of knowledge approach could provide an addition to or new perspectives on more ‘typical’ pedagogical themes and how the history of knowledge allows for different/new analyses and narrations within and beyond schooling and educational organizations.

One advantage offered by the history of knowledge perspective is that knowledge can be found in characteristic historiographical source material such as books and other teaching materials, but that other sources such as digital formats, children’s drawings, copybooks as well as maturity tests can also be used to question who circulates knowledge where and how this circulation occurs. Those discussions revealed to some extent the possibilities of new sources and readings but also their limitations. Regarding history of education sources, a certain inaccessibility of the material remains, e.g., the intentions of the drawing children, even if questions of the history of knowledge are able to reveal new facets of the material.

The workshop gave a broad overview about and specific insights into the methodological pluralism that characterizes the research field surrounding history of knowledge currently. The methodologies ranged from conceptual histories, discourse and dispositive analyses, ANT and object approaches, image analysis methods to methods from the digital humanities, methods from the sociology of knowledge, and ethnography.

The continuous questioning of the position and relevance of the conceptual category of knowledge in research served as a connecting framework. In particular, questions of differentiation from the history of ideas, intellectual histories and professionalization research were raised more than once. Overall, however, it became clear that the conceptual proposal to take knowledge as the starting point certainly enabled methodological adjustments to be made due to the new questions, even if these can only be conceptually defined to a limited extent. In addition to the methodological breadth of approaches, there is also the breadth of the modalities of knowledge, which can do more than just circulate, be integrated into practices and be produced, but can rather occupy a variety of social positions, functions and interpretations in a broader sense.

If the history of knowledge promises to bring innovations to the history of education, the contributions certainly showed that institutions and their at times rather hermetically imagined interrelationships and grand narratives can certainly be questioned, supplemented, and expanded by case analyses informed by history of knowledge, without the cases themselves claiming to generate or redeem new narratives. The case studies as well as the theoretical contributions presented succeeded in showing that the history of knowledge as a tool and field of experimentation is quite successful in identifying lacunae and gaps.

It became apparent that the history of knowledge could focus on other elements of knowledge (aside from, e.g., the curriculum), other actors (other than groups of actors closely linked to the school) and other processes of knowledge transmission (aside from, e.g., imparting knowledge). These additions enhance our understanding of the history of education significantly, though more systematic and conceptual work is needed to further elaborate on the implications and effects of these additions.

The workshop thus raised a fundamental question: What does the history of knowledge add to the history of education? In spanning a variety of times, spaces and topics, the chapters of the edited volume promise to provide some answers to this question. While some chapters focus on particular sources, others make conceptual contributions or engage with methodological questions. A keynote by Stephanie Zloch complemented the program and two workshop dinners left the participants in good spirits. It is now up to the authors to sharpen their chapters and continue the dialogue on the history of knowledge – and it is up to the editors to make this edited volume a compelling case for the history of knowledge.

*Participants (presential and online):* Fabian Dombrowski (Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute), Heather Ellis (University of Sheffield), Theo Finsterschott (Czech Academy of Sciences), Eduardo Galak (CONICET), Ina Hasenöhl (University of Zurich), Wiebke Hiemesch (University of Hildesheim), Michèle Hofmann (University of Zurich), Hendrik Holzmüller (University of Münster), Rebekka Horlacher (University of Zurich), Kirstin Jorns (University of Zurich), Fredrik Krohn Andersson (Stockholm University), Daniels Mansi (CONICET), Synne Myrebøe (University of Vienna), Maret Nieländer (Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute), Lilli Riettiens (University of Mainz), Johann Samuelsson (Karlstad University), Hans Schildermans (University of Vienna), Andrea De Vincenti (Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich), Stephanie Zloch (TUD Dresden University of Technology)

*Convenors (presential and online):* Joel Barnes (University of Queensland), Jona T. Garz (Universität Zürich), Fanny Isensee (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), Joakim Landahl (Stockholm University), Björn Lundberg (Lund University), Daniel Töpfer (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

