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Process-oriented methods in teaching history in present day secondary schools: the example of Austria

Ladies and gentlemen,
dear colleagues !

First of all, I would like to thank the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation for this invitation. I would also like to thank our colleagues from the Administration of the Volgograd Region, the City of Volgograd and the Volgograd State pedagogical University for their part in the organisation of this seminar and especially for their hospitality.

It is the first time that I have the opportunity to work with experts of history teaching in the Volgograd region so let me say that I am curious to exchange information and experience with you, that I am interested to discuss the common problems in history teaching - but also to learn from the differences we may notice in the structures of education when talking about concrete problems.

As a historian of the younger generation living in Austria at the beginning of the 21st century, I do not hesitate to say that I appreciate it as a great present from history to get the opportunity to work with you *as colleagues.*

As teachers and as educators we are working in a long term perspective without knowing whether our efforts will ever have the chance to bring up successful results. From this rather week position we may hope today that our efforts to overcome the nationalistic heritage of the 20th century will be fruitful and productive in the sense that our work will foster the peaceful development and co-operation between European countries and that it will enable and strengthen their people to live a life with respect of Human Rights and democracy, the rule of law, the values of freedom, equality and solidarity.

In this historical moment it seems that we have to double our efforts to write a critical history about the past century, the time of growing nationalism, the time of the two World Wars, and the time of the Cold War. - We have the chance to write and to teach, hopefully together in the

future „common house of Europe", a history that leads our children to attitudes of mutual understanding, open-mindedness and tolerance.

Before going into the description of new methods in history teaching, let me say a few words about the general development of the educational systems in European countries. We can use this description as a basic reference of our reflection.

1. History Teaching in an era of accelerated cultural change: complex societies and complex learning processes

Let us start from the basic assumption that the highly industrialised regions of our planet are currently undergoing a process of rapid social, political and economic change. These restructurings have a strong impact on the cultural sphere: seemingly stable conventions are undermined, well-established norms and behaviours change rapidly. This process has been termed "accelerated cultural change".

The consequences in the educational sector are as follows: the established educational institutions are coming under increasing social pressure. New suppliers from the information sector (TV, print media, adult education, private institutions/organisations, new technologies: internet, CD-ROM) compete with schools and universities as providers of education. The range of education offered by the school and university systems is increasingly challenged and questioned.

Consequently successful teaching methods and contents are no longer demurely and unquestioningly accepted by the young people of today. Relationships between teachers and pupils change.

The teachers themselves are not very well prepared for these changes and many experience feelings of insecurity. Daily routine leaves teachers little room for the systematic reflection of their experience. Such a situation tends to produce simplified explanations of the problems at hand. The teachers' likelihood to fall back on authoritarian educational styles increases and the conflicts this creates are then often projected onto the pupils.

If we as teachers continue to base our educational programs on a traditional understanding of education there is a high risk that the acceptance on the part of the young generation will decrease even further. We will become less and less able to fulfil their legitimate need for an education which they experience as useful and which they will therefore accept.

What is needed in the classroom are complex, i.e. integrative and dynamic methods of teaching and learning. Such methods should enable the learner not only to acquire declarative knowledge about certain historical facts (e.g. the social dynamics of industrial societies, the restructuring of the family, the changing relationship of the sexes) but to also develop social skills - procedural knowledge which can be acted upon in concrete, everyday social situations - methods which help the learners to develop historical knowledge as part of their social competence.

In this approach the didactics of history is understood to be an *applied social science*. Its central concerns with regard to the teaching of history at schools are as follows:

1. In the face of current social developments, what ways of dealing with the past seem particularly necessary and useful for the young generation?

2. Which (historical) methods are appropriate for reconstructing past cultural, social, economic and political situations and their development?

3. What knowledge is necessary in order to foster a historical understanding which is relevant to the current changes in society?

These are the basic issues which the didactics of history needs to resolve within its concrete social environment. We therefore think that it will be useful to ask in a more systematic and profound way:

2. What are we doing when we are teaching history in the classroom?

A. The history lesson

At the beginning of my teaching career I was teaching Austrian history at the French school in Vienna. The curriculum had foreseen that in the 6th form I had to teach about the beginning of the Habsburg-Dynasty in the late Middle Ages. It was during one of these lessons when I suddenly realised that the pupils were rather bored and I myself did not feel very motivated to teach about Albrecht II. in this situation.

So I stopped my lecture and asked the pupils why there was such an atmosphere of boredom and lack of interest in the group. One of the courageous boys stood up and said: Well professor, it seems to us that in history, it is always the same: kings are crowned, they win or loose battles, they marry and have children, and finally they get wounded or killed, they get executed or banned.

I listened to this very striking description of the boy and then thought: Well, if this is the real message of my teaching, there is something going wrong in my way of teaching history. So I invited the pupil to come to the desk. – He was a little bit scared, doubted my well-meaning intentions, – the other pupils all of a sudden were listening. I asked the boy: Now, please tell us what *you* have been doing this morning since you woke up. He felt released and started describing: At seven the alarm clock was ringing, I went to the bathroom, brushed my teeth, washed my face, put on my clothes, went to the kitchen, drank a cup of coffee, took the tram and went to school. -
I thanked him and then said: Now I will tell you what you would not have been able to do in the time of Albrecht II (who ruled in the middle of the 14th century: 1340 -1358): You would not have had an alarm clock, not even a watch, there was no bathroom with cold and warm running water, there was no toothbrush and no dentifrice, no coffee in the kitchen, no tram to take you to school – and: there was not even a public school.

You can certainly imagine that for the rest of this history lesson we had a very interesting discussion about similarities and differences in every-day-life between the 14th century and today. – Having come so far it was not very difficult to finish with more information about Vienna in the time of Albrecht II. and about his role as a Habsburg king.

Looking back I may say that this experience was the starting point for a completely new conception of my presentations of historical facts. But it was still more: it was the turning point for my view of history teaching.

B. Analysis of the communicative process during this history lesson

In this first approach I have described this experience of a history lesson from my personal - subjective - viewpoint as a history teacher in 1978.

I am sure you will agree that we need additional consideration and reflection if we want to understand the process of teaching and learning about history during this lesson. Coming back to our question at the beginning of this paragraph, we may now ask again: what had really happened during this history lesson?

From the viewpoint of daily routine history teachers would probably give a simple explanation: They would describe this event in categories of pupil's miss-behaviour and thus ending by the encouraging statement that I have solved the conflict well. But this is a short-handed explanation without reference to the historical content under discussion and without reference to the learning process.

We know that there are many different answers to the question: what had happened? The answer depends on the viewpoint of the researcher: S/he decides, following her/his thematic interests and her/his theoretical capacities, how to define – and how to construct – in a concrete case, the perspective towards reality. As historians we are interested to (re-)construct a former political, social, economic, cultural reality in a plausible and transparent way so that it gives to the reader or to the listener the impression of a description of reality being beyond subjective[1] treatment and judgement. As didacticians of history we are not only referring to this past (reconstructed) reality but also, and even with more emphasis, towards the given reality of the auditory, the pupils in the classroom in the concrete moment of teaching. We therefore can say: The didactician of history has to deal with a twofold reality: The reconstructed reality of the past[2] and the actual reality of the teaching situation.

For the teaching situation of the history lesson which was presented above I would like to describe the situation in class, in a second approach, following process-oriented theories of communication[3] and theories of social systems[4] and by this give you an introduction in some constituents of the „process-oriented model of history teaching" which we have developed with a team of historians, pedagogues, social psychologists and advisory teachers at the department

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[1] Although subjectivity might play an important role in the sources which have been analysed by the historian.

[2] Which has always also a fictional part – as much as we attempt to keep this part as small as possible. See also: Melville, Gert (1988) Kompilation, Fiktion und Diskurs, pp. 142.

[3] Bateson, Gregory (1972) Steps to an Ecology of Mind; Bion, Winfried R. (1961) Experiences in Groups and Other Papers; Bion, Winfried R. (1962) Learning from Experience; Watzlawick, Paul, Beavin Janet H. and Jackson Don D. (1967) Pragmatics of Human Communication; Watzlawick, Paul, Weakland, John H. and Fisch, Richard (1974) Change. Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution; Pagès, Max (1968) La vie affective des groupes; Heintel, Peter (1974) Das ist Gruppendynamik; Selvini-Palazzoli, Mara et al. (1981) Das Konzept der organisierten Komplexität, in: Selvini-Palazzoli, Mara et al., Hinter den Kulissen der Organisation, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, p. 269-285; Ciompi, Luc (1982) Affektlogik. Über die Struktur der Psyche und ihre Entwicklung; Diem-Wille, Gertraud and Wimmer, Rudolf (1986) Soziales, erfahrungsorientiertes Lernen; Lorieda, Camillo and Vella, Gaspare (1991) Paradox and the Family System; Simon, Fritz B. (1993) Die Selbstorganisation kognitiver Prozesse, in: Simon, Fritz B., Unterschiede, die Unterschiede machen, p. 79-107; Cohn, Ruth and Terfurth, Christina (1997) Lebendiges Lehren und Lernen.

[4] Luhmann, Niklas and Schorr, Klaus Eberhard (1979) Reflexionsprobleme im Erziehungssystem; Luhmann, Niklas (1984) Soziale Systeme; Willke, Helmut (1994) Systemtheorie II: Interventionstheorie; Willke, Helmut (1995) Systemtheorie III: Steuerungstheorie.

of social and economic history at the university of Vienna. Let us go back to the first remarkable irritation during this history lesson:

- At the beginning of this process stood my observation of boredom in the class. The fact that I had realised this atmosphere of boredom implies that there had been already an irritation in the teaching process before. The atmosphere of co-operative relationship between teacher and pupils which forms the base of every fruitful teaching process had been somehow disturbed. We can later on ask, why?

- I then asked the pupils to give me feed back and to describe their perceptions and impressions of the teaching situation.

- This demand for feed back was not only an intervention on the level of historical content which I was lecturing, but on a meta-level of communication: the level of reflection upon the social dynamics within the group, respectively the interaction, the relationship between teacher, pupils and the subject under discussion.

- Considering the information I had got from the feed back, I decided to change the structure of learning and teaching (and by this decided to change the relationship to the pupils): I stopped the directive form of teaching, the presentation and/ or narration about Albrecht II., and

- I intervened by introducing a new method: I invited a pupil to be our resource person and to provide us with information about his deeds and experiences during that very morning.

- This intervention put the pupil in the position which I had been occupying while I was lecturing at the beginning of this lesson: the position of the expert who gives information to the auditory. I myself came into the position of an observer and listener. After the pupil had finished his story I switched from the position of the observer into the role of an historical expert. This finally gave me the possibility to analyse his description of daily experience in categories of every-day-life-history and in categories of social history.

- The change of roles between the teacher (me) and the pupil had a big influence on the dynamic of the whole group. By putting the boy for a few minutes in the role of expert of daily experience of a Viennese schoolboy in 1978 and then contrasting his description with my historical expertise of the daily life in 14th century Vienna I reminded the auditory on our main goal of this lesson - learning about history – and by this, I reintroduced the debate about past social and political events. Yet this second time I also had gained the interest, the emotional consensus of the majority of the group and I was no more lecturing, but discussing with the pupils, answering their curious questions.

- The intervention had reactivated pupils' curiosity. By relating the historical information to the personal experience of one pupil also the other pupils of this class, who obviously were identified with him when he referred his deeds during the morning, became able to draw connections between daily experience in 1978 and in 1350 and to recognise the differences in daily life between the middle of 14th century and the second half of the 20th century.

- The change of roles had also influenced the change of the structure of communication respectively the pupils' consent to it. And this structural change again had had an impact for the understanding of the historical content: In the contrast to the daily experience of the boy, thus in relation to his personal experience, I found the possibility to bring closer to the pupils mind the lifestyle and culture of the 14th century Vienna and the Viennese court of Albrecht II.

- So we may conclude that we both, the pupil(s) as well as me, the teacher, have gained new insight in what it could mean to perform a history lesson: By changing the level of communication and by putting historical information in relation to the pupil's daily experience, we came to a new insight of the historical period of Albrecht II:
  The pupil(s) learned to be interested in the daily life of a "foreign" / past century, and in a next step learned to ask for the political organisation of this period.
  I, the teacher, learned to make a new form of contrastive approach in history teaching.

- By referring to the pupil's experience I, the teacher, also learned to put more interest to the conditions of learning and to the organisation of the learning process during a history lesson.

- We also may conclude that a similar change of the structure of communication happens every time when a teacher consciously changes the method of teaching. He makes an effective intervention in the communicative settings and this has consequences for the perception and the understanding of the subject by both, the pupil *and* the teacher.

3. Process-oriented didactics of history

The theory of process-oriented didactics in history focuses on the communicative process of teaching and learning history. For the situation in the classroom we might therefore say that we look on the process of learning about history as on a special form of communication and thus on a social process.[5] The central idea of this approach *is to acknowledge the teaching situation as a social structure in its own right: the history lesson itself is viewed and treated as a self-referential[6] social system: When performing a history lesson in the classroom, a history teacher and a group of pupils are creating together a special social system, called „history teaching".*

Niklas Luhmann and Klaus Schorr distinguish between the 'basic self-reference' of a social system, which in our history lesson would include all actions or operations of teaching and learning about a certain historical topic – as well as the chat of the pupils, - and the 'reflection' as a special form of self-reference of the system:

> „Selbstreferenz heißt zunächst nur, dass die Operationen eines Systems in ihrem Sinngehalt immer auf andere Operationen desselben Systems verweisen, mögen sie nun solche Anschlussoperationen intendieren

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[5] We therefore do not consider learning to be an exercise in (self-) castigation that is always directed towards an authority which defines the aims. We consider learning to be a form of curiosity about the insights a specific subject might give. This is always combined with an interest in sharing these insights with other people or in telling them about the results of one's cognitive process.

[6] In: Luhmann, Niklas and Schorr, Karl E. (1989) Reflexionsprobleme im Erziehungssystem, pp.8.

oder nicht; mögen sie nach innen oder nach außen gerichtet sein. Ein selbstreferentielles System operiert stets in der Form des Selbstkontaktes. Es nimmt die Wirkungen aus der Umwelt auf und gibt Wirkungen an die Umwelt ab in der Form von Aktivitäten, die sich jeweils intern abstimmen und insofern stets strukturell kontrollierte Selektivität aufweisen. Ein Lehrer mag in einer bestimmten Unterrichtssituation einem Schüler etwas erklären und dadurch Umwelt verändern – aber doch nur, indem er Wissensstand und Situation der Schulklasse, Grenzen der Möglichkeiten von Schulunterricht, Zeitbudget gerade dieses Systems, Legitimationsgrundlagen etc. voraussetzt. Gerade diese Selbstreferenz in einem ausdifferenzierten System hilft ihm zu hochspezialisierten Sensibilitäten, die ohne Ausdifferenzierung gar nicht hätten eingerichtet werden können.

Basale Selbstreferenz in diesem Sinne ist der universelle Operationsmodus des Systems, der sogar alle Differenzen von zweckmäßigem und zweckwidrigem, erfolgreichem und erfolglosem, konformem und abweichendem, formalem und informalem Handeln übergreift. *Reflexion* ist dagegen ein Sonderfall von Selbstreferenz, der besondere Ressourcen, vielleicht besondere Spezialisten erfordert und nur gelegentlich aktualisiert wird. Mit Reflexionsprozessen macht das System sich selbst zum Thema. Die Selbstreferenz ... hier ... zielt auf die Identität des Systems, auf die Einheit dessen, was in den Alltagsoperationen jeweils als Komplexität gegeben ist und als Komplexität zur Selektion zwingt."

In the understanding of "history teaching" as a self-referential social system it is important to recognise that the making of the system started at the very beginning, the first minutes when a history teacher started to work with a group of pupils. The rules of communication, which – consciously or unconsciously - were established between teacher and students during the first lessons of history, form the basic structure for the relationship between teacher and pupils as well as for the relationship (and the working conditions) as regards the subject "history"[7].

Process-oriented didactics takes as its basic assumption the "pragmatic axioms" of communication as described by Watzlawick et. al.[8] but it takes into account various extensions of this theory which have been published since then, e.g. the idea of the multidimensional structure of communication as described by Sevini-Palazzoli et. al.[9] The first axiom says that *it is impossible not to communicate*, the second axiom says that *each structure of communication has a content-related aspect and an aspect of personal relationship in the way that the latter determines the first*.

Selvini-Palazzoli et. al., in their comment to Watzlawick, then added that in a concrete situation there are not only the two or three persons involved in the process of communication who are obviously talking, but also those people to whom the speakers and listeners are referring to. This is why Selvini-Palazzoli et. al. proposed to add two aspects to Watzlawick's model of communication, the aspect of "territory" which includes all partners who – consciously or unconsciously – are involved in that communication, and the aspect of "temporality" which takes into account the intervals and the perspectives of a concrete communication (e.g. short term, mid term, long term implications of the content under discussion).

When talking about a concrete topic of history the history teacher for example is referring not only to the pupils in the classroom but also to the scientific group of historians by whom he was trained, and to the authors of historical books he has been reading in preparing the history lesson, as well as to the objectives of his teaching about history, the educational aims etc., while the pupils who are listening to his stories will relate his narration to the stories of the parents,

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[7] Looking back on the first meetings with this class which I have described here, I assume that I was not very clear and - more important, - I also was not very consequent in establishing the rules of communications with the pupils as regards the performance of learning history. This would give an explanation for the question why there had been an irritation and an atmosphere of boredom before I intervened as described above. It would also mean that by the above intervention I succeeded in correcting the rules of communication between the pupils and me in a form which was acceptable for this class and which made them curious for working with me on history.

[8] Watzlawick, Paul, Beavin Janet H. and Jackson Don D. (1967) Pragmatics of Human Communication, pp. 53.

[9] Selvini-Palazzoli, Mara et al. (1981) Das Konzept der organisierten Komplexität, pp.272.

uncles, neighbours, as well as to historical information received from other teachers, gathered through TV, radio, films, Internet, books etc.

The comments of Selvini-Palazzoli et. al. have in mind to develop a theory of communication which takes into account the complexity of a concrete situation of communication. But they remain rather uncertain as regards the borders of the system of communication. – This is why in our theoretical reflection at the department of social and economic history, we came to the conclusion that - for the learning and teaching situation in the classroom - it will be of advantage to take into account as well the observations of theories on social systems and thus regarding the teaching situation as a social /communicative system in its own rights. The advantage of this theoretical approach, as described above, is that we introduce with this approach, a clearer distinction between "system" and "environment of the system" and that we acknowledge, by the notion of "self-reference of the system", that each teaching and learning system tends to produce "sense" in a specific form which is typical for this peculiar social structure.

It is evident in this understanding that the social dynamics taking place in the teaching situation itself have to be recognised as being part of the learning process. The history teacher in this understanding can only be successful if s/he not only watches the pupils' perception of the historical content but if he also takes into account the social dynamics in the learning group. This observation of the social dynamic has to be made explicit - at least in the teacher's self-reflection - in order to be useful for further (content-related) learning. Any insights gained from the explicit reflection of social processes should then be fed back into the planning of the next learning phase.

For the didactics of history this means that the history teacher should keep alive at all times the awareness, that the teaching situation is a social structure in its own right. Only if the teaching of history is organised in a dynamic way can it engender learning which produces *insight* into historical processes. To produce insight also includes that the teacher is able to bring close to the pupils' understanding the central conflicts which played a role in the historical situation under discussion. - This idea, up to now, has not gained much currency neither in the training of specialist historians nor in the history teaching in schools. Nevertheless it is a basic assumption of history teaching: if the teacher neglects its implication this will have consequences for the learning and teaching of history in a concrete learning group.

For the teaching of the subject history this means in particular: if it is one of the central insights of the profession that political, social, economic and cultural structures change and are changeable then the learning system, being a social structure itself, has to be organised in such a way that it remains changeable (for all parties involved). The task of conveying historical change in a particular area can be completed successfully only if what is said on the content level is related to the events on the social level of the learning group (between teachers and students, between students and students...), made explicit and fed back into the learning process.

Misunderstandings on the social plane cause blockages on the content level. The reverse also holds: if an otherwise plausible hypothesis about the content level fails to be understood, this suggests that there are (latent) social conflicts between the persons involved in the teaching situation.

The interdependency[10] of the relationship between the historical content as well as the social / communicative relationship between teacher and a group of pupils can also be made explicit in the theory of the didactic triangle:

4. The didactic triangle

In daily routine the models of teaching and learning are not always very elaborated. We might suppose - at least this is the assumption for a bigger number of teachers in Austria - that their theoretical reference in daily practice is often very close to the so called learning model of the „funnel". This model is based on the simple assumption that the pupil's minds, during a history lesson, are open to the historical information which the teacher "fills in" (the head / the mind of the pupil). The imagination in this model is that the history teacher "fills in" the historical knowledge, the facts and the stories, and the pupil then "digests" what has been filled in by the teachers. At the end of this "digestive" process the pupil reproduces what s/he has been told a few weeks ago, in written or oral exams.

This very technical (and linear) conception of historical learning has the disadvantage that it neither gives an idea about the process of communication which happens between teacher and pupils in the teaching situation nor it gives an idea about the appropriation of historical knowledge by the pupils. The history teacher, in this conception is the (active) subject of the teaching process: s/he disposes on the "right" historical information which s/he transmits to the pupils. The pupil(s) in this conception remain(s) the (passive) object(s) of the teacher's *intention*. The relationship between the teacher and the pupils is not described or made explicit by reflection and thus it is not a subject/ object of planning and organisation in history teaching.

As regards the organisation of the learning process it is to notice that in the "model of the funnel" there exists no element of feed back between pupil and teacher. This implies the imagination that it would be possible for a history teacher to perform the same history lesson for rather different groups of pupils or students without taking into account the concrete group of people s/he is teaching. – As regards the acquirement of historical knowledge, and the formation of historical consciousness[11], there exists no idea about the pupils' (active) role in the learning process and about their explicit possibilities of accepting, neglecting or rejecting the teacher's proposals for the organisation of the history lesson. In short, the "model of the funnel" is not adequate to the complexity of the process of learning and teaching history.

At the department of economic and social history at the university of Vienna since a couple of years, we are working on a more complex theory of teaching history[12]. As we have focussed our theory on the communication and the learning organisation in history teaching we gave to this model the name of "process oriented didactics of history". In the following I would like to introduce to you some general constituents of this theory. Let me start with the basic components in teaching history. We can demonstrate some of them by describing the "Didactic Triangle" which is, in fact, still a rather simple but effective model of communication for the teaching and learning situation. With the "didactic triangle" we are able to indicate the interdependency between the three components

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[10] Heintel, Peter (1974) Das ist Gruppendynamik, p. 110.

[11] Borries, Bodo von (1995) Exploring the Construction of Historical Meaning: Cross-Cultural Studies of Historical Consciousness Among Adolescents'; Angvik, Magne, Borries, Bodo von (1997) Youth and History.

[12] Ecker, Alois (1992b) Didaktik als sozialer Prozess; Ecker, Alois (1997c) Process-oriented didactics of history.

Teacher   -   Pupil/s -   Subject

in the process of learning and teaching.

Chart 1 **: The Didactic Triangle**

Subject (Topic)

Teacher   **Students/ Pupils**
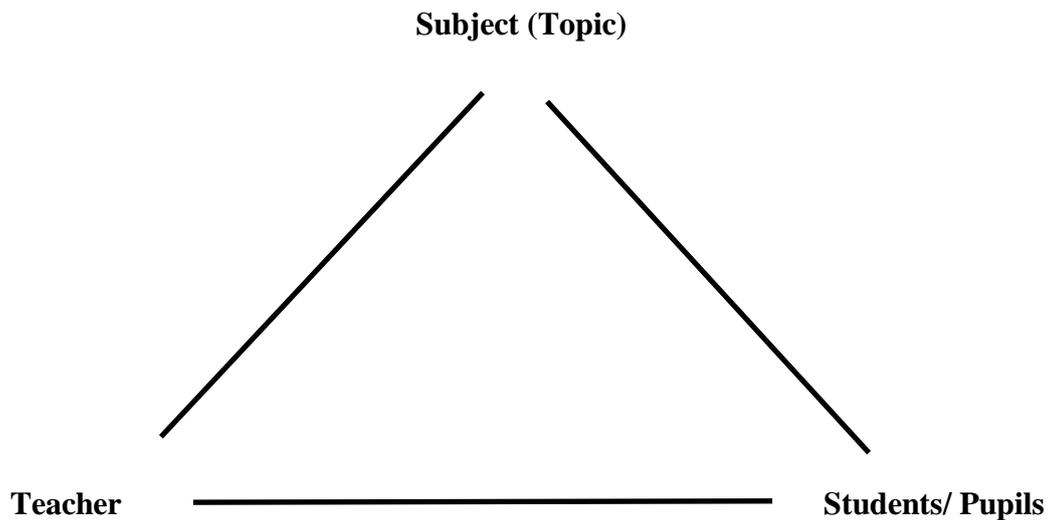
"Interdependency" in this respect means that each of the components has an influence on the learning system as a whole. When the teacher changes for example the relation towards the pupils - as I did in the above example - this also has an impact on the perception of the subject (history). When the teacher treats or teaches the subject in a different way this will also have influence on the working arrangement with the pupils. When the pupils learn to deal with the subject in a new way, e.g. by experience oriented ways of learning about the past, this also has an influence on the teacher's role.

You will not be very surprised and presumably you will easily accept that I replace the notion „subject" by the notion „history".

Chart 2: **The Didactic Triangle in History Teaching**
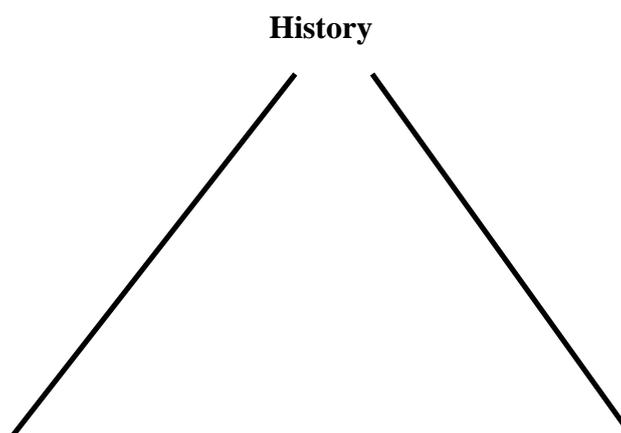
History

Teacher ⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯⎯ **Pupils**

But if you accept this second step of our theoretical consideration this also implies that you accept the idea of getting a different perception of *history* when you change the relation (the form of communication) between teacher and pupils in the process of history teaching.

As we are working on a differentiation of these insights in our seminars of subject didactics, I would like to demonstrate this general assumption of the didactic triangle by a few examples:

5. Different ways of dealing with the past: methods and their implication for historical learning

In the last part of my presentation I will introduce three main models of communication for the learning process and, by this, give you some indicators for the implication of each learning organisation for the teaching of history. I will describe:

- lecture: the hierarchical organisation of learning

- group work: the pupil centred form of learning

- project work: the process- and/ or product-oriented form of learning

For each of the three forms of communication I will ask the following questions:

1. What is the basic structure of communication between teacher and pupils?

2. Are there forms of reflection and feed back intended in this learning organisation? If so, which ones?

3. What is the 'potential' of the learning organisation for the development of historical learning: i.e.
   Is the method applicable to gain historical knowledge?
   Is it applicable to gain historical skills?

4. What are the explicit aims of this learning organisation?

5. What are the hidden aims and objectives of this learning organisation (effective in the long term run)?

6. What is the profile of competencies the history teacher needs to be successful in the teaching process?

5.1. The hierarchic learning organisation

I start with this form of communication although it is not a process-oriented method in the narrow sense[13]. Compared with the two following methods hierarchic learning organisation has the lowest level of complexity in organisation. – By describing this learning organisation I can give some more explanations to pupils' behaviour during my lecture about Albrecht II. For the general description it is of importance to know that in many European countries this form of teaching is still the predominant form of teaching history: As we read in the study on "Youth and History" the item "We listen to teacher's stories about the past" takes 'often' the biggest part of history lessons. In the overall ranking it is second after the item "We use the textbook and/or worksheets", but very close to the first place. The question for this ranking was: "What does usually happen in your history lessons?"[14]

As Angela Kindvater and Bodo von Borries report, these results indicate a rather traditional, old-fashioned type of historical instruction in the European average.

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[13] Nevertheless it can be integrated successfully in more complex learning arrangements.
[14] Angvik, Magne, Borries, Bodo von (1997) Youth and History, pp. A96.

"The combination of the most frequent methods/media "listening to teachers telling" and "textbook/worksheet" on the one hand and the most rare methods/media "audiovisual/auditory media" and "project/visit" on the other hand indicates a rather traditional, old-fashioned type of historical instruction in the European average. Eager reformers will be disappointed - and may hope for a "better" situation in their own countries, but in some cases the range is not at all above the European mean, even if a long and fierce debate on reform of history teaching has taken place for decades (like in Germany or Sweden). Theoretical controversies and convictions of didacticians are not social reality of everyday instruction.

There are two presentations of history which are appreciated most by the adolescents ($M_{Overall}$ = 3.73 and 3.62), namely "films" and "museums" (see above). And there are two methods of instruction, which are used least of all, again: "films" and "museums" ($M_{Overall}$ = 1,87 and 1.59). On the other hand, there is a type of presentation ("textbooks") which students really do not enjoy ($M_{Overall}$ = 2.43), but teachers use very much (second most) at school ($M_{Overall}$ = 3.65). […] This result hints to a bitter contrast, at least in the students' perception. Even if there are some small differences in the exact wording of the questions (with respect to media of presentation and methods of teaching), teachers undoubtedly do not pay any attention to students' wishes and preferences when they plan and decide on teaching methods and media in history lessons."[15]

Let us ask now for the general implications of the hierarchic learning structure for the learning and teaching about history. You all know the classical lecture, the performance of a person who intends to give the information and interpretation on a certain topic to an audience without getting in direct communication with the persons who listen. We estimate that a big number of the history lessons in secondary schools in Austria are organised in a similar way.

I do not intend to give marks to one or the other learning arrangement. What I want to discuss here is the function of each form of communication in relation to the aims and the content of a history lesson, namely for those in secondary schools. Like any other method lecture can have its advantages, but it has also its disadvantages. One advantage reported by many teachers seems to be that the lecturer can give an overall picture on a certain historical topic in a relatively short time. But he will not be sure that the pupils have understood what he intended to transmit as historical information: There is a big disadvantage of this method reported: The general estimate is that only 20% of what is said by the lecturer will be kept in mind by the listener.[16] Therefore the fact that pupils all over Europe do not like to listen to their history teachers as much as they have to, has to be taken very serious. In relation to psychological results this fact does not mean that they are not interested in history but they are unable to listen to the stories of their teachers because of the quantity of time they have to spent with this 'method'. We therefore have to ask for the relevance of this method in teaching history. This will probably lead us also to situations where 'lecture' is misused in the classroom.

The narrative form of communication has a very long tradition in history and history teaching: Listening to the story teller in a group of people[17] has been a fascinating form of reflection since Antiquity or even before. The narration is one of the oldest forms of historiography as well. The critical historian is aware of the fact that there is a small path which separates historical narration from mythological narration. When a history teacher refers his stories in the classroom s/he should be aware of this difficulty. But it is to doubt whether s/he always clearly distinguishes between the two fields of narration.

For the teaching structure in secondary schools the narrative form has been put into a narrow corset when it was closer attached to hierarchic form of teaching[18]. The hierarchy suggests that

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[15] Kindvater, Angela, Borries, Bodo von (1997) Historical Motivation and Historical-political Socialisation, in: Angvik, Magne, Borries, Bodo von (1997) Youth and History, pp. A96.

[16] Tausch, Reinhard and Tausch Anne–Marie (1998) Erziehungs-Psychologie. pp. 68.

[17] See for example: Canetti, Elias (1967) Erzähler und Schreiber, in: Canetti, Elias (1980) Die Stimmen von Marakesch, Frankfurt/Main, pp.89.

[18] Which took place in the development of secondary schools in Europe since the late Middle Ages but mainly – with the implementation of public schools - between the second half of the 18th and the beginning of the 20th century.

the person who is in front of the audience also has a higher competence as regards the content s/he is lecturing. It also implies that s/he is accepted as an authority by the listeners.

In the classical form of hierarchic communication, as shown in chart 3, the teacher is the only person who speaks. It is not intended that the pupils ask questions. They should listen to the story-teller. This passive status causes various psychological reactions: One is the identification with the teacher from the pupils' side: Pupils who try to understand have to listen to the teacher; in the long term run this also means that they get identified on the cognitive as well as on the emotional level with the words – and eventually with the behaviour - of the history teacher[19]. On the level of the unconscious the words of the teacher form the representatives of historical narration, which also implies: the basic structure of historical thinking[20].

If the teacher wants to give an introduction to a new historical issue, the hierarchic learning organisation can be a suitable method. This method may also fit well, if he wants to tell anecdotes about great men in history, about a famous historical event and/ or other heroic stories of the past. - But if the teacher wants to analyse critically historical sources, lecture will not be the suitable form because this method is not appropriate to involve the pupils actively in the process of historical learning. – The history teacher has to use activating methods, if he wants to develop skills like critical thinking, multiperspectivity, analytic skills, self-reflection and/ or social competence by history teaching.

As regards the comparative questions at the beginning of this chapter we can conclude the following:

1. The structure of communication is hierarchic, or as Watzlawick et al would say, it is asymmetric. A direct communication between teacher and pupils is not intended. Interventions from the side of the pupils are regarded as irritation of the teachers; they use to call this irritation "disturbance".

2. Explicit forms of reflection or feed back are not intended in this learning culture. If there is a reflection, we assume forms of self-reflection from both, the teacher's and the of the pupils' side, but there is no form of feed back foreseen which would make it possible to exchange opinions, impressions, reflections etc. Therefore the teacher remains lonely in his suppositions and suspicions, while the pupils remain thrown back to the associations they produce vis à vis the referred topic. If they feel bored or frustrated, they will start to chat, to interrupt the teacher, to play with the neighbours etc. As regards the communicative process we can say that this process develops „wild", without steering and control.

3. The potential of this communicative structure for historical learning is rather limited: It aims at giving historical information, at introducing into a new theme or a new historical issue, but without giving the possibility to discuss it.

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[19] On a psychodynamic level we could describe this process as a form of "identification with the aggressor".
[20] First ideas of this relation may be found in Sigmund Freud's article "The unconscious", chapter "word and thing", see: Freud, Sigmund (1915e) Das Unbewußte, pp. 168.

Chart 3: **The hierarchic organisation of communication**[21]

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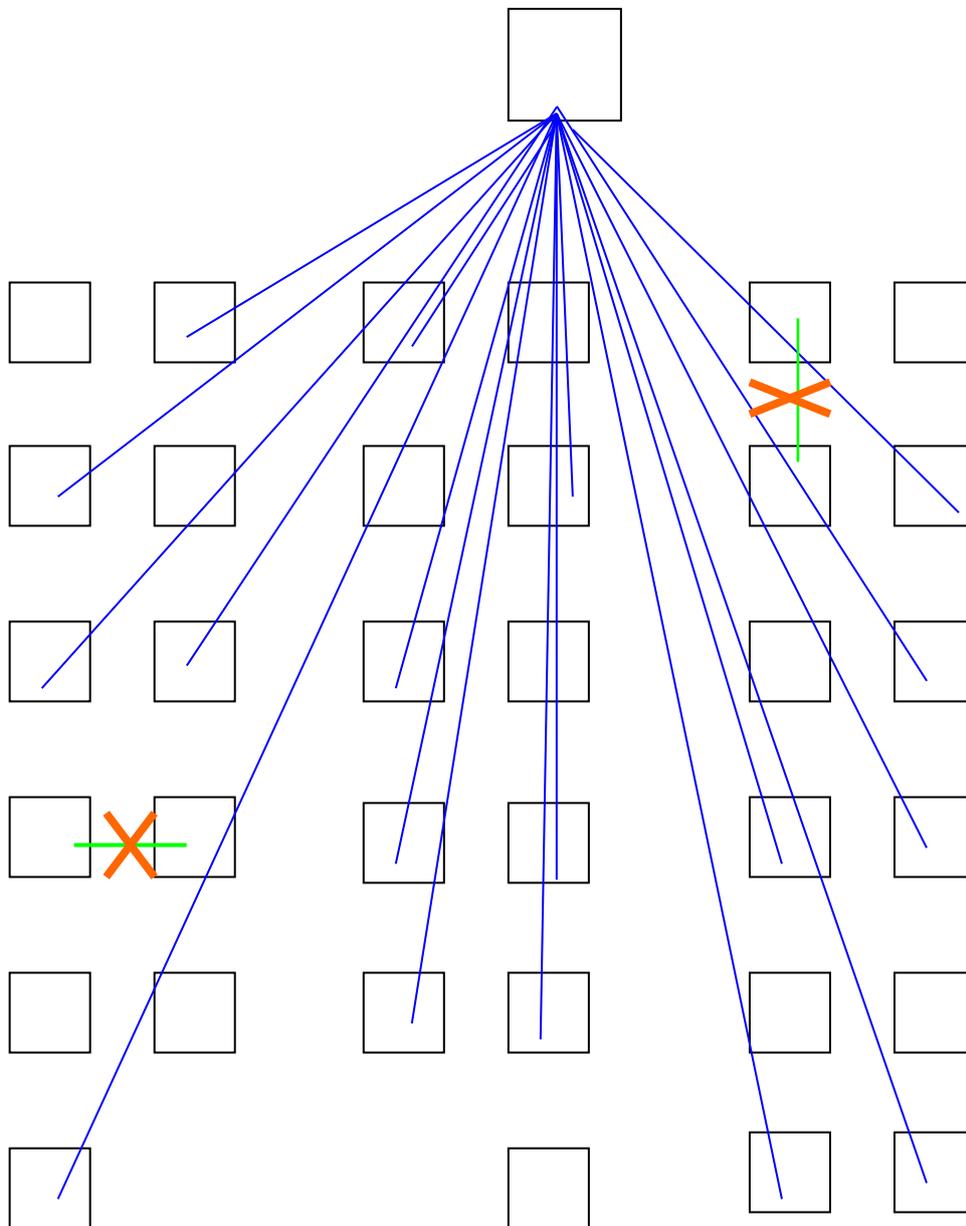
[21] Colour blue marks the speech of the teacher /lecturer, colour green marks the speech of the pupils/ listeners. The latter speech, in this case, is not allowed or intended which is symbolised in the chart by a red cross.

As regards historical knowledge the pupils can only gain more knowledge through this learning culture when they have already a basic knowledge of historical themes, structures, questions and methods. Otherwise they rarely will be able to listen for more than a few minutes.

As regards historical skills it is rather difficult to say whether there is a possibility to develop skills by this method. We may assume that in the long term run the pupils will learn to acquire the skills "listen to the story-teller", and "identification with historical stories/actors".

4. The explicit aims of this method are to transmit historical information to the pupils (which is in contradiction to the socio-psychological observations we have reported).

5. The hidden aims, as we suppose them, are: "identification with the authority/ the teacher" and "acceptance of the teacher's authority". As a tool of political education we regard this learning organisation rather critically, because the main effect of this form of communication in the long term run seems to be "the training of the pupils' acceptance of hierarchical structures" and "the training of the acceptance of preconstructed, 'legal(ised)' historical knowledge". It is not astonishing in this context that the use of textbooks is the complementary method to lecture, as a big part of the textbooks in schools is used to reproduce normative information about historical 'events'.

6. The teacher's profile, which is necessary to fulfil the demands for successfully perform a lecture are the following: S/he has to dispose on sufficient historical knowledge for systematically present the historical issue; s/he has to have competence in the conception of a lecture and s/he has to have the rhetoric ability and the knowledge of historiographic argumentation to give a presentation without becoming unbelievable to the audience.

5.2. The pupil centred learning organisation

It is a consensus between didacticians that pupils are more attached to a concrete topic when they have the possibility to be active in the learning process. Their passivity during a lecture also hinders the pupils to be attentive for more than a few minutes. Each of the pupils has different associations to what the teachers tells but these associations are not open for further discussion or reflection in the group. During a lecture the pupils are left alone with their associations and thus tend to switch themselves off; therefore, as reported above, they will not remember more than twenty percent of the content of a lecture.

It is characteristic for growing up people that they want to be active themselves: as long as they have a learning structure which they are confident about, they are very motivated to follow their curiosity, to acquire the knowledge the adults pretend to have, and they normally are satisfied to participate in a process of work. All these observations are arguments for a pupil centred learning organisation. With these new methods of learning – dialogue, discussions, group work, role play, many other forms of active learning in the classroom – pupils will remember on average fifty percent of the historical content under discussion.[22]

Another, even more important, argument for pupil centred structures of learning brings us back to the didactic triangle: When working with pupil centred forms of learning the teacher is not any more the only one to talk and to dispose on historical information in the classroom. The pupils themselves start to discuss, they argue, they analyse historical sources and they begin to ask critical questions about the historical information. - The pupil centred learning organisation

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[22] Tausch, Reinhard and Tausch, Anne-Marie (1998) Entwicklungs-Psychologie, pp. 70.

intends to put the pupil in the role of a critical lecturer of historical sources; the pupil should get the opportunity to verify historical interpretations, to analyse historical sources or other teaching material, to discuss upon explicit questions of historical interpretation and, by this, take part in the reconstruction of historical situations.

Pupil centred forms of learning are the basic elements for process-oriented didactics in history. With the support of these forms of learning, historical information is not any more regarded as a normative codex of prescribed texts, but as a range of (historical) texts, of historical sources and interpretation which remain open to discussion, to further investigation and to further interpretation. By implementing pupil centred forms of learning the relation between teacher and pupils change and this also has an impact on the pupils' perception of historical information. With the successful implementation of group work or similar active forms of learning the subject 'history' will not any more be regarded by pupils as 'the word' that comes from the authority of the teacher but as a knowledge which can be acquired by the pupils themselves; a knowledge which can be elaborated by collecting information, by analysis and synthesis and by further discussion, as a knowledge which has to be questioned and verified. We may conclude that 'history' through pupil centred forms of learning is more dynamic and hence closer to the genuine structure of historical thinking which is, in fact, not a static and dogmatic corpus of stories, legends and songs but a dynamic form of thinking and reflection on change in human societies.

The classic form of team-oriented learning organisation is group work. This is an adequate learning organisation for theme-centred or problem-oriented approaches to history. There are many forms of group work which it would be impossible to describe in a short presentation like ours. I will only give a few examples for the teaching of history in the classroom. It is possible to organise group work with pupils of all school grades, it is possible to work in groups just for 5 or 10 minutes, but also for 20, 40 or 60 minutes. Depending on the aims, the quantity and the quality of tasks to be fulfilled, groups can be organised to work upon the same task and with the same source but groups may be organised as well – and this will be the prevailing form in history classes - with different texts but with comparable questions for every working group. Normally group work need a thematic introduction or orientation at the beginning of the lesson, followed by the invitation for the pupils to deepen certain aspects of the historical issue by analysing historical sources themselves and thus reconstructing historical interpretations. During this working process the pupils may find new approaches to historical interpretation themselves. They should be encouraged to ask questions and /or to make their own reflections on a certain historical situation, but they should also be encouraged to verify these assumptions with the help of critical historical methods.

During this form of communication, as shown in chart 4, the teacher is in the role of an organiser and advisor of the working process. This implies that he has to be competent in directing and organising a working process with groups. He is not any more *the only* expert who has to give *every detail* of historical information: with group work it is up to the pupils to acquire historical knowledge. The teacher becomes a manager of the learning process, he gives orders for the organisation of work, he co-ordinates the time, he advises, he may consult the groups while they work, but he normally will not be involved in details of the content-related aspects of work as long as the groups work.

Regarding group work as a systemic process we can describe the working groups as "sub-systems" of the system "history teaching". The groups themselves develop for the time they work together, a peculiar working style /working culture which can be different from the working culture of another group in the classroom. Nevertheless they may arrive at the same quality of results – and the plenary then can learn form the differences of presentations. There may be conflicts in a working group which can be productive as well. Only if the teacher recognises that the group is not any more attentive for coordinating advises, as indicated for one of the groups in chart 4, it is useful that the teacher intervenes - in a form which helps the group to remain in relation to the overall process of work[23]. This process has to be managed and supervised by the teacher during group work.

Presentations of the group results and the discussion of these results are of eminent importance for the successful process of work. _With the presentation of their results the groups contribute to the constitution of the "historical self-reference" of the learning group: this means that they contribute - on the level of the class /system - to the production of "historical sense" (the augmentation of [standards about] historical knowledge and understanding in the class). It is nothing more frustrating for pupils than working actively on a certain topic and then being given no time to present the results and to relate what has been elaborated to the results of the other working groups. The working process is dependent on inter-group relations which include conflicts and competition as well. It is up to the teacher to direct and to moderate these conflicts in a way to become productive for the learning process and to get insight in the historical conflicts under discussion. This is one of the insights of process-oriented didactics in history that the conflicts in the learning group can be related to the historical conflicts under discussion. [24] If the teacher succeeds to do so he will lead the group to a profound knowledge about that concrete historical issue he is working upon together with the pupils.

We have organised for example group work on the Austro-Hungarian Treaty in 1867 by providing texts from the parliamentary debates from both perspectives, the Austrian/German and the Hungarian side, including the comments of Czech and Croat delegates. This form of multiperspective approach to a decisive political moment of the Habsburg Monarchy gave the pupils an insight into the historic background of that specific political conflict but also in the long lasting consequences for the further development of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Pupils worked in four groups, they worked on the documents following a questionnaire which made it possible to later on compare the different national positions. Their task was to first analyse extracts of speeches of an Austrian, Hungarian, Czech and Croate delegate, then in a second step they had to decide on one pupil who would play the role of the delegate and who could reproduce his main arguments in a debate with others. Representatives of the four groups then reported the results of the group work in a role-play, arguing pro and contra Austro-Hungarian Dualism. In the overall picture the pupils got an insight into the political conflicts around the Austro-Hungarian Treaty from different national perspectives. It remained the teacher's task to co-ordinate the presentations, to moderate the discussion and to organise it in a way so that the different positions and interests were comparable.

Group work also gives the possibility to work upon sensitive issues in history. For Austrian history one of these issues is the civil war between Social democrats and Christian democrats in February 1934. We choose in this case a contrastive approach by analysing articles from different newspapers of that time in group work. Pupils learned in a first step to be critical towards political information as it was given by the newspapers. As regards the civil war they

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[23] I.e. without menace of punishment.

[24] I have described this idea in my comment to Georges Devereux, see Ecker, Alois (1997c) Process-oriented methods in the teaching of history, pp. 417, footnote 10.

learned to critically deal with information about political events. In a second step, after the first plenary discussions, they were encouraged to ask for differences between politics of a totalitarian regime and democratic forms of political life. The central questions of this discussion were visualised by the teacher on the blackboard. In a third step, again in groups, the pupils worked with background sources: they became familiar with the political parties in that time, the social and economic problems in the period of world economic crisis, the political relations of the Dollfuss regime to neighbouring countries, to Nazi Germany and to fascist Italy. This inductive working process took several hours and put the pupils in a first step in the role of interested readers of newspapers, then in the role of critical observers of the political conflicts in 1934 and finally put them in the role of historians of our time who were collecting and comparing historical interpretations about the civil war.

I imagine it could be a challenging project to work upon the battle of Stalingrad, the great patriotic war, in a similar way and to ask for example: How is it presented in Russian, German, Austrian, English, French textbooks? A multiperspective approach like this would contribute to the demystification and deideologisation of wars and thus hopefully contribute to a more peaceful development of international relations between European countries.

Group work is certainly also a good form for talking about issues of social history or every-day-life history. Just to give you an idea how to work with pupils on subjects of social history I will describe a proposal for group work on the history of childhood[25] in Austria at the beginning of the 20th century: The central goal in this group work was to bring closer to pupils' historical insight the socio-economic differences and their implication for children's life. In the introductory part of the lesson the teacher asked the pupils to individually take notes about their assistance in the household of their families. The pupils then were asked to contribute to a general list of such forms of assistance which were differentiated between girls and boys and then collected on flip-chart. A second flip-chart was made upon their favourite activities during leisure time. The next step in the working process was then to ask whether they know how their grand-parents have experienced childhood in these two aspects. Pupils were invited to tell stories or anecdotes they have heard about the childhood of their grand-parents. Then the teacher invited the pupils to look for similarities and differences with their personal experiences today. The third step was to compare in group work historical sources about the childhood in a peasant family, a craftsman family, a bourgeois family, a proletarian family living in Austria around the year 1910. Interpretations were differentiated between conditions for girls and boys, education of children and child labour, living conditions and leisure activities were analysed. Relationship towards parents was also question of thematic consideration. After the groups had reported the answers the situation of children in different milieus were compared and related to macro-social data on economic conditions of peasant and craftsman families, bourgeois and proletarian families.

In a final discussion pupils again had the opportunity to discuss the historical information they had found in the sources in relation to stories of their grand parents and in relation to their personal experiences today. By these comparisons pupils not only got an idea how to acquire knowledge about past social conditions of living, but they also got a better feeling /empathy for the historical conditions of childhood a fifty and a hundred years ago.

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[25] See also: Ecker, Alois (1986a) Sozialgeschichte der Familie, pp. 49; pp. 75; Ecker, Alois (1986b) Kindheit in der bürgerlichen und in der proletarischen Familie, pp. 29.

Chart 4: **The pupil centred learning organisation**[26]

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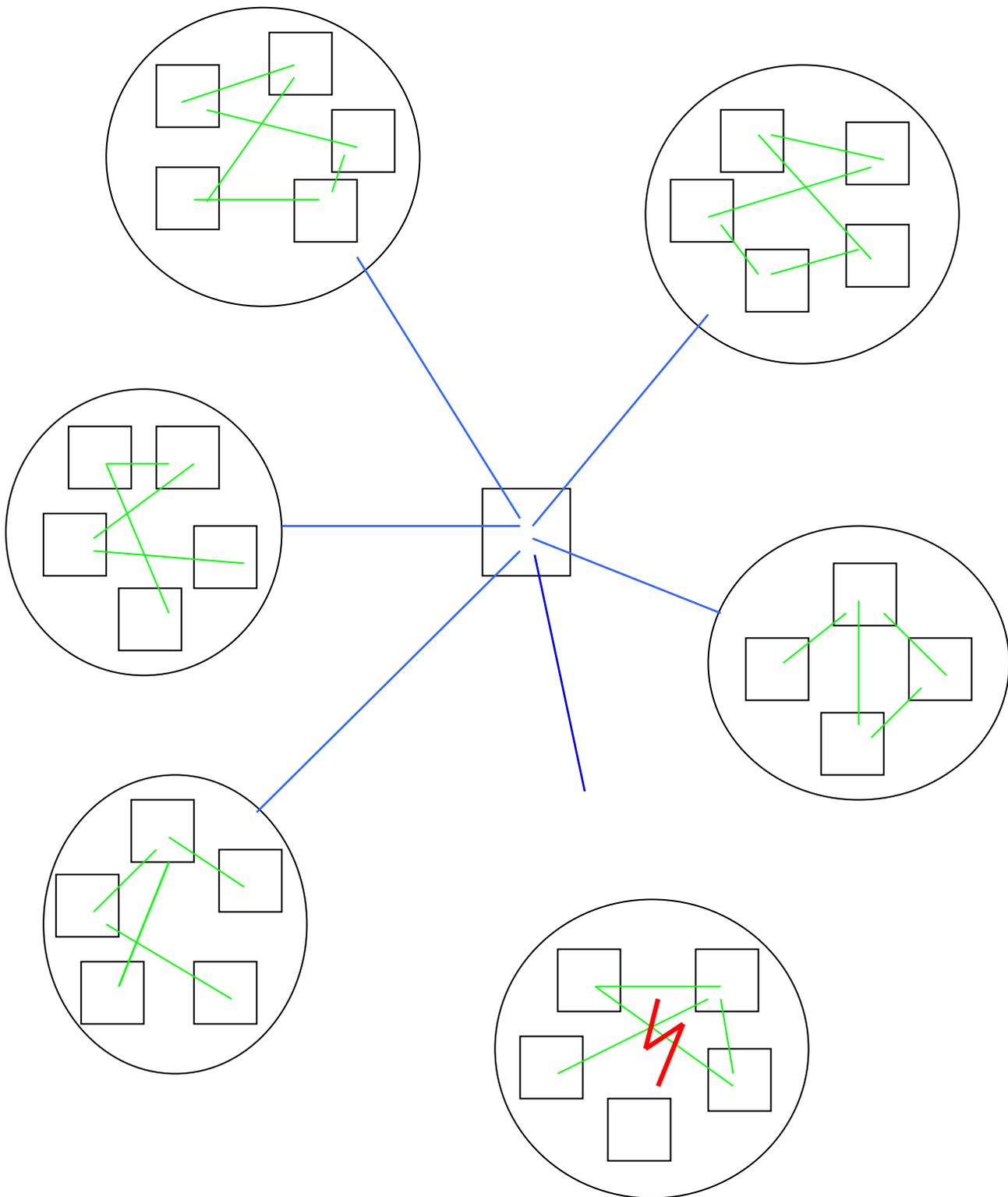
[26] Colour blue marks the speech of the teacher /mentor, colour green marks the speech of the pupils. The flash symbolises a conflict between members of one of the groups.

By starting with their personal experience[27] and by relating these experiences to historical findings the pupils also learned to understand history as a subject which has to do with their own conditions of life. The history teacher who is working in this way can be sure that this work on historical situation of children will also give an input for further debates between the pupils and their parents or grand parents. We will describe in the next paragraph how to work with such conversations in the history class.

Coming back to our comparative questions we may now conclude for pupil centred learning organisation:

1. Communicative structure: We understand pupils centred learning as a selective form of a learning process which not necessarily includes the planning for a long dated process. Pupil centred learning organisation supposes that teacher and pupils can work on a symmetric level of communication about certain historical topic without being hostile and suspicious towards each other. The assumption is that pupils are curious to learn about history and that the teacher is motivated to bring historical knowledge closer to the pupils.[28] The communicative structure is mainly altering between plenary organisation and group work. The relation teacher – pupils is open for questions, advises, information, organisational orders and for discussion, thus altering corresponding to functional needs. During group work and presentations of results pupils (partly) take over the role of experts in historical analysis and interpretation. The teacher remains responsible for the overall co-ordination of the learning process and also for directing and mentoring the acquirement and interpretation of historical knowledge.

2. Reflection and feed back: Reflection and feed back, in the sense of self-reference of the learning group, are permitted and wanted. At the beginning of a learning process the teacher certainly wants to know what the pupils already know about a certain historical topic before he deepens in details of the thematic exemplification. He therefore will ask for available knowledge and competencies before going to the next step of work. These inquiries and explorations of the learning group are very important, they may be seen as part of the self-reference of the class as a "history class". In the process of teaching the history teacher is always partly involved in the working process, but he will try to maintain self-reflection and to be in a good equidistance to the pupils so that he can plan the next step of work. To be able to co-ordinate group work, for example, the teacher has to get feed back from the groups about the progress of work. He also has to ask for feed back when planning a new step in the development of the learning process.

3. Historical learning: Pupil centred learning organisation has a wide range of possibilities in developing historical understanding and knowledge. Certainly the complexity of the historical subject under discussion must not be too high: nevertheless a critical formation of historical sense[29], theme-centred or problem-oriented approaches to history normally built the adequate level of complexity to be developed by these methods. As we have shown in the examples above pupil centred learning opens possibilities for the introduction of multiperspectivity in history teaching or to a work on sensitive issues. Comparative and contrastive approaches can be developed by group work, as well as diachronic or synchronic perspectives.
The description above already indicates the wide range of historical skills which can be developed by pupil centred learning organisation. Pupils learn to think in diachronic and synchronic perspectives on a historical issue, they learn to analyse historical sources, to critically deal with historical information and to argue pro or contra a certain historical development. Last

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[27] Diem-Wille, Gertraud and Wimmer, Rudolf (1986) Soziales, erfahrungsorientiertes Lernen, pp. 47.

[28] For a concrete learning situation this assumption may be questioned; see also the objections by Bodo von Borries (1990a) Geschichtsbewußtsein als Identitätsgewinn?, pp.8. On the other hand we know that pupils curiosity is very strong and can easily be activated by the history teacher, if he is with his suggestions in a functional relation to the pupils' interest.

[29] „Kritische Sinnbildung", compare Rüsen, Jörn (1994) Historisches Lernen. p. 88.

but not least they learn to make synthesis, to report about the analysis of historical texts and to present a historical issue or problem.

4. The explicit aims of this form of learning organisation are to bring pupils closer to historical understanding and historical methods trough inductive learning processes under advice of the history teacher. As regards the subject history they should learn to critically judge historical information, to analyse sources critically and to make first steps to a transparent handling of historical information and interpretation. Pupils should also develop skills for teamwork, self-organisation and self-responsibility for smaller tasks. The method also aims at developing communicative and social skills, abilities for teamwork and presentation skills.

5. The hidden aims are to develop working skills which are adequate to the actual demands of the labour market, including communicative skills and teamwork. This also implies that the structure of such methods aims at breaking up hierarchical structures and to establishing more democratic forms of political and social relationship.

6. Pupil centred learning organisation demands a teacher's profile which includes high academic competencies in history and the ability to argue about and to present historical issues. The history teacher also has to be competence in historical interpretation and should dispose flexibly on a wide range of historical methods. But beside these academic competencies the history teacher has to be competent in directing a learning process, he has to know how to organise group work or other active methods of learning, he has to dispose on a range of planning and design skills, e.g. in preparing historical sources for group work, in developing teaching material in relation to the concrete demands of a school class, and he also has to have advisor skills and skills in moderation discussions.

5.3. Process-oriented learning organisation

As described above pupil centred learning contains elements of process-oriented learning organisation. But there are differences especially in the level of complexity as well as in the level of self-reference and self-organisation of the working process. All three levels are higher in process-oriented learning organisation. Process-oriented learning organisation also gives a higher responsibility for the success of the working process to the pupils. It starts from the pupils interest and involves the pupils as central and as responsible players in the process of learning and teaching –without neglecting the overall co-ordinating function of the teacher.

As regards the didactics of history, process-oriented learning organisation tries to integrate as much as possible the pupils in the process of reconstructing and constructing history. The pupils become partly researchers, they have the possibility to get to know and to experience a process of historical research. In an advanced form the pupils learn to develop their own questions towards the past and then in a second step they learn doing research on their own.[30] Therefore these methods are appropriate for inquiry based learning especially in the historical fields and problems where pupils feel or find themselves involved in history. This might be the case when history teaching starts from actual political debates, from interesting historical questions on a local level, from questions of every-day-life history, gender issues, social and cultural history, but as well from questions of economic history or diplomatic history.

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[30] In this approach process-oriented learning organisation is close to the idea of a „genetic construction of historical sense" (genetische Sinnbildung, Rüsen 1994, p. 89) and /or to the development of historical consciousness which is related to the learning environment of the pupils (lebensweltlichem Geschichtsbewußtsein, von Borries 1990a, p 121).

As regards the level of complexity it is useful to differentiate between 'project work' which has a limited time during a year, normally from a few days up to a few weeks and a 'long dated learning process' which is planned and directed over a longer period of time, e.g. a semester or a whole school year.

Project work is normally organised in process-oriented forms, very often combined with product-oriented forms of learning. In the last form pupils plan the project with the aim of putting the results of the working process together in form of a "product", e.g. an exhibition on the history of their school, a pupils' journal summing up interesting historical parts of oral history interview and comments about the historical topic under discussion, a video on archaeological sites near the home town of the pupils etc. We also can imagine partnerships between school classes as process- oriented forms of learning. Some of my colleagues with whom I am working in subject didactics have organised international partnerships on historical topics, e.g. resistance during the second world war in Germany, Austria and France.

I would like to give an example on a project in a history class of 10[31] grade secondary school.[31] It was a project on every-day-life history where pupils interviewed their parents and grand parents on topics of family life: changes in living conditions, household[32] and leisure time. Pupils themselves had declared their interest on this topic after a lively debate on differences between peasant families and bourgeois families. - I worked together with colleagues of Geography and of German language, so we also had team teaching and group work on the level of the staff. During this project pupils learned to first analyse historical sources on family history in different social milieus, as described before. Then the pupils were working on questionnaires for an oral history interview which they intended to make with their grand parents. They interviewed their grand parents together with second pupil who also could give emotional support vis à vis the adults and who could report upon the situation of the interview when coming back to school. Back in school the pupils learned to analyse the oral history interviews, they compared what they had found out with former information about household and family life in the first half of the 20th century and finally they were working for an exhibition in the school hall.

You can imagine that during this learning process they not only learned quite a lot on family history from different perspectives, they also acquired various competencies in qualitative historical research, especially on the level of oral history. They also learned to present historical research in an exhibition and they learned to be a guide for other pupils, for parents and grand parents through this exhibition – a situation which forced them again to acquire historical knowledge as an active communicative competence. The project took 25 hours of school lessons, not included the time of the interviews and some extra time the pupils spent in preparing the exhibition. It is obvious that they acquired historical knowledge ad skills in this active learning process.

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[31] See Ecker, Alois (1984a) Forschendes Lernen. Zur Didaktik der oral history in Schule und Erwachsenenbildung.
[32] Ecker, Alois (1995) Sozialhistorische Texte zur Frauenarbeit, pp. 46.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF PROJECTWORK[33]
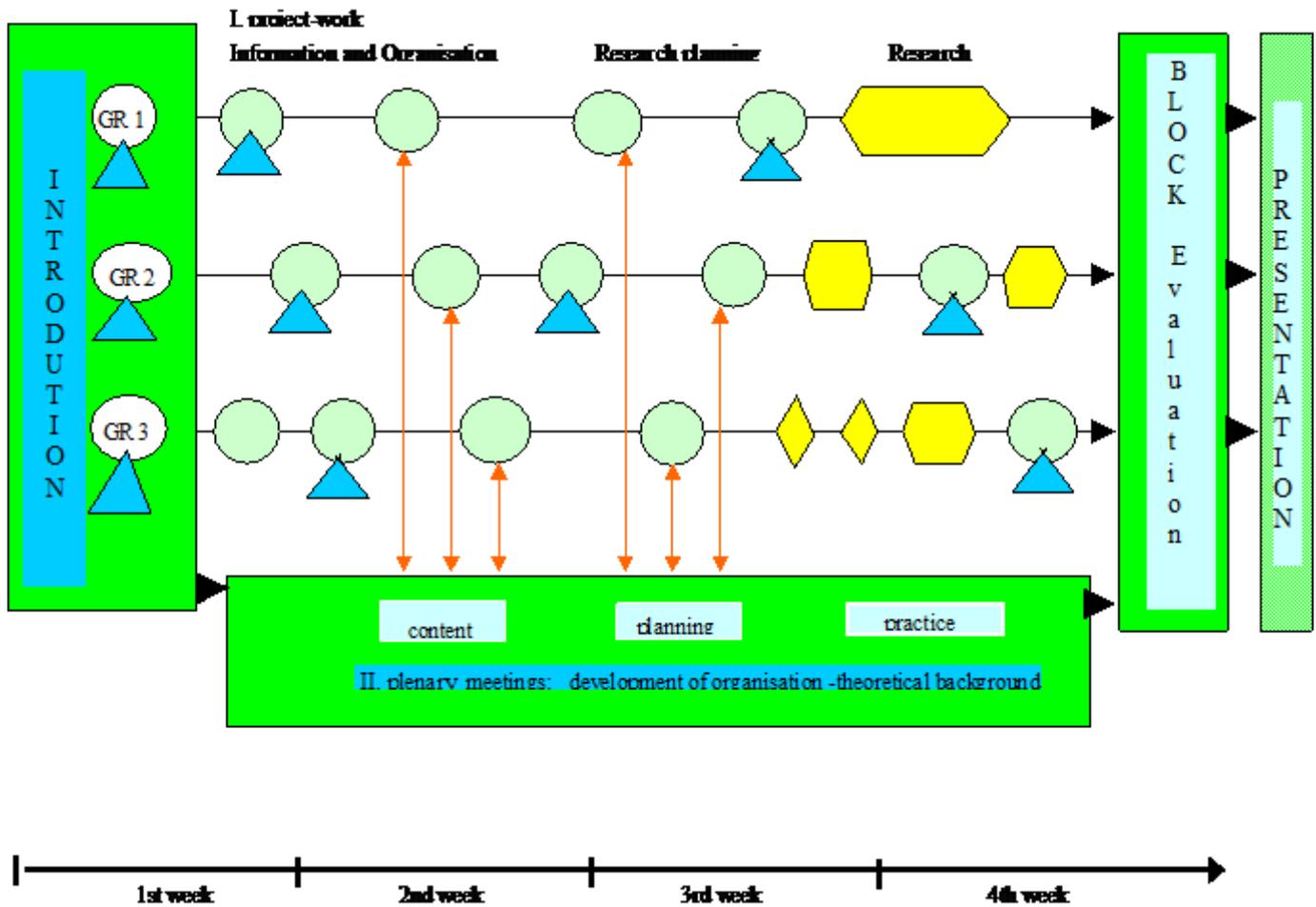
It is important for our concern to regard the organisation of the working process as a complex learning structure. Pupils worked in different social forms: with partners, in group, in plenary or on their own, following the complexity of the task which had to be fulfilled. The plenary as a social structure for example had the function of a forum of information, of co-ordination, presentation and of discussion. Groups were important for theme-centred tasks like analysing sources, preparing the questionnaire, systemising information from the interviews and preparing wallpapers for the exhibition. Partner oriented work was important for smaller parts of work as well as for emotional support during the interview.

But the structure of learning was even more complex than that. The whole project was planned like a composition, starting with deductive learning elements, then introducing qualitative and quantitative elements of historical research for the development of the pupils' interest and activity. Finally giving space for analytic and reflective elements and a satisfying presentation about the work that has been achieved.

It was very important during this process not only to organise communication on different levels of complexity but to introduce and to maintain the reflective process of the learning system as a whole. The staff met regularly to discuss the working progress and to plan the next step of work. The pupils had several possibilities in plenary as well as in group to reflect upon the learning process. It was especially important to give space to discussion and reflection after the interviews. One of the boys for example caused with his interview a conflict between his mother and father about duties in the household. When he reported his experience in class we were directly involved in a debate about roles of gender and had to first discuss with the pupils what had happened in the conversation between the parents and from there came back to the general interest on labour division between men and women in household duties.

Even months after the end of that project some pupils found relations between general information of history, e.g. conditions of labour in pre-industrial time, and stories they have heard from their grand parents. So after the project, there was more interest and motivation on historical issues than before.

Let us conclude again with the comparative questions:

1. Communicative structure: Process-oriented learning organisation is a complex learning organisation which engages the whole learning system (history teaching in the classroom) but sometimes also the environment of the system (the school administration, the colleagues, the grand parents). The history teacher as well as the pupils have to take over different roles, there is labour division between teacher and pupils, self-reflection is a constituent of the working process. Pupils partly work in self-organisation, they are collecting historical information, producing historical sources and historical interpretation themselves under the overall co-ordination of the history teacher who manages the learning process.

2. Reflection and feed back: Both are necessary and wanted in process-oriented learning forms. It is important for the teacher to regularly get feed back from to pupils about the progress of work. Reflection upon the working process in the teachers' staff, analysing, planning and co-ordination was elementary for the success of the project reported above. As describe before we assume that the history teachers who starts working with a certain class, wants to know at the beginning of this learning process, what pupils already know about history – not only in the sense of dates and facts, but especially about their competencies as regards historical methodology. It would be impossible e.g. to start a project on oral history without knowing whether the pupils have competencies in group work, whether they are able to analyse sources

etc. During a process of teaching and learning the teacher also has to learn to be dependant on the pupils co-operation (e.g. during or after the interviews).

3. Historical learning: By different projects or a long dated learning process it should be possible to develop a broad scale of historical knowledge and of historical skills. We will not repeat what has been said in chapter 5.2., it seems obvious that with process-oriented methods it should be possible to acquire the same range of knowledge and skills as described above. Beyond that it should possible to bring pupils closer to historical research and to advise them in producing themselves historical sources, like e.g. oral history interviews. They also should be able to elaborate their competencies for teamwork, for various forms of presentations, for the organisation of historical exhibitions etc. I sum we may say that process-oriented forms of learning allow to developing „historical competence" as an „active knowledge" about and on history, a social competence which can be used by the pupils also later on in daily conversation.

4. The explicit aims of this learning organisation are to bring closer to the pupils historical insight and methodology so that they can develop their own historical identity and that they can use this historical consciousness as a social competence in daily communication. They also should learn to actively participate in historical work and/ or research. They should also become more competent in skills for teamwork and co-operation. As far as experience oriented learning forms are used pupils should also learn to develop their historical identity in close connection to the experiences they have made in their own social backgroud.

5. The hidden aims are to enable the student to team work and co-operation, to self-organisation, self-confidence, self-determination and to individual responsibility for the learning process.

6. Teacher's profile: In addition to what has been said in chapter 5.2 it is important to say that the history teacher has to have a well elaborated competence of self-reflection. If he is organising a complex learning process he has to deal with unexpected conflicts and this makes it necessary for the teacher to deal with conflicts constructively. He will only be successful in this task if he has the capacity to remain kindly disposed towards pupils reactions. He also has to dispose on a good proportion of social and communicative skills, planning and design skills, organisational skills and competence in interdisciplinary co-operation and teamwork. It goes without saying that the history teacher should dispose on a high flexibility in historical knowledge and skills.

6. Conclusion

We have introduced in this presentation the teaching situation as a social structure in its own right. For the development of adequate theoretical and methodological tools for history teaching, the history lesson should be regarded and treated as a self-referential social system. By introducing the didactic triangle for history teaching we have shown that there exists an interdependent relation between the teacher, the pupils and the subject under discussion. We have exemplified this interdependency by describing three main models for the learning organisation in history classes and their potential for historical learning: the hierarchic, the pupil centred and the process-oriented learning organisation. All three types of learning organisation should be used flexible and appropriate to the specific objectives of a concrete history lesson, the capacities and the needs of the learning group. But the history teacher has to be aware of the fact that the level of complexity and thus the potential of the learning structures are rather different. Process-oriented learning organisation has the highest level of complexity; this gives

the opportunity not only to transmit historical information by a learning structure, as it is the case with hierarchic learning organisation, but to develop historical knowledge and historical skills which in a long dating learning process can be developed with this method towards social skills for the use in daily conversation.

The central innovations in this concept of historical learning are: emphasis on the self-reference of the learning group, emphasis on self-reflection of both, the teacher and the pupils, the importance of structural design of the learning process, reflection of the learning process and of feed back.

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