

International Standing Working Group on Educational Media in Comparative Perspective
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Beyond Common Regard: Alternative Teaching Instruments – Innovations, Successes, and Failures

Session 1:

Chair: Eckhardt Fuchs (Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany)

Presenters:

Daniel Lindmark (Umeå University, Sweden)

Educational Media in Sápmi: Religious instruction in a colonial context

Marcel Naas (University of Basel, Switzerland)

The didactical construction of Swiss children's bibles in the first half of the 19th century: A pedagogical analysis focussing the perception of the child

Nadine Geisler (University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg)

Teaching the Holocaust beyond curricular guidelines

Discussant:

Frank Simon (Gent University)

Session 2:

Chair: Ian Grosvenor

Presenters:

Anne-Li Lindgren (Linköping University, Sweden)

Transgressing boundaries of citizenship. Constructions of active pupils in School Radio broadcasts in Sweden in the 1930s

Eckhardt Fuchs

Instruction and Modern Technology: The Emergence of the Educational Film in the Interwar Period

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The Technocratic Momentum after 1945, the Development of Teaching Machines and the Sobering Results

Discussant:

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Abstracts:

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Educational Media in Sápmi: Religious instruction in a colonial context

Two hundred years ago, the whole Bible appeared for the first time in a Saami translation. The Saami Bible of 1811 represented the most spectacular landmark in a long row of important milestones. In my paper, I will outline the major achievements in the development of Saami educational media and relate them to colonial education perspectives, Christian mission aspects, and Saami language conditions. In addition to accounting for ABC-books, catechisms, hymnals and Bible translations, I will pay special attention to the chap books of exemplary narratives directed to a nineteenth-century Saami readership, as well as the reader prepared for the Saami boarding school of 1913.

Colonial education

Colonial powers have often used a restricted curriculum to inculcate knowledge, values and attitudes deemed necessary to controlling the colonised. Usually, instruction was limited to elementary skills like reading, writing and arithmetic, sometimes supplemented with basic vocational training. Virtues like order, precision, punctuality and obedience were instilled to make the students meet the demands of colonial society. Often enough, morality was taught through religious instruction. In my paper, I will demonstrate how the educational systems established in Sápmi by the Church of Sweden, other evangelical missions, and local municipal authorities played an important part in the colonisation of the minds of the Saami population, from the seventeenth century and well into the twentieth century.

The language question

Having started in the early seventeenth century, Saami translation activities took off in the 1740s, when two language conferences took place. The “Southern Saami Book Language” was created, which soon enough was modified to include more traits of the northern Saami dialects. However, in the northernmost area, the Torne Laplands, this modified version of the Southern Saami Book Language was neither understood nor used. Instead, the Saami were taught in the Finnish language, which dominated among the settlers in the area. In my paper, I will discuss what effect the use of Finnish-language educational media had on the level of Saami skills and knowledge.

From Christian missions to evolutionary ideas

Attempts at Christianizing the Saami were made already in the Middle Ages, but it was not until the seventeenth century that the missionary efforts intensified. Extant Saami religious rites such as the use of ceremonial drums and places of sacrifice motivated new initiatives such as visitations and examinations by the Governor of Västerbotten County and the Bishop of Härnösand Diocese in the 1680s. Initiated by a parliamentary decision in 1723, the Skjyttian school founded in Lycksele in 1632 was supplemented by Saami boarding schools in all the parishes of Sápmi. From the 1740s, itinerant teachers reached the children of the most remote areas. During the course of the nineteenth century, the state-supported and church-run school system was gradually replaced by missionary schools set up by various missions, primarily the Swedish Mission Society, but in the northernmost region, the Apostolic Lutheran Church founded a schooling system of their own. These schools continued to exist when municipal authorities developed an elementary school system in Sápmi.

However, in 1913 a state-supported boarding school system was established. Aimed at preserving the cultural identity of the migrating reindeer-herding Saami, this “Cot School System” provided the usual restricted curriculum, this time in Swedish though. Only by keeping the Saami population to their traditional trade and lifestyle, they would survive as a nation, the commonly held view was. In my paper I will analyse the contents of the reader produced specifically for this school system. In what way did this reader reflect Saami culture, and to what extent did it represent a restricted colonial curriculum?

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**The didactical construction of Swiss children's bibles in the first half of the 19th century:
A pedagogical analysis focussing the perception of the child**

Children's bibles are a forgotten source in historical research on education, although they have been used in schools and families for centuries. Children's bibles do not only tell the stories of the Holy Bible, which could be considered as being a field for theological research, but they also teach moral and general knowledge, which makes them interesting for a more pedagogical or didactical approach. The didactical construction of a children's bible – the selected stories, the way of presenting them to the children and the used language – tell something about the author's implicit perception of the child.

The situation in Switzerland with the numerous cantons, which are either catholic, protestant or half protestant half catholic, leads to the question whether there is something like a cantonal perception of the child or at least a confessional different perception to be discovered. That's why my dissertation focuses on children's bibles that were used in schools of exemplary cantons between 1800 and 1850. My presentation will give an overview of the results in my dissertation, including some insights in selected bible stories like “the fall of man”, “Sodom and Gomorrha”, “David and Bathseba” or the “Sufferings of Jesus Christ” to show how differently these stories were written. Topics like violence, sexuality, moral, sin, the justifying of a punishing God, the way of treating wonders or the implementation of scientific knowledge in children's bibles will be pointed out to extract the implicit perception of the child. It will be my aim to show some general tendencies concerning the change of this perception within the analyzed time-span as well as to show and explain some cantonal and confessional differences.

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Teaching the Holocaust beyond curricular guidelines

In contrast to clearly defined school subjects such as arithmetic or French and in contrast to unquestioned elements of the individual school subjects such as the rule of three or the subjunctive some curricular contents are less established. This low level of establishment can be seen in either the complete lack of official teaching materials such as textbooks or in the marginalization of these topics within these teaching materials.

My paper deals with one (tragic) event in recent history that has had a hard time getting integrated into the ‘normal’ curriculum: the Holocaust education. Up to very recent years the Luxembourgian schools did not explicitly focus on the extermination of the European Jews. Accordingly, the Holocaust was no topic within national textbooks in history nor did any further official teaching materials exist. Only after 2000 the opportunity of visiting a concentration camp is mentioned in the curriculum, not taking into account the distinction between a concentration and an extermination camp.

The gap between the growing consciousness about the Holocaust in the 1970’s and the international Holocaust education movement – beginning 1998 with the foundation of the „Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, remembrance, and research“ (ITF) – and the lack of teaching materials at schools raises the question of how teachers dealt with the situation. The aim of this paper is to show which teaching materials were developed beyond the classic one’s like the schoolbooks; the so-called alternative teaching materials like scholarly resources on the “Holocaust” such as films, DVD’s, working sheets, websites, teaching guides edited by the European Union and others, visits to museums and/or extermination camps, survivor testimony etc. Based on a categorisation of the existing teaching material its using in Luxembourg and France is analysed.

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Transgressing boundaries of citizenship. Constructions of active pupils in School Radio broadcasts in Sweden in the 1930s

In Scandinavian countries and Britain, special departments for school radio programs were organized in the late 1920s or early 1930s. In general these programs were in line with the overall curriculum. However, in Sweden the new subject citizenship, was given a particularly radical formulation in the school programs. This meant that children who listened to educational programs on the radio, discussed the programs, and did assignments on them, encountered views of society that differed from prevailing traditional middle-class representations. The article focuses on the communicative practices children and adults participated in. Different conversational strategies related to different contemporary pedagogical ideals, and they positioned children as more or less autonomous. I want to suggest that the highly politicized, but non-commercial public school broadcasts gave children voice as competent and active citizens in new ways – especially in programs produced by female teachers. In particular ways, these programs transgressed traditional boundaries on notions of childhood, gender, education and citizenship.

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Instruction and Modern Technology: The Emergence of the Educational Film in the Interwar Period

Textbooks were introduced into the lower secondary school in the course of the 19th century and replaced simple reading books. Since then they have been the main instructional tool up to the present. However, the introduction of new teaching materials frequently led to discussions about the way in which these materials would modernize or not modernize instruction. The history of educational media shows that new teaching and learning aids have consistently been developed in the wake of technical inventions and innovations, and that, although their introduction has led to controversy, they have generally been rapidly adopted. My presentation will discuss the emergence of the educational film in the interwar period. Taking the example of Germany I will sketch the technological development, the debates within the teaching community, and the institutional ways in which the new technology spread within Europe. This will be based on three hypotheses:

1. The introduction of film as a novel medium resulted primarily from new technical inventions and a new form of popular culture;
2. Educational films –as did textbooks – were subjected to inherent state control;
3. Educational films were developed and implemented internationally.

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The Technocratic Momentum after 1945, the Development of Teaching Machines and the Sobering Results

The development of the Atomic Bomb in the Manhattan Project and the Radio Detection and Ranging (Radar) at MIT during the Second World War convinced American stakeholders that fundamental problems are to be solved by interdisciplinary teams, including experts from different academic sciences trying to find solutions for military, social, or economic problems defined by politicians. In the 1950's this technocratic model was applied to the education system, introducing centralized experts, standards, standardized tests and the focus on sciences and mathematics. Along the cultural logic of this model, that is supported since the 1960's by the OECD, new teaching tools were developed, first as idea of a Memory Extender (Memex) as early as in 1945 by Vannevar Bush, the former coordinator of the activities of over six thousand American scientists in the application of science to warfare during the Second World War. Against this background the idea of programmed instruction arose in the 1950's, with Burrhus Frederic Skinner as most prominent initiator, developing mechanical teaching machines whose purpose was to administer a curriculum of programmed instruction. It contained sets of questions, and a mechanism through which the learner could respond to each question. Delivering a correct answer, the learner would be rewarded and thus stimulated. However, in contrast to educational policy the technocratic momentum sobered in classroom instruction after it had shown sobering results, most recently in the expensive language laboratories in the 1980s.