

Challenging national boundaries in the history of education

An outline of the journal «Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education» (IJHE)

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ABSTRACT: The journal «Bildungsgeschichte / International Journal for the Historiography of Education» is a bilingual forum (German and English) that aims to provide for, strengthen, and further develop both meta-theoretical and specific-topic discussions. At the meta-theoretical level, the journal promotes the de-nationalization of research and its central research questions, calls into question both «great theories» of history and epochalizations, and pursues the combination of historical and comparative research approaches in the field of education. At the specific content level, it focuses on the rise and development of

the school system; nationalization and internationalization of education policy; history of science, history of education, and history of theory since the Renaissance; and issues in historiography.

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: Periodical; History of Education; Research Method; Scientific Research; International Studies; XXI Century.

The journal «Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education» (IJHE) is a double blind peer reviewed, international, and bilingual journal dedicated to the history and the historiography of education, aiming thus at both substantive material studies and methodological and epistemological reflections. It furthermore deliberately initiates innovation in the field by addressing controversial topics and by offering a *Carte Blanche* to renowned scholars.

Initially, the IJHE started twenty years ago in 1995 under the name «*Neue Pestalozzi-Blätter*» [*New Pestalozzi-Papers*]¹, renaming itself in 2001 as «*Zeitschrift für pädagogische Historiographie*» [*Journal for the Historiography of Education*]². Collaborating from 2011 onward with a new publishing house, Klinkhardt in Bad Heilbrunn, Germany, the editors decided on the current title «Bildungsgeschichte. International Journal for the Historiography of Education» (IJHE), reflecting the bilingual character of the journal (English and German) as well as its international scope³.

During these twenty years of publication, this journal has mirrored the development of thematic features and research trends in the field of the history of education. Among the most recent changes are the increasing challenge of national boundaries in the history of education and the need for theoretical reflection and methodological innovation.

Internationality...

The international orientation of IJHE has a twofold aim. First, the journal presents new knowledge about different national, regional or local histories,

¹ The occasion was the 250 anniversary of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi in 1996; the 'model' were the *Pestalozzi-Blätter* [*Pestalozzi-Papers*] published between 1880 and 1906 by the Pestalozzianum.

² As joint venture between the (meanwhile dissolved) Pestalozzianum Research Institute for the History of Education Zurich and the University of Zurich.

³ In contrast to the predecessors, the current journal is not a venture of institutions but of the (until 2012) three and since 2013 four editors Eckhardt Fuchs, Braunschweig, Rebekka Horlacher, Jürgen Oelkers, both Zurich, and Daniel Tröhler, Luxembourg.

and second it provides a forum where different research methodologies, epistemological systems, and historiographical traditions may be discussed. It is therefore based on the assumption that the histories of education differ in what they mean to be and to do between the different national or cultural traditions, and by that they usually design their research agendas within specific cultural contexts. This means from a historical perspective that once the idea of the importance of history of education had become accepted internationally it became evident that the sameness of the idea turned out to be in fact very different in its actual materialization: The new genre 'history of education' was adapted to the different cultural aspirations of the individual nations.

... as means against national blinders

The term «historiography» in the title refers to these cultural (or national) differences in writing history (of education). Rather than the term «history», «historiography» reflects different epistemological and historiographical systems in the field of history of education. These differences have not been reflected thoroughly by historians of education. School histories, for instance, often follow different cultural or national paradigms for “doing” school history, reflecting culturally dominant perceptions of social order and progress. German histories of schooling were traditionally written in the vertical tension of social exclusion, focusing on strategies of social advancement of the bourgeoisie and the exclusion of the middle and lower classes. A focus like that might reflect the difficulties of Germany with the establishment of a republic with formally equal citizens – a concern that is less likely to be found in the United States, Switzerland, or France. The French and the Swiss historiographies focus much less on vertical tensions between the upper and the lower classes, but rather on ideological tensions on the horizontal level between liberals and conservatives. The US American historiography in turn is different again, where we find a system of reasoning that deals strikingly often with progress and pertinence or resilience. The major focus here is not between upper and lower social classes or the ideological fight between liberals and conservatives, but on how reforms affect the development of the school, or vice versa, how schools affect reform progresses.

The journal will contribute to identifying such academic-cultural or national modes of understanding the history of education and to establish a critical self-reflection and dialogue. The mutual realization of different cultural modes of doing history of education, or even schooling, will enhance the quality of the historiography of history of education.

Innovation and inspiration through controversial discussions

It is a distinct feature of the IJHE to promote discussions on topics relevant to the international development of the history of education. These topics in the journal's section titled «Debate» are suggested by the editors who invite scholars to make a provocative case and have it discussed among experts from around the world in the very same issue of the journal. In contrast to the other articles in the journal, the contributions in this section are not double blind reviewed, because the objective is to provide a free and open space where people can freely contribute their ideas and the 'peer reviewing' is in the form of the dialogues/debates that the submissions in this section trigger. In 2011, for example, experts discussed Lynn Fendler's *Foucault as Teacher Educator*, in 2012 David Labaree's *A Sermon on Educational Research* and Inés Dussel's *The visual turn in educational history: Just another fad, or a serious challenge to historian?* In 2013 the cases in this section included *Homosexuality and Violence as Challenges to Theory and Historiography of Education* (William F. Pinar) and *The Short Timelines of History of Education at Present* (Edwin Keiner). These cases were written by colleagues from the US, Canada, Mexico, UK, Germany and Portugal; the commentators came from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Macao, Netherlands, Scotland, Switzerland, the US, Sweden, and New Zealand.

The upcoming topics in this section will address the challenges of digital humanities to historiography and the question, if and when yes how, education can be shaped without any religious context.

Carte Blanche

International journals have become more and more standardized with regard to structure, citation formats, and length. However, these standardizations have also been criticized as stifling creativity and intellectual innovation, marginalizing seemingly minor events or sources, or helping dominant modes of doing research to become even more dominant. Whereas IJHE advocates the internally accepted academic standards with regards to its articles, it recognizes the danger of excluding cutting edge ideas that could potentially be important for the history of education.

In order to avoid this risk IJHE introduced a section serving as «Carte Blanche» for internationally renowned scholars. In this section scholars are invited to write about whatever arouses their interest. In this sense, Heinz-Elmar Tenorth wrote (2011) about the way in which obituaries in newspapers serve as source for the indication of formation-scenarios after death. He also addressed school camps

or summer camps as an important field of educational experiences, and an area of education research which has often been marginalized. Richard Aldrich, to name another example, suggested Rudyard Kipling's poem *If* (1885/1910) or the Rosetta Stone as sources of historical inquiry in education (2013).

Book reviews

The emphasis on the importance of international discussion is not only reflected in the section «Debate», but also in the book review section. The editors of IJHE are convinced that an international exchange in the history of education must include reviewing books being published in this field. Such a section also serves to introduce new colleagues into the academic community. IJHE places great importance on ensuring that every issue has in average six to seven books reviewed, most of them being published – according to the bilingual character of the journal – either in German or in English.

All together, its special emphasis and innovative structure makes IJHE a unique forum of academic exchange and communication. It initiates international debates, inspires researchers through its provoking topics, promotes epistemological self-reflection, and opens up new perspectives in the field of history of education.

