

# Textbooks and Beyond: Educational Media in Context(s)

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**Abstract** • This article provides an introduction to the aims, methods, and interdisciplinary approach of this new journal, elucidating the traditions of international textbook research and the function of educational media as illuminating sources for various academic disciplines. Textbooks and curricula in particular, which are not only state-approved but also of a highly condensed and selective nature, are obliged to reduce the complexities of the past, present, and future onto a limited number of pages. Particularly in the humanities, which often deal with concepts of identity and portrayals that may be more open to interpretation, textbooks can become the subjects of controversial debate, especially in relation to societal shifts such as globalization and immigration. In this regard, this journal intends to illuminate the situations in which educational media evolve, including their social, cultural, political, and educational contexts. The emergence of new, particularly digital, educational media marks new modes of knowledge production. The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* (JEMMS) invites analyses that reach beyond the printed page and even beyond the institution of the school itself.

**Keywords** • curricula, educational media research, identity construction, knowledge control, knowledge production, knowledge transfer, mutual perceptions, new media, sociology of education, textbooks, textbook research

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Anyone inquiring into the ways and settings in which knowledge is acquired, stored, applied and altered must have an interest in consulting educational media, particularly in textbooks and curricula that are mostly defined and determined by the state. Individual as well as collective knowledge is always a result of a pre-structured societal order and the respective forms produced by various media.<sup>1</sup> Ever since the evolution of the modern school system, textbooks have acted as *privileged* media in this respect. For the state, they have been



the preferred instruments of civic education and national instruction, and for millions of people they have been the first, and often the only, books that they had read and been confronted with. Textbooks are therefore not merely another medium of socio-cultural knowledge among others; they embody an early and also authorized element of “mass media.” Even if they are—as are indeed all other media too—subject to a wealth of influences during the reception process, and no *direct* conclusions can be drawn from them regarding the knowledge, ideas, judgments, or attitudes of individuals, the logics of construction and the contents of textbooks have nevertheless influenced generations of future citizens in one way or another.

Throughout the world, school textbooks provide valuable information as to how cultural knowledge is legitimated, presented, taught, and assessed in schools. Almost everywhere, they are based on state-approved syllabi and curricula. In this regard, they reflect the knowledge and values defined by a given society, and particularly its political elites, as essential and thus suitable for passing on to the next generation. As textbooks tend by necessity to be of a highly selective nature, and are either subjected to official approval procedures or are oriented toward state-regulated examinations in their contents and methods, the knowledge and interpretations they hold appear legitimated and authorized to a particularly large extent. The impression that they do not only transport accurate, secured, and consensually approved knowledge but are also objective and free of judgment, is widespread. To a certain extent, curricula and textbooks appear to carry an official “stamp” promising “the truth.”<sup>2</sup> Even if it really can only be a question of a claim to truth and to general validity, and even if textbook knowledge is the subject of political and cultural discourse in many—particularly democratic—countries, textbooks nevertheless transport specifically authorized information, which in turn can refer to cultural as well as political hegemonies.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, they represent a constantly unique and for many academic questions highly fruitful cross-section of education, academia, the public sphere, and politics.

If we consider the wide distribution of textbooks and the fact that, in principle, they carry the seal of the state, their relevance as instruments of political influence and social steering becomes obvious. Without a doubt, there are great differences in this regard between the various education systems; the spectrum ranges from relatively open systems oriented toward pluralism and discourse to authori-

tative structures in which a small and powerful elite controls and defines education policy. In both cases, they convey the positions of influential groups. In most democratic states, these positions correspond to the values shared by the majority of society, as societal acceptance of a medium is relatively high whenever it corresponds to the current patterns of thought, interpretation, and assessment and adopts their communication structures.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, textbooks select and represent codes and interpretations that are either socially dominant or—in authoritarian states—prescribed “from above.” In the processes of planning, production, and design, as well as in the phases of implementation and reception, they reflect the principal political and cultural ideas and values of their time and social structure, which, in turn, cannot be isolated from the cultural and political—and nowadays economic too—conditions of their conception.<sup>5</sup>

In many societies, textbooks are repeatedly the subject of potentially controversial discourse negotiating the validity of the knowledge they currently contain due to their generally authoritative nature. This is the case for curricula and textbooks of *all* subjects, as the complete spectrum of teaching media is part of our social knowledge system.<sup>6</sup> History, mathematics, or biology textbooks alike all contain selective knowledge with a tendency toward canonization, and they all classify information either as relevant or as dispensable. The definition of “relevant” is never permanently fixed but subject to historical change, depending on the political and cultural conditions under which the definition is formulated. Textbooks are therefore to be generally understood—regardless of discipline—as media that convey and reduce the complexity of social realities in a specific way, thus in turn themselves participating in the construction of social realities. They transport and convey not only pure data or value-neutral information, but also codes containing clues as to what is considered “worth knowing” by societies or their ruling elites, and how this knowledge should be transported. It is a case of “canonized knowledge,”<sup>7</sup> selected, filtered, structured, evaluated, and didactically coded by a variety of players, which always helps us to draw conclusions pertaining to society as a whole, its cultural and social structures, and also its political culture.

History, geography, and social studies books have particularly attracted the interest of researchers, politicians, and the public. These subjects usually focus on the rather more sensitive issues of collective identities and serve as basic identification tools pertaining to belonging and not-belonging.<sup>8</sup> They not only convey representations of

specific regions, nations, or groups; they also offer authoritative interpretations of the past, the present, and the future of a given society, serving as both product and provider of a specific memory culture.<sup>9</sup> It is through these textbooks in particular that societies transmit ideas of citizenship, of values, and of norms that seem to be of validity at least for the nation or the group they are supposed to legitimize and stabilize. They serve almost every state as central resources of identity construction via knowledge that is—as this first issue of our new journal demonstrates—still primarily structured by the *nation-state*, despite a wealth of tendencies toward globalization. The choices made by the authors of social studies and history textbooks concerning what to include and what to omit, or what to emphasize and what to leave unelaborated, always reflect the ways in which the (national) past is supposed to be remembered and connected to the present. They are, therefore, never completely free of political and ideological considerations. They repeatedly provoke the question as to whose history and whose future should be presented, and in what way. In this respect, they act as important instruments of state remembrance policy and central sites of remembrance for individual societies.<sup>10</sup> It is, therefore, hardly surprising that textbooks provide “battlegrounds” on which questions of interpretative power and cultural authority and, ultimately, the right to define and pass on legitimate knowledge, are negotiated and fought for. Textbooks are especially likely to provoke severe political conflicts in places where doubt has been cast on the national self-image, either externally or through violent domestic conflicts. At the same time, however, they may reflect such conflicts, in some cases even becoming media of conflict control.<sup>11</sup>

## Traditions of International Textbook Research

“Textbook Research” is rather more a complex cross-section than a homogenous, clearly distinguishable area of research. The spectrum of disciplines that approach the textbook with differing, yet often overlapping questions ranges from the humanities, such as history, area studies, and linguistics through social sciences, education, social anthropology, media sciences, religious studies, political sciences, and psychology to the natural sciences such as geography, mathematics, and biology. From a historical as well as contemporary perspective, textbook research makes a substantial contribution to studies on societal knowledge, its contents and structures, its transience and

suitability for being passed on to the next generation. It focuses on knowledge shared at a particular time by a larger group of people and passed on to the next generation with some continuity as well as on knowledge and interpretations that are particularly controversial within a given society.<sup>12</sup>

The potential of textbooks to divide peoples and induce conflicts, and to inspire peace and empathy, is particularly relevant to the branch of textbook research that derived from textbook revision activities that began in the 1920s and early 1930s, and which were further developed after World War II. Scholars working in this area have especially focused on the various perceptions, stereotypes, and conflicts, and the resulting concepts of the enemy that have evolved between different countries and cultures. The textbook, as an instrument of “intellectual armor” and nationalistic mobilization, has been at the focus of such research, which analyzes and revises any contents that may hinder international understanding and/or encourage nationalistic or chauvinistic attitudes.<sup>13</sup> Traditional textbook research has, however, not only dealt academically with the cross-sections of academia, education, politics, and public life; it has also taken an active part in these spheres. It has not only analyzed the production of concepts of the enemy through public instruction; it has—with the support of international non-governmental organizations—also contributed in practice to minimizing mistakes, distortions, and prejudices.<sup>14</sup> These efforts and their successes are documented by the activities of several bilateral textbook commissions, some of which still exist today. German academics and institutions have been deeply committed to such undertakings and with good reason. In view of the particularly burdened national past and the ambivalent relationship that the Germans have experienced with their own nation as a result of this past, they have been specifically motivated—and also particularly credible—whenever it has come to the revision of nationalistic interpretations of history. This has earned them—and indeed traditional textbook research as a whole—a great deal of respect on an international level.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, it has provoked the objection that this kind of research was—or so it has been claimed—born “of the spirit of politics and the normative postulations of enlightenment” and thus founded on politics rather than on academia.<sup>16</sup> And one of the central aims of textbook *revision* was indeed to “encourage an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the other nations and to bring children up to be free from prejudice and willing to cooperate peacefully, and to reduce ... conflict potential between nations.”<sup>17</sup>

Textbook *research* has been struggling for a new definition of its basic concept as well as of its methodological approaches for a long time. In 1979 Karl-Ernst Jeismann, founding director of the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, initiated the journal *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research*, pointing out two desiderata in his introductory essay to the first issue. On the one hand, he claims that early international textbook research took as its starting point the (no longer tenable) assumption that textbook texts have a direct and constant effect on the ideas and behavior of pupils, and, on the other hand, that it pursued—focused on purely national points of reference—primarily defensive goals such as the revelation and correction of mistakes, distortions, concepts of the enemy, and stereotypes. Jeismann saw the future of international textbook research in opening up the area in several ways, including the analysis of the social, didactic, and curricular contexts in which textbook contents are conveyed, and questions of their reception. He equally focused on even stronger interdisciplinary cooperation and consideration of transnational dimensions;<sup>18</sup> that is, challenges to research that remain equally relevant today.

With this new journal, the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, we wish to continue the traditions established during the thirty years of *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research*. At the same time, however, we wish to inspire new research questions and encourage approaches that reach beyond established concepts, thus opening up international textbook research to fresh perspectives and new impulses. If we look back on the established tradition, we find that since 1979, 540 authors from fifty countries have published more than 400 essays and textbook analyses alongside well over 200 forum contributions and documentaries in the Georg Eckert Institute's journal *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research*.<sup>19</sup> The largest group of authors comprises historians, geographers (including education experts), researchers in social studies and education science, and linguists. The journal has been oriented toward authors and readers with a particular interest in issues of stereotypes, concepts of the enemy, identity patterns and corresponding underlying assumptions in textbook passages, the function of textbooks in the process of nation-building and the creation of social cohesion through knowledge production. From a methodological point of view, content analyses of textbook passages, and later of images, have tended to dominate. Twenty-seven percent of all contributions have dealt with topics particularly relevant to Ger-

many, 28 percent with topics pertaining to one or more European countries, 25 percent with the textbooks of non-European countries, 16 percent with global, and 4 percent with Europe-wide perspectives. The textbook has remained the most significant medium for the journal throughout its thirty years of existence.<sup>20</sup> Essentially, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* has been an important and reliable forum of academic exchange for many parties. Its columns have, however, only given limited space to issues of social reality, which have been subject to change due to globalization and the information revolution. Yet a high level of internationality among the authors and readership, which was certainly the case for *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research*,<sup>21</sup> a wide range of academic disciplines and regions subject to study, the diversity of educational media relevant to the institution of the school, and the plurality of theories and methods are of an absolutely defining nature for modern research on educational media as envisaged by the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*; these elements will be of high significance in constituting the profile of this journal.

## **Textbook (Research) and Beyond**

The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* will allocate a central position to research analyzing legitimacy, identification, and argumentation structures and international comparative portrayals of the function of these issues in textbooks. Other approaches of interest will include curriculum research, which is well established on an international level; systematic textbook research, which focuses on principles of construction; language and the design of textbooks as well as the implementation and reception of educational media in the classroom from the perspectives of education science, cultural studies, or sociology, which use textbooks and other educational media as sources from which to draw conclusions regarding the stability and changeability of social structures, cultural norms, or political preferences.

The journal will, therefore, adopt the central threads of international textbook research, while at the same time moving beyond them and their traditional subject of study. Up until now, many textbook studies have been conceptually limited to quantitative approaches (counting text passages and images on specific topics), and to qualitative content analyses. Research on the social constructions inherent in textbook representations is rather rare. Even rarer, how-

ever, are comparative context analyses that not only justify the decision to include or omit certain aspects; they also seek to explain *why* certain points are highlighted or marginalized. Which cultural, historical, social, political, or geographical factors are of importance? Who influences the development of curricula and textbooks, and by which means and which political, cultural, or economic resources? What is prescribed in curricula and which overarching goals are defined? Which facts and contexts are excluded and what does this tell us about the society and powers who enjoy or have gained influence on textbook representations? What dynamics are to be found in the development of textbooks? On which social and cultural patterns is the construction of curricula based? How is the selected knowledge presented, which didactic principles are given preference (and with which intention?) and to what extent do these correspond with the social context they affect?

In reference to Foucault's social constructivism or even Pierre Bourdieu's "Theory of Action," for instance, we are confronted here with conflicts of definition and the modes in which these conflicts take shape, with their participants struggling for resources, with interests and motives, with hegemonies, power relations, and opportunities for influence. In short, we are confronted with questions pertaining to the social, economic, cultural, political, and religious *contexts* of textbook production and textbook use.<sup>22</sup> The new journal will be open to such questions, theories, methods, and debates, as well as to approaches provided by the sociology of education or psychology, particularly research on stereotypes and prejudice, in relation to the construction and effects of textbook contents and their role in the process of citizenship or human rights education.

The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* will also widen the horizons of textbook research in other ways. The journal places the textbook into the context of the whole spectrum of educational media relevant to the school as well as within the frame of reference of the society in which they are implemented. One need not necessarily go so far as Staffan Selander, who perceives national curricula and textbooks as (mere) designs for learning that were (only) suitable for the early industrial age, and who ascertains for the post-industrialized era of globalization and multiculturalism a turning to individual curricula and new digital learning resources<sup>23</sup> in order to recognize that textbooks are only *one*—albeit now as always a central one—source of information in the classroom and only *one* resource for identity constructions among many others. Extending the research interest to other

educational media relevant to the school corresponds to the diversifying of the discursive and medial arenas in which the sovereignty of interpretation and the power of definition are struggled for today, for it is through such developments that the social space and the function of textbook knowledge becomes subject to change. By no means is it only textbooks; numerous other media also convey the societal ideas and interpretations of the self or the respective "other." Monuments, memorials, and museums, for instance, are equally rich in meaning and highly symbolic transmitters of knowledge and representations, often bearing the stamp of state authority. Other media such as the press, film, the belles lettres and non-fiction volumes, and the Internet or video games, may not convey officially legitimated knowledge, yet they are equally influential in inspiring meaning and, above all, they interact in a variety of ways with traditional teaching media.

Indeed, recent studies have shown that the textbook remains the preferred teaching medium in most countries of the world, and that diverse attempts to work with New Media in the classroom have not (yet) nearly achieved the success expected by the makers of education policy. The lack of technical equipment suffered by many schools even in highly developed industrial nations, the persistence of teachers, and the absence of didactic concepts appropriate to the use of new or mixed media in more or less traditional teaching environments, are not to be underestimated in this respect.<sup>24</sup> Regardless of this, however, pupils and teachers alike are subjected to the most diverse of influences when *outside* of the school. The representations of reality provided by textbooks must always—and today even more so than ever before—retain the upper hand in the cacophony of rival suggestions as to how pupils should see the world. Textbook knowledge is increasingly diffracted, reinforced, recoded, and neutralized by other media and actors. Research must challenge this intermediary character of the textbook and indeed with a greater force and courage than it has demonstrated up until now.<sup>25</sup> It would appear worthwhile, for example, to compare the specific construction logic inherent in various types of educational media, to analyze the points at which they conflict or converge and to provide explanations as to how various educational media and entities involved in the process interact or compete with one another. The role played by textbooks in the process of knowledge production and adaptation can thus be assessed in comparison with other media.

This can hardly, however, be achieved with the traditional methods of textbook research alone. Such an undertaking demands a (theoret-

ical) openness toward innovation and interdisciplinary approaches. The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* therefore aims toward clearly extending the disciplines and research perspectives of textbook research, thus opening up topic areas, including those with only an indirect relevance for research on educational media. This includes—to name only a few—theories and issues of media studies; questions of memory and memory cultures; research on (historical or spatial) awareness and processing images; and empirical studies on reading skills, text comprehension, and the reception of the thematic contents.

All this is ultimately connected to the attempt to provide or allow for answers to *current* challenges such as globalization, the shaping of multiethnic and multicultural societies, or the transition into the information age, challenges that fundamentally alter our understanding of knowledge, learning, and sense making.<sup>26</sup> What, for instance, does the increasing interaction in young people's use of the media mean for school learning processes and what do growing global networks mean for processes of identity construction?<sup>27</sup> Students today grow up with new technologies and new media.<sup>28</sup> And yet we still only know very little about changes in the relationship between the educational medium, teacher and the pupil, and in the traditional "information flow," when processes of adaptation are more a result of independent action than of mere reception. The same goes for organization principles and structures of knowledge featured on the Internet. If we set aside exceptions such as China, it is not state approval agencies but rather search engines that—primarily following algorithmic criteria and logic rarely defined by content—decide which information is *found*, thus considerably influencing what is taken to be "worth knowing" and what is not. One thing is clear: the information society has produced new knowledge systems that are constituted in interdisciplinary, often anonymous, transnational and state-free discourse contexts, and it is considerably more difficult to look *behind* these media than it is to look behind textbooks in order to ascertain which knowledge is structured and conveyed in which way, how hegemonic structures and social discursive knowledge achieve validity, how or with what level of sustainability this new knowledge is accepted, and what the knock-on effect may be on the (nation-)state structures imposed on school classroom knowledge.

In view of this, research must first reach beyond the textbook in the narrow sense and perceive it as part of a general media system that lends structure to textbook knowledge, at the same time influ-

encing its reception. In this context, we find ourselves confronted by one question in particular: How are the traditional functions of educational media and their effects in school-relevant contexts changing as a result of new tendencies in information systems and knowledge cultures, and what consequences will this have for the formation and transformation of knowledge?<sup>29</sup>

Second, it appears essential to lend historical depth to research within the field; that is, to research widely the history of various educational media and the strategies of knowledge transfer that shape it. Historical research on educational media that deals with the genesis of knowledge and education cultures does not only serve to provide historical certainty within this research area; it also allows for the location of current processes within a long-term perspective, thus shifting continuities and ruptures in the production, usage, and effects of educational media into the limelight. The spectrum here ranges—to name only a few examples—from primers and textbooks through other print media such as catechisms, published sermons, reference volumes or newspapers, through media related to cultures of memory, such as museums, exhibitions, and monuments to electronic media such as film and television, which in recent times have also become relevant for the school classroom.

Third, research on educational media that uses comparative approaches to analyze patterns of identity construction and the resulting diversity and competition between interpretation patterns must confront the new tension between the national and the transnational. This first issue of our new journal also deals with this problem. The challenges of globalization for education and instruction are approached (in Hanna Schissler's article), as are ubiquitous national conflict situations (in the articles by Thomas Bender and Mauricio Tenorio Trillo). While the European Union is undertaking a kind of post-modern "nation-building," and spreading supranational identity concepts for this purpose, at the same time and also in Europe, the national is once again being "reinvented" in accordance with the nineteenth-century model (cf. Charles Ingrao's contribution in this issue). Apparently unstoppable homogenizing tendencies are discernable on the one side; on the other side, national, religious, or ethnic references that have hitherto remained stable and relatively enclosed, are diffusing. Within this context, traditional images of the self and the "other" are reinforced because they allow for self-assurance and orientation; at the same time, however, many certainties, terms, and points of reference begin to waver. The consequences of these complex and, indeed, am-

bivalent processes for conceiving and designing educational media are likely to be one area of great interest to research on educational media over the next few years.

### **The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* and Contexts**

*Nomen est omen:* The title of the new journal paves the way for its program. As a platform for the new field of educational media research, the journal situates this field in various contexts, namely in social, cultural, political, educational, economical, and academic environments, in which educational media are produced, distributed, and understood. Although international specialist organizations producing academic publications with their own focus topics have existed for a long while,<sup>30</sup> these mostly involve academics who decidedly see themselves as “textbook researchers” or as education scientists, whereas the debates beyond this “subject community” still frequently disintegrate into subject- or region-specific public spheres. The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* is oriented toward breaking boundaries, and establishing cooperation with regard to its subjects of study as well as to its theoretical concepts. The journal wishes to provide a forum for the young, international and multidisciplinary area of educational media, which will transcend the hitherto closed circles of discourse, thus adopting new impulses from—and in turn proving fruitful to—neighboring disciplines such as media or communication sciences, psychology or perhaps even cognitive science.

There is no question that social practices and cultural contexts are written between the lines of medially conveyed knowledge, and that, at times, this knowledge is charged with new meaning. Certainly, socio-cultural knowledge can under some circumstances have an influence on societal structures, yet generally it is the contexts that define and determine relevant knowledge.<sup>31</sup> Research must, therefore, turn its attention to the societal, historical, and communicative contexts of the knowledge represented in and handed down via textbooks and other educational media, and analyze the central objects, structures, and functions of this societal knowledge, the social mechanisms of the process of passing on knowledge to the next generation, and the concrete as well as symbolic forms of its portrayal. With reference to Foucault’s “archeology of knowledge,” research on educational media can reveal historically and socially defined patterns of thought and interpretation by opening up the contexts of societal

knowledge production. This can lead to certain concepts and norms becoming dominant while others disappear from public awareness. Discursive knowledge that is channeled into textbooks and then reflected by them is determined by a frame of reference that is fractured in many places. Its corner points, however, include the following.<sup>32</sup>

### ***The Social Context***

Many scholars claim that it is the context of textbook *production* and textbook *use* that gives the text and the contents real meaning. In doing so, the focus is placed on the issue suggested at the beginning, the question as to which social interest groups (hope to) gain influence over the design of educational media and how and which do not. What does this mean for the inclusion and exclusion of certain contents, representations, and spatial references? Is, for instance, a national or a nationalistic history narrated, or is the national narrative rendered more fluid? Do certain groups insist on harmonizing and homogenizing, or do they demand pluralist approaches? Do the textbooks filter and ignore or rather encourage different interpretations? To what extent do educational media demonstrate who possesses social influence and representational rights, and who is fighting for such? Of course, earlier research has also sharpened our awareness of competing interest groups, each seeking a dominant voice in constructing what counts as popular memory.<sup>33</sup> They have, however, only given little consideration to the fact that, in this process, different discourses are constantly being established, and that a simple top-down model—i.e., from the government straight to the classroom—would be an analytical framework for authoritarian systems at best. In more open societies, however, we encounter extremely delicate processes of negotiation that differ greatly from one country to the next in terms of their (often obstinate) participants such as politicians and publicists, parliamentarians and pressure groups, industrial representatives and social activists, textbook authors and textbook publishing houses, parents and peer groups, pupils and teachers.

### ***The Cultural Context***

If we are interested in comparative approaches—and the journal will encourage comparisons in particular—cultural settings and national

or regional cultures of learning are as important as the content and the structure of textbooks and other educational media. Concepts of knowledge vary across time and regions; there are major differences from state to state concerning ideas as to how knowledge should be researched, taught, or learned. The same is true for specific forms of educational media, which are also the products of a specific socio-cultural context. The design of educational media strongly influences the way in which students conceive knowledge, how they develop skills and competences, and how they approach problems. At the present time, we know only little about how and why designs of learning and textbook use vary dramatically between different cultural and national settings. Who is involved and who or what influences the process of conveying knowledge and thus shaping meaning?

### ***The Political Context***

If we attempt to analytically categorize the contexts in which textbooks and educational media can be documented, our attention is first called to questions of direct political influence.<sup>34</sup> Here, researchers are interested in interdependencies between resources of power on the one hand, and the selection and implementation of knowledge on the other hand. Mechanisms of state or political control over knowledge conveyed by the school as well as open and covert hegemonies and a variety of structural factors all influence the production of school textbooks. Legal framework conditions vary greatly from one country to the next, and have an enormous influence on textbook production.

### ***The Educational Context***

Contexts are not only of interest in relation to the evolution of educational media but also in terms of their practical relevance. We still only know little about which media are utilized in the school classroom to what effect, both in international comparison and in many national settings. We must, however, bear in mind that teachers who constantly give voice to their own attitudes and values in their classes thus change the meaning of information, including the information implemented in various educational media. Teachers consider what is written in the textbook to be either important or of no consequence; they either confirm or fracture the basis laid down by a given educa-

tional medium. Textbook research has only conducted few studies on how this happens, how the teachers select, (re)define, and (re)interpret medially conveyed knowledge; the same applies to the influence enjoyed by entities and media outside of the school.<sup>35</sup> It is, therefore, our hope that essays published in the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* will provide answers to the question as to how and whether discourse structures in textbooks and mass media either differ or remain constant. Which intermedial logic is to be found in the burning glass of educational media in general and textbooks in particular?<sup>36</sup>

### **The Economic Context**

Educational media in general and textbooks in particular are also subject to the *economical logic* of the market. There are enormous differences in this regard from one country to the next, and these have a long-term effect on learning and education cultures. If we consider, for instance, that in countries with a free textbook market the idea of permanently updating textbooks is highly unattractive from an economical point of view, it becomes clear that the often somewhat delayed incorporation of new research tendencies is a profit-making issue, and not a question of the logic inherent in the cultural and political discourse. Textbook knowledge is equally subject to a market-determined filter.<sup>37</sup> In systems in which the textbook market is regulated purely by the state, however, the production of textbooks follows a different logic, one that is based on politics rather than on economics.

### **Conclusion**

The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* wishes to raise awareness of these and further contexts; some of them are illuminated by this issue, which is edited by Hanna Schissler (Braunschweig). In this respect, the first issue is suggestive of the focus for this new journal: diversity in its topics, a wide range of disciplines, embracing theory, plurality of method, and internationality. The journal is open to all contributions reflecting on educational media, whether they are oriented toward sociology, quantitative and qualitative empiricism, from the media sciences, history or from the field of discourse analysis. There is doubtless a particular interest in theoretically founded and internationally comparative research on patterns of in-

terpretation and identity constructions that are of a controversial nature, and which become the objects of societal negotiation processes. The journal is equally interested in studies on the interrelationship of form, content, and meaning; of power, hegemonies, positions, and knowledge, between structure and agency, between subject and object, between different states as well as between states and civil societies. The *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* is, however, most interested in all scholars who will participate in a critical discussion of educational media in contexts beyond disciplinary borders. With this decidedly multidisciplinary and broad vision, the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* intends to contribute toward the development of research on educational media, a research area that is only just evolving and thus entails particular academic potential. Adopting and examining this potential will be the principal aim of this journal, which will appear bi-annually and involve a double-blind peer review procedure.

*Translated by Wendy Anne Kopisch*

## Notes

1. Fundamental contributions from frequently differing theoretical perspectives are offered by Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge, 1991) and *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980); Jürgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (London: Heinemann, 1979); Michael A. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Micheal A. Apple and Linda K. Christian-Smith, eds., *The Politics of the Textbook* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
2. Suzanne De Castell, Allan Luke, and Carmen Luke, "Beyond Criticism: The Authority of the School Textbook," in Suzanne De Castell, Allan Luke, and Carmen Luke, eds., *Language, Authority and Criticism: Readings on the School Textbook* (London and New York: Falmer Press, 1989), 245–60.
3. Stuart J. Foster and Keith A. Crawford, *What Shall We Tell the Children? International Perspectives on School History Textbooks* (Greenwich, CT: IAP, 2006); Thomas Höhne, *Schulbuchwissen. Umrisse einer Wissens- und Medientheorie des Schulbuchs* (Frankfurt/M: Fachbereich Erziehungswissenschaft der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, 2003); Michael W. Apple, *Official Knowledge: Democratic Knowledge in a Conservative Age* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

4. Ludwik Fleck, *Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp [1935] 1980); Claudia Fraas, "Begriffe—Konzepte—kulturelles Gedächtnis. Ansätze zur Beschreibung kollektiver Wissenssysteme," in Horst Dieter Schlosser, ed., *Sprache und Kultur* (Frankfurt/M.: Lang, 2000), 31–45.
5. Foster and Crawford, *What Shall We Tell the Children?*, 1.
6. For a general orientation, see Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966); Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi, *Die Organisation des Wissens* (Frankfurt/M. and New York: Campus, 1997); Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1991); Max Scheler, *Versuche zu einer Soziologie des Wissens* (München and Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1924), 1–146.
7. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, eds., *Kanon und Zensur. Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation* (München: Fink, 1987), 15.
8. William Edward Marsden, *The School Textbook. Geography, History, and Social Studies* (London: Woburn Press, 2001); Jason Nicholls, ed., *School Textbooks Across Cultures. International Debates and Perspectives* (Oxford: Symposium Books, 2006); Foster and Crawford, eds., *What Shall We Tell the Children?*; Wolfgang Höpken, "History Textbooks in Post-War and Post-Conflict Societies: Preconditions and Experiences in Comparative Perspective," in Steffi Richter, ed., *Contested Views of a Common Past: Revisions of History in Contemporary Asia* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2008), 373–96. See also the special issue on textbooks and textbook research of the *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2003).
9. Stuart Foster, "Whose History? Portrayal of Immigrant Groups in U.S. History Textbooks, 1800–Present," in Foster and Crawford, *What Shall We Tell the Children?*, 156.
10. Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 4; Hanna Schissler and Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, eds., *The Nation, Europe, and the World. Textbooks and Curricula in Transition* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).
11. Philip G. Altbach "The Unchanging Variable: Textbooks in Comparative Perspectives," in Philip G. Altbach et al., eds., *Textbooks in American Society. Politics, Policy, and Pedagogy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 237–54; Falk Pingel, "Can Truth Be Negotiated? History Textbook Revision as a Means of Reconciliation," *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 617 (2008): 181–98; Hein and Selden, *Censoring History*.

12. Theoretical and methodological issues of textbook research have only rarely been discussed up until now. Nicholls, for instance, describes textbook research as “essentially under-theorised” (see Jason Nicholls, “The Philosophical Underpinnings of School Textbook Research,” *Paradigm* 3, no. 1 [2005]: 24–35); Peter Weinbrenner, “Methodology of Textbook Analysis Used to Date,” in Hilary Bourdillon, ed., *History and Social Studies—Methodologies of Textbook Analysis* (Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1992), 21–34; David Scott and Robin Usher, *Researching Education—Data, Methods and Theory in Educational Inquiry* (London: Castel, 1999).
13. Eckhardt Fuchs, “Internationale Schulbuch- und Curriculumrevision in historischer Perspektive,” in Eva Matthes and Carsten Heinze, eds., *Das Schulbuch zwischen Lehrplan und Unterrichtspraxis* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2005), 193–210; Falk Pingel, *Unesco Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision* (Hanover: Hahn, 1999).
14. Pingel, *Unesco Guidebook*; Karl-Ernst Jeismann, “Internationale Schulbuchforschung. Aufgaben und Probleme,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 1 no 1(1979): 7–22.
15. The acceptance of the Franco-German history textbook—*Histoire/Geschichte* vol. 3: *Europa und die Welt seit 1945* (Stuttgart: Klett, 2006); *Histoire/Geschichte* vol. 2: *Europa und die Welt vom Wiener Kongress bis 1945* (Stuttgart: Klett, 2008) developed jointly by previous “arch enemies,” has once again emphasized this point. Nevertheless, textbook research found itself confronted by new challenges and conflict situations in the past two decades, to which the “German model” of bilateral textbook commissions is no longer a sufficient response (Pingel, “Can Truth Be Negotiated?”).
16. Nicholls, “The Philosophical Underpinnings,” 24; Höhne, *Schulbuchwissen*, 21.
17. Jeismann, “Internationale Schulbuchforschung,” 11.
18. In 1995, he elaborated that—in Europe at least—it was no longer primarily a case of “preventing the will to war by dissolving concepts of the enemy, but rather of conveying a shared will to the future that reaches beyond national identities” (Ursula A. J. Becher, “Perspektiven der internationalen Schulbuchforschung—ein Gespräch mit Karl-Ernst Jeismann,” *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 17, no. 1 [1995]: 63).
19. Thanks to Lars Müller, Michael Riemann, and Monika Wrobel for their statistical analysis.
20. More than half of the essays have focused on textbooks, followed by articles on non-specific media on general questions of education. Four percent of all essays dealt with new media and mass media, and only 1 percent with other educational media such as museums or memorials.
21. Although the journal *International Textbook Research* was oriented toward an international readership, over 60 percent of the authors came from Germany. The largest non-German groups represented were the United

- States (38), Great Britain (31), France (16), Canada (13), Switzerland (10), Russia (9), and the Netherlands (9).
22. Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason—on the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); idem, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London and Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977); Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*. See also Nicholls, “The Philosophical Underpinnings,” and idem, “Methods in School Textbook Research,” *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research* 3 (2003) <http://www.centres.ex.ac.uk/historyresource/journal6/6contents.htm>, (accessed 10 April 2008), 2.
  23. Staffan Selander, “Designs of Learning and the Formation and Transformation of Knowledge in an Era of Globalization,” *Studies in Philosophy and Education* (2007), [www.springerlink.com/index/22p5w47148135242.pdf](http://www.springerlink.com/index/22p5w47148135242.pdf) (accessed 2 June 2008), 10.
  24. Even Selander (2007), who is convinced that digital media demand completely new designs for learning, must admit that, in Sweden, where there are many computerized schools, “long and strong traditions still dominate much school work.”
  25. For some interesting points, see Eric Bruiellard, Bente Aamotsbakken, Susanne Knudsen, and Mike Horsley, eds., *Caught in the Web or Lost in the Textbook?* (Paris: IUFM de Caen, 2006).
  26. Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996–98); Friedrich A. Kittler, *Literature, Media, Information Systems: Essay* (Amsterdam: GB Arts International, 1997); Gunther R. Kress, *Literacy in the New Media Age* (London: Routledge, 2003); James A. Banks, *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997); Alec Fyfe and Peter Figueroa, eds., *Education for Cultural Diversity: The Challenge for a New Era* (London: Routledge, 1993); Roy Gardner, Jo Cairns, and Denis Lawton, eds., *Education for Values: Morals, Ethics and Citizenship in Contemporary Teaching* (London: Kogan Page, 2000); Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, ed., *Learning in the Global Era: International Perspectives on Globalization and Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
  27. See, for example, Ute Ritterfeld and Rene Weber, “Video Games for Entertainment and Education,” in Peter Vorderer and Jennings Bryant, eds., *Playing Video Games—Motives, Responses, and Consequences* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006), 399–413; Ute Ritterfeld, “Identity Construction and Emotion Regulation in Digital Gaming,” in Ute Ritterfeld, Michael Cody, and Peter Vorderer, eds., *Serious Games: Mechanisms and Effects* (Mahwah, NJ: Routledge/LEA, forthcoming).
  28. Douglas Levin and Sousan Arafah, *The Digital Disconnect. The Widening Gap Between Internet-Savvy Students and Their Schools* (Washington, DC: Ameri-

- can Institute for Research, 2002), <http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED471133> (accessed 11 May 2008).
29. Staffan Selander, "Designs of Learning and the Formation and Transformation of Knowledge."
  30. The International Association for Research on Textbooks and Educational Media (IARTEM) regularly publishes conference volumes and the e-journal *Research on Textbooks and Educational Media*, [http://www.iartem.no/ejournal/ejournal\\_call.htm](http://www.iartem.no/ejournal/ejournal_call.htm). The International Society for Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks regularly publishes collections on a variety of aspects of textbook research, particularly historical issues; for example, *Contributions to the Historical and Systematic Research on Schoolbooks*, edited by Marc Depaepe, Carsten Heinze, Eva Matthes, and Werner Wiater (Bad Heilbrunn: Verlag Julius Klinkhardt). In 1988 a Textbook Colloquium was founded at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Its aim was to promote the interdisciplinary study of textbooks. The main focus is on the history of education and textbook publishing, on the writing of textbooks, on collecting books, and on the sociology of the classroom. There were three volumes of *Paradigm, Journal of the Textbook Colloquium* published. Staffan Selander has now developed a new opportunity with the e-journal *Designs for Learning*, <http://www.designsforlearning.nu>. One of the most influential national institutions is the American Textbook Council, which occasionally publishes reports.
  31. Höhne, *Schulbuchwissen*, 157.
  32. R. Bowe and S. J. Ball with A. Gold, *Reforming Education and Changing Schools* (London: Routledge, 1992), 12, systematize contexts differently. They differentiate between the "Context of Text Production," the "Context of Influence," and the "Context of Practice."
  33. Foster and Crawford, *What Shall We Tell the Children?*, 6.
  34. On the following, see Bowe and Ball, with Gold, *Reforming Education and Changing Schools*, 12.
  35. Until recently, only a few studies have been available on the use of different media in the classroom. This particularly affects qualitative analyses of reception that investigate impact and/or meaning as well as how frequently or evidently the media are utilized.
  36. Höhne, *Schulbuchwissen*, 16.
  37. Michael W. Apple, "Education, Markets, and an Audit Culture," *Critical Quarterly* 47, nos. 1–2 (2005), 11–29; idem, "The Culture and Commerce of the Textbook," in Michael W. Apple and Linda K. Christian-Smith, eds., *The Politics of the Textbook*, 22–40.