Exploring the Educational Potential of a Video-Interview with a Shoah Survivor

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Abstract.
This article aims to establish what the education potential is of video-interviews with Shoah survivors that have been made available as historical sources for learners in secondary schools. It does so by looking at some of the learner tasks pertaining to one selected video-interview and by using empirical data consisting of masters students' responses to the same interview. After contextualising the research within the intersecting field of video-testimony and Holocaust education, a brief overview of the DVD medium called "Zeugen der Shoah" ("Witnesses of the Shoah") is presented. Thereafter the tool used for the analysis is explained. According to three dimensions of the tool, some learner tasks pertaining to the selected interview are then analysed. These dimensions are: making own scientific knowledge, learning empathy and positioning learners as collectives. The findings are discussed with examples from the reception study with the masters students. Results show that the tasks strongly encourage abstract-theoretical and empathetic thinking and also that they encourage cooperative learning. There is evidence that a top-down type of pedagogy (moral lecturing) was purposefully avoided.

Keywords.
Holocaust education, video-testimony, task analysis, historical thinking, empathy, collective identity

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Video Testimony and Holocaust Education

For some time now, and especially in the light of the fact that the last living survivors will not be among us for much longer, the source of video-graphed interviews with Shoah witnesses has increasingly found its way into interdisciplinary research in recent years. Such research is influenced by studies of Holocaust testimony and oral history in general. It is multi-faceted and broadly spread out across an array of the arts and the humanities. Apart from historical studies, it includes psychoanalytical works examining trauma and trauma therapy, Holocaust memory studies in general, works in literature, studies in visual and dramatic arts, and analyses focusing on philosophical aspects.[1] What they have in common is the double challenge of accessing the essence of the *contents* of the testimony, and, in relation to that, understanding the unusual *form* in which it is transported, given that traumatic experiences are not expressible in ordinary ways. The very categories of space, time, language, life and death take on different meanings. Therefore survivors' memories "shatter the biographical frame."[2]

On the whole, the aim of qualitative analyses of Holocaust testimony is both to "disclose what lies underneath - or inside: the phenomenology of the tormented"[3] and also to understand how this having been tormented affects the expression of the memories. Scientific engagement with the emotionally demanding video-interviews is said to "require critical distance" (at least in Germany).[4] Such scientific work is also regarded as "more neutral" than the interview projects conducted by representatives of organizations such as the Visual History Archive (VHA) of the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation.[5] The political interests of such organizations (allegedly) influence what the witnesses tell and how they do it.[6]

To make these multiple facets of video-testimonies accessible to learners in a school setting requires special considerations. Firstly, such testimonies are not relevant for only one subject, like history, language studies or philosophy, but contain aspects of all of these - and more. Secondly, the form of expressing the content becomes critically important. Thirdly, school pupils do not usually learn about the perspectives of the survivors, at least not through commonly used textbooks.[7] The contents of such textbooks often consist of laws, official documents and excerpts from Hitler's speeches.[8] Finally, the pedagogical work with video-graphed interviews with Shoah witnesses has not found a firm place in schools yet.[9] This has possibly something to do with a fear of using emotionally demanding materials in schools, given their ability to manipulate. Designers

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[1] The literature is extensive. Here are some examples: Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies. The ruins of memory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991); Sarah Ambrosi, "Bildgedenken," in *Videographierte Zeugenschaft. Ein interdisziplinärer Dialog*, ed. Sonja Knopp, et al. (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2016), 308-311; Martin Kusch, "Testimony and the Value of Knowledge," in *Epistemic Value*, ed. Adrian Haddock, et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 60–94.

[2] Assmann, Aleida, "History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony," *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006a), 264.

[3] Robert Kraft, "Archival Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Oral Testimony," *Poetics Today* 27, no. 2 (2006), 311.

[4] Verena L. Nägel, "Zeugnis - Artefakt - Digitalisat. Zur Bedeutung der Entstehungs- und Aufbereitungsprozesse von Oral History-Interviews," in *Videographierte Zeugenschaft*, 356.

[5] Ibid., 354. "More neutral" in this context means less effective in terms of publicity (*öffentlichkeitswirksam*).

[6] Ibid., 354.

[7] To facilitate an authentic encounter with the topic, many schools in Germany try to arrange outings to former concentration camps and other similar memorial sites, or they invite survivors to speak to the pupils, which is becoming less and less of a possibility.

[8] Martin Liepach, "Zeitzeugenvideos am Ende der Zeitzeugenschaft. Zwischen Perspektivwechsel, Erinnerungsdiskurs und Kompetenzerwerb," in *Die Shoah in Geschichte und Erinnerung. Perspektiven medialer Vermittlung in Italien und Deutschland*, ed. Claudia Müller, et al. (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), 161.

[9] Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung und Freie Universität Berlin, *Zeugen der Shoah - Schulisches Lernen mit Video-Interviews. DVD-Begleitheft für Lehrende* (Berlin, 2012), 7. From now abbreviated as "Teacher Guide".

of educational materials seem to have taken all these points into consideration and published a learning software in 2012 (outlined below), a closer examination of which is the aim of this article.

Not only is the use of video-testimony relatively new in school settings, but subjecting them to formal analysis as educational media is complicated by the fact that such analyses, as far as they are comparable to history textbook analyses, do not benefit from a long-established theoretical and methodological tradition.[10] This makes the analysis of video-testimony for Holocaust education a relatively new and difficult endeavor, but one worthy of pursuit if there is agreement that "no other area of the historical-political educational landscape is as highly fraught with moral, enlightening (*aufklärerisch*), democratically relevant and pedagogical implications as is history education about the Shoah."[11] Such moral-pedagogical implications tend to be based more on political ideals than on empirical research. In the past, not much research has been done on how the rather ambitious government educational goals regarding the moral and political lessons to be learnt from the National Socialist past are to be implemented at the level of instruction.[12]

Internationally Holocaust Education is often instrumentalized to teach general lessons about human rights and democracy.[13] In Germany school learners are met with additional challenges when they study this subject. Not only do they have to face the immensity of the moral dilemma evident in this historical topic, such as being able to fathom, as unthinkable and unimaginable as it might be, that the horrors and the evil of which the survivors give an account *really* took place.[14] They also have to accept the fact that it is part of their own history.[15] On top of that, in the institutional setting of a school they are dependent for their success on the power of those who have higher authority. "Within this structure it is easy to develop a reservedness towards engaging with the NS crimes, if this challenging topic is turned into moral self-assurance, articulated by the more powerful position of the teachers."[16] This often results in passive resistance on behalf of learners. Some researchers working in the field of Holocaust Education in Germany describe this as follows: "The moral over-unambiguousness of the educational remembrance agenda that is often linked to this subject matter prevents real cognitive and emotional engagement."[17] To express what is meant here more directly, I think it would be fair to say that some German learners switch off before they even start. They do not want to be burdened with feelings of guilt that is perceived to be forced onto them by members of the preceding generation who have authoritative power over them.

It is against this background that the research presented here aims to answer to the gap in knowledge about the structured analysis of video-testimony as applicable in a formal learning environment. It does so by offering a possible way of analyzing and commenting on educational materials that are based on a video-interview with a Shoah survivor. It attempts to take into account the multi-disciplinary nature of this research field, the morally significant problems inherent in the subject matter, and the institutional setting with its unequal power distribution, where learners encounter extremely negative aspects of their own history.

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[10] Stuart Foster and Keith Crawford, "Introduction: The Critical Importance of History Textbook Research," in *What shall we tell the children? International Perspectives on School History Textbooks,* eds. Stuart Foster and Keith Crawford, (Greenwich: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 11.

[11] Christian Kuchler, "Den Opfern eine Stimme geben. Jüdische Perspektiven auf den Holocaust im Geschichtsunterricht," in *Shoa und Schule. Lehren und Lernen im 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Peter Gautschi, et al. (Zürich: Chronos, 2013), 171. All translations and interpretations of German to English texts are those of the author, unless the sources used were already translations.

[12] Meseth Wolfgang and Matthias Proske, "Mind the Gap: Holocaust education in Germany, between pedagogical intentions and classroom interactions," *Prospects* 40 (2010), 202.

[13] See Oliver Plessow, "Länderübergreifende 'Holocaust Education'," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtsdidaktik* 11 (2012).

[14] Judith Suissa, "Testimony, Holocaust Education and Making the Unthinkable Thinkable," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 50, no. 2 (2016), 295.

[15] My focus here on Germany excludes a consideration of the large and increasing number of immigrant youths in schools.

[16] Astrid Messerschmidt, "Selbstbilder zwischen Unschuld und Verantwortung. Beziehung zu Täterschaft in Bildungskontexten," in *Nationalsozialistische Täterschaft. Nachwirkungen in Gesellschaft und Familie*, ed. Oliver von Wrochem (Berlin: Metropol, 2016), 116.

[17] Michele Barricelli, Juliane Brauer and Dorothee Wein, "Zeugen der Shoah: Historisches Lernen mit lebensgeschichtlichen Videointerviews. Das Visual History Archive des Shoah Foundation Institute in der schulischen Bildung," *Medaon* 5 (2009): 1.

Overview of the DVD Educational Medium *Zeugen der Shoah*
The DVD series "Witnesses of Shoah-school learning with video-interviews" was published in 2012 by the *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* (Federal Center for Political Education) in Bonn and is intended for use in secondary schools from grade 9 onwards. The series consist of four DVDs with the themes "fleeing/escaping," "surviving," "resisting," and "carrying on living" respectively. Each DVD contains three video-interviews that were first recorded between 1994 and 1999 as part of the VHA, initiated by Steven Spielberg. The overall archive contains more than 52000 such interviews. Between 2008 and 2010 academics from the Freie Universität in Berlin developed an extensive learning software package as part of a series based on these twelve interviews. The development of the tasks was based on 40 project days on which school learning with this medium was tested with pupils from various school types and ages. The package contains complex work assignments, as well as selected, complementary, multimedial materials needed for the completing of the assignments. Such materials consist of primary sources, works of art (such as paintings, drawings and poems), photographs, letters, interactive, animated maps, literary texts, secondary sources, expert video-interviews, documentary film excerpts, audio recordings, tools such as transcriptions and translations, and a lexicon. This variety of materials underlines the necessity to draw on sources from multiple disciplines when researching the Shoah. Another way in which the designers of the DVD learning software took into account the multidisciplinary nature of the topic is that they did not limit it to the school subject History. They also included ideas and questions for subjects such as German, English, Social Studies, Politics and Religion.[18]

The DVD series comes with resources (guidelines) for teachers[19] and a freely downloadable booklet that documents the scientific and pedological (didactic) work with the video-interviews of the USC Foundation Institute where the VHA is based.[20] Each of the 12 interviews that were selected for the DVD series was shortened from their original length of about two hours to 30 minutes each, so as to make them usable in school lessons. The principles guiding these edits were that the overall biographical span of the witness's story should be kept intact, as well as to make sure that the cuts were clearly marked. The edited films were meant to be kept as free as possible of any influence of the editors. For example, dramatising cinematography effects such as the use of zoom, music, commentary or editor-narration were left out. "Even if you want to show 'narration pure', this requires considerable cinematic design decisions and interventions."[21] These decisions are described as the video concept of the short films, which was intended to allow "an independent, value-free and transparent examination of the entire life stories."[22] However, any reduction and intervention inevitably includes something of the subjectivity of the author and therefore an engagement with the life stories of the survivors is hardly going to be "value-free." An examination of the formulations of the tasks should provide some information about this subjectivity or author intentions.

Analyzing an Educational Medium
In my previous research on the representation of the Shoah in history textbooks, one of the key findings at the time was that methodological principles that underpin textbook research were not well developed and that the area remained under-theorized.[23] As a response, a co-author and I developed a history textbook analysis tool that had a strong theoretical foundation and that, as a result of it, could be applied to other educational media.[24] Textbooks and the DVD medium introduced

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[18] In German state schools pupils are obligated to take a subject called Religion or alternatively Philosophy. If Religion is chosen, usually a second choice has to be made: Catholic or Protestant (*Evangelisch*).

[19] Teacher guide.

[20] *Zeugen der Shoah. Die didaktische und wissenschaftliche Arbeit mit Video-Interviews des USC Shoah Foundation Institute*, ed. Sigrid Abenhausen, et al. 2012, from now abbreviated as "scientific work."

[21] Scientific work, 31.

[22] Ibid., 31.

[23] Foster and Crawford, *What shall we tell,* 11.

[24] Katalin Morgan and Elizabeth Henning, "Designing a Tool for History Textbook Analysis," *Forum Qualitative Social Research* 14, no. 1 (2013), accessed July 27, 2017, http://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-14.1.1807.

here have certain similarities. Both are resources used in communicative learning situations. Both can be understood as meta-texts that can reveal certain character traits and normative structures as the *Zeitgeist* of a given society.[25] Given these similarities, the tool designed for textbooks can also be applied to other educational media. In the next section I explain the dimensions of the tool, connecting some of the concepts to the German context in which the empirical part of the study was carried out, so as to make it more context-relevant.

The Dimensions of the Analysis Tool

Dimension A - Making own (historical) knowledge - is about theoretical learning and seeks to find out what the discipline-specific, scientific areas of knowledge are that texts mediate and how they do it. Seixas described what this means for learning to think historically: "good history teaching *exposes the process* of constructing warranted historical accounts so that students can arrive at their own understandings of the past through processes of critical inquiry."[26] In the German context the question would be similar: how do texts bring their readers to produce historical knowledge that is evidence-based and that allows one to make reasonable, merit-based and expert judgments or interpretation about an experience that took place in a specified time period.[27] Looking beyond the subject of history, the general question is: how do texts enable their readers to develop abstract, theoretical principles from empirical reality? In the subject area German, for example, this dimension would be concerned with analyzing the relationship between content, language and form (presentation) so as to assess the meaning (or evaluate the *Bedeutungsraum* or "space of meaning"). In the case of written, literary texts, such spaces of meaning are organized and connected by means of words and in the case of films they are assembled and opened up using color and sound.[28] Therefore, if the discipline-specific requirements of a subject are known, then this dimension of the tool can be adapted accordingly.

Dimension B - Learning empathy - is the humanizing dimension of the analysis by calling upon our sense of responsibility and conscience.[29] Empathy is understood here as feeling *and* thinking *with* another person: "at its basic level, empathy is a feeling (a suffering or undergoing) of the world in and through another person. At its most basic level, empathy is bodily."[30] This means that empathy is something that can be directly and physically experienced because a text can be subjectively accessed, involving emotions. Empathy allows us "to tune into the interpretive patterns of others"[31] and thus to experience a closeness to the events described, narrated or transported in other communicative ways in the text. In the German *Geschichtsdidaktik* (the science of teaching history) this is usually referred to as "taking over another´s perspective"[32] or "changing perspectives."[33] In the core curriculum for the subject called "Protestant religious doctrine" in the upper secondary school in Hannover, for example, "participation, empathy and creativity" are considered to be significant qualifications pupils are expected to achieve.[34] The general question

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[25] Hanna Schissler, "Navigating a Globalizing World: Thoughts on Textbook Analysis, Teaching, and Learning," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 1 (2009), 205.

[26] Peter Seixas, "Beyond 'Content' and 'Pedagogy': In Search Of A Way To Talk About History Education," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 31 (1999), 332.

[27] Jörn Rüsen, *Historisches Lernen. Grundlagen und Paradigmen* (Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau Verlag, 2008), 61.

[28] Lisa Shekel and Florian Urschel-Sochaczewski, "Wie wirken Video-Interviews? Unterrichtsreihe zur Arbeit mit Video-Interviews für das Fach Deutsch (Sek II)," (*Zeugen der Shoah,* 2012*),* 41-42.

[29] Jörn Rüsen, *Studies in Metahistory* (Pretoria: Human Sciences Council, 1993), 65.

[30] James R. Mensch, "Empathy and Rationality," in *The politics of empathy. New interdisciplinary perspectives on an ancient phenomenon,* ed. Barbara Weber, et al. (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011), 21.

[31] Eva Marsal and Takara Dobashi, "From Dionysian Dance in Friedrich Nietzsche. To the Subjective Aesthetic Formation of Japanese Empathy Fûryû," in *The Politics of Empathy. New Interdisciplinary Perspectives on an Ancient Phenomenon,* ed. Barbara Weber, et al. (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011), 91.

[32] Franziska Conrad, "Perspektivenübernahme, Sachurteil und Werturteil. Drei zentrale Kompetenzen im Umgang mit Geschichte," *Geschichte lernen* 139 (2011), 2.

[33] Christina Brüning, "Historisches Lernen mit videographierten Zeitzeug_inneninterviews in (sozio)kulturell und religiös heterogenen Lerngruppen," *Zeitschrift für Genozidforschung* 14 (2013), 147.

[34] Nikolaus Schneider, "Kerncurriculum für das Fach Evangelische Religionslehre in der gymnasialen Oberstufe. Themen

is: how can the reader be guided into feeling and thinking his or her way into another person's reality? The analysis in this study also takes into account the correspondence between the learner tasks and the survivor testimony: are there any parts of the life story told that are not addressed in the tasks, but that have a potential for empathy learning?

Dimension C - positioning a textual community - can be compared in the German context to Aleida Assmann's political memory which is an explicit, homogeneous, and institutionalized top-down memory.[35] It is about asking how a text is used or even "plundered to produce convenient stories for the present"[36] in order to position (transform) individual readers into collectives, given that texts are produced in specific social contexts and are thus motivated by specific interests.[37] The way curricula influence educational media can be operationalized by the description of the intended learning outcomes ("competency acquisition" in German).[38] For example, Gautschi names possibilities for identification (closeness) and distance between the topic and the pupil as a criterion for analyzing teaching and learning materials.[39] This can also apply at a collective level: "Societies or social groupings have an interest in familiarizing their members with certain histories to secure a common identity."[40] How are readers positioned by such identity possibilities and interests? In order to use this dimension for the study of the digital medium, the analysis will once again establish the correspondence between the narration and the learner tasks: what are the positioning possibilities in the narrative that are left out in the tasks? How do the tasks deal with political or collective identity-formation issues?

The Selected Video-Interview and the Associated Work with the Tasks

The interview with Jack Bass on the DVD "carrying on living" was conducted in English, but the viewer and listener could follow it in German because a translated transcript was provided by the software that automatically scrolled alongside the spoken words. The original video-interview was recorded in 1997 in Adamsville, USA. One of the peculiarities of this interview and its associated tasks is the reference to and inclusions of two distinct time periods, with the aim of demonstrating to students how memory changes over time. In 1946, shortly after his liberation from Auschwitz, Jack Bass was interviewed by the American Psychologist David Boder (in German), thus putting a 50-year gap between the two interviews. Segments of this audio-recorded interview are included in one of the tasks that asks students to compare the two versions of the testimony and to assess it's changing over time. Such exercises are unusual in history lessons and thus present new learning opportunities about the relationship between history and memory, which is one of the reasons why this interview was selected for analysis. The other reason is that in the wider reception study this interview caused some controversy and emotional tension between a pupil and her teacher.[41] She was rather offended by Jack Bass's attitude towards Germans and Germany (see Figure 2) and the teacher did not think that her reaction was appropriate. I wanted to know if this was an isolated case or weather the older (university) students would react in similarly ways and if so, how this could be understood.

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und Inhalte für die Entwicklung von Kompetenzen religiöser Bildung" (Hannover: Kirchenamt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland), 21.

[35] Aleida Assmann, "Memory, individual and collective," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analyses*, eds. Robert E Goodin and Charles Tilly. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006b), 215.

[36] Peter Lee, "History education and historical literacy," in *Debates in History Teaching*, ed. Ian Davies (London: Routledge, 2011), 65.

[37] See Günter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images - the Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 2006), 8-13.

[38] Teacher guide, 35-36.

[39] Peter Gautschi, *Guter Geschichtsunterricht. Grundlagen, Erkenntnisse, Hinweise* (Schwalbach/Ts: Wochenschau Verlag, 2011), 144-146. See also Johannes Meyer-Hamme, "'I never liked history at school.' Identitäten und Emotionen beim historischen Lernen," in *Emotionen, Geschichte und historisches Lernen. Geschichtsdidaktische und geschichtskulturelle Perspektiven*, eds. Juliane Brauer and Martin Lücke (Göttingen, Germany: V&R Unipress, 2013), 125-137.

[40] Waltraud Schreiber, "Ein Kompetenz-Strukturmodell historischen Denkens," *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 54 (2008), 198.

[41] The larger study examined the reception of this DVD medium in various schools and school types in Nordrhein Westfalen, Germany, between December 2015 and April 2016.

Jack Bass
Born in 1923 in Bernkastel at the Mosel //
Father Manfred Bassfreund is a doctor and
dies in 1932 // Moves with his mother and
sister to Trier, Cologne, Coburg and 1938 to
Berlin // Forced labour // 1943 deportation to
Auschwitz // January 1995 death march to the
Dachau concentration out-camp Mühldorf //
From there he was liberated by American
troops on 2 May 1945 // Emigrates to the USA
in 1946 // Jack Bass dies in 2010.

Foto: USC SFI

Jack Bass

Figure 1. Jack Bass's short biography (Teacher guide, 47).

About the life stories

"I cannot understand that today Jewish people settle in Germany. I just can't see it", says Jack
Bass, who was born Jürgen Bassfreund in 1926 near Trier, Germany. He chose English as his
language for the interview in which he talks about his experiences of being marginalized that
he suffered as a child and teenager in Nazi Germany. He describes antisemitism in Germany as
an ongoing problem. When he returned to his home country for the first time after his
emigration to the United States, he had the following to say: "I was back in 1972. And I found
the people just as bad and - as they were in, during Hitler's time […]. Of course now they have
to be a little more cautious about expressing themselves. Because there is no more Hitler. But,
er, I don´t think that their character has changed any". His recollection about his deportation to
Auschwitz is told in two testimonies at two different times. German-American psychologist
David Boder interviewed Bassfreund in September 1946 in a DP (Displaced Person's) camp.
This interview was audiotaped and a passage is selected for the DVD in which he talks about
his arrival at Auschwitz. Fifty years later he describes the same event in the interview
recorded for the Visual History Archive.

Figure 2. Summary of Jack Bass's life story (Teacher guide, 79). The discrepancy between 1923 and 1926
given as Jack Bass's year of birth is printed like that in the teacher guide. It is not a typing error in this
paper.

The part of the reception study with the university students consisted of 12 masters candidates
who, in February 2017, took part in a five-hour block seminar with the title "Public Education
and Culture of Remembrance" (*Öffentliche Erziehung und Erinnerungskultur*). The focus of the
seminar was the question of how to deal with the current challenges presented by the memory
of the National Socialist crimes. The participating students were either studying for a degree in
education (with various subject combinations and not only history), or to become professional
guides at memorial sites (*Gedenkstättenpädagogen*), or social workers in educational institutions.
To prepare for the seminar, students were asked to read three texts that served as the theoretical
preparation.[42] After discussing the texts, the students had three hours to watch and listen to the
30-minute interview with Jack Bass and to complete the tasks on the DVD software set for school

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[42] These texts were a) Sebastian Schulze, Sonja Knopp, and Anne Eusterschulte, "Videographierte Zeugenschaft.
Überlebendenzeugnisse im interdisziplinären Dialog," in *Videographierte Zeugenschaft,* 13-35; b) Aleida Assmann,
"Vier Grundtypen von Zeugenschaft," in *Zeugenschaft des Holocausts. Zwischen Trauma, Tradierung und Ermittlung,* ed.
Fritz Bauer Institut (Frankfurt und New York: Campus Verlag, 2007), 33-47; and c) Barricelli, et al, *Zeugen der Shoah:
Historisches Lernen*, 1-17.

learners, thereby assuming the role of school pupils. They did this either individually or with a partner and recorded their answers in writing. This was followed by a 66-minute discussion with the seminar leader (a professor in communication science) and me (a sociologist and educational media analyst), acting as co-leader of the seminar and as a researcher. The focus of the discussion was the answers the students provided to the set questions, as well as a reflection on the process of completing the tasks. The discussion was recorded and transcribed. For the purpose of this article only the transcript of this discussion was used (and not the students' written answers[43]).

Method
The analysis carried out here can be described as open-hermeneutic, which, according to Dilthey, aims to understand the intentions and thoughts of authors of texts by means of interpretation, based on signs and symbols.[44] In this interpretive task, the analyst is located in a dynamic, reciprocal and ongoing relationship with texts and inevitably brings in aspects subjectivity.[45]

The analysis of the tasks was carried out on the basis of the analytical dimensions A-C. Each task-complex was divided into shorter segments and then a category (A-C) was assigned to each. I made this decision by asking: which analytical question does this task segment address the most? The commentary on (or suggested answer to) each question in the teacher guide was also taken into account when assigning the codes. To minimize the subjectivity effect, I used the data from the seminar transcript in a triangulating way. I read the transcripts with the analytical questions per dimension in mind and again assigned codes to segments of the text that answered those questions. After the coding of both data sets, I created headings with each of the dimensions. Under each heading I first summarized the findings from the theoretical analysis, explaining how the assigned coded text related to the analytical dimension. Thereafter the empirical data from the group session was added to the relevant heading by way of discussing the previously documented findings. This way the data from the group discussion was used in an illustrative way, providing empirical examples that concretized the initially still rather theoretical-abstract categorization of the tasks.

In the next section some parts of two learner task-complexes pertaining to the video-interview with Jack Bass are reproduced as they are to be found in the software, with minor modifications for the seminar purpose. The instructions in square brackets are to be found in the original, but they were omitted for the purposes of the seminar, because the time did not permit such in-depth involvement with the tasks. I wanted to use the available time rather for the subsequent group discussion.

Task 1 Pertaining to the Video-Interview with Jack Bass
1.   Two Periods - Two stories?
1.1 Watch the video-interview and then listen to the audio-interview with Jürgen Bassfreund / Jack Bass. [With a partner] name any similarities and differences between the two interviews in terms of the contents and the forms of the narratives (the way the stories are told).
1.2 [With your partner] formulate possible reasons for the differences, taking into account the text by Primo Levi. Also bear in mind the different situations and conditions prevailing during the two interviews.
1.3. Listen to the audio-interview and then watch the video-interview with Jürgen Bassfreund / Jack Bass. Discuss the impact of the interviews and how you can determine it.[46]

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[43] Although these answers cannot be analyzed here, it is worth mentioning that, on the whole, they were elaborate, differentiated, diverse, thoughtful, clever and very insightful. The students did not struggle to work with the materials and this work evidently sparked their historical imagination and cognitive insights in multiple ways.

[44] Jörg Baberowsky, *Der Sinn der Geschichte. Geschichtstheorien von Hegel bis Foucault* (München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2005), 105-106.

[45] Jason Nicholls, "The Philosophical Underpinnings of school textbook research," *Paradigm-Journal of the Textbook Colloquium* 3 (2005), 30.

[46] Teacher guide, 83.

Analysis and Discussion of Task 1

Dimension A

The heading "Two Periods - Two Stories?" indicates that overall this task focuses on reflected and reflexive learning. It is aimed at making own historical knowledge by directing learners to appropriate cognitively the scientific concepts time, memory and narrative. This task, which is concerned with two interviews conducted in 1946 and 1997 respectively, requires a high degree of discipline-specific thinking, since learners have to deal with several (and also very difficult to interpret) texts, genres and formats (printed, audio, and video) at the same time. One of the students felt generally overwhelmed: "in my opinion the tasks were not that easy. They had a very high level (*Niveau*) and I had to think hard in order to get to the right answers." Or: "one felt a bit battered (*erschlagen*) because you had to keep too many things in mind." Some thought that for school learners this task would be too difficult:

> I think pupils in secondary school, for whom this was intended, in other words relatively young pupils, would not be able to deal with this question. As soon as it gets somehow to a meta-level of analysis, it would be too difficult for them. They would not cope with all the input and all the information.

If tasks 1.2 and 1.2 were to be analyzed from the disciplinary perspective of history, then they represent a typical method of historiography that works comparatively with several primary and secondary sources (taking into account differences and similarities) and critically evaluates them in terms of the reasons behind the events, occurrences or phenomena that they describe. To complete these tasks, learners have to provide reasons for their answers that they have to extract from the Primo Levi text, which is encrypted in it in rather complex ways. Therefore, the working out of this task requires a considerable amount of time: "one recognizes immediately that in principle there are many possibilities and ways to interpret and analyze these tasks. And there are many different aspects that one could emphasize over another, so you really need a lot of time to do it all." Moreover, it would require that the teacher knows how to make such complex scientific work manageable for their learners:

> Well, if I were to do this with my pupils, I would discuss each individual text with them first. [...] I would do that more in the form of a class discussion and not leave them to do it on their own. Because I think it is important for pupils to first understand the individual texts and to talk about them, before going into the interpretation or to complete these tasks.

The teacher guide commentary states that the two narratives differ, among other things, in the way Jack Bass uses the "topoi of the Auschwitz discourse."[47] In the video-interview he uses this discourse in an obvious way by reproducing rather atmospheric impressions than concrete details. According to the commentary, this is because a period of 50 years separates the two stories and because of this, the unreliable instrument of human memory inevitably tends to make use of stereotypes. Based on this question, learners are meant to recognize an abstract phenomenon: that in the course of time, an often recounted and repeatedly told memory "tends to set into a stereotype, that is to say, to a form tested by experience, deposited, perfected, congealed and decorated [...]."[48] Learners are meant to figure out this abstract principle based on the empirical reality of the two recorded interviews, using the method of comparison of the contents and analyzing the situational context of each interview. This task is a good example of dimension A.

Dimension B

The potential impact of the audio interview (task 1.3) can be interpreted using dimension B, because

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[47] This refers to a way of talking about Auschwitz that has been part of the public culture of remembrance for some time now as reproduced in popular media such as films, museums, books, exhibitions, etc. It has to do with relying on atmospheric impressions rather than on concrete detail when talking about Auschwitz (teacher guide, 83).

[48] Primo Levi, *Die Untergegangenen und die Geretteten* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1993), 19.

here the complete absence of empathy on behalf of the interviewer David Boder is very striking. He interviews Jack Bass in a rather intrusive, overpowering, emotionally insensitive and interrogative way, constantly interrupting him with questions about exact facts and figures. He literally cross-examines him as if he were in a court hearing. It is almost agonizing how much Boder is lacking in empathy (but perhaps not that surprising, given that an American person in 1946 could hardly have imagined or believed the horrors taking place in a Nazi concentration camp). Some of the students commented on this: "we discussed the audio-interview among ourselves and we all came to the conclusion that it was rather forced or compulsive (*zwanghaft*), like an interrogation." However, this aspect is not discussed in the teacher guide commentary, which also says nothing about Jack's emotional state in 1946 and 1997, but which is clearly expressed in the respective interviews: in 1946 Jack talks in a highly animated, emotionally charged and "alive" manner (maybe even with hope?) but in 1997 he seems rather resigned, dulled, indifferent and apathetic, as if he had lost all hope and were not really alive. One of the students described it like this:

> Compared to the video-interview, he seemed [in the audio-interview], I am not sure, not only factual, but also emotional. One realises that he is totally traumatised and that he rattles down everything really fast because he wants to get it all out. He does partly go into the detail and says that he was pressed against the heater and there was a proper hole in his body. I do think that he is emotional in the way he talks about it, but that the circumstances do not allow him to be even more emotional.

These aspects of emotionality are not addressed in the tasks directly. Instead, the commentary talks about the need to consider the "general way a question is asked and the consequences thereof."[49] Although this does not directly address the emotionality of the interviews and thus the impact this might have on the listener, empathy is nevertheless implied, because the task demands that pupils place themselves in the situation of the interviewee as well as of that the interviewer. The text asks for the ability to take on different perspectives and thus could be working towards developing empathy.

Dimension C and Social Competence
Whenever the instruction read that pupils should work together in pairs or groups, or have a discussions, this aspect of the task was grouped as social competence. It "refers to the complex of all personal abilities and attitudes that contribute to transforming the relationship from an individual to a community of practice orientation. [...] Socially competent behavior links individual objectives to the attitudes and values of a group."[50] This quotation illustrates that social competence plays a role in dimension C by calling for a transition from an individual to a collective level. However, this is not so much motivated here by the authors' selections regarding a particular representation, which could have been indicative of their interests. Therefore it was not coded as C. The transition is achieved with the instruction to work out a problem collectively (or cooperatively). Thus the readers are not positioned as collectives by the texts of the tasks regarding the topic of the Shoah, but by the repeated instruction to work together. This approach is a departure from the paradigm of top-down pedagogy (you should know) to a more bottom up, cooperative approach as is recommended by Harald Welzer for the future of political education and the culture of remembrance in civil society.[51]

In the seminar the need for discussing the content of the interview with a partner or in a group was expressed right at the very beginning. Not only was the teacher seen to be responsible for the preparation of the material, but

> It is perhaps also that the tasks themselves, the materials, are group work assignments. And I have noticed that I had a strong desire to exchange my views with a partner. [...] And I

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[49] Teacher guide, 84.

[50] Manfred Noé, *Mit Controlling zum Projekterfolg* (Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler, 2013), 36.

[51] Harald Welzer, "Erinnerungskultur und Zukunftsgedächtnis," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 25-26 (2010), 21.

believe that working in a group always offers a lot of potential for such exchange so that there is discussion. Perhaps someone else has noticed something that you have not seen at all because of the richness and density of the material.

This response also suggests that the formulation of the task is based on cooperation and avoids pushing learners towards a particular way of thinking that would prescribe to them how they are to be positioned as a collective. This is by no means a given. For example, in textbooks that use the topic of the Shoah in an instrumentalizing way, aiming to immunize learners against other forms of injustice like racism, clear positioning of them as collectives can be identified.[52]

The seminar leader asked the students whether this need for exchange was based on the understanding of the content, or rather on something related to a moral appellative, as described in the text by Assmann.[53] Using the concept of the "moral witness" Assmann discusses an appeal to a moral community, or the whole of humankind, which is called upon to uphold "the universal values of human dignity" and to work out a "culture of remembrance in the wake of the traumatic past in which forms of political responsibility focus on solidarity with the victims."[54] For most students the desire to exchange their views had something to do with this kind of moral appeal, which, however, switched from a focus on the victims (as per Assmann's discussion) to a focus on themselves:

> As for me, I had a strong urge to talk to someone about the interview, because I found the kind of a picture he still has about Germany very frightening. And apparently it is never going to change for him either. And that is quite a strong moral appeal that Germany is seen to be eternally anti-Semitic. This would be a point that I really would first have to talk about.

This point has was discussed at length because many students felt personally addressed by Jack Bass's missing offer of reconciliation with or "un-burdening" of (*entlasten*) the perpetrators. One student said that as a German citizen one would maybe not expect that, but at least hope for it, given that "with her culture of welcome (*Willkommenskultur*) Ms. Merkel has achieved an image of the country internationally as a more open-minded, cosmopolitan (*weltoffen*) society." This example illustrates the argument that the learning material avoids a top-down pedagogy. The politically loaded topic of prejudice against Germans as a whole (which was also emphasized by the authors of the learning software as per as Fig. 2) was not addressed directly by the formulation of the tasks. Rather, the task opened up only a *potential* for discussing this topic by means of the instruction to work cooperatively, using social competence. This strategy had worked in the sense that the potential was realized within the student group.

Task 2 Pertaining to the Video-Interview with Jack Bass
2.   Problematizing the German Language
2.1 Read the short biography of Jack Bass and watch his video-interview. Compare both with the lexicon entry about Ruth Klüger as well as with the excerpts from her autobiography weiter leben ("Still Alive");
2.2 Take into consideration their respective historical life-stations, their relationship to post-war Germany, the addressees, and the medium used for telling their life stories.
2.3 Thereafter work out [with a partner] the reasons for Bass's and Klüger's respective language choice. [Present and discuss your results in a plenum.][55]

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[52] Katalin Morgan and Elizabeth Henning, "How school history textbooks position a textual community through the topic of racism," *Historia* 56, no. 2 (2011), 169-190.

[53] Assmann, *Vier Grundtypen von Zeugenschaft*, 41- 46.

[54] Ibid., 43.

[55] Teacher guide, 83.

Analysis and Discussion of Task 2
Dimension A
Similar to the first question, learners have to work comparatively with multiple sources, presented
in various formats, in order to investigate a theoretical problem. In this case it about the relationship
between language and national identity. In order to complete this task, they must be able to work
with highly specialized (and in this case transdisciplinary) scientific concepts such as motivation,
narrative context, media types, and addressees. Using such concepts, they are supposed to analyze
the relationship between content, language and form so as to evaluate the *Bedeutungsraum* or (space
of meaning), which in this case is the question of how language is related to identity. They must
simultaneously be able to compare several life experiences related to time (life-historical stations)
and be able to understand the witnesses' relationship to post-war Germany. They also have to
take into account the respective media used for portraying the narratives (video-interview and
literary work) and explain how these serve as a justification for the respective language choices of
Jack Bass and Ruth Klüger. This is an enormous theoretical-scientific, abstracting challenge and
was commented on by a student as follows: "it was rather overwhelming." Or: "I found this task
relatively demanding because you had to consider so many different things [...] And then you
somehow had 17 sources and you thought, 'okay, how can I quickly summarize them on one page
so that it offers a satisfactory answer to the question?'" This task is once again a good example for
dimension A. Learners have to be able to abstract general principles from empirical realities given
in the texts, such as the different life stations provided in the witnesses' biographies. Learners have
to do this abstracting using many subject-specific, scientific concepts that underlie these realities.

Dimension B
Jack Bass speaks in English and has also changed his name so as to signal his complete break
with his former German identity. Ruth Klüger, on the other hand, writes in German and "will
not allow the Nazis to rob her of her mother tongue," as she puts it. In order to be able to carry
out successfully the theoretical-abstracting task described in dimension A, learners must first be
able to think and feel themselves into (or empathize with) the situation of Klüger and Bass: both
suffered horrors at the hands of Germans that may be unimaginable on a cognitive level, but that
may possibly be experienced subjectively (bodily) on an emotional level. In order to understand
this emotional burden, the tertiary recipient of the testimony must not only be able to contextualize
the narrative historically, but he or she must also "textualize the context."[56] In other words, the
content must be made accessible to a reading that aims to recognize not only the facts, but also
appreciate the process of verbalization. The concept of truth takes on a different dimension
within this process: it does not have the usual factual, empirical or juridical function, but that
of facilitating a "reconciliation" between a destroyed world and the world of the here and now,
which is accomplished (or is hoped to be accomplished) in the process of verbalization of what
was experienced.[57] This process activates an inner conflict and as they represent a "struggle for a
linguistic form" of a survivor testimony.[58]

In this sense, recipients could emphatically understand that the survivor as a witness is not a
"remnant" of a historical event, even though he tells a story that took place in the past, but shares
the same elements of knowledge as "we" (the learners) do.[59] He is capable of formulating reflections
on his verbalization and his memory.[60] Understanding this and using this understanding to make
sense of the narratives requires an extreme change of perspective, which cannot be assumed,
but must be learnt. Neither is it a feature of so-called scientific understanding because, as Platt
shows, researchers tend to attribute the breaks in narratives told by traumatized witnesses as a
failure to create meaning or as an inability to produce coherence in the telling of the stories of

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[56] Schulze, Knopp and Eusterschulte, *Videographierte Zeugenschaft*, 21.

[57] Ibid., 22.

[58] Ibid., 14. It is precisely these struggles that are made the subject if not specifically of these tasks, then certainly of some others.

[59] Platt, *Narrative und traumatische Kohärenz*, 208.

[60] Ibid., 208.

their remembered experiences.[61] Researchers therefore tend to interpret this as an unsuccessful processing by the witnesses of his or her own history. This happens because scientists, like all human beings, have only their own reference points to work from, which is that of stability, structure, orientation and intactness. They assume that there is (or could be) a state of being that is influenced by such characteristics at least to some degree. But the loss of precisely this normality marked the day-to-day lives of the witnesses.[62]

The seminar leader tried to illustrate this point when a student was wondering why Jack Bass did not talk about his liberation with any sense of joy:

> We have a particular conception of what we associate with [the term] liberation. [The text by Schulze et al points out, however, that] the "witness of the Shoah is a precarious figure in our social order based on knowledge and the transmission of knowledge. He or she radically questions the traditional meaning of testimony as a social institution of knowledge."[63] So this precarious figure, and I would interpret this to mean that Jack Bass does not talk about liberation as perhaps many, not only us, would expect him to. That he cannot do this because of what he experienced has to do with the process of de-individualization, which perhaps questions the kind of narratives that we would expect.

This explains why a radical change of perspective is necessary and why it is misleading to rely on one's own frame of reference (or logic of existence) for understanding the stories told by the survivors. But this is unavoidable if the teacher is not familiar with the kinds of sense-making strategies employed by survivors when they tell their testimonies. In the seminar, a student illustrated this problem by explaining Ruth's choice of language in terms of her educational status, even though he recognized that this way of thinking could be misleading, because it would be relying on one's own prejudices and thus fail to recognize the reality of the situation: "I was really wondering for a bit if you could somehow draw wrong conclusions by saying that perhaps Mrs. Klüger is academically more educated than Jack Bass. [...] But whether this is really the case, it is dangerous to think like that."

Another student saw it differently. She justified Ruth's choice of language with her career decision to become an academic, studying German language and literature: "there is probably also some kind of passion involved for the language if she does that for a career. I use that to explain why she does not behave in a rejecting way towards Germans and the German language." Others approached the task by pointing out the similarities, for example, that both are directing their stories at Germans or "that Jack Bass changed his name and Klüger sees the German language critically, which shows how both are clearly influenced by their experiences in Germany. And I think this is only natural."

For some, the difference in language choice was an indication that Ruth Klüger has learned to live with the negative story, "while Jack Bass discards his past and history out of shame and hurt and he cannot continue to live with it." Yet others saw it exactly the opposite way, namely that Jack Bass "seems to have found his peace. He does not seem particularly irritated or sad. He portrays his story clearly and pays attention to certain aspects. His bitterness only comes to light when he speaks about present day Germany and he expresses his incomprehension."

These comments show that a personal-subjective understanding strongly influences the interpretation of the witnesses' accounts. Therefore what constitutes knowledge includes both subjective and objective facets. The reason it is worth stressing this here is that in the German context knowledge tends to be understood as purely factual, scientific, and objective, enabling "pure knowledge impartation."[64] Alongside the focus on pure knowledge, I suggest that the potential to

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[61] Ibid., 206-209.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Schulze, Knopp and Eusterschulte, *Videographierte Zeugenschaft*, 20.

[64] Bert Pampel, "Gedenkstätten als 'außerschulische' Lernorte. Theoretische Aspekte - empirische Befunde - praktische Herausforderungen," in *Erschrecken - Mitgefühl - Distanz. Empirische Befunde über Schülerinnen und Schüler in Gedenkstätten und zeitgeschichtlichen Ausstellungen*, ed. Bert Pampel (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2011), 19.

empathize with the witness could also be regarded as valuable in its own right. This could lead to a better understanding of the witness's moral identity and emotional condition. However, this is difficult, "because I could not really think about this moral dimension, given that I was so focused to quickly solve the tasks in the time provided. That's why this emotional part did not really come across properly because you were always rushed from task to task."

The proximity between the virtual presence of the narrating person and the real presence of the recipient produces a dynamic of its own. Hearing his voice and simultaneously seeing his face, gestures and mimicry creates the impression that a real personal interaction is taking place. This presence makes it conceivable that the potential for learning empathy with the witness is offered during the whole narration. The effect this presence may have on the listener's learning of empathy is interrupted by *any* instruction to solve tasks. Thus the ability to experience empathy in a bodily way is diminished when the focus is on the solving of tasks. Nevertheless, even if this natural empathy produced by the the "immersion and instantaneity effect"[65] of a video-interview is not purposefully made the object of reflected knowledge, it is nevertheless experienced in the background, alongside the development of a more objective type of knowledge necessary for the solving of the tasks.

Dimension C
Although an explicit positioning of the reader as a collective is not recognizable, the task nevertheless offers a potential for such positioning. This potential must be explored (again) by the learner in group or partner work and is not given by the topic of the task itself. In the Klüger text, the "strangeness" (*Artfremdheit*) (of Jews), the "complicity" (*Mitschuld*) (of Germans) and the "it's got nothing to do with us" discourse are explicitly named.[66] The comment in the teacher guide, however, does not address this directly, but mentions only Klüger's efforts to enter into a "critical dialogue" with her German reading audience.[67] Thus the task text using the instructions to discuss the answers with each other leaves it up to the learners (and teachers) to deal with this delicate topic. Every form of moralization or lecturing is avoided by the task text, but without bypassing the topic itself. This is a rather skillful way of dealing with the guilt question, which plays a central role in political and national (German) identity.[68] The lively discussion that ensued in the seminar about Jack Bass's lack of a reconciliatory offer to Germans suggests that the implicit expectation by the task text to bring the sensitive issues of this topic to the fore by relying on social competence in group and partner work is a reasonable one.

This lack of moralizing in the task text is emphasized again by the fact that the "message" at the end of the interview, which was part of Jack Bass's story in the short film, is *not* addressed in the tasks.[69] His message is that "the greatest legacy I have given my children and grandchildren is that they are here [in the US] and not over there." The background of this message is Jack Bass's allegation of continuing German anti-Semitism as shown in Figure 2.

The students commented extensively on this message, picking it out as the most important part of the video-interview for most of them. Had the tasks addressed this statement, it would have been possible to interpret it as an attempt at collective identity formation because anti-Semitism as a reproach could play a role in the reproduction of German national identity. The text avoided this, which, however, does not mean that learners would also avoid it. On the contrary, as the students' reaction showed, this was a very significant part of the video-interview for them. In addition, from the beginning and throughout the seminar, the question of guilt was extensively discussed. Among other things, topics that came up in such discussions were "how to ask for

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[65] Alina Bothe and Rolf Sperling, "Trauma und Emotionen im virtuellen Raum. Historisches Lernen über die Shoah mit virtuellen Zeugnissen," in *Emotionen, Geschichte und historisches Lernen: Geschichtsdidaktische und geschichtskulturelle Perspektiven*, eds. Juliane Brauer and Martin Lücke (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2013), 209.

[66] Ruth Klüger, *weiter leben. Eine Jugend* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), 142.

[67] Teacher guide, 83.

[68] Matthias Proske, "Why Do We Always Have to Say We're Sorry?," *European Education* 44 (2012), 39-46.

[69] At the end of each interview, the interviewers working on the Spielberg project were meant to ask the witnesses for their "message" to the next generations, thus capturing the motivation for giving the testimony.

forgiveness," "to be lumped together in a stereotypical way," "making peace with Germany," "the pride question," "Old-Nazis," "the German language," "un-burdening (*Entlastung*)," "acceptance of non-forgiveness," "being insulted," or "whether the next generation is also 'bad'." That these topics are about national identity is also confirmed in the following statement by a student: "so it's so difficult, because, of course [the perpetrators] were Germans, but we were not those Germans. Do we therefore have to ask for forgiveness now?"

Conclusion

The analysis presented here aimed to explore the educational potential of the learning tasks along three dimensions. These were: making own scientific knowledge, learning empathy and positioning learners as collectives. The assessment of the tasks in terms of these three dimensions and the educational potential they offer was then discussed with empirical examples based on a reception study with postgraduate university students. Results showed that such potential focused mainly on discipline-specific knowledge acquisition and to a lesser extent also on the development of empathy. Furthermore, it can be concluded that although the task texts avoided any explicit positioning of the readers by way of their topic focus, the instruction to work cooperatively provided ample opportunity for discussing issues about collective (national) identity.

In terms of discipline-specific knowledge acquisition one of the conclusions is that the tasks demand a very high level of abstract-theoretical and conceptual thinking ability, which can by no means be assumed. It also requires a considerable amount of time. Both could be based on unrealistic expectations, especially the former, given that previous or existing knowledge is a precondition for learning.[70] That is why the role of the teacher is of paramount importance. Were learners to be left on their own with these tasks, which is often an expectation teachers have with such digital media[71], then these materials would lose some of their educational value. Neither can the role of the teacher be replaced by the often emphasized instruction to work cooperatively. Even though from a sociocultural view such cooperation is in any case a condition for learning, just leaving students to talk about the issues would not allow them to benefit from the higher level of knowledge and experience that the teacher presumably has.

The tasks on the DVD also presented opportunity for learning empathy, whereby the emphasis was more on thinking-with rather than on feeling-with the survivor. Some of the students seemed to struggle to empathize with Jack Bass's attitude towards Germany. They also found his way of telling his life story emotionally flat, for example, when he did not express joy while talking about his own liberation. The seminar leader had to explain that survivor victims experienced absolute de-humanization and de-individualization, resulting in a completely different register of meaning making. This indicates that school learners would most likely struggle even more with such severe differences between their own life-worlds and those of the victims. They would need a teacher who can step into this gap the same way the seminar leader did.

The role of the teacher needs to be emphasized here because teachers in Germany have considerable autonomy in translating their local curricular ideals into educational units that they deem meaningful and relevant. Pupils' learning success is said to depend on the teachers' skill and craft (*Geschick*).[72] This in turn is related to the type of teacher education they have received and in Germany the topic of National Socialism and the Holocaust is hardly present as a course of study at universities.[73] Therefore the delicate yet powerful role teacher have in mediating this topic should

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[70] In the overall reception study one of the teachers in a *Hauptschule* (a type of school where children get a qualification after grade 9 or 10 that allows them to learn a trade or business at other institutions) decided to abort the project because his learners did not have the necessary knowledge about the topic that would have necessitated a meaningful (and sensitive) engagement with the video-interviews.

[71] In the overall reception study consisting of three cases (schools) where the teacher used the DVDs in his history lessons, in two of them he let the pupils work with the task straight from the software, without mediation, and in the third case he made some selections and changed the wording slightly to suit his lesson plan, but kept the essence of the tasks intact.

[72] Ministry of Culture, "Unterricht über Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust," 2005, accessed July 27, 2017, http://www. kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/Bildung/AllgBildung/Zusammenfassung-Holocaust-November-05_01.pdf, 28.

[73] Kuchler, *Den Opfern eine Stimme geben*, 173.

not be underestimated, especially in the light of the fact that they may be well prepared for this topic in terms of their university education.

The aim of empathy, which is an ability to tune into another person's world emotionally, was not fully realized, given some of the reactive and defensive comments that came up in the discussion of the guilt question in the seminar. These comments pointed to a preoccupation with the students' *own* identities rather than trying to empathize with Jack's life story. Dori Laub explains that "the testimony [...] is an exploration of differences rather than an exploration of identity, just as the experience it testifies to - the Holocaust - is unassimilable, because it is a passage through the ultimate difference - the otherness of death."[74] Therefore, learning empathy is not about taking on another's perspective (identification), but about shifting it, as Brauer describes: "it relates to an ability to perceive other ways of living and the corresponding act of setting oneself in relation to this type of living that is not meant to produce identification but understanding."[75] A feeling-with the witness could initiate such an understanding. In order to maximize the feeling-with potential, time should be given to learners to freely watch the video-interview and to just absorb it, apart from having to solve tasks.

Moreover, German school curricula, and those pertaining to history education in particular, serve a central function in socializing subsequent generations both morally and politically, and for this purpose the memory of Holocaust victims is meant to be kept alive so as to derive lessons for the future from this history.[76] For this reason the way students relate to the memories of the victims on a personal, emotional level is of critical importance. By examining this dimension of empathy learning, some understanding can be gained in how the personal becomes political. Or to put it more poignantly: Certain politically charged topics are bound to come up when working with survivor testimonies, such as how German students might respond to what they perceive to be judgmental or stereotyped images of themselves held by Jewish survivors. If these are silenced as private, emotional matters as tends to happen in German scholarship about Nazism,[77] then valuable insight about how the personal becomes political is lost. Therefore emotional defensiveness should not get in the way of talking openly and honestly about the controversy at hand. It is not about agreeing with a witness, but about understanding where that person is coming from. That is the kind of empathy advocated here and it is a moral issue that cannot be ignored in Holocaust education, especially in Germany.

In terms of building national identity, it was shown that positioning readers and viewers as clearly recognizable political collectives based on the guilt question or an allegation of anti-Semitic attitudes was purposefully avoided, but without having ignored the topic altogether. The authors did not seem to prescribe in a moralizing way what is to be learnt from the memories of the witnesses in terms of any political, ideological or other group-orientated mobilizing factors. The "suffering of Germans" because of their history was therefore not processed using a Jewish survivor, which, according to Schmitz, is often the case in other (especially popular) medial representations of the topic.[78] At the same time, this means that given the survivor stories and the tasks, pupils will not learn anything about the tempting powers of National Socialism. Thus the "silencing tendencies of this history" is likely to be reproduced, so that it will not be about "us" and "our families," but about violent, brutal and totally alien SS men acting in a completely unimaginable space-time context.[79]

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[74] Laub cited in Schulze, Knopp and Eusterschulte, *Videographierte Zeugenschaft*, 21.

[75] Juliane Brauer, "Empathie und historische Alteritätserfahrungen," in *Emotionen, Geschichte und historisches Lernen Geschichtsdidaktische und geschichtskulturelle Perspektiven*, eds. Juliane Brauer and Martin Lücke (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2013), 76.

[76] Meseth and Proske, *Mind the Gap*, 202.

[77] See Ruth Waldeck, "Spuren des Grauens. Über Kriegserlebnisse der Väter und ihre Schatten auf die Nachkriegsgeneration," in *Unbewusste Erbschaften des Nationalsozialismus. Psychoanalytische, sozialpsychologische und historische Studien*, eds. Jan Lohl and Angela Moré (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verag, 2014), 226.

[78] Heike Schmitz, "Von un-glücklichen Kindheiten. 'Kriegsundführerkinder,' ihre Nachkommen und die Grenzen der 'Aufarbeitung' seit 1968," in *Die Kinder der Kriegskinder und die späten Folgen des NS-Terrors,* ed. Heike Knoch et al. (Heidelberg: Mattes Vlg, 2012), 99.

[79] Ibid.

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