

Curriculum-based Historical Learning in Austrian Primary Schools from 1945 to 2012

Mag. Dr. Wolfgang Bilewicz, Bed¹, Dr. Egbert Bernauer²

¹Fachkoordination Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Politische Bildung, Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Diözese Linz, Private University of Education, Diocese Linz

²Teaches history education and political education, but at the University of Teacher Education Upper Austria

***Corresponding Author:** Mag. Dr. Wolfgang Bilewicz, Bed, Fachkoordination Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Politische Bildung, Private Pädagogische Hochschule der Diözese Linz, Private University of Education, Diocese Linz

Abstract: The curricular study conceived by Heike Ackermann in 1992 concluded that educational policy decisions influence the curriculum development process. To develop a new curriculum, there must be, for instance, a problem in the school system. Only when a social problem has been established is a programme formulated. Public discussions about schools, statements by associations, school supervisory authorities are reasons for redesigning a curriculum (cf. Ackermann, 1992, p. 40). In Austria, the decision on the initiative of a curriculum development comes from the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. In the Austrian school system, the curricula are an essential basis for teaching since they outline learning objectives and learning content and contain a timetable. The syllabus is intended to guide school teaching or to specify which contents are binding for teachers (cf. Friehs, 2004, p. 118.). Basically, a curriculum comprises a conglomerate of selected teaching contents or teaching and learning objectives. The teaching contents require a certain chronology to achieve the given teaching objectives (cf. Wiater, 2006, p. 169). Furthermore, the curricula prescribe the number of hours per week for a subject, based on which one can derive the importance of a subject in the general canon of subjects.

Keywords: Austria, Curricula, History Lessons, 2. Republic, Local history, History Education, Political Education

1. INTRODUCTION

This article examines the significance of historical-political education in the curricular development of the subject of subject matter teaching from 1945 to 2012 and what challenges the school system in general had confronted with after the end of the Second World War. In this context, the curricula published since 1945 are subjected to a comparative, analytical examination. The focus is on the development of the traditional local history lessons towards modern, student-centred history lessons, which attempt to teach historical-political learning in a competence-oriented way. In addition, special significance is attached to the year 1945, especially since with the end of National Socialism, the Austrian school system was denazified and depoliticised by the implementation of the Transition Act of 3 September 1945 and had to be positioned on a new structural and organisational footing. As far as the analytical consideration of curricular development is concerned, in view of the fact that this is a theoretical contribution, a literature comparison is carried out where the curricula published since 1945 for the subject of subject matter education are examined in relation to the area of history and social studies/political education.

2. CONCEPT AND FUNCTION OF THE CURRICULUM

In general, curricula embody a compilation of selected learning content or teaching and learning objectives. If designing curricula is under the control of the state, as in the case of Austria, then they represent an indirect steering tool of the state (cf. Wiater, 2006, p. 169).

A curriculum is the state-binding, orderly summary of teaching content and learning objectives (knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour) that should be taught during a period of time at certain types of schools in certain subjects/areas of learning (Wiater, 2006, p. 169).

According to section 6 of the School Organisation Act, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research is solely responsible for the conception of curricula in Austria. This must include the following areas: general educational objectives, educational and teaching tasks of the individual subjects, didactic principles, the distribution of the subject matter to the individual school levels as well as the total number of hours per week of the class and the number of hours of the individual subjects.

3. THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON CURRICULA DESIGN

The explanations provided in the previous section illustrate the influence of the state and politics on the design of curricula. It has been observed that at the initial phase of a curriculum redesign, there is a discussion about school structures or forms of organisation. Such debates lead to resolutions and bills, whereas the actual curriculum development is carried out by curriculum commissions, some of which are made up of active and former teachers.

In opposition to these commissions, two movements established themselves in the 20th century: Firstly, the reform pedagogical movement should be mentioned; among other things, it criticised the distance of the curriculum work from school and life. Despite their reform pedagogical proposals for what they saw as innovative teaching methods, freedom of method was restricted by didactic guidelines. Furthermore, the reform pedagogues did not succeed in formulating an effective alternative to the curriculum (cf. Hopmann, 2000, p. 384).

The second counter-movement grew in the 1960s and 1970s and demanded the replacement of curriculum work by a scientifically based curriculum development. It also demanded an abolition of the division of labour, through either a scientific appropriation of the entire process or a scientific structuring of the negotiation processes. This development, too, could not prevail in the long term (cf. Hopmann, 2000, p. 384).

Notably, this situation has not changed in recent years or decades. There are hardly any curriculum reforms that have not been preceded by political debates. Nevertheless, political arguments have little significance in curriculum decisions, since practical, pedagogical and subject-didactic considerations are in the foreground. On the other hand, political influence is incomparably higher concerning questions of school organisation and structure (cf. Hopmann, 2000, p. 385).

Numerous studies have looked at the influence of political parties and other interest groups in the conceptualisation of new curricula. One such study conducted by Heike Ackermann in 1992 showed that educational policy decisions do have an influence on the curriculum development process. To develop a new curriculum, there must be, for instance, a problem in the school system. Only when a social problem has been established is a programme formulated. Public discussions about schools, statements by associations, school supervisory authorities are reasons for redesigning a curriculum (cf. Ackermann, 1992, p. 40). In Austria, the decision on the initiative of a curriculum development comes from the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture.

4. THE RE ORGANISATION OF THE AUSTRIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Although large parts of Austria were still under Nazi rule on 27 April 1945, the provisional state government under the Social Democrat Dr Karl Renner proclaimed the restoration of the Democratic Republic of Austria. This government consisted of representatives of the Socialist Party, the Austrian People's Party and the Communist Party.

In this situation of deprivation, under foreign occupation and in material need, the reconstruction of the Austrian school system began in 1945. The primary task of this initiative was to return the school system to Austrian conditions. The school organisation had to be changed and freed from National Socialist ideas (cf. Olechowski, 1975, p. 227). "Above all, however, a new spirit, the spirit of Austrian patriotism, had to fill the schools." (Neugebauer, 1972, p. 323)

When the provisional state government was constituted, the highest authority of the newly installed school administration was the State Office for People's Enlightenment, Teaching, Education and

Cultural Affairs, which was headed by the communist Dr Ernst Fischer. Initially, Fischer only wanted to entrust matters of school administration and youth work with the undersecretaries of the SPÖ and ÖVP, who were assigned to him for control. (Cf. Engelbrecht, 1988, p. 397).

Fischer, who only held this position until the first free elections in November 1945, succeeded, with the support of the Soviets, in successively expanding his sphere of power by subordinating the entire education system to his area of responsibility, with the exception of the agricultural and forestry schools. Among other things, he set up a “Commission for Textbooks and School Design” in his state office, tasked with overhauling the Austrian school system completely. The National Socialist curricula were abolished in accordance with the “Legal Transition Act”. Teachers who were members of or aspirants to the NSDAP were dismissed from their posts, and teachers who remained in their posts were obliged to undergo “retraining” as part of the denazification enforced by the Allies (cf. Engelbrecht, 1978, p. 115).

In the school system in 1945, in addition to the 4049 teachers who were dismissed without notice and the 5897 teachers who were taken out of service, 7730 "lesser offenders" had to be left in service for the time being in order to be able to teach at all in the school year 1945/1946. (Mühlhofer-Gurion, 1996, p. 70)

With this set of measures, the Allies, in cooperation with the State Office for Popular Enlightenment, Instruction, Education and Cultural Affairs, attempted to eliminate all National Socialist school structures as fast as possible, although sometimes, this only successful on the surface, since the ordinances of the German Empire were still in force in some areas.

The “Transition of Laws Act” issued by the provisional state government repealed all orders from the National Socialist rulers that contradicted the legal sensibilities of the Austrian people or contained typical National Socialist ideas:

All laws and ordinances enacted after 13 March 1938 as well as all individual provisions in such legislation which are incompatible with the existence of a free and independent state of Austria or with the laws of a genuine democracy, which contradict the sense of justice of the Austrian people or which contain typical ideas of National Socialism, are repealed. All other laws and ordinances enacted after 13 March 1938 for the Republic of Austria or its subdivisions shall be put into operation as Austrian legal provisions until the individual areas of law are reorganised. (Staatsgesetzblatt, 1945, Stück 2, Nr. 6 und 7.)

On 1 May 1945, the Federal Constitution of 1929 came back into force, with particular care taken to ensure that the laws – with certain restrictions – from the period of National Socialism and the corporative state lost validity. Some of the remaining National Socialist regulations, on the other hand, continued to have the force of law, provided they were not in stark contrast to the Austrian sense of justice. The regulations and ordinances that fell under this was to be made public by the government (cf. Wassermann, 2004, p. 11).

The political indoctrination of the entire school system by the National Socialists, which bordered on perfection and was characterised by racial hatred, unconditional obedience, and loyalty to the Führer as well as the necessity of unrestricted self-sacrifice, could not be abruptly removed from the memory of pupils and teachers. This ruthless instrumentalisation of the school by the National Socialists resulted in considerable difficulties for the political participation of large sections of an adolescent generation – a circumstance that marked the early phase of the Second Republic to a great extent (cf. Dachs, 2000, p. 463). The control system established by the Allies also affected the Ministry of Education. Each of the four occupying powers had a department for school and education matters. After the first Control Agreement of 4 July 1945, these joined together to form the Quadripartite Committee on Education Affairs to make joint decisions that applied to the whole of Austria. If no decision could be reached by this committee, the decision-making power fell to the Allied Executive Commission; only if no solution could be found by the commission either could the Allied Council make decisions as the highest authority. In practice, however, most decisions concerning the school system were already made by the Education Directorate, which fell under the Ministry of Education (cf. Engelbrecht, 1988, p. 280 ff).

On the question of the curricula redesign, the Allied Council instructed the State Office for People's Enlightenment, Instruction, Education and Cultural Affairs to allow the Austrian school system and its curricula from the last democratic phase before the Second World War and the Austrian *Ständestaat* to come into force. Thus, school reorganisation was largely based on the reimplementation of the school system of the First Republic. This new constellation led to the curricula for general elementary, lower secondary and middle schools from 1926, 1928 and 1930 once again gaining the force of law, whereby the Allied Council explicitly pointed out in the "General Demands of the Present" that these curricula were to be supplemented with the new world political and cultural changes (cf. Engelbrecht, 1981, p. 80 ff.).

5. CONTENT AND PROGRESSION OF THE SUBJECT MATTER CURRICULA IN THE COURSE OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC FROM 1945 TO 2022

The task of the four-level primary school was to give pupils an elementary general education and prepare them for the other four school levels of the lower secondary school, upper secondary school or other forms of school. With the introduction of the two-tier secondary school at the beginning of the 1960s, the upper level of the primary school was gradually dismantled (cf. Schnell, 1974, p. 200).

Curricula, in general, depend or depended heavily on social and political factors and remain under discussion even after they come into force.

The 1962 School Law was intended to unite ideologies. In addition to striving for a uniform middle school, the prevailing opposition between church and socialist educational ideology was gradually overcome. Furthermore, there was a significant expansion in the secondary sector. The implementation of the two-year Pedagogical Academy in teacher training alleviated the shortage of teachers (cf. Schnell, 1974, p. 200 f.).

4.1. The Curricula in the 40s and 50s

After the end of the Second World War, the curriculum of 1930 was reinstated with little changes. Only nuances were made in some areas, especially with regard to strengthening the Austrian identity; under the concept of historical pre-schooling, the "Austrian people and its structure, some of the prehistory of our homeland, the settlement of Austria should be addressed." (cf. Lehrplan, 1945, p. 22).

In the third grade, the aim was to understand the hometown in general as well as its economic existence. Furthermore, content on the landscape and map work was added, and social and historical content was to be taught.

In the fourth grade, the subject "Local History and Natural History" was the "core lesson of the primary school, with which the other branches of instruction dealt with in the curriculum should form a living unit" (cf. Boyer, 1990, p. 179) The principles were that the lessons should be down-to-earth and held as a whole (cf. Lehrplan, 1945, p. 3).

Here, the quality of being down-to-earth was understood to mean that the children's experiences should be taken as a starting point. "The different areas of the homeland" and "historical monuments, legends, traditions and customs" were to be discussed, in addition to dealing with "stories about historically memorable personalities" – "awakening the understanding for historical art and nature monuments of the homeland (Heimatschutz)" (cf. Curriculum, 1945, pp. 57-72).

Regarding historical monuments, one can already speak here in rudiments of an examination of historical sources. The contents of the economy and organisation were also to be expanded and the influences of time and the seasons on the landscape were to be analysed. All this was to be grasped using the example of one's own homeland. Further goals included protecting the culture and the homeland and knowing associated historical content.

4.2. The 1963 Curriculum

The new curriculum was structured according to subjects. To set content-related and methodological priorities, "exemplary learning" was integrated since the amount of subject matter accumulating over time could no longer be mastered anyway. In addition, there was now a division into minimum requirement and extension, the latter being the responsibility of the teacher. Current topics were allowed to flow in at any time.

Due to the prevailing freedom of methods, there were however no compulsory teaching models – nevertheless, private manuals were available, and autonomy continued with an internal distribution of teaching material within schools (cf. Spachinger et al., 1975, p. 202). "Closeness to home and life, clarity and self-activity of the pupils" (Spachinger et al., 1975, p. 203) were to be continued as principles for teaching. What was new, however, was the expansion of the educational tasks of the school.

If we now summarise the development of the Austrian compulsory school curricula since 1945, we can say that these developments probably took place within a traditional framework, but that this framework provided room for a number of fruitful innovations which repeatedly point in the direction of modern curriculum creation. (Spachinger et al., 1975, p. 204)

Austria's economic progress at the beginning of the 1960s was decisive for the assumption of the connection between the education system and economic growth. Occupational shifts followed and investments were made in education and research, which was followed by a first rapid upswing and an increase in the level of qualifications (cf. Dermutz, 1983, p. 39 ff). The number of hours was variable to the extent that it corresponded to the total number of hours and could be set according to organisational form and by the Ministry of Education according to appropriate circumstances. This was structured as follows in the case of local history lessons:

School level	Hourly extent of the Local History (1963)
1	3 hours per week
2	3 hours per week
3	3 or 4 hours per week
4	4 or 5 hours per week

Thus far, local history lessons have had the following objectives:

"It was intended to achieve integration, adaptation and incorporation into existing, ideal conditions and was seen as a subject for 'popular education'" (Beck & Rauterberg, 2005, p. 23).

With the introduction of the main curriculum levels, a process of standardisation was initiated: The first and second grades formed the *Volksschulunterstufe*, the third and fourth grades the *Volksschulmittelstufe*, and the fifth to eighth grades belonged to the *Volksschuloberstufe*. In the case of the latter, however, it should be noted that only for the fifth grade was a separate curriculum listed (for the sixth to eighth grades, it was presented in summary form) since the *Hauptschule* (secondary school) was in the process of largely replacing the *Volksschuloberstufe* (cf. Lehrplan, 1963, p. 82 ff and p. 93 ff).

Sachunterricht, formerly *Heimatkunde*, was significantly further developed in the curriculum reform of 1962. It should be noted that in *Sachunterricht*, the various content areas were also taught in the form of the overall lesson, whereas in the upper level of primary school, these were broken down into more precise subjects. The subject areas were now called local history and natural history, history and social studies, geography and economics, and natural history and science.

Local history and nature studies in the lower school focused on the immediate environmental experiences of the children, while in the middle school, this was extended to the home town and home state. Associated goals included the pupils' acquisition of knowledge and love of home. In history and social studies, historic times and peoples, their achievements and the time periods were to be opened up. Political content such as state consciousness, public life and democracy as well as traffic education were also assigned to this area.

Regarding the subject matter in general, only rough guidelines were given in the lower school, and the most important aspect was the children's relationship to the world in which they live. The distribution of material was more precise in the middle school, where the minimum goals from the individual areas were listed in addition to a precise description of the contents in general.

4.3. The Curricula in the 70s

During the course of the curricular revision in the early 1970s, Dr Sinowatz, Federal Minister for Education and the Arts, spoke of a social, economic and cultural change to which the school had to adapt.

Whereas in the middle level of the 1963 curriculum, there was still no differentiation of the concrete subject matter, but only a minimum amount of subject matter that had to be mastered by the of the middle school, the topics for the third and fourth school levels were listed separately in each of the six content areas and partly reformulated. The number of hours was structured in analogy to 1963 as follows:

School level	Hourly extent of the teaching of material skills (curriculum 1972)
1	3 hours per week
2	3 hours per week
3	3 or 4 hours per week
4	4 or 5 hours per week

The naming of the six subject areas of physical education in the general educational objectives of the primary school was changed such that they were given the addition of “orientation and behaviour”. Furthermore, the term “history” or “social studies” was no longer used, but rather “historical-cultural area” or “social area”. This change in terminology was intended to increase the pupils’ awareness of reflection.

Designation of the subject areas

Designation 1963	Designation 1972
Geography	Orientation and behaviour in the geographical area
Economics	Orientation and behaviour in the economic sphere
Social studies	Orientation and behaviour in the social sphere
History	Orientation and behaviour in the historical-cultural area
Natural history	Orientation and behaviour in the natural history field
Presentation techniques	Orientation and behaviour in the technical field

The educational tasks in the fields of local history and nature studies still correspond to the children’s environment in the primary school lower grade. From this, first general insights are to be conveyed. The treatment of the home town in the third grade and the home province in the fourth grade should also continue to be handled in such a way that people should be related to it in every respect. Purposeful behaviour should prepare pupils for future life as Austrian citizens.

The areas of history and social studies were still focused on the historical epochs, personalities and their achievements as well as the concept of time over the different periods. Empathy for historical and contemporary groups was to be covered. Efforts towards a peaceful coexistence were attributed a high priority, and they included practical conflict resolution. Furthermore, an introduction to democracy and the interests of the state was to take place. Thus, the first steps were taken to address civic education in primary schools. The lower elementary school level was now called basic level 1, and the middle school level was called basic level 2. The number of hours of subject lessons was reduced or standardised and now referred to all four school levels.

School level	Hourly extent of the teaching of material skills (1979 curriculum)
1	3 hours per week
2	3 hours per week
3	3 hours per week
4	3 hours per week

The educational objectives in the individual areas of physical education also remained identical to those in the 1972 curriculum. Only one detailed area changed: natural history was now replaced by the term “biology and environmental studies”.

The topics and contents of the teaching material for basic level 1 and basic level 2 are also identical, except for their designation (basic level – lower or intermediate level).

4.4. The 1996 Curriculum

The 1996 curriculum is also based on the 1963 Decree of the Federal Minister for Education and the comprehensive renewal after numerous school trials in 1986. Similar to the 1979 curriculum, the number of lessons was three hours per week for each school level.

School level	Hourly extent of the teaching of material skills (Curriculum 1996)
1	3 hours per week
2	3 hours per week
3	3 hours per week
4	3 hours per week

Changes crystallised in the terminology of the subject areas, which are now referred to as experiential and learning areas. The following table clearly shows the changed designations:

Designation 1963	Designation 1972	Designation 1996
<i>Geography</i>	Orientation and behaviour in the <i>geographical area</i>	Experience and learning area <i>space</i>
<i>Economics</i>	Orientation and behaviour in the <i>economic sphere</i>	Experience and learning area <i>economy</i>
<i>Social studies</i>	Orientation and behaviour in the <i>social sphere</i>	Experience and learning area <i>community</i>
<i>History</i>	Orientation and behaviour in the <i>historical-cultural sphere</i>	Experience and learning area <i>time</i>
<i>Natural history</i>	Orientation and behaviour in the <i>natural history field</i>	Experience and learning area <i>nature</i>
<i>Presentation techniques</i>	-----	-----
-----	Orientation and behaviour in the <i>technical field</i>	Experience and learning area <i>technology</i>

The learning and experience area “community” should again start from the children’s environment and make them aware of their standing in social groups. Topics in the family, school and playgroups as well as social action should be rough objectives.

Festivals and celebrations, the importance of rules in communities, managing conflicts or the impact of the birth of a baby on the family are just a few of the given topics.

In the experiential and learning area “time”, content on the formation of concepts of time increased. The comprehension of time dimensions through processes to measurement was to be learned to be able to better grasp historical events and develop an understanding of other times. In addition, it was now important to actively look into the future in relation to the effects of the present. Last but not least, as described in the past curricula, peaceful coexistence was to be strived for.

Distinguishing between old and new objects, telling the time or gradually learning about historical events were among the subjects taught.

4.5. The Curricula Since 2000

Another change to the curriculum stemmed from the amendment to the School Act passed in 1998. Among other things, primary level 1 was newly regulated here. The pre-school level could now be run together with basic level 1. The curriculum and the differentiation steps had to be adapted in a certain way to make this possible. Changing school levels was made dependent on the child’s development and had to be organisationally possible at any time.

The timetable for *Sachunterricht* remained unchanged as in the previous versions, and the experience and learning areas also retained their designations.

School level	Hourly extent of the teaching in the subject area (Curriculum 2003)
1	3 hours per week
2	3 hours per week
3	3 hours per week
4	3 hours per week

When comparing the educational and teaching tasks as well as the teaching materials of the 1996 and 2003 curricula, no differences in content could be found. Only minor changes, such as in the area of space, in which in 1996, only “orientation exercises on various representations” (Lehrplan 2003, p. 215) were required, whereas in 2003, there was talk of “knowing sketches and plans as geographical forms of representation, producing them oneself and using them as orientation aids” (Lehrplan, 2003 p. 217).

With the Decree of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, the currently valid curriculum was issued in 2012.

When comparing it with the 2003 curriculum, the change in gender-equitable language can be noticed immediately. In 2003, only the masculine form was used when referring to people, whereas in 2012, a gender-equitable form of expression is used.

In contrast to the 2003 curriculum, the content to be covered in the third and fourth grade is no longer listed separately in the curriculum of basic level 2. The timetable, on the other hand, has not changed since 2003.

School level	Hourly extent of the teaching in the subject area (Curriculum 2012)
1	3 hours per week
2	3 hours per week
3	3 hours per week
4	3 hours per week

While the focus was exclusively on active working methods in the 2003 curriculum, in the current curriculum, the children are to be encouraged to inform themselves and interpret content independently.

Some changes in the areas of experience and learning have also been noted. For example, the family has been replaced as the starting point in the area of community by school life alone. Moreover, a more important function has now been assumed by the change of perspective and empathy. These, combined with values, norms and conflict resolution skills, constitute a basis for democratic education and peaceful coexistence.

In the teaching material of basic level 2, it can be seen that the juxtaposition of the working woman with the housewife has been removed. The portrait of one’s own being and the analysis of adequate behaviour have been added. In the school area, there is talk of rights and duties, democratic decisions are to be made actively. The understanding of other cultures and the sensitisation of primary school pupils for other people now actively take their place in the curriculum. Other important changes relate to the correct use of media to obtain information and to informing about further educational paths.

Understanding and empathy has also taken on a high priority in the area of time. Compared with 2003, in the current curriculum, the children are to not only look at historical events from the present perspective but also understand the situations at that time and the actions associated with them. Changes in lifestyles over the course of time must also be grasped. The subject matter now also includes the future, whereas the historical aspects were previously limited to the past. This is to be largely implemented through personal planning, but also to show the associated uncertainty.

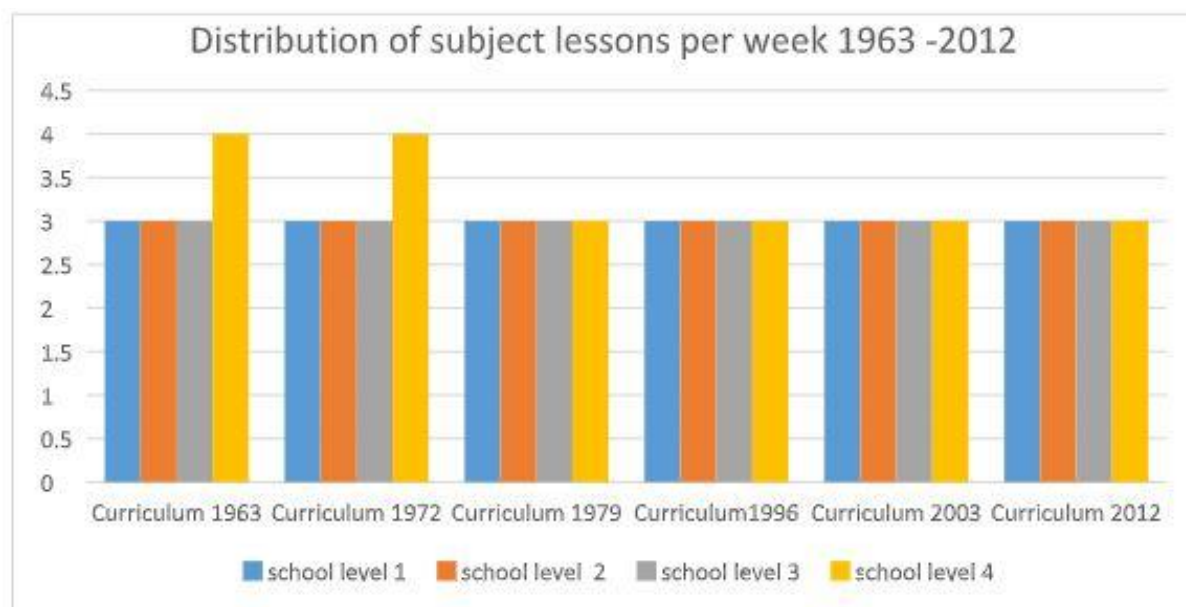
With regard to an increased competence orientation, in the experience and learning area “community”, reference is made to understanding and helping to shape living together in other communities. Thus, participation can be described in rudimentary terms. Concerning the historical orientation competence of the FUEP model, selected examples are used in the third and fourth grades to differentiate between times of peace, times of need and significant events from early local history. The pupils are encouraged to gain insights into the changes in the wider environment. (cf. Wolf et al., 2009, p. 161.)

6. CONCLUSION

The question of the particularly challenging situation for the Austrian school system in 1945 after the end of National Socialism can be answered in view of the circumstances prevailing immediately after the end of the war to the effect that the situation in Austrian schools could be compared to a torso in political, ethical and physical terms. The political indoctrination of the entire school system by the

National Socialists, which bordered on perfection and was characterised by racial hatred, unconditional obedience, loyalty to the Führer and the necessity for unrestricted self-sacrifice, could not be abruptly removed from the memory of the pupils and teachers. This ruthless instrumentalisation of the school by the National Socialists resulted in considerable difficulties for the political participation of large sections of an adolescent generation – a circumstance that marked the early phase of the Second Republic to a significant extent (cf. Dachs, 2000, p. 463).

Political participation, a correspondingly reflective awareness of history and the teaching principle of political education, which has been in force since 1978, should not be restricted to the secondary level only but should already be part of teaching at the primary level. In this context, the subject of *Sachunterricht* has an important role to play in addressing these requirements and conditions in an appropriate manner. The curricula for the subject of physical education took up these areas quite late. Up until the 1960s, the historical aspects of science education tended to be related to local history topics, such as one’s own hometown or the origin of legends and their transmission. With the 1963, 1972 and 1979 curricula, the first steps were taken in the direction of political education. In the curricula of the 2000s, a change of perspective and historical empathy assumed a more important function. These are combined with values, norms and conflict-resolution skills, a basis for democratic education and peaceful coexistence. In the current curriculum, pupils are encouraged to not only look at historical events from the present perspective but also understand the situations at that time and the associated actions. In addition, lifestyle changes over the course of time must be understood. Regarding an increased competence orientation, the experience and learning area “community” refers to understanding and helping to shape living together in other communities. In this way, participation can be discussed in rudimentary terms. With regard to the historical orientation competence of the FUER model (cf. Baumgärtner, 2019, p. 82), a differentiation is made in the third and fourth grades between times of peace, times of need and significant events from early local history using selected examples. The pupils are encouraged to gain insights into the changes in the wider environment.



While the challenges and demands on the subject of *Sachunterricht* have changed and expanded massively, especially in the last two decades, it can be seen from this table that the number of weekly lessons has not changed significantly in the last decades. Since the 1963 curriculum, three hours per week have been planned for this subject; only in the fourth grade did the 1963 and 1972 curricula provide for an increase to four hours per week. No concrete weekly lessons existed for the curricula of the 1940s; therefore, the curriculum of 1945 was not considered in this table. Although the challenges with regard to the subject became increasingly multifaceted and diverse, the number of weekly lessons was not increased. However, the development of the curricula as a whole from the time after 1945 to the present can be considered very positive in terms of a reflected historical consciousness and democratic participation.

REFERENCES

- Ackermann, H. (1992). *Information technology education in the field of tension between politics, educational administration and pedagogy*. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
- Blankertz, H. (1991). *Theories and models of didactics*. Munich: Juventa
- Baumgärtner, U. (2019). *Wegweiser in der Geschichtsdidaktik: Historisches Lernen in der Schule* (2nd ed.). Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh.
- Boyer, L. (1990). *Sachunterricht*. In: T. Egger, H. Gruber, A. Joksch et al. (eds.): *Kommentar zum Lehrplan der Volksschule*. ÖBV/J&V: Vienna. 179-187
- Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (2012). *Lehrplan der Volksschule*. BGBl. No. 134/1963 as amended by BGBl. II No. 303/2012.
- Dermutz, S. (1983). *The Austrian Way: School Reform and Educational Policy in the Second Republic*. Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik.
- Dagger, J. (1959). *Curriculum of the Occident: Two and a half millennia of its history*. Ratingen: Henn,
- Engelbrecht, H. (1988). *History of the Austrian education system*. Education and teaching on Austrian soil. Volume 5. Vienna: ÖBV.
- Friebs, B. (2004). *Introduction to the theory of school. A study book on theoretical aspects of the Austrian school system*. Graz: Leykam
- Hopmann, S. (2000). *Lehrplan des Abendlandes – Abschied von seiner Geschichte? Basic lines of the development of curriculum and curriculum work since 1800*. In W. R. Keck (ed.). *History and Present of the Curriculum. Josef Dolch "Lehrplan des Abendlandes" als aktuelle Herausforderung* (pp. 377-400). Baltmannsweiler: Schneider-Verlag Hohengehren.
- Landesschulrat (1945). *Curricula for the general elementary schools*. Graz: Steiermärkische National Printing Office.
- Landesschulrat (1950). *Curricula for general primary schools*. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst.
- Landesschulrat (1963). *Curriculum of the primary school*. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag Wien. Verlag für Jugend und Volk.
- Landesschulrat (1972). *Lehrplan der Volksschule*. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kultur. Verlag für Jugend und Volk.
- Landesschulrat (1979). *APS-Lehrpläne. Curriculum of the primary school*. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, Jugend & Volk.
- Curriculum Service (1996). *Lehrplan der Volksschule mit Anmerkungen und Ergänzungen*. Vienna: ÖBV Pädagogischer Verlag.
- Curriculum Service (2003). *Lehrplan der Volksschule mit Anmerkungen und Ergänzungen*. Vienna: öbv & hpt.
- Wolf, W., Scheiber, B., & BM für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur. (2009). *Lehrplan der Volksschule: Mit Anmerkungen und Ergänzungen; Stand: 1. September 2009*. Graz: Leykam
- Mühlhofer-Gurion, G. (1996). *Morbus Austriacus. Die NS-Zeit in Österreich betreffend Verdrängungsinstrumente und Verdrängungsmechanismen in der geschichtlichen Bildung und in der vorwiegend mütterlichen Erziehung der Nachkriegsgenerationen ab 1945*. (Unpublished diploma thesis) Universität Wien.
- Neugebauer, M. (1972). *School system*. In E. Weinzierl & K. Skalnik (eds.). *Austria. The Second Republic*, 2nd vol. (pp.323-346). Graz: Styria
- Schnell, H. (1974). *The Austrian school in transition*. Vienna: Jugend und Volk Vertragsges.m.b.H.
- Schnell, H. (1993) *Bildungspolitik in der Zweiten Republik*. Vienna: Europaverlag
- Spachinger, O., Spreitzer, H. & Sretenovic, K. (1975). *The Austrian school. 1945–1975*. Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst; Vienna: Youth and people.
- Wassermann, H.-P.(2004) *Verälschte Geschichte im Unterricht. National Socialism and Austria after 1945*. Innsbruck: Studienverlag
- Wiater, W. (2006). *Lehrplan, Curriculum, Bildungsstandard*. In K.-H. Arnold, U. Sandfuchs & J. Wiechmann (eds.). *Handbuch Unterricht* (pp.169-178.). Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Dr. Wolfgang Bilewicz, studied political science and history at the universities of Innsbruck and Linz in Austria. At the University of Linz, from 2010 to 2016, he wrote his dissertation entitled "The Holocaust in Textbooks and Curricula-a Historical Pedagogical Comparison between Bavaria and Austria." Furthermore, he taught German and history at Austrian schools for more than two decades. Since September 2020, he has been teaching at the Private University of Education of the Diocese Linz in the fields of history didactics and civic education. In his research fields he analyses the handling of Holocaust memorials

in Austria and Bavaria, furthermore he examines history textbooks and curricula in relation to the meaning of the Holocaust.



Dr Egbert Bernauer, studied history and political education as well as philosophy, psychology and education at the University of Vienna. In April 2004 he completed his doctorate on a topic of contemporary history at the University of Vienna. After 20 years of teaching at secondary schools in Vienna and Linz, he began working at the Upper Austrian University of Education in 2009, where he worked in both primary and secondary education. His research focuses on contemporary history with a focus on National Socialism and the Holocaust, as

well as in the field of history didactics with a focus on school development in Austria.

Citation: Mag. Dr. Wolfgang Bilewicz, Ed & Dr. Egbert Bernauer. "Curriculum-based Historical Learning in Austrian Primary Schools from 1945 to 2012" *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, vol 9, no. 6, 2022, pp.89-99. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0906009>.

Copyright: © 2022 Authors. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.