



# TEXTBOOKS BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION

## A JOURNEY THROUGH THE HISTORY OF THE GEORG ECKERT INSTITUTE

Member of the  
*Leibniz*  
Leibniz Association

**GEORG ECKERT  
INSTITUTE**

for International  
Textbook Research

'In Germany we have also discovered how vital it is to confront the past in order to achieve reconciliation. Textbook-related dialogue is one instrument with which we have had most positive experiences. For textbooks greatly influence the images of history and of neighbouring countries that develop in the minds of young people. With the Georg Eckert Institute in Braunschweig, Germany has been able to support this dialogue between Korea and Japan. Such gestures of reconciliation were not easy in Europe either, such as between Germany and its neighbour Poland. While these steps may consume a great deal of time and energy, they ultimately always pave the way towards mutual understanding.'

Joachim Gauck, President of Germany, 2015

Eckhardt Fuchs  
Steffen Sammler

Assisted by Kathrin Henne

# Textbooks between Tradition and Innovation

A Journey through the History of the  
Georg Eckert Institute

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## FOREWORD

In 2015 the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research celebrated its 40th anniversary as an independent research institute. The story however, began much earlier, namely in 1951, when Georg Eckert established the 'International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks' at the Teacher Training College in Braunschweig.

But who was Georg Eckert, after whom our Institute is named? Born on 14 August 1912 in Berlin, Eckert studied history, geography, German studies, ethnology and folklore at the Universities of Berlin and Bonn, and gained his PhD in 1935 with his thesis on Micronesia. He was brought up in a social democratic household and became involved with the socialist pupil and student movement at a young age, a connection which he maintained throughout the period of National Socialist rule. As a student teacher in 1937 he joined the NSDAP as a result of political pressure from his headmaster. During the Second World War he served as an army clerk in German-occupied Greece where he joined the Greek resistance movement in 1944.

Eckert's determined commitment to democratically rebuild the education system after the war was almost certainly a result of his political work in the SPD, his inner conflict concerning his NSDAP membership and his experiences in the resistance movement. At the end of 1946 he was appointed as a lecturer at the Kant Teacher Training College, later the *Pädagogische Hochschule Niedersachsen*, in Braunschweig. By 1952 he was Professor of History and Methods of History Teaching at the same institution.

This was the start of Eckert's influential career as an academic and education policy maker and whilst he was employed in the field of teacher training in Lower Saxony, his impact was felt much further afield, partly through his focus on the revision of textbooks across the globe. Eckert deliberately targeted his efforts at those activities carried out in the post-war period by trade unions, governments and international organisations. These were united by a common mission to liberate textbooks of stereotypes and portrayals of the enemy; a policy Eckert believed would stimulate international understanding and peace. His work in the field of international textbook revision was founded in his deep conviction that reconciliation with neighbouring countries with whom Germany had once been at war was not only a matter of democratic principle but also a key aspect of foreign policy for the new Germany.

The decades of work by Eckert in the field of textbook revision, culminating with his election as President of the German UNESCO Commission in 1964, continued to shape the history of the Institute even after his death in 1974. Textbook revision and textbook research are still today the central pillars underpinning the work of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI), established in 1975.

This brochure provides an overview of the work and achievements of the GEI since Georg Eckert first began collecting textbooks in his cramped office and initiated discussions concerning textbooks with colleagues from Europe and the USA. From these humble beginnings the Institute has grown steadily not least due to the financial support of the state of Lower Saxony. It has consistently expanded its scope of activities and enlarged its collection.

Successfully interlinking research, research infrastructure and knowledge dissemination has become the trademark of the GEI. It has earned national as well as international renown in this field, which is not only an indication of the unique work performed by the Institute both academically and in educational practice, but continues to serve as motivation to advance textbook research still further. The Institute provides pertinent research infrastructure and transfers its knowledge and expertise to the public sphere. It is involved in a continuous dialogue with education policy-makers and practitioners.

Textbooks of course continue to occupy a central role in education, used by states and social groups not only to define the knowledge to be passed on and the skills to be nurtured, but also the cultural demarcations of societies. Textbook analysis opens channels through which to explore processes of identification, patterns of inclusion and exclusion and therefore 'integration'. In view of new social problems, such as in the context of post-colonial migratory societies and the current movement of refugees to Europe, the demands upon textbook research to provide cultural mediation and to promote understanding have become increasingly complex.

With this brochure we hope to provide an interesting and hopefully entertaining foray into the history of the Georg Eckert Institute and to take readers on a journey that combines tradition with modernity and affords them insights into the future development of the Institute.

January 2016

Eckhardt Fuchs  
Director



# INSTITUTIONAL MILESTONES

## The Early Years: The International Textbook Institute

When he took up his post as a lecturer at the Kant Teacher Training College in Braunschweig, Georg Eckert became involved in reforming teacher training in general and history teaching in particular. One of his first achievements was the establishment of the Braunschweig Research Group for History Education. The aim of the group was to develop new teaching, learning and illustrative materials for the history classroom, and to carry out crucial pedagogical research in order to redesign history lessons for a democratic society and to further the cause of mutual understanding between nations.

Eckert then shifted his attention towards turning the research group into a foundation. Funding was to come from the German Teachers' Unions (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Lehrerverbände*), the military governments of Great Britain, France and the USA, the state government of Lower Saxony, the City of Braunschweig and various American foundations. When it subsequently became clear that this idea could not be brought to fruition, education policy makers and colleagues of Georg Eckert pushed for an institutional home to be found for the International Institute for the Improvement of Textbooks founded by Eckert in 1951 at the Kant Teacher Training College. This was eventually achieved in 1953, bolstered by support from the government of Lower Saxony. The objective of the International Textbook Institute, which was affiliated with the Kant College, was to carry out research into the design of educational materials and teaching methods, with a particular focus on history teaching and its related subjects from an international comparative perspective.



Georg Eckert

The new Institute furthered international communication through the organisation of bilateral textbook discussions, a feat only rendered possible through the substantial financial support provided by the Department for Federal Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of the Interior and the Foreign Office. The Institute's multilateral projects were also financed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO whilst the Consortium of German Teachers' Associations made significant contributions towards financing the Institute's publications. By the end of the 1960s, however, it was clear that major organisational and financial restructuring would be necessary if the Institute was to fulfil its increasing scale of responsibilities and international textbook work.

## The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research – The Founding Years

Following Georg Eckert's sudden death in January 1974, politicians and academics in Lower Saxony resolved that the work of the International Textbook Institute should continue. On 26 June 1975 delegates of the state parliament for Lower Saxony voted unanimously in favour of a resolution to establish the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research as a registered public institution. This act not only ensured the continuation of the institute's work with textbooks; it also provided a new and stable base from a legal, financial and organisational point of view. Lower Saxony invited all other federal states to participate in the organisation of the GEI as a nationwide textbook institute.

Almost all federal states took up the invitation and, in conjunction with the Foreign Office and the Ministry for Education and Research, they subse-





Alfred Kubel

quently funded the Institute and were represented on the supervisory board after its inception in 1977. The Board of Trustees, under the leadership of Alfred Kubel, and the Academic Advisory Board, which was founded in 1978 under the leadership of Rudolf Vierhaus, constituted the organisational organs

that would guide, advise and support the Institute in all its endeavours. Amendments to the original statutes of the GEI in 1993 provided a legal basis for the states of the former German Democratic Republic to participate in the work of the Georg Eckert Institute.

## Joining the Leibniz Association: The Georg Eckert Institute – Leibniz Institute for International Textbook Research

From the 1990s onwards the work of the Institute was increasingly tugged in two directions, caught between the growing expectations of textbook projects on the part of international and transnational organisations, and the demands of the funding federal states, who expected the research and infrastructure projects to be more intensely directed towards the practice of social studies teaching in Germany. The ever increasing international activities and expanding research infrastructure also required longer-term financial planning. The state of Lower Saxony therefore sought membership for the Institute in the scientific community of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, an association of non-university research institutions funded by state and national government. On the basis of a favourable evaluation of the GEI by the Scientific Commission of Lower Saxony the GEI embarked upon a process of fundamental restructuring and reorientation at the end of 2006.

The work of the Institute had traditionally been focused on textbook consultation and development and it had earned an outstanding reputation on account of its involvement in contemporary textbook development processes in post-conflict societies and its practice-oriented peace education activities on both the national and international stages. New challenges to scientific and academic policy, however, required considerable expansion to the GEI's research base and infrastructure services in order to fundamentally reconceptualise its knowledge transfer activities. This process involved the establishment of departments for both research and research infrastructure, an operations strategy for the medium term, and a dramatic increase in personnel.

The evaluation carried out by the German Council of Science and Humanities (*Wissenschaftsrat*) in 2008 confirmed the transregional significance of the GEI and the national interest in its achievements. The groundwork was thus laid for the GEI's acceptance into the Leibniz Association as an academic infrastructure institution, funded by both national and state governments. The Georg Eckert Institute became a member of section A: 'Humanities and Education Research' of the Leibniz Association on 1 January 2011.



# RECONCILIATION AND UNDERSTANDING

## INTERNATIONAL TEXTBOOK WORK

### Bilateral Textbook Dialogue

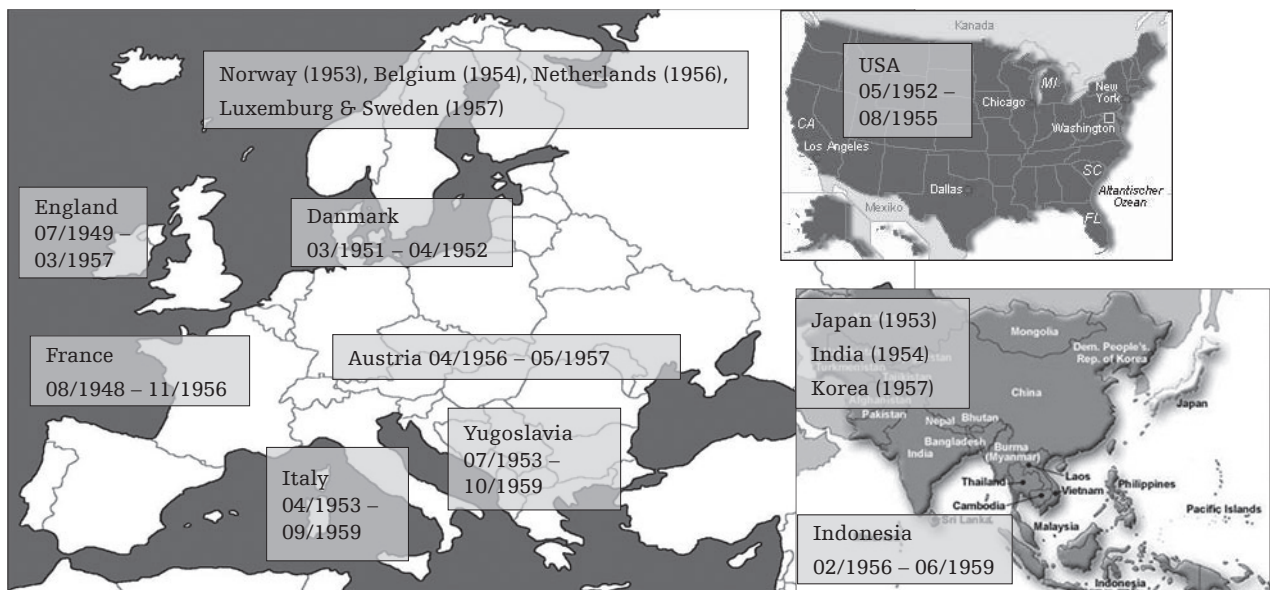
International dialogue and research on textbooks have always constituted the central pillars of the Institute's work. In the immediate aftermath of the war, however, the focus was rather placed on international textbook revision with the aim of supporting international reconciliation and ensuring enduring peace.

The priorities for textbook revision were initially the former wartime enemies in Western Europe whereby particular emphasis was placed on reconciliation and communication processes with France. The bilateral textbook dialogues, which began in 1949, sought to eliminate factual errors, particularly images of the enemy and stereotypes, from history books. The dialogues were based on academic research regarding disputed aspects of shared history.

This should ultimately bring about the necessary conditions for European societies to find reconciliation after their experiences during the Second World War, to collaborate in a process of European unity, and also to enable teachers to develop a democratic view of history which would then be passed on to the next generation.

In the course of the European unification process the bilateral textbook discussions soon expanded to include Italy, the northern European states, Austria and Switzerland. Parallel – overarching – dialogues with Yugoslavia were also initiated in the 1950s.

Within the framework of the 'New Ostpolitik' under Chancellor Willy Brandt and the Helsinki Accords, work on textbooks was intensified in the 1970s to include Poland and Romania.



The first decade of bilateral textbook dialogue



German-Polish textbook commission –  
Władysław Markiewicz and Georg Eckert

The establishment of the German-Polish Textbook Commission in 1972 played a pivotal role. Together with the Franco-German Textbook Commission, it still represents the success of the work carried out by the Georg Eckert Institute and is viewed as a paradigm of international textbook work. The German-Israeli textbook discussions, which began in 1981, marked the conclusion of 'traditional' bilateral work on textbooks. The process not only

signalled a new dimension in the reconciliation processes of German society and politics, but also marked a change of perspective in bilateral textbook discussions. The dominant focus on the history of the relationship between two states was expanded to include the coexistence of and conflicts between religious and cultural communities from a long-term historical perspective.

German-Israeli textbook dialogue, from left to right: Karl-Ernst Jeismann, Yehuda Ben Avner, Reinhard Rürup, Chaim Schatzker





German-Indonesian meeting in Braunschweig, 1965

## Textbook Activities beyond the Boundaries of Europe

From an early stage, the organisers of international textbook activities in Germany had envisaged working beyond the boundaries of Europe. They viewed textbook dialogue with newly established states formed as a result of decolonisation processes in Asia as a unique chance to make an independent German contribution to processes of reconciliation and understanding on the international stage. In Georg Eckert's view, the Federal Republic of Germany was particularly suited to assuming the role of intermediary, together with international organisations, between colonial powers and their former colonies. The textbook discussions with Japan and Indonesia that were initiated in the 1950s demonstrated the expansion of the work on textbooks beyond Europe, and continue to this day.

## Cooperation with International Organisations

The seminars held by UNESCO in 1950 and 1951 in Brussels and Sèvres that addressed the reform of history lessons made an important organisational and material contribution to the institutionalisation of international textbook work in Braunschweig. Georg Eckert was involved in the conception of the central, long-term UNESCO project in this area from the 1960s onwards. In 1971 he initiated the UNESCO project 'Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks', which undertook the first ever systematic evaluation of history, geography and social studies books beyond continental and cultural boundaries.

The close partnership between the GEI and UNESCO continues to this day. They have jointly compiled important reports and handbooks, including the *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision* and most recently



a study of *The International Status of Education about the Holocaust*. The GEI is also developing textbook recommendations in conjunction with UNESCO from the perspective of multiculturalism and diversity. UNESCO honoured the GEI's dedication to international textbook work in 1985 by bestowing upon the Institute the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education.



UNESCO Prize for Peace Education



Willy Brandt and Georg Eckert (UNESCO, Paris 1968)



Ryon Kwan Kim (UNESCO) and Gerhard Neumann (Council of Europe), Braunschweig 1971

In addition to the Institute's collaboration with UNESCO, the Council of Europe has also been an important partner for the GEI on matters of international textbooks. The development of a European perspective that transcends national borders and traditional images of the enemy has been the Council of Europe's central sphere of action since the 1950s. The expertise demonstrated by the international textbook institute at conferences on the reform of history and geography teaching held by this global organisation led to the Institute being entrusted with the construction of a *European Information and Documentation Centre for the Improvement of History and Geography Textbooks* in 1965. The organisation of this European textbook centre subsequently constituted the starting point for a multitude of joint research projects, conferences and training events, which facilitated valuable contributions by the International Textbook Institute to the methodology discourse within the field of textbook research. The Institute also made significant contributions to the critical analysis of representations of Europe in textbooks for history, geography and politics, and to the reconceptualisation of history teaching following the revolutions in Europe in 1989.



Japanese history teachers from the association 'Teachers against War' visiting the GEI in 1998

## Challenges after 1989

1989 was a year of radical change that opened up new perspectives for textbook projects with numerous countries on both sides of the iron curtain that had separated Europe during the Cold War, in particular with the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Baltic states.

The end of the Cold War saw the disappearance of traditional political images of the enemy which had been common in textbooks during the era of confrontation between eastern and western blocs. However, the newly emerging conflicts in the Balkans and in several successor states of the Soviet Union somewhat dampened the hope that scrutinising textbooks for images of the enemy or for prejudices would no longer be necessary. It was a period in which some parts of Europe were rapidly approaching one another whilst a new strain of nationalism was flaring up in parts of the former Soviet Union. Newly formed states, particularly in South Eastern Europe, replaced old prejudices with new ones that were based upon ethnic and cultural minorities and characterised by nationalistic interpretations of history. Ethno-centric resentment was frequently whipped up by national elites.

With these developments, the Institute's traditional fields of work dramatically regained relevance. At the same time, the GEI found itself confronted not only with the rise of new forms of nationalism but also with conflicts between religious and cultural communities within one and the same society. A further new challenge for international textbook projects was the need to address aggressive and violent conflicts, especially in South Eastern Europe.

This also meant a revival for textbook revision. The bilateral textbook commissions were enlarged and restructured, with a focus on the impacts of European integration on the concepts of identity conveyed in textbooks, rather than the prior restriction to conflict-laden national perspectives, often pertaining to specific international relations. The GEI was also active in the Baltic states and, from 2000, in Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular in the context of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. Here the GEI was involved in the new design of history, politics and geography education and in the development of relevant teaching material. These activities only to a certain extent followed the classic model of bi- or multila-

teral textbook negotiations. Rather, the general framework demanded that other forms of project work be developed with intensive discussions in a seminar format, and that the GEI assume a consulting, evaluating and mediating role.

Thanks to the networks systematically built up by the GEI long before 1989 in the context of its international textbook work, the Institute was able to function as a specialised authority and as mediator between the various 'parties', and in doing so contributed to the development of textbooks designed to promote peace. The GEI thus established itself as an internationally recognised transfer institution for the impartation of textbook-related knowledge and the relevant competences.

## New Directions

It became clear from the challenges after 1989 that international textbook revision was still a timely and much needed instrument with which to negotiate processes of transformation and conflict resolution. This was not only the case for Europe but also for other regions such as East Asia, where the achievements of the GEI provide inspiring examples. On the other hand, it also became

apparent that the content and form of traditional international textbook revision was no longer sufficient; that more complex approaches and methods needed to be found in the face of current developments such as globalisation, growing heterogeneity and cultural dynamics. The fact that both international tension and conflicts between different groups within one and the same society developing in areas that touched not only on issues of social distribution but increasingly on the struggle for recognition of collective identities was a clear sign that textbook revision would have to move beyond its field of work thus far: destabilising forms of national prejudice.

Today the work of the three joint textbook commissions with Poland, the Czech Republic and Israel therefore enjoys rather different prospects as compared to those of the 1970s and 1980s. The Second German-Israeli Textbook Commission founded in 2010, for instance, concerns itself with representations of the respective 'other' country as well as portrayals of globalisation processes and Holocaust education. The significance of the textbook commissions, and also the difficulties they have encountered in the course of their collaboration, were emphasised by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel during an interview in 2015.

Angela Merkel in an interview with the Jewish daily newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* on 02 October 2015

A German-Israeli textbook commission recently published a study that concluded the image of Israel portrayed in German textbooks was rather negative. 'What is astonishing', writes the Commission, 'is that nothing has changed since the findings of the first German-Israeli Textbook Commission in 1985.' How can we improve this situation?

'First and foremost it is a good thing that we have these German-Israeli textbook commissions, who pay attention to such aspects. If the findings of this study are true, then we can make a difference by writing textbooks in collaboration with each other and by including the Israeli perspective. We have excellent experience with a Franco-German history textbook. It took a long time to agree on a shared view of history. It was a highly instructive process; perhaps we should think about initiating such a project between our two countries.'

# RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

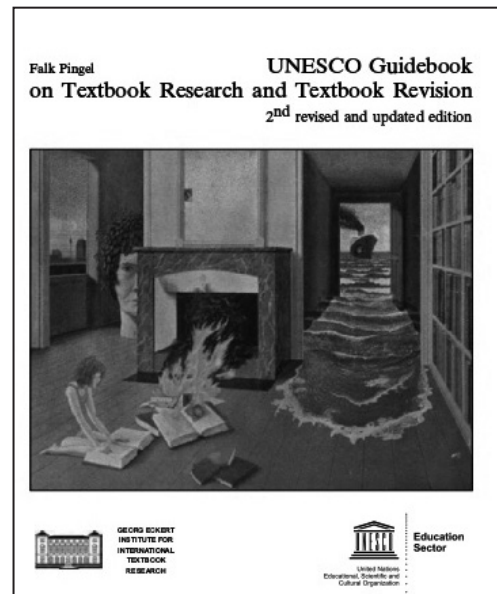
## TEXTBOOKS IN THEIR SOCIAL CONTEXTS

### Textbook Revision as a Subject of Scholarly Reflection

Textbook revision as initiated by Georg Eckert was based on scholarly expertise, which formed the groundwork for the analysis and critique of textbook contents. At that time, however, textbook research had not yet been institutionally established. It was not until the 1960s that textbook revision itself became the subject of academic study, which revealed the need for a sound base of fundamental research. Textbook revision could then no longer be reduced to a merely pragmatic process of negotiation of a textbook narrative, which would be collaboratively defined and liberated from enemy images, stereotypes and factual errors. This implied a critical approach to the cultural practice of traditional textbook dialogue. The studies carried out in the years to follow thus addressed the tension between academic textbook analysis and the need for political legitimisation felt by those involved in both policy and the process of textbook revision.

Today, systematic and critical reflection on the history of textbook revision is an important area of textbook research. It extends beyond the borders of Europe and the USA, encompassing East Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Textbook research has also reacted to shifts within history didactics, which now propose approaches with multiple perspectives in order to enable pupils to use self-critique and reflection when dealing with the past.



### Theory and Methods of Textbook Research

Changes in the practice of teaching school knowledge and in the use of media in the classroom have led to an intensive discussion that continues today on the methods of a truly scientific textbook research. While initially the traditional methods of hermeneutic textbook analysis were expanded upon to include quantitative and qualitative methods from the social sciences and from linguistics, the spatial and visual turns shifted the methodological discussion to beyond the boundaries of text analysis. Recently, the debate surrounding theory and method has broadened, now encompassing the use and appropriation of teaching and learning materials in the classroom.



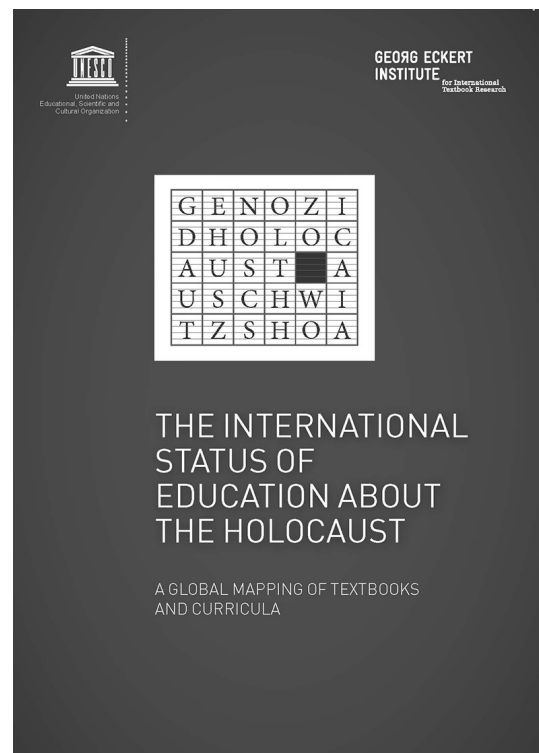
## Comparative Research on the Holocaust and Human Rights

From the beginning, comparative studies on violence crime and resistance to twentieth-century dictatorships constituted an important field of research at the GEI. Research on textbook portrayals of the destruction of the European Jews has become an area of focus since the 1960s. The analyses of this subject in German textbooks initiated by the International Textbook Institute together with the UNESCO Institute of Education in Hamburg, were continued primarily in the course of the German-American and the German-Israeli Textbook Dialogues between 1978 and 1985.

In the past two decades, the GEI has carried out joint projects, conferences and workshops with the *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research* and with UNESCO. These activities culminated in the publication of a study on *The International Status of Education about the Holocaust*, which was presented to a wider public at the International Day of Commemoration of Victims of the Holocaust in Paris in 2014.

As a result of the *Recommendations Concerning Education for International Understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms* adopted by UNESCO in 1974, questions addressing human rights education had been shifted into the forefront of the GEI's research since the 1980s. This research was based on comparative studies on violence in the twentieth century.

The Institute developed a system of categories that serve as analytical guidelines on the subject of human rights in the textbook and, together with the German UNESCO Commission, produced a bilingual teachers' handbook: *Teaching Human Rights*.



## Comparative Perspectives

In the course of the social upheaval in Europe after 1989, the Institute was able to productively draw upon its methodological and specialist expertise in research on a concept of Europe that now included Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. From the beginning, the textbook research carried out at the Institute had equally taken into account the history of relations between Germany and its European neighbours. At the same time, the demand for an academic study of European history with a view to a collaboratively defined Europe had been an important issue since the 1950s. In this regard, the Institute had been conducting research on key issues and categories for the study of European history, which led to the publication of the handbook *Fundamental Concepts of History: Fifty Chapters on Representations of European History (Grundbegriffe der Geschichte. 50 Beiträge zum europäischen Geschichtsbild)* in 1964. The study on the portrayal of religions in Western European textbooks, initiated by the Vatican together with the Council of Europe in 1968, was continued in the 1980s. The GEI contributed to the project on the depiction of Islam in textbooks of the Federal Republic of Germany, initiated by the Islamic Scientific Academy (*Islamische Wissenschaftliche Akademie*).

Alongside research on images of Europe, conducted in the context of collaboration with the Council of Europe, the GEI carried out a systematic comparative analysis on the image of Germany and the 'German Question' in textbooks from both the Federal Republic of Germany and from the GDR in the 1980s. Moving beyond the German perspective, the Georg Eckert Institute had concerned itself with shifts in history cultures in the states of the former Soviet Union and in South Eastern Europe since the mid-1990s.

## The Challenges of Globalisation

The challenges of a world of global networks had led to textbook projects becoming increasingly defined by questions of the cultural preconditions for the establishment of a peaceful and sustainable society since the 1960s. In this context, textbooks for foreign language learning also became the focal point of interest and were to play a key role in collaborative research projects with the USA, Great Britain, China and Turkey over the course of the coming decades.

The societal changes resulting from processes of globalisation necessitated an in-depth analysis of concepts of self and 'other'. The issues under examination included mutual perceptions of Western and non-Western cultures in projects on the multicultural societies in Europe, the USA and Latin America, or the representation of foreign cultures in geography lessons since the 1990s.



Research project with the Vatican, Braunschweig 1971

## New Fields of Research

In the past ten years, the GEI has further broadened its research fields and opened up new areas of analysis. Alongside research on national concepts of identity, collective patterns of interpretation and images of self and other as inscribed into textbooks, the Institute now works in three primary areas of interest:

Firstly, the GEI analyses how educational media represent social change and construct society. Here, we examine the contribution made by textbooks to social integration and inclusion, as well as questions of continuity and change in perceptions, constructions of identity, norms and bodies of knowledge. One area of focus is the impact of crises, conflicts and interventions on textbooks, and how textbooks themselves contribute to the emergence and also defusing of conflicts and social contention. The GEI has thus been active in East Asia and developed cooperative partnerships with Japan, Korea and China. The project *Exacerbating Conflicts – Promoting Peace? The Role of Social Science and Language Textbooks in South Asia* analysed conflict relations in textbooks from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh between 2009 and 2013. Unlike previous studies, this work was not restricted to individual, often violent conflicts between states or within one state, but rather addressed the interweaving of different lines of conflict.

Secondly, the GEI continues its work on Europe, which reaches back over many years. Here, the focus is on the construction and dissemination of linguistic interpretation, image-based representations and spatial concepts of Europe. We are examining how narratives and bodies of knowledge within educational media change in the course of translation on the analytical levels of the region, the nation, Europe and the world. This work also considers how textbook narratives with a European relevance develop at the intersection of state history policy, societal entities and condi-

tions of production. We examine, for instance, how the experience of colonialism has shaped and continues to influence textbook knowledge as well as national and European self-images.

Thirdly, perspectives of production, of the use and appropriation of textbooks are increasingly subjects of broad interest from scholars and societal entities alike. The empirical research,



Learning with digital media

inspired by the discipline of cultural studies, has led to new approaches and results in the analysis of memory practices, and at the same time, to the development of methodological diversity and theoretical advancement. Key questions here address which media are actually used in schools, which media are selected for a particular task, and how media are integrated into everyday life. Another topic of analysis is how young people use specific media and how the available interpretations are adopted, critically questioned and then appropriated.

# MAKING RESEARCH POSSIBLE

## THE INSTITUTE'S RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

### The Library

Since its establishment, the GEI has substantially provided infrastructure for academic research. From the very beginning, the library with its collection of textbooks and research literature has constituted an internationally unique and long-term highlight of research infrastructure for textbook research. The development of the textbook collection in the subjects of history, geography, social studies and politics was supported by the Education Branch of the British Military Government with the result that, at the time the Institute was founded, the International Textbook Institute featured some 2000 history textbooks. The library grew steadily in the course of book exchanges such as in the context of the bi- and multilateral textbook dialogues and thanks to financial support from the Foreign Office and numerous donations, and in 1965 the library was declared the textbook centre of the Council of Europe for history and geography textbooks. The library expanded dramatically in the course of these developments. Financial support from the Volkswagen Foundation (*VolkswagenStiftung*) and the German Research Association (*DFG*) secured the further growth of the library in the following years and paved the way for the library's recognition as a specialist collection of the *DFG*. In the meantime, since 2011, the library has expanded to cover the subjects of religious education and values education.

Alongside the continuous extension of the library and its increasing numbers of current textbooks, the library has also worked on a comprehensive collection of historic textbooks in the German language dating back to the 17th century, the highlight of which is the collection of primers.

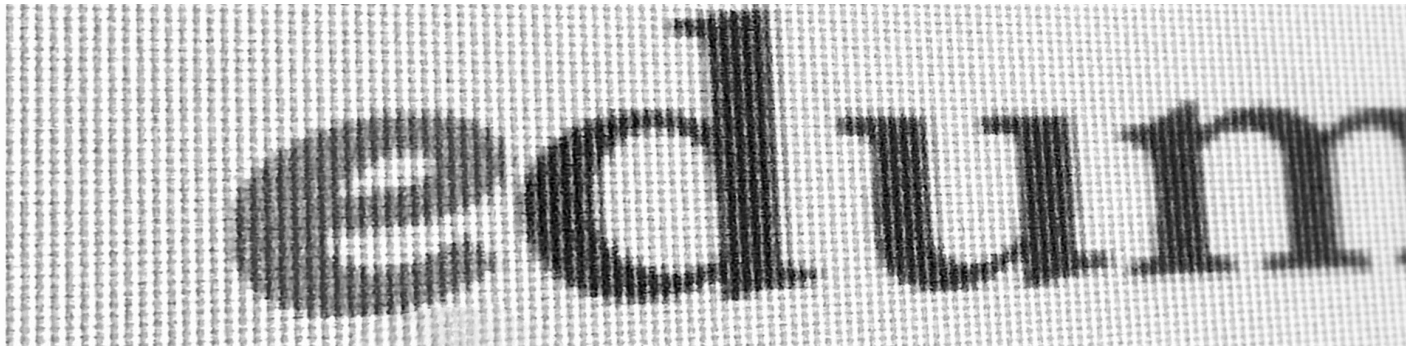
Today the research library is a well-connected hybrid facility that can increasingly provide digital access to its stock and services via the Internet. Its textbook collection now comprises books from over 173 different countries, and the library is working on digital tools for textbook-related research. These include the 'Curricula Workstation', which compiles curricula and renders them available for research, and the GEI's 'Database of Authorised Textbooks', which publishes an annual list of textbooks authorised in Germany. The project 'GEI Digital' aims to digitise all German textbooks not subject to copyright.







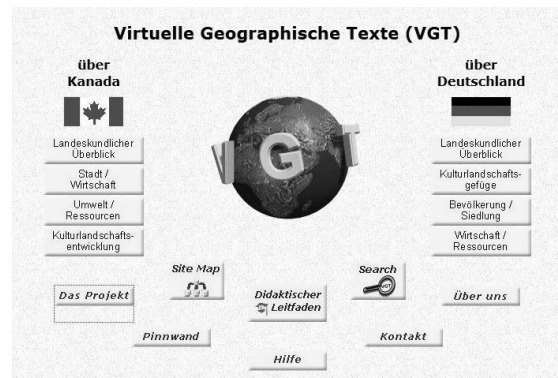
The Georg Eckert Institute's library



## Digital Media

As early as in the 1990s, the GEI addressed the challenges of digital media as well as the Internet for informative and research-related purposes. The project 'Virtual Geography Texts' has developed virtual materials for geography teaching in Canada and Germany. The result is trilingual material on linked modules of learning units on Germany and Canada. A further example is the development of the digital collection 'DeuFraMat', which comprises more than 100 single contributions to Franco-German history and geography.

In collaboration with UNESCO, a virtual platform for discussion and exchange, the 'International Research Network on Educational Resources' was created in 1992. A newsletter, distributed both in printed and in digital form, provided an annual



summary of the most important information and news in this area.

Today the GEI is developing a wealth of digital educational materials; one of its most significant projects is the portal 'Nuances: Teaching Materials for Classroom Diversity'.

# zwischenTöne

Materialien für Vielfalt im Klassenzimmer

THEMEN
ÜBER ZWISCHENTÖNE
AUTOREN
VERANSTALTUNGEN
MATERIALIEN

Identitäten: Wer ist "wir"?

Deutsche Geschichte, globale Verflechtungen

Religionen & Weltanschauungen: Woran



## Digital Projects

The virtual network for international education media research, *Edumeres*, constitutes the digital hub for this interdisciplinary field and the core of the Institute's digital research infrastructure. With its modular structure it brings together approaches from both information technology and research.

These modules would not have been possible without the GEI's social research infrastructure, without its international activities and its networks built up over the course of research and transfer projects. The module *edu.data*, for instance, renders available structured, research-based and often hardly accessible information on textbook systems of numerous countries, while *edu.experts* provides a whole new basis for the consolidation and expertise of the international network of textbook researchers. *Edumeres* also brings together current textbook-related reports from educational media research.

The GEI has achieved a high level of competence in the area of digital history and conducts research projects with innovative methods from digital humanities. An example is the project 'Children and their World', which brings together research questions and classic working methods of historical scholarship with the development and evaluation of innovative procedures of information technology. It does so via interdisciplinary collaboration with historians, experts in information technology, and computer linguists.





# CONVEYING TEXTBOOK KNOWLEDGE

## THE PUBLIC SPHERE, EDUCATION POLICY AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The Institute's multifaceted spectrum of activities is tailored to the requirements of education policy, textbook publishers and teachers. From the very beginning, the lasting success of the textbook talks was strongly dependent upon reaching this audience, which was indeed achieved via seminars, the development of textbook recommendations and publications.

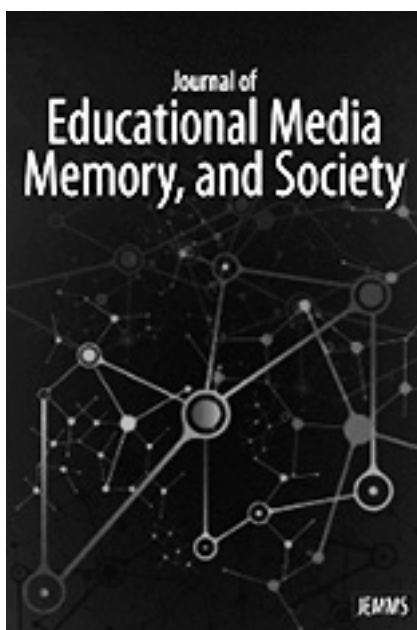
Further training courses for teachers were given from the 1950s onwards by the Sonnenberg International Working Group (*Internationaler Arbeitskreis Sonnenberg e. V.*). The transfer of research results was also of significance at the annual conventions of the German Teachers' Unions (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Lehrerverbände; Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft*) as well as events held by the Association of German History Teachers (*Verband der Geschichtslehrer Deutschlands*). The Institute also organised regular further education courses from the 1960s

onwards in collaboration with foundations close to political parties and trade unions, with the Protestant Academy (*Evangelische Akademie*) and the Council of Europe.

Today the GEI's publications comprise both print and electronic media. Its principal print media include the *Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* (JEMMS), which is published primarily in English and subject to peer review, and two book series, also subject to peer review: *Eckert. The Book Series* primarily addresses the academic community while *Eckert. Expertise* rather targets education policy and the public sphere.

Here the GEI continues the tradition of its earlier publications. With its *International Yearbook of History Teaching* (*Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht*) launched in 1951, the GEI had published the scholarly analyses and the results of the textbook talks in the language of the respective partner and in German. They were usually funded by the Ministries of Education of the partner countries and reached a wide audience. From 1979 until 2008, renowned textbook-related and academic publishing houses such as Westermann and Diesterweg supported the Institute's journal, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* (*International Textbook Research*) and the book series *Studien zur Internationalen Schulbuchforschung* (*Studies on International Textbook Research*).

The publications of the GEI reflect the production of knowledge within textbook research on a global scale and inspire scholarly dialogue, thus also considerably raising the academic profile and visibility of the Institute itself.







The common Israeli-Palestinian textbook

## Teaching Materials

The Institute's textbook work of the first few years was strongly geared towards the production of new teaching materials for a democratic society. The Institute developed multilingual source editions which teachers could use to familiarise themselves with the image of Germany portrayed in Western European textbooks from the perspective of 'how others see us', and to learn of the results of international textbook projects.

From the 1960s onwards, the bilateral textbook dialogues had been less and less frequently dealing with school practice itself, a development which regained significance in the 1970s when the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research was founded. The scholarly findings of the German-Polish textbook dialogue thus led to the publication of a bilingual handbook for history

teachers. In the light of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the GEI participated in the development of teaching materials on the divided history of South Eastern Europe, which were published by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe in 2005. The Institute also coordinated the development of a joint Israeli-Palestinian textbook in cooperation with the *Peace Research Institute in the Middle East*. Since 2003 the GEI has been a member of the project group 'Franco-German History Textbook' and since 2010 a leading partner in the development of a German-Polish counterpart. With its projects *EurViews* and *WorldViews*, the Institute is currently working on digital source editions on perceptions of Europe and the world in textbooks for use by academic research.



Dr. Robert-Hermann Tenbrock (right) in conversation with Prof. Dr. Heinz Dieter Schmid, award winner 1981

## Fellowships and Awards

The GEI's fellowship programme, which further contributes to the Institute's reputation in the area of international and social research infrastructure, is funded by its Association of Friends and Supporters (*Verein der Freunde und Förderer*). On an annual basis, the programme provides 30 guest researchers from all over the world with the opportunity to use the research library, to work in a comparative vein and to engage in intensive discussion with colleagues from home and abroad. The GEI has awarded the Robert Hermann Tenbrock Fellowship for research on Europe since 1993, and the Otto Bennemann Fellowship for innovative methodological studies on international textbook research since 2005.



Henry M. Arnhold

In 2012 the GEI established the Georg Arnhold Visiting Professorship with which to fund research on 'Education for Sustainable Peace'. With this visiting professorship the Institute is able to support research by renowned experts in Braunschweig for three to six months at a time. The programme focuses on research on educational media and curricula in post-conflict and transformation societies, and includes a summer school for early career scholars as well as a symposium.

The GEI has also awarded its prize for the 'Textbook of the Year' under the aegis of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and in collaboration with the Leipzig Book Fair, also since 2012. In doing so the GEI has established a seal of quality for textbooks and refreshed its connections with educational practice. This award is particularly important for the visibility of the Institute in the non-academic public sphere.

Since 2010 the GEI has also awarded a research prize for excellent academic work on international textbook-related research on educational media.



Textbook of the Year 2015

## THE GEORG ECKERT INSTITUTE TODAY

The GEI is a dynamic organisation which has grown dramatically over the last few years. This vibrancy is reflected in its membership of the Leibniz Association and in its many and various collaborations with other academic institutions, both in Germany and abroad, as well as in numerous networking projects. The Georg Eckert Institute has adapted its internal structure to better meet the challenges of this dynamic growth. Since 2013 the GEI has been home to five departments:

### DIRI and the Research Library

The *Digital Information and Research Infrastructure* department (DIRI) is responsible for internal IT services and oversees diverse web-based information and communication platforms. It forms a crucial link between research and research infrastructure, as does the Research Library, which represents the heart of the Institute.

The majority of the specialist research conducted by the GEI is carried out by the three departments *Textbooks and Society*, *Europe: Narratives, Images, Spaces* and *Textbooks as Media*.

### Textbooks and Society

The *Textbooks and Society* department examines the social, political and institutional contexts in which educational media are developed, produced, implemented and received. It comprises the research fields 'Textbooks and Conflict', 'Religion and Diversity' and 'Textbook Production: Frameworks and Practitioners'.

### Europe: Narratives, Images, Spaces

This department addresses the persistently national orientation of Europe visible in historic and current textbooks alike. The department investigates, within the research categories 'Nation', 'Region' and 'Global Dimensions' the construction of Europe from a comparative perspective and from the viewpoint of historicity and transnationality.

### Textbooks as Media

The *Textbooks as Media* department researches textbooks within the research fields 'History, Theories and Methodologies', 'Educational Media Change' and 'Educational Media Reception', predominantly using ethnographic and media studies methodologies. Among its primary objectives is the systematic documentation and expansion of the arsenal of theories and spectrum of methodologies applied within the field of textbook research. The department also explores new approaches, in part from the social sciences, to further the field of educational media research.





The GEI intends to maintain its close relationships with representatives from the non-academic community. It will continue to advise education policy-makers and practitioners both at home and around the world and to act as coordinator and consultant in international matters related to textbooks. Its organisational structure and defined emphasis on research and research infrastructure will enable the GEI in future to reinforce and expand its position as a regional and international reference centre for textbook research.

Looking back over the history of the Institute we see that the tasks pursued by the GEI have maintained their high level of political and social relevance from its establishment up to the present day. With its research and its activities in the context of international textbook affairs, the Georg

Eckert Institute has constantly reacted to changes in social contexts and with its areas of focus paves the way for a wealth of expert panels. Textbooks have not lost their significance as education media; on the contrary, they are a topic of social debate today more than ever. With its research achievements and infrastructure, the Institute will continue to contribute significantly to the field of educational media research, education consulting and international understanding well into the future.

Beyond the dynamics of change, Georg Eckert's call for peace and democracy remains until today both the incentive and the guiding principle of the Institute's work.



# Directors



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Since October 2015



Prof. Dr. Simone Lässig  
October 2006 – September 2015



Dr. Falk Pingel  
October 2005 – September 2006



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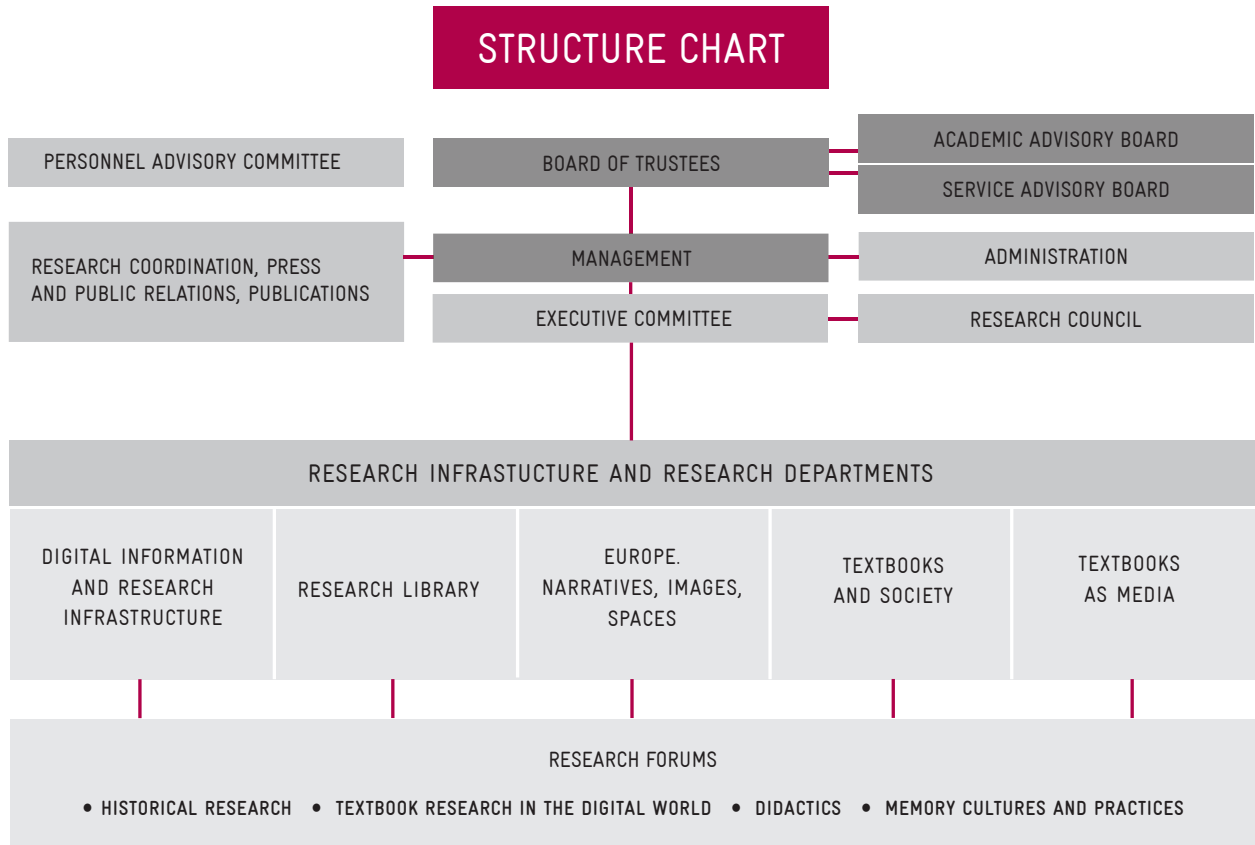
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2007 – 2015

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# Structure Chart of the GEI





## Selection of Literature

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The quotation printed on the front inside cover originates from President Joachim Gauck's speech to the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea in Seoul on 12 October 2015. The speech is available in full at <http://www.bundespraesident.de>.



The Institute's beginnings at the *Kant-Hochschule*

