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Together with educational theory, the history of education and comparative education form the discipline of general education.

While educational theory is concerned with fundamental terms and categories in education science (*Erziehung, Bildung*, learning, etc.), the goals of education (educational ethics), the human foundations of education (educational anthropology), and other general questions about education (education as a profession, the extent to which skills in education can be taught, etc.), the history of education – in a nutshell – is the study of the diachronic perspectives of education. Comparative education focuses on making intercultural comparisons.

General education is a sub-field of education science. Other sub-fields of education science include school education, social pedagogy, and adult education.

In the practice of research and teaching, it is almost impossible to separate the three components of general education from one another. To give an example, if a specialist in the history of education wishes to examine historical forms of children's play, he must know what 'play' means in order to ensure that he does not erroneously study actions carried out by children that do not constitute 'play'. Conversely, the educational theorist cannot say anything meaningful about play if he does not make use of the possibilities provided by the rich findings on historical forms of play. The same applies to (intercultural) comparison. Here too, the historical and theoretical perspectives cannot be ignored. Conversely, when the educational theorist explains terms in education, he draws on their historical dimensions and makes comparisons. At the same time, the history of education is always comparative to a certain extent, as analyzing historical forms of education only makes sense if a comparison is made with the present day. Both in research and teaching, it is always more or less a question of specialization. For this reason, our teaching includes all three aspects of general education, even though the historical and comparative perspectives are dominant.

However, in our research we naturally specialize in the history of education and comparative education. Our current research topics include the history of social pedagogy and social work, the youth movement, and early childhood education. We are also conducting research on the history of the education system in which, having produced a historico-genetic description of school, we are now analyzing selected problems and personalities in education discourse (Wilhelm von Humboldt). In comparative education we have studied and continue to study questions related to Jewish education and how the Shoah is dealt with internationally.

For several years, we have been devoting particular attention to the American concept of progressive education and John Dewey, a key scholar in this field. We conducted a three-year research project on this topic with funding from the German Research Foundation (DFG). The results of this project are being published successively.

Traditionally, an important area of general education is methodology. Here at the KU, hermeneutic methods are represented in teaching and research by the Professor of History of Education and Comparative Education and his team.