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Article

## Visual ethnography in classrooms: the “action of showing” in classroom videos in contexts of social science teacher education

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**Keywords:** visual ethnography, classroom videography, social science teacher education, German reunification and process of transformation, camerawork

- Unique historical sources of German social science classroom videos in the phase of 1990–91
- Historical documentation of the relations between camerawork and intentions for further use
- Insights into documentary practices and implicit images of teaching methods and practices
- Reconstruction of the complex and multi-layered process of image production
- Classroom videography needs a reflection of the complex process of meaningful image production

**Purpose:** The paper discusses the camerawork within a historic video case study as a meaningful practice of visualization of classrooms and also as an aspect worth consideration in current contexts of video-based classroom research and teacher education.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The case study combines elements of video hermeneutics and a visual sociology of knowledge to reconstruct *the visual* within historic classroom videos. It discusses these reconstructions based on the theoretical framework of video ethnography as an alternative method of classroom research focused on specific actions of showing within the historical context.

**Findings:** The analysis and interpretation underpin the assumption of relations between camerawork and intentions for the use of the videos and enables insights into practices of documentation, implicit images of teaching practices, and classroom interaction as a part of the history of social science education.

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## 1 A HISTORIC VIDEO CASE: SOCIAL SCIENCE TEACHER EDUCATION FOR EAST GERMAN TEACHERS DURING THE PHASE OF TRANSITION (1990-1991)

The paper presents a case study considering the camerawork within a group of three classroom videos that can be considered as a unique, contemporary historical source.<sup>1</sup> They document a particular experimental setting within the context of teacher education for teachers from the German Democratic Republic (GDR) who had to teach the new subject of social studies (*Gesellschaftskundeunterricht*) during the phase of transition (1990-1991).<sup>2</sup> The crisis of the political system in the GDR also challenged the legitimation of civics courses (*Staatsbürgerkunde*), which had been built up as the key subject for imparting Marxist-Leninist ideology as a basis of socialist education (Blessing et al., 2012). After the resignation of the Minister of Education Margot Honecker in October, 1989, her successor, Günther Fuchs, suspended the curricula for civics courses in November, 1989 (Jehle, 2018). Subsequent to the formation of a new government that December, the Ministry of Education established a working group consisting of approximately sixty members from distinct scientific, pedagogical, political, and clerical sectors to develop new concepts for social science education. In January, 1990, the first interim curricula were confirmed, and the whole implementation process of the new subject was accompanied by continuous revisions and discussions (Biskupek, 2002, pp. 74-87).

The first concern of this curriculum work was founded on the claim of a “radical break with the former civics courses” (Standpunkte, 1990, p. 1).<sup>3</sup> Based on a structure of obligatory basic and elective courses, the curriculum gave the teachers more freedom to select the subject matter. The didactical concepts recommended activating teaching methods which should establish a democratic, communicative, and cooperative learning atmosphere (Ministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft, 1990). Finally, implementing these new subjects and concepts required considerably extensive teacher training. Accompanying these concerns was a discussion about whether former teachers of East German civics courses were even allowed to teach. The first training programs at that time were developed in cooperation with West German universities and institutions for civic education (Jehle, 2021). However, specifically in the early phase of implementation of the new subject, most of the teachers still felt insufficiently prepared and reported uncertainties in handling the new concepts and teaching methods (Kuhn et al., 1993).

The case study presented here is part of a larger study of twelve video classroom observations of civics courses in East-, West-, and then unified Berlin from 1978 until 1993 (Jehle, 2021). With its collectivized and contrastive case study design, this study is the first systematized research of several historic classroom videos from various institutions. With a focus on the new research perspective afforded by the source – the insights into the documentation of classroom practices of the past (Grosvenor et al. 1999; Mietzner et al., 2005; Braster et al., 2011) – the analysis specifically addresses the relation between official goals and the documented practice in each case. As an explorative study, which uses relatively new sources for historical research on education and (subject) teaching, the research needs basic methodological considerations and reflection. Generally, the use of

(classroom) videos from the perspective of educational history research also requires reflections on videos as a source of research (Warmington et al., 2011). Within the *Documentary Film in Educational Research Project* (DFER; 2009-2011) they regard the “two-fold nature of film as a resource in historical research” as the “first methodological challenge” (Warmington et al., 2011, p. 459):

In some cases, school documentaries, might be utilized as a *source* (of information) in studying particular periods, policies, practices and ideologies in education. In other instances, films might become *objects* of research, to be studied for their representational and technical features. (Warmington et al., 2011, p. 459; emphasis in original)

Even if doing classroom videography is not the same as dealing with school documentaries as a specific type of film production, this paper intends to underpin why this differentiation and the interplay between these two layers also in the context of – not only historic – classroom videography is worth more-in-depth consideration (Reh & Jehle, 2020, pp. 348-351). The three video recordings from these teacher education contexts which were saved as a part of the collection from the Department for Civic Education (Referat für politische Bildungsarbeit) at the Freie Universität Berlin (FU) cannot be considered as a representative source for the teaching practice in this new subject during the time of transition. Due to the high dynamic of the whole process and the constant revisions of directives it is unlikely that there was already an established teaching practice. While the didactical discourses controversially discussed lifeworld-oriented approaches as a possibility for enabling new perspectives within the discredited subject (e.g. Grammes, 1991), the recorded lessons addressed the decidedly political issue of citizens’ movements within the GDR. This topic selection as well as the thorough didactical design of the lessons, including and combining various student-activating teaching methods, can be attributed to the specific context of institutional teacher training. The courses were implemented on the basis of the department-specific curriculum for social science teacher education (Massing, 1992, 1996). The participants worked in groups to develop lesson plans, and then single teachers put them into practice. These lessons were recorded; analyzed by experienced teachers, subject didactical experts, and scholars; and also discussed in the training groups (Jehle, 2021). Furthermore, this reflection of the production context of the recordings does not only concern their use as sources of the *visible* information. That it is also of importance with regard to the *visual* framework, the implicit and explicit practices of visualization (Cabeleira et al., 2011), including “their representational and technical features” (Warmington et al., 2011, p. 459), will be illustrated in this paper on the basis of results of an analysis of the camerawork and related visualizations of teaching practices within this case study.

Following Massing (2002, p.91) civic education and specifically its legitimating function gain in importance in times of system changes. Specifically, the implementation of democratic systems needs citizens who are capable of participating, whereby the own

dynamics of democratization processes should be taken into account. Against this backdrop, the recordings from the teacher training context do not only provide an insight into the kinds of topics and teaching practices deemed relevant with regard to this aim. As sources they also shed light on the relevance of professional knowledge in teaching practice – for example when implementing specific teaching practices or in the organization of classroom communication – or also of biographical perspectives on the subject matter. Moreover, the reconstructive analysis of the camerawork and related practices of visualization will also enable a discussion on how the recordings can be interpreted as reflection impulses in the contexts of teacher education. The discussion of these examples will emphasize that the camerawork within a specific context already leads to meaningful image production and that, as a matter of fact, this aspect should also be considered in other contexts of video-based classroom research or teacher education (e.g., Janík & Seidel, 2009; Blikstadt-Balas, 2016; Charalambous et al., 2018; Dallan et al., 2018).

## **2 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON VISUAL FRAMEWORKS AND CAMERAWORK**

The consideration of *the visual* in the context of classroom videography is generally considered a field of research that has only recently received gradually decreasing attention (e.g., Rabenstein & Reh, 2008). Ethnographic approaches as a method of classroom observation (e.g., Hammersley, 1990; Breidenstein, 2008; Macknight, 2016) are considered to be unstructured observation methods (Janík et al., 2009, p. 8), which consciously interlink processes of data collection and interpretation:

Ethnographic description is linked to the researching gazes which, in turn, are connected with what can be viewed in the field. Discovering/inventing and also completely designing such gaze-entanglements characterizes the creativity and attractiveness of the ethnographic process of knowledge accumulation. (Mohn, 2009, p. 173)

However, in contexts of classroom research, videography is basically used as a (supplementary) method of observation and documentation. The decision for using particular technical equipment and specific camera angles is mainly related to the epistemological interest of the study which generally focuses the visible information within the video footage (e. g., Lomax & Casey, 1989; Erickson, 1992, 2006). In contrast to that, video ethnography is understood as an alternative method in classroom research that uses focused camerawork as a “methodology of permanent work on gazes [...] to make social phenomena in the context of possible interpretative patterns sensorially visible” (Mohn, 2009, p. 173). In doing this kind of video ethnography, researchers consciously work with their own “sensitivities and selectivity” (Mohn, 2009, p. 175) already within the process of data collection by conducting highly focused and selective camerawork as well as within the further data processing by cutting and editing the audiovisual material.

Beyond that specific kind of research, we find considerations of documentary or ethnographic video material as minimally edited footage (Erickson, 2007). This contrast to familiar visual and narrative filmic conventions might lead to irritation or information overload due to the complexity of the data on the viewer's side. Even if these effects are not as obvious, every video observation takes place in a specific framing context so that the understanding of the visible also depends on the availability of this context information. Still, the whole process of producing and analyzing video data is characterized by explicit and implicit decisions and processes of focusing. With this in mind, one should be aware of possible differences between the perception of situations through a camera lens (by different viewers) and by the participants' (Blikstadt-Balas, 2016). Against this backdrop, the paper intends to go a bit deeper into the interplay between the *shown action* of teaching and classroom practices and the *action of showing* as such (Reichertz & Englert, 2011, p. 28) which can be understood as a complex process of "simultaneous documentation and visualization" (Mohn, 2009, p. 175).

Within their introduction into a qualitative video analysis based on video hermeneutics and a visual sociology of knowledge (see also e.g., Raab & Tänzler, 2009), Reichertz and Englert (2011) consider the camera in this context as a "corporate actor," meaning the "sum of all logics of actions which contribute to the image composition" (p. 29). As a first prerequisite, one considers the technical requirements such as the camera equipment, placement, angle, and the whole process of *mis-en-scène*. With regard to the various possibilities of image production, they assume a complex process of weighing pragmatic considerations on epistemological interest, technological devices and room conditions being the initial point. This process creates particular frames for the shown action which are – consciously or not – influenced by inherent professional (pedagogical) perspectives (e.g., Jehle, 2016a) and might be read as comments on the action that is shown (Reichertz & Englert, 2011, p. 19).

The reconstruction of this implicit "narrative line" (Reichertz & Englert, 2011, p. 17) does not focus on the iconography of singular stills but considers specific combinations of camera movements, including pan shots and zooms (Reichertz & Englert, 2011, pp. 16-21; Raab & Tänzler, 2006, pp. 86-87). Using the technique of systematic sequential analysis, one identifies key scenes for step-by-step (picture-by-picture) analysis. The interpretation of the reconstructed narrative line needs a thorough differentiation between various kinds of contextual knowledge (common knowledge, knowledge about the production context, knowledge about the whole data material, scientific knowledge) (Reichertz & Englert, 2011, pp. 30-31). Further on, the analysis uses the technique of the comparative and contrastive analysis of sequences from the same or other recordings (Raab & Tänzler, 2006, pp. 87-90).

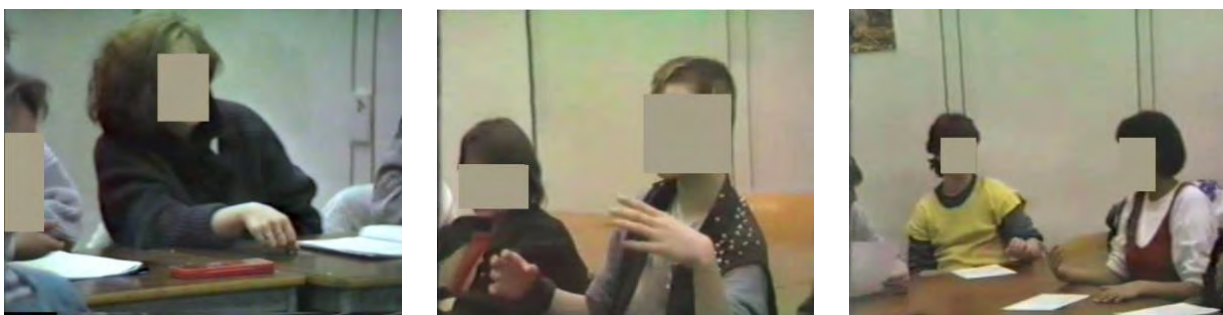
Within these steps of analysis, the interpreter should also reflect on the importance of specific established visual grammars and cultures. Even if one works with the claim of minimally edited footage there are various ways of perceiving depending on the viewers' backgrounds (Erickson, 2007). Images – if moved or not – articulate tensions in the form

of interplays of revealing and concealing, of technical conditions, visual elements and aesthetics (Hayes, 2007). Moreover, as a “problem of visualization” (Mohn, 2009, p. 175), we have to take coincidentally emerging meanings into account. This complexity, multi-layeredness, and interweaving of representational features will be illustrated now with examples from an analysis of distinct actions of showing within a historic video case.

### 3 LOST IN TRANSITION? PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS OF CAMERAWORK WITHIN THE HISTORIC VIDEO CASE

Based on the larger case study, which also includes other video classroom recordings from the archives of FU’s Department for Civic Education, we can characterize the preferred camerawork when filming classrooms within in the 1980s as a “student-oriented” practice (Jehle, 2016a, 2016b). They usually placed one camera to one side in the front section of the classroom so that it was possible to pan with the camera over the class and also document the teachers’ actions, chalkboard presentations, and overhead transparencies. By generally documenting the *front stage* of classroom interaction – meaning all actions that follow the official rules and objectives of the institution (Zinnecker, 1978; Goffman, 1959/2008, 1961) – they used the zoom technique to focus mainly on the students who actively participated in class (Fig. 1-3). Given that teaching practices in social science classes were considered as and also criticized for being dominated by a limited understanding of student orientation (e.g., Gagel, 1985; Grammes & Kuhn, 1987), we can observe parallels between the visual frames, the images of producers’ assumed didactical concepts, and the interpretive framework of the contemporary didactical analyses. Based on general assumptions of a visual sociology of knowledge, it might be a further point of discussion to ask if and how these images of classroom practices within the didactical discourse also influenced “the configuration and arrangement of the audiovisual form” (Raab, 2008, p. 212).

**Fig. 1-3: Stills (VF 1985: 00:37:31; 1984: 00:04:52; 00:25:41)**



With this in mind, we turn to the recordings from the teacher training contexts during the phase of transition 1990-91. First, we will take into account the effects of the general technical and room conditions within the visual framing of the documented classroom interactions and discuss them in the teacher education context (3.1-3.2). Second, we will

look for particular characteristics of the camerawork in this historic case and also discuss them within the specific pedagogical context (3.3-3.4).

### 3.1 Elongated camera panning and visual effects

First of all, we find relatively similar technical preconditions for the video recordings across the teacher training contexts: they also used one camera which was placed to one side in the front section of the classroom with the same capabilities as before. In two of the three settings which were analyzed for the case study, we observe a more frequent use of camera panning so that there is not only primary focus given to students' actions but also to the interaction between teachers and students. Given the context of teacher education, this practice of camerawork seems plausible, for if the recordings were to serve as a basis for the teachers' self-reflection, they needed to see themselves in action.

Beyond that, in combination with the spatial classroom arrangement, this camerawork generates particular visual effects. In classroom settings in which the teacher remains in the front section of the room while the majority of the students is sitting rather far in the back, these elongated camera panning seem to work as visualizations of distance between teacher and students (Fig. 4-6). With the impression of the visible lethargy in class, specifically expressed by the postures of the two students sitting in the first front row, we might link these perceptions and perceive this practice as an implicit visual comment on the typical atmosphere in class (FAU, 1978, pp. 57-58, 179-181). However, knowing that this lesson was recorded on a hot summer day while the rest of school had the day off (Grammes & Kuhn, 1992, p. 26), the students' lethargy is not surprising and there is no plausible reason why the camerawork should emphasize this aspect for analysis. Thus, this visual effect is assigned to the category of emerging meaning (Mohn, 2009, p. 175).

**Fig. 4-6: Stills (VF 1990: 00:00:13; 00:00:58; 00:01:07)**



In another classroom setting, at first glance, the overhead projector, in particular, catches the observer's eye in the course of the elongated camera panning (Fig. 7-8). When the camera is panning further over the class, there are also empty tables between the teacher's zone in the front section of the classroom and the students' group tables in the back which attract attention (Fig. 8-9). Both the overhead projector and this row of empty

tables build a remarkable visual barrier within the visualization of interaction between the teacher and students when panning with the camera.

**Fig. 7-9: Stills (VF 1991a: 00:06:02; 00:06:25; 00:06:33)**



Based on associative connections, one might receive the impression of implicit visual comments on classroom interaction again if we additionally take the experimental setting within teacher training and its consequences for the teaching practice into account. In this case, it is an East German teacher who was giving a lesson about citizens' movements in the GDR in a West Berlin school. With regard to this subject, it is quite remarkable how the distinct, particular biographical backgrounds, life experiences, and resulting perspectives on the subject manifested in classroom conversation and, sporadically, produced some friction. As an example, we can consider the beginning of the lesson when the teacher asked the students for their experiences connected with the opening of the Berlin Wall. After the students mainly reported their experiences of foreignness in the Eastern part of the city and discussed the poor building structures there, the teacher then had some difficulties in turning the conversation to the lesson's subject of citizens' movements (Jehle, 2016a). We also find other moments in the course of the conversation when the particular Eastern and Western background experiences correlates with different perspectives on the subject (Jehle, in print). In these situations, it is specifically the teacher's handling of the students' answers to his open questions that suggests that he had other expectations when raising the questions (Jehle, 2021). However, this development within the course of classroom conversation could not have been foreseen. Moreover, the visual effects of a focused visualization of barriers between teacher and students can be attributed in large part to the relationship between the spatial classroom arrangement and the camera position, but it does not seem plausible that it was the intention to particularly accentuate barriers between the teacher and the students. Thus, this visual effect is also assigned to the category of coincidentally emerging meaning.



### 3.2 The results of camerawork on the visualization of teaching methods and practices

We can also focus the visual information embedded in these elongated general views, first, with regard to the teaching methods and classroom practices used in these lessons and, second, by making some assumptions about the intentions of their documentation. Apart from the visual barriers between the teacher and the students that was mentioned before, the relationship between the spatial classroom arrangement and the camera position seems unfavorable for the documentation of interaction in class (Fig. 7-9). Given the seating order, the camera's view of all of the students is blocked by other students who partly sit with their back to the camera. All in all, it does not look like a well-prepared setting for documenting the group work processes among the students, which was a core element of implementing this new student-activating teaching practice (Ministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft, 1990). Moreover, this eye-catching row of empty tables in front indicates a spontaneous adaption of the spatial arrangement in class before the video documentation. With this in mind, we can speculate whether any of the people involved had considered the consequences for the documentation of the interaction among the students or if it was the main intention anyways to focus particularly on the teacher's actions.

In contrast, the third setting within this case study seems to be better prepared for video classroom observation, also with regard to the whole instructional setting. As in the other cases, the camera was placed to one side in the front section of the class. The spatial arrangement did not only comply with the instructional method of group work implemented in the first part of the lesson, but the seating arrangement provided a better line of sight into group working processes (Fig. 10-11). Moreover, the camera's position is also adequate for documenting the interview with a member of a citizens' movement in the second part of the lesson as well as to pan over the class during this phase (Fig. 12).

**Fig. 10-12: Stills (VF 1991b: 00:00:50; 00:02:07; 00:51:11)**



Furthermore, we observe a higher sensitivity for potential visual barriers. After not being used any longer, the overhead projector was moved out of the field of view from the camera at the beginning of the interview. Knowing the chronology of the recordings which correlates to the order of presentation here, we can speculate whether there was also a

conscious development process within the Department for Civic Education with regard to these aspects of documentation. However, as we find no evidence of such a discussion or reflection within the documented material, this assumption remains speculative. Nevertheless, the analysis of visual aspects of video recordings highlights the transition processes with regard to new teaching practices in social science education (e.g., Sander, 1990). Apart from the consideration of specific requirements for video documentation, we can also find impulses for a reflection on spatial arrangements.

### 3.3 Focusing on details

Besides these general technical preconditions and their visual effects, we also find particular characteristics of the camerawork in singular recordings. In one of the lessons, the teacher asked the students to draft a petition for a local recreation area, and the students were allowed to work in groups or individually. During this phase, we observe a camera focusing very closely on the students' activities (Fig. 13-14).

**Fig. 13-14: Stills (VF 1990: 00:25:48; 00:27:30)**



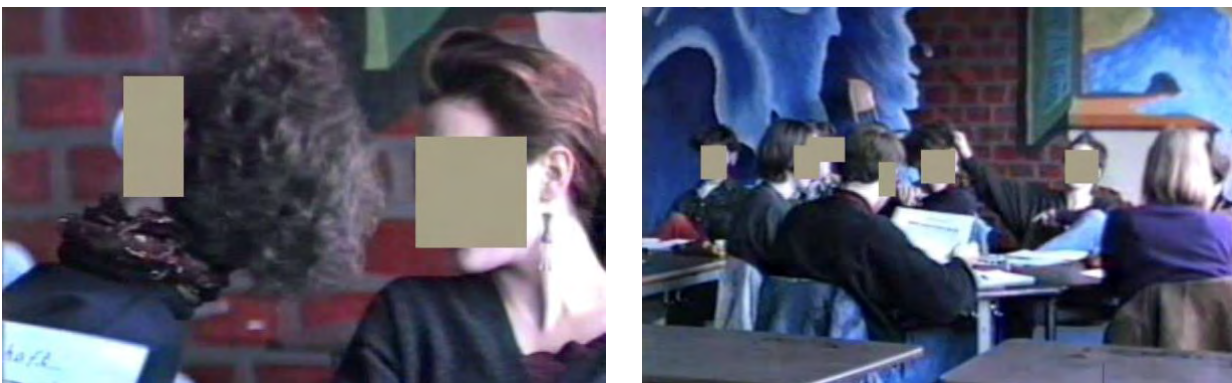
The aesthetics of this camerawork – particularly these fine-grained hand studies – shows similarities with the technique of “video ethnography” by Elisabeth Mohn and colleagues (Mohn & Amann, 2006; Mohn & Wiesemann, 2007), who describe their work as a conscious showing practice (Mohn, 2009). In this case, the focused camerawork reveals particular differences between the task formulated by the teacher and the students' activities. While the task is to draft a petition, the camera focuses on a student's hand holding her pen in a state of suspense over her paper without starting to write (Fig. 13). Even though this posture signals her willingness to work, on the one hand, that she does not start might be a sign that the task is highly demanding. In contrast, the second picture shows a group of girls still deeply involved with the task while the teacher has already asked the students to present their results (Fig. 14). Given that the teachers in these training contexts were not familiar with the methods of instruction for individual and group work processes, these differences indicate the demands of coordination for teachers in implementing such methods. If we assume that the teacher might not notice these

differences in the course of teaching, we can interpret this focused camerawork as a conscious practice of showing some details which might have otherwise slipped the teachers' attention.

### 3.4 Drifting *backstage*

Finally, in one of the recordings, we find one more striking practice of focusing on the students that had not been used before. Up until this point, all recordings from the archive of the Department of Civic Education analyzed in distinct case studies had in common that the camera first and foremost documented the *front stage* of classroom interaction and did not pay much attention to students' *backstage* activities (Jehle, 2021). In contrast, we observe increasing deviations from this strategy within the course of one of the lessons on citizens' movements (VF, 1991a). At first, one can identify singular side activities and amusing interactions among some of the students in the background of the complete view. Then, in the course of the recording, the camera focused more and more on one group of students and their intensifying entertainment interactions (Fig. 15-16). The student with the curly hair (Fig. 15) takes especial advantage of his central seating position to chat with various students around. Their chuckling indicates that they are joking and that the character of their conversation is rather informal. In the course of the lesson the student with the curly hair leans back more frequently to involve the girl sitting behind him in the conversation. She also reacts with laughter as well as physical interactions by slapping him slightly on the back of his head (Fig. 16).

**Fig. 15-16: Stills (VF 1991a: 00:40:38; 00:40:48)**



Specifically, the close-ups present particular image aesthetics and distinguish these interactions visually as having their own value, which again brings to mind the camera-ethnographic studies of Mohn and Amann (2006). If we reflect on the established ideas of pedagogical orders within classrooms (e.g., Mehan, 1979; Hicks, 1996; Herrle & Dinkelaker, 2018), we might detect an interpretive turn that calls this established idea into question and also considers these backstage activities as constitutive of and necessary for the maintenance of the classroom interaction order (e.g., Breidenstein, 2006). However, if we

take the context of teacher education into account, it seems more plausible to again interpret the camerawork in this case as one of conscious practices of showing and focusing on details which might have otherwise escaped the teachers' notice. Thus, we can finally consider these practices of showing as pedagogical practices themselves, as practices of steering teachers' perceptions of classroom interaction in the context of teacher training. If we assume that they were to draw the teachers' attention to the students' *backstage* activities, then they also raise questions with regard to the implicit images of classroom interaction orders within these visual frameworks.

#### 4 REFLECTIONS ON DIFFERENT ACTIONS OF SHOWING

In conclusion, the analysis of the camerawork within this historic case study illustrates the high complexity and multi-layeredness of the whole process of an action of showing and producing specific images of classrooms and classroom interaction in the context of video documentation. Thus, if we regard the use of historic classroom videos as an additional source in ethnographic classroom research with regard to the implementation of social science teaching practices, we have to keep this complexity and multi-layeredness in mind. Taking the technical preconditions and its possibilities into account, we have also to consider historical contexts and the original intentions for the use of the videos (e.g., Raab & Tänzler, 2009). Based on that, we have to carefully weigh which factors have influenced the interplay of the whole – both conscious and unconscious – image composition. Specifically, we have to differentiate between implicit images of classroom interaction, assumed intentional actions of showing, and coincidentally emerging visual effects.

First, if the visual effects result from a coincidental interplay between the camerawork and actions in front of the camera, it does not seem plausible to interpret these visualizations as visual comments on the action that is being shown (Jehle, 2021). Even if these assumed visual comments appear to be coherent accentuations of significant aspects within the interpretation of the whole interaction – as it was stated in the examples above, one should reconsider whether such a purposeful emphasis would have made sense with regard to the original intention for the use of the video. Moreover, there is a need to also reflect on the individual visual habits, viewing patterns, and interpretive frameworks that evoke various associations that might differ depending on the particular background experiences of the viewers (FAU, 1978, p. 65; Erickson, 2007; Reichertz & Englert, 2011, pp. 10-14). Specifically, if we use video-based observation to study learning atmospheres in classrooms, to analyze the quality of social interactions in classrooms, or to discuss the possibility of sharing data for re-analysis and further use for teacher education, we should reflect on if and how the camerawork generates specific visual frameworks which might affect our perception of the situation – and which might be different from the participants' perspectives (Blikstadt-Balas, 2016).

Based on more extensive contrastive case studies – including the case study presented here, we can assume that the original context and purpose of the recordings influenced

the practice of camerawork within the particular cases. Already, the technical requirements as well as the relation between the technical preconditions and the spatial arrangement – which opens and limits possibilities of documentation and focusing – shed light on assumed intentions of documentation. In the case of the teacher training videos during the phase of transition, we have found some visual indicators of a development process with regard to the documentation of group work. Given the historical context, we can interpret the implementation of this instructional method as part of a transition process of social science teaching practices that had the aim of a more communicative, cooperative, and democratic teaching atmosphere (Ministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft, 1990; Sander, 1990). With some caution – because we found no evidence of such a discussion in the literature, we can assume that there was also a process of conscious reflection on spatial requirements and arrangements which facilitated or hindered the implementation of activating methods.

In general, we can consider the historic video case as a document of the process of transition in the culture of citizenship education from distinct perspectives. Given the context of teacher training, the inherent visualizations document, first and foremost, the perspective of the Western scholars within the Department of Civic Education at the FU. Besides the impartment of political science content knowledge, these teacher trainings focused on the implementation of activating instructional methods (Massing, 1996). Against this backdrop, we can interpret some aspects of the focused camerawork as actions of showing with specific intentions in the context of teacher education. In the preceding paragraphs, we identified two particular examples of focused camerawork that we have interpreted as a conscious practice of showing some details which might have slipped the teacher's attention in the course of classroom interaction. Thereby, it seems plausible to specifically consider the first one – which reveals particular differences between the task formulated by the teacher and the students' activities – in correlation with the implementation of activating methods and the instruction in independent learning and working. Thus, we interpret this action of showing as a pedagogical practice itself in the context of teacher education which aims to be a reflection of the specific demands for teachers when implementing activating and individualizing instructional methods in social science education.

In contrast, the second example – the drifts over to students' backstage activities – rather seems to reveal implicit images of classroom interaction orders on the part of the image producers. On the one hand, the visual aesthetic configuration might indicate an interpretative turn with regard to established images of classroom orders. On the other hand, given the interpretation of pedagogical practices of showing by camerawork, it seems more plausible that, in this case, the teacher's attention was to be drawn to certain aspects of interaction which may have slipped his attention before. Taking this intention into consideration, we can still interpret this action of showing as an institutionalized perspective that sticks to an oppositional difference between front and backstage and

documents a corresponding normative expectation of pedagogical orders that enable learning processes.

As we could see, we can factor the basic assumption of relations between camerawork and the intentions for the use of the videos in different productive ways into the analysis and interpretation. If we analyze, for example, historic classroom videos without much information about the context of their production and the original intentions for their use, the reconstruction of visualizations and implicit actions of showing as well as steering the viewer's perception might enable some unsupported conclusions or assumptions concerning these unknown facts (Warmington et al., 2011; Jehle, 2021). On the other hand, it might be necessary to conduct additional research for more contextual information so that we can understand visualizations which seem irritating at first glance as, probably, conscious practices of showing (Jehle, 2016a, 2016b, 2021). But still, then one has to consider various options of interpretation in order to consider the implications of such a "knowing gaze" (Grosvenor, 2010, p. 156) and the constricted perspectives which could result. Taken as a whole, analyzing the visual within classroom videos in the context of classroom ethnography is a complex process which needs careful consideration of the various factors of image production. However, studies such as the one presented here enable not only insights into practices of documentation but also into implicit images of teaching practices and classroom interaction as a part of the history of social science education, and in this way, they are certainly worth the effort. Specifically, when we discuss the possibility of transferring videos from research contexts to the context of teacher education or of working on data sharing projects within larger research communities (e.g. Janik & Seidel, 2009), we should bear in mind that the context-specific camerawork and the whole interplay of image-producing factors already affect the construction of meaning within processes of perception and interpretation.

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## VIDEO FILES

Data Collection (2013-2015): Schluß, H., & Jehle, M.: Quellensicherung und Zugänglichmachung von Videoaufzeichnungen von Unterricht der Freien Universität Berlin [Safeguarding and Ensuring Access to Classroom Video Recordings from the Freie Universität Berlin]. In *Audiovisuelle Aufzeichnungen von Schulunterricht in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* [Audiovisual Recordings of Classrooms in the Federal Republic of Germany]. Forschungsdatenzentrum Bildung am DIPF.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> We generally date the beginning of video-based classroom research back to the mid-to-late 1990s (Rauin, Herrle, & Engartner, 2016; Corsten et al., 2020). Indeed, the tradition of video-based classroom research goes back further. Besides the possibly better known examples of first video studies in the Anglo-American sphere in the 1960s and 1970s (Biddle, 1967; Adams & Biddle, 1970; Erickson, 1982, 2011), there is also a tradition of video-based classroom observation in both parts of Germany since these decades which still seems to be almost unknown. After Alfons Otto Schorb had founded the first video-based classroom observation facility (Unterrichtsmitschauanlage) in Germany at the Teacher Training College (Pädagogische Hochschule) in Bonn in 1963, a whole series of similar installations were installed at various institutions of pedagogical research and education in both West and East Germany (Schluß & Jehle, 2013; Reh & Jehle 2020; Jehle, 2021). After a first phase of ambitious efforts, the interest in these projects declined; the technical, financial, and personal expenses were too demanding. At singular locations,

video studies were continued on a small scale, but these recordings fell into oblivion in most institutions.

Since 2003, a research team around Henning Schluß from the University of Vienna has been collecting these recordings, at first mostly from East German archives but over time also from West German institutions. After processes of retro-digitalization, they have been available in online databases for the purposes of scientific research. The databases are part of the Research Data Centre (Forschungsdatenzentrum, FDZ) at the German Institute for International Pedagogical Research (Deutsches Institut für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung, DIPF). While the database for the East German classroom videos (<https://www.fdz-bildung.de/studiendetails.php?la=de&id=55>) includes about 270 recordings, the database for the West German classroom videos (<https://www.fdz-bildung.de/studiendetails.php?la=de&id=116>) is still in the growth stage. In accordance with data privacy laws, access to the videos requires registration and proof of scientific interest: <https://www.fdz-bildung.de/registrieren?la=de> (18.03.2021).

<sup>2</sup> This subject existed only during the phase of transition 1990–91. After the reunification, the related re-establishment of federal states and a federal education system, each state developed its own curriculum (e.g., Jehle, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> All translations of German references by author unless otherwise noted.

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