

Teaching citizenship through history education in primary schools

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Topics of citizenship education in the teacher training

- - not so much traditional ways of „political“ participation
- - sympathy with service learning, initiatives of NGOs, local initiatives, charity...
- - no focus on factual knowledge
- - focus on „stories“, experience, inquiry based education
- - not so much interested in general phrases about tolerance and equity

Training of future teachers (PSTs) should (be)

- - more based on experience of PSTs
- - more combined with their involvement in practical initiatives, teaching practice
- - be combined with creative activities of PSTs for pupils (projects, teaching materials, field trips)
- mediate the „model“ experience with political participation and its advantage

The significance of history education

- a means of moral education, a tool that helps build a 'better society'
- contributes to the way pupils see themselves, their country, their roles in the society
- it builds historical consciousness and provides knowledge enabling an individual to understand the contemporary world (Brophy et al. 2013; Körber 2015)

Didactic approaches to history instruction in primary schools

- to teach how to think ‘historically’, how to analyse and interpret historical facts, how to work with historical sources, etc. (Van Sledright 2011 : 42; Lévesque 2008: 18).
- the key role in the process of teaching- pupils’ concepts
- to build history lessons on pupils’ concepts and to build them on phenomena comprehensible for the pupils
- to build the research skills of pupils
- to support higher levels of thinking by discussing historic events

to build historical consciousness =

= eliminates the threat of misusing history lessons to manipulate pupils, and at the same time minimizes the threat of overloading pupils with an excessive amount of factual information (Peck 2005)

Project – teaching CE through history

- 4th year of the study
- Common planning the lesson (all the group and concretely in group of 4)
- Realization of the lesson at a class of 5th grade of primary school (each group of 4 PSTs realized one lesson at one primary school class)

The realised lesson

- Topic: November 17th 1989/1939 (two alternatives)
- Activities:
 - interviewing parents/grandparents about their experience with this historical event and discuss the information at the class
 - working with the emotions of pupils

1939

- the leadership of Nazi Germany decided to close the universities for three years as a reaction to riots, which resulted in the burial of a student named [Jan Opletal](#)
- several raids were carried out by the Nazi security forces with the aim of capturing the leaders of student organizations and interning other students. Nine representatives of student leaders were executed in Ruzyne barracks without any prior trial.
- Numerous interned students were transferred to a concentration camp, where many of them died.

1989

- demonstration against the Communist regime. This demonstration was an impulse for further citizens' protests that took place in the later days , eventually leading to an abdication of the government, and after more than 50 years to a re-establishment of democracy in the country.

The results of the project

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Pupils can learnt from the interviews with their parents and grandparents

- pupils authentically learnt that the same event can be assessed differently by different people, which is desirable from the viewpoint of the so-called theory of multiperspectivity or multilateral interpretation of history (Stradling 2003)
- *Many things were simpler, there was only one shop with groceries and vegetables in your vicinity. Children played more with their classmates in the garden or in the street where they didn't have to worry about cars as there were none. However, you couldn't travel, visit foreign countries [...] You couldn't buy a lot of things. Toys, clothes, electronics, you had to stand in queue for everything*

Primary education can lead also for fulfilling the affective goals

- 17th November is important because [...] *it meant the beginning of freedom ; people have democracy again and they can travel. I personally believe that [...] it must have been awful under the Communist rule; I would not want, for example, my horse to be taken away from me and put into some common stable and for me not to be allowed to even visit him; I admire those people who had rushed into the streets and demonstrated. I don't want this to occur again. As for living in the Communist Czechoslovakia, people didn't like that [...] they were being spied on; they couldn't say what they were thinking; they had to follow nonsensical rules; they couldn't vote freely; publishing books was forbidden; they punished innocent people.*

Feels and work with them

- to encourage the pupils to put themselves in the shoes of the people living in the wartimes and to empathize with them, to express their feelings and
- 'The Sounds of the Era' - a video presentation of a Nazi army's military parade, a speech by Adolf Hitler, explosions and gunshots
- Pupils showed relative empathy and expressed their feelings spontaneously: 'I had a terrible feeling and I am glad that I was born not long ago, not at the time when this was happening'.

Goal of history instruction

- not to teach about history, but to understand the world we live in today through history