



Luiza Kulenkampff

Questions



What is the definition of "pedagogy of remembrance"?

Tomasz Kranz, director of the State Museum at Majdanek and author of numerous studies on the pedagogy of remembrance offered the following definition

"The concept emphasises the didactic and educational importance of the knowledge about the crimes of Nazism, gained through confrontation with authentic documents and monuments of the past in historical places, especially museums on the grounds of former Nazi camps. Of key importance is the educational process, based largely on independent research work, which combines reflection on the past with that on one's own dispositions, views and attitudes.

Source: Kranz T., Pedagogy of memorial sites, in: Encyclopedia pedagogica XXI wieku, vol. IV, Warsaw 2005, p. 170-172.

What is the culture of remembrance? And what is the relationship between the culture of remembrance and historical-political education?

The culture of remembrance is the way in which a given community and its individuals care about their past and history - commemorating important events for the community and nurturing the memory in a way specific for the particular group.

Since the culture of remembrance is a social phenomenon closely related to collective memory, it is passed on by community members in the processes of socialisation, inculturation as well as in informal education and in everyday situations. The culture of remembrance is further supported by official political content in public spaces and formal education in schools at all levels of education. It can be assumed that historical and political education is a component of the culture of remembrance, because one of the forms of commemoration may be teaching about the past. And at the same time, it is a factor constituting the culture of remembrance itself as it reproduces it, ensures its continued effectiveness by forming an identity with historical foundations among community members. Therefore education can be considered a very important element of the functioning of the culture of remembrance and the formation of identity and collective memory in communities.



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How does one prepare for a visit to a memorial site at a former concentration or extermination camp?

Memorial sites on the grounds of the former camps play an important role in the process of historical-political education and pedagogy of remembrance. They are special so-called authentic places where the Nazis imprisoned and murdered people in a systematic manner, places of unprecedented violence. This is why it is so important to prepare young people for the visit. Proper preparation will help them cope with the fear that may occur before the visit and with the emotions that may arise during its course. This helps to protect students from the excessive stress which might interfere with the learning process.

Before visiting the memorial site it is worth raising the following points with young people:

- Aim of the visit*
- General information about the visited memorial: topography (e.g. by using photographs), basic historical information*
- Basic information about the Holocaust and the history of Nazism*
- The Polish historical context*
- Plan of the visit and topics covered*
- Emotions and ways to deal with them*
- Students expectations and needs.*

The preparation can be completed by working with additional materials (e.g. film projections). It is equally important to meet with students after the visit and discuss the emotional aspect with respect to the knowledge acquired.

A very detailed description and specific recommendations can be found in the publication of the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum: <http://auschwitz.org/edukacja/materiały-dla-nauczycieli/przygotowanie-do-wizyty/> (accessed: 15.08.2020).



What is "biographical learning"?

Biographical learning in the context of historical-political education is learning about history through the biographies of those who lived in a given historical period. Learning about an individual's biography, it is possible to see, in a tangible way, how historical events affected his or her life. We consider personal attitudes and actual decisions and actions in the face of specific events. By learning through biography, one seeks an analogy between one's own biography and a historical biography, which initiates a process of reflection on one's own attitudes and values.

Where can I find useful educational materials on historical-political education and the pedagogy of memory?

There are many practical materials available on the internet that support teachers, educators and educators in conducting classes in the field of pedagogy of remembrance and historical-political education. Here are some of them:

- "Anti-Semitism is not a point of view - a manual for educators and educators" of the Dialogue Forum: <http://dialog.org.pl/szkola-dialogu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Podręcznik-dla-edukatorów-i-edukatorek.pdf>
- "How to teach about the Holocaust" International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/pl/resources/educational-materials/jak-uczyć-o-holokauście>.



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- *Facing History and Ourselves (in English): <https://www.facinghistory.org/topics>.*

- *Various Materials made available by the Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, including preparation of a visit to Auschwitz, as well as lesson plans: <http://auschwitz.org/edukacja/materiały-dla-nauczycieli/>.*

- *Various Materials on the broadly understood historical education of the History Meeting House: <https://dsh.waw.pl/edukacja>*

- *Stories That Move" Online learning material on diversity and discrimination based on biographical learning: <https://www.storiesthatmove.org/pl/strona-główna/>.*

- *"War and memory. Terror, Everyday Life and Forced Labour - Poland Under German Occupation (1939-1945)" a portal for education on forced labour based on biographical learning: <https://edukacja.wojnaipamiec.pl>.*



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