

*The Past is not dead. It is not even past yet.*

*William Faulkner*

*Tell me, I forget,  
Show me - I remember,  
Involve me - I learn.*

*(Hindu proverb)*

## INTRODUCTION AND SHORT HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

### Long-term developments in European history education

Europe is a continent of diversity in which over forty countries each have a history of their own. In spite of this, a remarkably similar discourse is taking place in most European countries concerning the aims, content and approaches for the learning and teaching of history<sup>1</sup>.

History teaching in Europe is presently moving away from the concept of memorising the (official/national) truth about the past. At the same time, learning about the past is considered essential for the development of historical consciousness and a sense of the past in the minds of young people. In most history curricula we can now find that young people should be equipped with learning strategies that are applicable in their future personal and professional life.

History education also feels responsible for creating a positive attitude towards democracy among young people. In the research project *Youth and History*, more than 80 % of the history teachers answered the question *which aims of learning history they concentrate on: with I want them to internalise basic democratic values*.<sup>2</sup>

To obtain tangible results with these new objectives, a new way of learning and teaching of history is required. Over the last twenty years, teacher training, history education magazines and history textbooks have demonstrated an intensive discourse and search for ideas and implementation strategies for an innovative and effective manner with which to learn and teach history. They all point towards the conclusion that instead of teachers talking in front of the classroom, young people need to be more actively involved in learning. Pupils have to learn by doing,

and have to be able to work independently. They should apply modern communication and information technology, books, articles and a variety of source materials during their learning process.

In Europe there is, on the whole, a clear move in education from a teacher-oriented system to an approach in which teachers help pupils to become independent learners<sup>3</sup>. The history teacher should not be afraid of this change. The myth that pupils remember all that has been said in classroom has long been refuted. Effective learning and remembering is based on a variety of learning styles.

### The conflict between content and methods of learning and teaching, knowledge and skills

The big issue in European history education is how to balance knowledge, core competencies, historical skills, values and attitudes in the curriculum. In many European countries the curriculum is still very much knowledge based, but history educators in most countries are inclined to question this type of history curricula. It is already accepted by most history educators that if pupils should acquire more understanding of what happened in the past, the methods of working in the classroom have to undergo considerable change. Approaches have to be introduced which enable pupils to think critically, to form their own judgements and opinions, and to acquire democratic skills and attitudes.

However, with the introduction of a more skill based history curriculum, the traditional approach with a wide variety of events, facts, names and data places old-style curricula under pressure. Acquiring skills requires the introduction of sources, assignments and activities, and it is this sort of teaching and learning

<sup>1</sup> This introduction makes use of work from the EUROCLIO/Matra Project *New Ways to the Past, Ways to the Past: Searching, Versions, Ideas* (Riga 2000). Available in Estonian, Latvian and Russian language versions.

<sup>2</sup> Magne Anvik and Bodo Von Borries ed. *Youth and History, the Comparative European Survey on Historical and Political Attitudes among Adolescents*. Hamburg, Germany, 1997. Page B 75.

<sup>3</sup> Council of Europe *Recommendation, Rec (2001) 15 on history teaching in the twenty-first century*.

that takes much more time in the classroom than the traditional approach. It is impossible within unchanged parameters of allotted time for history lessons in school curricula to maintain the same amount of content.

For every historian the choice of what to leave out is very painful and often difficult. Consequently, many of the new curricula are still content loaded and very difficult to accomplish. As a result either much content has to be studied outside the classroom or very little time is spent on skill-based learning. In a very few countries in Europe, history curriculum developers have been able to match the content with the other requirements of the history curriculum within a reasonable framework of time. History is a wonderful subject, but there is too much of it! Selection is a key word for teachers, whatever aims and objectives are described in the curriculum. The debate concerning what to select is a never-ending story among historians and history educators. The history teacher has to make choices and should not be afraid to do so in order to keep the subject interesting and challenging for pupils.

### **Project background**

Since 1991, Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia are in a process of rediscovery of the (recent) past. Academic historians have renewed their studies of a sensitive and controversial history. However, their historical interpretations are changing regularly, dependent on new evidence and political points of view. It will take some time before historians, who have personally lived through such a painful recent past, are able to face this past independently. The point of real freedom will only be reached when people are not held by their past, but hold the past in their hands.

History teachers in schools cannot wait until the academic historians are ready. In their classrooms are young people who are experiencing a present which is totally different in comparison with their teachers' and parents' childhoods. History teachers also have to face the fact that much of what is now common knowledge about the past was not known during their university days. Teachers in the history

classrooms are now required to teach about urgent questions such as *what were the roles, options and experiences of the people living in the Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia during this last century and why has life changed so much in the last fifteen years?*

A key-issue for this teacher resource book is to bring a recent and sensitive past alive for young people, while at the same time keeping in mind the questions *what do my pupils need to know from the past to live in the future and what message will be meaningful for a person in the 21st century?*

### **Short history of the teacher's handbook**

The project was proposed by EUROCLIO and its partners in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia within the framework of the Stability Pact South Eastern Europe, with the Dutch Government acting as donor<sup>4</sup>. At the end of 2000 the project was authorised and a group of dedicated history educators from Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia, including representatives from minority groups was formed to work in a team for three years. The EUROCLIO network provided consultants from Denmark, Latvia, The Netherlands and Portugal.

The teaching materials in the teacher resource book ask *what was the impact of communist ideology and power, and the downfall of communism on the everyday life of people living in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia?*. Each team did its utmost to come forward with original and unique written, pictorial and oral materials. A considerable collection of artefacts was accumulated.

The project's working method consisted of several national and international working seminars where the objectives, ideas and the progress of the project were discussed. The project was to work along the lines of problem orientation and try to face the past through open questions whose complexity would require a multi-perspective approach.

A significant decision was made to merge the material from Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia as far as possible on certain issues and topics, to give teachers and pupils a closer insight into the similarities and differences in the recent history of the region.

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<sup>4</sup> EUROCLIO was founded on April 21, 1993, in Leeuwarden in the Netherlands. EUROCLIO was established to defend and promote history teaching as an essential subject in the education of young people. Among the aims are: the strengthening of the position of history in school curricula, the intellectual freedom of teachers, and the promotion of the European dimension in history teaching without neglecting global, national and regional dimensions. Over 60 History Teacher Associations and other Organisations involved in history education are members of EUROCLIO as of 2002.

EUROCLIO has members in the following countries: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

To implement the work each school in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia will receive a copy of the teacher resource book and a variety of teacher training seminars will be carried out. We hope that the friendly, creative atmosphere, which surrounded all of us during the development of this book, will spread to all teachers and pupils who use this book in the future.

### **Project aims**

The history educators in the respective countries have aimed to develop a method of learning and teaching history, which blends traditional methods of conveying knowledge about the past with new approaches to history teaching. The materials developed enable teachers to promote democratic practices, human rights and the rule of law. The handbook wishes to contribute to the needs of Albanian, Bulgarian and Macedonian society by presenting the past with a multi-cultural and multi-perspective approach. The project also aimed to support the enjoyment of learning history and understanding the present by encouraging young people to ask inquisitive, sensitive and controversial questions.

The final aim of the project was to create and strengthen a network of history educators in the respective countries and for the region. As a result the network has been extended and the number of history teachers associations has grown, and small, but professional expert centres for the learning and teaching of history have been established. The centres can provide the history educators in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia with up to date and innovative books and educational material, also offering further in-service training activities on the resource book and other topics.

### **EUROCLIO**

EUROCLIO, the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations, was

established in 1993 to defend and promote history teaching as an essential subject in the education of young people. To fulfil its objectives, EUROCLIO has organised a large variety of activities including, among others, bilateral and multilateral projects concerning learning and teaching history. EUROCLIO feels a special responsibility for the learning and teaching history in European countries, as the tradition to develop rather nationalistic history curricula and textbooks still exists in quite a number of European countries. EUROCLIO considers it is its duty to bring historians and history educators from the countries of Europe together and to advocate and demonstrate a school history which supports a wider perspective and is useful for the future of young people.

### **The purpose of this teacher resourcebook**

A teachers' resource book is not a textbook, it does not offer a full history course but provides more in-depth material to supplement the curriculum and existing school textbooks.

- √ The handbook looks into continuity and change in the everyday life of people in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia between 1945 and 2000.
- √ The book focuses on practical material and was developed by people with classroom experience. It contains a wealth of written and pictorial sources, maps, graphs and cartoons, and exemplar and ready-made classroom materials and tasks.
- √ It offers a variety of suggestions about alternative and effective ways of learning.
- √ There are examples of individual research activities, essay writing and working with sources. The resource book gives examples for individual, pair and group work and shows how role-play can be a meaningful tool in the history class.
- √ The material provides ideas for applying information and communication technology.

## **KEY CONCEPTS AND HISTORICAL SKILLS IN SCHOOL HISTORY**

### **Historical Consciousness**

Learning and teaching history must have direct relevance for students and their daily lives. Otherwise there is no reason for having the subject in the educational system. This statement can be regarded as very banal or very provocative. Nevertheless, it is very important if one should try to find reasons for having history as a subject in the educational system in present day society.

In recent years the concept of *historical consciousness* has become a key term in many European countries. It has become part of some national curricula and plays an important role in the discussions on European history-learning-and-teaching for a such a body as EUROCLIO. It was also the concept behind the extended all-European investigation, "Youth and History" (see footnote no. 2) and the basis for a number of books published by

the Körber Stiftung in Hamburg, Germany in cooperation with EUROCLIO<sup>5</sup>.

### **Understanding the concept of historical consciousness**

The concept of *historical consciousness* was introduced in the late 1970's in the discussions within German history didactics (subject pedagogy and methodology) and explained in "Handbuch der Geschichtsdidaktik" (Handbook of History Didactics) by Prof. Karl-Ernst Jeismann. In this book he explains: *Historical consciousness embraces not only knowledge and sheer interest in the past, but the relationship between interpretation of the past, understanding of the present and perspectives for the future and [historical consciousness] is the ever present awareness that man, everything in society and all forms of interrelationship between human beings that he has established, exist in time, and, consequently, have an origin and a future, and that they do not represent something stable, unchangeable and unconditional.*

In other words historical consciousness is a basic condition for all human beings. If we want to understand ourselves as human beings and the communities we live in, we must constantly interpret the past. This interpretation will change according to the questions that we put forward, and these questions vary according to the state of affairs in our communities and our expectations for the future. This applies both to the personal and collective level.

It might be difficult to make this concept clear to pupils as it can be very theoretical. Therefore the task of the teacher is to illustrate it to students in a way that makes it relevant to them. First an example on a personal level. Imagine a husband making a speech at his silver wedding anniversary. He may speak about the 25 years as a period of harmony between man and wife. He refers to all the common experiences they have had, all the churches they have seen during their holidays and other shared experiences. He will use the past to explain why people are gathered on this occasion and he will outline the future for the couple on the basis of the past.

Some days later, the same man reveals to his mistress that his marriage has been more or less a nightmare. Whenever his wife dragged him to a church, he would have far preferred to sit drinking a glass of wine in the café, and that he wants to get out of the

marriage. And when the wife finds out that her husband has a mistress, she also changes her interpretation of the past. She always resented his lack of willingness to be interested in the same things she was interested in, and visiting churches on their holidays, which she had liked so much, had always been spoiled by him. The point here is that he, like all other people, use the past to understand his present and changes his interpretation of this past according to his situation and his expectations for the future. This example shows how we use the past on a personal level to try to find out what our situation is today. However, this past is not permanent, as we change its interpretation according to our understanding of our present situation and our expectations for the future.

On the collective level we see that politicians, intellectuals, journalists and teachers constantly use the past in order to support present day decisions and future hopes. The American reaction to the attack on September 11, 2001 can only be understood in the light of their interpretation of the past; in this case, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in 1941. The way the ensuing war in Afghanistan was can only be understood through the American experiences in Vietnam. The American government interpreted the past in order to justify their reactions in the present, with expectations of future terrorism.

### **Development of people's historical consciousness**

We should ask in what way our historical consciousness is formed. Of course the best answer would be that it is shaped through history education. However, as the educational system cannot be seen as an island, it is certainly not the only place where historical consciousness is formed, and probably not even the most important one.

Students' historical consciousness is formed in many different ways such as through the media, music, paintings, museums, flags, and national anthems, even football matches. Students' historical interpretations of the past are often formed by their families and friends. The stories children are told by their parents, grandparents and siblings contribute to their use of the past, and the way in which they interpret the stories with their friends form their characters. Experiences within their environment are also important. When students grow up in cities

<sup>5</sup> Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, edited *History for Today and Tomorrow. What does Europe mean for School History*, Hamburg, 2001

Joke van der Leeuw-Roord edited, *The State of History Education in Europe*, Hamburg, Germany 1998.

Sharon Macdonald, edited *Approaches to European Historical Consciousness. Reflections and Provocations*. Hamburg, 2000

damaged or destroyed by violence or war, they are directly influenced by the past, in this case by physical sights: destroyed houses, shops, bridges, and religious buildings.

Students are in “the middle of the past”, and the school system must take this into account. The use of the past exists, also the controversial and painful issues, whether history is dealt with in schools or not. Students should have a chance to become aware of the fact that they do have a historical consciousness, that they themselves use the past constantly, and that people in their communities and their politicians use the past all the time.

Knowledge and use of history in school history is, in itself, not enough. There can – so to speak – be too much weight on the past and special interpretations of it. Therefore, there must be special requirements as to the quality of learning and teaching history.

It is not the question whether people have historical consciousness, as everybody has one, particularly in countries with a very complex and often painful, recent past. But the historical consciousness should be a qualified historical awareness, and the aim of learning and teaching history with the material from this resource book is to develop a qualified historical consciousness. This certainly involves knowledge of one’s own country’s history, but also of the history of the other two countries involved in this project. It also involves skills in dealing with various kinds of historical material: written sources of all kinds, pictures and films, information on the Internet etc. But it also involves a willingness to look at the past from various angles, in this case from various interpretations in the one country, but more importantly, from the view of the other countries.

### **Consequences for history education using historical consciousness as a basic concept**

So far we have looked at the theoretical background of the concept, but what are the consequences for history in the education system?

First of all, it is important that schools should be a *qualifying place of learning* and in order to be that, also a *qualified place of teaching*. This means that the education system should provide pupils with qualifications - again both individual and collective - to enable them to live in a rapidly changing society. If the backbone of history teaching is historical consciousness and the way it is shaped, it will have profound consequences for the way history teaching should be carried out.

And if it is going to be a *qualified place of learning* specific qualifications and competencies will be required of teachers. Not only will they have

to be good academic historians - this is a necessary, but not sufficient precondition – they will also need the ability to understand the constantly changing way in which young people think and feel, as well as their channels of information regarding the past, for example the media, music or films. Also, teachers should be people who take an active interest in the current and future issues of their society and community. And they must have democratic attitudes, meaning that their own opinions do not prevent them from accepting and respecting their pupils right to express *their* opinions. *Multiperspectivity* is a key concept in a qualified learning and teaching of history. One should always be willing to look at the issues from different angles, also when dealing with controversial issues.

### **Multiperspectivity**

Modern societies are made up of various communities with different backgrounds and experiences. There are linguistic, ethnic and religious groups, social levels, and males and females. Even if they lived in the same area and had certain historical events and developments in common, their experiences could have differed. What was good for one group could have been disastrous for another. What increased the freedom of the one has meant exclusion for another. The different experiences are reflected in the stories and identities of individuals and groups.

In order to achieve an understanding of the complexities of the past, *multiperspectivity* is required in history classrooms. Distancing oneself from the accepted view of one’s own group and looking at history from a different angle helps to understand the other. There are valid arguments for the other group’s different story, and this promotes greater historical knowledge. Explanation of events benefits from changes of aspect. Multiperspectivity fosters historical thought.

Multiperspectivity is of great importance when *sensitive issues* in history are at stake. The *blank spots* in history could be addressed by bringing controversial texts into the history classroom, texts presenting contrasting views. History provides many opportunities from which to learn to look from a variety of perspectives. There is the Roman and Phoenician story of Carthage, the conservative and liberal story of the 1789 revolution, the Marxist and liberal story of the industrial revolution.

Sometimes people suggest that multiperspective learning leads to relativism. These people are concerned that pupils would not understand the difference between good and bad, right and wrong, noble and plebeian. There is inevitably an ethical

element embedded in education. However, the ethical aspect should be discussed, not dictated, in order to clarify certain values for students. An open discussion would allow taking a more critical look at what really happened. It can lead to heated arguments, but it also leaves scope for a choice of position. After looking at events from a multiple of perspectives, this choice can be rational and well founded, instead of being based on emotions and biases.

### **Perspectives and standpoints**

Decisions made by each individual, as well as their interpretations of events and circumstances, are influenced and determined by different elements, such as when the person lived, individual experiences, place of residence, country, gender, social status, religious and political conviction. Groups of people who are somehow connected may share certain standpoints, however even within such groups various people are unlikely to share all points of view.

Development of personal judgement is the students' ability to make a well-argued *personal* choice on a certain matter. In educational material, the time, place, people involved and circumstances should be defined briefly and clearly. Several tasks can be used to develop the student's personal judgement. Students should recognise arguments in favour and/or against certain positions or sources, or produce their own arguments in favour and/or against them. When substantiating their own position, students should either recognise in sources or produce their own pro and contra arguments in order to arrive at a position, and explain their reflections.

### **Empathy**

*Empathy* defines the ability to enter into how people thought in the past and to answer questions by putting oneself into their shoes...; of projecting oneself...; or, imagining that... This requires students to have knowledge and understanding of the period and circumstances in which those people lived. To achieve optimal empathy, certain knowledge and understanding related to later periods should be left aside. Empathy involves awareness of one's own opinion and that of the other. History philosophers by no means agree that empathy is a responsible way of investigating the past. But in school education it is practised widely in order to create more understanding about peoples' behaviour, attitudes and convictions in the past.

### **Sources and questioning**

Sources play an important part in modern learning and teaching of history. The primary and

secondary source material defines our knowledge of the past. Sources come in all shapes and sizes, and students have to develop an awareness of the nature, types and limitations of the available source material. Sources used in school should be accessible and applicable, not merely illustrative.

The students have to use the sources when answering questions. We could differentiate between questions, which specifically concern the *reliability*, and ask a question such as, how reliable the source is when you think of the person who produced it. The second type of question focuses on how *representative* it is, by questioning if the source represents the thoughts of just one person or a whole group of people. The last type of question would look at the *usefulness* of the source and would trigger questions as to how useful this source is for answering this question. The functional use of sources is what matters most.

Not all sources are suitable for classroom purposes. They may be too long, contain complex words or sentence structures, may be in a foreign language or are vague pictures. In that case, editing source material is inevitable and might involve explanation, shortening, translation and paraphrasing. Editing sources, with due consideration for their purpose, takes a lot of time, but is often necessary with a view to the students ability level.

### **Evidence and critical interpretation**

Historical knowledge is based on evidence, such as written documents, pictorial sources, oral history and physical remains from the past. Additionally, there is "second hand" evidence. It comprises books, photos, films and the culture of memory. A student is expected to learn to ask of each type of evidence, how much and whose interpretation it contains. A true history student will ask why historical evidence is conflicting. If two history books give radically different interpretations of a case, the historically trained student will examine the evidence. For instance, Friedrich Engels portrayed the industrial revolution in England as a social disaster, while T.B. Macaulay, a prominent historian of the period, praised the same developments as a progress towards social welfare. The two opponents appear to have used different evidence: Engels used qualitative evidence of the working class experience, Macaulay material evidence and financial records.

All people interpret their own experiences of life in their own way and are faced with various different interpretations of personal and public events in their daily life. In the field of history, interpretation is defined as interrelating (collected) data in order to

make choices in the form of a story and to structure historical phenomena. Starting from a research question or a hypothesis, the historian attempts to promote understanding and to structure certain events, phenomena or developments.

School history should teach students to make historical considerations and to become aware that different interpretations of the same event are possible. Within limits, students should also be capable of attaching their own interpretation to certain data, for example when writing a paper or setting up an exhibition.

To discover what attitudes the author of the evidence had, a history student conducts a critical inquiry into the author's historical context as well as into the construction of the evidence. He also tries to find another, comparable pieces of evidence. If the two pieces are controversial in their testimony, he critically evaluates which one is more reliable. He acknowledges that they can also be equally reliable, if they result from looking at history from different points of view.

As history is a mental reconstruction of the past, there will always be an element of subjectivity when working with evidence. A history student, like a historian, inevitably projects his own mental frame into his interpretation. Therefore, when reading historical literature, a history student has to acknowledge that a disagreement as such does not mean that one is right and the other wrong. The different accounts just reveal two sides of the reality, as in the case of Engels and Macaulay.

### **Identity and critical skills**

History is an accumulation of many stories, and people living in the same or in different communities share many of these stories. Individuals can identify with several stories, or at least share some elements of each other's stories. A person can share experiences with its ethnic group but also with his or her professional or other affinity groups. A person can belong to a local, national, a wider regional or even European group at the same time. The sense of belonging depends on different sorts of commonalities.

History in school is traditionally an *identity subject*. When identifying with the actors of an historically existent community, young people adopt collective elements as part of their identity. However, an identity in an open society is a personal choice. While political leaders tend to cherish the idea of a collective identity, individuals will ultimately construct historical identities of their own. For such purposes, they need critical skills. They have to carefully evaluate which of the various actors and pursuits to identify

with. Therefore, a history classroom should be a school of intellectual self-defence by means of critical skills.

An adequate history education fulfils at least two functions; it provides elements for the construction of identity as well as critical skill training. Without the first function, history is reduced to a mere intellectual exercise, and without the second function it often results in a manipulation of minds.

### **Fact and objectivity**

Facts do not exist without a context. A fact is defined as an event that is generally assumed to have actually taken place. Historians usually have only a restricted number of research sources at their disposal. And sources are frequently incompatible. Therefore, when categorising skills, the boundaries between 'interpretation' and 'fact and objectivity' sometimes appear to be arbitrary. The facts that one person considers important may be insignificant to another. This very much depends on the research topic and connected question and the researcher's background. Full objectivity and absolute certainty are out of the question in the field of history.

Students are expected to be able to recognise objectivity and subjectivity of sources and of those who wrote or produced them. They also have to be aware of the problems that researchers face when analysing source material.

Working with source materials should also reinforce the students' ability to discriminate between fact and opinion and objectivity and subjectivity. This means that students should be able to see matters through other people's eyes and to distance themselves from their own norms and values.

### **Causes and effects**

Every event, past or present, has causes and effects. The causes and effects of past events cannot always be set into strict categories. Often one and the same event has several direct or immediate and indirect causes. It is even possible that opinions vary on whether or not a cause is an immediate or an indirect cause. Not all causes bear the same weight or give rise to the effect intended. Historians' interpretations in matters of causality are far more likely to differ than to correspond.

Events that have had important effects generally receive most attention. At the time events occur their effects are often difficult to foresee. Intended effects fail to occur, whereas unintended effects do. Some effects that occur immediately appear to be very important at the time but prove less significant in retrospect. Other effects, on the other hand, only become apparent later, being initially

unseen. The distinctions between important and less important causes, short-term and long-term and intended and unintended effects, as well as between cause and indirect cause should be applied in school history in order to understand the complexity of the past.

### **Continuity and change**

People studying the past are bound to notice many changes. People's activities in the past have influenced the time we live in. Similarly, our present activities will affect the future. Changes may occur so

slowly that people hardly notice them at the time. But they can also be sudden and very momentous. 'Slow', 'sudden' and 'momentous' are relative notions. What is perceived by one person as a slow change may be felt by another to be fast.

Though many changes occur, a lot remains virtually the same. Continuity of political systems, certain values and views based on religious or national feelings could remain unchanged over a longer period of time. This resource book invites its readers to investigate the measure of change and continuity during the past 60 years.

## **TEACHING AND PLANNING**

### **Teaching**

The success of history education can only be judged on a long term basis. The arguments in favour of a long-term approach are the answers given by young teachers to the question: *why did you decide to become a history teacher?* The two most typical answers to the question are: because *I had a special history teacher* or *I like history*.

Using these answers it is possible to say that history education is successful in the longterm. And this is good news.

Teachers, as well as other professionals, face many problems. Yet, like other professionals, teachers must learn how to deal with them. The problems are similar in some countries and it is also clear in many studies that there are some regional similarities in the problems history educators face<sup>6</sup>. The fact that Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia have collaborated on this huge effort to produce a teachers' handbook that can be used in the schools in the three countries is, of course, significant of these similarities. The fact that history educators from the three countries were able to do the work within the tight framework that EUROCLIO suggested is of great merit and shows what motivated people are capable of doing.

History teachers in countries under-going political changes experience keen problems in their work. This does not necessarily mean that teachers are not up to the challenge, as they are able to teach, though lacking in various degrees clear interpretation of what is expected of them and lacking basic teaching material.

Traditional teaching does not need much material, but modern teaching is very demanding. If teacher training through the use of this teachers'

handbook is generalised, and if teachers become familiar with modern teaching methods and pedagogical models, they will tend to develop a creative approach to organising their own lessons, using not only the sources of this handbook but also other sources. When teachers learn the new methodology they can become quite innovative and independent.

Organising history teachers' training seminars in reference to the dissemination of this handbook is something new and challenging. The big challenge of this project is that different teachers, in different learning contexts, might use the handbook and find it makes history teaching motivating and interesting in the classroom. And the reason is that its content is relevant for the learning community in the three different countries.

### **Hard and soft teaching**

Therefore the very theoretical approach should be avoided in favour of something really practical that can help teachers. Sometimes business training seminars give us some practical insights, such as the idea that there is a difference in *hard* teaching - teaching what to think, and *soft* teaching - how to think<sup>7</sup>. History teaching in a classroom can use both approaches, but should emphasize the latter.

Modern trends in history education argue that the interpretation of sources and the processing of information are of higher educational value, as that it is a useful and transferable acquisition all lifelong. In fact, almost everything that is memorised is easily forgotten, and when history relies on memory it has good short-term results but very doubtful long-term success.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Youth and History Survey, published by The Körber-Stiftung

<sup>7</sup> Colin Corder, *Teaching Hard Teaching Soft*. Published by The Gower Group, both in the USA and England.

When educators teach their pupils how to study, they try to organise the most important issues or questions in a *hard way*. All try to make lists of facts and dates. This is of course *hard*, and it is a natural way of trying to control all of the data and make some sort of sense and progress within the curriculum. Most people, such as teachers and pupils, parents and head teachers are more comfortable with hard teaching, which provides more rules and more answers than soft teaching, which looks at interpretation and questions. But given the right tools, such as this handbook and training, history teachers adopt new methodologies successfully.

Within a classroom, the learning rhythms of the students differ. Interpretation of sources is as varied as is the perception of reality. Teachers have to be able to deal with this diversity and teacher training should be relevant and useful to teachers' everyday work. Therefore, history involves hard and soft teaching, but it definitely involves a lot of soft teaching. *How to think* as soft teaching emphasizes interpretation, which is achieved through questioning.

It should be stressed that *soft teaching* does not mean teaching *vaguely*. If there are no doubts concerning the learning objectives to be achieved, history teaching will not be vague. It is a fact that vague objectives are an open invitation to vague teaching, but this does not mean that hard objectives are an invitation to hard teaching. On the contrary, soft teaching will help to obtain the hard objectives of the curriculum with motivated students. The teachers' handbook now offered for use by the community of history teachers has a hard organisation that allows plenty of soft and creative use in the classroom.

### **Hard and soft planning**

Because this handbook wants to reach the teacher in the classroom, it should be stressed that classroom work depends on the time the teacher decides to allocate to a specific unit within the curriculum, as well as the students' and the schools' possibilities. The time allocated depends on the aims that have to be achieved.

*What to do* is a hard judgement but it guides subsequent teachers' decisions on activities to be used and on further planning. The teacher's decision is the essence of the process of planning. *Hard*, and therefore good, planning is the best starting point for good teaching practice. The decided activities will then be developed in a *soft way*, which means *the learning process should stress interpretation, achieved by questioning*.

If a teacher wants to develop an activity within the framework of history of everyday life, some aspects of the planning should be carefully organised and closely followed. This way, the class will be able to reach hard objectives, because the process will be focus and supervision driven (rules/answers) but it will be developed in a soft way, allowing plenty of time and space for interpretation and contrasting of different perspectives.

### **A choice of methods**

As history teachers we organise the teaching - learning process by using a wide range of teaching strategies and methods activities<sup>8</sup>. The choice of method mainly depends on the aims and objectives of learning, the content, but also on the nature of the class, taking into account age, motivation to learn, interest, ability, skills and background knowledge, and the number of students. However, also the circumstances in which the learning and teaching process takes place, as well as the teacher's personality and experience are important.

Every history teacher has several questions to answer before making a choice between teaching methods. Learning history requires the development of historical understanding and special historical skills. History is always controversial, because of the different viewpoints of the historical events. Often we have to discuss problems with our pupils which are still an object of debate for academic historians. Society and politicians also sometimes use history to achieve specific goals. *What methods should history teachers use to promote critical thought and source evaluation skills, to enable pupils to recognize political bias and propaganda?*

Our pupils will live in a society demanding self-sufficiency, responsibility, the ability to work with information, to plan and organise, think critically, solve problems, make decisions, be tolerant, be cooperative, to make self-evaluations. *Which of the various teaching methods and approaches should we use to develop the social skills our pupils will need?*

In our everyday work we often face the situation that different pupils, coming from varied ethnic and spiritual origins, sometimes pupils from families with different, even contrary political backgrounds are in the same classroom: *What methods would help our pupils to cooperate, be tolerant, to overcome the old stereotypes and avoid creating new ones?*

<sup>8</sup>. Methode (methodos) in Greek means- a way to go.

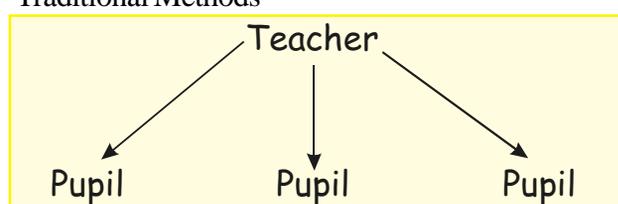
## ACTIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES

History teachers from three Balkan countries have done a creditable job. This teachers' resource book contains a very wide range of source material on change and continuity in everyday life in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia from 1945 – 2000.

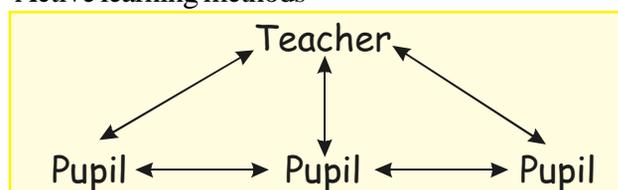
This collection of varied historical sources and teaching approaches enables teachers to implement skill-based teaching using active learning methods which might encourage their pupils to think more actively and critically, to promote co-operation, to overcome stereotypes.

### Traditional or active learning methods?

#### Traditional Methods



#### Active learning methods



There is no co-operation between pupils in the traditional, teacher concentrated method. If we use active learning, which is a pupil concentrated method, it means co-operation on two levels, between teacher and pupil and between pupil and pupil.

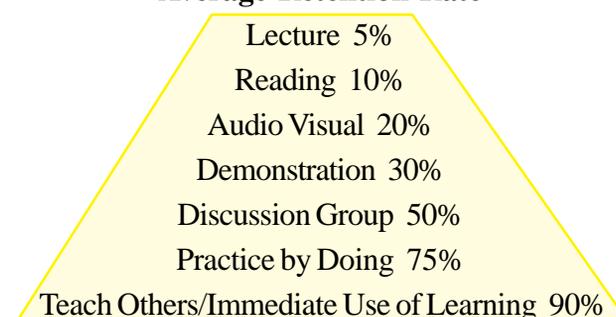
However introducing active learning does not mean that the traditional methods teachers have used before should be forgotten. Sometimes it is even difficult to draw the line between the traditional and the active learning methods. For example, what about the traditional *lecture*? It has a lot of advantages. During a comparatively short time a considerable amount of information can be dealt with, the content and sequence of information can be controlled, it's possible to control the time schedule for every topic and it's possible to work with a large group of pupils. If the teacher involves pupils, giving them tasks, asking questions, asking them to discuss some problem in pairs or 'beehive', the lecture can also be a form of the active learning method<sup>9</sup>.

During a lecture, for example about the development of agriculture and collectivisation in

Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia, the teacher should ask pupils to discuss in groups for 5-7 minutes what the consequences of collectivisation for the three countries could be. Using the reports from these groups discussions, the teacher could then draw general conclusions.

Language teachers widely use the *Pyramid of Average Retention Rate* to show what kind of methods are the most effective<sup>10</sup>.

### Average Retention Rate



Presumably the effectiveness of the above mentioned methods and activities can be also applied to history teaching. It cannot achieve its aims and objectives without active participation by the pupils.

### Examples of organising and assessing different pupil groupings for active learning

*Whole class teaching* is not so popular in educational literature in recent years, but it is still useful when the teacher wants to concentrate pupils' attention at something general, such as introducing a new topic, organising brainstorming, evaluating previous work and making different kinds of presentations. Of course, whole class teaching may also take only a part of the lesson and can be followed by individual or group work.

*Individual learning* is very important to develop historical skills, undertake individual research, write essays, and prepare individual presentations or arguments for discussion. It's more difficult for teachers to have an overview of the total class and at the same time to be able to assist any individual pupil if necessary.

*Group work* can be used to implement co-operative learning and decision-making, but it also is useful as a means of differentiation. Group work requires certain classroom conditions. Pupils may need to move around the classroom, they have to see and

<sup>9</sup> „Beehive”- pupils are organised in groups (5-7 in each). Teacher gives the question to discuss in 5-7 minutes. After the discussion a representative from each group makes a brief report on the results of the work, then the final conclusion.

<sup>10</sup> Source: National Training Laboratories, Bethel, Maine: <http://eleaston.com/pyramid.html>

hear each other and teaching aids have to be freely available. The optimal number of group members is 4-5.

We can adopt different approaches when giving tasks to the groups:

- a) Each group has the same task. The result is assessed by the teacher per group or a short presentation is prepared by a speaker from one/each of the groups, the other group members can only add something;
- b) Each group has an individual task. At the end the group presentations are organised or the speaker from each group visits other groups and shares experiences;
- c) Each group has an individual task, but all work is related to the same topic. In the end group presentations are organised.

When organising the group work we should ensure that pupils have sufficient background knowledge, think about how the groups are organised, consider tasks or roles in groups, be precise in thinking about materials groups will need, give clear instructions and consider how to assess the group work. Here we are able to assess several elements. We can evaluate the process and the result. We can carry out individual assessments of pupils, using individual worksheets, pupil self-assessment and assessments made by group mates or class-mates.

### *Using sources*

There are three major elements in working with sources. Firstly to use sources to obtain knowledge about the past, secondly to evaluate of historical usefulness of sources and thirdly to interpret the sources.

To help our pupils to analyse sources we should suggest that they ask the following questions<sup>11</sup>:

1. What kind of source is it, is it a written document, a graph, a diagram, a picture, a photograph, a map, an object or artefact?
2. Is it a primary or a secondary source?
3. Who produced it and why?
4. What was the aim or purpose of it?
5. In what historical context was the source produced?
6. What information does it contain?
7. What historical questions might it help me to answer?
8. What can the source not tell me?
9. Are there any other supporting sources I would need to study to make sense of the source?

10. Is the source biased or objective?
11. What emotions or feelings does it show?
12. How reliable is the source?
13. How useful is the source for the historian?

This teacher guide contains a rich variety of historical sources and they can be used in different ways. Making copies of sources on a certain topic helps to organise pupils' individual or group work.

If we give the sources to the pupils we can ask them to:

- 1) Answer the questions to the sources
- 2) Ask new questions to the sources
- 3) Group sources according to certain criteria
- 4) Find new criteria for grouping sources
- 5) Use sources for making timelines.

Some of the sources could be used on overhead transparencies for whole class teaching.

### **Examples of role play as empathetic strategy**

Historical empathy is the ability to understand different viewpoints in history by looking through the eyes of a contemporary observer. It means putting oneself into another time, fitting into the other person's shoes, even if we cannot accept this person's actions from the viewpoint of our morality. It is the ability to understand why people acted in a particular way. We can use empathy-based tasks only if our pupils have knowledge about a certain time, certain values, and a way of thinking. That is why it is good to use empathetic strategies towards the end of a chapter or a course.

It is always useful to follow the pattern:

**Role**

**Situation**

**Sources**

↓  
**Instruction**

*The Role* is given by the teacher. In such a case it is necessary to give the role description, including short biographical data of a person, his or her social status, values, and some character elements.

*The Situation*, which means some historical event and time. This time can be longer or shorter, even only a few minutes.

*The Sources*, as pupils need additional information to prepare for their respective roles. They could receive a list of sources to be found and analysed beforehand, or specially prepared material. This

<sup>11</sup> From the material *Working with Sources in History Classroom* compiled by Ian McKellar, October, 1998.

teacher resource book provides teachers with classroom ready material applicable for the role-plays.

*Instruction* should include task(s) and if necessary, reminders about the role-play.

These role tasks can differ. They might focus on longer time periods if pupils have to show developments, or on shorter time periods where pupils should show reactions to specific situations. Roles can be played individually, in pairs and in larger groups.

### **Practical examples of role plays related to the materials in this resource book**

#### ***Tasks for short time periods.***

1. A short time *individual* task.

√ Imagine yourself as a member of a Youth Organisation at school in Albania, Bulgaria or Macedonia during the 1960's. Write a letter to your friend from another town or village about your school life last week.

2. Work in *pairs*. Imagine yourself living in the 1950s.

√ Role for first pupil: You are a good employee. You have a big family. The secretary of your factory who is member of the Communist party proposed you to become a member of the Communist Party. You know that your living conditions and also position in the factory may improve if you are an active party member. You know your best friend does not support Communists.

√ Role for second pupil: You owned a factory. Your family had property, several apartment houses, but now it is nationalized. Your father died after that. Deep in your hart you are against the Communist regime, you are sure that this regime is terrible. Of course, you cannot speak about it out loud. Your best friend has been asked to join the Communist Party.

√ Task: Prepare the dialogue between those two friends.

3. Pupils are organised in *groups*.

√ Western journalists.

√ Journalists from Albanian, Bulgarian and/or Macedonian Communist party newspapers.

√ Journalists from Albanian, Bulgarian and/or Macedonian emigration news-papers.

√ Their task is to prepare an article, including two illustrations, for their respective news-papers about the education situation in the 1970's in Albania, Bulgaria and/or Macedonia, using the given sources. All the groups have the same sources. At the end the different groups present their articles and are evaluated by all the

participants using a special evaluation form. The form contains questions concerning whether the title of the article is appropriate, if the illustrations are well chosen, what is best in this article and which special things are noticed.

#### ***Tasks for long time periods***

Divide the roles among the pupils at the start of a topic. When studying the topic concerning changes in property ownership, some of pupils may imagine themselves, for example, in the roles of farmers, as students of the Agricultural Institute, as high-level Communist Party leaders and as bank employees. While studying this topic pupils should always be aware of their roles and be ready to interpret events from the point of view of their personages and explain their actions.

#### ***Role-playing debates***

If dealing with a controversial topic where, for example, there are two conflicting groups or views, it is possible to organise role-playing debates. However great care should be given to avoid organising role-playing debates on sensitive topics which may personally affect pupils.

Topic example: Religion and atheism in Albania, Bulgaria or Macedonia 1944-2001. Debates between priests and supporters of the socialist rituals in the 1950's on the question: Which contributions are more important in forming the young generation's morality – the church or socialist rituals?

One way of organising a step-by-step role-play debate (40 minutes).

√ Make a choice of the topic;

√ Give your pupils an individual task to familiarize themselves with historical facts, for example: collect sources on the topic and hand them in to the teacher with a short review in two weeks;

√ Return material to pupils with your short commentary;

√ Organise 2 groups representing the conflicting views, a group of experts and if there is more time also a group of journalists. The *conflic-t*ing groups are best formed by drawing lots;

√ State a question for discussion;

√ Give the conflicting groups their tasks: decide their positions, select arguments and investi-gate the possible behaviour and appearance of personages to prepare a short (5 minutes) main presentation by one speaker of each group, the other group members should be ready to join debates;

√ Give pupils the ground rules as to how to participate in debates;

√ Give pupils instructions about the agenda of the debates:

1. 5 minutes presentation group 1.
2. 5 minutes presentation group 2.
3. 6 x 3 minutes for 3 supporters from each group (18 minutes).
4. 6 minutes for the experts.
5. 6 minute conclusions with the teacher. It is a very important step to complete the debate and avoid a possible conflict between pupils.

√ For homework after the debates, pupils can be asked to write an essay on the topic discussed. (If there was a group of journalists, they can write an article about the debates).

### ***Examples of working with timelines***

Different kind of timelines can be used to develop an understanding of the concepts *change and continuity* in historical processes. Pupils could, for example, individually draw a timeline about changes in political life in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia from 1945- 2000. Pupils working in groups can draw a timeline on large sheets of paper, whereby the timeline can, for instance, be enhanced with photos copied from this teachers' guide. One task could also be to form a timeline entirely from photos of one particular topic.

Another way to develop timelines is for the teacher to prepare cards describing historical events and giving pupils the task of putting them in chronological order. Further cards with the *causes and consequences* of historical events mentioned in the timeline should then be put in the appropriate places by the pupils.

If we use parallel timelines, we rein-force awareness of similarities and differences in historical developments. In such cases, pupils can be asked to form three parallel timelines on historical events in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia and to reflect on similarities and differences.

### **Project work**

The resource book provides opportunities for essay writing, using on site education and project work. In such cases teachers are advised to follow these steps:

- √ The teacher must be quite clear about the learning aim(s) and objective(s) and must acquaint students with these aim(s) and objective(s);
- √ The teacher must decide on the assessment criteria;
- √ Activities must be carefully planned and organised in a special calendar;
- √ Work rules, such as aims, length, duration and assessment can be negotiated with the class;
- √ The teacher must regularly monitor and supervise all work. Teacher and class must be open-minded and make adjustments to the project if necessary;
- √ Involve students in the evaluation of the working process and results;
- √ The learning objectives are the focal point of the project and the criteria for all decision making.

It is not difficult, and it is most rewarding.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE MATERIALS.

Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia share common elements in their recent histories. In the aftermath of the Second World War their political systems were transformed under communist ideology. From 1944 till the end of the nineteen eighties all three countries had a one party system. When the rule of the communist party, rather suddenly, ended the three countries took with much optimism and expectations the road towards democracy and market economy. In the late nineteen nineties people in the three countries were often disappointed with the effects of ten years of change.

The impact of these turbulent fifty years on the lives of people living in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia is the topic of this teacher resource book. The project participants from the respective countries have selected a wide variety of materials related to changes and continuity in the every day life of their countries over the last fifty years. The aim of these selected materials is to provide history educators and their students with parallel illustrations of the shared tendencies as well as the differences.

The authors aim to give young people a better insight in the lives of their parents and grand parents. Lives which are so different from the present generation of students, and which are at the same time part of a very recent past.

The materials start with a chapter on political life, than economic and social life and it ends with cultural life. The participants have had long discussions if the materials should leave the traditional dominant position of politics and for once start with culture. However such approach would complicate the use of the materials, as the political changes and events were the source for all the developments in the other spheres of life. However the abundant space in the materials given to the topics of cultural and social life shows the positive concern of the authors with these topics.