



EuroClio

Inspiring History and Citizenship Educators

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Learning to Disagree

FIFTH JOINT SHORT-TERM STAFF TRAINING

13 - 15 DECEMBER 2019, POTSDAM, GERMANY

REPORT

Co-organised with:



Leibniz Centre for
Contemporary
History Potsdam

Project partners:

**GEORG ECKERT
INSTITUTE**
for International Textbook Research



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

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About the Learning to Disagree Project

The Learning to Disagree project aims to respond to the needs of educators who experience difficulties in addressing sensitive and controversial issues in their classroom, in responding to students who express extreme opinions, or in assessing students' social and civic competences. The project offers training and support materials to history and citizenship educators to overcome these difficulties and enable them to facilitate debate, dialogue and discussion in their educational practice. The core idea of the project is that students acquire those social and civic competences that enable them to interact with people that they (fundamentally) disagree with, in a constructive manner. The project will help students to acquire skills such as the ability to listen, to respond to what others are saying, to use neutral language, and to consider alternative interpretations. These are important life skills that will have a positive impact on students beyond the school environment.

In this project, EUROCLIO works together with four partners:

Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Germany is a publicly funded institute with 150 employees. It conducts applied and multidisciplinary research into textbooks informed primarily by history and cultural studies among other projects related to textbooks.

Education for the 21st Century, Serbia is a non-profit organization, established in September 2011 in Belgrade, Serbia. Its aims are to support the promotion of human rights in Serbia and the Southeast Europe region and spread the values of the EU among students, teachers and professors.

The Mount School in York, UK is an Independent School for girls and boys from 5-11 and for girls only from 11-18 years old. It embraces a commitment to education, sustainability, equality, simplicity and trustworthiness.

The National University of Ireland Maynooth is one of Ireland's fastest growing universities with a strong tradition of teacher education. The University is committed to engage in questions affecting education and society and to a diverse and interdisciplinary approach to the study of education.

Executive Summary

The fifth Learning to Disagree training took place in Potsdam, Germany from 13 to 15 December 2019. It was organized by EuroClio in cooperation with the Georg Eckert Institute and the Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam. Nineteen history and citizenship educators were present from the following 17 countries: Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. During the training, they continued to work on the project results, especially on familiarizing themselves with the Training Package that has been created to support the organisation of the National Trainings. The National Trainings will be organised between February and July 2020 to disseminate the final products to the wider community of history educators.

This meeting was conducted within the framework of the EuroClio Erasmus+ project “Learning to Disagree” (L2D) which runs from September 2017 - August 2020.

The 3-day training consisted of a variety of activities that were relevant to the project topic and functioning, including multiple “Train the trainer” sessions, a sharing round on the lessons learned from the piloting of the developed material, and the collaborative creation of three source collections on controversial cultural heritage. Two active workshops were also held, using materials developed by the project team, and an active training session on contested memories in Potsdam.

The main aims of this meeting were:

- To design the National Trainings
- To share experiences, tips and tricks on training on formative assessment and teaching strategies
- To discover the reality of contested memories in Germany
- To design collaboratively the source collections on controversial buildings, monuments, and street names
- To finalise the development of the Variety of Viewpoints by peer reviewing the titles and descriptions of every viewpoint
- To share the results of the external piloting and peer reviewing of the lesson plans

Results

The training in Potsdam resulted in a further exchange between educators from across Europe, on experiences and methods related to Learning to Disagree. The participants discussed their experiences and different approaches from piloting of the materials developed during the project. They reviewed and finalized the Varieties of Viewpoints and lesson plans on the topics of ‘People on the Move’, ‘Borders, Secession, Annexation’, ‘Surviving under pressure’, and ‘Cultural Heritage’. Furthermore, it results in 12 draft programme for National Trainings, including tentative budget and tentative dates, and in the finalisation of 3 source collections on controversial cultural heritage.

Programme: 13 December 2019

The first day of the training was dedicated to a full morning train the trainer session, during which team members designed the programme of their national training and discussed tips and trick to tackle the content of the teachers' guides on assessment and dialogue, debate and discussion.

Train the Trainer

During this session, team member received guidance on how to design their national trainings, and especially on how to share the content of the teachers' guides on assessment and on dialogue, debate and discussion.

Anthony Malone and Majella Dempsey from Maynooth University, who are the authors of the Teachers' Guide on Assessment, presented the different types of assessment that are introduced by the guide, and their key elements. They underlined the connection between the assessment methods and the materials that have been developed in the project, and provided team members with a ready-to-use presentation that can be adapted to different national contexts.

Helen Snelson from Mount School York, the author of the Teachers' Guide on Dialogue, Debate, and Discussion, presented the content of the guide, and especially the 12 different teaching strategies that compose its main body. She underlined how each strategy is used in a different lesson plan developed by team members.



Helen Snelson explaining the Four Corners strategy to the team

Before diving into the design of the programme of each National Training, team members had the opportunity to share their opinions on both guides, asking for changes that would make them more user friendly. During the discussion, some members suggested to merge the two individual guides into a combined Teachers' Guide on Learning to Disagree, so as to make it easier for educators to use it. The combined guide will be translated in the 12 national languages of team members, so as to further increase their range and usability.

Finally, Alice Modena, from EuroClio, introduced team members to the Training Package that project partners have developed in the last trimester of 2019. The package contains a

set of templates, drafts, and ready-to-use presentations that team members can adapt to their national contexts or use as they are.

During a Q&A session that followed the first train the training session, two main points were touched upon by the team:

- the team agreed that the main aim of the National Trainings will be not only to present Learning to Disagree and the materials produce within it, but also to illustrate the thought process that leads to the creation on a Variety of Viewpoints, and to help participants to apply this process and develop their own material.
- The team discussed how to present the content developed in the project in a way that would allow teachers to feel comfortable while using it in the classrooms. This discussion was based on the idea that every classroom is different, and reactions to controversial topics might vary. For this reason, teachers need to be prepared to deal with all kinds of situations. On the other hand, teacher trainers also need to be aware of the different reactions from the side of teachers during national trainings.

Lecture: Contested memories in Potsdam and Brandenburg



Jan C. Behrends presenting on contested memories in Potsdam

During the afternoon of the first day of training, team members had the opportunity to learn about the contested memories in Germany, and in Potsdam in particular, thanks to a lecture from Jan C. Behrends, researcher at the Zentrum für zeithistorische Forschung.

After briefly introducing the Zentrum, its mission, and its functioning, Mr. Behrends focused his presentation on the city of Potsdam.

He explained participants that

Potsdam covers a special and very significant role in Germany and its history: not only it is the capital of the State of Brandenburg and it is close to Berlin, but it is also the location of the Potsdam Conference (1945), when the allied forces signed the Agreement with Germany that ended the Second World War in Europe.

The city and its surroundings are at the center of a variety of contested issues.

The city itself, and in particular its urbanization, were impacted by three historical period:

- the Royal and Imperial Period;

- the Third Reich. During this period, one of the biggest concentration camps was built close to the north of the city, and prominent families of Potsdam developed a plan to assassinate Hitler;
- the Post-war era (especially during the Cold War). During this period, one of the biggest Soviet garrisons outside of the Soviet Union was established in Potsdam.

Each of these periods has left its own signature on the city, especially when we look at examples of contested cultural heritage, such as the city castle and the garrison's church. These buildings, monuments, and street names can cause the clashes of contested memories, and are dealt with in various ways, including: preservation, commemoration, reconstruction, and education.

On-site learning

The first day of training ended with a visit of the Leistikowstraße prison in Potsdam.

The building in which the prison is housed changed ownership and function several times through the 20th Century. At the beginning, it was owned by the Evangelical Church Relief Association, and in particular it contained the offices of Evangelical Women's Relief Society, a charitable society in Germany at the time.

In 1945, after the arrival of Soviet forces, the building was confiscated. It was used as a Soviet prison until 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Soviet Secret Service (KGB) was dismantled. The living conditions in the prison were harsh as well as the treatment of the prisoners. They were often suffering from hunger, cold, isolation, and poor hygiene.



Team Members during the prison's visit

Now, the building is open to visitors, and helps to give an idea of the living conditions of prisoners, as well as showcasing testimonies from more than 50 former prisoners about the reasons for their arrest, interrogation techniques, and other aspects of their life connected to the prison.

Programme: 14 December 2019

The second day of the training was dedicated to the finalisation of the content of the project: participants designed in a collaborative setting three source collections on controversial cultural heritage, peer reviewed the final varieties of viewpoints, and took part to two workshops based on the materials developed within the project. Only the two workshops are described in this report, as the other sessions were work session based on mixtures between individual and group work, and their description would not be of interest for the reader. The results of the work are available on the project page and at www.historiana.eu.

Workshop on the topic ‘Surviving under Pressure: the Great Famine in Greece’

During this workshop, Vassiliki Giannou, member of the Learning to Disagree Team, presented both the Variety of Viewpoints on the Great Famine in Greece and the lesson plan that she developed to make use of the viewpoints in the classroom. She focused, in particular, on the black markets that surfaced during the Great Famine in Greece, when people were often desperate to find food for themselves and their families. During the workshop, team members analysed text sources about the Great Famine in Greece, and discussed how they could be used as parallels for current cases of war and occupation. Through group work, they discussed and argued on controversial topics like collaboration and resistance.



Vassiliki introducing the Variety of Viewpoints on the Great Famine in Greece

Workshop on the topic ‘Cultural Heritage: Changing street names in Belgrade’

During this session, Lidija Zupančić-Šuica, from Education for the 21st century, shared the results of the pilot of the Lesson Plan on Changing Street Names in Belgrade. She underlined, in particular, how she strived to promote a safe learning environment. This had been a concern during the previous trainings: students might not feel safe discussing sensitive issues related to a controversial past. Lidija explained that most people have a strong opinion about the past, especially when events of the past have their family or their life in any way. It is the responsibility of the teacher to create a safe environment and learn how to discuss sensitive issues.



This workshop did not dive into a specific Lesson Plan, but aimed to give an idea to other team members for dealing with cultural heritage topic.

Programme: 15 December 2019

The third and last training day was dedicated to the individual design of the programme, budget, and timeplan of the National Trainings.

Tran the trainer – Continuation

During this session, which covered entirely the third and final day of the training, participants worked individually on the design of the programme, budget, and time-plan of their National Training. Given the mixed nature of the team, composed of experienced teachers that have designed and delivered many trainings already, and of teachers that are now delivering their first training, several ‘booths’ were created, where team members could go to discuss specific aspects of their training:

- the more experienced team members provided practical tips and tricks to their colleagues, and supported them in troubleshooting specific sensitivities of the national context at hand;
- EuroClio representatives supported team members in drafting the budget and the time-plan for their trainings;
- Helen Snelson, Majella Dempsey, and Anthony Malone helped the team members in drafting the programme of their training, with a special focus on the logical order of the sessions and on the design of the interactive elements.

The National Trainings will be held between February and June 2020.

Conclusion and next steps

Overall, the training had a very rich programme with diverse training sessions and active working sessions. It yielded very positive results, with the Variety of Viewpoints on People on the Move, Borders, and Surviving under Pressure being finalized and three source collections on controversial buildings, monuments, and street names being developed collaboratively. It also provided a space, for team members, to share their fears and plans for the National Trainings, and to draft their budgets, time-plans, and programmes.

Certain main decisions were made and conclusions reached, including:

- To finalise the source collections on controversial cultural heritage by the end of January 2020.
- The composition of the Training Package that team members can use to prepare for their National Trainings.
- The draft budget and programme of the National Trainings.
- The dates and content of the sixth and final training, set to take place in April 2020 and to incorporate the 27th EuroClio Annual Conference. This training will provide the opportunity to team members to share the finalized exemplar content, and to further build their capacity in providing high quality trainings. Furthermore, the Needs Assessment and the Teachers' Guides will be discussed, together with the topic of how to deal with controversy and disagreement in the classroom.



Team Members working on the design of their National Trainings

Participants

Alice Modena (The Netherlands)
Amaia Lamikiz (Spain)
Ann-Laure Lieval (France)
Anthony Malone (Ireland)
Ayse Bilgic (Turkey)
Barbara Christophe (Germany)
Benny Christensen (Denmark)
Bistra Stoimenova (Romania)
Burcu Cingay Culha (Turkey)
Fani Partsafyllidou (The Netherlands)
Helen Snelson (United Kingdom)
Juraj Varga (Slovakia)
Lidiya Suica (Serbia)
Majella Dempsey (Ireland)
Maren Tribukait (Germany)
Marko Suica (Serbia)
Matej Matković (Slovenia)
Reili Reintal (Estonia)
Riitta Mikkola (Finland)
Valerio Bernardi (Italy)
Vassiliki Giannou (Greece)
Veronika Budaiova (The Netherlands)
Zsolt Vódli (Hungary)