



Newsletter

June 2012



SEM@s



Sharing European Memories
at school



Norway · Spain · Italy · Slovenia · United Kingdom · Poland



Local historical memories of the II World War in Kristiansand (Norway)

Stiftelsen Arkivet's pilot class at Havlimyra School in Kristiansand started their work on the methodology in March. In the first week they were taught in school about the war both abroad and in Norway. After being introduced to a theoretical framework on the difference between history and memory, the pupils then started the process of examining the historical memories of the period. One of the main activities was a full day excursion in the last week of March, where the pupils visited authentic places and memorials in our local area.

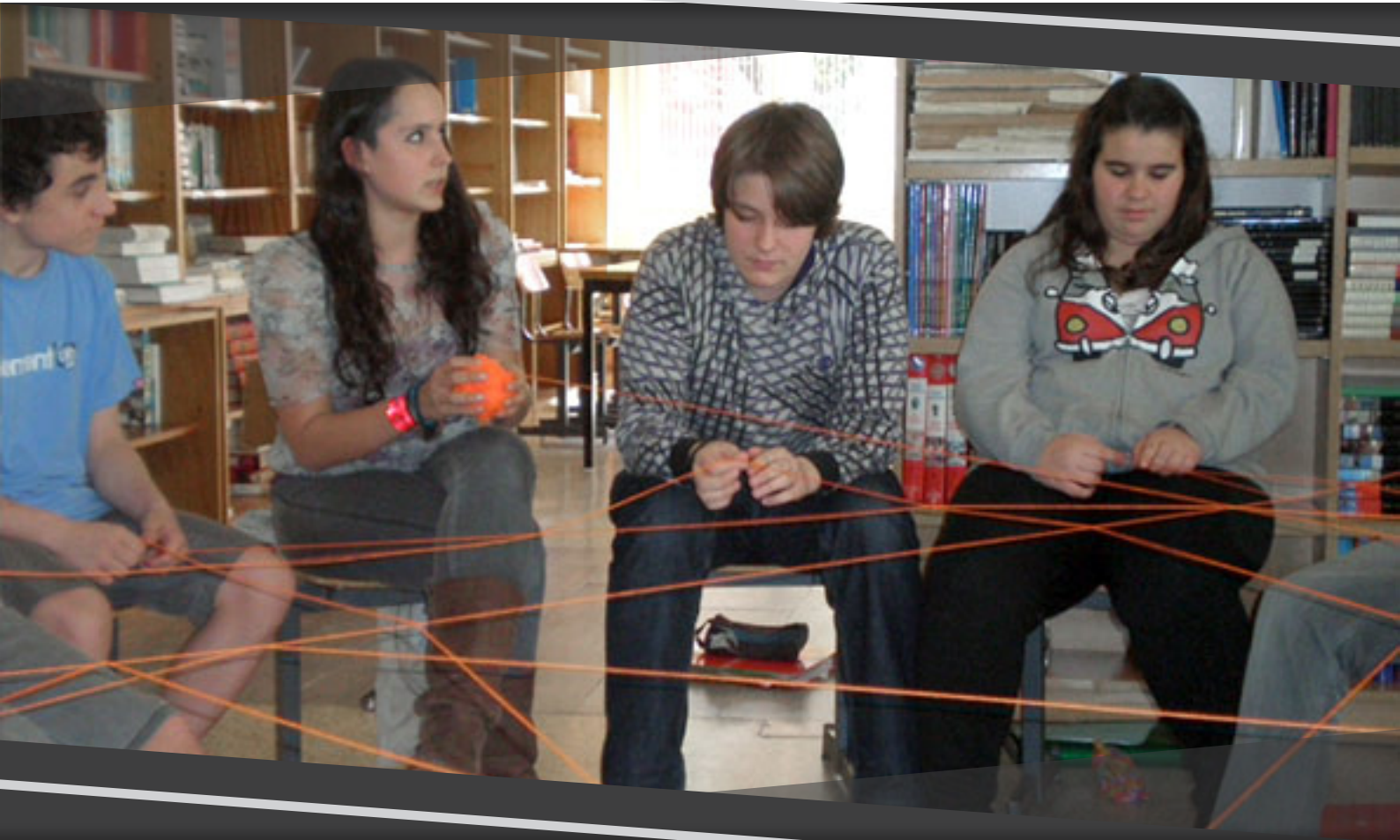


We used as a starting point our own exhibition at Stiftelsen Arkivet, in which prison cells and torture chambers from 1942-45 have been reconstructed and the events that took place are illustrated by various installations. After this, the pupils visited several memorials. On four of these sites, they met and interviewed living witnesses who talked about their memories from this place. This event, and especially the meeting with the living witnesses, was both informative and eye-opening. Back at school, the pupils worked with their analysis, in which they have compared the historical information with the collective and subjective memories of the same period. They have produced digital stories presenting what they have learnt about the memories of the Second World War, and these films were shown – with great enthusiasm – for pupils, teachers and living witnesses in the local cinema in the last week of May. On their schedule the same week was a Skype conference with the Italian SEM@s class, in which the pupils shared and compared memories.



Second Industrialization of San Sebastian (1950-1970) (Spain)

Pilot implementation in San Sebastian started on 18th April with a plenary session with all teaching staff, Aranzadi experts and 113 students who will participate in the project. The SEM@S methodology has been adapted to the school curricula and all History teaching hours of the last term will be devoted to the project. All materials and documents relating to the project are stored in a virtual portfolio.



After some classes and workshops approaching the historical background of the period and the concept of memory, the students made a tour across different parts of the town identifying buildings and evidences of the period, as well as checking how the current urban landscape has been set up by the transformations of those years. From urban and landscape changes, students will analyse changes in the town (demography, housing, public authorities), economy (sectorial and gender work distribution) and society (daily life, education, rites of passage, festivities and leisure). Students will have to interview people of their entourage who lived through these years, which will contribute to their personal memories to reconstruct the historical memory of the period. Besides they will have to collect daily life objects such as books, clothes, devices, tools, etc. to be shown at an exhibition planned for the day of the school (9th June), together with evidences of students' work. The European approach of the project will be ensured by the exchange of experiences and results with Debinka school (Poznan, Poland) which has also studied how the urban landscape reflects the memory of the city.



Monte Sole Massacre - Gothic Line (Italy)

The project activities have involved two schools: one is Forma Giovani, a professional institute in the compulsory education sector, involving a class with students coming from outside the European Union; the second school, "Istituto Caduti della Direttissima", is located on the territory of the Gothic Line (defensive line, established by the Germans in 1944, in an attempt to slow the troops of Allies towards the North of Italy). Both Italian schools are tackling as their topic a local event of the Gothic Line.



Despite their different background they are proceeding with the same steps (Reconstruction of the historic context, difference between history and memory, the impact of war on people, critical discussion of the sources - books about the Monte Sole massacre- and the use of oral testimonies).

The students met and interviewed witnesses, who have reported their daily life during the war and the war stories of their fathers, including the difficulties of returning home. Through these stories students have rediscovered their community and their territory. Then each class has visited a place of memory relating to an historical event of the Second World War. In addition, at the end of the methodological steps, both classes have participated in a Living Diorama, during which the students could compare the different points of view. At the end there was a common moment for comparison and for sharing their emotional reactions. The students, as the final output of their work, will make a video in which they present the experiences gathered.



Industrialisation in Kranj (Slovenia)

Students had studied the historical context of the industrialisation of Kranj in the period between the two world wars individually. Then they searched for differences between memory and historical records with the help of their teacher. Based on their project work regarding the industrialization of Kranj, the participants made posters which were exhibited in the ground-floor of the Kranj City Library.



Our team accompanied the students to the museum where a presentation of the discussed topic was held, and products of the factories of that period were exhibited. Having researched the topic in detail, the students were extremely interested in the lecture. Another positive experience was the cooperation with the local branch of the Ljubljana Historical Archives. An expert on materials in archives showed several documents, plans, postcards, employment books – all representative of the industrialisation period. Based on their own judgment, the students chose materials that will be incorporated into their final creative output.

Final shape, execution and interview analysis were their next step. The students found this part of methodology very interesting as they started filming a short documentary on the discussed topic. Classes on directing, filming and editing in post-production were a welcome addition to the work. Five students took an active part in filming. Besides working within a planned schedule, the participants put in many additional hours and a lot more energy than we had expected. Thanks to the cooperation of different institutions, which are dealing with history, the learning process was both dynamic and student-friendly.



D-Day Memories by Leeds Second World War veterans (United Kingdom)

The Royal Armouries team have been working with a class of 14-year-old History students at the Co-op Academy in Leeds. Since January 2012 the students have been studying the Second World War, exploring the difference between history and memory sources relating to the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944.



Students visited the Royal Armouries Museum, where they handled Second World War weapons and equipment, explored historical evidence in the classroom and had training in interview skills. Subsequently they met and interviewed five people with memories of the Second World War: Paddy Hope, who flew aerial reconnaissance missions and spent two years as a prisoner of war in Germany; Jim Reddyhoff, who worked in the intelligence service; Alf Ackroyd, who took part in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day; Mary Todd, whose husband Wilf also took part in the Normandy invasion; and Wilf and Mary's son Jeff Todd, who described hearing his father's wartime memories as a boy. After analysing the outcomes of their interviews the students have made digital stories that present their own interpretation of the interviewees' testimony and offer a personal reflection on the experience of meeting the interviewees.



Poznań Bank of memory (Poland)

Recent developments in the project involved creating of the "Bank of Memory". The students were requested to collect recorded conversations conducted with witnesses of past events, which are important for the understanding of everyday life in the past century. A particular attention has been focused upon the history of the Poznań's districts: Debiec, Wilda over the last seventy years of the 20th century. They examined the following aspects: changes of appearance of city districts, the process of suburbs urbanization, people's habits, their daily problems and joys. The material has been collected using a standardized questionnaire, conducting a series of interviews, making copies of photos and documents or preparing photo documentation of different objects and places.



The other action comprised a second part of the workshop on "oral history" carried out by Mrs. Magda Kowalska (University of Birmingham / University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań). The aim of this course was to teach the students how to write the first questionnaire and prepare for meetings with the witnesses of recent history. Each class, on the basis of information about one particular person, prepared a set of questions that may be useful during the interview.

One of the most important elements of the project is a series of meetings with history in places referred to by the authors of the project as "The Temples of Memory". These are mainly museums, libraries and archives. So far the students of Dębinka have visited 14 such places in Poland and Germany (mainly Berlin). Having completed the series of the museum classes, the school plans to prepare a questionnaire and debate, the effect of which is going to be a creation of an image of a "perfect museum"- one that appeals to a younger generation and is effective in passing the knowledge and skills to younger generations.



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