

# **History Project 2006** **Enjoying Teaching –** **Oral History In The Classroom**

**Teachers' Guide**

IIZ/DVV – SEE Regional Office



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The perspectives of the authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute; however, for the purposes of authenticity, learning, and sharing we would like to present their insights.

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## Foreword

**T**he project launched by the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV) for its third year under the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe with the support of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Foreign Office in the field of general and vocational, political and cultural adult education, has focused some of its activities for the years 2005 and 2006 on the development of the “*Oral History*” method. In addition to the training of teachers and educators from the region through seminars and workshops, we have compiled this *Oral History Teachers’ Guide – “Enjoying Teaching”*.

This guide is intended to raise the teachers’ and educators’ awareness about the everyday life of people through the testimonies of the eyewitnesses. In order to learn about the lives of our parents and grandparents, and thereby learn more about ourselves and the “other”, this guide adapts a sensitive approach and focuses on the recent past.

The Teachers’ Guide gives readers the opportunity to learn about the “*Oral History*” methodology. The theoretical component presented in the beginning of the guide, explores the essence and the history of the method. With this basis the Guide goes a step further by describing the method step by step and at the end presents examples and sample lessons produced by the teachers from the South Eastern European countries.

We hope that with the guidance of this teaching tool the process of learning will be much more joyful and interactive for both the teachers and the students. It helps to deepen the knowledge and develop not only the teachers’ but also the students’ skills, by researching personal stories and the different trends that exist in the political, economic, cultural and everyday lives. In this way, through a better understanding of the recent past, we hope to contribute to conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peaceful living.

In order to achieve this reconciliation process, people from the region need to communicate and share their experiences with one another. Through the development of the “*Oral History*” method, the History Project has found a way to teach how to accept different perspectives and how to treat each other with respect and trust, in teaching history or other social studies.



Johann Theessen  
Regional Coordinator



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. *Teacher's Guide Background History*

The quick political transitions in Eastern Europe during the 1990s requested the reconsideration of the written history and the enrichment of the written records with the oral data, especially in those countries where history was manipulated and censored by the totalitarian regimes. The Eastern Europeans got more and more interested in knowing the facts and were fascinated by the concrete historical evidence distributed to them through the tangible evidences of oral history in the early 1990s.

The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (IIZ/DVV) has implemented through the History Project multilateral initiatives in history education, encouraged mutual understanding, as well promoted skills and values for the development of the civic society in the region. More specifically, the History Project from 2004 to 2006 disseminated new and proven history teaching methodologies, which are used to promote a deeper understanding of the cultural diversity and respect for the human rights. One of the methods elaborated during these years within the History Project was the Oral History Method. The need for having a guide for the history teachers and adult educators from South Eastern Europe was officially recognized, due to the fact that there is no such compiled information with a practical approach for the history teaching. Hence, by compiling this teachers' guide we intend to present how to implement oral history into the classroom and other educational settings.

In 2005 within the framework of the History Project two teacher trainings focusing on Oral History were accomplished in Albania and Romania.<sup>1)</sup> The high interest shown by the participants led to the creation of a regional team of teachers coming from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia, who gathered together in March 2006 in Veliko Tarnovo Bulgaria, to set the framework of this teachers' guide.

The Guide is structured in three main parts where the first one explains the essence and the background history of the oral history method. The second part goes deeper into the educational programs of the history teaching in the Balkans and exploring the standards and the curricula in the different countries. It also gives suggestions on how to implement the method in the classroom and explains step by step how to prepare an oral history project, conduct successful interviews and gather reliable oral evidences for the research project. The third part presents the teachers' achievements and good practices, which have emerged while implementing the method in the classroom setting. All the presented history lessons might serve as an inspiration tool, which promotes an enjoyable teaching process.

We owe special thanks to all the contributors of this teacher's guide: Liljana Guga, Milika Dharmo and Danjela Shkalla from Albania, Amila Pustahija and Asmir Demir from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Violeta Stoycheva, Petya Georgieva, Dimitrinka Arnaudova, Angel Yanchev from Bulgaria, Zafira Kagkalidou and Pantasiz Miteloudis from Greece, Arber Slihu, Donika Xhemajli and Xhafer Ahmeti from Kosovo, Besnik Emini, Ilir Memedi and Igor Jurukov from Macedonia, Cosmin Budeanca, Anka Potra, Tudor Hebean and Ioana Florescu from Romania, Ivana Dobrivojevic and Jelena Zivkovic from Serbia, and Vasja Rovsniak and Jernej Jakelj from Slovenia.

1) More information about the trainings are available at: [www.historyproject.iizdvv-bg.org](http://www.historyproject.iizdvv-bg.org)

## 1.2. Why Do We Need Oral History?

Oral history is a valuable historical research tool, which the students might use in research projects during junior high school, high school, college, and in more advanced academic levels. It involves a preliminary research for each interview, if it is implemented according to the guidelines thus, enabling students to familiarize with the traditional and library resources. When the students perform an oral history project, they become real historians and develop their critical thinking skills. The primary source documents the students generate offer them some personal information, which balance the panoramic version of history presented in their school textbooks. We propose to implement the oral history method as an antidote of the school textbooks used in the history classrooms.

Oral history enriches the historical knowledge, enhances the historical research, improves the writing, thinking, and interpersonal skills, and gives students a feeling of belonging and feel closer to the community. Oral history helps students and the teachers to understand the past and at the same time to organize interesting and qualitative teaching environments. The students might reinforce and extend their knowledge on history beyond the school textbooks, by interviewing eyewitnesses and establishing contacts for future collaboration with them. Through the implementation of oral history in the class, the students might learn about the common people, who even though are not represented in the history textbooks, have played a crucial role in the making of history. The oral history method also helps to discover the ways the historical events have influenced the various communities and document historical information, which is not represented in the official sources.

Oral history raises important questions about the past events such as the idea of a single monolithic truth about the past and claims that there are multiple historical truths and perspectives presented by different history eyewitnesses. Students might have to analyse and compare the bookish history with the one presented from the eyewitnesses, as well as decide on the credibility of the sources they are researching. A good interviewer should be an attentive listeners and a careful observer in order to ask thoughtful follow-up questions and constantly evaluate the interviewee's responses. Becoming a skilled interviewer helps students improve their communication, listening and analytical skills and it may also serve them for their future academic or professional undertakings, considering an important part of a country's political, historical, cultural, and social inheritance is not only found in books, archive documents, newspapers, or other printed documents, but also on the oral accounts of the eyewitnesses.

Oral history is both a crucial methodology for the historians and a valuable pedagogical tool for the history teachers. Through the oral history projects, the students might reap educational and personal beneficiary rewards and the teachers might enjoy the students' enthusiasm to learn about a subject, which might have previously sounded boring and irrelevant to them. These kinds of projects require careful planning and instructions on how to implement oral history, conduct interviews and respect the ethical interviewing protocol.

### 1.3. The Essence of Oral History

Defining history is a difficult process, because people in the past and present have different conceptions and viewpoints about the exact meaning of history. Most of the definitions are partially true, but there is no clear ultimate definition about the term "history". Generally, the historians, scholars, researchers and teachers have agreed upon the following definitions.

**Past Actuality** – All the events that have happened up to the present, especially the past human events that are irrevocably fixed in time and space. It is considered to be *absolute* and *objective*; History refers to what has happened.

**Record of Past Actuality** – It is the human attempt to recapture the past, present it in words and give it a meaning. It is *relative* and *subjective* and it is only a version of what happened from the viewpoint of the witness. It used to be primarily considered a written record, but the 20th century technological advancement rediscovered the value of oral history presented through the visual and audio mediums.

There are three types of historical records; the Narrative, the Didactic, and the Genetic record. The oldest and most commonly understood and used recording is the *Narrative*, a story that is told by someone. It was the only way to tell history starting from 4000 BC to 500 BC. The narrative consists in the telling of history or the historical events in a chronological order. The next form, the *Didactic recording*, evolved around 500 BC (usually credited to Thucydides and his 'Peloponnesian War') and has an instructive aim. The deocentric, or Christian writers of the Middle Ages are the best representatives of this type of recording. They treated the past actuality as a precedent for action and hoped to bring guidance to those, who would read about the past, in order to glorify God, a social group or an individual. Didactic recording was the preeminent form until the Enlightenment period when Leopold von Ranke, the father of modern history, published his first work and exhorted his students to „go to the sources". Shortly thereafter, the third type *Genetic* emerged and is

the primary historical recording practiced from the 1800s up to the present. The goal of Genetic history is to establish "why" certain historical events have occurred, by studying the complexity of the causes and effects, which have revealed the growth, development and evolution (sometimes called the basic phenomena) of history. Thus, Genetic history tries to establish the „why" of the complex historical events, by investigating their causal relations.

**Making the Record of Past Actuality** - The process, the technique or the method used to record a past actuality is also considered 'History'. The method makes history a science, though not an exact one. There are four important steps in a historical method:

- A search for information
- The study of the gathered information
- A critical evaluation of the information. An active process to comprehend the reasons and judge actions.
- The final synthesis of the collected information and recasting it according to the personal judgment.

The basic considerations of the method are related to the type of the historical sources used and their reliability. The sources are various and they include data and evidences on which a historical event is built.<sup>2)</sup>

**Primary Sources** – Are the sources, which the people present themselves in the written or spoken way.

**Secondary Sources** – The present day writings of the past events.

**Tertiary Sources** – A compilation of the secondary sources, even though they often include some primary sources.

2) Marc Comtois: Introduction to Historical Method, <http://users.ids.net/~marcom/historint/hi-about.html>, last time viewed: 17.9.2006

## Defining Oral History

Oral History is a record and analysis of some past narrated memories and it includes the testimonies of the eyewitnesses on a given event. According to the definition given by Goode and Hatt, it is "simply one of the devices, which helps people communicate with each other", and at the same time "an instrument for collecting data".<sup>3)</sup> As a result the history teaching method, which includes also the witnesses' narration, is named after the American term "Oral History", which preserves the traces of the daily activities; the testimonies of the different people about their experiences, feelings and attitudes regarding the past events, which they have witnessed or participated. Sharing the knowledge and feelings about the past events enables people to better understand the past and reflect on it. It is for the above mentioned reasons that Oral History is classified as a methodology and a complementary instrument for the history teaching, which allows us to acquire more knowledge about the past.

Oral history is an account of something, which is orally transmitted from one generation to the other. Some historians consider oral history an unreliable source to study history, whereas other consider it a valid means for preserving and transmitting history through generations. Experience within the literate cultures indicates that each time a story or memory is presented might undergo some changes, even though the core of the story or memory is always retained. Sometimes, it occurs that the story might suffer minor changes up to the point of totally changing the story and making it unrecognizable.

In effect, oral history is the recording and analysis of the spoken past testimonies<sup>4)</sup>, and a formal and informal process of collecting the oral historical data and presenting a new understandable dimension of a national history, social history, family and individual history. It is a reflection of the people's experiences as well as an important tool, which encourages a new awareness and perception of the past in order to construct a better future. Oral History is an interactive method, which gives people the chance to present and share in a larger community certain political, social or historical facts, which were hidden from the public sphere, in order to understand and face history.

Using Oral History to construct a national history gives a more coherent, reliable and clarified pattern of the past context, which is clearly imparted to the present days. Oral history allows people to address their life difficulties in a way that could not be communicated in other contexts. It is an easy and powerful tool for preserving and presenting people's realities not only to their own communities but to the worldwide community as well.

An important tool of Oral History is the interviewing technique, which helps in uncovering the personal insights of the people who have contributed in the making of history. Considering that Oral History addresses the needs of these people its use has started to grow during the last decade in order to create a more inclusive history. The Oral History method does not only promote communication among people, through the questioning/interviewing techniques, but it also serves as a valuable source of information, which helps to understand better the historical agents, their national history and their "values and actions". Oral History is a very resilient method, which gives everyone the opportunity to learn and implement it. What is more, every interview is unique and every interviewer reveals a special knowledge of various historical events.

Oral History might be used in different historical, social, economic and political categories, by enriching in this way the understanding of a certain country. Even though oral history develops information, which is not recorded in written form, one should question the credibility of the information coming from the interviews as long as this information might be misleading, inaccurate, and deficient. It is for this reason that the oral history data must undergo the same test of credibility as the other historical sources used to make a national history or the social history, in order to have a more convincing and authentic record.

3) Goode, W. J. and Hatt, P. K.: *Methods in Social Research*. McGraw Hills, New York 1952, pp. 196–197

4) Stradling, R.: *Teaching 20th Century European History*. Council of Europe, January 2001, p. 213

5) Лотман, Ю. М.: *Внутри мыслящих миров: Человек-текст-семиосфера-история*. Москва 1996, pp. 344–345

6) Гаврилова, Р.: *В търсене на изгубените места: конструиране на алтернативно минало. В: Около Пиер Нора. Места на памет и конструиране на настоящето, Дом на науките за човека и обществото, София 2004, p. 358*

The oral history process is not a limited one and it includes a variety of significant procedures. The data collected from the memories of the interviews are transcribed, sometimes translated, analyzed, reported in cases of a research project in order to reach the decision-making instances and latter on archived. As long as the information received from the interviews is what people have installed in their memories about a certain event, we should be careful and knowledgeable while interviewing someone:

**Careful** as it might be a very sensitive topic for the interviewee (imprisonment, working camps, trafficking etc.)

**Knowledgeable** because during an interview an interviewee might forget the historical time due to age, or other circumstantial reasons, thus making the interviewers interference necessary for reminding or clarifying.

It is for these reasons that having some set interviewing guidelines and checklists from the very beginning of a research, offers to the interviewer a sense of confidence in commencing an oral history interview.

## Oral History and Narration

Narrative derives from the Latin word *gnarus* and the Proto-Indo-European root *gnu*, „to know“. It was adapted in English via lingua Franca and it is used in a number of specialized applications. The “narrative” is used for general purposes in Semiotics and Literary Theory and it is a story or a part of a story and an interpretation of some world events, which are historically and culturally grounded and shaped by the human personality (by Walter Fisher). A story is any form of text, regardless of the volume, describing a sequence of events caused and experienced by some characters who might also be fictional. The story might be spoken, written or imagined, and it might have one or more standpoints, which represent some of the witnesses or all of them. In the verbal storytelling there is a person telling the story, a narrator whom the audience can see and hear and who adds layers of meaning to the text non-verbally. The Human beings prefer to shape information into a „story“, rather than organize the data as facts in a logical

relationship. Most of the people retain their everyday information in the forms of anecdotal narratives with characters, plots, motivations, and actions. Fisher argues that all the human communication is a form of storytelling. In his „Narrative Paradigm“, he presents a general definition of „narration“, which is a symbolic of actions, words, and/or deeds that have a sequence and meaning to those who live, create or interpret them. The first and most obvious definition is that not all the human discourse might be presented as a story. This page, for example, is not a storytelling with human characters and a plot. Although it might be possible to sustain the idea that Fisher is a character himself in this narrative, whether to accept or not his theory, considering this sequence of words does not match the normal readers’ expectations for a narrative.

## Written History and Oral History

The written history is a thought to be a better preserver of the past important events. “These kinds of events are accurately presented in the chronicles and annals, and latter become generally known to the public”.<sup>5)</sup> Professional history tolerates these kinds of written documents and predominantly the official sources preserved in the archives. The historians accumulate the official versions of history from these sources because they can not only verify the reliability of every single document, but also rebuild a chronological past history in a generalized, “unified and coherent narration”.<sup>6)</sup> Unlike professional history, which reconstructs the past chronologically through punctuality and concreteness, the oral evidence uses the space presented in “unique compact images”. Gavrilova states that the oral evidences are complex and may contain geographical, chronological and physical environmental information and other characters, feelings and emotional states, which might include some unimportant details.

The oral evidences allow us to generally conclude that they are adequate as a reconstruction means of the various situations in the case when there is a complex and multi perspective reality. This is also true for the social, economic and the political history, especially when the contemporary history is analyzed. Nevertheless, we should not underesti-

mate the fact that the study of the regional history in schools in the light of genealogy and traditions of the social groups, helps to increase the interest of the young people about the past and contributes to the better comprehension of the present. It also gives us the opportunity to get acquainted with and to accept the culture and traditions of the "other", especially in the towns and villages with mixed ethnic population.

In a more general context the Oral Evidences present a start for the historical reconstruction of our recent social history, particularly the history of the marginalized people by the state, the society or the historians themselves. The women's history is mostly based on the oral sources, often because of the relative lack of official information about them. As an interdisciplinary methodology oral history has also proved to be a particularly helpful means of studying the intergenerational social changes, such as identifying the differences among generations, the childhood experiences, education, work and social mobility.<sup>7)</sup>

Oral History in the Balkan countries has some settled traditions, which are mainly presented in the works of the ethnologists and sociologists, who have conducted several studies on the social processes. It is only during the last few years that oral history has turned into an important element of the historical researches. There are various Oral History institutions in the Balkan countries such as the Oral History Institute in Cluj-Napoca (Babes-Boyal University) and there are also oral history related initiatives undertaken in Sofia and Blagoevgrad Universities in Bulgaria. This interdisciplinary character of oral history is an indicator for "starting" a professional historical narration about the personal stories and daily activities of the marginalized people, who are not represented in the official history and might be presented through oral history.

## Classifications of the Oral Evidence

There are different classifications for the Oral Evidence. The review of some accessible sources has shown that being an interdisciplinary method, oral history is closely connected with various sciences and languages. Here, we would rely on the classification of Oral Evidence given by R. Stradling<sup>8)</sup> and we would distinguish them from the methods of the collective oral History. Stradling has stated that the basic Oral Evidences are:

**Oral Tradition** – The shared knowledge of the past which was passed down from the previous generations

**Oral Biography** – A narrative of events from the individual's life, which can characterize and attach them respective meanings

**Personal memories** of the individual about certain events, phenomena or experience, achieved by the moment

**Eyewitness accounts** written during or immediately after an event

Oral history is mainly used for two distinct purposes. The first is to help to reconstruct the past, such as to find out what it was like to be an ordinary soldier in the trenches, or a refugee crossing Europe in 1945, or what difference did birth control bring to the lives of the young women and mothers.

The second purpose of the oral history method is to help us understand the way people interpret the past. The oral sources do not only reveal us what people did and witnessed, but also how they acted, thought and believed in a particular time and for a specific event.<sup>9)</sup>

7) Stradling 2001, p. 208

8) Ibid., p. 213

9) Ibid., p. 213

## 1.4. History of Oral History

Oral history was a widely used method for gathering information and evidence until the 19th century. The French historian, Michelet, for example, claimed that the “living documents” were the source for the historical presentation of the French Revolution, arguing that this approach was necessary in order to counterbalance the official sources. However, by the end of the 19th century oral history was not so popular and the so-called Rankean view of the history discipline became the dominant paradigm emphasizing on the political history, narration and the use of documents as the primary source of evidence.

Meantime, other scholars were beginning to recognize the potential value of the direct people’s experiences of certain events and their understanding of the causes and effects of the historical events. The journalists started to use the interviewing technique and writing about the “eyewitnesses’ accounts” of major events from the mid-19th century and onward. The social researchers, who were interested in the social reforms and the living and working conditions of the ordinary people, started to collect evidences through oral interviews. Some anthropologists also started to collect recordings (at first especially from the American Indian folklore) of the phonograph cylinders in the late 19th century. While the methods of eliciting and recording them were rigorous, the absence of the audio and videotape recorders or the digital recording devices, required reliance on the human note taking, thus raising questions about the reliability and the veracity of the historical data. Many early interviews were also idiosyncratic or extemporaneous efforts, conducted with no intention of developing a permanent archival collection. It was in the 1930s that the United States Library of Congress started an oral history program to record and file the traditional folk music, the accounts of the survived witnesses of the American Civil War, Slavery and other major historical events. By that time, the task of the oral historians became much easier and reliable due to the development of the audio tape recording.

Among the most notable early collections of some oral past accounts are the thousands of life histories recorded by the Federal Writers Project [FWP] work-

ers during the late 1930s and early 1940s. An agency of the New Deal Work Progress Administration, the FWP was deeply popular in objectives and orientation; the life histories were designed to document the diverse American experience and the ways the ordinary people were coping with the difficulties of the Great Depression. Nevertheless, most of these records were manuscripts and remained in the Library of Congress and other repositories around the country. The best known of the FWP life histories are the „slave narratives” elicited from the elderly former slaves living in the South; the other narratives were collected from a variety of regional, occupational and ethnic groups.

It was only since 1945 that oral history has begun to reemerge as a fruitful and legitimate source of historical evidence. This partially reflects a growing interest in social, economic and cultural history, and the core subject matter of history. Since the 1960s we have seen the emergence of various historical studies on childhood, education, death, mental illness, medicine, family, hygiene and gender, topics which were not previously thought to be relevant or even to “possess a history”.

Historians generally state that oral history starts with the work of Allan Nevins at Columbia University in the 1940s. Nevins was the first to initiate a systematic and disciplined effort to record on tape, preserve and make the data available for future research recollections, which would have a historical significance. While Nevin was working on the biography of President Grover Cleveland, he found that Cleveland’s associates left a few of the personal records, letters, diaries, memoirs, which were considered important materials for writing a personal biography. Moreover, the bureaucratization of the public affairs tended to standardize the paper trail, and the telephone communication was replacing the personal mail correspondence. Nevins introduced the idea of conducting interviews with participants of the recent history to supplement the written records with oral data. He conducted his first interview in 1948 with a New York civic leader George McAneny, thus giving birth to the Columbian Oral History Research Office, the largest archival collection of oral history interviews and the

contemporary oral history movement in the world. The early interviewing projects in Columbia and elsewhere tended to focus on the lives of the „elite“ leaders in business, politics and social life. However, the oral history's scope expanded during the 1960s and 1970s in response to both the social movements of that period and the growing interest of the historians in the experiences of the „non-elites“. An increased number of interviews were conducted with blue-collar workers, racial and ethnic minorities, women, labour and political activists, and a variety of local people, whose lives typified a given social experience. Similarly, the previous generation WPA interviews helped to realize the oral history potential to restore and record the voices of the historiographers and the historically silent. Likewise President Cleveland's associates, a few people left self-conscious records of their lives for the advantage of the future historians. Some are illiterate; others, too busy; yet others do not consider it and some others simply do not know what it is. Many people think erroneously claiming that they had little to say, which might be considered relevant and of a historical value. By recording the firsthand accounts of a variety of narrators, over the last decades, oral history has helped to democratize the historical records.<sup>10)</sup>

The re-emergence of oral history also reflects a growing interest in what has come to be known as "history from below", the historical testimony of the ordinary people, particularly those whose life experiences and perspectives have been virtually omitted from the historical record, such as the ordinary soldiers, working-class women, indigenous peoples, and cultural ethnic and religious minorities. To investigate the lives of the ordinary people historians have had to resort to a wide range of sources, including letters, photographs, newspapers, archives, oral evidence collected by the social researchers, the official inquiry committees and the personal individual reminiscences. In the last fifty years, oral history has developed into a special field, with its own journals and databases and it has become an interdisciplinary discipline, which might include other study fields, such as the women's history, the black history and cultural history, which have become the topics of some of the most important and widespread oral history projects. There are a number of various museums and archives, which have filed evidences of oral

testimony; there are CDs with the collections of oral evidences about the different social aspects, which are now available in different languages; there are websites which incorporate transcripts of the eyewitnesses' accounts of the most important events in the 20th century; there are audiovisual archives of oral testimony retained by universities and broadcasting companies and finally, many minority groups, whose histories were previously ignored, have initiated their own oral history projects. While changes in the discipline are taking place, the technological development of the portable cassette recorder, has been an important stimulus for the collection of oral evidences. However, in spite of this growth, many historians still express doubts about the validity and reliability of the oral evidences compared to the evidences available in the official sources. This is not just because of their concerns about the reliability of the people's memories and the problems involved in using uncorroborated evidence and hearsay, but because the documents, especially the archived official documents, do not only present valuable information but also they present a sequence or a series of historical documents. The written documents might be compared to other written sources thus, providing the historian not only with the credibility of the source but also enabling them to better interpret its meaning. The official document itself is a source for other research literature, thus, establishing a historical chronology, which outlines the decision sequence and the thinking process.

10) Linda Shopes: Making Sense of Oral History – History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral>, February 2002, last time viewed: 17.9.2006

Nevertheless, any historian, who conducts a research on the recent past, has to rely on other sources rather than just limit to the official written data. This is partly because most of the governments are secretive about recent decisions and policies and therefore do not allow public access to the relevant documents until a specific time line (often it is twenty-five to thirty years after a historical event), even though the access might continue to be denied, depending on the research topic. Due to the development of the communication technology, even the historians of the recent past need to research other sources to supplement the documentary historical evidences. In the present days, a researcher might be advised to examine a document, which refers to a telephone conversation, or an e-mail for which there is no oral recorded information available. As a result, the researchers have to use the available sources such as the interviews with the senders or receivers of this information.<sup>11)</sup>

### Oral Evidence in History Textbooks

Including oral evidences in the history textbooks enables the understanding and full presentation of the everyday life picture in different historical periods. It also helps to escape the traditional “peace treaties-and-battles” narration, directing the attention towards the anonymous and the collective, where every individual might find and position himself/herself. As a study component, the Oral Evidence contributes to the construction of another quality teaching approach, which differs from the traditional teaching and allows the inquisitive students to understand the historical facts “in the dramatic conflict between the personal intentions and the general regularities”.

Stradling pays a special attention to the oral history sources the students produce themselves, while analyzing the Oral Evidences, considering one of the purposes of the oral history source is to record and analyze the Oral Evidences. As a result, the students do not need only critical thinking and interpretation skills, but they also need to know how to connect the oral evidences to the concrete historical context. The students also need to verify the source credibility and understand the oral history implementation process.

R. Stradling’s position once more states that during their school education the young students should learn how to collect the Oral Evidences, which are a representation of the people’s historical and collective memories. Giving students, the possibility to collect and analyze the historical Oral Evidences would:

- Help students to reconstruct the diverse events, which took place in the recent or distant past
- Contribute to the understanding of the historical events by the ordinary people, thus constructing social knowledge as the other side of the official political History
- Tend to create a personal memory of several special events, while broadening the collective ones and fill in the gaps of the community historical memories
- Allow the understanding of the present time image, bringing out the unwritten stories such as biographies, memories, photographs, and oral narratives
- Give students the ability to compile their own oral sources and draw their own conclusions, based on the comparison of the oral and written information
- Develop their critical thinking skills, responsibility, empathy and communication skills in a different environment.<sup>12)</sup>

The students’ ability to collect Oral Evidences is closely related to the acquirement of some basic information collecting techniques such as:

- Communication
- Inquiry
- Family tree
- Interview

11) Stradling 2001, pp. 211–213

12) Ibid., pp. 214–215

## Why to Use Oral History ?

It does not only promote communication among its members through the questioning/interviewing techniques, it also serves as a valuable source of information, in order to have a thorough understanding of the historical agents. Oral History is a very resilient method which gives the opportunity to everyone to get accustomed to it.

Oral History can be used in different historical, social, economic and political categories, by enriching the understanding of a certain country. Even though oral history develops information, which is not recorded in written form, one should question the credibility of the information coming from the interviews as long as this information might be misleading, inaccurate, and deficient. For this reason oral history data must undergo the same test of credibility as other historical sources used to make a national history or the social history, in order to have a more convincing and authentic record.

The oral history process is not a limited one; it includes a variety of significant procedures. The data collected from the memories of the interviews is transcribed, sometimes translated, analyzed, reported in cases of a research project in order to reach the decision-making instances and archived. As long as the information received from the interviews is what people have installed in their memories about a certain event, we should be careful and knowledgeable while interviewing someone.

**Careful** as it might be a very sensitive topic for the interviewee (imprisonment, working camps, trafficking etc.)

**Knowledgeable** because during an interview an interviewee might forget the historical time due to age, or other circumstantial reasons, thus making the interviewers interference necessary for reminding or clarifying.

It is for these reasons that having some set interviewing guidelines and checklists from the very beginning of a research, offers to the interviewer a sense of confidence in commencing an oral history interview. Thus, an interviewer should keep in mind some important interviewing concerns while going to an interview:

- Conduct a literature review in the topic being interviewed in order to comprehend the historical/ social aspect and build an interview questionnaire
- Carefully select the interviewees based on the aims of the oral history interview
- Have the consent of the interviewee or in cases of children parents or caregivers, before the interview takes place
- Check all the needed technical support before running the interview (tape recorder, (check for electricity and batteries), notebook, pen, pencil etc.
- Be honest, devoted, responsive and flexible while conducting an interview
- The most important of all be observant during the whole interviewing process in order to grasp what is really important about the interview and the information received and fill the gaps in the current written sources

## 1.5. One Reflection on Oral History

### Universities Step Fold towards Quality History Teaching <sup>13)</sup>

The oral history method, is gaining foothold in the present day teaching subjects in Albania, such as history, geography, civics, and literature. Many innovative teachers use this method in order to allow students for more social interaction in and outside the classroom setting, considering students learn not only through peer cooperation but also from the local sources that bear significant facts, such as eye witnessing in various historical events. The social studies teacher, while choosing the oral history method, first considers the students' learning abilities, their immediate study interests and the chances the surrounding environment provides them to enhance the critical thinking skills in relation to the interpretation of the social heritage.

#### This is what a history teacher has commented on oral history:

*"I remember the time when I first heard of oral history. I thought that was a hard work. Why should students go out and verify facts? Why do students have to go out asking about people's memories? Why should we ignore the history textbooks? I was hesitating as I was strongly concerned in contributing to the national identity through the traditional history teaching. I was afraid that something malignant might happen to the students out there. But now, my students love this method and they have so much fun while using it. Above all, they have learnt a lot in the history subject."*

The students' integrity in the history class is strongly affected by the implementation of the oral history method. While students learn to identify key informants and classify them according to their importance for a specific historical event, students' personal expectations are raised and they become more socially responsible. Students come to understand that history is made not only of leaders and other important personalities, but also of various people from different social belongings, who even though are not officially presented in the official history, are the real authors of human development and its history. As social reproduction does not ask only for political reproduction, oral history brings a balance between the students' political, social, and civil education, thus, adding to their willingness for more social participation and representation.

Oral history allows students to bring everything produced by the people in the class, where they acknowledge that history is what has affected more the human relations and development through the ages. When students choose different people and their memories to become part of their history lessons, history no longer becomes the monopoly of some people, nevertheless, students become more open minded in acquiring more historical knowledge, and critical on the already presented information from their parents. Moreover, oral history allows students to research on some issues, which might not be easily understood and concluded only through the written materials. Historiographers hardly come to clear definitions on issues such as religion and religious sacredness for certain religious groups; gender and gender problems; poverty and its social bill; and the role of the marginalized groups and their everyday life agony. On the other hand oral history might respond to some of these issues. Through personal contacts and interviews students come to learn about different religions, gender perspectives, economic and human rights and the suppression of certain groups in the course of history.

<sup>13)</sup> The author of this section is Prof. Assoc. Milika Dhamo. The article is based on the author's experience while working with "Education for Democratic Citizenship" centers in the universities of Tirana, Shkodra, Korca and Gjirokastra, and the "Theodore Kaltsounis" Civic Center and the Albanian Association Education Center for Democratic Citizenship.

Oral history allows students to better perceive and recognize the credibility of the historical events. Moreover, the oral history implementation process improves the students' critical thinking skills, while identifying and selecting among various facts and opinions. While using the oral history method, students learn to search for facts and evidences themselves rather than accept only the data delivered to them by various sources. The Balkans is a region of fierce history and people bearing diverse interests and standpoints, who claim to be right in all their political or social requirements. It is through the implementation of oral history that students learn to determine the historical truth from sentiments and twisted facts.

**This is what a history teacher states about the potential of oral history:**

*"I remember it was the beginning of 2001, when I first read about the oral history method in a series of articles in a teachers' magazine. I considered them as exaggerating as they were very positive about the use of this method and its outputs. I considered using this method with my students. Since then I have never stopped ..."*

Oral history aims at affecting and touching the personality of the people. When students use oral history to collect data they provide not only the perspective of the eyewitness, but also their own perspectives on the historical events and eyewitnesses. Oral history introduces students to a new philosophy and makes them more resourceful during the learning process. Students learn to evaluate the data they collect and recognize that there are different means and ways to acquire and above all that there is no ultimate truth in the learning process. The students become more open minded when they learn history through oral history, rather than limit themselves to the so called final and just knowledge of the school textbooks.

Oral history allows each student to think individually of the outside world and its occurrences as well as enables the development of the students' emotional intelligence. Students might learn better through sharing among each other, considering oral history provokes significant curiosity and interest in them.

### Oral History and Social Interaction

The oral history method can generate a better learning microenvironment, where students and teachers might relate the old ideas to the new ones, where the mental schemes develop smoothly and flexibly. The Albanian students have found various ways to learn more about their national history and lifestyle, thus, they are receiving more information on the infrastructure and architecture of their country, the people who have contributed to the physical changes of their country and to the building of various important public institutions, streets, wells, churches, mosques, etc.

The oral history method allows students to gradually shift from concrete objects and people and their actions to more abstract ideas and complete generalization of the development principles. It focuses mostly on what children can really do and avoids what they cannot meaningfully understand. There is no such better way that the students might learn to be part of their community and integrate in this community. Sharing the past events and personal experiences, contributes to the building of a more civilized future.

The students' intellect is developed more when they interact with each other rather than when they share and communicate only with the adults or their teachers. Sometimes children are more inclined to understand what has happened among people from some shared cases and experiences. The official history sometimes sounds as non repetitive and happening long time ago, whereas oral history makes the events and the people's lives and activities sound real and closer to them. It prepares students not only to be part of it, but also to create it.

**Student's comment:**

*"I find my grandmother sometimes a conformist. She does not stand to her experience. She tells me the things that are politically correct. She is afraid I might have trouble at school with the truth."*

The oral history method encourages open discussions about various perspectives of the historical events and improves the students' communication skills. When students use oral history they practice more, learn how to ask questions and listen to the responses, think critically and develop empathy and imaginary work. It allows students to interact in the society, discover more, and share their personal ideas about history.

The formal teacher based history teaching does not have the same impact as peer learning, despite the way it is compiled and presented. The school history textbooks, usually appears like a tool, which is handed to the students to act as more intellectually advanced, and seems to neglect the importance of the other agents such as the peers, teachers, older students, and other adults. Listening to the oral history experience, teaches students that there are many sources which contribute to the learning and understanding of history, rather than focus only on the textbooks which often are seen as ready made guiding models to the cognitive development. The history textbook might result in a harmful teaching tool leading to submissive and easily indoctrinated young citizens, if it is studied in isolation.

The use of oral history in the school helps students to better understand the historical ideas and concepts and broaden their knowledge. They learn how time has contributed in the building of personalities and the importance of the influence of the multiple social relations in the social actions. For example if the teacher asks a student to talk about his/her grandfather the student will mostly refer to his physical appearance and their relations with each other. However, if the teacher requires the students to bring a story from their grandfather into classroom, they would search and learn more, and consider the older generation with more interest. The students

like to see and understand their grandfathers' social roles, besides being only their grandfathers, and look into the multiple relations they have built through the years and the impact of these relations into the other people's lives.

Usually, oral stories, unlike the historical texts, are very well organized and serve as wonderful well designed instruction materials. They are excellent problem solving and decision making examples and keep students focused, and help them to easily understand the meaning and content of the stories. The oral history method encourages students to ask different questions about space, time, reasons, developments of events, consequences etc. which fascinate them during the entire questioning process. It also enables teachers to invent new teaching methods by starting with some real life stories and move to other creative activities, such as ask students to share what they know or their personal stories.

**The oral history method offers teachers the opportunity to create happy and productive history classes. This is what a history teacher has told:**

*"The school headmaster came to supervise my teaching in one of my history classes. The students were speaking about the interviews they had conducted. The director approached me after the class, and told me to consider the further development of such interesting classes."*

## Oral History Promotes Moral Development

The oral history method raises the students' moral awareness on certain historical issues, considering that moral development is very vulnerable to the mind-twisting teaching patterns. The oral history lessons are usually short educational sessions, based on values. It enhances the moral development and it is within its settings that the students may learn more about the transition of their values and respective morals, about right and wrong, and cognitively compare their own norms and morals with those of the others.

The teachers who use oral history in their classes have witnessed that the thinking flexibility and reversibility are easily developed to serve moral awareness. However, students might recognize that the history textbooks are written from the men's perspective and pose the question: What would happen if it was written from the women's perspective? Students might discover by interviewing some women witnesses a different perspective on history, which is certainly not provided in the history textbook. The students might understand that the women's perspective is excluded from the history writing simply because it does not qualify as "male" issue. The oral history method encourages students to acquire in a more credible, and based way, such as interviewing people who are directly influenced by a certain historical event. Students would realize that every person holding a certain social position has his/her own perspective on a situation, which is influenced by their pre-assigned social positions, expectations and value systems that are substantially different depending on the social strata.

### This is how a parent has perceived the importance of oral history:

*"You know how boys are at this young age. They do not talk too much at home. I am so happy that the history teacher has assigned him the task to interview us on our life experiences. It has turned out that we are having wonderful family nights in the house!"*

There are many experiences of social studies teachers in high schools or universities who are attending much trainings on the use and importance of oral history to understand history. During the last ten years, the universities have undertaken a very ambitious task in enhancing democratic education in Albania through the development of capable teachers for the task. A critical mass of potential actors in democratic citizenship education is already created under the assistance of different potential partners. A team of national teacher trainers is created, who have become significant members of the civic education network. Five Civic Education Centers in different universities throughout the country were set up, to assist and further continue the work of the educators in this network,

The universities of Korca, Tirana, Elbasan, Shkodra and Gjirokastra with the assistance of "Education for Democratic Citizenship in Albania", supported by the University of Washington, USA, are hosting respective centers for Democratic Education. They are acting in the local level as resources for peer teacher training events, parents' associations' animation, and students and students' governments support. They have become very experienced and are supported by the by-products of the project for Democratic Citizenship Education in Albania. The Civic Teachers' Guides for the 1st to the 10th grades, the manual for the bases of democracy and the role of education in a democratic society, and other methodological books and materials for education of teachers and students, are widely spread and used in the national level.

These publications comprise the basis for steady developments in empowering teachers to promote democracy in the public school level and finding more effective teaching instruments and methods.

Nevertheless, there is still a gap between the outside world and the knowledge and skills students receive during their studies. The universities seem to be detached from the intentional engagement in democratic citizenship education, and they lack the toolbox to perform a better teaching. The teachers in the education programs have undertaken sporadic initiatives to introduce modules and courses, which apply to the public needs. Improvements are seen in political sciences, democracy and citizenship, human rights and gender education on global education and life skills. Education actors are searching for tools, which would lead to the social cohesion and the promotion of democratic and citizenship education. The oral history method easily fulfills the methodological and historical gaps already identified.

Teachers from the elementary, compulsory and secondary education and university professors are active members of these centers. They are devoted to engage in training teachers in order to bring more enthusiasm in the teaching of history in the country. Therefore, following will be the presentation of the role of the oral history method, which is recently adopted by them, in recognition of the systematic efforts the centers are making, and the professionalism they are demonstrating, in developing a comprehensive program, capable to impact and restructure the role of the school in a democratic society. The adoption of the interactive methods proves that the universities are producing a holistic impact in a system in need for quality.

## 2. Oral History in the Classroom

### 2.1. Standards and Curricula

#### The Aims of History Education

The present world dynamism is challenging the history education in finding innovative and effective strategies for teaching the past. Although in the Balkans, as in other European states, a curriculum is mainly knowledge <sup>1)</sup> oriented, there is a need and aim for constant education reforms in the post-totalitarian societies, aiming at student centred lessons.<sup>2)</sup>

Which are the main components of the new educational paradigms and what opportunities does the modern history education offer?

#### Common Tendencies

The comparative analysis included in some Balkan new history school programs, study national history in a new geopolitical and cultural perspective symbolized by "United Europe". This new position introduces another tendency of the broader presence of civic and cultural history and the spiritual life of various societies and national states. Understanding the diverse traditions and religions, going deeper into the national identities and respect the cultural values are important factors, which mark the components of a research about the events and attitudes of the people not only in history, but also in the present everyday life. This learning approach, to better understand the past, transforms history education in a dynamically organized process of rational past study, based on various sources and standpoints. This gives students the opportunity to go further beyond their personal set of values and also understand the values of the Other.

The methodological framework of the aims of the modern historical narrative, offers the following common elements among the new school history programs in the Balkan countries:

- Balanced presentation of the political history through the development of new topic curricula connected to the active and creative role of the people in their lifestyle, labour, everyday life, co-existence with other ethnic and religious communities etc.
- Development of the documental bases for learning the past and change the diverse attitudes and interpretations of history based on the multi perceptivity and multiculturalism
- Students' guidance towards a critical thinking and competent learning approach
- Development of attitudes and values as behavioural norms
- Practical implementation of the acquired knowledge

Although there are different approaches used in different countries for the development of the school programs structure and content, they have similar structures and use common conceptual elements and normative discourse. The following examples present the above mentioned tendencies.

1) Van der Leeuw, Roord, J.: Introduction. In: *Changes and Continuity in Everyday Life In Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia 1945–2000*. Teacher Resource Book, EUROCLIO, Skopje 2003, p. 3; See also Pingel, F: *The European Home – Representation of 20th century Europe in history textbooks*. Council of Europe, September 2000, p. 199

2) Damjanova, A.: *Constructivism – The new educational paradigm*. Bulgarian language and literature (web version), 2005, No. 5; See also *Constructivist Learning Design*: <http://www.prainbow.com/cld/cldp.html>, last time checked: 18.9.2006

### ■ New Approach in Kosovo's curriculum and the Main Changes in the New Programs

- Based on procedure rather than content
- Oriented towards the goals, objectives and results
- Oriented towards the social, cultural, economic and everyday life history

### ■ Macedonia <sup>3)</sup>

The aim of the high school history education is that students gain essential, systematical, permanent and scientifically proved knowledge about the past and the present, which would contribute to the development of the students' critical thinking and historical consciousness, as well development of value system in respect to their people and state, to the other peoples and states, and which represents the civilization achievements of the world, as well to deepen the knowledge towards further education of the historical events and processes.

### ■ Bulgaria <sup>4)</sup>

Article 9 of the Bulgarian Constitution

(2) The aims of the general education should conform to the Human Rights, the Rights of the Children, the Freedom of Conscience and Religion, the values of social education, the achievements of European and world science, technologies and culture, and should be based on the traditions of the Bulgarian culture and education.

(3) The basic aims of the general education are:

- a) Build the national identity for the young people in the framework of the European and world cultural traditions through the wealthy Bulgarian culture
- b) Ensure the right of difference based on the respect for the personality and individuality of others, consideration for other cultures and appreciation of different knowledge.

### ■ Romania <sup>5)</sup>

The knowledge of the fundamental values, norms, perspectives and performance criteria used in the European Union.

3.1. The adoption of the European perspectives in solving problems about national identity and European integration, state citizenship and European citizenship, unity and diversity.

4. The conscientious acceptance and competent implementation of individual rights and responsibilities in the components of the European integration process.

3) History Curricula for 1st year of the High School education, Skopje, December 2005

4) "Law governing Educational level, General Minimum Education and School Curriculum, 1999", The state newspaper, volume 67, 27.07.1999

5) The Order of the Ministry of National Education No. 3621/13.04.2000 referring to the optional subject "Integration in the European Union", Quoted by Capita, C. Small World, Big Country. In: History for Today and Tomorrow. Volume N2, Hamburg 2001, pp. 83–84

## The Subject of History in the Balkan Countries

The school regulations and documents in the Balkan countries are prepared and distributed by the Ministries of Education and it is the respective Ministries, which are also responsible for the planning and preparation of the history school curricula.

History is an obligatory subject in all the Balkan countries, which is studied in both levels of high education. The systematic history course starts in the 5th grade, apart from Slovenia that starts in the 6th grade (11 year old students). The teaching of national history in Albania, Greece and Romania starts in the 4th grade. Whereas, separate history lessons are

included in the integral subject “People and Society”, which is taught in the 3rd and 4th grade in Bulgaria. In similar way the students between the ages of 7 to 10 years old, receive historical knowledge in the “Nature and Society” subject in Macedonia. The average secondary school students receive less than 2 hours of history teaching per week, approximately between 64 and 72/80 hours per year. The more limited the number of the history education classes a student receives and the richer the content of the existing curriculum is, the fewer would the opportunities for extending or expanding the curriculum be.

The following table <sup>6)</sup> presents a comparative approach of the organization of the history course in the Balkan countries.

Level	Classes per year	Classes per week	Learning weeks per year	Historical Period	Country
5 <sup>th</sup>	68	2	34	Ancient and Medieval History	Albania
	70	2	35	Ancient Times	BiH
	51/68 7)	1.5–2	34	The Past of the Bulgarian People from Ancient Times to the End of the 17th c.	Bulgaria
	74	2	37	National History from Ancient Times to 1999	Kosovo
	72	2	36	Ancient Times	Macedonia
	54	1.5	36	Ancient Times	Romania
	34	1	34	Ancient Times	Serbia
	–	–	–	–	Slovenia 8)
6 <sup>th</sup>	68	2	34	The New History 9)	Albania
	70	2	35	Medieval Times	BiH
	68	2	34	History of Bulgarian People and State (18th–20th c.)	Bulgaria
	74	2	37	National and World History from Early Ancient Times to Middle Ages 11th c.	Kosovo
	72	2	36	Medieval Times	Macedonia
	36	1	36	Medieval Times	Romania
	68	2	34	Medieval Times	Serbia
	70	2	35	Basis Points and Terms of History	Slovenia 8)
	7 <sup>th</sup>	68	2	34	Contemporary History (1918–1990) 10)
70		2	35	New History (from 15th c. to 1789)	BiH
51		1.5	34	Ancient Times	Bulgaria
74		2	34	National and World History from 11th c. to the Beginning of the 19th c. / 1815	Kosovo
72		2	36	New History (1492–1914)	Macedonia
26		1	36	World History (19th–20th c.)	Romania
68		2	34	World History (17th–18th c.)	Serbia
70		2	35	The Ancient World, Roman Empire and Middle Ages	Slovenia

8 <sup>th</sup>	68	2	34	History of Albanian People	Albania
	7	2	35	New History (1789–1918) and Contemporary History	BiH
	51	1.5	34	History of the Medieval World (4th–15th c.)	Bulgaria
	74	2	37	Modern and Contemporary History from the Congress of Vienna (1815) to the end of the WW I (1918)	Kosovo
	72	2	36	Contemporary History	Macedonia
	72	2	36	History of Romanians	Romania
	68	2	34	World and National History (19th–20th c.)	Serbia
	70	2	35	World and National History (16th–19th c.)	Slovenia
9 <sup>th</sup>	70	2	35	Ancient and Medieval History	Albania
	70	2	35	From the Beginning of the Human Being until Berlin Conference (1878) 11)	BiH
	72/108 12)	2/3	36	New History (1492–1914)	Bulgaria
	70	2	35	Contemporary History Albanian and World History (1918–1999)	Kosovo
	36/72	1/2	36	Ancient Times	Macedonia
	36/72	1/2	36	Ancient Times	Romania
	34	1	34	Ancient Times	Serbia
	70	2	35	History of the World, Yugoslavia and Slovenians in the 20th c.	Slovenia
10 <sup>th</sup>	70	2	35	Modern History (end of 19th till beginning of 20th c.)	Albania
	70	2	35	From Berlin Conference (1878) to the Fall of Yugoslavia (1992) 11)	BiH
	72/144	2/4	36	Contemporary History (1914–1990)	Bulgaria
	74 13)	2	37	National and World History From Ancient times to Great Geographical Discoveries (15th c.)	Kosovo
	36/72	1/2	36	Medieval History	Macedonia
	36/72	1/2	36	Medieval History	Romania
	68	2	34	Medieval History	Serbia
	70	2	35	The Ancient World, Greek period, Roman empire and the Middle Ages, Slavic settlements in the Middle Ages, East and South Eastern Europe	Slovenia

6) The information in this table is gathered and elaborated by the contributors of the representative countries in the Oral History Teachers' Guide. The table presents only the history subject in compulsory education, without special cases as in the Language Schools, Technical schools etc. All the sources were compiled and prepared by Petya Georgieva, Bulgaria.

7) In March 2006 the Ministry of Education and Science in Bulgaria, according to Regulation No. 6 changed the history curricula from 51 to 68 hours per school year for the 5th and 6th grades.

8) History education in Slovenia starts in 6th grade.

9) In this table *New History* replies to the period from Great Geographical Discoveries, the end of 15th Century to the end of the First World War (1918).

10) *Contemporary History* refers to the period from the First World War to the end of the 20th Century.

11) The information refers to the Technical High Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

12) Ordinary/Extraordinary

13) General and Social Sciences in the High Schools

11 <sup>th</sup>	70/105	2/3	35	Contemporary History (20th c.)	Albania
					BiH
	72	2	36	Bulgarian History from Antiquity to 1990	Bulgaria
	70 14)	2	35	History of Albania and Kosovo (1939–1999)	Kosovo
	36/72	1/2	36	New History (1492–1914)	Macedonia
	36/72	1/2	36	World History (19th–20th c.)	Romania
	68	2	34	World History (17th–18th c.)	Serbia
	70	2	35	World and National History (10th c. to 1815)	Slovenia
12 <sup>th</sup>	70/136	2/4	34	History of Albanian People	Albania
					BiH
	62	2	31	Nations and Nationalities on the Balkans	Bulgaria
	74	2	37	National and World History from 1815 to 1918	Kosovo
	36/72	1/2	36	Contemporary History	Macedonia
	36/72	1/2	36	History of Romanians	Romania
	68	2	34	World and National History, 19th–20th c.	Serbia
	70	2	35	World and National History, 1815–1914	Slovenia
13 <sup>th</sup>	64	2	32	Contemporary History of Albanias and World 1918–1999	Kosovo
	70	2	35	History of World, Yugoslavia and Slovenians in 20th c.	Slovenia

The aims of the historical education and content of the school curricula have an impact on the school-books used for teaching history. Although the teachers are obliged to follow the information in the schoolbooks, they have the pedagogical freedom, especially in Greece, to determine the topics and facts they would use in the class. The methods and means used to teach these subjects also depend on the teacher.

#### 14) General High Schools

## 2.2. Topics to Study – Guidelines for Using Oral History in the Classroom (Themes and Topics)

In the framework of the development of the educational reforms and “new reading” of the past in the Balkan countries, the oral history method has become a relevant and integral method, that offers teachers the opportunity to undertake flexible actions in implementing the new school plans and finding successful and concrete solutions for an active learning process.

Example: The possibilities to use Oral Evidence in schools in Bulgaria is bounded by the state educational regulations included in the school curricula. The number of the documents and the expected competency the students must achieve through their interpretation are specified in the “Sources of History” section. One of the methodological grounds for using Oral History during the teaching process is the interpretation of the documents, which are seen as “an entity of all the traces of human activities, which have contributed to the studying of History”<sup>15)</sup>

The broader understanding of the term “document/source”, included in the school documentation, gives opportunities for:

- Inclusion of oral evidences in the school textbooks as sources of official information about an event or historical process
- Additional teacher’s presentation about the oral evidences as bearer of various and alternative standpoints of an event or of a historical personality
- Conduction of a students’ research and discussion about sensitive and contradictory related issues or events from the recent and distant past

The use of oral evidences as one of the sources for learning about the past enables teachers to organize a challenging teaching/learning process based on multi-perceptivity, connecting the development of the historical consciousness and national identity with the improvement of the critical thinking skills.

The history teachers might implement oral history at every education level, from undergraduate school to graduate school and as well in the community educational programs.

The use of the oral history method in the classroom requires students to possess:

- Technical knowledge to connect the oral evidences with the tangible historical context
- Competency in defining the reliability of the source and the common processes connected with the conception of the source
- Critical thinking and interpretation skills
- Ability to understand the essence of the historical information and its written structure through key words or notes and various kinds of plans and skills to compile the history school texts based on the gathered evidences
- Opportunities to synchronize and asynchronize the chronological differences and regional particularities in the historical and cultural developments of the different societies
- Opportunities to synthesize the knowledge and the methods in history, literature, philosophy and other study fields

The development process of such skills and competencies starts in the introduction course to history education<sup>16)</sup> and continues during the entire course of school education. There are some particularities related to the use of the oral history method in the primary and secondary schools, which mostly appear due to the diversity of age, psychology, student’s intellectual abilities, attitudes, values, stereotypes and prejudices.

15) Kusheva, R.: *Methodology of Teaching History*. Sofia 2000, p. 138

16) see table on pp. 26–28.

## Using Oral History in the Primary School

History education from the 5th to the 8th grade is based on the understanding of the world knowledge. In most of the Balkan countries, where the systematic history course starts with the authentic past (Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia), the main idea on which knowledge is based, is on the notions about the distant epoch through the actualization of the modern social experience from the children's everyday life. When students are able to present the historical events in a chronological order they are also able to build the notions of time and space. The opportunities to use the oral history method in the frame of the obligatory preparation are released when students learn about topics, which are connected to the cultural history or the history of the everyday life. The teachers might assign students interesting tasks, which concern the monuments of the national and world cultural heritage and are situated in the territory of a state or preserved as museum exhibitions. The governments in the different Balkan countries have tried to preserve the buildings or entire streets in the old parts of the towns or cities, which have a historical atmosphere and capture the rhythm and the psychology of the people who live there. Such "open air museums" give teachers the opportunity to organize open classroom lessons, along with the well known lessons in the regular museums. Besides that, the cultural heritage offers students the opportunity to conduct various creative tasks, connected to the gathering of oral evidences through interviewing parents or other acquaintances. The history teacher, Donika Xhemajli from Prishtina, Kosovo, has implemented this method in her history classes.

Other resources used as oral history might be the traditional songs and legends, which contribute and offer more meaning and content to the better understanding of the past. These resources are included in the textbook and the teacher has the opportunity to develop various didactical situations, in order to encourage the students to actively participate as researchers in the learning process. The Roma folklore might be purposefully used not only to integrate the children in the learning process, but also as an acquisition tool, to learn more about the Roma culture in school.

The task, connected with the Balkan people everyday life culture and their involvement in the clear historical representation of the events, as a source of a systematic learning, could also be interpreted as a relation between the collective and historical memory. Oral history allows students to articulate the visual signs such as emblems, costumes, jewelry, customs and ceremonies, and traditional social organization manners, so that the memory of one historical community becomes meaningful to the students as a historical evidence of life in the past and its contact with the "others" it is meant different. The teachers might assign additional tasks to the students, more than the ones presented in the school curricula and stimulate them in order to learn more about their country.

The collection of the personal memories and autobiographical stories are also valuable sources for the pupils in the primary schools. For example, when teaching the modern Bulgarian history in the 6th grade the teacher might assign students the task to collect various stories about the cooperative farms, the migration of the people, the construction of the new houses, the first television at home, evening activities or the participation in the youth brigades. All these memories engage relatives and parents, neighbours and other people, and at the same time they motivate the pupils who come from different locations, and might consider the traditional way of teaching history as boring and difficult to learn and understand.

The skills that the students of the 5th to the 8th grade of primary education need in order to use the oral history method are mainly related to the gathering of information technique such as talk, investigate, family tree and interview.<sup>17)</sup> Due to the fact that the development of the specific historical skills requires a step by step implementation of the oral history method, teachers should be based not only on the theoretical explanations and guidelines, but also show students working models, involving them in didactical situations with a training aim.

17) The author has used the terminology introduced by the methodology of R. Stradling and popularized by the project "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century", because of the terminology differences, which are typical in various schools that implement oral history.

Many interesting tasks on the additional history learning could be performed in the classroom or outside it through open space activities such as workshops, clubs, cultural heritage classes, etc. These are some suggested topics which might be used during the academic year or through a period of two to three months work:

- History of my Family (family history, family calendar, family working days and holidays)
- The Life of my Parents during the Communist Regime
- The Pride of my Family
- My School
- My City/Town/Village
- The Story of my Name
- Story of my Street
- The Children's Games in the Past <sup>18)</sup>

Special classes could be devoted to famous families that have played an important role in the development of a country. These history classes would contribute to the further development of the students' skills to work and implement oral evidences in the study of history. Examples of some oral evidences:

- Family poster
- Family tree
- Traditions and holidays of my family
- My autobiography, etc.

Nevertheless, the teachers should recognize that oral history dealing with past events, is a terminological innovation, which refers to old teaching practices. Thus, it is correctly to say that this method is not only the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, but also one of the most modern methodologies, which better preserves the evidences of the individuals about their experiences, feelings and attitudes towards past events.

<sup>18)</sup> Some of the topics are proposed by Tudor Hebean from Romania.

## Using Oral History in the Secondary School

There are many considerable opportunities to use the oral history method in the secondary school education. Compared to the elementary school where oral history is used to help students become more aware of their surrounding, in the high school oral history tends to be more closely connected to the subject matter taught in the history class. The students learn the same oral history techniques but implement them in various subjects. <sup>19)</sup> Due to the different age belongings, the students present considerable sets of competencies while using various sources. The history teachers have diverse opportunities to create didactical situations, enabling students to transfer the general skills they have acquired into other subjects. The teachers might assign individual tasks to the students, connected to the gathering of oral evidences, as well as conducting a research activity under the framework of various projects.

The use of the oral history method included in the obligatory school program is conducted based on the new history school textbooks full of oral evidences and didactical tasks, which facilitate the process of interviewing about the traditional and cultural heritage the political and socio-economic history from the second half of the 20th century, and the life of the ethnic minorities. These tasks synthesize the character of the evidences and suggest other combined usages of oral history with ethnology, political science, art, sociology, linguistics, literature, geography and informatics.

The teachers might improve the textbooks tasks in order to include oral history as a thematically integrated part of the chronological learning of the national history in the secondary school. The history teacher Vasja Rovsniak from Slovenia has implemented this idea in his teaching process. He suggests some of the following topics as appropriate for the students from 9th grade of the Elementary school to the 4th grade of the Secondary school (see box on next page).

<sup>19)</sup> Donald A. Ritchie: *Doing Oral History. Practical Advice and Reasonable Explanations for Everyone*. Twayne 1995, p.165

### The Slovenians between the two Wars

- The Slovenians in the SHS – later Yugoslavian – monarchy (The founding of SHS monarchy, question of borders, general Maister's role, political standings of Slovenians in the monarchy)
- The Slovenian minorities "on the other side of the border" (Slovenian fight under fascism in Italy, the Slovenian minority in the Austrian Republic, the Slovenian minority in Hungary)
- The Spanish fighters against Franco from Slovenia
- The Slovenians and the beginning of the Second World War

### The Slovenians in the Second World War

- Occupation, division of Slovenia into three parts and denationalization of the Slovenian people
- The fight against facism, nacism and collaboration
- The liberty front and the different political standpoints
- The Slovenian decision on Tito's federative Yugoslavia and the liberation of Slovenia.

### The Slovenians after the Second World War

The end of the war, the consequences of the war and the reconstruction period, communism, postwar massacres, Tito's Yugoslavia, the border question, the minorities, the political standing of Yugoslavia in the world, the role of Slovenia in Yugoslavia, the differences in the economic development of the republics, everyday life in Slovenia/Yugoslavia after Second World War, the crisis of the 1980s and the collapse of Yugoslavia, the war for independence in Slovenia and, the war in Yugoslavia, Slovenia in the present world.

The elaboration of the complex tasks for gathering oral evidences on some key topics, gives the opportunity for a multi-perspective and multicultural approach to the history learning. It also gives space for various levels of interpretation of facts from the local, regional and European history. The example presented above is considered adequate for the humanitarian schools, where the teachers have more than two hours of history classes per week.

In most of the cases, the limited number of the history classes allows teachers to assign the oral history tasks as homework and further present the findings, analysis and synthesis of the gathered information during the class hour. The history teachers often assign students interesting tasks about the family and the local history, which are more advanced and have a more complex character than the ones assigned to pupils of the elementary schools. The importance of the students research work, and the gathering of the oral evidence is based on the complexity of the research objectives, the variety of the sources used, the level of the analysis and the interpretation of the gathered information, which are also connected to the abilities to compare and select, to conduct critical analyses and synthesis, as well as with the writing of individual analytical essays.

a) Research on the history of the family, which includes several objects:

- The family origin and its history through several generations
- Personalization of the family people, who have contributed to the great historical events in the national history; state activists, scientists, sportsmen, national fighters
- Researches of the topography of the places, which are connected to the history of the families.

Students learn in this way the algorithm of researching the genealogy of the family roots, which raises awareness of the family memories and its place and contribution in the collective community development.

The students might also conduct a research on the place where they live.<sup>20)</sup> The task could include various aspects, such as:

- Historical information about the old village/town/city center
- Geographical research on the village/town/city center (the main square)
- The present modern conditions of the architecture and the natural heritage, situated in the village/town/city center
- Topography research on the street names

Each of the researched objects requires the performance of several tangible tasks. For example, the gathering of the information about the present conditions of the architecture and the natural heritage that is situated in the central part of the town aims to:

- Research and gather pictures, which are connected with the present conditions of the buildings in the center of the town; the houses, fountains, decorations etc.
- Compilation of files about the different buildings following the model:
  - Present name
  - Location in the village/town/city
  - Urban relations
  - Location in time (project dates, construction dates)
  - Owners of the buildings
  - Materials in use
  - Decoration elements
  - Living conditions (hygiene, reservation)

b) Research on the cultural traditions, which are cultivated in various locations and geographical regions in a certain country, as the example of the firewalking custom in the Aegean Trace region of Greece.<sup>21)</sup>

The delivery of the investigation tasks connected to the cultural traditions, besides the challenges concerning the oral interview, offer students the opportunities to get awareness on the continuous development of the peoples' civilizations. It also makes "visible" the cultural parallels and common customs, which we easily find in the Balkan regions. It is in this context that the oral history method supports the rationalization of the individual identity, as well as the others' identities, learning to tolerate and respect the different.

Apart from the obligatory curricula, the oral history method could be used in the framework of an elective preparation course for students. Some relevant topics could be:

- Childhood in the Past
- Women and Men in the Past<sup>22)</sup>
- Everyday Life during Communism<sup>23)</sup>
- Religion in the Communist Regime
- Economic and Social problems after 1989<sup>24)</sup>

20) The example is adapted from Macedo, F., L. Macedo: Cultural Patrimony. In: European Citizenship Education. Teacher's manual, edited by European Information center, V. Turnovo, Bulgaria, 2004.

21) A similar idea in the framework of this Teachers' Guide is presented by Pantazis Miteloudis from Greece.

22) In support to the teachers in 2001–2002 two teachers' manuals were published, that were created in the framework of the History and History teaching in South East Europe project. The researches were participants in the International seminar of the Balkan researches and specialists, Southwest University "N. Rilski", Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria.

23) Teachers from three Balkan countries have worked in the framework of the Stability Pact, Euroclio and the national associations of the history teachers in 2000–2003. See Teacher Resource Book "Changes and Continuity in Everyday Life in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia 1945–2000", Euroclio, Skopje, 2003.

24) Tudor Hebean from Romania has suggested the last two topics.

Most of the textbooks' diachronic themes, which focus on some aspects of historical development over an extended period of time, might be studied through a pedagogical approach, which includes the use of oral testimonies. Some of the themes might be the following:

- How has the technological development influenced people's domestic and working lives?
- What differences has the expansion of the urban areas brought to the people's lives in the towns and rural areas?
- How has the labour market changed through the years (decline of employment rate, establishment of new professions and industries, decline of the manual work and development of the high technology)?
- How have the relationships among generations changed?
- How has the people's everyday lifestyle changed?
- How has transport and communication affected the people's lives?
- How have changes in medicine improved people's lives?
- How have our ideas and perceptions changed i. e. ideas and perceptions about religion and faith, crime and punishment, poverty and welfare, education, art, fashion, the role and responsibilities of the individual and the state, national identity and patriotism, etc.<sup>25)</sup>

Parts of the quoted examples are appropriate for open class lessons such as in museums or memorials, because they combine oral history with archived data, which are preserved in these local research sites, as well as with the professional support and consultancy of the experts working in these research sites.

During the last years, under the framework of the National Historical Competition organized by "Values Foundation" in Bulgaria, students became famous history researches on various topics. The topics of the last two editions in the competition – "Free time in the mirror of the history" and "The family story and the vicissitude of the 20th century" indicate the rise of the people's interest and awareness on the everyday life history and the widespread use of oral evidences by teachers in the classroom. The completion of such a task, individually or in a team, is accomplished through the outside class activities. Nevertheless, this does not exclude the opportunity to use the collected data during the class activities.

For example, a topic like "The development of the football game in your village/city" during the two World Wars, offers students various opportunities to conduct researches on the culture and sport tradition of the people in the local community that they have selected as a research site. While portraying the trainers, the football players, the coaches, the football fans, the journalists and the administration representatives from the sport field, the students might research on the life in the village or the city during the post war years. Students might also plan and conduct various thematic interviews such as; the post war everyday life, the labour market, economy, fashion, nutrition, leisure time, likes and dislikes related to football, favourite football team and the importance of football in their lives.

25) Stradling 2001

In the framework of the school projects as part of the various national and international programs such as "Europe", "Culture 2000", "Socrates – Comenski 1", etc. the teachers might motivate their students to conduct an oral history research work. For example working on the theme "Women during the 20th Century" students might select various sub themes for their micro projects:

- Women and Industrialisation
- Women and the Family Life
  - The topic itself could be composed of separate smaller issues:
    - Technology and women: time saving or not?
    - Motherhood
    - Women and Consume
    - Happy society – the Responsibility of Women?
- Women and Cultural Life
- Political Power and Equality
- Women and Wars during the 20th century
- Women and Revolutions <sup>26)</sup>

The use of the oral history method in the contemporary schools allows teachers to use more than the required history textbooks, and offers students the possibility to better understand the research information from various sources such as state and personal archives, memoirs (diaries, letters, and memories), oral evidences, autobiographies and family stories, photos and other family values. Although the students might encounter difficulties in finding the data or make "discoveries", the oral history method offers them the chance to research not only the very well known official sources but also unknown ones and bring about new official historical facts as well as become authors of "oral evidences" themselves. <sup>27)</sup>

The complexity of the transformation of the present history teaching into a "process" requires students to critically compare and learn from different historical sources. Students independently of the circumstances discover the discrepancy between the old and the new myths imposed by the recent or the distant past, through "communication" with various past "traces", such as the official archive documents, the memories of the state system, the oral evidences. Nevertheless, "coding" the individual memories during a research project, has resulted in subjectivity and contradiction in many cases. When students reflect themselves on their own stereotypes, they become more "thoughtful" citizens, who would be more critical and analytical while observing cases of manipulation of the national and world history.

26) Ruth Tudor, expert in the Council of Europe, has commented some of the topics during a seminar with history teachers in Veliko Tarnovo in October 2005, "Citizenship Education and Gender Equality".

27) Stradling 2001, p. 213

## 2.3. Doing Oral History \*

### The Draft Project

When designing an oral history project, one should consider the selection of the research theme, the establishment of the project purposes and objectives of the project, as well as of a solid research strategy, which comprise the draft of that particular oral history project.

**The choice of a research theme** is the first step within the contriving of an oral history project. When having to choose a theme, one should consider its compatibility with oral history, thus, select a research theme, which could be sustained by a considerable available number of eyewitnesses, who are easily accessed and would contribute to the completion of the research project.

**Preliminary documentation** represents a key factor in establishing to what degree the topic has previously been explored. It also reveals whether there are other significant contributions that can be made to the chosen topic.

**The research team** should be formed based on the chosen theme and the complexity of this theme and may consist of historians as well as other specialists, such as; anthropologists, ethnologists or sociologists. Depending on the specific characteristics of the project, the research team may be supported by technical staff that might be necessary to assist the team in using video and audio equipments, driving vehicles, etc. It is extremely important that each member of the team be assigned clear-cut tasks, so that the project is accomplished successfully.

**The data bank** refers to the contacts established in the research sites that would facilitate the access to the key informants for matching the purpose and objectives of the project. The contacts would also help to prepare a list of the potential eyewitnesses who would be interviewed. A data bank may also refer to a wide range of institutions, stakeholders and other partners from the selected

research sites. Through the support of the institutions and stakeholders one may gain access to useful information and thus produce a more efficient and professional research.

**Logistics** makes reference to all supplies and services needed for the research. It is extremely important that the equipment should be in good conditions and in proper support of the project, and in accordance with the research topic, objectives and team.

**The budget** is a decisive element for the accomplishment of a project. The preparation of the project budget is a very complex process which comprises a number of factors and needs the contribution of all the members of the research team. Moreover, while planning the project budget the team should carefully consider every aspect in the project development and assure to be realistic during the entire planning process. The budget should include a wide variety of probable expenses, which depend on the research objectives. It may be arranged by principal heads of expenditure, such as:

1. Equipment, i.e. tape recorders, video players, cameras etc.
2. Office supplies, i.e. audio and video tapes, batteries, photo films, CDs, DVDs, etc.
3. Transport and accommodation expenses. In the case of an oral history research various research visits might be undertaken and as a result other phases should be considered like; the identification of the research sites, the organization of the research awareness campaigns and the number of the participants in the project.
4. Other logistical expenses, i.e. telephone and internet bills, mail services, etc

Discretionary costs:

1. Staff remuneration, i.e. the payment of the project coordinator and other staff involved in research activities or in transcribing and translating the interviews

2. Assessment of the research results i.e. publication of books, production of documentary films, organization of exhibitions, web designs etc.

## Research

The second most important and complex stage of a project consists in implementing the project, comprising all related activities, that is, documentation, field research, preliminary reports, and analyses, etc.

Documentation begins once the research theme is decided and the preliminary analysis is completed. Proper documentation indicates a deeper and more comprehensive research on the topic, which is to be discussed from a number of different perspectives.

### 1. The Historic Frame

The ability to position a certain topic within a precise historical framework leads to a better understanding of the causes and the effects that have influenced the development of certain historical events.

### 2. The Geographical Frame

Identifying and familiarizing with the research sites may prove necessary if the interviewee is most likely to make geographical references.

### 3. Local Customs and Traditions

Familiarity with local customs and traditions helps the research team eschew conducting the research process during important regional celebrations. Awareness of the working hours in the research site is also significant because it facilitates the work of the researchers in preparing the field schedule; avoid interviewing during the busy hours allowing people to be extensively interviewed during their spare time.

## ■ Resources

Before going on research trips, one should remember that documentation is a key element, which assists in having a productive research trip. The researchers should compile a detailed literature review taking into consideration all the relevant resources such as; various books and research papers on the subject, photographs, documents, documentaries, maps, newspapers, letters, diaries, postcards or the internet

data bank. Moreover, preliminary documentation campaigns may be organized according to the possibilities offered. Such enterprises would provide many sensible ways to gather quality information and help the team to make a good beginning.

Obviously, each of the above-mentioned resources has its advantages and its limitations, but taken as an entity, together they may lead to a solid knowledge on the subject, which is the basis for quality interviews.

## ■ Compiling the Interview Guidebook

An interview guidebook represents an essential element within an oral history project. It may be compiled by one of the members of the team and later improved by the other team members or it may simply be the result of a brainstorming session. More detailed information on the structure and substance of an interview guidebook is presented in a separate section of this publication.

## ■ Identifying Potential Eyewitnesses

This is an operation that can be processed in various ways:

- Through the support of the local partners, the key informants, and other contacts in the area. This is particularly helpful in cases when the team is not well acquainted with the research site.
- Soliciting support from 'relay institutions', such as; The City Hall, The Police, The Church, etc., in cases when the local partners who might identify the key eyewitnesses are not an option. Nevertheless, this procedure requires a considerable amount of time and bureaucratic procedures in the above-mentioned institutions.
- Primary sources. One may try to identify a potential eyewitness and then use the snowballing technique to identify other eyewitnesses. This particular approach, also known as the 'step by step' approach, proves successful particularly in the small communities in the rural areas, where the local people know each other well.
- Depending on the circumstances other approaches can also be used such as the telephone book for finding contact information

### ■ The Team

As mentioned above, the team is formed in conformity with the research topic. It is advisable to form a two-person team where one is the head interviewer and the other an assistant who would facilitate the interview. The first leads the discussion with the eyewitness, while the latter takes notes on the general information presented by the respondent; names of the people, towns or cities mentioned during the interview in order to check the credibility of the information at the end of the interview. The research assistant may also intervene during the interview by asking questions, bringing to attention related topics or asking for supplementary clarifying information. However, it is essential to remember that these interventions should be relevant and made at the right time, without disrupting the course of the discussion. Depending on the importance of the eyewitness and the information presented, a camera man may also be present during the interview.

### ■ Interview Location

A few key elements should be kept in mind when deciding the location of the interview:

**Phonic Facilities** – a location with no disturbing noises which would affect the quality of the recording is always a sensible idea.

**Light Sources** – should also be considered especially in the case when the interview is video recorded.

**The psychological comfort of the witness**, which is, by far, the most important element. Consequently, often the best location for an interview is the eyewitness's home. It is likely that the interviewee overcomes more easily the restraints of an interview, especially in cases when they are interviewed by a stranger. Moreover, being in a more comfortable and personal environment, the eyewitness may also provide the researchers with extra materials, photographs, documents or other items that are topic related, thus, contributing to a better retracing and understanding of the course of the historical events. Nevertheless, difficult situations which might obstruct the smooth development of

the interview might still occur. In such circumstances, the interviewer should consider the case attentively and decide on the most appropriate and relevant location available.

### ■ Equipment

Equipment should be adequate to the substance and weight of the theme as well as to the given circumstances. Using an analogue or digital tape recorder is indispensable during an interview. As long as there is no settled standard for the tape size, one can always decide on a big or small tape depending on the equipment used. The use of a hand-free microphone may add to the quality of the recording. After an interview is conducted, the content should be transcribed, typed and sometimes translated. When these processes are finished the researcher may reread the material in order to remedy the information gaps or clarify equivocal excerpts, which is sometimes done by redoing the interview with the eyewitness.

### ■ Archiving the Interviews

Archiving is performed by filing every recorded tape, so that it would be easy to identify a particular interview within a data base. There is no settled filing standard, but it may contain the following information: name, address, date and place of birth, nationality, ethnicity, religion, academic profile, and occupation of the respondent. The file may also include the date and place where the interview took place, the name of the interviewer, the topic, a short account of the discussion, a name index, a location index, and some information regarding the transcription process, whether the interview is transcribed or not and who performed the process, and the interview methodology with some general information about the interviewing procedure. As a result the filing process becomes an important source of information for both the eyewitness and the content of the interview.

### ■ Transcribing the Interview

The writing of the interview may be considered the 'on paper reflection' of a video or audio recording. However, there are changes that may occur when transcribing, considering the spoken language is quite different from the written standard language. The tonality, intonation, and the rhythm of the speech are parts of the content, which are difficult to be accurately transmitted through writing. The transcribing process should take place immediately after the interview is finished, preferably by the lead interviewer/researcher or the research assistant. Thus, a number of gestures or movements that cannot be recorded on audio tape may be easily explained by a person who was present during the interview (e.g. "The eyewitness indicates by gestures that the water rose up to his neck".) Only a person who was present during an interview and witnessed this gesture would be able to make a precise note on the water level. Specialists in the field recommend that it is better to use a copy of the interview rather than the original when doing the transcription.

### Project Completion

The last stage of an oral history project includes the evaluation of the project results and outcomes, the monitoring of the project, the final report, and suggestions and recommendations for a possible follow-up.

### ■ Evaluation and Monitoring

The research results are collected, evaluated, and analyzed in conformity with the initial project objectives. One can write essays on the subject, publish testimonials, make documentaries, initiate radio and television debates, organize exhibitions, write school text books or present the information in the electronic sites.

### ■ Final Reports

These reports should offer an account of the project results, mentioning also to what degree were the initial objectives fulfilled. Such reports may also indicate whether a project follow-up is necessary or not.

### ■ Preparing the Questionnaire

A good quality questionnaire is of great importance in accomplishing an oral history project. Its use is generally limited to the object and the moment when the respective study is conducted. Researchers should carefully conceive their interview questionnaires in order to be able to properly embark on research trips. An interview questionnaire usually comprises introductory, open, close, and control questions. Introductory questions help the researcher understand and know more of the interviewee. These questions refer to general information about the interviewee; name, nationality, ethnicity, address, date of birth, religion, academic profile, and occupation.

**Closed questions** can only be answered with 'Yes', 'No' or 'I don't know' (e.g. Did you fight in World War II?) and they do not offer so much information but sound rather isolating.

**Open questions** allow the eyewitnesses to better express their points of view on a certain issue (e.g. What was an ordinary day on the battlefield like?). They offer more detailed information, which leads to a better understanding of the historical events.

**Control questions** are conceived in accordance with the topic and are based on the eyewitness's answers. They help the researcher to find clearer and more complete answers.

## 2.4. The Interview

### Before the Interview

#### ■ Choosing Topic and the Witness \*

Teaching modern history offers teachers the opportunity to practice oral history method in the classroom. However, the teachers must decide very carefully in selecting the most effective topics for teaching 20th century history. The most efficient procedure would be to avoid the controversial political issues like: "How did the war in ex-Yugoslavia start?" or "Who started the war in ex-Yugoslavia?" and try to consider the feelings of ordinary people who had to eyewitness the war horrors on the daily basis. Controversial and "hard" questions can evoke unpleasant memories and since the classroom is not the best place for any kind of difficulties during the interview, it would be prudent to avoid such situations.

Since human memory is not perfect, people usually tend to be selective in events they memorize and later explain them from their own perspective. In order to avoid misleading statements and conclusions concerning some political issues, the best results of oral history method could be achieved when teaching, for example, some of the following topics:

- Every day life of the "ordinary" people
- Women's position and role in the society
- Childhood in the past
- Family life, Customs, Courtship and Marriage
- The culture of living
- Hygiene standards and habits
- Internal and external urbanization and migration
- Influence of revolutionary technological progress in every day life
- Leisure time in rural and urban areas
- Fashion and popular culture
- Every day life during communism
- The fall of communism

These topics give teachers the possibility to start the class hour with the textbook lesson and then introduce the eyewitness to the class who would explain some events or social changes more clearly and vividly. The eyewitness or the teacher can also

bring photographs, old letters, diaries press articles to share them with the students. It is important to find relevant and reliable eyewitnesses for the interviews considering they would share memories and emotions with the students and present important historical data and events which are supplementary materials for the history class. Interviewees who have been present only in one event and do not have a variety of information for the research topic should not be considered as reliable informants for the research topic. The eyewitness must have good and clear memory, should be involving and willing to share and participate during the interview. A successful interview is one where the interviewee is committed and eager to communicate with the children in order to have a continuous conversation and a more interesting and informative class.

The teachers can chose the eyewitnesses from their own acquaintances or knowledge they have on eyewitnesses or allow the pupils to invite the eyewitnesses themselves. However, finding a eyewitness is a challenging initiative. If the teachers do not have personal contacts with relevant eyewitnesses then they might contact institutions which are focused on history teaching and development or organization of historical projects as well as social institutions or organizations which host eyewitnesses of different historical events.

#### ■ Preparing for the Topic \*

After carefully selecting the research theme and the eyewitness, the teachers should conduct a preliminary field research in order to be well prepared for the class interview. A teacher should also conduct a literature review which might enable them to find not only primary source information as well as secondary source materials which would help in "refreshing" the eyewitnesses' memory, provoke emotions and present a more vivid and interesting story to the students.

The preparation of the teachers for the research theme is a crucial factor during an interview, especially in the cases when the eyewitness is not participating or committed to respond, is not able to

answer due to the memory gaps, avoids certain questions in order to justify his/her role in certain situations. Since the eyewitness might consciously or unconsciously confuse some data a knowledgeable teacher of the subject might notice the unreliable information and clarify or comment the interview during the evaluation phase. If the eyewitnesses turn up to be unreliable, the teachers must explain the drawbacks of the interview to the students and inform the students on the reliability and credibility of the information. However, it is important to stress that the purpose of oral history method in the classroom is not to substitute textbook or other sources regarding some topic, but rather to help students to have a more vivid and informative picture of some events and to be able to better understand every day life in that historical period.

#### ■ Critical Approach to the Interview \*\*

History is a very complex and multi-disciplinary subject which can not be presented from one perspective, as a consequence every past event or experience has to be reviewed from several angles and perspectives in order to have a more detailed and precise presentation of the historical past. The interview method contributes in clearly presenting the audience not only with historical facts and data but also with the personal perception and attitude of a eyewitness for an historical event, offering an easier and effective approach to the understanding of history.

Nevertheless, the teachers of history should use different methods and approaches related to the concept of oral history while teaching a specific history subject, thus, making students better acquire a past event or occurrence. The interview involves a researcher who performs the interview and a eyewitness who has experienced a certain event and answers to some previously prepared questions by the interviewer. As eyewitnesses are crucial actors in the public presentation of the historical events, the oral history method, which is an excellent and practical method for teaching history, is applicable only in researches conducted on modern history themes. The teachers should also consider the disadvantages of implementing this method in a history class. The results of an interview depend on a number of various factors. The way how an interview questionnaire

is prepared and processed is of essential importance during the questioning process. A successful interview mostly depends on the preparation of the interviewer, especially with regard to the selection of questions for the eyewitnesses.

An interviewer should be well prepared and organized while conducting an interview in order to avoid asking irrelevant questions, repeating questions or forgetting to ask important questions, which are crucial for the research. Another shortcoming is that the eyewitness may mislead the interview, change the subject or discuss about issues not relevant to the research. This drawback might result as time consuming and deceiving for the research. The psychological state of the eyewitness is an additional aggravating factor in an interview. Certain questions that are important to the research may provoke strong emotional reactions of the eyewitnesses. In that case, the interview should be interrupted or distorted and the researcher should focus on the eyewitness and finding ways in creating a more peaceful and trustable environment. However, a researcher should follow a research protocol and not get emotionally involved during the interview; otherwise the interviewer would not receive the required research information. These situations may occur when a research is based on some "sensitive issues". The researcher has to recognize the fact that a eyewitness might not reveal some very important data or information, especially when it involves prominent politicians from or former political prisoners. A successful researcher should also be aware that the memories of the eyewitnesses are very often subjective and their assessment of a particular past event or occurrence should be perceived as a reflection of someone's subjective observation.

As a result, the interview method should not be applied in isolation but it should be combined with other history teaching methods well as different sources of information like the archives, museums, press editions, literature, documentaries and memoirs etc.

#### ■ Questionnaire Preparation \*\*

Before preparing an interview questionnaire, the researchers should assure whether they have properly completed all the required phases for conduct-

ing a research, especially selecting a clear and precise defined topic. The research team should compile a literature review and use various sources of information like literature, documentaries, collections of published documents or archive documents, in order to prepare a relevant and motivating questionnaire. Having conducted no preliminary research and analyses on the subject would result in deficiency and lack of research quality. The research aims and objectives might be achieved through a well prepared questionnaire and good cooperation among the research team and the eyewitnesses.

Beside the selection of the topic, a special attention should be posed to the finding and selecting of the eyewitnesses for an historical event. Before conducting an interview, the interviewer should have some general knowledge regarding personal information of the eyewitnesses, particularly on the role and contribution of the eyewitness in this specific historical event. Randomly selected brainstorming questions are a good ice breaker and should be inserted at the beginning of a questionnaire. The other topic related questions should be analyzed and ranked chronologically and according to their importance. Nevertheless it is important to emphasize that the researcher should be selective and not necessarily use all the preliminary questions during the interview, thus, making the questionnaire concise and meaningful. Once the researcher has determined the quantity of the most important questions, he/he should also provide some space and time for additional questions or sub questions, which might occur during an unstructured interview. If the questionnaire is prepared by a group of students, it is suggested to divide them into several smaller groups where each group is given an adequate time to discuss a topic as well as to prepare a preliminary list of questions relevant to the interview. Then these lists may be presented to the class where each of them is evaluated and commented by the students. The questions which are mostly appreciated and positively evaluated by the students should be included in the interview questionnaire. These questions should be precise and clear, not very long as they might result distractive or difficult to be understood, and direct, which would make the interviewee reveal important new information and not mislead the discussion. The interviewer should also ensure that the

interview is conducted ethically: is sensitive, flexible, accountable, non provocative, and is sanctioned by the respect to the eyewitness' private life. Questions should be consistent, logical clear and appropriate for the research so that a eyewitness is never misled during the interviewing process..

## Interviewing \*

### ■ Preparation of the "just in case" questions

The teachers should prepare "just in case" questions to avoid any misleading development during the interview. It is more efficient and interactive when the teachers do not ask questions, but limit to suggestions, indications and guidelines for the students, to achieve the aims and objectives of the history class. Allowing students to act as researchers and not interfering with their roles or taking any leading positions, is a student centered approach, which has proved effective and profitable during the teaching process. Nevertheless, teachers should also be well organized for the interview having some questions prepared in advance, in case students deviate from the topic related discussion or do not take any advantage of the answers of the eyewitnesses to ask further related questions.

It is very important to allow students to act freely during an interview, thus, they would easily adapt to the role of the researcher, and develop more critical and creative thinking skills. This practical knowledge that students receive during an interview contributes to a much deeper and long-term understanding and acquirement of a subject, than the theoretical knowledge received from the school textbooks. Therefore students should learn how to realize and recognize the various historical sources, especially while identifying potential eyewitnesses. Considering the influence and flow of the cyber-information in the present days, it is very important that students be good critical thinkers and able to recognize, select and assess the information they receive from the different addresses in the virtual world.

\* article prepared by Vasja Rovsnič & Jerjnej Jakelj

### ■ Dividing the Students into Groups

The oral history method reveals more successful when it is student centered and they are active participants during the implementation of this method in a class hour. In order to succeed in this method teachers should divide the students into groups either based on the alphabetical order, gender belonging, year of birth etc. The most effective and productive way is to divide the class according to the topics included in the school syllabus. By giving students the chance to freely choose their group we would achieve a more effective history class and a more active students' participation.

This is a sample for a history teaching lesson with the topic "Post World War II Everyday Life": *Students might be divided into groups and asked to create questions on different aspects concerning issues such as food, leisure time, education, media, human rights, social safety and security, culture, etc. Students are also allowed to choose the topic they feel more knowledgeable, enthusiastic or interested in, so the final output would be more productive and informative. Depending on the time availability students might also perform this activity as homework.*

Nevertheless, a teacher should predict the shortcomings of the activity and have a reserve plan and be prepared for any situation that might arise. For a more effective learning process it is better to divide the different "question groups". The best model is that one group is sitting by the same table. With that we achieve better cooperation among the pupils in group, democratic spirit and that the different groups are not disturbing each other.

### ■ Introduction of the Eyewitness

The introduction of the eyewitness to the students is a crucial phase of the oral history method, thus, teachers have to appraise this phase and be well prepared while conducting it. It is a good, efficient and integrating way to start the history class with a speech on some basic information on the historical subject being taught, the relation of the eyewitness to this particular subject and historical era and some general biographical information on the eyewitness, the teacher should also be concerned on the ethical and moral protocol during the interviewing process.

The teacher does also need to pay attention to some basic human rights, especially if the eyewitness has experienced historical periods or events where these rights were totally neglected or negated.

If we want students to develop their critical thinking skills on the perception and understanding of history it is also necessary to consider that the information received from the eyewitnesses is a subjective piece of the historical reality. The more information pieces collected on a certain historical situation/period the clearer would this situation/period be presented to us.

### ■ Recording an Interview

A successful interview is one which is also recorded through a tape or video recorder, as long as the information is fully preserved. The video recording is considered as being more efficient than the audio recording considering the gestures and emotional feelings, which help to better understand a historical context, are more vividly and clearly transmitted through a video player. Nevertheless, regarding the class setting, the technical supplies and the video dimensions tape recorder is much more convenient than a video recorder.

Before conducting an interview the teachers should have the consent of the eyewitness on whether using a tape or video recorder during the interview, considering these equipment might be threatening or discouraging to the eyewitness for different reasons such as:

- They might cause discomfort or confusion to the eyewitness, especially when the interviewee does not know about these technical equipment and as a result refuses to further cooperate.
- The use of the recorder might inhibit the eyewitness to be honest and open to every research topic related discussion.
- Students love these technical equipment, which might cause distraction from the interview and low attention on the interviewee.

Teachers should be well prepared before using a tape or video recorder and previously check the physical conditions of these equipment before conducting an interview. Otherwise they would lose impor-

tant time in fixing these technical problems, disturb the interviewing process and lose the students' concentration, thus failing in obtaining an informative and quality interview. If the teachers have the consent of the eyewitness to be recorded, the interview would result very useful to the subject and its content can be used for other teaching classes, presentations, analytical or critical essay, or be processed as archival material.

### ■ Questions and Answers During an Interview

The implementation of the oral history method in a history class is not an widespread even though the emotional insight and the first hand information students receive during an interview is of great importance and an advantage of this method. The questions and answers compiled by the teachers or students are the main tools which help in better learning and understanding history with/through oral history.

#### a) Questions

The teachers should also be prepared for the unpredictable situations, which might arise during an interview. The interview questions should be precise, concise, clear understandable and considerate, in order to provide a dynamic and interesting interviewing process. It is important to start the interview with an introduction to the topic of the interview before the oral history class hour. The students may ask the eyewitness short, logical, comparative and evaluation questions during the interview which would facilitate the understanding of the past historical situation. The teachers might act as facilitators during the interview for clarifying any misunderstanding or checking on the credibility of the historical facts brought by the interviewee in the class. The teachers might also prepare questions for the students in order to check their knowledge on the topic and allow them to contribute and share their knowledge and opinions on the interview topic so that students might feel important and easily involved during the interviewing process.

There are three types of questions prepared for an interview, such as questions for the eyewitness, questions for the pupils, and "just in case" questions.

The teacher has to teach the students to ask when, why, where, and how questions during the interview and spontaneously lead the students to the interview topic, in the case when the students' questions result ineffective for the research topic. As a result it is necessary for the teacher to prepare "just in case" questions which might be asked by the groups of students.

An example of the model of questions, where the students are divided into groups:

- The questions about the general historical situation
- Questions about local history (depending on the topic)
- Personal questions for the eyewitness
- Describe questions to the eyewitness
- Questions about a specific event
- Comparative questions for the eyewitness
- Evaluation question for the eyewitness
- Comparative questions for the students
- Evaluation questions for the students
- Final evaluation
- Actuality

#### b) Answers

The students have to take notes of some basic facts revealed during an interview, and write a summary of the answers received by also taking into consideration the complexity of the questions. The information received from the interviews might serve as good initiative materials for working analytical papers written by the students. The teachers' role in an interview is a decisive one, considering they have to be careful when the eyewitness is giving long responses to the students' questions, and interfere in order to keep the discussion relevant to the topic, aim of the interview and within the time frame. They have to carefully analyze the answers of the eyewitness, the questions and answers of the students and try to direct the students' toward an objective, logical and tolerant historical thinking, so that students would be able to assess the historical situations and events and learn some basic cultural, human and social values. The latter activity might also be performed in the coming history classes.

## After the Interview

### ■ Evaluation \*

This part of the lesson is carried by the teacher with previously planned strategies:

#### a) *Gratitude to the witness*

We express our gratitude to the eyewitness for the direct engagement in the activities performed during the history lesson. This can be performed by the teacher or any student representative. A sample of gratitude toward an eyewitness might be expressed as following:

“Dear Mr/Mrs Smith, It was an enormous pleasure to conduct an interview with you on the topic of ‘Every day life during communism’. We would also like to apologize for the eventual inconvenience afflicted by our curiosity for the subject during the interview. In the meantime we would like to thank you for your sincere answers and overall collaboration during the interviewing process. Your expressive, committed and responsible contribution with different testimonies on our historical topic has proved of great importance to this research. We would inform you on the further continuation and results of this research.”

#### b) *Students’ Evaluation*

The second part of the evaluation consists in focusing the mutual dialogue among the students who would ask questions in consequence to the topics emerging during the analyses of the historical events. The students prepare for the interview, exchange the outcomes among each other and resolve the complexities appearing during the preparation process, which are further displayed in the established settings by a students’ representative.

The activity can be completed through a general assignment, which might be explained as follows:

- Each group resumes the received knowledge from the eyewitness interview
- How would the received knowledge during the interview assist to our research aims and objectives

- Describe the emotions the interview generated on the researchers (it might also be assigned as home work, individual or team work)

#### c) *Teacher’s Evaluation*

The teacher in cooperation with the students evaluates the historical event by describing and analyzing the circumstances when the event occurred as well as asking students to express their standpoints and feelings on this historical event. Teachers might also require students to play the alternative roles in the event where each student is assigned a role one of which might that of a leading power where the student had to find the means and ways of avoiding the negative consequences of the historical issue. However, each activity performed should focus in achieving the required aims and objectives of the research subject. As a follow up homework activity students might be required to write a position essay, which would reflect the students’ perspective on different historical events as well as develop some more critical thinking skill.

The results of a research project, the interviews, materials collected from the review of different subjects, such as photos of the historical events eyewitness, students’ activities, might be published as teaching materials in the school magazine, gazette or newsletter, school web page, on CDs etc. The publication of the research outcomes might serve as an excellent model for a successful teaching methodology not only for the subject of history subject but also for other natural sciences.

\* article prepared by Besnik Emini & Ilir Memedi, Macedonia

### ■ Evaluation and Assessment of a School Oral History Project \*

The evaluation of an Oral History Project is closely related to the preparation process and the end product of the project. The stages and criteria for performing and succeeding with the task are previously presented by the teacher to the project participants. This practice helps to achieve an objective and accurate final project assessment.

The teacher's work and interference is crucial during the research project. It starts with the presentation of the project theme, continues with the working process and ends with the students' final evaluation and grading of their work and performance. The teacher's participation during the project preparation and planning should be in the capacity of adviser, facilitator and stimulator.

#### *The Teachers' Role during the Oral History Project Planning*

- Choose the theme, assign tasks, and presents the expected project results
- Clearly distribute the assessment criteria. (Teachers might be flexible and allow students suggestions on these criteria).
- Assist students to prepare interviewing questions
- Help students identify the research interviewees
- Advise students while working on and processing the information

#### *Oral History Project Evaluation*

The oral history project evaluation starts at the very beginning of the project. It is a numerical reflection of the whole project work and results.

#### *Types of Evaluation*

The evaluation could be performed in four ways:

- By the teacher
- Expert evaluation – by a team of students and the teacher. It is more effective when students work in teams and then a representative of each team participates in the evaluation.

- By all the students through assessment cards, prepared and delivered to the students by the teacher who also clarifies the evaluation criteria and rules
- External evaluation – if the project audience project is other than the teacher and students, than this external audience might assess the product. For a successful evaluation it is recommended to invite external evaluation audience.

#### *Evaluation Criteria*

- Respect the project time frame
- Plan the project purpose and objective
- Associate the project goals and results
- Connect the project theme and content
- Process and execute the project tasks
- Respect the ethical protocol during the project presentation (consider the physical appearance, time frame, conciseness, creativity and responsibility in clearly presenting the research findings)

Nevertheless, these criteria are flexible and might vary and change depending on the particular teacher's work style, class setting and atmosphere in class, student's academic performance etc.

Each criterion could bring different issues which might be announced in advance. Teachers should be clear and accurate while delivering the percentage assessment to the students, i.e. there should be a clear understanding of the students' assessing system either through a percentage or a grade. Example:

- 100%–90% = excellent
- 89%–80% = very good
- 79%–70% = good
- 69%–60% = fair
- 59% and below = poor

\* article prepared by Dimitrinka Arnaudova, Bulgaria

# Individual Project Management Plan

Name: .....

Due Date: .....

Project Title: .....

Project Product: .....

Project Purpose: .....

.....

List of Steps to accomplish the project well and on time:

.....  
.....  
.....

Step-By-Step Description:

.....  
.....  
.....

Target Date per each step:

.....  
.....  
.....

Problems To Completing The Project:

.....  
.....  
.....

Strategies To Overcome The Problems:

.....  
.....  
.....

Signed:

.....

Student

Teacher

Parent

# Self-Assessment

By: .....

1. What do you like most about your project? Why?
2. What was the most difficult part about making the project? Why?
3. If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently? Why?
4. If you were to revise this project one more time, how would you change it and why?
5. How did you craft your project so that it would be just right for the (target audience/purpose)?
6. Describe a situation when you got stuck and were frustrated with the project.  
What helped you get going again?
7. What helps you to be creative?
8. What are three words that describe you as a student? Explain how these three words describe you.
9. If a camera were to take pictures of you working on this project, what would it record?
10. Who was the biggest help to you on this project? How did this person help you?
11. How does this project show that you understand the concepts of world history or the concrete theme?
12. How does this project show that you are making decisions which will improve your understanding of world history or the concrete theme ?

## ■ Assessment – General Tips and Instructions \*

### *Working on Oral History Project and the Included Tasks Requires Thinking Skills*

Conducting an Oral History project requires critical and creative thinking skills. Critical thinking provides the “verbs” that guide the research process in assessment tasks such as finding and collecting information, processing it and using it to generate a research product. Critical thinking concerns the understanding of the audience and producing a work which accomplishes the audience’s specific purposes.

The assessment task is a process which requires the following skills:

- Literature review; find, collect, read, define, observe, select, complete, the information and interview, listen and record etc.
- Analyze the information; compare, contrast, classify explain, make analogies, generalize, evaluating etc.
- Use the research information to achieve the project purpose and objective; inform, persuade, motivate etc.
- Create a research product or presentation
- Using the research information to communicate and share with specific audience; peers, social community, informants, etc.

### *Individual Task Management Plan*

Students may not have the adequate experience with Oral History project. The individual task management plan provides sufficient structure and indication to help students approach the task in an organized, thoughtful manner. Students are required to state the purpose of the research task and list the necessary steps for the accomplishment of the project. The final task is to identify the problems, challenges and barriers which inhibit the project completion and consider their solutions. When the plan is completed, the teacher and the students are required to formalize it. There are cases when external participants, such as students’ parents are required to review the plan and sign it too.

### *Students’ Self-Assessment*

The ability to self-assess and plan for further improvements in project preparation and completion is an important skill. Students often complete assignments expecting to be assessed by the teacher. However they should be able to analyze their own work and identify the shortcomings and ways to overcome them.

Especially at the beginning of a project, students tend to complete their work and handle it to the teacher without proofreading or analyzing it themselves. If students do not have the adequate experience in assessing their own work, they would need training on evaluation during the course. When students have completed the project, the teacher might ask them to respond to the questions shown on the Self-Assessment Sheet (see previous page).

\* article prepared by [Dimitrinka Arnaudova, Bulgaria](#)

## 3. Oral History Lessons

### 3.1. Introduction

The understanding of history as a bridge from the past to the future is currently spreading its meaning of the essential role of history as a moderator in bringing new perspectives for the future. Hence the requirements to the present history lessons are connected to the implementation of some main modern tendencies:

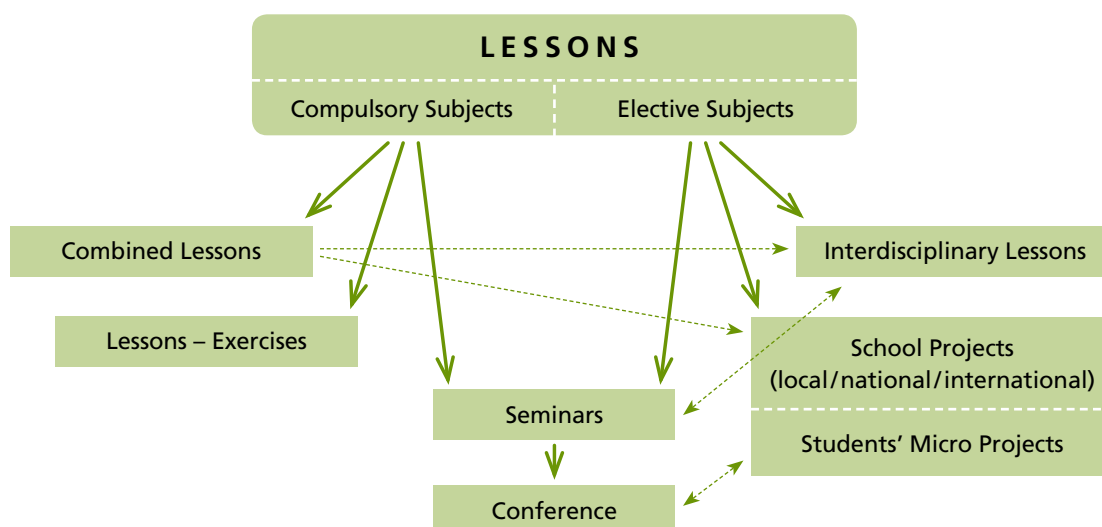
**Humanization** of the educational process – the students' needs and necessities are the central focus of the educational process as well as the building of a partnership of trust and cooperation among all the parties involved in the lesson.

**Socialization** of the educational process – building an interactive environment, using interactive techniques and including more overwhelming team work instead of the traditional lecturing.

**Technological Development** of the educational process, students accomplish the lesson aims step by step, using new delivered pedagogical techniques for the completion of the interconnected procedures.

The reflection of these tendencies in the history teaching broadens the understanding of the past, including also events from the 20th century, and focusing on new procedures in choosing the historical topics such as everyday life, family issues, gender issues, the small ethnic communities, and the memories of the eyewitnesses. The implementation of the new methodology in a multi-perspective and multicultural approach <sup>1)</sup> such as everyday life, family issues, gender issues, the small ethnic communities, and the memories of the eyewitnesses. The implementation of the new methodology in a multi-perspective and multicultural approach <sup>2)</sup> is connected to the enlargement of the compilation of the historical narratives through various sources, such as the oral history evidences.

Which are the ways of implementing Oral History in the class and how is it connected to the technological aspects of the learning process? The following scheme illustrates in a synthesized way, the various opportunities to use oral history as a source of modern history teaching in schools.



The following text gives a special attention to the various aspects of the combination of content and process, while implementing oral history in the classroom.

### Lessons – Exercises

The didactical aim of the lessons-exercises is connected to the building of skills and competencies in receiving, organizing, and analyzing the historical information.<sup>3)</sup> The specificity of the didactical aim determines their application after a certain topic, so students receive tangible materials to conduct the exercises, which is an obligatory precondition in order to learn the work technology. The specific aim of the lesson-exercise presumes that students are not graded during the class performance.<sup>4)</sup>

The aim of these kinds of lessons could be to better understand the connection of the given knowledge about the historical facts, and the information of reconstructing the past, which characterizes the main work of the history teachers with the given understandable methodological information about the knowledge of skills, and guidance on how to acquire, understand, and interpret the traces of the past.

Learning the “techniques” of oral history gives students the possibility to feel closer to the “kitchen” of the history researcher. When students acquire the oral history method, which offers them the opportunity to become researchers themselves through interviewing the ordinary interpreters of the historical facts, a new knowledgeable and rich world is distributed to them. Thus, students do not only “discover” and experience the past, but also create historical evidences themselves.

For example: According to the new school program for the 5th grade, the teachers in Bulgaria might compile a lesson-exercise to create a family tree after the lessons “The Christian faith – stronghold to the Bulgarians” and the “Collective stronghold of the Bulgarians”, which are components of the 4th part of the “History and Civilization School textbook, The Bulgarian lands under the Ottoman rule during 15–17th century”.<sup>5)</sup>

The content of the sections of these two topics have much in common with the personal lives of the students. The introduction of the pupils to understand oral history based on their own experiences, offers relevant information to further continue the history class by shifting the focus to the technological model for researching the family history. The teacher constructs various didactical situations and compiles understandable information (the module) for the students who would prepare the family tree. The creation procedure might start in the classroom and concluded at home as homework.

It is more efficient if students are given some preparation time to learn the technology to create a students’ project, to prepare for an interview, and to analyze a monument of cultural heritage. The students should follow the guidelines and rules on how to prepare and conduct an interview, identify eye-witnesses and approach them. They also have to consider that the information coming from the personal memories might be subjective, so that they have to know to compare and contrast the research data collected from the various sources.<sup>6)</sup> The following example proves the necessity of the differentiation of the levels of knowledge on the oral history technology and the students’ competencies in these two age groups. It also guides teachers to select relevant tasks while teaching and implementing the oral history method.

1) Kusheva, R.: *The dialogue in history*, issue 8, 2004, p. 17

2) Stradling 2001

3) Shopov, I.: *The Lessons-Exercises in the History Teaching. Methodological guidance*. Sofia 1979

4) Ibid.

5) Gavrilova, R., Pl. Pavlov, R. Kusheva: *History and civilization for 5th grade*. Prosveta, Sofia 2006

6) Stradling 2001

Example: Lessons where students might learn to use the oral history technique (The essence of oral history and the peculiarities of the oral evidences):

- Creating a family tree
- Discussions on old pictures (How is the history of photography created?)
- Creating an autobiography
- How to conduct an interview?
- How to make a students' project?

Lessons in which the skills for gathering oral evidences are developed:

- Family poster
- Personal meetings with Tito (conversation with an eyewitness)
- The forms of discrimination (interviews with political dissidents in Romania)
- The migration of the Kosovo Albanians (three women generations)
- Places of the everyday life activities (theatre, prison, house, mosque, cornfield and holiday resorts)
- The big Robovs' family

Students have many opportunities to implement oral history in the classroom. The use of the oral evidences might be either combined with the official traditional lessons or presented as a separate history subject.

### Oral History as a Component of the History Lesson

The history teachers might assign individual or group work tasks, concerning the oral history method, which would specify the separate elements of the lesson content based on the analysis of the information from the oral evidences, conducted individually or in groups. Examples: The students might ...

- Collect personal memories of the parents, relatives, and acquaintances, connected to the recent past, as an alternative of the official school textbook
- Gather non official data such as memories of parents or relatives, apart from the school textbook

- Increase their knowledge on local history through interviewing people who deal with the cultural heritage in various forms
- Accomplish a multi-perspective approach, while researching the electronic sources or archived oral evidences
- Preserve a direct contact with eyewitnesses during the history lesson
- Combine the conversation with the eyewitness during the history class with the previously conducted interviews on the topic

### Oral History as an Element of the Interdisciplinary Lessons

Students have the opportunity to learn more while participating in a binary history lesson. This means a joint learning about one and the same topic from different subjects, such as history and geography; history and art; history and informatics; history, philosophy, and music. The teachers need more than one class hour to conduct such a lesson. This is the reason why the teachers organize these lessons in the framework of the additional hours in the history subject.

Suggestions for some history topics:

- The Women's Everyday Life
- Life in Socialism
- The Fall of Yugoslavia
- Women's Emancipation in the Balkans
- "Male" and "Female" Professions – Traditions and Modernity
- The Influence of the Traumatic Events in Everyday Life in the Balkans

## Oral History Outside the Classroom

The long and effective practice of history teaching in the classroom has left a good tradition to the outside class activities as well. There are many examples of these outside class activities undertaken by the history clubs and researchers individually or in teams, which are implemented in workshops or seminars, which the teachers organize very enthusiastically. They also feel responsible for the development of many ideas and topics, especially while conducting researches on the local history. It is for this reason that many schools in the Balkan countries have their own "local schools", which contribute to the collection of oral evidences. This, has improved the way of teaching during the last years and has led to the involvement of the method of project development in the history teaching process. The project work might be accomplished on different levels:

- Students' microprojects
- School projects on the local, regional, national and international level
- Teachers' projects (in cooperation with the students) in the framework of the project activities of the NGOs, the local community, and the international projects

The results of the project activities are presented during the school conferences, debates and competitions, which are developed not only in the class/school level but might be further presented in the regional or international context. The development of the ICT allows new forms to the already existing written history discussions in the internet or virtual conferences. As an output of the joint work of the students from the different Balkan countries, they might establish website sources for oral evidences related to:

- The Communist Political Repressions
- The Education System after the Second World War
- The Balkan Society during the 20th Century
- The Everyday Life Balkan Traditions
- Images of Beauty and Fashion
- The Family Traditions of the People belonging to Various Religions and Ethnic Communities (food, clothing, holidays, love, marriage, family etc.).

Creating this additional resource for the history lessons, an information bank with various sources such as chronicles, diaries, photos, interviews, autobiographies, travel notes, personal memories, family stories, pictures from personal archives, and copies of family belongings, improves the potential of better understanding the historical, and cultural heritage of the Balkan people.

In this way, the use of oral history as a resource of modern education not only stimulates the young people to get more and more interested in the past heritage, but also plays a leading role in educating the responsible citizens in these modern times.



## 3.2. Human Rights in Communism in Albania

Project Director: Liliana Guga, „Petro N. Luarasi“ High School, Tirana. Supported by: The Regional Education Directorate in Tirana, School Directory, Community, Municipality, Directors of the different Institutions where the research will be conducted.

### Objectives:

*“Let not the teachers do what a student can, but give the students the possibility of searching and the pleasure of finding” – Aleksandër Xhuvani*

- Present Oral History as a theoretical and practical experience
- Students identify and understand human rights during the communist regime.
- Encourage active students' participation in making history through oral history as a means of civic education.
- Evaluate Oral History as an alternative means in building and interpreting the past
- Teach a students' centered history class
- Train students to research, communicate, ask, analyze, experience
- Synthesize the human rights status during the communist regime based on specific historical event
- Develop vocational skills in using Oral History as a multidisciplinary method

### Methods and Techniques:

research, analyses, brainstorming, discussion, comparison, role play, selection, generalization, synthesis, interviews, oral history, reports, essays, group work

**Time/Duration:** 90 minutes

**Participants:** 5th class of General High School

### Preparation

a) 6–7 hours in advance students are:

- divided into groups and given an assignment.
- given basic interview guidelines.
- delivered information on the identified interviewees such as:
  - dissident writers
  - politically prosecuted clerics or politicians by the communist regime
  - parents and grandparents
  - ex-communist statesmen
  - students of the 1970s

The teacher might organize a meeting in advance with the interviewee, in order to prevent any inconvenience that may arise during the interview.

b) A sample questionnaire that might be used to interview an ex-prosecuted cleric during the communist regime:

- What is your name?
- When/where were you born?
- What do you remember from your childhood?
- When/how did you receive your religious education?
- Which is your marital status?
- Where have you been during the 1960s? (These are the years when the anti-religious movement took place in Albania)
- What did you do during that period?
- Is there any event which has impressed you during these years?
- Who destroyed the churches and why were they destroyed during the communist regime?
- Which was the role of the clerics during the 1960s?
- Did you propagandize against the state in power?
- Did you hide any weapons in the churches?
- How did the attack against the religious institutions start?

- Were you affected by this movement? Did you have any responsibility for this attack?
- Did this communist initiative influence your everyday life?
- Have you ever visited any "Atheist Museum" in Albania? If yes which is your impression?
- Do you believe that the Albanians became atheist only after the anti religious movement?
- Please let us know whether and how the religious beliefs have survived among the Albanians.

c) The teacher distributes a story experienced by an ex prosecuted person, and asks students to plan a questionnaire which would be latter used during the interview with the eyewitness on this story. These stories might be presented during the history classes on human rights.

The goal of points b) and c) is to teach students how to use the questioning techniques.

d) Establish the time frame for the groups' planned assignments.

## Group Work

### ■ Group 1

Students receive media sources (written sources, photos, caricatures, news, articles, and posters) regarding the freedom of: speech, religious belief, property, education, political belief, gender equality (see Appendix 1). Students may collect other documents according to the directions presented above.

The students might use the information to develop a poster in order to:

- define the title
- define the relevant sources
- define the emotional effect of the information collected from these sources
- deliver a report or a historical summary on the information collected, which might be later presented to the class.

### ■ Group 2

The teacher should advice students to identify those Official Sources, which focus on the freedom of: speech, religious belief, property, education, political parties, women during the communist regime (see Appendix 2).

The students might use the information to develop a poster in order to:

- define the title
- define the relevant sources
- define the emotional effect of the information collected from these sources
- deliver a report or a historical summary on the information collected, which might be later presented to the class.

### ■ Group 3

The students might conduct some interviews for different respondents, and they might either write down all the answers or use a tape recorder. After completing the interview students are required to present:

- the information they obtained from the interview
- the general perceptions and feelings of the interview.
- the report or the historical summary produced after the interview.

### ■ Group 4

The students might collect:

- *Biographies* of the prosecuted people by the totalitarian regime
- *Photos* of prosecuted people while suffering their convictions.
- *Past memories* written either by the prosecuted people themselves or by others.

After collecting these relevant data, the students might develop a historical event which would present a sample of the violation of the Human Rights during communism.

#### ■ Group 5

(If it is considered important and relevant) invites an eyewitness in the class and conducts an interview on the topic of Human Rights under the teacher's supervision. Students should prepare a questionnaire in advance in order to be well prepared and ask relevant questions.

#### ■ Group 6

Students of group 6 perform the Observer's role, monitoring and evaluating the presentations of the five other groups. This group would present the final conclusions and results of the previous presentations. The involved groups may also discuss the final observations and results.

The teacher expects students to:

- Discuss, analyze, compare and contrast the research findings and presentations.
- Notice the differences or similarities of the information collected from different sources such as the official sources, media sources, or from the interview with the eye witness.
- Recognize the importance of Oral History while re-writing history.

Emphasize the dictatorial, controlling and oppressive power of the communist regime.

#### Homework

The students should:

1. Prepare a play acting perceiving Human Rights in communism as:
  - a. Albanian journalist during the communist regime
  - b. Western journalist
2. Discuss the presentation of Human Rights in:
  - a. poetries
  - b. caricatures
  - c. essays
  - d. pictures
3. Build a small dramatic or grotesque play.

The selection of the homework topic is an individual choice.

**Appendix 1**

**Doc. 1:** Data on the number of the politically persecuted people during the communist regime

executed:	4 200 people
imprisoned:	13 700 people
in exile:	17 200 people

**Doc. 2:** Women’s rights

	Men	Women
Deputies 1997	93%	7%
Deputies 1999	93%	7%
Cabinet 1999	89.5%	10.5%
Presidency 1999	30%	70%

*(Cited from the Magazine: “Shqiptarja e re” – The Young Albanian)*

**Doc. 3:** Martyrism of the catholic church, years 1944–1990, page 221

1. The assassinated clericals were at the average age of 57, and have undergone 258 months of persecution (altogether).
2. The clericals who died some time after the tortures has the average age 52, in 3 years of persecution.
3. The clericals sentenced today serving their religion have had 563 years of imprisonment in all. They have accomplished 450 years of study in 24 universities of Europe.
4. All the years of imprisonment are 881 or nearly 9 centuries.

*(Source: “Committee of the politically persecuted people”)*

**Doc. 4:** Against the right of speech

*Question:* You have defined this regime as an absolute one. Is this true?

*Answer:* Yes, because it supports the view points of only one party.

*Question:* Why do you like the western democracies?

*Answer:* First of all because it is a personal opinion, second the people’s democracy is not the western democracy, meaning the true one.

*(From the court against Mr. Shevqet Beja. Newspaper “Rilindja demokratike” – Democratic Renaissance.)*

**Doc. 5:** Opinions from the foreign institutions on the Albanians’ Human Rights. (Amnesty international)

**Appendix 2**

**Doc. 1:** The Albanian Constitution of 1946, 1976 on the citizens’ freedom and rights, as well as speeches of different communist leader on this topic

**Doc. 2:** Speeches of the political leaders in the communist state

**Doc. 3:** Plays from the political leaders

**Doc. 4:** Passages from the official Albanian history of the communist regime, as well as from the current history textbook

**Doc. 5:** Photos from the official albums of the communist time

**Doc. 6:** Posters from the communist time

**Doc. 7:** Official publications

**Doc. 8:** The Criminal Code, e.g. the Criminal Code of 1977, “gave from 3–10 years of imprisonment for religious propaganda, production and distribution of the religious literature.”

**Doc. 9:** Verdicts or approved laws by the Albanian Communist Parliament

**Doc. 10:** Studies from INSTAT (institute of statistics)



### 3.3. Knowing the City Through Alternative Sources

Project Director: Liliana Guga, „Petro N. Luarasi“ High School, Tirana. Supported by: The Regional Education Directorate in Tirana, School Directory, Community, Municipality, Directors of the different Institutions where the research will be conducted.

#### Objectives:

- Students would get acquainted with the geographical, historical, economic, educational, cultural, sportive, environmental, demographic and institutional developments in Tirana.
- They would explore and research information about their city
- They would get more knowledge and skills in:
  - Group work
  - Conducting a research
  - Planning a project
  - Conducting interviews with eye witnesses
  - Alternate the methods and sources while creating events
  - Publish some editions
  - Assist in the development of the city, community and improvement of the behavioural attitude of this community.

#### Methods and Techniques:

research, exploration, excursions, confrontations, selections, comparative analyses, group work and implementation of oral history

**Time/Duration:** 3 months

**Participants:** 4th year high school students

**Location:** Tirana City, including here the institutions, ethno-cultural objects as well as the nature resources

**Materials:** maps, guides, photos, statistics, graphics, stamps, money, posters, publications, internet, songs, poetries, foreign proverbs etc.

#### Group Work

##### ■ Group 1: The Archeological and Historical Sites in Tirana

- Objectives of the Exploration: (history), Dajti, the City Clock, the mosques, the museums, the castle, of Tirana and Petrela
- Resources: Photos, information, students' photos in the field research or during the interviews

##### ■ Group 2: Tirana's Demography and Geography

- Objectives of the Exploration: The city landscape, climate, hydrographic conditions, natural resources, population
- Resources: Scientific research, statistics

##### ■ Group 3: Cultural, Sports and Health Centers

- Objectives of the Exploration: the cultural center, opera house, theatres, variety shows, the palace of congress, radio and televisions, fitness centers
- Resources: information, photos, posters, interviews, records

##### ■ Group 4: Different Institutions, Monuments and School

- Objectives of the Exploration: Presidency, Parliament, Council of Ministers, Line Ministries, municipalities, banks, religious institutions, universities, school, education directorate.
- Resources: Students' photos in the fieldwork, or during the interviews, or while collection the data

**■ Group 5: Economic Centers**

- Objectives of the Exploration: factories, food plants, business centers etc.
- Resources: Collection of Statistics, historical interviews etc.

**■ Group 6: Culture, Ethnography, Writings and Symbols**

- Objectives of the Exploration: Cultural activities, clothes, songs, popular sayings, symbols, stamps
- Resources: Photos, posters, research, interviews with Tirana citizens etc.

**■ Group 7: The Environment in Tirana – A Strategy for Change**

- Objectives of the Exploration: The green lands and the environmental pollution in the inhabited areas
- Resources: Statistics, interviews with stakeholders (municipality employees or representatives of the NGOs)



## 3.4. The Fall Of Yugoslavia

Lesson supplied by Asmir Demir, Technical School, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### Objectives:

- Students understand the importance of the process of the Fall of Yugoslavia
- Students apply critical thinking skills to organize and use the information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic sources and oral history. The students communicate in written, oral, and visual forms
- Students learn to distinguish facts from opinions
- The learning process encourages a critical evaluation of these historical developments
- The lesson offers the opportunity to undertake a small-scale historical research.
- Students become aware/cautious of impartiality
- Students become morally aware of the influence of the Fall of Yugoslavia and the following events in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Key Terms:** independence, civil war, democratization process, religious and national identity, tolerance

**Time/Duration:** 45 minutes

**Participants:** 12th grade of High School

**Materials:** multimedia, laptop

### Sources:

Radio Free Europe: "Witnesses of the fall", Documents of History Archives Sarajevo, Printing media: "Oslobodenje", "Svijet"

### Preparation

Before starting the lesson, students must have conducted a small-scale historical research. To achieve this aim, the teacher divides the students into three groups having the same number of participants. Their tasks are as follows:

The first group would research in the history archives and find documents relevant for the history subject.

The second group would conduct interviews with the eyewitnesses.

The third group would find video materials relevant to the subject as well as the public speeches of the six presidents who participated in the fall of Yugoslavia and tried to find the means and ways to avoid the crisis.

### Activities

#### ■ Activity 1: Icebreaker

The history class might start with an open discussion on the myths regarding the communist ideological propaganda.

*Step One:*

The teacher shows a picture or on multimedia propaganda image from Tito's time. What was the purpose of slogans like this one?



*Step Two:*

The teacher divides the students into pairs and asks them to write for three minutes a list of 3–5 stereotypical images of Yugoslavia after World War II. The students’ suggestions should be presented on a poster.

*Step Three:*

Students openly discuss the ideological propaganda and the Yugoslavian myths. The teacher describes how the process of the fall of Yugoslavia started, delivers the tasks to the students and explains the aim of the research conducted by the students.

■ **Activity 2: Group Presentations**

Each group has 10 minutes to present the research findings. Before starting this activity, three students considered as experts (one from each group) and the teacher would evaluate the research work and the presentation of the research findings. Each group receives the guidelines on the evaluation criteria (see below).

■ **Activity 3: Plenary Discussion**

Students have the opportunity to attend a plenary session and comment and discuss the research findings and the way the research and presentation were performed.

Rating	A	B	C	D
Criteria	engaging, creative, and thoughtful information	clear and thoughtful	quite well developed and detailed	direct and usually clear
	precise, vivid, and sophisticated vocabulary	complex, precise vocabulary and varied sentences	generally precise vocabulary and complex sentence, structures containing minimal errors	straightforward vocabulary and effective sentences that are rarely complex or varied
	coherent and organized structure	logical organization	obvious organization	organization evident
	chosen form effectively and innovatively conveys content	chosen form effectively conveys content	chosen form appropriate for content	chosen form generally appropriate for content
	relevant and intriguing use of details to convey	relevant and careful use of details to convey	relevant use of details to convey personality and experience of person interviewed	competent use of details to convey personality and experience of person interviewed
	skills for selecting and analyzing of the information; correctly formatted bibliography	good combination of the basic facts; uncertainties of the formatted bibliography	generally few surface feature errors; some punctuation, spelling, or pronoun reference errors: not complete bibliography	surface feature errors such as comma splice, spelling, or pronoun reference errors
	strictly following the presentation’s time	strictly following the presentation’s time	passing the time limit	passing the time limit



## 3.5. The Big Excursion from 1989 in the Memories of the Ethnic Turks

Lesson supplied by Angel Janchev, Professional High School of Tourism „Dr. Petar Beron“, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria.

### Objectives:

- Pupils will get to know about the crimes of the communist regime in connection to the “revival process”
- Defining oral history as a tool for tracing and gathering evidence on everyday life history
- Assimilating the knowledge on the interviewing techniques
- Recognizing the information and historical importance of an eyewitness interview

### Key Terms:

“revival process”, human rights, discrimination, oral history, interview, eyewitness

**Time/Duration:** 2 × 45 minutes

**Participants:** 10th–11th grades

### Materials:

working sheet, flipchart, A4 sheets, colourful post-it, markers, recorders, video camera

### Literature:

Bala, Heike Catrin, “Remember for the Future. Seminar for handling the recent history”, Sofia, 2003.

### Activities

#### ■ Activity 1: Describing An Image

Separate the class into several groups. Each of the groups receives a “working sheet” with pictures from newspapers, presenting different moments from the emigration of the ethnic Turks during 1989 (see Appendix). Each of the groups has to find out the answers to the following questions:

- What do I see in the photos?
- Why are these people leaving Bulgaria?
- What kind of feelings do the pictures evoke or transmit?

The teacher summarizes the students’ answers and concludes that the described event from the summer of 1989 is a consequence of the attempts of the Bulgarian government for assimilating and chasing the ethnic Turks. The teacher has already introduced the theme and motivation of the lesson’s aims. As a consequence the following logical question comes up: “Do you know eyewitnesses who have experienced these events?”

The teacher attracts the students’ attention on the peculiarities of interviewing as a helpful technique for gathering oral evidences. The skill development in using oral history, determines the need to understand the progression of the historical events presented during an interview. It would be necessary to outline the following guidelines:

- Clear out the aims of your interview
- Carefully identify and select the interviewee based on the aims of the oral history and make an appointment with him/her
- Create the questionnaire for the interview

The teacher assists and clarifies the students' ambiguities, while preparing the interview questions:

- The students should start the interview with some very general questions related to the experience of the eyewitnesses..
- The interview questions must be open ended and neutral.
- Nevertheless, the students should be able to predict the possible answers and shortcomings of the interview..

### ■ Activity 2: Brainstorm

The aim of the following task is to associate the theoretical and empirical information and see the practical implementation of this information during the preparation and conduction of an interview.

*First Step: Specifying the aims of the interview*

Task: Brainstorm all the relevant associations that the term "The Big Excursion" evokes in you. The teacher writes the students' answers on a poster or at the black-/whiteboard dividing them into negative and positive responses.

Conclude: The teacher refers to the students' response list to describe the aims of the interview. It is important to clarify that the interview aims might differ, depending on the atmosphere or the evaluation of the historical event within the group. This fact adds to the subjectivity character of oral history.

*Second Step: Inform students on the identified eyewitness*

The teacher delivers some general information on the personality of the eyewitness. This additional general information is necessary for the preparation of the interview questionnaire. The interviewers might consider giving a symbolic present (flowers, chocolates, books) to the eyewitness to show appreciation for the willingness and availability of the respondent to participate in the research.

### ■ Activity 3: Group Work

*Third Step: Identify the interview questions*

The students are divided into five groups. Each of the groups should produce in 10 minutes a list of questions for the eyewitness and write them in colourful post-its. The students are once more required to produce open ended and neutral questions.

At the end of the group work, the post-its are stuck on the black-/whiteboard. A representative from each group would present the questions to the class, and tick those questions considered good-quality ones.

The teacher sums up the selected questions and lists them in a chronological and logical order for the coming interview. Thus, the final questionnaire is produced.

### ■ Activity 4: Role Play

*Forth Step: Avoiding the unpredictable challenges and interview shortcomings*

Divide the students into small groups of three. Each of the students is assigned one of the following roles: interviewer, interviewee and observer. The students should prepare in advance for their performance, before the interview is conducted.

Role plying hints: A simulation role play is conducted to face and prevent any shortcomings appearing during the interview with the eyewitness.

The interviewers might be faced with the following shortcomings: the interviewee might suffer an emotional crisis due to some questions or memories, the interviewee might refuse to answer to all the questions, the interviewers might repeat the same question or interrupt the eyewitness, the tape/video recorder does not function, etc. At the end of the role play the observers might describe the different situations and shortcomings, and suggests ways to avoid such drawbacks during a real interview.

### ■ Activity 5: Interviewing the Eyewitness

This part of the lesson offers students the possibility to practice in the class what they have learned.

The teacher invites the eyewitness in the classroom. The students are already prepared to conduct the interview based on the guidelines previously delivered to them by the teacher. It is advised that each student participates in the interview with the eyewitness and the teacher should facilitate this process offering every one the possibility to ask a question to the interviewee.

The technical aids such as a tape or video recorder, or a camera add to the quality of an interview. The video recorder helps to better understand the emotional status of the interviewee, through the record of the gestures, facial expressions, posture etc. which are more vividly and clearly transmitted through the visual aid.

Nevertheless, a "live" interview might be risky, considering sometimes students have to clarify the question or spontaneously ask more questions, for which they are not prepared. This creates a more involving environment and offers a more practical approach in learning history.

One of the students should thank the eyewitness at the end of the interview and offer a small present in sign of appreciation and respect.

### ■ Activity 6: "Lightening"

The final activity tends to reflect students' perspective about the interview. Task: Share your impressions of the interview and answer to the following question: "Which was the most important information you received from the interview?"

Remember the following tips:

- Be clear and concise
- Do not be repetitive
- Respect the others' speeches;
- Only the teacher might interrupt a presentation if it is necessary

The teacher might assist and help students in following these guidelines. The students might publish the recorded information in the school website or in other printed or electronic media if they have a written consent of the interviewee.

During the implementation of oral history in the class, students should introduce their knowledge, organization skills, creativity and sincerity. The discussion of some "sensitive" themes from the recent past usually results in various attitudes and perspectives that often require tolerance and understanding.

Students might also find some oral history evidence through a text, a documentary, or any other source with historical values.

## Appendix

Look at the images and discuss the following questions:

- What do I see in the photos?
- Why are these people leaving Bulgaria?
- What kind of feelings do the pictures evoke or transmit?





## 3.6. The “Female” Daily Life

Lesson supplied by Violeta Stoycheva, Methodology of History, University of Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria.

### Objectives:

- Understand the gender equality through oral history
- Identify the women’s social changes and successions through the analyses of the everyday life examples from three generations
- Develop of the ability to use the oral history method (through biographical interviews)
- Apply a multi-perspective approach and analysis of facts from different perspectives
- Be tolerant and understandable in accepting other people’s standpoints

### Key Terms:

Gender and gender equality, social roles, “female problem”, emancipation, division of labour, stereotype, propaganda, value

**Time/Duration:** 2 × 45 minutes

**Participants:** students from high school

### Materials:

Flipchart, markers, stickers, 3 different coloured A4 sheets cut in rectangular bands, preliminary prepared Venn diagram cut in three parts, glue/scotch tape, scissors, felt-tip pens

### Activities

#### ■ Preliminary Organization

The teacher should assign the preliminary work to the students for this lesson 2–3 weeks in advance. The teacher divides the students into small groups:

**Group A** (5 groups of 2 students):

would conduct biographical interviews

**Group B** (3 groups of 4 students):

would research in the library

Students of group A would conduct interviews with women from 3 generations asking the preliminary prepared questions. The teacher presents some basic information such as, education, profession, place of work, family life, technologies, free time, entertainments, fashion depending on the aims and objectives of the lesson, and based on this information the students produce the interview questions.

After conducting the interview students fill an information table (Appendix 2).

Students of group B would conduct the research in the school or public library and collect official documents or periodicals from the Communist period, which illustrate the state policies regarding the women’s status in three different decades:

- From 1945 to 1955
- From 1965 to 1975
- From 1985 to 1995

The identified facts would be written in the table (Appendix 3).

■ **Activity 1: Associative Cloud**

The teacher writes on the board the term “woman”. Each student’s pairs receives posters which represent the woman in different social roles (Appendix 1).

Task: Specify the post World War I and World War II changes in the women’s social status, based on the information received from the research.

- Which countries are these images related to?
- What differences/similarities can you identify in the messages transmitted through the official propaganda on women’s issues?

The students’ responses are written down without being commented and are presented in a graphic way. Attention should be paid to the summary on the differences in the gender policies in different countries, and the consequences of the women’s movements for equal rights in Bulgaria.

The aim of choosing everyday life history is to understand the whole picture of the Communist government and policies, and the difficulties and challenges the Bulgarian women had to face in order to achieve their emancipation and equality.

The accomplishment of these tasks requires the preparation of a preliminary time line, the resource materials, and a flexible coordination of the independent students’ work.

Before the teams present the oral evidences, the teacher describes the tasks of the other three groups.

Task: While the teams present the interview facts, write down:

**First group:** The similar traditional elements often brought up by the interviewees (women from the three generations).

**Second group:** The differences in women’s everyday lives.

**Third group:** The values which characterize the life of the interviewed women.

The teacher delivers to the first and second group a work sheet (Appendix 4), part of the joint poster where the Venn diagram is preliminarily designed and felt-tip pens (the third part of the poster is filled during the accomplishment of the next task).

The teacher delivers to the third group a work sheet (Appendix 4), a flipchart; felt-tip pens; glue and wide paper bends in three different colours. Students will write the values of these women and arrange them in an appropriate and logical way in the poster. The work sheet allows students to take notes during the processing of the task and fill in the poster based on the task results.

■ **Activity 2: Oral Evidences (biographical interview)**

Task: What are the characteristics of the “women’s” everyday life in Socialism?

Each student pair presents in 3–5 minutes the basic interview facts and findings which are previously written in the tables delivered by the teacher (Appendix 2).

■ **Activity 3: Venn diagram**

Task: Compare based on the researched sources:

First group: The relation of the state politics on “women’s issues” to the protection of the stereotyped notions of the traditional women’s social roles of the. Analyze the traditional elements which are repeatedly presented in the women’s lives from the three generations.

Second group: The relation of the state politics on “women issues” to the in the traditional social roles of the Bulgarian women, present in the everyday lives of the women from the three generations.

The two student groups analyze the parts of the graphic organized in the preliminarily prepared information for the official policy of the socialist state and the Bulgarian Communist Party.

The aim of the first part is to understand the traditional gender roles when comparing the official and unofficial facts from the different sources. Respectively the second group identifies the state policies concerning the “women’s issues”.

The groups attach the filled Venn diagram on the board. The third blank part of the poster is the intersection area where the research components are compared and contrasted.

It is advisable to discuss the different opposite opinions which are brought during the class discussion. In this case the teacher directs the attention to the aspirations pursued by the totalitarian regime and the women's overload to accomplish several public and private roles such as that of the mother, wife, working woman and public socialist woman.

#### ■ Activity 4: Scale of Values

In order to understand the discrepancy between the aims of the state propaganda and the actual women's overload teachers might use a new task and involve the third group to comment on the issues.

Task: Imagine the system of value of the Bulgarian women in Socialism. Compare the empirical facts with the theoretical information about the official Communist Party ideology on gender equality.

Example: A second step in this activity might be the arrangement of the values from a modern perspective. In order not to lose time you might use the open vote principle. Two tellers are chosen who would stay on both sides of the students.

Task: Make a scale of the value system of the Bulgarian women. Each student has the right to choose three of the values stated by the interview respondents and vote for them.

The teacher writes the number of the students who have voted on the poster or on a post-it and sticks it next to the respective value. When the voting is finished, the teacher compiles another list based on the most voted values. The teacher might write the values in the shared circles of the graphic organizer. In this case Activity 5 can be left out and you move directly to the questions from the final discussion.

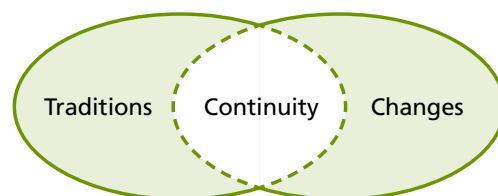
#### ■ Activity 5: Discussion Network

The students are grouped in a way that the oral history researchers are able to participate. The teacher delivers some coloured stick sheets to the students. Each group receives 3 coloured sheets and one white A4 sheet. The speaker directs the attention to the blank part in the graphic organizer.

Task: Each student has to write in two minutes three things (qualities, characteristics, values) which they consider as the most important for a modern woman.

- Share opinion with the group. Make a list of the proposals.
- Choose three characteristics which you consider the most important. Write each of them in a separate coloured sheet.

The teacher sticks the coloured sheets in the blank space in the graphic organizer.



Discussion:

- Examine the completed Venn diagram. Are there any elements related to the traditional roles of the socialist women which you would like to add or edit?
- Are there any other elements not presented in the diagram, which you would classify as evolutionary for the women
- According to your opinion, are there any steady, eternal values which can be attributed to the women?

The speaker, while summarizing, directs the students' attention towards the modern conception of the gender roles and the eternal characteristics of the female identity.

Appendix 1



**Appendix 2**

	75–80 years	60–65 years	45–50 years
Education			
Profession			
Job			
Family Life			
Technologies (in the household)			
Leisure Time			
Entertainment			
Fashion			

**Appendix 3**

Decade	State Documents	Party Documents	Periodicals
1945–1955			
1965–1975			
1985–1995			

**Appendix 4**

Generations	Traditions	Changes	Values
75–80 years			
60–65 years			
45–50 years			



## 3.7. The Tradition of “Anastenaria” – Firewalking

Lesson supplied by Pantazis Miteloudis, Gymnasium of Livadia, Serres, Greece.

### Objectives:

- Students learn about their Local History and Traditions
- Familiarize with the research methodology
- Learn how to use the historical sources
- Students develop practical skills in approaching History
- Improve the collaboration and learning skills
- Undertake new teaching and learning initiatives
- Promote critical thinking
- Explore the recent information and communication technologies such as electronic sources

**Topic:** Local History

### Key Terms:

culture heritage, fire walkers, tradition

**Participants:** 3rd class of General High school

**Time/Duration:** 2 weeks for the project preparation and 1 hour for presentation

**Materials:** multimedia, laptop, camera, paper, pencils

### Group Work

The teacher divides the class into 3 mixed groups. Each of the groups, works on a small-scale project, which is later presented in the class.

#### ■ Group 1+2: The Custom of Firewalking – “Anastenaria”

Identify and select the bibliography related to the subject of local custom of fire walking:

The fire walking custom lasts for three days. On St. Constantino’s day, people slaughter a lamb in the “konaki” (the place where firewalking takes place), and cook the lamb in the same evening and eat it with brad and cheese, after the coal is prepared and the dances have finished. The next day only the fire walkers (Anastenarides) are gathered in the house and dance holding the pictures of the saint. The third day, they gather again but this time they dance on the coals. Then the fire walkers and the spectators hold hands together and dance.

They searched the internet for relevant information:

The drama fire walking takes place every year on 21 May in the villages of Kerkini, Saint Helen in Serres, Lagkada, Thessaloniki and Mayroleyki. It is a graphic festive event that constitutes a survival of the adoration of Dionysos (in Greek Mythology). The cradle of this custom is the Aimos peninsula and is connected to the saints Konstantinos and Helen. In the present days, the fire walkers hold pictures of Saints and the holy Gospel, to demonstrate their attachment to the orthodox Christian doctrine.

This Custom consists in the pompic dance and fire walking in naked legs on the coal accompanied by the drum, the lyre and the bagpipes tunes. This custom is brought by refugees from Eastern Romylia and Thrace to the villages of Macedonia in 1922. It is considered as a strange and shock-

ing custom. Its form is simple and still remains unexplained. The rhythm and the melody constitute the quintessence of the musical feast. However, the Church prohibits the performance of this custom considering it as a pagan event..

Students conducted interviews with participants of this local custom:

**When did fire walking start as a custom?**

This is hereditary. I started to celebrate when I was 18. I was "touched" suddenly. Yes, this is a heritage because my grand mother was also a fire walker. There is no discrimination; it does not make any difference, whether someone comes from "Pontos" or Thrace.

**How many people did participate this year? How many people participated in the previous years? Which was the average age of the participants?**

When the customs started in 1920 Kerkjn, only three women participated in the celebration of this customs and continued it as a traditional heritage. Today there are almost fifteen people. I am the oldest one – 78 years old – and the youngest is 20 years old.

**Which is the origin of this custom?**

The custom originates from Thrace, and latter on developed into a bigger and brighter celebration. Even the Bulgarians started to participate.

**Do you believe that this custom should continue to be celebrated?**

Yes, of course. But this requires faith and the present day youth does not even approach a church. This custom is also a good means for attracting visitors from various places.

**What objects do you hold during the ritual?**

Apart from the pictures of Saint Konstantinos and Saint Helen each one holds a handkerchief. They are antique, red and hand made, brought by our relatives from Thrace.

Students collected photographs:



■ **Group 3: The History of the School**

The students:

- Investigate the school files
- Process and arrange the assembled materials
- Conduct interviews with school staff and senior students
- Assemble photographs or other materials

Each group presents its work in Power Point form. They present their research work in the school.



## 3.8. Cultural and Historical Monuments in the XIX.–XX. Centuries

Lesson supplied by Donika Xhemajli, „Faik Konica“ School, Prishtina, Kosovo.

### Objectives:

1. Identify the cultural and historical monuments
2. Understand the (through the assistance of the eyewitnesses) the contributions of the Kosovo people to preserve the cultural and historical monuments through the centuries
3. Assess the importance of the cultural and historical monuments

**Key Terms:** culture heritage, cultural and historical monument, civilization

**Participants:** 8th grade (14–15 years old)

**Time/Duration:** one week

**Materials:**  
work sheets, A4 paper, pencils

**Sources:**  
photos, newspapers, printed and electronic materials, encyclopedia

### Preparation

#### ■ Preparation for students

Prepare and conduct interviews with eyewitnesses, such as custodians of the Sultan Muraty Mosque (near Prishtina) and members of the “Tyrbetari” family who would discuss the most important objects in this place.

#### ■ Preparation for teachers

Prepare the working sheets for the students and organize the meetings with the eyewitnesses.

### Activities

**First Day:** Visit to the Institute for the preservation of historical monuments.

**Second Day:** Visit (field trip) to the research site, the cultural and historical monuments and conduct interviews with members of the “Tyrbetari” family and custodians of Sultan Muraty Mosque.

**Third Day:** Write essays on the perception of the field research and observations, based on the interviews and research findings.

### Evaluation

- improve knowledge on the cultural and historical monuments
- understand the commitment of the family to guard the monument
- promote individual feedback, perception and analyses
- encourage individual study to protect the Cultural Heritages

■ **Students' Evaluation**

- identify and select relevant sources and information, based on facts
- conduct field-trip work
- improve the critical thinking skills
- evaluate the research work
- self evaluation

■ **Teacher's Evaluation**

- prepares and supports students for the interview with the eyewitnesses
- assigns each student parts of the research work
- invites the eyewitnesses

- supports students to prepare the interview questions
- considers the students' opinions (essay/questions) for the research
- help students identify the eyewitnesses
- evaluates the students' research work

**Appendix: Worksheet**



**Questions:**

- Which is this building?
- Where is it situated?
- When it is built?
- Who built it?
- What was the purpose of it?
- How it is used and what are its particularities?
- Do you know this building?
- What do you know about it?
- Have you been there?
- Why do you go there?



**Tasks:**

- Draw a full body after you see this part of the picture.
- Look at the museum pieces and discover the figures.
- Make open ended questions which might help you learn more about this exhibition.
- Make a short presentation of this exhibition for various visitors.



## 3.9. National Movement in Kosovo 1980–1990

Lesson supplied by Donika Xhemajli, „Faik Konica“ School, Prishtina, Kosovo.

### Objectives:

- Use oral history data to support warriors' perspectives about the Kosovo Albanians regarding the historical period of 1980–1990
- Understand the people's reaction to war and the means and ways they use to surpass face it
- Justify the students' actions
- Compare and contrast the values of the past and present day youth

### Key Terms:

independence, civil war, democratization, identity, collective and individual memory

**Participants:** 13th grade (17–18 years old)

**Time/Duration:** two history lessons, 3 months for students' research projects

**Materials:** A4 paper, pencils, tape recorder

**Sources:** eyewitnesses, documentaries, newspapers (different editions), programs, literature from different authors (no more than 3–4 pages by each book)

### Preparation

Guidelines for the teacher: The teacher organizes a class interview with the eyewitness, based on the didactical approach. Before the interview, the teacher arranges a meeting with one of the organizers of the Students' Demonstrations in 1981 in order to clarify any technical interview question.

### First Lesson

#### ■ Activity 1: Discussion

#### Step One:

The teacher writes the following quotation from ‚Meditation XVII' by John Donne on the board: “No man is an island, entire of itself; ... any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind”.

The teacher divides the students into 4–5 groups and discuss in smaller groups what do students think on the quotation and how could it be related to the present freedom of Kosovo. The students should think independently about the meaning each word from the quote transmits.

Ask students to feedback and discuss their ideas. The teacher comments on the importance of studying and knowing more about history.

#### Step Two:

The teacher asks students to work in pairs and write a list of all the people who they consider important to be remembered, such as soldiers, medical staff, civilians etc.

#### Step Three:

Students would feedback and briefly discuss the role of the aforementioned people in a war. At the end of this task, students might conclude that a war has a negative effect on people due its disastrous consequence.

### ■ Activity 2: Interview

The teacher divides the students into five groups based on the following task, informs them on the interview and presents some general information about the eyewitness.

Each group receives a blank paper and writes for 5 minutes five questions for the eyewitness. The teacher collects the questions, selects the most relevant ones for the interview, and decides on the chronological sequence for asking these questions. The teacher presents some interview guidelines to the students and later invites the eyewitness to the classroom.

At the end of the interview, the students thank the eyewitness for his/her availability and give a symbolic present as a sign of respect and gratefulness.

### ■ Activity 3: Plenary

After the interview is conducted the teacher might organize a plenary session and focus on the way the interview was conducted and whether the students followed the interviewing guidelines. The students might also discuss on some of the drawbacks of the interview, the eyewitness' behaviour, some of the challenges students had to face during the questioning etc.

Example questions:

- What do people usually remember from their past?
- Which are the topics that people usually avoid or are more willing to discuss?
- Why is it important to discuss the recent past with ordinary people, rather than accepting only the information coming from the professional historians?
- Which is the procedure to find "right" eyewitness?
- How would you proceed if the eyewitness wants to terminate the interview beforehand?
- How would you proceed if the eyewitness gets emotional?

The teacher makes a summary of the basic steps in an interview, and delivers students a questionnaire sample.

### ■ Activity 4: Individual Task

The teacher writes on the board the following part of a sentence "We remember past because..." and ask students to work individually and provide possible conclusions. At the end of the history class, the teacher assigns the tasks for the coming months.

### Second Lesson

Prepare for the research projects:

The teacher divides the students into five groups three months before the project starts. Each team would conduct specific research tasks and interviews. (Appendix 1).

**Group 1:** Interview High schools and University professors in Prishtina focusing on topics such as, freedom, education, politics, equality and discrimination. Research materials: interviews, photos, essays, biographies, documents etc.

**Group 2:** Interview media representatives from the national television and radio channels and the printing media, focusing on topics such as the freedom of speech, equality, discrimination, censorship, and politics. Research materials: interviews, photos, documents, written sources, electronic and printing media information.

**Group 3:** Interview politicians (Kaqusha Jashari & Azem Vllasi) and focus on topics such as the one party system, the political and economic developments, students' movement and their standpoint on this movement. Research materials: interviews, official documents, statistics, essays, photos.

**Group 4:** Interview security agents from that time (police officers and superiors, commanders etc.) focusing on topics such as freedom, discrimination, rule of law. Research materials: interviews, statistics, photo, essays, biographies.

**Group 5:** Interview miners in Trepça Mine, Stari Trg, Mitrovica and focus on conditions, solidarity, freedom, political situation and strikes. Research materials: interviews, biographies, photos, essays.

It would be very effective if the students collect some information, photographs, biographies, autobiographies during their research in these different institutions.

Research presentation: Students should prepare a "Power Point" presentation. The students would present the research findings to a wider audience such as the schools staff, representatives of the municipality and other students.

#### ■ Activity 1

At the beginning of the history lesson the teacher delivers a folder with various sources to each group. The students should discuss in groups and prepare a short presentation of what was the most important thing they learnt from the information they have (Appendix 2):

#### ■ Activity 2 – Group Presentations

Before the presentation, the teacher introduces the evaluation criteria for the research project and project presentation.

Each of the groups receives a colourful blank paper with numbers from 1 to 5, so that students would be able to value each part of the presentation with a number, starting with one as the best grading.

The observation group would have the opportunity to ask questions clarifying questions in order to achieve a conclusion for the research topic and the history lesson.

#### ■ Activity 3 – Plenary Discussion

### Evaluation

- Get more information on the historical events during the last decade
- Understand the causes and effects of these events
- Evaluate the Albanian social situation during this period in Kosovo
- Establish cooperation on different levels: student/student; student/teacher; students/eyewitnesses
- Achieve a fair and logical conclusion

#### ■ Teacher's Evaluation

- Create the groups
- Assigns the duties and responsibilities
- Organizes the interview with the eyewitness
- Observes the students' work
- Prepare the students for the interview
- Facilitates and creates a pleasant class
- Evaluates students' work

#### ■ Students' Evaluation

- Effectively cooperate within the group and conduct field work (active citizens)
- Gather information and different facts relevant for the research topic
- Record the interviews with the eyewitnesses
- Respect the deadlines
- Prepare quality questions for interview (oral history in the classroom)
- Evaluate the best activities
- Perform a self- evaluation
- Improve critical thinking and understand better the connections of the past and the future

## Appendix 1: Questionnaire

The students might use this sample questionnaire while interviewing an eyewitness:

- When and where were you born?
- What is your education background?
- Where did you live while you were studying?
- How did you feel when you were a student?
- Why did you organize the demonstrations?
- Was there a unique consent among students to start the demonstration?
- Did any girl participate in the demonstrations?
- Did the police interrogate you?
- If yes, how did they treat you?
- Did your family support you in this undertaking?
- What about the outside society, did anyone support you?
- Do you consider the actions of that time as right and justifiable?
- Did you think that establishing a "Republic Kosovo" would solve the Albanians' problem in Former Yugoslavia?
- What is your opinion about the Kosovo politicians of that period?
- What message would you give to the present youth?

## Appendix 2

**Doc. 1:** Articles from the daily newspapers "Rilindja", Kosovo and "Veçernje novosti", Serbia.

**Doc. 2:** Statements of the politicians Azem Vllasi from Kosovo and Petar Stambolliç from Serbia.

**Doc. 3:** Information about the students' demonstrations. Students' town, Prishtina / Mother Theresa, Prishtina.

**Doc. 4:** Statistics regarding the politically prosecuted people after 11 March 1981.



## 3.10. Learning Oral History Method

Lesson supplied by Igor Jurukov, Elementary School „Petar Pop Arsov“, Skopje, Macedonia.

### Objectives:

1. Learn the oral history technique
2. Understand the specifics of oral evidences as a reliable source compared to other historical sources
3. Focus on the students' understanding to conduct interviews and learn to implement it by themselves
4. Capacity building on writing history based on oral evidences

### Key Terms:

oral history method, oral evidences, eyewitness, story, interview

**Participants:** Secondary school

**Time/Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** A4 paper, posters, students' instructions work sheet (one per each student)

### Preparation

The teacher assigns students the task to conduct a research about "Everyday Life in Macedonia from 1970 to 2005" a week before the lesson. The students become interviewers and their parents the eyewitnesses of the researched period. The teacher guides the students on the interview focus without describing the concrete interviewing procedure.

### Activities

#### ■ Activity 1: Starting Discussion

The teacher sticks on the board the separate parts of the same image belonging to a cultural monument, in order for the students to recollect them and find out the historical building.

Look at the separate elements, put them together, and create the monumental image.

- Which is the famous national cultural monument in the picture?
- Which sources might we use to receive information about this monument

The teacher focuses the discussion on the historians' studies and the various historical official sources at the same time paying a special attention to the development of the students' critical thinking skills, while identifying the historical sources.

- Which are the similarities of your task in relation to the professional historians

The discussion about the differences with the professional historians consists on the challenges that students had to face while conducting the interviews with their parents. The teacher encourages the students to share their experiences and impressions from the interviews and to discuss the interview shortcomings.

In conclusion, the teacher presents students to the method they have already used, which is the oral history method, further explains the topic of the lesson and motivates the students to fulfill the aims of the lessons.

■ **Activity 2: Improved Lecture**

The teacher explains to the students that besides the official information sources, the historians might also use the “oral evidences”. The teacher states that oral history is a widespread method, used to research the post Second World War historical periods with a special focus on the eyewitnesses of certain historical eras. The historians use the oral evidences to understand history through the personal stories of the eyewitnesses. These sources could be gathered by conducting interviews with the eyewitnesses.

■ **Activity 3: The Situation Method (pair work)**

The students receive some guideline working sheets on how to prepare a successful interview, focusing especially on the responsibilities of the interviewer.

Task: The teacher assigns roles randomly, such as who would be the interviewer or the interviewee, and prepare for the interview. The students should use the information they have collected from the interview they conducted with their parents following the guidelines on “How to conduct a successful interview”. The preparation time for this activity is 10 minutes.

The teacher explains the lack of previous guidelines on how to conduct a successful interview, while assigning the task as homework. When the instructions are not followed in their specific order, the validity and the quality of the sources would not be good and they would not be properly used by the students.

■ **Activity 4: Group Work**

The teacher focuses on understanding the implementation of the oral history method and its role in the recent history teaching and learning.

The teacher divides the students into groups of six. Each of the students receives instructional working sheets, and graphics on how to work (see Appendix).

The aim of the activity is to structure the collected information in a quick and efficient way.

Task: Discuss the results of your research work. Find the advantages and disadvantages, similarities and differences and make up “one” story. The preparation time for this activity is 10 minutes.

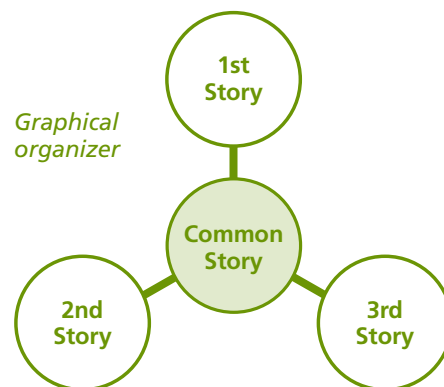
Representatives from two of the groups might present the results to the rest of the class. In conclusion, the teacher explains the specificity of the oral evidences, the authenticity of the personal memories, and the subjectivity of oral history.

**Appendix: Working sheet**

Read carefully the stories, which your parents have told you. Write down in a separate paper the answers of the following questions:

- Which event/phenomenon/process does the story refer to?
- When did it happen?
- Is the author directly involved in the event or is the author just an observer?
- What is the author’s age?
- What was the author’s position (director, administrative staff, and outsider)?
- Where did the author receive the information from, if the author is not directly involved in the events

Underline the sentences, which present the interviewee’s opinion. Is the story relevant to your already acquired knowledge, or is it completely different from what you know?





## 3.11. Illustrated Proverbs

Lesson supplied by Tudor Hebean, „Nicolae Iorga“ School, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

### Aims:

- Learn the value systems of different nations
- Create an attitude of mutual respect and tolerance between religions and nationalities

### Objectives:

- Know the specific proverbs of different nations
- Compare and discover the value of the proverbs through the analysis of some listed and illustrated proverbs
- Stimulate an oral history research regarding various communities

### Key Terms:

proverbs, value, traditions, nationalities

**Participants:** Primary school

**Time/Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** flipchart, markers

**Sources:** oral history data collected from several ethnic or religious communities in the neighbourhood or the town

### Activities

#### ■ Activity1: Icebreaker

The teacher explains to the students that there are various ethnic communities in present day Romania, who speak their own language and practice their own religion, traditions and culture.

- Which are the different nationalities in the present day Romania?
- What kinds of communities live in our neighbourhood?

The teacher explains that the two biggest ethnic groups in Romania are the Hungarians and the Roma people and illustrates this claim with statistics, which are already written on a poster or a diagram.

The teacher presents the arguments about the opportunities for mutual learning and understanding of each other, through various proverbs and sayings, explaining in this way the topic of the lesson.

#### ■ Activity 2: Group Work

The teacher divides the students in teams of four or five and requests them to make lists of Romanian, Hungarian and Roma proverbs. After performing this activity a representative from each team writes the proverbs in a flipchart paper and sticks it on one of the classroom walls, thus providing several proverb lists according to the number of the teams of students.

The students might use different colours to differentiate the proverbs of each group and start to identify the similarities and differences among the proverbs of different nationalities. The students might also illustrate some of the proverbs from the list and put them on the classrooms walls.

### ■ Activity 3: Discussion

Finally, the students with the teacher's support find out similar proverbs about the present everyday life in their country and try to evaluate the illustrated proverbs presented in different colours.

## Evaluation

### ■ Students' Evaluation

The students try to understand the importance of the oral information from the different communities. They also appreciate the usefulness of these activities and the importance to treat all the communities with respect and tolerance and understand the connections among the different cultures.

### ■ Teacher's Evaluation

The teacher tries to appreciate the students' participation in the class discussions held during the different steps of the oral history project.



## 3.12. The Last Five Years of the Communist Regime in My Town (1984–1989)

Lesson supplied by Tudor Hebean, „Nicolae Iorga” School, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

**Aims:** Learn and understand the life difficulties in this period and the community memories about this topic

**Objectives:**

- Distinguish the essential characteristics of the communist regime in Romania
- Compare life during communism with the present everyday life
- Teach the skills for a historical investigation such as the first steps of a scientific research in oral history.

**Key Terms:**

the communist regime, the anti-communist revolution, everyday life, questionnaire, historical investigation

**Participants:** Secondary school

**Time/Duration:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** flipchart, markers, etc.

**Sources:** memories of the parents from 1984 to 1989

### Preparation

1. Three weeks before the lesson, the teacher asks students to conduct a historical investigation about their families, with the topic: “My parents’ life in the last years of communism”.
2. The teacher and the students prepare a short questionnaire based on open-ended questions and the students might take down notes of the parents’ responses.
3. The students might use the questionnaire as outline for an essay, presentation or a story on the same topic. The teacher asks the students to bring each a questionnaire and an essay with information and reflections about their family members.

### Activities

#### ■ Activity 1: Icebreaker

The teacher writes the title of the lesson on the blackboard and divides the students into five teams, encourages them to share the essays with the other members of the team and latter to the class, for further comments and discussion.

#### ■ Activity 2: Group Work

On the next stage, every team inspired from the essays and questionnaire prepares a list of the most important life problems during communism. A representative of each team presents the ideas of the team to the rest of the class.

#### ■ Activity 3: Discussion

The teacher and the students compare the ideas from the presented lists and try to distinguish the most important features of life during communism. The teacher writes these ideas on the blackboard, especially the ones concerning to the essential life characteristics and elements during communism.

We might discover the causes of the anti-communist revolution by studying the above mentioned elements and characteristics.

## **Evaluation**

### **■ Students' Evaluation**

The students would appreciate the utility of the oral information collected through their parents' memories, in establishing the characteristics of life during communism.

### **■ Teacher's Evaluation**

The teacher evaluates the most detailed students' investigations and the way the students have succeeded to identify the most important life characteristics during communism.



## 3.13. The Totalitarian System in Romania

Lesson supplied by Anka Potra, Elementary School in Doba, Satu Mare, Romania.

### Aims:

- The students understand the changes in Romania after the II World War and the Stalinist Regime
- The students gain knowledge about the transformation of the Romanian Economy, through the Industrialization and the Collectivization
- The students evaluate the changes in the everyday life of the Romanian people while comparing data from official documents and oral evidences.

### Key Terms:

People's Democracy, Collectivization, Industrialization, Totalitarian state, Fascism, Nazism, Communism

**Participants:** 8th grade (14–15 years old)

**Time/Duration:** 50 minutes

**Materials:** flipchart, copies of documents, markers

### Preparation

Two weeks earlier the students are divided into 3 groups. Each group has a task to prepare interview with the people living in Totalitarian period in Romania or to do research work in the library. The information from the interviews will show the non-official point of view. The work in the Library will show the official point of view. The best way will be if the students find people who worked in factories and people who worked in cooperative farms in the villages, because it shows the difference between these two kinds of life and explain the terms: collectivization and industrialization

Students are divided into 3 groups:

**Group I** – Economical policy of the totalitarian government in Romania

**Group II** – Cultural life and entertainment of the totalitarian society in Romania

**Group III** – The Political Power: Place and role of the communist party and leader in the state and society

### Activities

#### ■ Activity 1: Mind Map

The beginning of the lesson starts with writing down the term "Totalitarianism" on the blackboard. The students use information, which they remember from the previous 7th grade.

- What do you understand under the term "Totalitarianism"?
- How many totalitarian models do you know?

Based on the answers of the students, the teacher marks on the blackboard the totalitarian models, which the students know from the previous years – Fascism, Communism, Nazism.

The teacher distributes to students working sheets with documents, which show the main characteristics of each system. They are separated into three groups and each group works on one totalitarian system. In the end the leader of the group marks on the board the main characteristics of the system, which they found. The students have 10 minutes for work.

After fulfilling the task the teacher starts a short discussion about the similarities and marks them on the mind map with different colours. He/she uses the mind map to motivate the topic: "The Totalitarian System in Romania"

### ■ Activity 2: Group Work

In Stalin's conception Communist Romania had to be explained through the term "people's democracy". Teacher gives short information on the term. And here starts the real work with the Oral history method, in order the term to be understood by the students in depth.

The pupils are divided into 3 groups. Each group works on an area influenced by Stalinism, such as:

**First group:** Economic area; Economical policy of the totalitarian government in Romania

**Second group:** Cultural area; Cultural life and entertainment of the totalitarian society in Romania

**Third group:** Political area; The Political Power: Place and role of the communist party and leader in the state and society

The groups are the same as they were working in the preparation phase. Each team has 15 minutes to prepare a poster and 5 minutes for a short presentation of the task. Students have to present the gathered information both from the official sources from the research in the library, as well the information gathered by the interviews.

After the presentations, the teacher gives additional information, based on official modern historiography. Here comes an example for the economical policy:

The economic consequences of such a policy was an all out drive to create a heavy industrial base in Romania and a determination to make Romania self sufficient through the elimination of its

foreign debt. A policy of 'systemization' was also proposed in which the rural population was to be moved to larger urban centers - but this was later abandoned.

Initially, the development strategy was very successful, as vast pools of underutilized labour in agriculture was mobilized for industry with the proportion of the non-agricultural labour force increasing from 30.3% in 1956 to 63.5% in 1977. However, this growth was not sustainable - being based on structural shifts - and soon the labour force was faced with inadequate employment and income opportunities with a reduced supply of food and other consumer goods. However, Ceausescu's ideological inflexibility allowed for no changes in his policy and the regime resorted to coercion to achieve the production targets which enterprise managers were then forced to fabricate

### ■ Activity 3: Discussion

**Task:** Based on the information gathered from the previous task, compare the positive and negative characteristics of the totalitarian system in Romania. The teacher focuses the discussion on the following issues:

- What does the ordinary person win or lose in the Totalitarian state?
- What kind of difference do you find with your everyday life?
- Which society do you prefer? Explain why.

This final task could be also given for homework.

### Conclusion

The students understand which are the common and specific features of the Totalitarian system in Romania after the Second World War.

The best sequence is if the next lesson explain the democratic system after 1989 and the difference between both using again oral history and official sources.



## 3.14. Life of the Ordinary People in Communist Serbia

Lesson supplied by Jelena Zivkovic, Britannica International School, Belgrade, Serbia.

### Objectives:

- Use the oral history method to explain the students the way the communist system functioned.
- Present a clear picture of communism through interviews with the eyewitnesses. Experiences with children have shown that students hardly comprehend the communism ideology, propaganda, and everyday life of the ordinary people in communism especially while conducting comparative analyses of the past and present.
- Use oral history method to achieve a better understanding of the communist era and to create a more interactive class. Students will have the possibility to ask questions and to participate actively in the history lesson.
- Teaching the students through this interactive method makes the history classes more dynamic and interesting.

### Topic:

Political, economic and cultural development in Yugoslavia 1948–1991

### Key Terms:

propaganda, ideology, communism, everyday life, ordinary people

**Participants:** Primary school, 8th grade (14 year old children)

**Time/Duration:** 2 × 45 minutes

### Materials:

recorder, camera, A4 paper, markers

### Preparation

#### ■ For Students: Conduct a research and prepare for an interview

Students prepare for the history lesson two weeks in advance. The teacher divides the students into two groups. The first group is going to interview their parents, with an average age of 40. The second group is going to interview the grandparents above 60 years old, and the other older members of the family or friends.

The aim of the activity is to examine to what extent has the communist system changed. Students should find some typical communist symbols like red scarves, red stars, pioneer hats, ideological posters, postcards and photos, old newspapers articles about the communist parades and the pioneers' organizations, speeches of the "heroes of the socialist labour", and Tito.

Individual tasks: 2 or 3 students should read one of the numerous published stories about Tito's childhood and youth or listen to some songs about Tito.

The main goal of these preliminary activities is to enable students to understand the communist system and the birth of the Tito's cult and his popularity among the people.

#### ■ Preparation For Teachers

The teachers should also prepare for interview. They should try to read and collect information from different sources, recent historiography literature on the research topic, popular books and records about Tito and the Communist Party, articles from past newspapers and magazines, old photos and other resources that might be useful to the research.

The teacher is responsible for organizing the interview with an eyewitness, if interviewing is a part of the preliminary research preparation:

- Identify the eyewitness – Besides identifying the “right” eyewitness, the teacher should contact the eyewitness before the interview in order to clarify any technical or logistic issue such as the date, place, hour, topic of the research.
- Provide the technical support for the interview (tape recorder, video camera, camera, microphone)
- Provide a symbolic present for the eyewitness (flowers, a box of chocolates).

## Activities

### ■ Activity 1: Interview

The teacher and the students decided to interview an eyewitness born in 1930 in Southern Serbia. He moved to Belgrade, capital city of former Yugoslavia, in 1949 in order to enroll in the Faculty of Law. He supported the system but never became a member of the communist party. We thought that such a person might be a rather good informant for learning about the ordinary men during the communist regime. He was not a dissident, but also did not completely ‘fit’ into the system, even though he did not have any special privilege or be prosecuted.

This topic has an important weight in the study of history, thus it would be advisable to teach it in several history lessons based on the subject schedule.

*Possible interview questions:*

- What is your name?
- What is your occupation?
- How old were you when the communists came into power?
- Why did you decide not to join the communist party?
- Was it a dangerous decision?
- Were you allowed to live in the student dormitory while you were studying?
- What was your first employment?
- Did you have any difficulties in finding a job, considering you refused to join the party?
- What was your living standard in that time?
- Did you buy your own apartment or the any company provided it for you?
- Could you afford to go on holidays twice a year?

- Could you travel abroad?
- Could you afford to stay in a hotel?
- Could you go to the restaurants?
- Could you afford to have a cottage and a car?
- Do you feel that you lived under a totalitarian regime?
- Were you allowed to speak freely in public?
- What do you think about the communistic propaganda?
- Did you feel any kind of oppression?
- What do you think about the social security in that time?
- Could you please compare life in communism with the present one in transition?

### ■ Activity 2: Plenary Discussion

After conducting the interview, the teacher should start a class discussion related to the interview. The teacher might ask the students to point out whether the respondent was convincing, considering the story is subjective and just a personal impression of everyday life in that epoch.

The teacher might provoke further discussion on the credibility of the information as long as the students have conducted previous interviews with their parents or relatives, thus are able to identify any historical similarity or difference among the eyewitnesses’ testimonies.

It is important to explain students the several metamorphoses of communism in Yugoslavia and ask them to analyze these historical changes based on the stories of the eyewitnesses.

This might be performed during a class discussion or as a homework assignment, through essay writing.



## 3.15. Education During the Totalitarian Regime and Transition to Democracy

Joint Oral History Project proposed by Violeta Stoycheva, Bulgaria.

### Objectives:

- Understand that the right to education is one of the basic human rights.
- Learn more about the education system during Communism and the need for democracy.
- Understand the particularities of oral evidence based on the comparison of the perspective of an eyewitness and side viewer.
- Learn the technique of constructing oral evidences and conducting an interview.
- Develop critical thinking and analytical skills for various sources, to compare, evaluate and interpret facts from various perspectives.

### Key Terms:

human rights, education, ideology, minorities, pioneers organization, uniform

**Participants:** 11th–12th grades

**Time/Duration:** 3 × 60 minutes

### Materials:

working sheets, copies of documents, A4 paper, flipchart paper, scissors, markers, tape

### Preparation

The teacher assigns students two weeks in advance to prepare a semi-structured interview with members of their family; grandparents, parents, etc. on the topic “School Life”. Students should write the answers in a special form already prepared and distributed to them by the teacher. (Appendix 1).

### 1st Lesson: The Education in Bulgaria\* During the Totalitarian Time

#### ■ Activity 1: Term Diagram

The history class starts with a brainstorming activity on the term “education”, written on the blackboard: What do you understand about the term “education”?

The aim of this icebreaker is to reach the conclusion that “education” is a basic human right. The teacher writes the students’ answers on the board in order to create a diagram for the term education.

The second part of the discussion is based on the key expression “right of education” and the answer to the question: Which are the main characteristics of the right to education?

The teacher reads an extract from the Constitution on the right to education. The teacher tells students that the “The Tarnovo Constitution”, the first constitutions of the Bulgarian Kingdom, set the foundation for the modern Bulgarian education, which has turned into a Bulgarian tradition.

The teacher presents the topic and motivates students for the activities during the history class.

\* The lesson theme might be adapted to the respective country

### ■ Activity 2: Situation Method / Construction of Oral Evidences

The aim of this task is to show the importance of the oral evidences as an experience and take the role of the eyewitnesses. The teacher divides the students into three groups, where each of them receives a file of documents and fulfills different assignments.

#### First group:

They are young researchers, who work on a topic connected to the Bulgarian Communist Party ideology in the field of education and politics. The students might use various visual sources, and choose one of them to prepare questions for an interview.

#### Second group:

This group should remember the 1970s when they were primary school children and write an essay/memory about their school life.

#### Third group:

The third group should take the roles of the foreigners and imagine what the English, French, or American journalists would report on the events of the 1970s. They should write a one page diary, which they would use as a future article on the Bulgarian Education. Students might also use photos to illustrate the article in the newspaper.

The groups have 15 minutes to conduct the activity of which 3 minutes to present the research results. As a conclusion the teacher focuses on the importance of personal memories which are the reflections of the personal experiences and events, as oral evidence. Nevertheless, students should recognize that these evidences, are subjective and the same situation might be presented in different ways by different eyewitnesses.

### ■ Activity 3: Different Perspectives

Students work in groups and use the data collected by the oral evidences to perform this task.

Task: Based on the materials you have collected from the interviews make a list of the characteristics of education during the communist regime. Use as guide notes the following: aims – means – results.

Present in an original way your point of view from the position of a “skeptic”, “optimist” and a “realist” (you can choose the group in a random way). The groups have 15 minutes to conduct the activity of which 3 minutes to present.

In conclusion the teacher focuses on the different ways to interpret an event, by the students’ perspective, the eyewitnesses’ and the side viewer. The teacher emphasizes that these differences in perception and presentation are very important and should not be neglected, when researching on the recent past. The teacher should also focus on the importance of the information received from oral history.

### 2nd Lesson: The Education on the Balkans During the Totalitarian Time

#### ■ Activity 1: Brainstorm

The teacher writes the terms “school” and “schoolmate” on the black/whiteboard, a poster or flipchart. Then, divides the students in two big groups assigning a word per each group, distributes coloured post-its to all the students and asks them to work independently.

Task: Describe in words for two minutes the assigned word. You may think of the values, characteristics, and activities, which refer to the communist period.

Students stick the post-its around the two main terms and the teacher or any student reads the students’ descriptions of the two terms. The teacher underlines the descriptions, which match the lesson aims and objectives and are suggested by different students.

As a second step the teacher uses the term diagram from the previous lesson, in order to raise a short discussion on the right to education and compare it with the guaranteed rights during the totalitarian regime. Students might continue the discussion at the end of the following task.

### ■ Activity 2: Role Play

Organization:

- Divide the students into several groups randomly.
- The students chose through a lottery the country that the team would present.
- The Chairman and Secretary of the academic forum are pointed out. The first one undertakes the role of the moderator, and the second one makes the Venn diagram during the team work.
- Students make oral presentations about the countries followed by a plenary discussion.

More guidelines:

The national team might use the data collected from the interviews. The national team presentation is made to be the last one.

The Western European academic group works with all the research documents. The representatives of this group have the right to ask each of the other Balkan group two questions. The groups' presentations are based on general remarks about education during the totalitarian regime and the creation of an alternative educational model.

Description of the situation:

- You are researchers from scientific institutes and are closely related to the field of education. In the frame of UNESCO program in Brussels, a symposium on European education, was organized in the mid 1970s.
- Task: Look at the documents (Application 2). Show the advantages of the education system in your country bringing arguments about forming a new personality.
- Present your opinions visually in a poster. You have 20 minutes to perform the task and 3 minutes to present.

During the plenary discussion the teacher makes analogies of the key issues which were previously presented at the beginning of the class.

### ■ Activity 3: "Lightening"

- Students present in one sentence their likes and dislikes about the education system during socialism.
- Students present their answers in turn, depending on the way they are sitting in the classroom.
- The first student says what s/he likes.
- The second student shares what s/he does not like.

Homework: The teacher asks students to make a virtual interview of the present education system in their countries, researching in the internet or interviewing friends or acquaintances from the neighbouring countries. Each student prepares the interview questions separately.

### 3rd Lesson: The Bulgarian Education \* in the Transition Period

#### ■ Activity 1: Key Terms

In order to illustrate the tendency of the contemporary education system for change, the teacher delivers students extracts from two documents, which serve to the aims of education. These extracts are already written on the posters, so each student might read them.

Which are the key terms, which trace the changes in education during the latest years?

#### ■ Activity 2: Pair Work

The tasks allows students to have a "visible" picture of the transition changes in education, based on the information they have gathered on the democratization processes, from the oral evidences.

Task: Based on the interview data make 3 positive elements and 3 elements, that required to be changed. You have 7 minutes to prepare and fill in the table, and 3 minutes to prepare the proposals. Each student pair receives instructions on how to work and copies of the already prepared table (Appendix 4).

### ■ Activity 3: Small Group Discussion

After finishing the first activity students make groups of 6. They discuss the results of their work and share the proposals they have prepared. They prepare a joint list of proposals, of which they will choose three.

Students write their opinion in a common poster, made in a T-form, underlying the repeated proposals. This allows making an outline of the positive elements of the national education and the new developments in education.

### ■ Activity 4: Plenary Discussion

The students use the information received from the virtual interviews and electronic sources to conclude. In this way they may outline the common tendencies of democratization in education in the Balkan countries. The teacher might focus the discussion on the quality of the education during the process of globalization. The aim is to reflect on the national educational level of the students and reflection on the achieved competencies, required for the inclusion of the real conditions of the civil society.

\* Each country adapts the title of the lesson according to their needs

## Appendix / Albania <sup>1)</sup>

### Doc. 1: The aim of education in Albania

"From the first day of liberation, the preoccupation of the Party at the Power has continually been that schools, the cradle of knowledge, be an important breeding-ground for the education of the our youth on the line with the politics of the PARTY."

(E. Hoxha, "Speech of the meeting f the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Albanian Labour Party")

### Doc. 2: The Education Authorities will not deal with you, State Security will

"... When I said that our educational syllabus was purely Soviet and not at all appropriate for our country, and that we could not make progress with it ... the Deputy Minister of Education addresses me with these words: "The education authorities will not deal with you, state security will". (Penka Gruda", *The Journal of a Broken Heart, 1937–1975*)

### Doc. 3: The young people and the party



### Doc. 4: Meeting with the leader



### Doc. 5: Official ceremony – membership in the pioneer organization / Pioneer Oath

"Pioneers, in the struggle for the cause of the Party and the Fatherland be ready!" "Always ready!" (It was the pioneer oath that was pledged every morning in primary schools during the communism period.)

### Doc. 6: Slogans

"Education for all!"  
"Higher Education for people's sons too!"  
(Hamit Baqja, *In the Foundations of our Popular Education, Tirana, 1976*)

### Doc. 7: Statistical data

Statistical yearbook of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania, 1990. (The data of 2000 is from the Ministry of Education and Science in 2001)

**Doc. 8:** "They will become technicians of the five-year plan" (The Vlora district professional school)

At school, Mark Gjon Lleshi made many friends:, Boco Ceko from Kurvelesh, Thoma Ilia from Bodrishte in Gjirokaster, and others. They study and live together. The classes are developed both in theory and practice.

At the school of job training a special care is given to political education and the all-round cultural development of students. Every morning they are provided with political information concerning the most important national and international events, and twice a week, regularly, political, cultural and scientific activities on certain themes take place.

Up to now, 31 different lectures have been given, including the struggle to defend peace, great achievements in creating communism in the Soviet Union and life in countries of people's democracies and in our country. Great importance is also paid to cultural and artistic development. There are 9 folklore groups, 3 theatre groups, 1 choral group and different sports teams.

The student Thoma Ilia from Borishte (minority village) in Gjirokaster is studying in his second year now. He hopes to become a good specialist. "I will work night and day, he says, to return this great favour the Party did me by sending me to this school."

*(M. Fero, newspaper "The People's Voice", 18 Nov 1952)*

1) Some of the sources of the following appendices are taken from the publication: *Changes and Continuity in Everyday Life In Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia 1945–2000*. Teacher Resource Book, EUROCLIO, Skopje 2003.

## Appendix / Bulgaria

### Doc. 1: The aims of education

The main purpose of the school system in the People's republic of Bulgaria is to prepare young people for real life in a socialist and communist society, connecting education with publicly-beneficial and productive labour; to bring up the young generations respect and cherish the communist principles, to love work and show socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

(...) General education is free and is obligatory for all children until 16.

Hostels, study-rooms, mess-rooms and summer camps can be opened and supported by enterprises, co-operative farms and other public organizations.

*(Law of integration of the school system in real life and further development of the education in the People's Republic of Bulgaria, State Newspaper, Issue 57, 7.7.1959)*

### Doc. 2: Todor Jivkov with Pioneers



Doc. 3: Photo of a manifestation celebrating the 24th May

### Doc. 4: Keinish Suleimanova, born in 1957 in Russe

„I remember the first school day very well. I was enrolled in L. Dimitriva school. I wore a gown with a white collar and red ribbons on it. That was a great day. I was very excited. All the night I couldn't fall asleep. My shoes were under my bed and I get up in the night to put them on. My teacher from the first class is still alive. In my class there were Turkish and Bulgarian children.”

### Doc. 5: Slogans

“Always true to the Party!”

“Go ahead, science is sun!”

“Together with Dimitrov – everywhere, in every deed – towards new victories!”

“Education and labour – joy and dare!”

“Today we are excellent in education – tomorrow – in labour!”

“Fight with work to have the right to say – this world is mine too!”

### Doc. 6: Petja Doubarova, Diary

“6.11.1978, Monday – Tomorrow is a great holiday – the 7th of November. It is great too, because we are not Going to school. That's good – great fun. Today I wasn't tested in any subjects. There remains for us one of the dullest and most arduous periods – namely – the class-teacher's period. I hate it intensely. Then we are going to have a circle with Iskarov. Last night the theatre wasn't that bad”.

*(Source: Petja Doubarova, The Bluest Magic, Sofia, 1988, p. 390)*

**Doc. 7:** Statistical data about education

	1969–1970			1989–1990			1999–2000		
	schools	teachers	students	schools	teachers	students	schools	teachers	students
Total	5359	80714	1554636	4193	111821	1557871	3790	113009	1357068
General schools	4610	54380	1166995	3500	70529	1147408	3011	65885	887213
Special schools	117	2090	16942	125	2299	15832	146	2597	15984
Vocational technical schools	147	2982	53482	4	56	2008	3	61	2785
Secondary vocational technical school	184	4836	68136	241	6952	103966	150	3206	50727
Secondary technical and art schools	255	9233	153348	264	11233	135606	369	14264	132240
Colleges	20	534	10031	29	1539	19867	47	2367	18461
High schools	20	6657	85675	30	19213	133184	41	24368	239769

**Doc. 8:** Education structure of the economically active population of the largest ethnic groups

Education	Ethnic Group		
	Bulgarian	Turkish	Gypsy
Higher and College	20,2 %	2,0 %	0,9 %
Secondary and Special Secondary	54,0 %	24,6 %	7,8 %
Middle	22,6 %	55,0 %	46,2 %
Primary and Lower	3,0 %	16,0 %	36,7 %
Illiterate	0,2 %	2,3 %	8,5 %
Overall	100 %	100 %	100 %

(Source: Tomova, I. *The gypsies in the Transition period*. S., 1995, p. 67)

## Appendix / Macedonia

### Doc. 1: Goals of the education

- To perceive the concerns of and the efforts by the Macedonian country after 1944 for education of illiteracy and evaluation of the general educational level of people
- To understand education as part of the process of streamlining and struggle against the inherited traditions and prejudice including:
  - opposition of parents who mainly worked in farming to educate their children – usage of children as a labour force in farming
  - opposition to teaching female Muslim population read and write
  - violation of the law on compulsory eight-year education and putting into confinement female children of the Albanian ethnic minority after the age of 10.
- To encourage students to exercise greater efforts in gaining knowledge in the material thought and fuel their wish to broaden their learning.
- To educate children not to accept the customs proscribed by patriarchal civilization, and to embrace innovation and modernization as part of human's civilization development: "Teacher, ... let Your students become greater than You. Give them solace in times of despair for knowledge is breakable glass, and ignorance is eternal as rock."  
(*Excerpt from Monograph of Goce Delchev Teachers' School in Stip*)

### Doc. 2: Education only for boys

Introduction on the compulsory eight-year education in 1953 increased the number of children in education, but female children were passive in this respect as a result of the omnipresent opinion that education was only for boys and not the girls. This was especially true regarding attendance of the higher classes of primary education. It was believed that female children were "others' door", meaning that they would leave home anyhow, so they should not attend more than four classes of primary education.

(*by Petrovska Blada, Family Forms in the Tetovo Area, Skopje, 1965*)

### Doc. 3: Meetings with Tito



### Doc. 4: Slogans

- "Illiteracy is a great evil for people"
- "Literate people – a strong country"
- "Learn, learn, and only learn"
- "The book is the greatest treasure"
- "With Tito for the Fatherland-go forward!"

### Doc. 5: Modern clothes create conflicts

- The students feel more comfortable in uniform.
- The uniform creates a better atmosphere for studying (at home and school), and mental easiness in relations with fellow students.
- The uniform is more practical and hygienic, and protects the clothes underneath.
- Modern clothes create conflict situations, between both children and parents as well as between students and teachers.
- The uniform eliminates, at least ostensibly, the social differences among students.  
(*Enlightened worker, 1972*)

### Doc. 6: Photo of celebration of 1st of May

**Doc. 7: Congratulations for comrade Tito**

"In the spring of 1969, a group of pioneers from Macedonia was chosen to congratulate comrade Tito for his birthday. When I was told that I was going, I felt happiness that could not be described by any words. Eagerly, we waited for the day of departure. All children from Macedonia gathered in Skopje and in the evening on 23rd of May, we left to Belgrade, happy and excited. On the railway station we were seen off by Skopje pioneers and our partner and relatives. Each child's face showed excitement for the forthcoming meeting with Tito. And each of us had an intimate wish or a message that was to be communicated to Tito. The train arrived to Belgrade. I didn't want to admit that I was tired. We were taken to the Pioneers' Center by bus. Pioneers from other republics were already there. We waited to go to the White House where we were received in the Great Hall. Suddenly, the noise was lowered as we were waiting impatiently for the appearance of Tito. A great door opened and comrade Tito accompanied by his wife Jovanka saluted us with his hand, his face smiling. The pioneer salute resounded through the hall: "For Homeland, for Tito – Forward." A long applause and spontaneous calls: We are Tito's, Tito is ours" followed.

The impression of this unforgettable meeting and promises we made to be good students and defenders of our homeland will never be wiped out. I'm still keeping a gift from Tito – a beautiful box full of candies."

*(Vlado Damjanovski, electrical engineer, now living and working in Australia)*

**Doc. 8: Statistics**

1. numbers of Primary/Secondary schools
2. numbers of teachers and pupils
3. numbers of teachers and pupils by origin: Macedonian/Albanian/Turkish

**Doc. 9: Pioneer Oath**

I swear under the pioneer banner  
 And before my fellow pioneers  
 Of our fatherland SFR Yugoslavia  
 That I will learn and live a loyal son.  
 I swear to keep the brotherhood  
 And unity of our peoples, freedom  
 And independence of our homeland  
 Earned by the blood of our best sons.

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