

Migration history in an oral history project (B. Hass)

The following pages present a unit planned in Germany for grade 12 in Summer 2007. At first the contents and competences are shown, then the complete unit with its ten lessons. At last there are some reflections about the results of this unit.

1. Contents and Competences

The following *contents* should have been worked out by the students before the beginning of the unit:

- **Raising awareness of the problem** and problem raising – „We all live in a world affected by migration!“
- **Definition of the term** – „What does migration mean? What are decisive factors that trigger migration? What are typical consequences of these processes? etc.“
- **Oral history as one method** for doing research on the phenomenon/a of migration.
- Guidelines for interviews and the carrying out of **interviews** taking into consideration the biographical as well as historical background of the interviewee.
- **Presentation of the fate of one migrant**
- **Classification within the theoretic frame of migration:** „Is our interviewee a typical migrant? Taking our introduction to the topic as a backdrop, where do we find similar factors, where individual characteristics, etc.“

At the same time the following *competences* of the students are trained:

- Competence for reconstruction
- Competence for doing research
- Subject-specific competences (Oral-history; guidelines for communication...)
- Competence for deconstruction (to question the congruence of memory and „actual“ historic facts)
- Communicative competence
- Competence for presenting

Initially the students should get a first understanding of the various aspects of topic of migration. Therefore we apply the method “market place” (see below).

The presentation of different pictures could be a first step: we are in a world affected by migration. That’s the main topic of the first lesson in this unit (see below).

The second part is the *definition of the term*: What does migration mean? What are the decisive factors that trigger migration and what are the typical consequences of this process? A special way to show this is *oral history*. Students should familiarize themselves with oral history as a methodology for doing history.

Oral history is a good method for doing research on the phenomenon of migration.

After that we look for guidelines for interviews and carry out the interviews taking into consideration the biographical as well as historical background of the interviewed .

Next is the *presentation of the fate of one migrant* and the *classification within the theoretic frame of migration*.

Competences

Competences for reconstruction: Students show what they have researched and what migration means now for them

Competences for doing research: Here the students can see and learn how important it is for oral history to know the techniques of interviewing and interviews

Competences for deconstruction: These competences are very important because sometimes the memory of the interviewed person differs from facts and so the students have to differentiate between memory and actual historical facts.

Communicating competences, competences for presenting: It's clear that it is important to show what the results of the research are— and they should be shown by the students themselves. That's also an important basis for discussing.

2. Overview of topics, scheduling and implementation

	Topics	Competences/ Principles	Materials
1st	Sensitization and problem raising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market place (pictures, texts...) • Personal points of contact with migration • „We are all migrants!“ Assignment for research: Who would be suitable for and interview?	Relevance for the presence Competence for research	newspaper pictures rambling...
2nd and 3rd	Clarification of the term and the phenomenon migration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textanalysis • Definitions of terms • Features of migration 	Competence for reconstruction	Texts about migration
4th and 5th	Introduction to Oral-History and creation of interview guidelines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition Oral-History • Tasks • Chances and limits • Communicative training • Parts of a questionnaire 	Subject-specific competences	Texts about oral history
6th	Preparation of the individual interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biographical benchmarks • Historical and • Political background 	Competence for doing research	individual
7th and	Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performance 	Subject-specific competences for methods	Questionnaires and guidelines

8th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transcription • Critical revising • Preparation of presentations 	Competences for re- and deconstruction	(c. results of 4th to 6th lesson)
9th and 10th	Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of the different groups • Discussion and classification 	Competence for presenting Communicative competence	Results of lesson 7 and 8
11th	Evaluation and end results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • „Typical“ examples? • Similarities and differences • Classification within the general results about migration 	Multiperspectivity, identity and otherness	c. results of lesson 2 and 3

In the first lesson we have a “market place”: pictures, texts, etc. show our students “you are living in a world of migration” ; furthermore they have the opportunity to say something about their personal experiences with migration: “We are all migrants” in a way.

And the first question who would be suitable for an interview: What could be important to ask? We have to look and find some examples for these interviews.

The second and third lesson: Here we have a clarification of the phenomenon of migration: texts to analyse, definitions of terms and so on.

Fourth and fifth lessons: They show a special approach by the German partners in the project: Introduction to oral history and creation of interview guidelines. What is oral history ? What are the tasks ? What are the chances and limits of this method? And we can do some communicative training with our students; they should train some communicative situations, ask fruitful questions in the right way, etc.. After that they can prepare an individual interview. There were three groups in this project with migrants from Italy, from Africa and from the German democratic republic.

So it was very interesting to compare these three migrants and every group had to look for the biographical bench marks and historical and political background for each group of migrants.

The seventh and the eight lesson is an interview; an interview is outside from the school, it's not in the classroom, the students had to meet up with the migrants somewhere else. Afterwards that they had to transcribe the interview, revise it critically and prepare the presentation.

Although this part is very difficult, it is very interesting and important at the same time. That way the students can practice methods and acquire subject specific competences.

Moreover, they can look for deconstruction. Here you can see the differences between the memory of the migrants and historical facts . That was to be deconstructed. And there were three steps of presentation:

- first, the results of the different groups,
- then discussion and classification,
- last evaluation and end results

What are the types of migrants here ? And what are the important facts for their migration ?

The eleventh lesson was an evaluation lesson with end results.

The main topic of the eleventh lesson was to answer the following questions: Has my attitude about migration changed? If so, in what way? Why (not)?

3. End results

The implementation has brought about the following significant results (which are also documented):

- The consciousness awareness of the students concerning migration in their surroundings has been raised; furthermore they have been enabled to project historical processes onto their consciousnesses
- Students did independent research on the topic
- Students put together various results in order to form an overall historic picture
- Students had to present their results

This goes hand in hand with the most important principles postulated by teachers of historic methodology and didactics:

- Problem orientation by means of sensitization and awareness
- Multiperspectivity
- Identity: Who am I after all?
- Otherness: Who is the other person?
- Deconstruction: There is no one and only history, but only a specific, individual awareness and presentation of it.
- All these points lead to an **individual consciousness of history**, which has always to be questioned and compared to the latest developments in the science of history.

4. Literature:

Barricelli, M. *Schüler erzählen Geschichte. Narrative Kompetenz im Geschichtsunterricht*. Schwalbach/ Ts.: Wochenschau-Verlag 2005.

Handro, S. *Historische Erkenntnisverfahren*. Ed. by Hilke Günther-Arndt. *Geschichtsmethodik. Handbuch für die Sekundarstufe I und II*. Berlin: Cornelsen, 2007, S. 25 – 25.

Sauer, M. *Geschichte unterrichten. Eine Einführung in die Didaktik und Methodik*. Seelze/ Velber: Kallmeyer 2004.

Schmors, S. „Sag, warum bist du hier?“ *Ein Unterrichtsprojekt in Geschichte Klasse 12 zum Modul 12.3*. Unveröffentlichte Staatsexamensarbeit, Tübingen 2008.