

TEACHING OUR CONTINENT'S HISTORY

Why do we teach history in schools? And what's special about teaching European history? Traditionally, teaching a country's history in school centred around a national perspective, focusing on the battles won and lost, and on national heroes and achievements. But there are some alternative ways of looking at this.

The Council of Europe ran a project on "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century", which produced innovative teaching resources for secondary schools. It was also designed to help teachers and students develop critical skills of investigation, which they could then use to study history, figures and battles. This enables students to better understand the links between the past and present and the nature of the conflicts facing Europe today.

The activities created show us that people's interpretation of historic events can vary greatly, and that the vast majority of people involved were victims rather than actors in historic events.

More information is available here:

➤ www.coe.int/Culture

School should be a safe place to learn; it should teach you about the important things in our world, including mistakes in the past, so that we don't make the same ones again; and it should be about finding out how to make your voice heard as you learn more about the world and have more to say!

BEING SAFE IN SCHOOL...

The Council of Europe wants to make the school a safer environment for all: this not only includes combating violence among pupils, but also preventing attacks on teachers or staff members, and other destructive behaviour. It has produced practical handbooks on these issues and tackles challenges such as how best to combat racism in schools.

➤ www.coe.int/children

... AND ON THE WEB

The Internet offers lots of possibilities for learning or for just having fun. However it also comes with some risks, mainly because you can never be sure that someone is who they really say they are. The Council of Europe's «Internet Literacy» handbook gives practical safety guidelines for using online social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook or Friendster.

➤ www.coe.int/internet-literacy-handbook

And for the younger students go to the Council of Europe's **Wild Web Woods** game.

It's fun for all age groups!

➤ www.wildwebwoods.org



➔ "The most important part of teaching is to teach what is to know."

Simone Veil



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



TEACHING REMEMBRANCE

One particular area of focus for the Council of Europe is teaching about the **HOLOCAUST** **1** and marking a time for remembrance for what happened. As well as instigating the Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity, the Council of Europe helps teachers with their Holocaust Remembrance preparations by making available teaching material and exploring the topics of **GENOCIDE** **2** and crimes against humanity, so as to promote prevention, understanding, tolerance, and friendship between nations, races and religions (see fact sheet **7**).

➤ www.coe.int/Holocauste

➤ www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/education/Remembrance

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND BE A SUPER CITIZEN!

The Education for Democratic Citizenship project (EDC) is a set of practices and activities designed to help young people and adults to play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society. The EDC project includes, in particular, human rights education, civic education, peace education and intercultural education. The aims of the EDC project are:

- To make both present and future democratic societies stronger through a lively culture;
- To make citizens really feel part of these democratic societies and want to contribute to them;
- To make people more aware of important values that all European citizens share and build a freer, fairer, more tolerant European society.

➤ www.coe.int/edc

1 The **HOLOCAUST** is the term generally used to describe the killing of approximately six million Jews during the Second World War.

2 **GENOCIDE** is a term which creates a lot of debate over its meaning because of the seriousness of the issue. In general terms, it is when a group of people is persecuted by another group because of nationality, ethnicity, race or religious beliefs. The persecution could lead to death, serious harm or even trying to prevent any babies from being born.

➤ MORE TO DISCOVER!

➤ www.coe.int/internet-literacy-handbook

➤ www.coe.int/children

➤ www.wildwebwoods.org

➤ www.coe.int/Culture

➤ www.coe.int/Holocauste

➤ www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/education/Remembrance

➤ www.coe.int/edc

Here are some activities looking at children's rights, staying safe, and the impact (responsibilities) your students have themselves.

KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

Children and young people do not have any less rights than adults – we all have the same rights. “Corporal punishment is wrong – children have just as much right not to be hit as an adult”: ask your students if they agree with this statement. If not, why?

To emphasise that the same rights apply to everybody, ask your pupils if they think a particular right from the European Convention on Human Rights applies to them:

For example, do they think they have the right to education?

What about the right to marry?

Or the right to move wherever they want in their country (“freedom of movement”)?

Which of these rights might apply particularly in school?

Did you know that...

Sweden was the first country in the world to abolish corporal punishment in 1979.

DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

The Education for Democratic Citizenship programme has produced material for teachers to use in the classroom to find out more about participating in a democratic community. The following manuals might be of interest and can be ordered online:

1) “Living in democracy”

This is a manual for teachers in Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE), EDC/HRE textbook editors and curriculum developers with a target group of 8th or 9th grade. Nine teaching units of approximately four lessons each focus on key concepts of EDC/HRE. The objective of EDC/HRE is the active citizen who is willing and able to participate in the democratic community.

2) Democratic Governance of Schools

What is democratic governance and how can it benefit schools in preparing young people to become participating, democratic adult citizens? How can schools and other educational institutions evaluate how they contribute to their students’ education for democratic citizenship?

By looking at the ways in which their schools operate from day to day, the two authors of this manual, both of them heads of secondary schools, describe how the journey down the road towards democracy tends to take shape, help readers to estimate how far their school has travelled so far, and offer practical advice on starting, continuing and evaluating the journey.

➤ www.coe.int/edc

WHICH FIGURE IS BEHIND THIS QUOTE? ➤

“The most important part of teaching is to teach what is to know.”

Answer on the back *





BEING SAFE ON THE INTERNET

You could start a discussion on how to be safe on the Internet. For example, in a chat room, what information would it be OK to give? The name of your favourite band? What about the name of your school? Should you talk to people you haven't met before on the Internet at all? What about students who might have their own websites, or "blogs" – what information would it be safe to put up there? What should they leave out?

Discover tips on how to participate safely in social networking sites, such as MySpace, Facebook or Friendster in the Internet Literacy handbook or website.

Did you know that 10 February is "Internet Safety Day"?

Check it out:

www.saferinternet.org

www.coe.int/internet-literacy-handbook

For younger pupils, the Wild Web Woods game is a fun and friendly way of learning how to use the Internet safely.

www.wildwebwoods.org



SOURCES

- * **Simone Veil:** Extract from speech by Simone Veil, French Minister of State for Social Affairs, Health and Towns at the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen 6 March 1995