

Role of Historical Resources in Teaching of History at the Albanian Schools After 90s

Jani Sota

"Aleksander Moisiu" University of Durres

E-mail address: jani_sota@yahoo.com

Doi: 10.5901/jesr.2012.02.01.275

Abstract *The achievement of aims, objectives and curricular topics of history, requires a broad use of historical resources (evidences) from pupils of all classes. The ability to discover, examine, ask, compare, conclude from historical resources and evidences is founded in different ways: finding and analysing the objects, buildings and other recourses, their examination and the use of the evidence help in developing the analytical abilities of pupils. These abilities are related to observe, discover, compare point of views, conclude about human acts and decisions. They help the pupil become an aware citizen in a democratic society and make the teaching of history an activity based on experience where the past "history" is not well defined, but it has to be discovered by all pupils and teachers.*

Keywords: *History, curricula, recourses, teacher, pupil.*

1. Introduction

When talking about a population we consider the totality of the achievements of the people in the field of production in social and mental development. In this context even historical culture takes place.

When we speak of the historical culture of the Albanian society, we should consider the totality of knowledge about Albanian historical events or world figures, of all social groups of the society. As such "historical culture is an integral part of general culture of the people. It was created and acquired over the centuries in the formation of this people." (Alison 1998)

Events or historical figures that have played roles in the life of the people are its cultural heritage and therefore they are transmitted from generation to generation through historical sources. This rich heritage should be consolidated as it is in different social groups, as society becomes more conscious of its identity and its role in the fund of world culture, part of which is it (Brown & Eisenhardt 1998)

An important role to equip society with historical culture has played and plays historical sources, which are recorded events, processes of historical figures that have left their mark with their role and should be stored in memory and consciousness of society.

By the way historical events and phenomena are treated; historic resources documented over the years makes the story of the people to be part of the social development of its mentality.

The set of events, phenomena or historical figures discussed by historians or creative objective, have helped to instill a culture historical society, which reflected the general specter and therefore the historical resources of our national culture, being involved recently and wondered in this specter of historical culture (Block 1999).

Generally, the wealth of historic resources generally determines a society's degree of its mental development. As the need arises, the growths of the role of historical resources in the society are reflected through various ways and forms.

It should be emphasized that the role of historical resources in a society determines the extent of her mental development. Thus grows the necessity of increasing the role of societies' historic resources through various forms.

Taking into account the findings of research conducted and especially the survey data made in this respect with school students on the level of use of historical resources, as well as my experience as a teacher of national and world history, we lay up for discussion, some thoughts and suggestions on the role of

historical sources to increase the effectiveness of teaching the history, knowledge and use of methods, strategies and techniques.

In keeping with the theme and in making the object of examination we put up the question: Can you determine the level of effectiveness of historical sources in teaching history in Albanian schools? Claim to achieve such a thing in precise values would be impossible. To achieve such a thing would have to undergo tests, clearly defined by all pupils and students. So as a way to find solutions to some of the data in this direction, we have used social monitoring through the survey, which was completed by pupils and students by age, social position of different educational backgrounds.

Results and conclusions drawn from this survey will provide the opportunity to have some indications, which may be deemed by the consideration for the issue to future tasks.

Submission of data through this survey figures would be too dry and the figures would be useless if not examined and their relation too complex to explain their significance. Therefore these data and explanations hold subjectivity within itself. The latter allows everyone to give their trial.

It is a fact that a significant percentage of respondents ranked history among the hardest subjects taught in school, it even makes us think that some of the weaknesses observed in the level of knowledge among others is the work of teachers, especially related to teaching artistry, highlighting the work for recognition here, perfection and application of methods, strategies and techniques in using historical sources to make it more effective teaching of history.

2. The Choice of Methods and Techniques in the use of Historical Sources - a Prerequisite for Teaching History

The problem of efficiency in utilization of historical resources in classes has attracted the attention of the most well-known specialists and teachers in Albania. During the '90s and 2000s, this problem was addressed in several international scientific forums, which are referred to conferences, seminars, symposiums held in Strasbourg and elsewhere. The highest expression of this opinion is receiving attention in the analysis of the problem of teaching the history of the Council of Europe, and the programs, projects, applications that are conducted under the direction of the high organism in many countries, particularly those Central and Eastern Europe.

Recent efforts have been made to provide opportunities to recognize the experience of specialist studies in different countries, the literature in the field of methodology and use of other sources, especially that of western historiography.

In current conditions, when the current curriculum is designed not only of history in general in Albania, in all subjects at various levels and their corresponding documentation, which will highlight the development of new programs, attention is rightly focused on deepening reform in the field of teaching (Xhelili 1995).

Apart from discussions of analysis, seminars and other training activities and training of teachers and professors to meet modern teaching duties laid, a role playing publications have recently carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science and the National Qualification and Pedagogical Documentation (QKKDP) attached to the Ministry of Science and Education.

Acquiring the contemporary foreign teaching and assessment methods and processing of school experience in Albania has made every day and more on teaching the history of refined methods, strategies of contemporary techniques to promote learning and encourage creative critical thinking of historical resources by the students. In practice the teaching of history, is known the claim that the teacher should bear in mind, by recognition of his/her knowledge level, level of students in selecting and using methods or types of learning, the nature and content of the source material to be processed. Moreover the following requirements must be respected in learning problem of history, which must be accepted that is more efficient, is more difficult to handle, and general studies in the field who are allotted less by our pedagogical thinking than the foreign one.

Today, literature teaching and educational practice are exposed to a number of methods, strategies and techniques in using historical sources in teaching. With much interest are the studies of Daniel Thompson, a professor at the University of London, in his study "Some psychological aspects of history teaching," Michael Fullan in the study "Understanding change in education", (Fullan 1993) which refers to studies of D. Cartes, P. Coleman and De Silva, with students of different levels, for the acquisition of various historical concepts of subjects such as political, economic and religious history.

To be successful in teaching history, the task of the teachers is geared to the menu of approaches, strategies, techniques, procedures¹. In this context they take on real meaning and become efficient in their overall context of teaching, only when they are recognized by teachers of history, when taken into account in their applications, the nature of historical material to be processed, the level of students' knowledge, the conditions and circumstances under which learning will take place².

However, the Albanian schools verbal methods to the nature of the subject's own history can not be excluded from its teaching. Work is not exaggerated and speculated with, aiming to renew and how to make them more effective, inter alia by combining them with methods and techniques of learning and discovery problem using historical sources. It should be noted that when outlining teaching methods, we must distinguish the teacher factor. We find fair and fully verified Michael Fullan's saying that "the teacher is the main factor in the students' historical thinking. Good planning and scheduling, textbooks, teaching tools and materials basis, their facilities and equipment, etc., are a necessary basis, but insufficient to promote active learning among students of history, desire and passion to teach students history, in increasing the effectiveness of teaching in general" (Fullan 1979)

We think that these goals can only be reached by a scientifically prepared teacher, that follows and acquires new information, who is responsible not only for subject matter, but also knows the historical resources availability, is in constant contact with methods, strategies, techniques, trends that lead to the realization of a modern teaching.

"A teacher who will not to have these postulates, - as it seemed to lay in a prominent researcher position in the field of history teaching - would be found in the classroom before a situation close to that of the physicist to be expected in search of results without developing the experiment, the naturalist that would explain the observed phenomena of botany without whom he speaks, the mathematician who would provide definitions without proof of their theorem, the literary that will formulate a trial and evaluation on a poem without reading and explaining before" (Sebring & Bryk 2000). Obviously this is a widespread problem which converts many factors, as we can mention pedagogical, methodological, organizational, and financial material.

2. Linking School-Museum-Society

For its nature, history, whether teaching the national or world one, in developing and delivering it to find a school wide use verbal methods such as explanation, denouncement, school lectures, discussions, and specific methods such as demonstration, survey methods problems, exercises, work with literature, historical documents, etc., occupies little space. Even in most cases this trend is developed so as to refer even if education records, and surveys with teachers and specialists, verbal methods, such as the teacher and his work generally occupies the leading place at the expense of the methods that encourages creative thought and action to students.

This phenomenon was not the case, as it was associated with the so-called school revolution in the beginning 90s, what it generally gave was more important information than the formation of students, active

¹ Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. (1993). *Catalogue of school reform models*, Portland, Or.

² National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996). *What matters most: teaching for America's future*, Washington: DC.

participation of students in class (Mato et al 2006). So obvious was this gap that the school teacher, explained words in every moment of the class and invariably, by posting the action of the students' active thinking. In these conditions, in Albania, nor it came to promoting and developing students' critical thinking, problem oriented, creative requirement that today modern techniques and strategies of the Western school put in the foreground.

Using the necessary and appropriate techniques to achieve one or more strategies and purposes as the incentives of critical thinking and creative problem in the field of history is closely linked and conditioned by the cultural richness of people's material and spiritual side.

Given the fact that the history of the Albanian people, material and spiritual culture is its rich, it is propagated to handle many kinds of ways, through publications, published articles, exhibits, commemorative celebrations, conferences and symposia, etc. Each of them plays its role and its importance for a long time coming, how it was treated, and strength of opinion and followed the values from generation to generation.

In this variety of forms of recognition, collection of historical values and spirituality of the people using the museums as authentic source of historical on events and facts developed in centuries. Despite the irrespective of politicization, sometimes even extreme, some of these values are stored, collected and propagated. They are the place where every student for some time through documents, photographs, memorabilia, etc., exhibited in the museum, browsing pages of history in museum that they treat, reading reinforces what has been previously thought, and takes a broader look at national history (Mato et al. 2006). In Albania, based on content themes of museum institutions are grouped into:

- a. General museum
- b. Special museum
- c. Museum Room

Despite of the cicerone, mode of exposure, quality of presentation, content, facilities etc., they have presented to students and visitors every history of material culture, as it is written and evaluated during 50 years of dictatorship.

It is a fact that some museum of axis maintained their goal for which they were established and it was this category of museums that have not lost their importance, such as the Archaeological Museum, Scanderbeg Museum in Kruja, the Museum of Independence in Vlora National History Museum in Tirana, the Arms Museum in Gjirokastra etc., which resisted time and served at any time, not just to school students, but also each different category of domestic or foreign visitors.

Referring to the responses given by students of different categories on the question as to help museums and historical knowledge, it made most of them responding positively, believing in the authenticity of the coverage of historical events which were studied in school.

Given this fact, it's important to say that museums play a key role in recognition of the national history to the education of students. And present experience has shown that they are approaching more school students and 9-year high students according to their interests. Despite the various interests of school, students visit museums, which have always been links between schools and museums.

Ties existed in the form of visits made in museums, excursions developed, developing classes at the museum, developed in conversations with contemporary museum etc. Each of museums, regardless of the level of quality, organization, etc., made to the students an important role of the historical formation and strengthening of historical knowledge acquired through school history textbooks.

It is the document that speaks more than words of text, picture or relics on display to inspire interest, curiosity for more knowledge and then have become objects of debate in class or classes of repeating a chapter. To lift up the spontaneity, school students visit the museum during the holidays, as an attempt by teachers and school leaders, in cooperation with specialists of the museum in the districts that they become programmed with specific topics for special topics chapters relating to the contents of the museum itself.

So whether you talk of the ancient inhabitants of our country, Illyrian settlements and their culture etc., it would be necessary for students to organize with the help of a visiting teacher of history in Butrint in Saranda district, at the Archaeological Museum of Apollonia in the district of Fier Pojan etc.

For some other historical themes, it can be arranged prior visits by individual pupils, whose aim would be better determined by the teacher in advance. The materials collected by them as documents, pictures, relics, etc., would be best served for an hour-learning model that will evolve.

It must be said that all forms would encourage other students for a general visit in the museum, which will assist students in shaping history. Serving to this purpose, are the organization of excursions from time to time in historic places, conversations with contemporary or participating people in events with the participation of schools in festive ceremonies in cases of anniversaries, afternoons in participating in commemorative events dedicated to the scientific sessions of historical figures.

Positive is the fact that recently, with the surfacing of new documents being made opening effort re made to open mini expositional characters of schools with students who are researched associates and those who are made independently by museum in view of the exhibition, where we think the circle of history will play a special role.

In the context of museum-school collaboration in the acquisition and increase of the role of historical resources in the teaching of history and education of students, such courses should be aimed in several directions:

- To create a relationship of close cooperation with teachers of the history museum in the 9-year schools and secondary schools, as in the propagation of visits to museums or historical sites in the area of research, organization of excursions and marches in places of historic joint exhibition openings, museum rooms for the school building, museum angles up to the realization of leaflets in cases of anniversaries of their school, organization of commemorative afternoons on the school's history, historical figures, for the native history, etc.
- In assessing what should be the school-museum collaboration, the role that history plays in shaping the students formation.
- In finding ways to promote the interests of students in general and in particular the circle of history, the research area and propaganda materials.
- In assessing the museum stands of school by periods of the history of our people.
- The use of audio-visual museum specialists from schools during the program through which history can be incorporated into documents, relics, pictures, images from the booth in the museum and historic sites, conversations recorded by contemporary witnesses, etc.

3. The Role of Media in Shaping People's Historical

Media currently is considered as the main factor in the historical formation of students. It comes to specialized press which closely follows political developments, economic and cultural life of the country.

Referring to the survey organized by the "League of Albanian historians" in some districts of the country in different layers of society, it has a great importance to the producers of television, because the first is ever taken interest survey information for the viewers of historical transmissions

In the survey conducted there were two significant questions:

- What resources are most convincing in historical writing: papers, memoirs or documentary?
- How much does the mass media help in the history formation: more, less or no?

To arrive at some conclusions against the questions asked above some 500 surveys browsed in a vast space like Tirana, Peshkopi, Gjirokastra, Korca, and Kurbin, different groupings of selected pupils, students and teachers, people with higher education, etc., were asked.

Of this number, it turns out that 115 people accept their historical formation through television broadcasts, and something more, 135 people, view the film compelling documentary historical source.

Attitude towards the mass media show that 169 people fully believe it, 211 believe less and 23 others did not believe at all.

The first conclusion is that 1 / 3 of the ratings link their own historical formation with programs of this nature on television. But a careful examination of the respondents gives us some interesting indicators: social strata attending more shows in television on history are university students. But students and layers of people with higher education find themselves away from television regarding historical background. This is explained by the fact that the historical formation, they associate it with historical monographs and scientific publications which seems perfectly fair.

It must be said that the survey and its results, are primarily related to television journalists. They remain under the shadow of an informant, but as a vision for the work of future journalists. Because it is necessary to draw the viewers attention to important aspects of national and world history,

For historical transmissions that affect students, "three very important factors should be taken in consideration: the subject, the importance of social and aesthetic forces": (These factors are intermingled with some other elements that are even more essential as documentation - historical framework through historian and memories of people. The better harmonized the blend of these elements, the more the appropriation of public school students and the general viewers; the more successful will be the historical transmission.

American researchers E. Katz, M. Lewin and H. Hamilton in their work "The tradition of research on the spread of innovations", stress that "the teaching of history has to be an active process, which requires the stimulation of research, reflections and expressions. Students should be given the experience of critical analysis of events and information they receives from the media ":

Referring to the survey conducted by the "League of Albanian historians" turns out the importance that all respondents give to authentic archival resources. Thus, about 80% of them associate events with documentation of time, complete and intact from interventions for propaganda purposes This means that historical transmissions should be directed towards numerous archives and original historical sources. They can leave the appropriate space in the form of eyewitness memory, but not the conclusions, because the findings should make their own viewers.

Experience has shown that in Albania, as in foreign television, historical documentaries are the fruit of cooperation between television, historical institutions, universities, archives and museums, as well as serious historians. Through historical transmissions it intends to give great messages to generations: to appreciate our history and the world, to honor the great figures who have sacrificed for the country, to speak openly, without timidity, and to tell people the truth when wrong and why have erred, for the sole purpose of history that mistake should not be repeated.

4. Results

The problem of implementing the methods and techniques in terms of using authentic historical sources in teaching history, to encourage student participation in their formation history, is very broad and complex. As such it seeks to empower first-base didactic and documentary material, more publications, manuals and guides for teaching history. For this purpose, besides the performance of state agencies, the initiative requires more action from school teachers. Computerization of scientific information for archives, libraries, and museums etc., is a relevant technical tool available and open, which gives us numerous opportunities to create materials in reproducing documents, looking for this purpose to help various associations and foundations. Exposure and the introduction of specific resources and techniques in the teaching process, affect the promotion of students in reviewing the evidence, the familiarity with the large and diversified sources, reflecting different aspects of people's lives in the past, and make them more careful to preserve the evidence of the past.

References

- Alison, D. J. (1998). *Ontario directors and American superintends: A study of contrasting cultures and contexts*, London, Ontario, Canada: Division of Educational Policy Studies, University of Western Ontario.
- Barber Sebring, P., & Bryk. A. (2000). *High expectations and standards*, London: Department for Education and Further Employment.
- Block, P. (1999). *Flawless consulting*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, S., & Eisenhardt, K. (1998). *Competing on the edge*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Fullan, M. (1979). *School-focused in-service education in Canada*, New York: Teacher College Press.
- Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*, London : Falmer Press.
- Katz, E., Lewin, M., & Hamilton, H. (1963). *Traditions of research on the diffusion of innovation*. *American Sociological Review*, 28(2), 237-252.
- Mato, E., Gjedia, R., Dautaj, A, Kola. B., & Denker, M. (2006), *Shkenca shoqore - Edukim Qytetar, Histori, Gjeografi (Udhëzues për mësimin)*, Tiranë: Shtypshkronja "Kristalina-KH" .
- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996). *What matters most: teaching for America's future*, Washington: DC.
- Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. (1993). *Catalogue of school reform models*, Portland, Or.
- Petro Lati, "Roli i radiotelevizionit në formimin historik të njerëzve", në: *Historia, Shkolla*
- Qazim Xhelili, "Zgjedhja dhe përdorimi i metodave, strategjive dhe teknikave bashkëkohore - kusht i domosdoshëm për rritjen e efektivitetit të mësimdhënies së historisë në shkollë", në: *Historia, Shkolla, Shoqëria - Referatet e Tryezës së Rrumbullakët Qershor, 1996* (me tej: *Historia, Shkolla ..., vep. e cit.*) Botim i Lidhjes së Historianëve Shqiptarë, Tiranë: "Toena", 1998, f. 58.
- Ramiz Xhani, "Muzetë, Shkolla dhe shoqëria", në: *Historia, Shkolla*.

