



Preparing future educators for teaching homeland knowledge and heritage in Bulgaria and Kazakhstan

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Abstract

This scientific report examines the significance of preparing prospective educators for effective history and heritage instruction. The study delves into methods and strategies employed to equip students in the field of education with the skills necessary to deliver high-quality history lessons while nurturing a deep respect and understanding of historical heritage. Through an analysis of existing training models, methodologies, and best practices, this report offers insights into the essence of preparing future educators and its potential to cultivate skilled and innovative history teachers. The report investigates methods and strategies for effectively training students destined to become future history educators, with the goal of ensuring superior education and fortifying the connection between the present and the past. The training of teachers in Bulgaria and Kazakhstan is primarily aimed at identifying the historical roots, patriotism, and pride in the history of the homeland. Teachers are the ones who provide information and upgrade the students' knowledge every year. History, historical and cultural heritage must be remembered, because as they say, in order to have a future, one must know, remember and transmit the past. A past that both countries are proud of. A past that we pass on to the new, young generation.

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1. Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in societal development, with educators holding paramount importance in this process. The preparation of future educators is especially crucial in fields like history and heritage. Local knowledge encompasses a scientific domain defined by principles, rules, and human activities that collectively shape society. It serves as an adaptive system aiding individuals in navigating their physical and social environments. The acquisition and transmission of knowledge pertaining to local heritage involve profound responsibility, shaping behavior, interpersonal interactions, and communal endeavors. The science of one's homeland and culture evolve dynamically, influencing aesthetics and nurturing diverse facets of the individual. Given this, the educational endeavor of cultivating love for one's homeland is a systematic, purpose-driven process.

Folk creativity, literature, arts, and natural wonders provide rich avenues for interactive learning. Touching upon these cultural assets should resonate with children and students, exciting their curiosity. Early-stage patriotism education revolves around foundational concepts about the homeland, its historical narrative, customs, people's way of life, and the natural environment. A critical educational role lies in acquainting young learners with their native surroundings.

[1-13]

2. Essence of Preparation

Equipping prospective educators for teaching history and heritage necessitates a comprehensive approach. This approach involves not only the assimilation of factual knowledge but also the development of analytical and interpretive competencies. Moreover, students must grasp the intrinsic link between historical heritage and contemporary values and issues. Skillful integration of this approach in education can foster an appreciation for nature, art, human endeavor, and their interconnectedness. Thoughtfully selected teaching materials can illuminate diverse facets of the local region, encompassing its history, architectural heritage, and cultural luminaries. These materials can also provide insights into the varied practices that have accompanied people's way of life.

Knowledge about one's homeland has long been integrated into Bulgarian school curricula. State institutions such as museums, archives, and libraries actively engage in the study of local history, customs, traditions, and culture. These collaborative research endeavors span multiple dimensions, offering varied perspectives and encompassing a breadth of interests.

In the present study, we primarily scrutinize the impact of working with local cultural heritage on school-age children. We explore the qualities it cultivates, its role in heritage socialization, the employed methodologies, and the potential for innovation. To address these questions, it is imperative to clarify three central concepts: local knowledge, school-based local knowledge, and local pedagogy.

[1-13]

3. Methodologies and Best Practices

Effective strategies encompass innovative technologies, active student engagement through research, experiential learning via games and simulations, and the integration of multicultural and multidisciplinary approaches. In the Bulgarian context, the knowledge of the homeland or native region traces its origins to the Renaissance period. During this era, interest in ancient customs, rituals, and traditions emerged, driving systematic documentation, research, and dissemination of these cultural elements through academic channels. The exchange of letters between Vasil Aprilov and Yuriy Venelin in the 1930s, outlining a program for gathering materials on Bulgarian spiritual and material culture, is often considered the precursor of Bulgarian local studies. Bulgarian revivalists invested [2, 4, 5], including Lidiya Razpopova [11], significant effort in formulating methodological questionnaires for collecting folklore material and promoting its publication.

Schools have gradually developed a distinct perspective on local studies, recognizing the advantages of integrating local knowledge principles and achievements directly into educational practices. Scholars like Lidiya Razpopova have explored the historical development and application of regional studies in Bulgarian schools. According to Razpopova, "school regional studies in our country is an educational and educational activity, in the



process of which the student has the opportunity to comprehensively (integrally) study the environment immediately surrounding him - its past, present and future development." [11] school-based regional studies represent an educational activity enabling students to comprehensively explore their immediate environment - its past, present, and future evolution. Other researchers, including Angelova, S. [1], emphasize that local knowledge serves as a conduit for assimilating and preserving historical memory and experience.

"Local knowledge is a way of assimilating and preserving historical memory and experience: heroic past, customs and traditions, folklore wealth, crafts, educational work, etc." [1]

The scope of the "native region" concept has been an ongoing inquiry in school-based regional studies. Dimitar Kanchev's comprehensive analysis concludes that the territorial scope and content of "homeland" should be tailored according to the specific topic, section, or course under examination "the content of the concept of

"homeland" and its territorial scope should be approached differently, according to the specifics of the course, section or topic being studied." [7]

As the study of the native area initiates in preschool years, it initially encompasses the immediate and familiar surroundings of children. [8, 13]. However, with advancing cognitive capabilities, it can expand to encompass broader perspectives - regional, national, continental, and beyond.

Another important topic related to school local lore is where it belongs - as illustrative material within lessons in history, geography, literature, etc. or as a separate educational form (circle, club, etc., extracurricular activities). Both work options are explored and the benefits of both options are indicated. And here the general conclusion is necessary that the best results are obtained from the study of local history material through the integral approach - when a problem is examined through the prism of different disciplines, so that its multi-layered nature can be covered.

The peculiarities of the organization of the educational process at school create a prerequisite

for sharing knowledge about the homeland between different disciplines. In an initial course of study, this is more easily overcome due to the fact that, on the one hand, students have one teacher who covers most of the subjects, and this allows him to make connections, summaries, combine activities to start in one hour, and to continue in another, etc. On the other hand, in the very structuring of the study subjects, there are integral ones that combine multiple scientific fields. Such a subject is today's "Man and Society", which is the successor of the long-standing study subject "Family Studies". [3, 6].

Much of the research devoted to school local knowledge focuses on the benefits it has for the student's personality. They can be summarized in several categories:

- I. Benefits related to the integration of students into the community. Integration has different dimensions:
 - In relation to ancestors/people of different generations (their way of life, aesthetic views and culture);
 - Related to problems of the area in which they live, with cultural institutions and public organizations.
- II. Local knowledge helps students to better understand older people, to explain their customs, their way of dressing, the things that are valuable to them. On the other hand, it is a valuable tool through which students can create connections with various local institutions, organizations, associations. This stimulates the development of their civic position.
- III. Benefits associated with a more accessible explanation of the learning material:
 - Among the most frequently highlighted benefits related to ensuring the accessibility of the educational material is the fact that through the teaching of local history or the inclusion of local history material in the lessons, students are brought closer to what is being studied - new, complex and abstract concepts are explained in accessible and close, examples are given of things they know. This concreteness is introduced into the lessons, which makes them more convincing for the students.



Last but not least, through examples from local history, the students manage to discover the general regularities in the development of society.

IV. Benefits related to developing different skills:

- By working in local studies classes, students develop their various skills - e.g. ability to take notes on what has been read, ability to observe, discover and appreciate natural beauty, research skills.

V. Benefits related to the formation of attitudes in students:

- Attitudes are something that is extremely slow to form and difficult to change. The work of many pedagogues in the field of regional studies proves that it is possible to work in the direction of forming valuable attitudes and moral virtues. It directly affects the education of patriotic feelings among students. A consequence of this feeling is their desire to preserve the local cultural heritage. The knowledge that students acquire in the process of studying local history affects their self-perception and self-esteem. On the other hand, it also leads to a desire for development and self-improvement.

VI. Benefits related to the quality of knowledge:

- It is accepted that local knowledge work can influence the general level of the quality of students' knowledge. Among the most frequently cited benefits are: more permanent and full mastery of the learning material and overcoming its formality. As local knowledge works with objects familiar to students or objects from their cultural heritage, it stimulates them to understand things in their depth.

One of the most important features of the mentioned science as a methodological fact is that it can and should be considered as a subsystem of patriotic education. That is why the many benefits described in the scientific literature from the use of a local studies approach in the Bulgarian school speak for themselves.

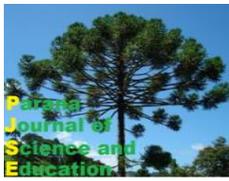
The incorporation of local knowledge into various disciplines within the school curriculum presents both challenges and opportunities. [9] While

interdisciplinary collaboration can enrich the educational process, it requires thoughtful coordination. Subjects like "Man and Society" exemplify the potential for integrating multiple scientific domains. The ongoing research on school-based local knowledge addresses its multidimensional benefits for student development.

4. Conclusions

HOMELAND KNOWLEDGE is a study discipline very important for every country. There is no doubt that future teachers must be very well prepared to convey reliable and quality information to students. The distorted, shaky facts that we constantly encounter in the global space must be minimized and explained away.

So, the "Ruseznanie" initiative took root in 2008, aiming to enhance knowledge of local history, significant personalities, museum collections, and Ruse's historical moments. The initiative's evolution highlights the distinction between museum education and school programs. Museum education operates without strict curricula, offering flexibility in theme selection, promoting creativity, and complementing traditional schooling. This initiative's development unveils diverse trends in aligning museum-based and school-based educational efforts, shaped by distinct factors. The beginning of the "Ruseznanie" initiative was in 2008. The most indicative of the first stage of its development is the description of Prof. Nenov, director of Regional Historical Museum – town Ruse: „The training in Ruse studies began as a patriotic initiative of VMRO-BND-Ruse and the museum, which aimed to give a higher level of knowledge about the local history, about the personalities who are the basis of the development of the city and the region, about the collections, the expositions and the stories in the museum, which present the most important moments of Ruse's history. Initiated by the then chairman of the Municipal Council Iskren Veselinov (and leader of the VMRO in the city), developed by the museum and coordinated with the regional inspectorate, the initiative became a reality in the form of training in the SIP from the second term of the academic year 2008/2009. In 2009, sixteen schools in the city held classes in this discipline, the curriculum of which contains fifteen sample topics. The authors of the curriculum are the



writer of these lines, Dean Stanchev, history teacher and Yulian Gyurchev, history inspector." [10].

After the initial work on "implementation" of the initiative in the work of the schools and the museum, some trends in its development crystallized.

First of all, it is important to distinguish between the activities of this initiative that find a place in the museum and those that are part of school programs. They have developed differently over the years and are subject to different factors, not least because school education and museum education are two very different fields. In her article, the Ruse Museum pedagogue, Magdalena Trifonova, points out the following characteristic features of museum education:

1. there are no mandatory curricula and plans;
2. each museum can choose its own theme;
3. implements an educational process in extracurricular settings;
4. it does not repeat the school methodology, but complements and expands it, affecting not only the students' knowledge, but also the aesthetic feelings and creative abilities of the students;
5. takes place in a non-traditional setting;
6. there are no strictly established rules and a sharp distinction between trainers and trainees. (According to Trifonova M.) [12].

The preparation of future educators for teaching history and heritage is a pivotal factor in shaping quality education and instilling values and understandings of the past. By employing diverse methods and strategies, teachers can inspire their students to cultivate interest and appreciation for history and cultural heritage.

In conclusion, preparing future educators to teach history and heritage stands as a pivotal element in fostering quality education and nurturing a reverence for history and cultural heritage. By embracing diverse methodologies and strategies,

educators can inspire students to value and appreciate the past.

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