

VITALIJUS FURSOVAS UIT LITOUWEN

Het geschiedenisonderwijs in Litouwen is vergelijkbaar met dat in Nederland. Litouwse leerlingen zijn net zo geboeid door oorlogshistorie als onze leerlingen, en docenten maken er ook gebruik van computers en internet. Toch zijn er natuurlijk ook verschillen.



Hoe wordt geschiedenis in andere landen onderwezen? Kleio-redacteur **Lisa Oskamp** gaat op onderzoek en bevrage collega's van over de hele wereld.

NAME, AGE, TEACHING EXPERIENCE?

Vitalijus Fursovas, 64 years old, 30 years teaching experience.

COULD YOU DESCRIBE AN AVERAGE HISTORY LESSON?

I think the lesson of history is not a tool of plugging historical dates into the heads of students. This is an opportunity to learn to analyze the life, both past and present life. I consider a lesson not as a finished product, but as a process of training. During a lesson each student must pass a little part of the way of learning at least. It is important to understand the his-

torical era not only from today's point of view, but also from that of people of the past. Therefore, I am supporter of the method of empathy in history teaching.

WHICH SUBJECT IS YOUR FAVOURITE SUBJECT TO EXPLAIN IN A LESSON? WHY?

When I was younger I very much liked history of wars, powerful battles and famous commanders. But step by step a real vision of war came to me. War is a crime, which is covered with a shine of glory (R. Burns 'I murder hate'). So, I prefer another subject now. To teach about peoples' everyday life, about persons who made a progress to society it's more suitable for me. I think, the aggression of modern world have to be diminished, by school education also.

WHICH SUBJECT IS THE FAVOURITE SUBJECT TO A LOT OF STUDENTS?

Part of my students considers as favorites modern history themes (French revolution 1789, Industrialization, WW2). Others prefer a history of World culture or heritage of Ancient Greece. From students' answers: 1) 'I like to explore different cultures, because it's a crazy interesting to do it.' 2) 'My parents, grandparents told me about the war. It is a very interesting theme, but also very sad and tragic theme.'

DO YOU USE ICT-APPLICATIONS? IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?

Yes, of course. ICT is an excellent source of information (Internet, first of all). I use my computer as an equipment to show pictures, video and audio subjects for students during history and citizenship lessons. It can be PowerPoint format also. At last, my students use ICT to prepare presentations, to find sources for discussion etc.

GIVE YOUR OWN OPINION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COURSE HISTORY?

Maybe a most wise quote about history was created by Cicero: 'History is the teacher of life.' My personal quote is: 'History is a life, life is the history'. School subjects provide logical thinking, imagination and knowledge



Some of my students.

of students. History lessons help them to get all of these skills and possibilities simultaneously. History allows students to get a clear picture of the social life of mankind through the ages from the past into the future. And it's a very important, I think so.

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE SALARY OF A 40-YEAR-OLD TEACHER WHO WORKS FULL-TIME?

Annual average gross salary is about 5300 EUR.

HOW MANY STUDENTS DOES AN AVERAGE CLASS HAVE?

A class has about 20-25 students.

HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU TEACH WHEN YOU WORK FULL-TIME?

Full-time is 18 class contact hours per week.

WHICH TRAINING IS REQUIRED TO BECOME A HISTORY TEACHER?

It is necessary to graduate History faculty of University or University of Educational sciences.

IF WE WANT TO LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF YOUR COUNTRY, WHICH BOOK (WRITTEN IN ENGLISH!) WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?

I would like to recommend a popular history of Lithuania prepared for the diplomats and dignitaries of the EU states and others participants of 2013 Vilnius summit. It has a pdf format and can be accessible for everyone who is interested in Lithuanian history. Find it at: http://urm.lt/uploads/default/documents/Travel_Residence/history_of_lithuania_new.pdf



ARE YOU FREE TO CHOOSE THE SUBJECTS THAT YOU WANT TO TEACH OR IS THERE ANY INVOLVEMENT OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT?

We have the school history programme approved by Ministry of education and science. But a teacher has some degree of freedom to choose the succession of subjects, possibility to add or unite the teaching themes etc.

IS THERE A SUBJECT WHICH IS CONSIDERED CONTROVERSIAL TO TEACH IN YOUR COUNTRY? FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE NETHERLANDS IT IS RATHER DIFFICULT TO DISCUSS THE DUTCH INVOLVEMENT IN THE SLAVERY TRADE.

Yes, Lithuania has several points of pain in the historical past. First of all, it's a theme of Holocaust. During WW2 most of Lithuanian Jews were killed by Nazi occupants and Lithuanians, who collaborated with them. Of course, it was only small part of Lithuanians. There were many Lithuanians, who saved Jews. But this pain theme remains as an actual subject of discussion in Lithuania. <http://en.delfi.lt/lithuania/society/talking-about-massacre-of-jews-in-lithuania-still-taboo-75-years-later-says-author.d?id=70230868>

WHAT IS THE CONTENT OF THE HISTORY CURRICULUM IN YOUR COUNTRY?

School history curriculum content in Lithuania includes themes on World history from pre-historical times to 21st century (predominantly it is the European history) and National history from medieval ages to nowadays.

DO YOU HAVE A NATIONAL CURRICULUM?

Yes, we have a national curriculum, which is integrated into the world history course.

Boven: Page from a history textbook, published by Briedis. Subject on this page is the Renaissance, with Erasmus of Rotterdam. Order: My classroom.



DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR A NICE HISTORY LESSON?

Yes, I have. It can be a lesson of peace. I gave a similar lesson for my students several years ago. Main components of the lesson are music and pictures. Students are discussing a problem how to overcome war. They are starting to realize that a hard way of mankind from overall war to peaceful coexistence has no alternative. Music for the lesson: 1) Theme of war: Dance of the Knights (Montagues and Capulets) from S. Prokofiev's ballet Romeo and Juliet. 2) Theme of peace: What a wonderful world (L. Armstrong), 'Imagine' (J. Lennon). Pictures for the lesson: 1) Theme of war: photographs of destructions and pain which are connected to wars. 2) Theme of peace: pictures of the beautiful Earth nature, nice faces of people of the whole world (different age, religion, nationality). P.S. The words of Mahatma Gandhi: If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children. ■

THE HISTORY OF LITHUANIA

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