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Teaching about the Holocaust using video testimonies – pedagogical aims and research results of the impact and efficacy of lessons



ABSTRACT

The present paper introduces results of the research conducted by the Oral History and History Education Research Group (OHERG) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the University of Szeged. One of the assumptions of this research is that testimony-based lesson using multimedia devices and an appropriate methodology can develop students' empathy and proper skills necessary to active citizenship. Analyzing the results of the qualitative and quantitative questionnaires we seek for the answers concerning the proper pedagogical aim in order to develop our students' empathy, critical thinking and democratic values.

KEYWORDS

history education, oral history, holocaust

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1. THE RESEARCH

Researches conducted by the Oral History and History Education Research Group (OHERG) of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the University of Szeged (JANCSÁK 2018, 2019a)¹ analyse the efficacy of educational materials based on video-testimonies in teaching about the historical traumas of the 20th century (e.g. the Second World War, the Holocaust and the Revolution and Independence War in 1956). The research is based on two different types of lessons: one group works in a „traditional” class and another group works in a testimony-based lesson. On the one hand, our researchers emphasise the importance of historical remembrance during the collective processing of the traumas, on the other hand, they enhance the significance of multimedia and digital materials for present-day students. For this reason, they develop educational materials not only with the purpose of teaching the data in the curriculum with the assistance of digital tools, but to develop the students’ empathy, tolerance, critical thinking and democratic attitudes as well by introducing them to the events of the past. In the present paper, I, as a member of the research group of Holocaust education, will report on the experiences and research results until now.²

The lessons used in the research project were built around the topic of the gradualness of disenfranchisement that is of demonstrating the steps leading to the Holocaust. In the testimony-based lesson, 5 interviews were presented; the clips were about legal discrimination, the yellow star, ghettoization, deportation and concentration camps. The so-called „traditional” (not testimony-based but „textbook-driven”) lesson’s topic was the same, but instead of videoclips, written historical sources were used (e.g. the text of the Nuremberg racial laws). The lessons were conducted with the participation of students from the 11th and 12th grades. They worked individually, in pairs, collectively and interactively within the frame of the classes both with the videoclips and the texts. The classes were divided into two groups, one group taking part in the traditional lesson, the other group in the testimony-based lesson (it means appr. 17-17 members). None of the student groups had learnt about the Holocaust under my tutelage; they could have heard about it in primary school or on remembrance days. The students completed a pre-, and a post questionnaire for the purpose of quantitative analysis. Furthermore, three students from both groups were invited for an interview after the lessons for the purpose of qualitative evaluation of the research, too. This research was conducted in two other schools as well, with different lessons, but in the same structure during the 2019-2020 schoolyear.

¹ <http://eyewitness.hu/en/about-the-research-project-2/> (2020.05.31.)

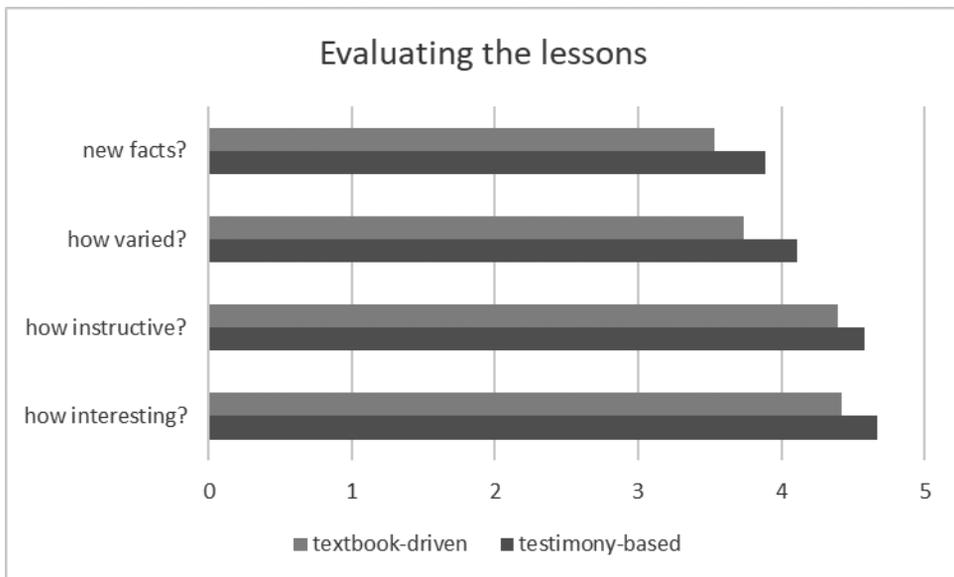
² The results come from questionnaires from 3 schools, by 78 (testimony-based lesson) and 59 (textbook-driven lesson) teachers and students. In the present report the experiences of the testimony-based lessons are summarized fundamentally and they are compared to the textbook-driven lessons only occasionally.

The video-testimonies used in the multimedia lesson are from the Video Archive of the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation (USC SF),³ which contains approximately 53.000 interviews made by Holocaust survivors, witnesses and rescuers. In addition, I used the methodical experiences which I had acquired as an educational developer of the Zachor Foundation⁴ for the past 8 years.

2. TESTIMONY-BASED OR TEXTBOOK-DRIVEN LESSONS AS PLEASANT LEARNING

We can suppose that using video testimonies are effective from several points of views: it provides a visual source which is more familiar to our students' generation; it approaches the historical events from a personal perspective bringing the past close to us (HUSBANDS 1996, NORA 1996, FARMER – COOPER 1998, BAGE 1999, KEATING – SHELDON 2011, KÖRBER 2011, LEVSTIK – BARON 2011, JANCÁSÁK – SZŐNYI – KÉPIRÓ 2019, MEZEI 2019, JANCÁSÁK 2019b, 2020). The implications of the present results absolutely confirmed our hypothesis: students ranked the video-testimony-based lessons significantly higher in terms of being interesting and diversified.

FIGURE 1. *Evaluation of the testimony-based and the textbook-driven lessons by the students.*
1= it did not develop at all, 5= it developed it very much.



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³ <https://sfi.usc.edu/> 2020.05.31.

⁴ <https://www.zachor.hu/> 2020.05.31.

The quantitative analysis was completed by qualitative studies, too, in the form of interviews made with students. Pupils participating in the textbook-driven lesson, remarked that the lesson was interesting but only slightly different or differing from a normal one.

„Qualitatively it was really like a normal history lesson it was interesting.” (T⁵, 12th grade)

„It was interesting, a little bit different from the other history lessons ... we looked at the background of the events more thoroughly.” (T, 12th grade)

After the testimony-based lesson, students highlighted that they did not hear dry facts but human stories which added a lot to their knowledge and made the lesson exciting and informative.

„I liked it very much ... we could see behind the events better; not only these dry facts.” (V, 12th grade)

„Because of this, the lesson was very fluent, that is because of the video interviews, and it lacked this dryness...” (V, 12th grade)

„It is good that when you listen to interviews, you are forced to be in things they are talking about and this way you can pay attention more easily.” (V, 12th grade)

It is remarkable that the students attending the textbook-driven lesson were rather astounded by factual novelties they had never heard of, and their questions were more related to understanding the mechanism of the historical events.⁶ However, those who attended the testimony-based lesson were rather interested in questions such as *„how people could survive such horrors”* or *„what the survival instinct can bring up from human beings.”* In other words, they acquired not only cognitive but an affective knowledge.

„How could they survive? It must have been really hard.” (V, 12th grade)

„it causes a turmoil of thoughts in my head” (V, 12th grade)

„when they felt that they were at their deepest, then what made them go on?” (V, 12th grade)

It is worth comparing the answers of the quantitative analysis with that of the questionnaire connecting to the online IWitness platform.⁷ IWitness is a digital educational tool of the USC Shoah Foundation where testimony-based online activities can be found. The questionnaires relating to these activities have a deeper pool for researching, currently several hundred students'

⁵ T as „traditional, textbook-driven” and V as video interview/testimony-based lesson.

⁶ for example: what the Sonderkommando was exactly, how the conference in Evian took place, etc.

⁷ <https://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/2020.05.31>.

answers are available. This list of questions contains open sentences that the students have to finish. The most relevant question to us at the moment is the one which begins with the words that „*The video interviews helped me to ...*” The students finishing this sentence accentuated almost every time that the video interviews are interesting and bring the lesson’s topic and the historical event closer to the students.

„...we can get to know the human side of the chart imbibed by dry facts” (V, 12th grade)

„...(helped me to) get more interested in what had happened and that I handle it not as a mere historical event but rather like ordinary life in the beginning of the 20th century” (V, 12th grade)

„...(helped the lesson) not to be monotonous, boring.” (V, 12th grade)

„...the curriculum be more exciting and human, not only numbers and statistics but human beings and lives.” (V, 12th grade)

„it is worth listening to these interviews on every account, because this sounds more authentic from someone’s mouth who survived.” (V, 12th grade)

In that regard, the experiences of the qualitative analysis and the IWitness studies confirmed the quantitative results: although the „traditional” lesson can be interesting and edifying, as well, but the testimony-based lesson undeniably provides the students with a positive experience, and they are more concerned about emerging thoughts at a later time, too. Considering pedagogical fact that learning connected to delight is much more efficient and solid, we can claim that the testimony-based lesson per se can be more productive than the traditional lesson.

3. PEDAGOGICAL AIMS IN USING VIDEO TESTIMONIES

Such as every lesson, the use of video testimonies in educational materials requires great caution. (About the selecting of the proper clips see e.g. ECKER-ANGERER 2018.) These interviews usually take several hours, in other words, we cannot use them as a whole. We have to cut them into smaller clips, keeping the rules of ethical editing in mind (e.g. we cannot alter the meaning of the original part.) It is worth using of 3-4-minute clips in order not to make our students bored or uninterested. We have to teach our students how to use source criticism and oral history. It is important to make them understand that even if the survivor does not remember every data in the exact form as students have learnt them, it does not mean the lack of credibility.

The most essential thing is to define our pedagogical aim and to find and edit the right clip in order to fulfil that aim. The video interview should not be a mere digital tool because it is „interesting”, we have to use it with proper methodology.

Learning about the past is not only for the purpose of getting to know historical facts or maintaining our ancestors’ memory, but to learn about our future and to avoid mistakes of the past. The subject of the Holocaust is particularly appropriate for this. The Holocaust had not

begun with Auschwitz: to realize the steps leading there can be an important lesson even for today's democratic societies. It is very important to educate our students to be *responsible citizens* if we want to avoid such traumas in the future. What does it mean to be an active citizen? It can be worded several ways, but overall it means those people who can make responsible decisions in life and in their environment, who can raise their voices if there is an occasion, and who intervene if necessary. What are their attributes and attitudes like? It is hard to express, however, it is important to express, at least to ourselves as teachers, what attributes we would like to develop in our students. This list can be somewhat subjective, of course, but generally speaking we can formulate some basic characteristics.

I believe that one of these characteristics is *empathy*: the ability of sympathizing with somebody or somebody's situation, even if we are not affected at all. Without empathy, societies cannot work properly. Moreover, we cannot speak about society, only about individuals defending their own interests. Isolated individuals cannot collaborate properly (for instance against the state), because certain social injustices can only be defeated by a wide range of cooperation. A person of empathy can be sympathetic with the offence of another person, too.

An important cognitive knowledge for responsible citizens is the *learning of the mechanism of democratic institutions and human rights* as well, because without it they cannot realize any discrimination in the society. It is highly obvious, even from the curriculum of history and social studies where the concept and interpretation of human rights, and the principles of the mechanism of the democratic states are mentioned several times.

Active citizens possess the ability of *critical thinking* which is a huge asset in analysing political situations from several points of view, or recognizing manipulative propaganda, or understanding the motivations of human or institutional actions.

Besides all of this, we can mention other personality traits or values which are probably very important in behaving as active citizens, such as *bravery, taking risks, responsibility, helpfulness, solidarity, tolerance, morality*. All of these values are referred to in the questionnaires of our research.

Thus, our supposition is that using video-testimonies in education is a proper method to develop these traits for several reasons. First of all, because students can hear personal stories from survivors and eyewitnesses, from people experiencing these historical events in person, consequently they can look at the data learnt from textbooks or written sources from a personal and emotional perspective. On the one hand, it creates an emotional involvement because students can connect to the interviewee at several points. Of course, this process requires the methodology of constructive pedagogy (NAHALKA 2013, KOJANITZ 2018). In this spirit it is worth unfolding the testimony-based educational materials into 4 different phases: Consider, Collect, Construct and Communicate (MEZEI 2019). Basing our educational activities on the students' own experiences and previous knowledge. More to the point of the Holocaust and discrimination, they can understand the significance of legal despoilment better if they can recognize the feeling of loss that all of us can experience to a different extent.

On the other hand, our students can recognise that – regarding our lesson's subject, discrimination – a dry legal text is not only some words to memorize, but a legal disposition affecting ordinary people's ordinary lives, with unpleasant, even serious, occasionally fatal consequences. Recognizing a discriminative situation in which a law can deprive individuals of their basic

human rights, and recognizing how it can affect somebody's life is a fundamental skill to understand the mechanism of civil rights and democratic institutions – or to identify the lack of them.

If we can develop the ability of historical empathy in students, if they are able to consider the events of the past sympathetically, from the point of view of the individual, then we have to develop their ability of recognizing the fact, that it did not happen in the past but can happen in our times, even in our country. Moreover, if they understand this connection, they may be striving for recognizing the signs in the society where basic human rights or democratic values are not respected.

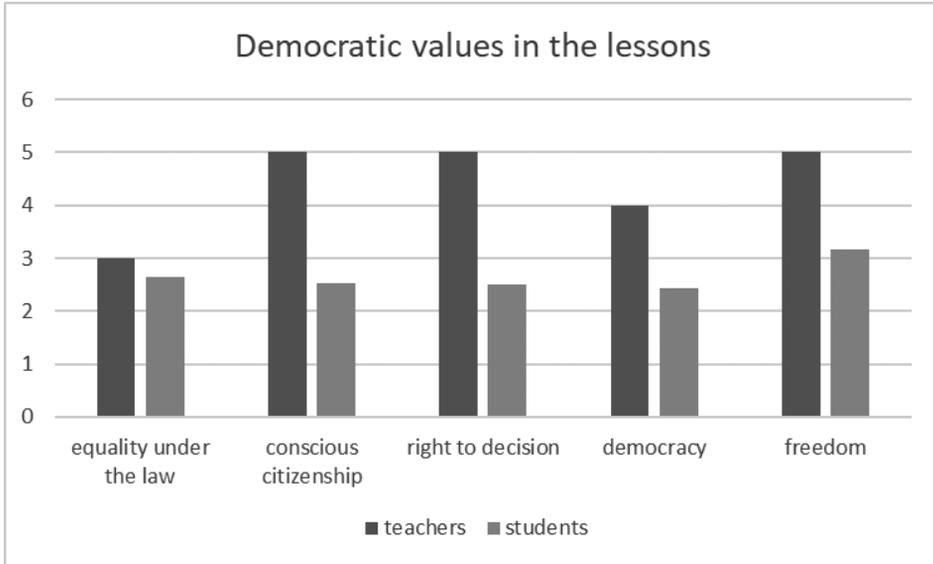
It is a valid question, accepting the supposition according to which studying personal stories and experiences can help our students in developing these democratic skills, whether the testimony-based lesson provides more than reading written sources like diaries or memoirs in the class. Of course, these are truly useful and valuable sources too – and there were times when teachers did not have the opportunity to present other documents. We do not have to ignore these sources either. The video testimonies, however, are more regarding that the students can see the interviewee's mimicry, gestures, emotional reactions, they can hear their tone and its changing. These are not merely more information in order to understand the events, but they develops students' emotional intelligence, especially if the teacher emphasizes it with questions and exercises.

As we listen to personal stories narrated by living people during the class, we inevitably encounter the survivors' situations, moral dilemmas and options of choices. In the genre of oral history, it is a matter of course that the interviewees often do not, or not exclusively narrate the exact courses of events but reflect on their own feelings then and now, or how they survived the loss of their freedom, or what instigated them to do something or not to do anything, or how they related to the happenings around them. It means, that students can encounter many behaviours such as bravery, risk-taking, responsibility, etc. A testimony is an excellent starting point to discuss these issues, because the students can analyse a pattern of demeanours apart from their own time and space, while they must recognize that these kinds of things can happen in their own lives as well. They examine different points of views, therefore *multiperspectivity* shows up in their thinking. Some teachers can meet challenges conducting these kinds of lessons when they have to resist not being too dominant or claiming their own justice *ex cathedra*, or telling what the wrong and the right answer is, but let the students express their *opinions freely* (another important element for an active citizen).

4. RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the present paper we are focusing on the findings which indicate the social values or cognitive elements concerning active citizenship. It is worth observing based on the post-questionnaire, what the explicitly democratic values presented during the lesson are according to teachers and students.

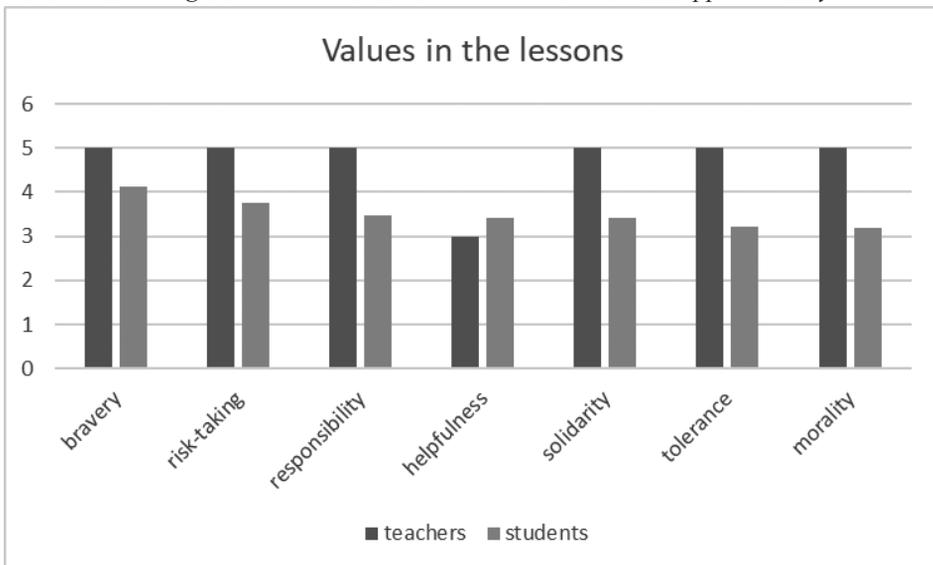
FIGURE 2. How did democratic values appear in the lessons according to teachers and students? 1= did not appear at all, 5= it appeared very much.



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The second diagram shows how students think about the social values listed above, that is what they think about the appearance of the teaching active citizenship in the testimony-based lessons. We can see below, how teachers and students marked the appearance of bravery, responsibility and other values in the testimony-based lesson.

FIGURE 3. To what extent these values appeared in the testimony-based lessons according to teachers and students. 1= not at all, 5= it appeared very much.

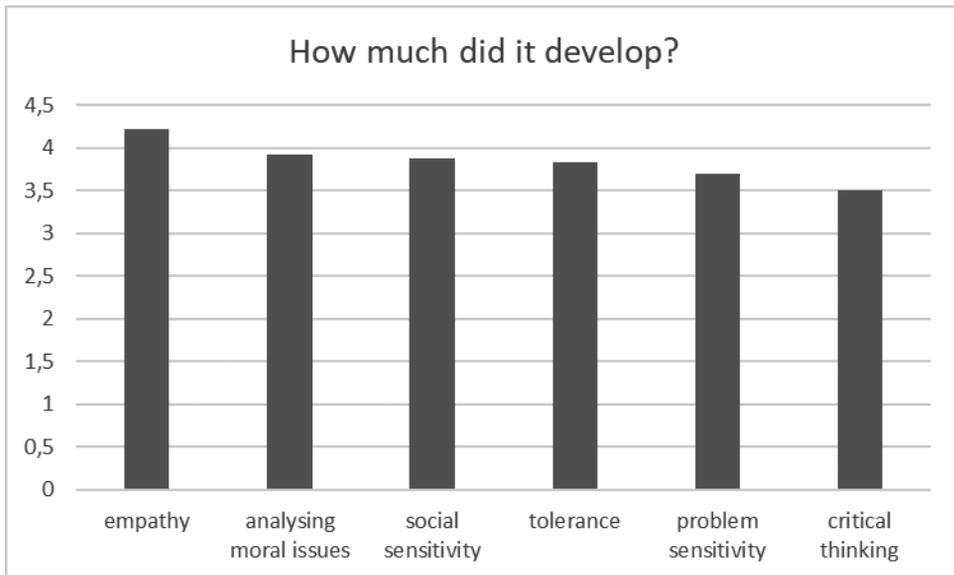


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It is interesting to see that teachers in both groups of questions, in every case gave higher marks to the presence of these values than the students. There can be two explanations to this difference. One can be that teachers would have liked to convey these values in the lesson as their pedagogical aim, therefore they found it obvious that these values had appeared. However, it seems that the students did not recognize these values, in other words, the lesson had not reached its purpose entirely. The other explanation can be that teachers are simply more conscious of these values and their appearance, while students are not (at the end of the paper we will come back to the difficulties of the interpretation of the results). At the same time, we must see that although students' marks are lower than that of the teachers', but not low; if we look at the marks of the social values, they are above 3.5. Nevertheless, the explicitly democratic values, referring to a cognitive knowledge and not to an attitude, received lower marks.

The other group of questions refers to skills supposedly developed by the testimony-based lesson. On the diagram below we can see what students think about how the lesson developed those social competences which are necessary for an active citizen.

FIGURE 4. *How much did the lesson develop these skills, according to students?
1 = not at all, 5 = very much.*



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It is apparent that each and every value's development got a mark of at least 3.5, which is interestingly contradictory to the previous diagram. For instance, the appearance of tolerance was ranked slightly above 3 (which is not too low, but one of the lowest rates, compared to the others), but students felt that the lesson developed their skill of tolerance almost at a 4 (3.83) rate. They ranked the appearance of morality in the lesson at the same low level (3.2), but they marked the evaluating of their skill of analysing moral dilemmas at 3.92.

The data that the development of empathy got the highest mark (4.22) among the listed categories is interesting. In the chart below it is visible that the testimony-based lesson significantly evaluated the skill of empathy more than the textbook-driven lesson.

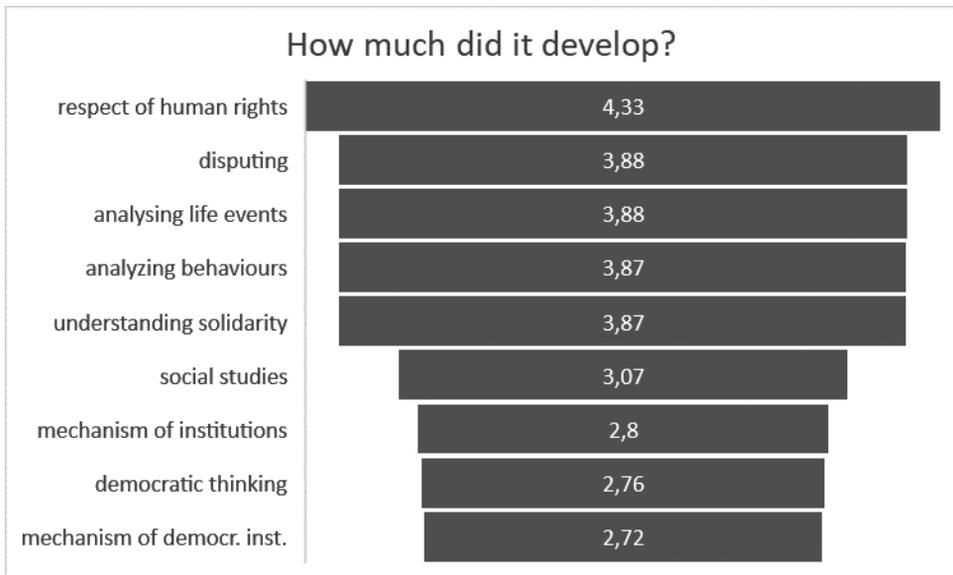
TABLE 1. Shorten data: according to the rates by students interested in history. Comparing this to the answer of all students, the mark is 4.14 which is also considered higher than the other type of lesson's mark (3.54).

How the lesson about the Holocaust helped ...	testimony-based lesson	textbook-driven lesson	Sig.
you to sympathise with the sufferings of the victims	4.33	3.54	Sig.<0.05

In an earlier stage of the research, the results also confirmed that the testimony-based lessons evidently developed the skills of empathy and promoted affective learning because of a personal bonding to the stories and the survivors (See JANCSÁK & SZÖNYI & KÉPÍRÓ 2019)

The students rated the knowledge and skills which rather belong to the cognitive category in the chart below:

FIGURE 5. To what extent the testimony-based Holocaust lesson developed these skills, according to students. 1= not at all, 5= very much.



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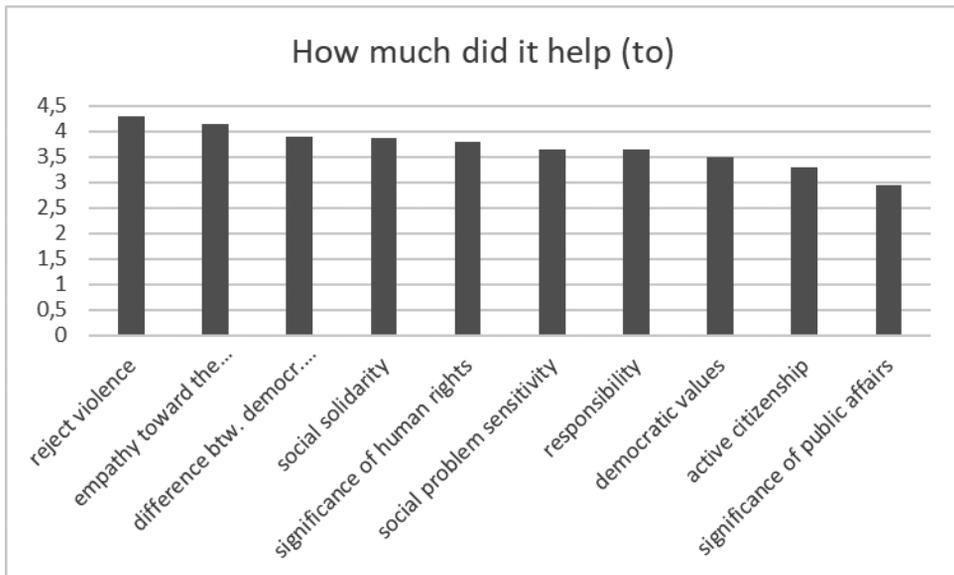
It is apparent that the respect of human rights received the highest mark, then the opinion, disputing, analysing life situations and behaviours, and raising awareness of the values

of solidarity fall approximately into the same range. These all received quite high marks. It is thought-provoking, however, that students gave the lowest marks to the development of social studies, to the learning of institutions, especially democratic institutions and to the evaluation of democratic thinking. Does it mean that a testimony-based lesson is not apt (enough) for passing these cognitions? Can we develop their empathy but cannot we make students understand how the democratic state works (or should work)?

I believe that this relatively wide discrepancy can be originated in two reasons. One of the reasons is – as mentioned above – the lack of students’ consciousness or the fact that they cannot turn their opinion into marks so easily. It can be implicated, too, that right there during this lesson, students are faced by the lack of operation of democratic institutions; that is, they can recognize why democracy does not work properly, but it is not necessarily mentioned how it could work well.

The statement that we have to take the numerical data of the quantitative analysis with a grain of salt (though, of course, it probably shows the tendencies realistically), is indicated by the last question of the questionnaire where not the verb „to develop” but „to help” is used:

FIGURE 6. *How much did the testimony-based lesson help you (to...) ? - according to students.*
1= not at all, 5= very much.



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In the questionnaire, students were asked to mark how much the testimony-based lesson helped the increasing of empathy towards the persecuted (4.14), the increasing of sensitivity of social issues (3.64) and of responsibility (3.64). These marks approximately correspond to the previous data. However, we can see a major discrepancy in some of the categories where the questionnaire inquires about concerning the understanding of rather cognitive elements. For instance, students marked the better understanding of the difference between democracy

and dictatorship by 3.89 while generally they marked the development of knowing democratic institutions only by 2.72. In the same way, they marked the better understanding of democratic values by 3.5 on average, but democratic thinking was developed only by a 2.76 mark during the lesson, according to the analysis. All these have to remind us that we must be careful with the results of the quantitative analysis, because these questions cannot easily be marked by numbers; at the same time, the tendencies are shown consequently enough.

The other, probably more essential reason for the discrepancies is that it is not irrelevant what the exact subject of the lesson used in the research was. We are considering a 45-minute lesson only, not a longer stage in the syllabus. 45 minutes are not long enough to discuss every aspect of the Holocaust.⁸ Among the aims of this aforementioned lesson we could find the development of empathy or critical thinking, or deepening the knowledge of human rights as a cognitive element, but not by all means targeted the teaching of democratic institutions. Consequently, the students could rightfully feel that this exact lesson had not evaluated this latter skill too much.

5. THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the qualitative analysis, students can express their opinion more freely. The person conducting the conversation inquires about what students learnt in the lesson, what its message was for them, what they think about individual and collective responsibility. If we are searching for traces indicating the above mentioned values, attitudes and knowledge characteristic for an active citizen, we can find interesting results.

As far as empathy is concerned, it is remarkable how often students referred to their own emotions during listening to the video interviews: that it touched them, that the personal stories and perspective brought history closer to them.

„These stories always touch me deeply... because in a human being's life it is a brutal thing ... not in a positive way.” (V, 12th grade)

„what it was like to live certain historic events.” (V, 12th grade)

„it (the Holocaust) is not only a historical event ... it has a significant effect even on the present.” (V, 12th grade)

Quoting from the questionnaire completed after having finished the aforementioned IWitness activities, some of the answers to the open question beginning with „The video interviews helped me to...”:

„...get a cleaner picture about that how they could live at that time. I personally like it very much when elderly people talk about their lives, or their ancestors' lives, therefore I often ask

⁸ Just one remark: in the history curriculum there is only one 45-minute lesson about the Holocaust for both the 7th and the 11th grades.

my grandparents to tell their stories to me. For this reason, I liked these interviews very much.” (11th grade)

„...have a view of a topic from the more personal point of view of the survivors or their relatives, which otherwise might be seen as mere curriculum.” (11th grade)

„...experience the emotions of the interviewee.” (11th grade)

„I think, that the video testimonies can help people to be more sympathetic and able to see the human side of an ethnic group they may have despised or hated until then.” (12th grade.)

„...understand, imagine and experience the situation of people then better.” (12th grade)

From these answers, it is evident that students felt empathy toward the stories of the survivors and they even considered this activity important in order to learn the curriculum better. Of course, it does not mean that those students, who took part in the textbook-driven lesson, would have not met the human side of the events, but it is obvious, that this aspect got more into focus during the testimony-based lesson. These two aspects, that is the historically exact analysis and the sympathetic approach, do not necessarily exclude each other. On the contrary, without some knowledge of the facts we can overwhelm students with emotions and stating facts without emotions can be dry and uninteresting or can alienate students from the topic (see ECKER-ANGERER 2018. 188–189).

The development of empathy, and the understanding of the personal perspective therefore were helped by the testimony-based lesson by all means. The answers which prove that students definitely understood what it meant to be an active citizen are more interesting. Although during the conversation they did not have to determine this definition, but the messages and lessons formulated by them emphasised the importance of an active behaviour: to recognize the negative tendencies of the society, to raise awareness of discrimination, to exercise tolerance, the individual and collective responsibility, to make a stand for the persecuted, to maintain democratic rights.

„We have to pay attention to the changes.... that it is possible that the unimaginable can happen again.” (V, 12th grade)

„We have to learn right in our young age to build an immunity (against radical ideas).” (V, 12th grade)

„We should try the extrusion somehow... so to extrude the extrusion from us.” (V, 12th grade)

„We should make a stand for the weaker ... not to join the side of the assailants” (V, 12th grade)

Let me quote some very remarkable answers from students in the 12th grade from their messages in an IWitness activity:⁹

⁹ [https://iwitness.usc.edu/sfi/Activity/ Answers from the activity „The roles of the Holocaust” \(2020.05.31.\)](https://iwitness.usc.edu/sfi/Activity/Answers%20from%20the%20activity%20%27The%20roles%20of%20the%20Holocaust%27%20(2020.05.31.))

„We have to understand that we are not obliged to defend our own rights but the existence of rights, because if we let it others get deprived of them without any words, then it is only a question of time that we will come next.” (12th grade)

„I think that the most important thing I have learnt from this activity is that if we have a choice to decide then we have a responsibility as well in our decision.” (12th grade)

„By this time, after half of a century, this is the responsibility of the world, of ours not to let this kind of discrimination and genocide happen again in general.” (12th grade)

„Political inactivity is a luxury to be paid extensively in a democracy or in a republic. As active citizens, we have to create a political environment where such tragedies can be stopped by the barriers of humanity and common sense, right in the beginning. However, we need well-educated, politically active generations for this, who do not throw „I do not politicize.” off to others. (12th grade)

We can observe that due to the testimony-based lessons, students recognized the steps leading to those situations where the democratic rights do not prevail and where the life of the discriminated groups can be on jeopardy. It is even more important that the students become aware that preventing this is the responsibility of the individual and the society. To what extent can we be certain that they would act on this recognition? We cannot be sure. But it is without a doubt that the first step towards becoming an active citizen is recognizing discrimination and accepting the personal and collective responsibility. It is the school's duty to educate our children to these skills with the assistance of the appropriate devices and methodology. It seems that one of the appropriate methods for this is building video testimonies into the lessons.

6. SUMMARY

In this paper I would have liked to prove the hypothesis that testimony-based lessons can help the education of active citizens. On the one hand, because according to our hypothesis the use of multimedia tools provides a pleasant experience for the students by all means, and for this reason it is more effective in teaching democratic rights and how they work among other things. On the other hand, the interviews of personal stories and perspectives develop empathy, critical thinking, multiperspectivity, freedom of opinion, working of democracy and other affective and cognitive skills necessary to active citizenship better.

Our assumptions have been confirmed by the quantitative and qualitative analysis, in some of the categories entirely, in others partially, so far. It is obvious that using video testimonies make the lessons more interesting than a textbook-driven lesson, and it is also evident that empathy or the personal point of view appear more during these lessons. The difference between the two types of lessons is not so evident when democratic values, institutional mechanism or learning conscious citizenship are concerned.

It is possible, that the explanation to this last result can be found in the circumstances of measuring. For instance, it is questionable whether the listed skills all can be measured by numbers or not. However, this inadequacy can be corrected by the qualitative analysis. The discrepancies appearing in the measurements can be originated in the fact that the questions are fundamentally based on students' self-reflections and self-confessions which causes fairly subjective results. Furthermore, it matters how much the students participating in the analysis had encountered multimedia tools previously than the lesson of the research. Those students who had encountered video testimonies – even if related to other topics – could be more conscious compared to those who took part in no more than one such lesson; these differences can distort the results. We also have to take it into consideration that so far we have disposed of a pretty low sample, hence we can speak about only partial results.

The results of the analysis of the efficiency of the lessons can be affected by other factors. For instance, by the exact topic of the lesson. One class cannot develop every skill and competence. For this reason it would be advisable to disseminate the use of multimedia devices and it would not be only on rare occasions that the students encounter video testimonies, but it would be an integral part of our educational system.

The personality and preparedness of the teacher is a matter of at least such importance. Probably it is not the use of video interviews itself which creates the basis of educating active citizens. If a teacher on a regular basis does not give the green light to the freedom of opinion of the students, if he or she has a too authoritative personality who does not respect the rights of the pupils and does not teach them to think in a responsible way, there is not much of a chance to provide these values genuinely. In the same way, it is important that the use of video testimonies itself does not lead students towards active citizenship. If we use a bad methodology (e.g. using the testimonies only for the purpose of illustration or not developing proper activities to the multimedia tools), we cannot achieve the effect we intend. In my opinion, the most important factor in this is the personality and preparedness of the teacher: a properly developed „traditional” lesson can be more efficient than a bad testimony-based lesson. In a word, the testimony-based lesson is not the one and only right method to educate active citizens but it can become a very useful asset in the hand of the teacher with proper pedagogical aims and methods.

To conclude, I would like to propose, that it would be interesting to conduct a follow-up research in 10-15 years' time with students who often took part in multimedia education. It is evidently proven that empathy, tolerance and democratic social values become more apparent due to these lessons for them; it is a question whether these citizens will change these principles into actions if necessary.

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