

TITLE: Stories That Shape Us

TARGET GROUP: adults in continuing education.

CONCEPT: the class for adult participants is based on using their generational experiences and previous knowledge to show the importance of the history of the Radogoszcz Extended Police Prison in the shaping of the local identity of Łódź citizens. An important aspect of the class is encouraging the participants to discuss the way historical memory is created in Poland and used for ad hoc purposes. The class also makes use of the microteaching method as a particularly effective way of adult learning, just like the “Six-Word Story” method, which allows the participants to sum up and verbalise emotions the virtual exhibition “Radogoszcz 1945 – Testimony to the Crime” aroused in them.

DURATION: 90 minutes (plus the time necessary to see the virtual exhibition)

MATERIALS:

- paper, pens, or other writing utensils;
- a computer/tablet with Internet access.

COURSE:

1. The facilitator, in order to bring out the previous knowledge of adult participants, can start by asking about a historical event that, in their opinion, shaped the collective identity of their generation / community / family / circle of friends. The participants can also provide examples of facts or events that constituted a kind of a generational experience to them (or their parents or grandparents), having an effect on their later attitudes and views.
2. The facilitator presents the basic facts about the operation and liquidation of the Radogoszcz Extended Police Prison as an example of an event that went down in the history of Łódź and became permanently embedded in the local awareness of its citizens.
3. The participants are divided into four groups with a more or less equal number of members. The task of each group is to see a different room of the virtual exhibition “Radogoszcz 1945 – Testimony to the Crime”. It should take them individually about 15-20 minutes.
4. Having visited the exhibition, the participants are once again divided into work teams so that each includes four persons that saw different rooms of the virtual exhibition. In teams, the work is based on microteaching. The participants tell other members of their team about the most important things they learnt from the exhibition, about the elements that moved them

the most, and about the emotions provoked by the exhibits. The teamwork should take 30 minutes.

5. After all participants have shared their knowledge of the exhibition visited, the facilitator can initiate a discussion with the whole group, focusing on the following issues:
 - Why did the Radogoszcz massacre become an event shaping the local identity of Łódź?
 - To what extent, according to the participants, were those responsible for the 1939-1945 events in Radogoszcz punished for their crimes?
 - What is the significance of memory of historical events for the present generations?
 - How do the present (social, political, and lifestyle) conditions influence the shaping of the historical memory of the society?
 - What can stories like the one about the Radogoszcz prison teach the contemporary Poles?
6. After the discussion (or after the end of the class), all those interested can see the remaining rooms of the virtual exhibition. A summary of the visit to the exhibition and participation in class can be the “Six-Word Story” exercise. In such a case, the participants’ task is to publish on the group’s forum or mailing list six words that they believe best convey the content, emotions, and experiences connected with a visit to the virtual exhibition “Radogoszcz 1945 – Testimony to the Crime”.