

Children Witnesses of the Holocaust

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Trebinje,
March 2013

The method of approach was to understand the Holocaust through a study of contemporary literature (from ghetto inhabitants) carried out in the Jovan Ducic High School, Trebinje.

Aims

- **Discovering literature values in works written by ghetto inhabitants**
- **Gaining general knowledge about the Holocaust, ghettos, concentration camps, victims' number etc...**
- **Developing empathy with individuals of similar age but completely different experiences**
- **Development of awareness of the unique value of each individual human life**
- **Development of aesthetic criteria**
- **Development of writing skills**
- **Interaction with the history contents**

Project phases

- 1) Analysis of authentic poems and diary fragments from children ghetto inhabitants**
- 2) Written assignments requiring a kind of “correspondence” with individuals from a poem or/and authors as well as expressing an attitude towards the events mentioned above**
- 3) Results**

1) Analysis

- Reading 2 poems and some fragments from Eva's diary (Motele: *From tomorrow on...*, Henryka Lazawart: *The Little Smuggler*, Eva Heyman: *Diary*)
- Questions and possible answers:
 - What are the emotions that all these texts have in common?** (existential insecurity, fear, suffering...)
 - What kind of life circumstances can cause such reaction?** (captivity, threat of death, hunger...)
 - Do the captives surrender to fear, panic or pessimism?** (On the contrary, they want to live and it is stronger than fear.)

Explanation (Holocaust, ghetto, concentration camp, victims)



THROUGH OUR EYES

Children Witness The Holocaust

Itzhak B. Tatelbaum



Authors (general information)

Dialog (need of writing, keeping diary, painting... in ghetto)

Хенрика Лазаверт: Песма о малом кружункару
(Henrika Lazardert)
- Ловска јесеникња
- Варшавски Гетто, Предмишка
Ева Рејман: одломци из Дневника
(Eva Reiman)
(1931-1944)
- Мађарска
- убијена у Аушвицу
- Мојере (12 година): Од сутра Sutra Пуржан



Interpretation (dialogue)

- All texts are from the book *Through Our Eyes* by I. Tatelbaum. The teacher was following some pedagogical instructions (questions) from the book.
- Students were informed that all topics from their written assignments should have something to do with the analyzed texts but would not require their written interpretation.

2) Written assignment

Topics:

- **A Letter to Eva**
- **Dear Motele**
- **A Letter to the Little Smuggler**
- **Dear Henryka**
- **Fragments of a Sad Mosaic**

All topics, except for the last one, require an addressing form. The answer to the last one could be written in the same way, but the main task of all topics is the articulation of students' thoughts and feelings towards the mentioned individuals and their extraordinary experiences.

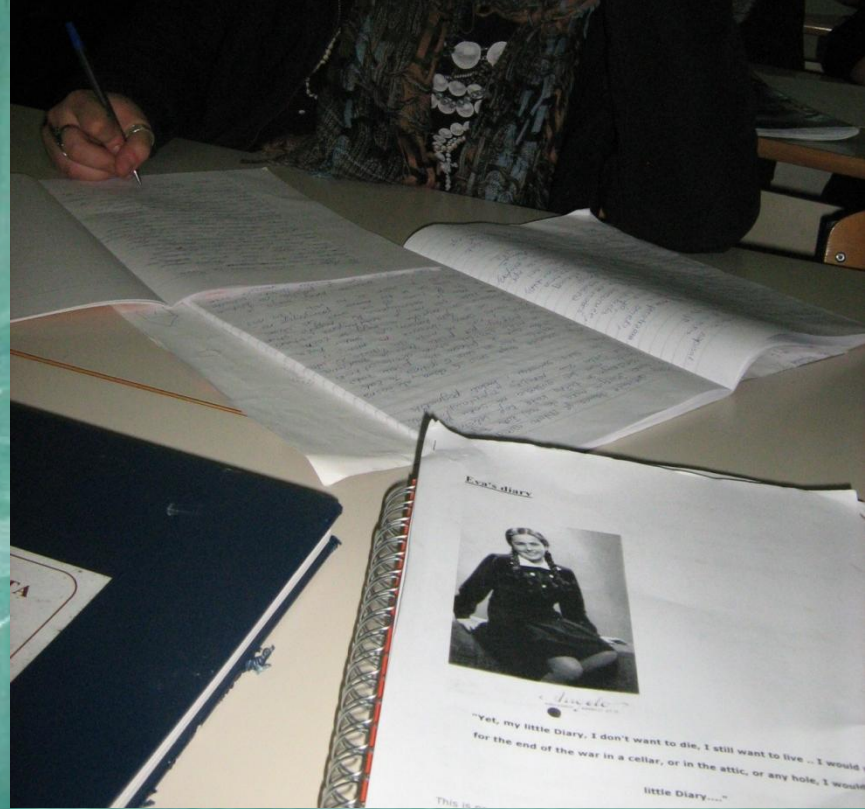
1) Книга Ели

2) Книга мамочек

3) Графа Кенрик

4) Графиня Монтессори ...

5) Зеркало мужской мозаики



3)

RESULTS - FRAGMENTS

Fragments of a Sad Mosaic

Today, more than 40 people wrote letters to you in this school and we might not be the only ones. No matter how honest or dishonest those letters were, I want you to know that we heard your voices and we stood and listened to what you had to say, even for a moment. If every person that remembered you today had lit a lamp (candle) maybe we would have lightened this whole town and maybe, just maybe, we could enlighten

people's hearts so steeped in darkness in the last centuries, at least for a while.

...

Also, I know that you are not the only victim, but we heard pieces of your stories and we want to try to understand your suffering and sympathize with you and all the other people that experienced similar atrocities. This won't bring you back but it can help prevent something like this from happening ever again.

Tamara Tica II-1

Dear Motele,

...

You showed a great amount of mental strength, which is sometimes, I have to tell you, more important than any kind of physical strength. You should know that this isn't easy at all, and not everyone can manage it but you did - you knew how to find a tiny, flashing ray of light in the darkness, a little island of joy in all that sadness, a little oasis of heaven in the middle of hell.

Aleksandra Pavlović II-3

Dear Eva,

I used to keep a diary once, myself. All the good and bad things that happened to me. Every smile, every "sinful" thought about that curly boy from the class next to us, every tear, everything written down in one small red notebook. I don't know why I stopped writing.

Now I see that I made a mistake. All those little things fill our life. Those pictures often fade away and we can't find them again. But when we write everything down, they stick with us forever. Like your red bike, your camera, that day in amusement park or Agi's words: "We should be happy that they take things, not people."

Nikolina Medan II-1

A Little Smuggler

Dear little friend,

I was reading the poem about you, and somehow I felt like your name was missing, something to call you by. I was thinking for a long time, which name is the best, which one is worthy and powerful enough. From my third brain chamber, I came up with "The Brave Heart".

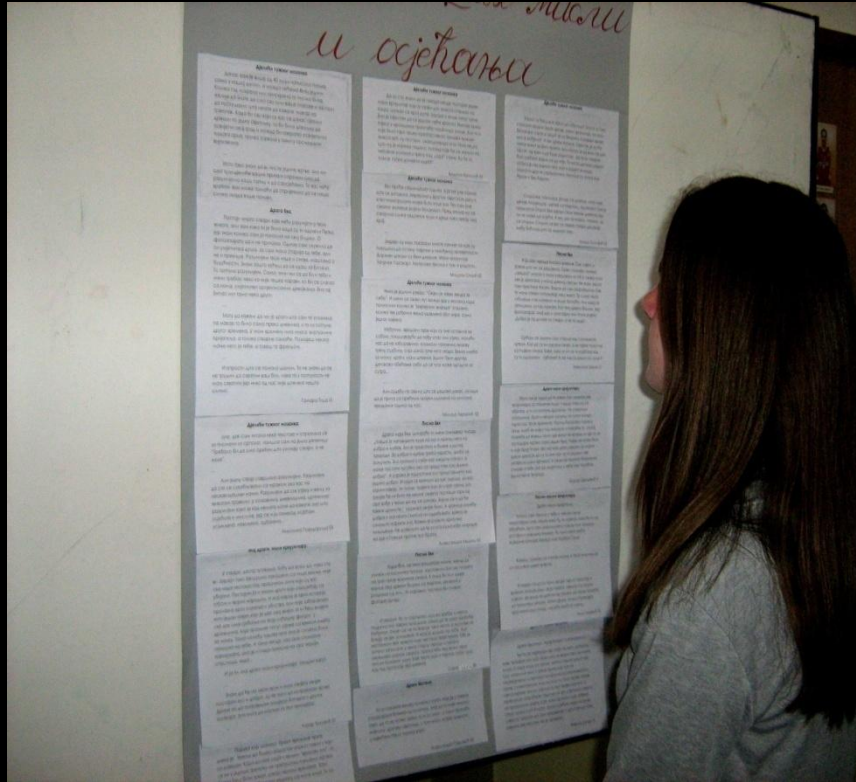
...

You say that you sneak around like a cat. Well I think you deserve nine lives.

Anja Tomovic II 3

- Fragments of the chosen essays were exhibited in the school hall (**Mosaic of Our Thoughts and Feelings**) along with two posters about Jewish children at the time of the Holocaust (**Fragments of a Sad Mosaic**).

Exhibition of essays



Exhibition of posters



“Every human being is a unique star.”

(Danilo Kish)