



DARE

Depolarisation Activism for
Resilient Europe

DARE to Care: Historical Human Rights Education

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Co-funded by
the European Union

This project was co-funded by the European Commission. The views and content of this lesson plan are the sole responsibility of its authors and do not reflect the views of the European Commission or the implementing organisations. The European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication.

DARE to Care: Historical Human Rights Education

Background (about the DARE project)

The 'DARE - Depolarization Activism for Resilient Europe' initiative was created to inspire a critical learning space and youth-led and action-oriented dialogue about various contemporary challenges such as polarisation, radicalisation, mental health, human rights violations. The DARE educational materials seek to strengthen active citizenship and European values and promote and amplify youth voices and civic engagement.

For more information, please visit the project website: www.depolarisation.eu

Lesson Themes

- DARE to Care theme - an insight into a young person's motivation and commitment to volunteering for a particular cause and through doing so, serving one's community;
- Historical human rights education and exploring the question of whether and what we learn from history, and how the past shapes and influences our present.

Context

School curricula often do not allocate enough time to properly cover delicate topics such as the Holocaust, and rarely deal with uncomfortable historical facts about their respective country's history. Nevertheless, these matters are often the subject of controversies in the present, as they relate to contemporary social and human rights issues. In some countries, historical revisionism and relativisation of historical facts is rising. These phenomena lead to erroneous and simplified explanations of complex historical processes which in turn contribute to hate speech, prejudice and polarisation on certain topics.

This lesson plan provides insight into young people who find these issues interesting and who in their free time implement historical human rights education workshops.

Goals

- To spark students' interest in learning history;
- To promote volunteering and peer education as an effective educational approach;
- To encourage students to respond actively to the challenges in their community and to promote a culture of dialogue.

Learning Outcomes

It is expected that as a result of the class, the students will be able to:

- Explain in what way history affects the present;
- Identify and discuss instances of historical revisionism and/or dealing with the past;
- Analyse and articulate what type of action(s) could be done in certain situations.

Material and Equipment Needed

Laptop, Beamer/projector, Speakers, Internet/wi-fi, Flip-chart papers and post-its for the whole class activity

Duration

45 minutes (one standard lesson)

Overview of Lesson Activities (Process)

Introduction (10 minutes)

The instructor begins the lesson by asking students the following questions:

- Can you name a controversial contemporary event associated with history in your local community? (vandalizing monuments, hate speech, far-right graffiti, etc.)
- How do those events make you feel and why?

Short DARE to Care video clip viewing (5 minutes)

Play the video clip for the students: depolarisation.eu/rights

A brief discussion about the video clip (15 minutes)

Useful exploratory and follow-up reflection questions:

- What particular historical issue do young people featured in the video work on?
- Is it important for young people to learn about history?

"Past2Present" - Whole Class Activity (15 minutes)

The instructor announces to the class that in the final part of the class, they will together brainstorm several ideas on how they could get involved in the face of certain issues appearing in their school or town.

The teacher prepares before the class three flip chart papers, and each one has the situation described:

Situation 1: When coming to school one morning, students and teachers come across fresh graffiti of swastikas in several places, both in and on the school walls.

Situation 2: In conversation with one of your friends or acquaintances, they say something like, "Holocaust is not real, it never happened."

Situation 3: A group in your town is often marginalised, discriminated against or attacked on account of their ethnicity, race or religion.

The students have 5 minutes, whereby each student is expected to write out 3 ideas (one for each scenario) on a post-it sticky paper, on how they would address these situations.

"Past2Present" - Whole Class Activity (continued)

In the final 10 minutes of the class, the instructor goes through the answers provided for the situations, noting for e.g. which ideas were most popular (i.e. many students came up with the same solutions), which ones were perhaps counter-productive or potentially harmful, which ones were original, etc.

The class concludes with the instructor reminding everyone that society works only if we all try and address injustice, hate speech and other societal wrongs. No action is too small, as just showing you care and empathise will make a difference in someone's life.

Sources

- DARE project, documentation and videos can be found on the project website: www.depolarisation.eu or www.resilienteurope.eu

Activity Adaption for Online Implementation

This lesson is easily transferable to an online format. The introductory part, video clip viewing and discussion can be carried out via online platform. The whole class brainstorming activity with scenarios and sticky notes can be implemented by using different online whiteboard tools, e.g. Miro board, Google Jamboard, Excalidraw, etc.

Assessment and Evaluation Options

The assessment or evaluation should focus on student action that might follow the implemented class activity - for example, carrying out one of the homework ideas.

Homework Ideas

- Homework idea 1: Ask students (either individually or in small groups) to research what is 'Holocaust denial' and historical revisionism as it relates to World War II. Is this issue in any way present in your country today, and in what way does it exhibit itself? Prepare a short presentation.
- Homework idea 2: What topic from its history is your country having difficulties facing? Ask students (either individually or in small groups) to research one such sensitive or controversial topic from your country's history, and to prepare a short presentation, explaining what the issue is; why it is sensitive or controversial; why they think that this controversy exists (i.e. why is it difficult or complicated to teach or talk about this particular topic); how this history affects the present.