History and Memory: Deeper connections for TOK instruction

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Objectives

• Teachers will explore and define memory as a way of knowing

• Teachers will be given examples of class activities and topics to explore authentic connections of memory to history

• Teachers will be provided resources to further their learning of history and memory
Objectives

- Student understanding of memory as a Way of Knowing will improve.

- Students will be able to produce better TOK essays and presentations using this WOK in connection to this AOK.
When I was younger, I could remember anything, whether it happened or not; but my faculties are decaying now, and soon...I will remember [only] the things that never happened.

-Mark Twain
A Definition of Memory:

Conscious sense of the past that is meaningfully connected to the present
So, how does memory help us get, gain, and construct historical knowledge?
Shared Knowledge:

- History
- Personal
- Memory
Activity: Student discussion of the following definition:

History is the selection of what is deemed “significant” memory.
There are multiple understandings in relation to history

Part 1. Memory seen as personal and individual – as identity construction
Timeline activity

Birth

1968

present moment

2014
The root of all historical comprehension lies in the individual’s mental relationship to his or her own life-experience.

-W. Dilthey as quoted by Cubitt p.34
There are multiple understandings in relation to history

Part 2. Memory as connected to social institutions and cultural forms- as commemoration, social construction. Survival of past experiences.
Case study memory- Hungarian statues of and about the Soviet era.

An example of social reconstruction and construction of history and memory.
Activity: Watch the following video footage of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising and consider how and why this is commemorated.
What happens when past constructions conflict with new constructions of memory and history?
Bronze Night in Tallinn April 26 2007
Activity: Commemoration journey

Look at the monuments in your community. Ask why was this event significant and meaningful to those who constructed this memory? Does the commemoration have current value? Is it meaningfully connected between present and past?
There are multiple understandings in relation to history

Part 3. Reconstruction of past experiences from a present standpoint
Our present gives purpose to find memory
Emerging communities (gaining social or political power) mine past memories to construct history

In the US as examples in the past 30 years:

- Women’s Studies
- African-American History
- LGBT Studies - new commemoration at Smithsonian
Activity- Have students consider present societal pressures to remember? What are we told to remember or to now understand?
General points for students

- Memory is a dynamic process - Human memory is not a storage bank
- Writing of history is influenced by the historian’s past – not in a simplified bias but in the context of the present moment.
- Retrieval is myopic - reflects your own identity construction
- Patterns can be ascertained by multiple accounts pointing to the same truth.
Resources

Books and articles:

Alderman, Derek H., Inwood, Joshua F.J. *Landscapes of Memory and Socially Just Futures* http://www.academia.edu/2252709/Landscapes_of_Memory_and_Socially_Just_Futures retrieved September 14 2014.


Images:


Tourist with Lenin: http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-oAM8OWjc6bY/TcqhuhqEpFI/AAAAAAAAB_c/s8n6LTHn4IA/s1600/DSC_1108.jpg retrieved Sept. 14 2014


Family photos provided by Kathleen Naglee. Image 1: Kathleen Naglee; image 2 Sylvia Misson (mother on left, Linda Barben, aunt on right); Image 3 Miriam Fischer (grandmother) and Sylvia Misson.


Video Clips

Vintage 8mm Silent Home Movies- Hula hoop footage frrom about 1970 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mF1Frlr7_fd

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jm0Dcy6aoOs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urSGFm57rzM
Thank you!