

DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' VISUAL LITERACY: TECHNIQUE OF WORK WITH FAMILY PHOTO-ARCHIVE

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The visual turn, which took place in socio-humanistic knowledge, brought the photo as a historical source out of the category of “peripheral” into the category of an independent subject / object of research, in this connection development of visual literacy of students of humanities in the system of higher education is gaining special importance. The purpose of the article consists in working out the technique of development of visual literacy of students who are future History teachers. The family photo-archive and its structural parts (the photo album and the photo) act as an object of research. The leading methods are the activity approach, theory and information methods of training, methods of independent study, control and evaluation methods allowing to develop independent creative activity of students, to stimulate acquisition and consolidation of the knowledge gained. The developed technique promotes formation of professional competences of students during the work with the photo as a historical source and development of visual literacy necessary for an aspiring researcher and future teacher. Its contents include various forms of study (a lecture, a seminar, independent study, a creative report). The materials of the article can be useful in the course of development of the educational standard and training courses on the subjects Visual Culture, Source Studies, History of Culture, History of Russia, Methods of Teaching History and Social Science.

Keywords: Education, history, visual literacy, family photo-archive, family photo album, photo.

INTRODUCTION

Visual literacy as a direction in pedagogics developed in the second half of the 20th century. The term visual literacy was suggested in 1969 by John Debes, one of the cofounders of The International Visual Literacy Association (The International Visual Literacy Association, 2011). According to R. A. Braden and D. A. Hortin, it is “the ability to understand and use images, including the ability to think, learn, and express oneself in terms of images” (Braden and Hortin 1982, 41). For the last decades the problems of visual literacy have been actively discussed in foreign pedagogical science (Burmark, 2002; Elkins, 2008; Apkon, 2013; Yenawine, 2013), specialized conferences are held annually. In a number of countries standards of visual literacy for the system of higher education (Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, 2011) which help to create and develop skills of interpretation and use of images have been developed. During the era of domination of visual culture in all spheres of everyday life the development of students’ visual literacy has become a key problem for teachers. Interaction of Russian experts

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with their foreign colleagues has actualized this problem within the Russian education. Active discussion of visual literacy as a basic component of professional competence of university graduates took place during the XVII Fulbright International Humanitarian Summer School devoted to “Visualization of knowledge: visual literacy as a part of higher education” (2014). The tendencies of development of modern society have posed a question for teachers: how to develop this competence within the given course? It means that they need to incorporate a visual vector into the program, taking into consideration the context of the scientific discipline and the level of students.

The visual turn in historical science has enabled to establish the equal status between visual sources and written sources. In this regard a task emerged before historians on development of methods of work with visual materials, including photos. Photographic sources from collections of archives, museums and libraries are used most actively in historical research. In Russian historiography in the 2000s appeared the first fundamental work of V. M. Magidov (2005), which highlights archive and source study aspects of studying documentary photographs. To a lesser extent historians study photos from family archives (Narsky, 2008; Boitsova, 2013). It is explained by the specifics of presence of photos in authentic environment of a household. However photos from family archives are a valuable source for studying history of daily life, history of family and generation, family memories. We set the task to develop a technique of formation of visual literacy of students on the basis of a family photo album and photos analysis. In this article the developed technique will be demonstrated. For formation of visual literacy of students, who are future teachers of History, we suggest addressing the organization of classes on the analysis of family photo-archives within studying the historical discipline Source Studies.

METHODS

For development of independent tasks on the analysis of a family photo-archive methodological guidelines from the area of visual research (visual studies), including the works of Russian scientists —I.V. Narsky (2008), O. Yu. Boitsova (2013); and foreign ones — P. Bourdieu (1998), R. Chalfen (2008), J. Elkins (2008) and others have been used. The research was conducted from 2011 to 2015 during classes with the second year students of Institute of History of the Kazan Federal University within the training course Source Studies. The total study population included 200 people. The results of students’ works in the form of a research portfolio and visual presentation were approved by means of public defense. The portfolio comprises a general characteristic of a family photo-archive, the analysis of a photo album and photos. On the basis of the results of pedagogical work the technique of formation of visual literacy of students-historians has been developed.

RESULTS

The role of the discipline Source Studies in development of students' visual literacy

The subject Source Studies of the Pedagogical Education (with two profiles of education) profile (Bachelor degree level) is studied during the 2nd year of a full-time education (3rd semester). Source Studies are included into the professional part of the main educational program and belong to the variable part. The course is interconnected with the basic discipline History of Russia by means of optional historical disciplines. The Source Studies theoretical course and practical classes are solidified in the course of students' museum and archival traineeship. The knowledge of bases Source Studies is integrated with studying of theoretical discipline and practice of teaching History and Social Science at school. The number of hours, allocated for studying the course, for the last five years has changed towards reduction of classroom hours and increase in hours for independent study that has caused adjustment of educational tasks to independent study of students.

Lecture. The theme "Classification of Historical Sources". The main types and kinds of historical sources, their genesis and current condition are considered. Within this theme the section "Visual Historical Sources" is studied, the emphasis on the range of varieties (a caricature, pictures; drawings; photos; posters; movies; graphic statistics; advertising), functions and features of their study is laid. Students get familiarized with the main discourses of modern humanitarian knowledge in the field of studying photographic material, including those which exist outside public space. This refers to family photos and photo albums. The list of references for preparation for seminars and independent study is offered.

The stated material allows posing for students a number of problematic issues which can be suggested for seminars within the general discussion of the role and value of the "family" photo in studying history of the generation, the family, the city and the country. These include features of the origin and functioning of photos from family archives; terminological disputes and concepts of amateur, naive, daily, family photos; forms of existing of photos in family archive and classification of photo albums - specifics of functioning of photos in city and rural culture; modern discourses on studying private photo-archives: balance between memory and photo, photo as a source of everyday life history, photo in the city culture, etc.

Seminar. The theme "Photo as a Historical Source".

Purpose: development of visual literacy of students on the basis of use of methods of critical analysis of the photo as a historical source. Along with a number of theoretical points from the history of development of the photo, the photo album, methods of working with photographic material, some practical work on application of methods of studying the photo including some stages is carried out:

Demonstration of the photo. An LCD projector for display of the image on the screen. A paper copy of the image for each student of the group. Questions: By what external signs is it possible to determine whether the photo is authentic or a copy? What type of photo is presented? What is the difference between the amateur photo and the professional photo? Is there an opportunity to determine the genre of the photo? In what way is it possible to identify the author of the shot, the owner of the picture, the date and the place of shooting?

Studying the contents of the photo. Make 5-7 sentences which characterize the contents of the photo. Characters represented in the photo. Locality and place of shooting. Static character or movement. Symbols or signs of a certain historical era. Interpretation of the contents. Exchange of opinions. Discussion.

Non-photographic elements. Passe-partout. Text on the back of the photo. Analysis of the text. Text and image: general and particular aspects in the analysis.

Discussion of the problematic issues brought up at the lecture is carried out.

Independent study. The theme “Family Photo-archive”

Individual work with a family photo-archive. Research is conducted from the general to the particular: photo-archive - photo album - photo.

Photo-archive

Students receive the task to write about the history of a family photo-archive. The result is submitted the form of an essay. Research methods: interview, conversation with the owners of the photo-archive, studying (analysis and synthesis) and description of the contents of the photo-archive. Bank of questions: In what way is the family photo-archive stored (photo albums, unsystematized separate materials (scattering), wall photo album, and others), the storage place. Is it possible to define the chronological framework of the family photo-archive? Are the names of the photo-archive creators known? What do you know about them? Tell us about the features of completing of your family photo-archive: purchase, giving photo albums as a gift, photos. The family’s owning of a camera and photo equipment. The history of their appearance. The family amateur photographer. Do you know his biography? The motives of the photo hobby?

Photo album history

For the analysis it is desirable to choose the earliest photo album from the chronological point of view. It is important to remember that the photo album as part of a family archive, is considered as a uniform, unique historical source in terms of its structure and contents.

Task: Reconstruction of history of the photo album, its external and internal characteristic; recording of personal impressions during the work on this type of sources (what details, plots, images attracted your greatest attention when viewing

the album and photos); the choice of the name of the analyzed photo album and justification of the choice; writing of the essay "Photo Album as a Source for Studying the History of Family, Generation". Questions: What does the external review of the photo album include? Is it possible to recreate the photo album history (date, place, the author, etc.). Reconstruct the biography of the owner or the author of the photo album completion. What is the external view of the album? Define the principle of formation of the contents of the photo album: the principle of selection of photos (thematic, chronological, etc.); the order of arrangement of the photos on an album page. Pay attention to such details, as retouching of the photos (enameling, coloring with aniline paints, etc.). What is the ratio of the amateur photos and the photos taken in a photographer's studio?

Allocate the constitutive units of the photo album and proceed to their analysis (the photo, inscriptions, non-photographic elements). What role does the text play in the photo album (dedications, wishes, captions to photos, the name of the photo, comments on photos, etc.) and non-photographic elements (cards, invitations, newspaper cuttings, poems, drawings, photo-corners, etc.)? How fully is it possible to attribute the photos, have you faced any difficulties in attribution of the photo? How is the communicative function of the album manifested in your family? Can you single out generational features of perception of the photo album? How fully are the photos of the family members presented in the album, what is the range of relative links? Are there photos testifying to the ethnic identity of family members? Is it possible to draw a conclusion that your family photo album can become a source for reconstruction of the biography of the family members?

Photos in the album

Task: Define the themes of the photos (children, student, army), industrial photos; photos of ceremonies of life cycle (wedding photos and photos of funerals); photos of calendar holidays; photos of family holidays; photos in a house interior (household photo); tourist photos; professional and amateur portraits, etc.

The analysis of the photo from a family photo-archive. Task: Analyze the photo from a family photo album (as chosen), for this purpose address the external and internal review of the source. Questions: History of the origin of the chosen photo. Designate the date and the place of shooting, the author. Is the occasion of taking the photograph known? Who became its initiator? Was there any preliminary preparation for photographing? What was the reaction during shooting and after it? Reveal the differences between shooting in a photographer's studio and amateur shooting. Pass to the characteristics of paper: size, print (color, black-and-white), degree of preservation. Is there an accompanying text? If yes, carry out textual analysis.

Describe the contents of the photo: identify the photo genre, if it is a portrait photo, write the name and the surname of the depicted person, and also the portrait

type (large, shoulder-length portrait, half-length portrait, full-length portrait, portrait with a turn to the left, to the right, etc.); if it is a group photo, list all the participants of shooting from left to right. What details of the photo bear the greatest source value? If it is the place of shooting, specify symbols, attributes, posters, monuments, environment etc. What is the originality of the recorded architectural details (dwelling, construction type)? What culture does the taken picture belong to: rural or city? Is it possible to allocate the main attributes of city and rural culture? What information can be inferred from the body language (posture, facial expression)? What details of people's appearance enable to reconstruct the era (clothes, haircuts, footwear, accessories, etc.). Is it possible to reconstruct, in your opinion, the interrelation of realities of the era with a family life? Summarize the results of your independent research of the family photo-archive in the form of an author's essay on the theme "A historical era through the prism of a photographic lens: analysis of photos from a family archive". Include it into your portfolio. Speak about the impression of the work done.

The creative report of results of independent work with a family photo-archive

We have suggested using "the creative report" as the main form of presentation of results of research work on a family photo-archive. The main components of the creative report of students are: a written portfolio, the report, visual presentation of the revealed photographic materials and commenting on them, answers to questions, self-analysis of the results of scientific research.

The main requirements to the contents of the creative report:

- The creative report has to reflect individual results of independent work most fully;
- The creative report is structured as follows: characteristic of a family photo-archive, photo album, the series of photos is given, self-reflection on the performed work is done;
- In the creative report the student reveals the features of the studied photos and the album as historical sources;
- The results are shown in a visual presentation (copies or scanned photos of a photo-archive);
- The main conclusions and prospects of use of skills and abilities in further pedagogical activity at lessons of History, the organization of educational and research work of students are formulated .

The criteria of assessment of the creative report are as follows quality of performance; level of visual presentation; productivity of the independent work carried out; awareness of features of the analysis of the photo as a historical source.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Problems of visual literacy in the Russian historiography are actively developed by representatives of socio-humanistic sciences. Within this research it is possible to single out the following blocks. Firstly, the analysis of school textbooks on history of Russia of the 20th century has shown that an important place in their contents is taken by visual sources, including photos. At the same time, the presented visual material in most cases carries out an illustrative function. For extraction of its source potential the authors of textbooks need to develop (to improve the existing ones) tasks and questions to photos in textbooks. Similar remarks regarding textbooks containing didactic tasks with visual imagery were also made by other experts. They considered the textbook as a reference point and a means of formation and development of visual literacy of students. The analysis of visual imagery of textbooks has enabled to reveal its socializing and educational role and to determine what cultural values it transmits. Development of visual literacy of students. For example, E.R. Yarskaya-Smirnova and P. V. Romanov (2009) have shared their experience in formation of educational process using the example of disclosure of a role of visual sources in definition of social problems and their solution during different periods of country's history. With the help of discussion of photos from one of the albums they determined the importance of a political and ideological context of creation of sources. Besides, they suggested that the students visualize knowledge on social work as a profession, having divided into groups, that is address visual methods of knowledge as well. Thus, in the Russian pedagogical science theoretical and methodological problems of development of visual literacy are being actively considered. The authors of the presented article have formulated the problem of development of visual literacy in future teachers of History with the help of the analysis of a family photo-archive.

The research conducted in accordance with the stated objectives and tasks makes it possible to formulate the following conclusions.

1. Training of students (History profile) in the technique of the analysis of the photo and the photo album as historical sources, and not just as illustrative material, enables to develop their visual literacy necessary for each young researcher and future teacher.
2. The developed technique combines several forms of study and includes conducting a series of classes: a lecture during which general source study problems are revealed; a seminar at which problematic issues of studying the photo as a source are discussed; independent study during which students conduct research on a family photo-archive; a creative report — presentation of results and their discussion.
3. Tasks for independent study of students on drawing up their research portfolio including the analysis of photographic sources from family

archives have been developed (general characteristic of the whole photo-archive, a separate photo album, photos from the album).

4. The given classes in the form of the creative report enable to draw a conclusion regarding the students' acquisition of theory and skills of research of the photo as a historical source.
5. Carrying out independent research work of students with a family photo-archive and presentation of its results contributed to the formation of their professional competence as historians: thanks to the developed technique it became possible to demonstrate the place of a historian in history: "History is what historians do" (Pro, 2000).

The practical importance of the research is that its results and conclusions can be used in development of students' visual literacy, and also in introduction of family photo-archives into scientific circulation as a historical source. This experience can be useful when developing training courses on historical specialties: Source Studies, Everyday Life History, Visual Research, Visual Anthropology.

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