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## **EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE CROATIAN MEMORIAL DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF THE HOMELAND WAR**

**Julija BARUNČIĆ PLETIKOSIĆ, Ph. D.**

Croatian Memorial and Documentation Center of the Homeland War, Zagreb, Croatia  
[julija.baruncic@centardomovinskograta.hr](mailto:julija.baruncic@centardomovinskograta.hr)

**Željka KRIŽE, Ph. D.**

Croatian Memorial and Documentation Center of the Homeland War, Zagreb, Croatia  
[zeljka.krize@centardomovinskograta.hr](mailto:zeljka.krize@centardomovinskograta.hr)

### **Abstract:**

*Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War is a specialized archives and a scientific institution with the mission to collect, arrange, safekeep, professionally and scientifically research and publish archival records from the Homeland War. Apart from these main tasks, the Centre also engages in educational activities by organizing and providing lectures for elementary school, high school, university students and history teachers or by the engagement of its employees at the universities. Speakers will present these activities by giving examples of various types of lectures and describing methodology and contents. The authors present the theory of archival pedagogy and its development in Croatia, as well as examples of good practice in the Croatian archives. In Croatia, in the last couple of years, special attention has been given to archival pedagogy as a potential for the development of archival activities and the modernization of the archives. The Croatian Archival Society has an important role in promoting archival pedagogy and it encourages archivists to participate in educational activities. The authors will present educational activities organized by the Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War. The Centre aims to follow modern trends in archive pedagogy and education by combining its two main activities - archival practice and scientific research. Special emphasis is given to the use of various categories of the Centre's archival materials, such as official records, printed material, audio recordings, photographic material, maps, etc. in the lectures. Besides paper records, the Centre has a large collection of digitalized documents which are particularly useful and convenient to use in the lectures. The materials from the Collection of photographs and the Collection of video materials are most frequently used. Dealing with the original archival material, especially when it comes to photographs or video materials, students get the most precise frame of the past on the basis of which they then best develop their own critical thinking. In this way, archival practice illustrates the educational role of archives. Authors also deal with the question how and to what extent does the use of archival materials affect the students' understanding of the topic and inspires them to visit archives and to do their own research which also contributes to the popularization of archives and archival science.*

### **Key words:**

*archive, archive materials, education, history, Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War*

**Izvleček:**

***IZOBRAŽEVALNA DEJAVNOST HRVAŠKEGA SPOMINSKEGA DOKUMENTACIJSKEGA CENTRA DOMOVINSKE VOJNE***

*Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne je specializiran arhiv in znanstvena ustanova, ki zbira, ureja, varuje, strokovno in znanstveno raziskuje ter objavlja arhivske dokumente, povezane s hrvaško domovinsko vojno. Poleg teh glavnih nalog pa izvaja Center tudi izobraževalno dejavnost, in sicer z organiziranjem in izvajanjem predavanj za učence in dijake osnovnih ter srednjih šol, za študente in učitelje zgodovine ali s sodelovanjem z univerzami. V prispevku bodo predstavljeni primeri različnih vrst predavanj, kakor tudi opis metodologije in vsebin izobraževanj. Avtorici se bosta posvetili tudi teoriji arhivske pedagogike in njenemu razvoju na Hrvaškem ter predstavili primere dobre prakse v hrvaških arhivih. V zadnjih letih so na Hrvaškem namenili veliko pozornosti arhivski pedagogiki in modernizaciji arhivov. Hrvaško arhivsko društvo igra pomembno vlogo pri promociji arhivske pedagogike in vzpodbuja arhiviste k sodelovanju. Avtorici bosta ponazorili, kako Center v okviru svoje izobraževalne dejavnosti sledi modernim trendom v arhivski pedagogiki in izobraževanju z združevanjem dveh glavnih aktivnosti – arhivske prakse in znanstvenega raziskovanja. Izpostavili bosta uporabo različnih tipov arhivskega gradiva v hrambi Centra, kot so uradni dokumenti, tiski, avdio posnetki, fotografije itd. Na ta način arhivska praksa osvetljuje tudi izobraževalno vlogo arhivov. Avtorici še obravnavata vprašanje, kako in v kolikšnem obsegu vpliva uporaba arhivskega gradiva na razumevanje teme in spodbudi učence, dijake ali študente k obisku arhivskih ustanov ter izvajanju lastnih raziskav.*

**Ključne besede:**

*arhiv, arhivsko gradivo, izobraževanje, zgodovina, Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne*

## **1. Introduction**

The role of the archives in modern-day society is rapidly changing and expanding. From institutions known to the general public primarily for keeping, arranging and safeguarding documents of the state institutions and the institutions of local government or organizations, individuals and families with the important historical role now they are, or at least tend to be, institutions known also by their cultural and educational role.

Modernization of archival activity contributed, among other things, to an increase and improvement of activities related to the usage of archival materials, thus highlighting the importance of cultural and educational activity of the archive.

For a long time, archives and their role have been defined primarily through the function of “*collecting, storing and keeping of archival materials; however, archives are nowadays becoming active participants in the organization process of various cultural and educational activities*” (Vuk, 2014, p. 337) Primary users are getting more familiarized with them, and they acquire or expand their knowledge on the subject-matter at issue through presentation of archival materials.

Archive's educational capabilities can be realized through various methods of learning from archival materials, which expands that knowledge. Probably the best example for that is application of those experiences and learning from archival materials during work with pupils and students (Garić, Stančić, 2013, p. 209-240). That is why the main part of the paper will present experiences acquired during lectures to pupils in primary and secondary schools in Croatia and students, which focused on learning from various archival materials.

## 2. Development of archival pedagogy in Croatia

In the mid-20th-century archives started to open to the public and offer more services (Vuk, 2014, 3). Today, as it has been stated in the UK government report *Archives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2009) „publicly founded archives have a vital role within the communities, they serve to contribute to local democracy, strong and cohesive communities, social policy, education, research, history and culture” while “the variety and historical significance of the collections held in archives can empower citizens to participate in community decision and “can support people in developing a deep sense of place and identity“.

In Croatia, in the last couple of years special attention has been given to archival pedagogy as a potential for the development of archival activities and the modernization of the archives. The Croatian Archival Society has an important role in promoting archival pedagogy and it encourages archivists to participate in educational activities. At the 4<sup>th</sup> conference of Croatian archivists “Archives and Politics” held in Opatija in October 2013 the Society initiated founding of the Section for the development of archive pedagogy as well as implementation of the archival pedagogy in archives practice.<sup>1</sup>

Examples of educational activities of the archives from USA and Great Britain were presented at the Conference and inspired the founding of the Section. The British National Archives and the American National Archives were probably chosen as role models because these two institutions were identified as the world’s best (besides National Archives of Australia) in archive pedagogy in the research “Archival education activities in the online environment” presented at the conference in Dublin by Ana Garić, Hrvoje Stančić and Ana Stanković. (Garić, Stančić, Stanković, 2014, p. 4 – 5.). The British National Archive at the time had “education” as a special category on its web page where teachers and students could find history lessons, information on various workshops and other educational content. American National Archive, apart from the usual educational materials, also had and still has an online teaching tool called *DocsTeach* ([www.docsteach.org](http://www.docsteach.org)). Today, *DocsTeach* provides “access to thousands of primary sources such as letters, photographs, speeches, posters, maps, videos and other document types” to teachers, students and history explorers. The users can create their own activities using online tools ([www.docsteach.org](http://www.docsteach.org)).

Upon its founding, the Croatian Archival Society published the guidelines for the successful implementation of archival pedagogy in the archives. In short it means as cited: 1.) adding the title archive pedagogue in the “Decree on job titles and job complexity coefficients in public services”, 2.) making the educational activities of the archives richer and visible by organizing visits of children, pupils and students to the archives, organizing workshops, digitization of archival material for teaching purposes and publishing of these materials on the archives web pages, creating electronic teaching materials for researching and interpreting archive materials, 3.) establishing cooperation with schools and universities and 4.) giving the importance to the job of archive pedagogues as the employees who lead and coordinate team of experts and dedicate themselves to the educational activities of their archive ([www.had-info.hr](http://www.had-info.hr)).

The definition of the archive pedagogy has not yet been determined. First version of definition was presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> conference in Opatija in 2013 by Ana Garić and Hrvoje Stančić (Garić, Stančić, Zagreb, 2013). In her master thesis that deals with the contribution of archives to education, the archivist Ana Garić (2014) had suggested the same definition which was later included in the Croatian version of the Multilingual Archival Terminology – MAT (<https://inforz.ffzg.hr/Stancic/Arhivisticki-rjecnik/>). According

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<sup>1</sup> More: [www.had-info.hr](http://www.had-info.hr).

to Garić and Stančić archive pedagogy is “*an interdisciplinary field of archival science and pedagogy that deals with the preparation and processing of archival material for educational purposes in accordance with the age and interest of children, students and adults*” (Garić, 2014). Petra Đuričić in her master thesis “Educational activities of the national archives in the world” accepted this definition and added: “*Today archive pedagogy is a modern form of expanding archival activity. It is a window into new ways of using archival material in order to increase the visibility and importance of archives in the environment in which it operates and in the field of education of the existing and future users*” (Đuričić, 2018).

Some of the archives in Croatia have well designed educational activities. The Croatian Archival Society’s Section for the development of archive pedagogy organizes educational activities such as lectures and workshops and publishes brochures and handbooks ([www.had-info.hr](http://www.had-info.hr)). The Section had even developed six archival games that can be found on the Society’s webpage: archival quiz, quiz on the knowledge about the Croatian State Archive, memory game with Croatian archives, memory game with world archives, puzzle with archive records and archive dictionary ([www.had-info.hr](http://www.had-info.hr)).

There is still a room for improvement of archive pedagogy in Croatia, but one can say that important steps have been made last couple of years.

### **3. Educational activities organized by the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War (HMDCDR)**

Cultural and educational activities have been one of the main purposes of the Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War even since its establishment. Employees of HMDCDR regularly hold lectures about the Homeland War in elementary and high schools, and several employees regularly teach, or have occasionally taught, at faculty departments of modern Croatian history.

The Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War aims to follow modern trends in archive pedagogy and education by combining archives practice and scientific research. Special emphasis is given to the usage of the various archive materials such as official records, printed material, audio recording, photographic material, maps, etc. in the lectures. Besides paper records, Center has a large collection of digitalized documents which are most frequently used, same as the materials from the Collection of photographs and the Collection of video materials.

#### **3.1 Educational activities of the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War in the schools**

Examples of good practice of some state archives in Croatia and the Croatian State Archives show that there is a growing interest in the cooperation of history teachers and archives. However, it should be emphasized that this interest in cooperation is still more individual, and it depends on the interest and commitment of individual history teachers and schools that continuously show interest in such a form of cooperation.

The Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War cooperates with elementary and high schools in Croatia in different ways – by organizing lectures for the pupils in the Center or by holding lectures in schools at the invitation of history teachers or school principals in Croatia. Furthermore, elementary and high schools often organize individual school trips to HMDCDR, touring the Centre itself and requesting from the Centre that it, as a specialized archive, gives them an expert lecture about the Homeland War in Croatia. On such occasions, employees of HMDCDR make extensive



use of archive materials kept in the Centre. They mostly use documents, since they are the best means of substantiating the topic covered by a lecture, but also photographs and short video footages, which always arouse the strongest interest and attention. Pupils usually have the most questions after viewing video footages.

According to the experience of one of the authors of this paper in giving lectures organized for different groups of elementary and high school pupils from Croatia, but also for visitors from abroad (mainly university students) coming to the HMDCDR in order to hear a shorter, no longer than 45-minute lecture on the Homeland War or certain aspects of it (military, political, demographic, cultural, etc.) shows that, along with lectures and explanations of cause, course and consequences of a certain event related to the aforementioned subject-matter, the usage of archival materials has proven to be of immense significance for lectures. On one hand, by showing archival documents of certain events, as well as photographs and video footages which can, in the best way possible, evoke the atmosphere of the moment which is meant to be highlighted during a lecture, pupils/students, and especially foreigners, are presented with a concise, but well documented insight into events that are being discussed. On the other hand, photographs and video footages provoke an even greater reaction from the audience, arousing their interest both for the topic itself in general, but also for certain events and/or persons, and contributing to the development of critical thinking and formation of certain attitudes.

Some of the Center's employees had the opportunity to hold several professional lectures to primary school children on certain topics from the period of the Homeland War.

For the purpose of this research, we have invited our colleagues to share their teaching experiences in elementary and high schools by asking them three questions:

1. Where have you acquired your teaching experience?
2. What types of archival materials have you been using in teaching?
3. Which types of the archival materials are the most interesting to your pupils?

These were their experiences:

Dr. Ivan Radoš, senior archivist

*"I have had several opportunities to give lectures to primary school children of different ages about the Homeland War, especially Croatian military liberation operation Storm. In my preparations I have used published literature, and I have adapted my lectures to a shorter time frame, the occasion and age of pupils, so that they could learn important facts.*

*In my presentations/lectures I have used visual aids such as photographs, interactive maps and scanned images of original sources/documents originating from that time.*

*I can conclude that it was precisely those materials that the children had found most interesting, that is, which had attracted their greatest attention, as well as triggered various questions and active participation in post-lecture discussions. The same can also be said for original documents and maps, which the children would study with great attention and interest."*

Dr. Natko Martinić Jerčić, senior archivist

*"I have had several opportunities to give lectures to primary school children of different ages about the Homeland War, especially battle of Vukovar and Croatian liberation operations in Western Slavonia in 1991.*

*In my lectures I have used visual aids such as photographs, interactive maps and especially scanned images of original documents. The pupils were interested in all the presented archive materials, especially video footages and photographs. They have many questions when they see something in a photo or video footage."*

### **3.2 Educational activities of the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War and its employees in the higher education**

The Center cooperates with universities and faculties in Croatia in different ways – by organizing lectures for the students in the Center, in organizing conferences and by enrolment of its employees in the teaching at the faculties. For instance, Center cooperates with the Croaticum - the Centre for Croatian as a Second and Foreign Language. It is part of the Department of Croatian Language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb (<https://croaticum.ffzg.unizg.hr/>). Students of the Croaticum have been visiting the Center and attending the lectures on the history of the Homeland War. Within the lectures, students were presented with archive materials, including documents, maps, photographs and videos.

Another example of cooperation is the one with the Croatian Catholic University from Zagreb. As a part of the course "Introduction to the archival science", history students visited the Center and they were taught about the importance and significance of the Center's archives and the Center's organization. At the end of the lecture, students were presented with a selection of the most interesting archival materials connected with the events during and immediately after the end of the Homeland War ([www.unicath.hr](http://www.unicath.hr)).

### **3.3 Teaching experiences of the Center's employees in the higher education**

Some of the Center's employees have been teaching at the faculties with the approval of the Center's management. All of these employees have a PhD in history and most of them have scientific degrees as well as the title of a senior archivist or an archivist adviser. Their lectures are related to the Homeland War and the period of the breakup of Yugoslavia.

For the purpose of this research, we have invited our colleagues to share their teaching experiences by asking them three questions:

1. Where have you acquired your teaching experience?
2. What types of archival materials have you been using in teaching?
3. Which types of the archival materials are the most interesting to your students?

These were their answers:

Dr. Natko Martinić Jerčić, senior archivist

*“As an associate to professor Ante Nazor I have been teaching at the Zadar University since... at the course “Homeland War and creating of the sovereign Republic of Croatia”. Within the lectures we use maps, photographs, videos and document kept in the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War. The students are interested in all the presented archive materials, yet they find video materials the most interesting. According to my opinion as well videos illustrate the best the events taught in the course.”*

Dr. Ana Holjevac Tuković, senior archivist, assistant professor

*“In my elective course Catholic Church and the Homeland War at the Catholic University in Zagreb I have been using unconventional archive materials – videos and digital photographs as well as conventional archive materials – documents. Documents have been digitized for teaching purposes and presented in digital form. Students' interes for different types of archives varied depending on the subject but one can say that they were generally most interested in the photographs.”*

Dr. Slaven Ružić, senior archivist, research associate

*“During the winter semesters of academic years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (Department of History) I taught at the elective course Republic of Croatia and the Homeland War as an associate lecturer (lecturer: Dr. Goran Hutinec, assistant professor). While preparing the lectures, I mostly used archive records of the so-called Republic of Serbian Krajina which are kept in the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War. Besides the original documents of the Serbian provenance, I used military maps from the Center's Collection of the maps and the press from early 1990-s (newspapers and magazines). Students were very interested in all of these archive materials.”*

### **3.4 Authors' teaching experiences in the higher education**

Both authors of this paper have had teaching experiences at the faculties.

Dr. Željka Križe, senior archivist and research associate has taught at the Department of History at the Zagreb University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the elective course Yugoslavia 1986 – 1991 - the Road to the Disintegration and War as an associate lecturer (lecturer: Dr. Goran Hutinec, assistant professor) during three academic years (2018/2019 - 2020/2021).

The course dealt with socio-political processes that preceded the disintegration of the Yugoslav federation and the war in the period which took place from 1986 and the adoption of the Draft of the SANU Memorandum until the beginning of the armed conflict in Croatia in 1991. Students were also presented with the key events in Yugoslavia and their consequences at the republic and federal levels as well as different perspectives and perceptions of historical events in different nations. The process of shaping stereotypes and the process of the construction of the enemy were also explained within the course.



Due to the specifics of the topic, the most important source for the course was the newspapers from the period 1986 – 1991. In the teaching in the great extent digitized newspapers and articles from the Center's Digital Library and digitized articles from personal collection created for the purposes of author's doctoral dissertation were used.

Newspaper articles and especially newspaper covers and headlines were very interesting to the students and were often commented on. In addition to the newspapers, the Collection of digital photos and videos was also very useful in teaching. To a lesser extent memoirs and interviews were also used.

Students were given the task to choose one event and analyze the newspaper articles on the topic. The minority had decided to analyze the primary historical sources i.e. the documents and when they did, those were mainly ones published by the Center. Some of the students however were combining the newspapers and the documents for their research.

One of the learning outcomes of the course was the ability to draw one's own conclusions based on newspapers articles as a secondary historical source and to learn how to study archival material by the methods of analysis and comparison. The students had also learned were to find and how to order the newspapers they need and were to find the documents and how to use them. They were also informed about the Center's digital collection of photos and videos and the terms of use were explained to them.

Dr. Julija Barunčić Pletikosić, senior archivist, assistant professor, is teaching at the Department of History at the Catholic University in Zagreb at the elective course Catholic Church and the Homeland War 1991 – 1998. The course deals with the most important events related to the disintegration of Yugoslav Federation and democratic changes in Croatia, the causes and consequences of the Homeland War in Croatia and the role and activities of the Catholic Church in Croatia all of these events.

The most important archival sources are original documents of Serbian provenance when it comes to the formation and activities of the Serbian parastate in Croatia between 1991 and 1995, also photographs and video footages, especially in the context of showing the consequences of the aggression against Croatia (photographs and video footages of destruction of cultural monuments and heritage, material destruction of towns, hospitals, churches, monasteries, etc.). Student reactions are always positive, and their great interest in a certain topic presented to them in such a way proves that it is precisely archival resources that are awakening their interest for certain aspects of the subject-matter of the war in Croatia. The usage of archival resources in education helps present a certain event in greater detail, explain the cause of certain events and the consequences, demonstrate the scale of destruction, etc.

### **3.5 The Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War activities in the professional training of the teachers**

The Center is actively engaged in professional training of the primary and high school history teachers. Every year in collaboration with the Educational and Teacher Training Agency, the Center organizes national professional conferences for the teachers on the Homeland War. To these conferences, the Center and the Agency invite war veterans to talk to the teachers about their experiences in the war, the researches of the history of the Homeland War, archivists and museum curators. ([www.centardomovinskograta.hr](http://www.centardomovinskograta.hr)).

The latest conference was held in February 2022 in collaboration with the Zadar University. The conference topics were "Anti-tank combat" and "The war photography in the Homeland War. The latter topic was presented in the collaboration with the Croatian History Museum. The Center's Head of the Archives Department presented the examples of a good practice, the Center's Collection of photographs and the possibilities of their use for the educational purposes. The Center plans to continue with its activities in the professional training of the teachers.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Experiences in cultural and educational activities of the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War as a specialized archive, presented in the paper, based on the experiences of their employees, show that the Center participates in the continuous implementation of this type of activity and does not lag behind examples of good practice of other archives in Croatia when it comes to developing and improving archival pedagogy.

Based on the experiences of the Center's employees, including the authors of the paper, it is evident that most of the students are interested in photographs, video materials, original documents and newspaper articles. The students' interest in any kind of archive material is important since the presentation of the historical i. e. archive materials provides them with a broader perspective and it teaches them about the significance and the usage of the archive records and the archives. It is important because by dealing with the archival materials, especially when it comes to photo or video materials, students get the most precise frame of the past on the basis of which they then best develop their own critical thinking. In this way, archival practice illustrates the educational role of archives. Besides educating pupils and students, the Center is consistently involved in the education of the history teachers by organizing conferences and seminars where they can learn more about the historical events and processes as well as the archive materials related to the Homeland War. Nevertheless, there is still a place for improvement and the Croatian Memorial Documentation Center of the Homeland War plans to continue and intensify its activities in education and archive pedagogy in accordance with the modern trends in archive science.

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## POVZETEK

### IZOBRAŽEVALNA DEJAVNOST HRVAŠKEGA SPOMINSKEGA DOKUMENTACIJSKEGA CENTRA DOMOVINSKE VOJNE

#### **Dr. Julija BARUNČIĆ PLETIKOSIĆ**

Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne, Zagreb, Hrvaška  
[julija.baruncic@centardomovinskograta.hr](mailto:julija.baruncic@centardomovinskograta.hr)

#### **Dr. Željka KRIŽE**

Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne, Zagreb, Hrvaška  
[zeljka.krize@centardomovinskograta.hr](mailto:zeljka.krize@centardomovinskograta.hr)

Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne je specializiran arhiv in znanstvena ustanova z nalogo zbiranja, urejanja, varovanja, raziskovanja in objave arhivskega gradiva hrvaške domovinske vojne. Poleg teh glavnih nalog se center ukvarja z izobraževalno dejavnostjo, organizacijo in izvedbo predavanj za osnovne in srednje šole, univerze in učitelje zgodovine. Avtorici predstavljata izobraževalne dejavnosti na primerih različnih tipov lekcij ter opišeta metodologijo in vsebino izobraževanja. V uvodu predstavita teorijo arhivske pedagogike in njenega razvoja na Hrvaškem ter dobre prakse v hrvaških arhivih. V zadnjih letih je bilo na Hrvaškem veliko pozornosti namenjene razvoju arhivske pedagogike in razvoju arhivskih aktivnosti ter modernizaciji arhivov. Hrvaško arhivsko društvo igra pri tem pomembno vlogo in spodbuja arhiviste k sodelovanju.

Društvo je tako objavilo smernice za uspešno izvajanje arhivske pedagogike v arhivih. Tem smernicam sledu tudi Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne.

Glavni del prispevka je namenjen predstavitvi izobraževalne dejavnosti Hrvaškega spominskega dokumentacijskega centra domovinske vojne. Center želi slediti sodobnim trendom v arhivski pedagogiki in izobraževanju s kombiniranjem dveh njegovih glavnih aktivnosti – arhivske prakse in znanstvenega raziskovanja. Posebna pozornost je namenjena uporabi različnih kategorij arhivskega gradiva centra, kot so uradni zapisi, posnetki, fotografije, zemljevidi itd. Poleg gradiva na papirju ima center tudi veliko zbirko digitiziranih dokumentov, ki so še posebej uporabni in priročni za uporabo na predavanjih. Gradivo iz Zbirke fotografij in Zbirke video gradiva je v tej zvezi najpogosteje uporabljeno. Pri delu z izvornim arhivskim gradivom dobijo učenci vpogled v preteklost in tako razvijajo svoje kritično razmišljanje.

Avtorici še obravnavata vprašanje, kako in v kolikšnem obsegu vpliva uporaba arhivskega gradiva na razumevanje teme in spodbudi učence, dijake ali študente k obisku arhivskih ustanov ter izvajanju lastnih raziskav. Prav to prispeva k popularizaciji arhivov in arhivske znanosti. Avtorici sta povabili nekaj izmed sodelavcev, da so delili svoje izkušnje glede uporabe arhivskega gradiva v šolah. Prav tako sta predstavili svoje izkušnje.

Hrvaški spominski dokumentacijski center domovinske vojne se je aktivno vključil v izobraževanje učiteljev in sodeluje z Izobraževalno agencijo za učitelje pri organizaciji seminarjev in strokovnih konferenc o domovinski vojni. Na konference so vabljeni vojni veterani, ki spregovorijo o svojih vojnih izkušnjah, in zgodovinarji, kuratorji in učitelji, ki predstavljajo svoje raziskave in strokovne izkušnje.