

Dobrogea Day celebrated in education

Orzan Constantin ^{1*}

¹ „Decebal Theoretical High School”, Constanta, Romania

*Corresponding author: orzan.constantin@gmail.com

Abstract. The paper presents the significance of Dobrogea Day in an educational context, highlighting its role in shaping learners' identity and civic spirit. The importance of the region's multiculturalism and the values promoted by this celebration are analysed. The study describes specific ways of celebrating in schools, such as interdisciplinary projects and artistic activities, and provides an example of good practice: the photo exhibition "Faces and Places of Dobrogea". The paper argues that such activities can serve as educational tools that support tolerance, dialogue and social cohesion.

Keywords: Dobrogea Day; Multicultural education; Cultural identity; Civic education; Experiential learning; Intercultural dialogue.

1. Introduction

Dobrogea Day, celebrated annually on 14 November, marks the moment when this historic region returned to Romania following the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 (Ionescu, 2015). The event has special significance not only from a historical perspective, but also from a cultural and identity perspective (Muresan, 2012). In recent years, the Romanian education system has begun to pay greater attention to this holiday, transforming it into an opportunity for learning, reflection and appreciation of diversity. In schools and high schools, Dobrogea Day is becoming an ideal setting for cultivating respect for the region's historical heritage and multiculturalism.

This paper aims to highlight the educational value of Dobrogea Day and to present practical ways in which this celebration can be integrated into school activities.

2. The importance of Dobrogea Day in education

The introduction of this holiday into educational activities contributes to the formation of a civic spirit and identity among learners. Dobrogea is a unique area due to the harmonious coexistence of numerous ethnic groups - Romanians, Turks, Tatars, Aromanians, Greeks, Lipovans, Bulgarians - which have shaped a diverse and tolerant social landscape over time (Ionescu, 2015). In the educational process, this diversity provides an opportunity to discuss values such as solidarity, intercultural dialogue and respect for heritage.

Celebrating Dobrogea Day in schools encourages learners to explore historical themes such as the War of Independence, the role of Carol I in unification, as well as geographical, economic and cultural aspects of the region. Activities such as map making, exhibitions or multimedia presentations stimulate learners' creativity and critical thinking, while consolidating the knowledge acquired (Olas, 2018).

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3. Ways of celebrating in schools

Schools and high schools across the country mark Dobrogea Day with a variety of activities tailored to the age and interests of learners. The most common are:

- Artistic activities: painting exhibitions, thematic collages, making traditional Dobrogea costumes.
- Interdisciplinary projects: lessons combining history, geography, literature and civic education.
- Special guests: representatives of ethnic communities, historians, museum curators.
- Themed excursions: visits to historical monuments such as the Adamclisi Monument, the Carol I Mosque or the Histria Fortress (Ministry of Education, 2020).
- Gastronomic moments: tastings of traditional Turkish, Tatar or Romanian dishes, designed to showcase the region's multicultural cuisine.
- Workshops on traditional Dobrudjan dance and music: learners can discover Dobrujan folk dance steps or listen to and perform traditional songs from different ethnic communities in the area, thus discovering new forms of cultural expression (Constanta Museum, 2017).

These activities encourage learners' active participation and contribute to their socio-cultural development. The energy and enthusiasm shown by the participants demonstrate that history can be learned in an attractive way when it becomes part of a real experience, not just theoretical content.

Example of good practice: "Faces and Places of Dobrogea" Photo exhibition

The general objective of the activity is to help learners discover the cultural and natural heritage of Dobrogea by analysing, selecting and presenting relevant photographs of the region.

More specifically, the activity aims to:

- Identify the cultural, historical and geographical elements specific to Dobrogea;
- Develop their skills in documenting and selecting information;
- Stimulate creativity by creating a thematic exhibition;
- Use images as a learning resource.

The activity requires printed or digital photographs illustrating monuments, landscapes, traditions and communities in Dobrogea. Additional materials may include A3 sheets or exhibition panels, labels for titles and descriptions, markers, glue and adhesive tape. For the digital version of the exhibition, applications such as Canva or Google Slides may be used.

The main stages of the activity, together with their description and estimated duration, are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1: good practice: "Faces and Places of Dobrogea".

Activity	Description	Duration
Introduction	The teacher briefly presents the significance of Dobrogea Day and explains the theme of the project: creating a photo exhibition that highlights the diversity and beauty of the region.	10 min
Collecting photographs	Learners are invited to bring photographs: - taken by them on trips to Dobrogea; - downloaded from reliable sources, with mention of the author and licence; - suggested by the teacher from albums or online archives. Suggested topics: Histria Fortress; Tropaeum Traiani Monument; Carol I Mosque; Constanța Port; Derwent Monastery; Danube Delta; traditional Dobrujan villages; traditional costumes, dances, gastronomy, etc.	Photos are collected before the activity itself or as homework
Selecting and analysing photos	Working in teams of 3–4, learners select 5–8 representative photographs. For each photograph, they note: - What it represents; - Why it is important for Dobrogea; - What cultural/natural elements it highlights; - Its connection to the diversity of the region.	20-30 min
Creating the exhibition	Learners create a poster (physical or digital using Padlet or Canva entitled "Faces and Places of Dobrogea" which includes: the selected photos; titles and short descriptions; colours and graphic elements inspired by Dobrogea (sea blue, traditional motifs, ethnic symbols, etc.). https://canva.link/7wh0pwwben0ex4m https://canva.link/es8yxrw4oa9wq30 The poster can be displayed in the school hallway, in the classroom or on the school's online platform.	30–40 min
Presentation of the exhibition	Each team presents the panel they have created, explaining why they chose those images and what they discovered about Dobrogea.	10–15 min
Final reflection	The teacher asks: - What surprised you most about Dobrogea? - Which photo do you find most representative and why? - How do the images reflect the multiculturalism of the region?	5 min

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Outcome of the activity. At the end, the class will have an attractive visual exhibition that helps learners visually and intuitively understand the richness of Dobrogea: landscapes, historical monuments, traditions and ethnic diversity.

4. Educational relevance for learner development

Dobrogea Day meets some fundamental educational objectives: promoting local and national identity, developing civic skills and understanding the common past of communities in Romania. Through direct contact with Dobrogea traditions, young people form a clearer picture of the cultural diversity that defines the Romanian space.

In addition, celebrating this day can strengthen the cohesion of the school community and help prevent cultural stereotypes or prejudices. Learners discover that differences between people are not obstacles, but valuable resources for a democratic and pluralistic society.

5. Conclusions

Dobrogea Day, celebrated in education, goes beyond the status of a simple historical commemoration. It becomes a tool for shaping a culture of respect, tolerance and diversity. Through various activities, young people come to understand the importance of this region in Romania's history and its multicultural present. Such initiatives are ways for schools to contribute to the development of a society that is aware of its past and open to dialogue and cooperation.

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