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**RESTORING THE MEMORIES OF PLACES  
AT THE NICOLAUS COPERNICUS UNIVERSITY (NCU).  
ON THE PROCESS OF STUDENTS' LEARNING  
THROUGH POPULARIZATION ACTIVITIES**

**PRZYWRACAJĄC PAMIĘĆ MIEJSCOM (UMK).  
O PROCESIE UCZENIA SIĘ STUDENTÓW PRZEZ DZIAŁANIA POPULARYZATORSKIE**

**ABSTRACT:** This paper presents considerations regarding the results of idiographic research carried out within the course of four cycles of an interdisciplinary project: „Students towards the places of (non)memory at Nicolaus Copernicus University”. On a theoretical level, the project was based, among other things, on the concept of memorial sites of Pierre Nora. In terms of methodology the project was based on action research supported by the analysis and interpretation of empirical data collected through the search for sources, (focus) interviews and (self)observation which was subject to thick description. On a didactic level, the project was built around the assumptions of a critical and emancipation paradigm of student education. In the presentation of the results of the project, emphasis was placed on the description of the multi-faceted process of learning by organizing popularizing activities. The process gave project participants the opportunity to be the subjects of their own practice, and its multi-faceted cognition, which fostered critical reflection – by taking into account the context or feedback – and resulted in the formulation of conclusions for the future. In order to show the specificity of the presented process, the text shows the characteristics of the stages of implementation of individual popularization initiatives (planning and preparation stage, public presentation stage and evaluation stage).

**KEYWORDS:** learning by doing, action research, places of (living) memory, critical and emancipation paradigm of student education, educational and research project.

**ABSTRAKT:** W artykule zaprezentowano rozważania dotyczące wyników idiograficznych poszukiwań, przeprowadzonych w toku realizacji czterech cykli interdyscyplinarnego projektu edukacyjno-badawczego „Studenci wobec miejsc (nie)pamięci UMK”. W warstwie teoretycznej projekt ten opierał się m.in. na koncepcji miejsc pamięci Pierre’a Nory, w warstwie metodologicznej osadzony został w ramach badań w działaniu, wsparty analizą i interpretacją danych empirycznych zgromadzonych dzięki przeszukiwaniu źródeł wtórnych, wywiadów na podstawie zdjęć, czy też podporządkowanej gęstemu opisowi (samo)obserwacji, w warstwie dydaktycznej zaś zbudowany został wokół założeń krytyczno-emancypacyjnego paradygmatu kształcenia studentów. Ukazując rezultaty projektu, skoncentrowano się na opisie doświadczanego przez jego uczestników wieloaspektowego procesu uczenia się przez działania popularyzatorskie, który dawał możliwość bycia podmiotem własnej praktyki, jej wieloaspektowego poznania, sprzyjał krytycznemu namysłowi – uwzględniającemu kontekst czy reakcje zwrotne, a w efekcie formułowaniu/wyciąganiu wniosków na przyszłość. W celu ukazania specyfiki prezentowanego procesu w tekście przedstawiono charakterystykę etapów realizacji po-

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szczególnych inicjatyw popularyzatorskich (etap planowania i przygotowywania, etap publicznej prezentacji i etap ewaluacji), których organizacji proces ten towarzyszył.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: uczenie się przez działanie, badania w działaniu, miejsca (żywej) pamięci, krytyczno-emancypacyjny paradygmat kształcenia studentów, projekt edukacyjno-badawczy.

## Introduction

An appreciation of the extra-spatial nature of a place as can be observed in the social sciences and the humanities corresponds to the significant extension of the scope of understanding places of memory, which Pierre Nora (2009) defines as points of condensation and expression of the capital of collective memory. Nowadays, almost all manifestations of the presence of the past in modern times are called places of memory. Importantly, places of memory understood in this way can play the function of places of living memory, i.e. localized elements of material and symbolic space which specific communities realistically identify with. These elements are accepted not because they have the official support of the authorities and have been imposed authoritatively/top-down, but because they crystallize the context and collective approval, and thus affect the activities currently undertaken by these communities and, as a consequence, decide about their future. Places of memory understood in this way are significant not only from the point of view of the nation, but also of other social groups, e.g. families, friends, or people living in a given region. They are based on heterogeneous and contextual memory, which not only professional historians have the right to interpret. Thus, owing to the complexity of their essence, these places can constitute a pedagogically popular category, and serve as impulses/catalysts of formal, non-formal, and informal education addressed to all age groups. It should be remembered, however, that for a given place, including a place of memory together with its associated multitude of meanings and senses, to last and form the foundation of human subjectivity (Malpas 1999, p. 35), it must be made aware of and experienced (Kurantowicz 2003, p. 96; Mendel 2015; Muszyńska 2014, pp. 17-18).

An example of an educational and research process that uses the educational potential of places of (living) memory can be the interdisciplinary project "Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory" developed and coordinated by me, the four cycles of which were carried out in response to the increasingly common students' perception of their university (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń) in the category of "non-place" (Augé 2010). A total of 87 students, including 76 female students and 11 male students, of NCU of various courses, first, second and third degree studies, as well as senior citizens, pre-schoolers and early education pupils took part in this undertaking which was implemented in the space of the University of Toruń, inscribed in the wider perspective of the city.

Following the desideratum that practising pedagogy should not be limited to getting to know reality but should also be a platform for its transformation/improvement (Michalak 2011, p. 512), methodologically the presented project was embedded in the *action research* model. The model was supported by semantic and semiotic analysis and the interpretation of data collected using participant observation and self-observation subordinated to dense description, group interviews based on photos, as well as searching secondary sources, including essays, the subject of which was students' reflections on their participation in the project and entries in diaries regarding the results of their self-observation<sup>1</sup>.

My research focused on three basic research questions, whose formulation was inspired by Elżbieta Wołodźko (2013) book titled *Ku autonomii studiowania. Procesy, znaczenia, konteksty, zmiana* [*Towards the autonomy of studying. Processes, meanings, contexts, change*], i.e.

1. What contexts accompany the education orientated towards NCU places of memory?
2. What processes occur during the education orientated towards NCU places of memory and what is their significance for the learning of its participants?
3. What changes accompany the education orientated towards NCU places of memory?

The answer to the above questions was related to the attainment of the following objectives:

- cognitive – a view from a broader perspective on the issues of the educational potential of places of memory, so far considered in the literature of the subject primarily in the context of the Holocaust and historical education; the characterization/reconstruction of the educational process based on NCU places of memory;
- methodological – verification of the usefulness of the action research procedure in pedagogical studies on memorial sites (NCU);
- teaching – using the potential of (NCU) places of (living) memory as a result of applying the methodical assumptions of the critical-emancipatory paradigm in educating students; improvement of one's own teaching and research technique;
- practical – social activation of students.

In the teaching layer, however, the project operated within the critical-emancipatory paradigm of educating students which is built around the assumption that man is a free being capable of transforming reality and even changing that reality for a better

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<sup>1</sup> In reference to the empirical data obtained in the course of the research, depending on the source, I will use the following symbols: i – interview, e – essay, and d – diary. Information on the number of the cycle will be marked using: I, II, III, IV whilst gender will be expressed as: W – woman, M – man, e.g. (i, I, W), and in the case of diaries with the date of an entry (dd.mm.year) – e.g. (d, II, 23.03.2013, W).

one (Sajdak 2013, pp. 429-467). Combining historical content with the pedagogical method of its modern communication, the presented undertaking was based primarily on students' own work, i.e. the students had the opportunity to be active co-explorers of the constructed educational situations.

This article presents reflections on the process of learning through popularizing activities which accompanies the implementation of the project "Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory". To present the specificity of this process the initiatives focusing on it, which were aimed at restoring memory to NCU places, were described and the stages of their implementation were characterized. Referring to the empirical data collected in the course of the research, the focus was on showing the multi-faceted aspect of the described educational process.

### **The process of teaching (learning) through popularizing activities**

An integral/constitutive element of all the cycles of the "Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory" project was the process of creating initiatives (including the planning and preparation stage, the public presentation stage and the evaluation stage<sup>2</sup>) the aim of which was to popularize knowledge about the NCU places of memory and, thus, to take actions to restore the memory of the people or events commemorated by these places. It was the participation in these activities that the students devoted most space to in their written and oral statements about the project. These narratives were related to multiple initiatives including: urban games organized in each cycle, the Internet portal "Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory" ([www.miejscapamieci.umk.pl](http://www.miejscapamieci.umk.pl)) opened in the second cycle and supplemented with new content in two subsequent cycles, publications, i.e. *The student guide to the NCU places of memory* (cycle two) and *The interactive guide to the places of memory of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń* (fourth cycle), interactive Toruń sightseeing routes regarding the past of Nicolaus Copernicus University (third cycle), or interviews as records of NCU's oral history (cycle four). At the same time, the analysis of the empirical material gathered in the course

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<sup>2</sup> Students could participate in all stages of creating the above-mentioned popularizing initiatives only in the case of urban games and the first version of the portal "Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory" opened during the second cycle. In the case of other activities carried out as part of the project, namely the publication of *The interactive guide to the places of memory of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń*, interactive city sightseeing routes regarding the past of Nicolaus Copernicus University, and interviews as records of NCU's oral history, student participation was limited to the planning and preparation stage, which was directly related to the specificity of the publishing process or the varied time of sending/handing in materials prepared by students, which in consequence led to their posting on the project website only after the end of a given cycle. Thus, it was impossible to make a public presentation of these materials during the given cycle and evaluate how they were received.

of the research makes it possible to conclude that the specificity of the multi-faceted learning processes accompanying the involvement (to any degree) in creating one of these popularizing initiatives was mainly associated with the nature of a given stage of working on them and, thus, the activities performed as part of this stage.

## 1. The planning and preparation stage

At the stage of planning and preparation, students made, among other things, decisions regarding the type and form of popularization initiative on which they would work together. First, they discussed and refined the details of the created initiative then, after prior investigation, they determined which NCU places of memory would be receive a dedicated initiative. Information on selected NCU places of memory was collected by analysing the literature and conducting interviews with students, graduates, teaching and administrative staff of the university, both professionally active and retired. Moreover, the students dealt with formal issues related to the staging of public presentations of the prepared initiative; they organised events to promote the public presentations and, thus, solicited for the participation of the largest possible audience in it; they also made decisions about the evaluation method.

First, the participating students reflected on the actions that were part of the stage of planning and preparing specific popularizing initiatives (Czerepaniak-Walczak 1997, pp. 17-19). This meant experiencing a more or less critical reflection which can be associated with the ability to understand one's own actions and the ability to search for creative solutions to meet the expectations and needs of those who are recipients of these actions, while ensuring their educational effectiveness. The statements of the project participants allow us to state that the presented type of reflection took place mainly during intra-group negotiations which resulted in intellectual exchange and made the building of skills to participate in the democratic decision-making process possible.

*Weekly meetings with the host and students participating in the project, whose comments and ideas were extremely important and useful, helped me a lot. During those meetings, it was felt that we all wanted the texts we wrote and the website on which we were to post them to really interest young people such as students. Therefore, following our reflection and joint discussions, we decided that in our texts we would focus not only on dates, but that we would show the human face of the people and events we present through curiosities or fragments of statements – memories (e, II, W).*

Joint negotiations were also associated with building the ability to speak in a group and, thus, to publicly express one's own views and ideas.

*By nature, I am a shy person, but today, wanting to present to the group my idea for a task for game participants, I gathered my strength and spoke in the forum ☺. I am glad that I did, because it turned out that the participants in the meeting liked my idea, and the arguments in support of it, which I had prepared earlier, were enough to convince the undecided ☺ (d, IV, 29.10.2014, W).*

The reflection on actions related to the planning and preparation stage also had an individual dimension. The words cited below confirm that this reflection concerned not only the technical/organizational side of a popularization initiative (in this case the urban game) but was also associated with the construction of the subjective alphabet of NCU places of memory.

*After the class, I “got down to” browsing books to find something about the places that in my opinion are adequate to appear on the route of an urban game. The first place that I singled out was the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences located at 6/8 Fredry St., and I started to select information about it. I chose it mainly because when I was studying at Nicolaus Copernicus University it was there that our dean’s office was located, and some of our classes were conducted there. I have an impression that history is happening right before my eyes” ☺ Another place is Collegium Minus (1a Fosa Staromiejska St.), the colloquial name of which is “Harmonica” because of the facade that resembles it. In the first year, as the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences did not have “its own place at Nicolaus Copernicus University”, classes were also held here. [...] And finally, the place where I spend a lot of time especially now, in my final year, i.e. the Main Library. When I look at all of them now, I know that my places are not quite well deployed when it comes to logistics. If they really were to be places/stops of the Urban Game, it would probably not work out well. I have to think it over again (d, IV, 23.10.2014, W).*

The participation of students in activities related to the planning and preparation of popularizing initiatives has also led to the (self-)reflection on their own (lack of) knowledge about Nicolaus Copernicus University and its past as well as places of memory commemorating this past.

*I was thinking of questions for game participants regarding NCU. I know so little about it myself. It was only today (!) that I found out where the Academic Museum is. I had not been interested in it earlier (d, III, 27.03.2014, W).*

Above all, however, the participation of students in the planning and preparation of popularization initiatives, especially urban games, was associated with their increased mobilization for the independent assimilation of thematically diverse historical knowledge. It was conducive to conducting a search that makes the perception of the temporal perspective, the history of Nicolaus Copernicus University and Toruń, as well as the socio-moral issues falling within the framework of universal history possible.

*It was through our urban game we conducted that I have learnt the most about places of memory. At that time, we had to determine its route, which motivated me to read not only about the history of Nicolaus Copernicus University but also about the history of the city. It was then that I acquired a lot of knowledge about what is where. Out of sheer curiosity, after reviewing the materials that I had found, I went to the city to see for myself, not through illustrations in books or the Internet, the buildings where the events that I had read about had taken place, and where the people who took part in them walked, and where now normal life is taking place (e, II, W).*

The narrative of another student indicates that in her case the mobilization to broaden historical knowledge was connected with the need to draw on it (often against the practice prevailing so far) from various sources.

*What a shock! I usually just type an entry in the search engine, and that is it, but now it is different. Not only did I have a conversation with my relatives and older friends today about what dishes were once served in canteens but I also ordered a book in the library, and tomorrow I am going to the reading room for the first time in my life (it's a disgrace, I know :p) to browse an album with fashion from those years. On the one hand, I got interested and, on the other hand, I have to admit that I want to present myself well and I want our game to be the best © (d, III, 14.03.2014, W).*

However, the statement of another student suggests that for her the participation in the preparation of *The interactive guide to the places of memory of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń* became not only a reason to search for historical knowledge in various sources, but also to consider the information obtained in this way, and above all to reflect on the discrepancies between the content contained in these sources.

*Another challenge for me was to find information about the people to whom individual NCU places of memory were dedicated, and whose biographical entries I decided to prepare for our book. To this end, I went to the university reading room and I also borrowed a multitude of books as well as used the most convenient source of information, i.e. the Internet. In each of these places I managed to find information of interest to me, although I honestly admit that it differed in content, even in the case of the same individual. In addition, some people were described in a very detailed and accurate way, while the biographical entries of others were quite scanty and lacking in information. I wondered why this was so; was it because of the not very accurate treatment of the topic? The lack of delving into the biography of individual people? Or maybe it resulted from the fact that these distinguished people best guarded their privacy, that they did not want to reveal the facts of their private life too much? (e, IV, W).*

The doubts and observations related to the results of the conducted historical searches were also shared by individual students in the forum of their project groups, including when we jointly planned urban game routes, discussed the teaching materials (posters) used during these games, and worked on the structure of the texts that were to be included in the publications prepared as part of the project. At the time, these voices became the starting point for reflection on the objectivity and indisputability of scientific knowledge. They made it possible to hold unforced discussions on, e.g. the relationship between the context in which a given study was created and its content. Importantly, during these discussions, students referred not only to the multiplicity of interpretations of specific events from the past and the possible causes of this phenomenon but also deliberated on contemporary events and ways of presenting them in various (mass) media. At the same time, it could be seen that for some students it was a completely new issue, which – as they declared themselves – they had never thought about, while for others it was almost obvious.

The involvement of students in collecting and analysing information on independently selected (NCU) places of memory, and in particular the figures/events commemorated by them, fostered the establishment of emotional bonds with these figures/events and, as a result, a real identification with them. This phenomenon was particularly evident during the second cycle of the project, when the students dealt with the historical searches concerning the same places of memory (and therefore the figures/events they commemorate) both as part of the work on the urban game and *The student guide to the NCU places of memory*. At that time, project participants very often spoke about the figures/events that were in the centre of their interest not only with sympathy but also with admiration. During joint meetings, they even competed in sharing the information they had obtained, in a way that would result in getting others interested in the subject of their own inquiries.

For some people, participation in the preparation of popularizing initiatives was an opportunity to develop social competences, including working on their own fears and limitations, and thus developing skills to cope with stress and increase self-confidence. This thesis is mainly confirmed by the students' statements regarding contacts with various institutions/persons in order to complete formalities or acquire awards or patronage.

*I was at the Faculty of Fine Arts today to file our request for permission to carry out a stage of our "Game" at this Faculty. I was a bit confused because at first, I didn't know where and to whom I should go with this request. So, I went to the dean's office, where a very nice lady directed me to the vice dean who granted his consent without any problems. The vice dean was very surprised that we were organizing such a "game". He asked me a little about the purpose of organizing it; fortunately, I was able to answer all the questions. With the signed request, I went to the porters' lodge to leave a photocopy of it (consent). Although at the beginning I was under stress, it turned out that I did not need to become stressed because everyone in this faculty was very nice and helpful, and I was able to do the errand "on the spot" and quite quickly. (d, III, 9.04.2014, W).*

A few days later the same student wrote:

*Each of us was to choose a place (restaurant, bakery, etc.) and go there and ask if they would like to sponsor us (our "game") (i.e. give us some prizes, discount cards, etc.). Today, I went to the Old Town for this purpose. First, I went to the "Kefrek" restaurant; there, a man said straight away that they could not afford to sponsor us. Next, I went to "Metropolis"; there, a lady said that I would have to write an e-mail concerning this matter to their office. After coming home, I wrote an e-mail to "Metropolis", asking if it was possible for them to sponsor our game. I hope that they will answer soon and agree. Just like when I was going to the Faculty of Fine Arts to file our request, also this time stress accompanied me (less than at that time, but it still did). However, it quickly turned out that there was nothing to be afraid of; as they say, "the devil's not so black as he is painted". I think that thanks to such tasks our self-confidence increases; mine certainly has and thanks to this task I also know that I am able to cope with many seemingly stressful situations (d, III, 14.04.2014, W).*



Another participant in the project indicated that she had overcome her own social limitations by participating in conducting and recording interviews that were a record of the NCU's oral history.

*I think I liked breaking the shyness barriers the most. This could be seen, for example, during the interviews. A very useful skill, overcoming embarrassment (e, IV, W).*

The (selected) fragments of diaries and essays cited above also attest to the fact those formulating them derive a lot of satisfaction from the successes they achieved in the field of implemented activities and, at the same time, that these successes gave them a sense of greater operability in independent and collective action.

## **2. Public presentation stage**

During another stage of creating popularizing initiatives, students undertook activities related to the public presentation of the results of their work so far and supervised the proper course of the undertaking being implemented. When conducting the urban games, they acted, among other things, as guides telling others about the history of individual stations/places of memory, and thus the figures and events associated with them. The students presented the content found on the posters which were specially prepared for this occasion and explained to the game participants the rules for completing the tasks related to individual stations/places of memory. They then assessed the completion of the tasks, selected the winning team/teams and summarized the entire undertaking, during which they used various evaluation methods. These included for example: group discussion, small (sticky) cards on which participants could write their observations and which they could stick to posters with the inscriptions: "What I liked in the game was ...", "I would like to improve ...".

Moreover, during a meeting addressed to the academic community, which was devoted to the launching of the "Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory" portal, where *The student guide to the NCU places of memory* was published, the students talked about the project and their work on the guide and portal. They presented the layout and content of the guide and portal, answered questions from the audience and held a discussion on the content of the portal and its visual side.

The presented activities, which were addressed to various audiences and were associated with the perception of various emotions, were a particularly intensified educational experience for the students and constituted an opportunity for project participants to develop cognitively and socially, and, consequently, to build their ability to cooperate and support each other.

*Before starting the presentation of our website, I was slightly stressed because I wanted to present myself in the best way and not to let myself and others down before the people who had come. But it quickly turned out that there was nothing to worry about. We operated like a well-oiled machine ☺. We supported each other (even with a smile and a nod when one of us spoke) and helped each other, e.g. by supplementing each other's statements (e, II, W).*

Thanks to the public nature of the presented activities, the students had the opportunity to develop the skills of public speaking and to prove themselves in practice as educators, while some of them intensified the process of their own learning by teaching others.

*Talking about my text in our guide, and above all answering questions about its hero, Professor Sokołowski. I felt like a teacher, like a person who wants to convey as much as possible to his or her listeners. I did not want to let them down, because I did not want to disappoint the Professor ☺. I wanted my words to encourage them to visit our website in search of a larger dose of information about him and the other people and events that commemorate the places of memory of Nicolaus Copernicus University. I got so involved in this task that I can still remember a lot of facts and curiosities from the professor's life and I will probably never forget them (e, II, W).*

It is also significant that the students themselves emphasized that their participation in conducting urban games made it possible for them to build specific social and communication competences, which, as we can suppose, may increase their effectiveness during the implementation of other collective activities.

*During the game itself and in its course, it was possible to deepen the ability to control the group and the situation (e, III, W).*

Continuing the analyses, it can be stated that the participation of individual people in the public presentation of popularizing initiatives, in particular conducting urban games, was accompanied by a reflection which can be labelled as the so-called reflection "in" action (Siarkiewicz et al. 2012, p. 129), a form of reflection which is related to the attempt to determine "[...] why a given event occurs" and, thus, focuses on identifying a problem and its possible causes (Wojtasik 2007, p. 197). It can be assumed that in the case of one of the female students this type of reflection contributed to a change in the pattern of proceeding adopted before the beginning of the game and, consequently, to adapting this pattern to the conditions of the educational situation which she co-created and which she felt responsible for.

*After presenting the figure of H. Stroband to the first team, I came to the conclusion that it would be better if I cut out several elements, thus shortening my statement. I thought that I probably wanted to say too much and that I focused too much on dates and names, and this caused the weariness of the players. The reactions of the other teams showed that it was a good step ... (d, III, 9.06.2014, W).*

### 3. Evaluation stage

In the last stage of creating the popularization initiatives, the students made an individual and group evaluation of the effectiveness of the actions taken/implemented by them, which took into account the reception of these activities by their addressees/participants. To this end, they analysed and interpreted the photos from the urban games and the data obtained through (self-) observation, as well as from the evaluation methods carried out, including discussions with players and participants in the meeting dedicated to the “Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory” portal. The students wondered about the results of their explorations and conducted group discussions.

It was, therefore, a stage which, like the planning and preparation stage, was accompanied by a reflection as part of the framework of reflecting on action. Importantly, both the observation of project meetings, during which the group evaluation of individual dissemination initiatives took place, and the analysis of narrative data, make it possible for us to conclude that this reflection concerned mainly the educational potential of the implemented activities.

*It was with great pleasure that I listened to the accounts of people participating in our game, and now I am looking at these photos<sup>3</sup>. The analysis [of photos] makes it possible to think that our activities are an example of how you can combine fun with learning in a simple, pleasant way, how to make it possible not only to learn about the places of memory of Nicolaus Copernicus University and find out something about its history, but also to spend time having fun (i, I, W).*

The students’ reflection on action concerned not only the educational processes experienced by the addressees of the undertaken/implemented initiatives (in particular, participants in the urban games), but was also related to the evaluation of the learning outcomes of their (co-)creators. This can be exemplified by the already mentioned student statements, as well as the one quoted below.

*In my opinion, the very convention of the urban game was a great way not only to spend free time but, above all, it was a valuable history lesson not only for the participants but, as we can hear, also for us (i, I, M).*

The students’ other statements suggest that, in individual cases, reflection on the implemented activities has led to the gaining of awareness of one’s subjectivity in relation to culture. It made it possible to realize a sense of pride and satisfaction associated with the experience of one’s own agency in the field of restoring memory.

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<sup>3</sup> In the first cycle of my research I used photographs taken by permanent participants of the project, as well as people taking part in the location-based game organized by them, as support material around which groups interviews were constructed.

*Our game took place today and I felt something special. I understood that it also depended on me which content from the storage memory would go to the functional memory, that my actions really affected others ☺ (d, III, 29.04.2014, M).*

*The weather was good and during both games, from what I remember, we were all in a good mood and had fun as a result of being co-creators of something so important, because in the end we “restored memory” to the places and people who would certainly be proud of us today (e, III, W).*

The experience of reflecting on action by project participants was also associated with the identification of items that should be further refined/changed to increase the effectiveness of jointly implemented initiatives. Therefore, it can be assumed that participation in the evaluation stage was conducive to the development of the skills of assessing one's own activities and those of others.

*In my opinion, the only downside was that the game lasted too long. We wanted to show too much, and it could have made the players tired. In my opinion, the various tasks and atmosphere saved us. In another game, the number of the stations should have been reduced from 10 to e.g. 6 (d, III, 7.06.2014, W).*

## Summary

Summing up our previous considerations, it can be stated that the participation in the creation of popularization initiatives accompanying the project “Students towards the NCU places of (non-)memory”, and especially urban games, was for individual students a plane of (self-)reflective experience. This activity was an opportunity to take part in an independent learning-by-action process (Okoń 1998, pp. 38-43, 191-207) which provided an opportunity to be the subject of one's own practice and its multifaceted cognition. It fostered critical reflection, taking into account the context or feedback reactions, and as a result allowed for the formulation of conclusions for the future. It is important that learning, which was related not only to an increase in knowledge about mainly the history and places of memory of Nicolaus Copernicus University, but also to the construction of various skills and attitudes, was the basis of the presented educational process.

The obtained results are in line with the statement that “[...] the process of acquiring knowledge and skills is more educational than the content itself. This is, among other things, because individual information and skills often become outdated, while the process itself, its subsequent stages and, especially, subjective activities, are remembered more easily and for longer” (Czerepaniak-Walczak 1997, p. 104). Thus, the performed analyses justify the thesis that, from a pedagogical point of view, what is effective is not only the educational process built around places of memory, during which active learning methods such as e.g. urban games are used (Majchrzak 2013, but also the process

constructed around the creation of these types of games, as well as other projects aimed at restoring memory to places. The data collected in the course of the study make it possible for us to conclude that (co-)participation in the implementation of various popularizing initiatives, permeated with involvement, becomes part of David A. Kolb's (1983) Experiential Learning Model and, thus, fosters the experiencing of reflective *praxis*, which implies changes in thinking. This activity generates an opportunity, at its various stages, to reflect "in" and "on" action, and makes it possible to interpret and reinterpret the world around the subject and to build the ability to creatively apply the knowledge accumulated through dialogue (with others and with oneself) in reflection-permeated planning and, consequently, to operate under changing conditions.

In addition, the results of the performed analysis seem to confirm the view of Roman Ingarden (1972, pp. 92-133), according to which bearing responsibility is fostered by the fulfilment of three conditions, i.e. taking active action (for we are not responsible for passively bearing something that happens to us); being aware of one's own action, while this category applies only to a person who has the sense of agency of his or her actions; and the experiencing and feeling of freedom of making decisions that make a given action one's own. The collected data reinforce the belief that the specificity of individual stages of the process of learning through popularizing actions embedded in the critical-emancipatory paradigm makes it possible to fulfil all of the indicated conditions and, as a result, learn to be mature in the world.

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