“Aviators” and mobile box in schools with Polish language as medium of instruction in the Czech Republic

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Between 11 and 13 March 2024, schools in the Trans-Olza region of the Czech Republic, where Polish is the medium of instruction, held history lessons using a mobile box designed for immersive history education. The lessons sparked great interest among both students and teachers, with each class prompting numerous questions about the history of World War II and the role played by Polish airmen in defending the European skies.

Cooperation with schools with Polish language as medium of instruction

Thanks to the cooperation of the IPN’s History Stop with schools in the Trans-Olza region of the Czech Republic, where Polish is the medium of instruction, a delegation from the New Technology Division took part in a presentation of the mobile box abroad. Polish youth attending schools in the Czech Republic were able to take part in immersive history lessons, during which students learned about the “Aviators – War in the Skies" project.

What did immersive history lessons look like in schools in Trans-Olza region?

At the beginning of the lesson there was a brief introduction to the topic of Polish airmen, who defied German aggression on many fronts. Then the contents of the mobile box designed for immersive historical education were presented. After this introduction, students took part in the latest educational gaming project “Aviators” – both in VR (virtual reality) and PC versions.

The division between young people who experienced the VR version of the project and those who used the PC version was determined by age, as VR equipment is recommended for individuals over 13 years old. Children in the younger grades were invited to play in the traditional way, while students in the older grades could use VR.

During the 45 minutes, the youth assumed the roles of Polish airmen and asked numerous questions about the events, dates, and course of World War II. For some classes, 45 minutes of such a lesson was far too little. While extending the lesson into the break partially addressed this insufficiency, it still fell short of meeting the needs of the young participants.Teachers declared their willingness to conduct more immersive history lessons using the educational projects of the IPN’s New Technology Division and prepared lesson plans, this time on computers available at school.

Immersive history education is a new and effective way to get students interested in history. Lessons using VR and PC technology attract students’ attention, arouse their curiosity, and encourage them to deepen their knowledge of Poland’s recent history.

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