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**DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA**  
**Genocide Education in Cambodia**  
**The Teaching of "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)"**

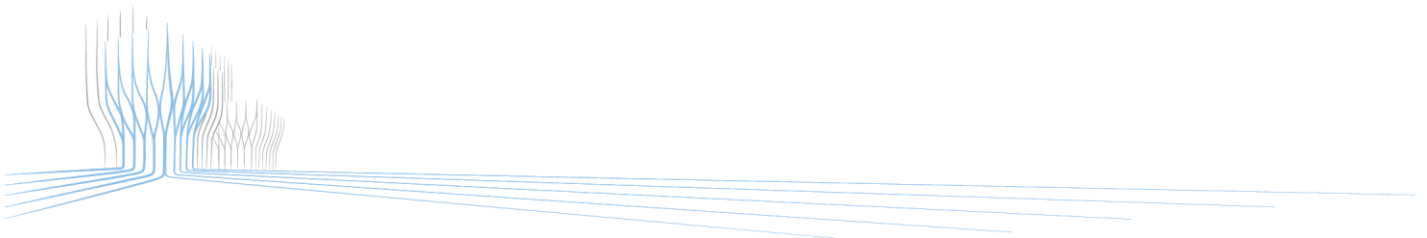
**Regional Pedagogical Training Center, Kandal Province**

**March 29-April 2, 2016**

**Day 3—March 31, 2016**

Key themes: The trainees focused on the lived experience of Democratic Kampuchea through stories of everyday life, ideology, and security centers. They also had a lot of opportunities to practice teaching and reinforced their understanding of some of the core teaching methods.

Today was the densest day of the training program so far – students began with a history at 7:15 and had a whirlwind day studying four chapters of the history text and about seven new teaching methods were introduced. There were four class sessions today ranging from an hour and a half to two hours, as compared to the shorter sessions yesterday with a mix of activities (screening a short film clip and two sessions of student teaching). The history lessons focused on daily life during DK, KR ideology, and the security centers. Some of the highlights from the teaching methods lessons were interviewing skills, analysis and evaluation of historical events, and an analysis of KR slogans, as well as a review of the KWL (“What I Know,” “What I Want to know,” “What I have Learned”) structure. This structure has underpinned each of their lessons and been emphasized as a way to review what the students have learned, outline the new material they will in the session, and synthesize what they just learned. The students were also introduced to a few different types of historical data through interviews and diary excerpts that chronicled daily life. I also had the opportunity to observe three more trainees practice teaching, which raised some interesting questions about feedback and evaluation.



During the history lesson in the first session this morning, the students were introduced to some first hand accounts of everyday life during DK from both survivors and former cadres. This activity got the trainees to start thinking more broadly about the contexts under which many people were driven to join the KR, the kinds of decisions people needed to make in order to survive, and how ordinary people were



*Inside the classroom*

treated. Later on in the day (in the next lesson) they were taught an activity where they used these accounts as a role play to better understand the experiences during DK. The trainees engaged with these first hand accounts and were able to get a better idea of what life was like during that period. These kinds of activities make it easier for students to interpret the experiences that could seem very far off from their lives; although, as one student commented, the exercise could be very difficult for others to grasp if they do not have enough context. However, most of the trainees in understanding both the history of what happened and why it happened, so today's lessons on ideology and every day life really spoke to those issues. One commented that he wants to be very clear on this history so that he can teach it better and another reiterated that understanding why it happened was the most important.

In the second session, the trainers used these history lessons to teach a variety of lesson plans, as well as some skills that could also be applied to research. MoEYS

teacher Mom Met gives a great review of the “KWL” structure to make sure that the students are comfortable not only learning in this manner, but adapting it to their own lessons. This is also an important to reinforce active reading. One of the trainees that I talked to commented that these tools are helpful for him to be able to teach his future students key reading skills. The class goes through an activity about analysis and

evaluation and the trainer suggests ways to make these skills more interactive for a class. Instead of focusing only on having students repeat back which events are important and why, she suggests giving students cards with names of events and having them fill in amongst themselves what happened and why it is significant. The students can arrange the events chronologically



*Trainees read their DK textbook*

or in order of importance, but this activity would allow them to assess these historical events more critically. She also talked to the students about interviewing skills and ways to go about conducting interviews well (and politely). These are really valuable skills for them to be learning, not only in the context of genocide education, but more broadly as key communication skills.

This afternoon starts with a practice teaching session from the trainees and today I am observing the students in group 1c. The trainee teaching is waiting for her peers to arrive to get started. It seems like students aren't the most prompt coming back from the breaks during the day, but in the past few days they've been respectful when their peers are teaching. However, there isn't enough time for each of the trainees to get



feedback on their practice lessons. There are two core areas where the training staff has a lot of expertise: knowledge of Democratic Kampuchea and teaching skills (although of course these are not mutually exclusive). Trainees have commented that they were interested in the training so that they can learn more about their history and the teaching skills to be able to communicate it effectively. The emphasis in this training has primarily been on the history side, in some cases, limiting the pedagogical side. The training was shortened from its original 7 days to 5 days, and in doing so, lessons were inevitably condensed: there is still a wealth of information, lots of history taught in a short amount of time and the students are presented with a variety of teaching methods as well. However, the toll of shortening the training program seems to have hit student teaching and pedagogical skills more. This makes student teaching sessions a particular challenge both because students are trying to get up to speed quickly on the material they are teaching in their lessons (sometimes presented only earlier in the day) and it seems like some of the trainers take part of this time to catch up on their own preparation. Some of the students that I observed did get feedback from their trainers, which was helpful and increased the amount of feedback that they got from their peers too; however, so far it hasn't been the majority. Students have been conscientious about going through their presentations and attentive participants during peers' practice lessons, but it seems like a missed opportunity for the students not to get directed feedback from the trainers who are truly seasoned educators.

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