

Paper session 6A | Quality in pre-and in-service teaching

Room: Skiftnyckel

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Observations about alternative learning spaces: Teacher students reflections about groupwork at museum

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Teacher students are more used to reflect on what learning means in classrooms than in an alternative learning space. In this study, we consider museums as alternative learning spaces and focus on how teacher students make sense of their own learning through the concept of historical empathy.

Compared to universities, museums can provide different learning opportunities for learners: opportunities for identity formation. While dealing with the artefacts provided by the museum, visitors discover themselves and the reflections of their own cultures. (Uslu, 2021). Theoretically, we also link to discussions around teaching for historical empathy and the need for self-reflection (Cunningham, 2009; Innes & Sharp, 2021; Endacott & Brooks, 2013; Ohn, 2010) as well as museum pedagogy as a tool for learning historical empathy (Uppin & Timoštšuk, 2019). In this study we are interested in how authentic learning can help learning about historical empathy.

We analyze material from two university courses in education: one in history and social studies

didactics, and one in phenomenon-based learning. Both courses included museum visits and particular pedagogical tasks within the museum, aiming to develop historical empathy and to teach students about the concept (historical empathy).

The material includes observation of the teacher students group work in the museums, and recorded interviews (stimulated recall) where students were encouraged to reflect on their choices based on video and pictures taken during the museum visits.

Preliminary findings show that the benefits of observation and reflection in this task were that student teachers learned to see themselves more clearly as teachers in an authentic context and they realised that in order to teach their future students about the concept (historical empathy) student teachers need to develop a sense of self-awareness and the need for reflection.