

Constructing Global Citizenship in Visual Arts Education – Student Teachers’ Learning Experiences in Primary Teacher Education

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Abstract

According to UNESCO’s report (2014), global citizenship consists of several skills and attitudes combined with relevant cultural knowledge and shared values. For example, critical thinking skills and abilities to face uncertainty and conflicting views are important aims in this field of education. In addition, intercultural dialogues within creative activities are important ways of learning empathy and equal rights. We approached these themes in the context of visual arts education with our students in primary teacher education at the University of Helsinki. We argue that visual arts education as culture education, with its unique way of constructing knowledge and multi-modality skills, is a functional space for educating global citizenship even at the primary level. Our research project took place in one primary school in the city of Helsinki, where student teachers in primary teacher education (N= 120) organized workshops concerning the theme (global citizenship) as part of their studies in visual arts’ didactics. The students in small groups planned and realized visual art’s workshops for the pupils (from seven to twelve years old) during one

school week in spring 2018. We explore what the student teachers learned during this process and how the theme was understood and realized in these artistic workshops. Our data consisted of student teachers' documentations and reflections on their learning process of the project. In the qualitative data analysis, we explore if and how student teachers learned to think critically around the theme in terms of pedagogy and visual culture.

Keywords

Global citizenship, Visual arts, Primary teacher education.