

Concepts for historical and geographical thinking in Sweden's and Spain's Primary Education curricula

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to compare the presence of concepts for historical and geographical thinking in the national curricula for Primary Education in Spain and Sweden in order to analyze if these thinking concepts can enable new active learning methodologies in the Social Science classroom. The comparative study is based on a qualitative investigation using a horizontal evaluation instrument (international compared analysis). Compared items were divided in four dimensions: 1. curriculum structure—subjects, timetable, compulsory, ratio, etc.-, 2. educational methodologies—project-based learning, research, practical lessons-, 3. Objectives and evaluation—aims, evaluation criteria, standards-, and 4. Contents—conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal. The results show that, despite a different structure for the history and geography subjects in Primary Education, neither of the two curricula present historical and geographical thinking concepts as a fundamental aim for Primary Education and, at the same time, the low presence of these thinking concepts is linked to traditional teaching models still based on positivism and memorization.