Title

Racism, Reflection, and Teacher Formation

Research Topic/Aim

This presentation explores how student teachers in Sweden experience and respond to racism during school-based practice. Drawing on narrative accounts from teacher education, it examines how racism is negotiated in pedagogical settings and how these encounters shape professional agency. The aim is to illuminate challenges and possibilities for anti-racist education in Nordic teacher education.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in critical race theory (CRT) and whiteness studies (Applebaum, 2017; Hübinette et al., 2023), with particular attention to Nordic race-blindness and racial evasiveness (Hübinette & Lundström, 2022; von Brömssen, 2021). Narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Aidan, 2019) and reflective practice (Schön, 2016)s provide tools for understanding how student teachers interpret and respond to racialized encounters.

Methodology/Research Design (Ongoing)

The study adopts a qualitative, narrative methodology. Data collection is underway and consists of self-authored stories by second-semester student teachers about racism during school placements. The narratives are generated through a reflective assignment in a large UVK course involving about 300 students. Seminar-based discussions support peer dialogue and collective meaning-making. Ethical approval has been granted (Dnr 2025-07719-01).

Preliminary Findings

Preliminary findings from pilot workshops indicate that racism appears in everyday school life through microaggressions, racialized humor, accent imitation, and stereotyping. The material also suggests that silence, laughter, and collective dynamics can normalize racialized behavior. A recurring theme is positional vulnerability: student teachers often feel constrained by their dual status as learners and emerging professionals, limiting their capacity to intervene. Collaborative narrative analysis has

also generated reflections on power relations, Swedishness, and the emotional labor of navigating racialized encounters.

Relevance to Nordic Educational Research

This study addresses a gap in Nordic educational research, where racism and whiteness remain underexplored in pedagogical contexts. By centering student teachers' lived experiences, it challenges narratives of racial neutrality in Nordic education and contributes to understanding how racial dynamics operate in schools and teacher education.

Key words:

- Narrative Inquiry
- Reflective Practice
- Racism in Schools
- Professional Agency
- Courage in Pedagogy

References:

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