
2021-22 Postcards

Postcards from Abroad

10-28-2021

Learning About Learning

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Recommended Citation

West, Cady, "Learning About Learning" (2021). *2021-22 Postcards*. Article. Submission 2.
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Learning about Learning

One of the biggest things I have been repeatedly surprised by during my time in Norway is not about any cultural norm or something I had to adjust to, but rather the content of my class, *Fairytales and Creativity*. It is a class in the education department, and since I am studying history and international relations, I found I am greatly under-prepared for the depth of some of the things we discuss. I do not know what I thought the class would be, maybe focusing more on history and culture. But every week, I am surprised by how fairy tales and stories can benefit children and how they can be incorporated into a curriculum.



A fairy tale walkway next to an Oslo market.

My favorite example is something called the Brotherhood activity. My class used Snow White as an example. The basic premise is that children complete the phrase “Snow White is like all those who....” with descriptors they think apply to the character. This could be as simple as inserting “are lonely” or “deserve second chances”, but it can also be phrases like “have had to leave their home” or “have experienced the loss of a loved one”. By doing this, children are diving deeper into the story, and often pulling out subtle threads that are not necessarily the central plot or moral lesson. As well, when kids answer with phrases about grief, loss, abuse, or other difficult topics, the activity can often allow them to talk about their own

experiences and emotions safely, because they are not talking about themselves. By talking about how Snow White lost her father or was forced to flee her home, children can openly discuss and process heavy topics that might otherwise be hard to face. Learning this activity absolutely blew my mind, but it made perfect sense how using a story to create a space where children can safely talk about complicated topics is useful for teachers to know.

This kind of eye-opening lesson genuinely happens to me every week, and even though I have no plans to become a teacher, I still feel empowered and better off for having learned these things.