Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Education 3-13

International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rett20

Prehistoric history in Swedish primary school education: pupils' expression of empathy after visiting a cultural heritage site

Lena Almqvist Nielsen

To cite this article: Lena Almqvist Nielsen (2023): Prehistoric history in Swedish primary school education: pupils' expression of empathy after visiting a cultural heritage site, Education 3-13, DOI: 10.1080/03004279.2023.2191631

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2023.2191631

Published online: 02 Apr 2023.

EDUCATION 3-13
https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2023.2191631

Prehistoric history in Swedish primary school education: pupils' expression of empathy after visiting a cultural heritage site

Lena Almqvist Nielsen [a,b]

[a]Department of Political, Historical, Religious and Cultural Studies, Karlstad University, Karlstad, Sweden; [b]The Department of Social and Behavioural Studies, University West, Trollhättan, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of historical empathy in the context of field trips for young pupils to a prehistoric heritage site in Sweden. The example discussed is a field trip to Vitlycke, a heritage and rock carving site with an associated reconstructed Bronze Age farm, where pupils had the opportunity to experience prehistory with all their senses. The study is based on the idea that historical empathy is a process that involves both cognitive and affective dimensions and that both dimensions are important for progress. The pupils were interviewed after the trip and their responses are related to the concepts of perspective recognition and care. The study shows how the cognitive and affective dimensions were interwoven in the pupils' reasoning and how the field trip contributed to an emotional and personal connection necessary for the development of historical empathy. This engagement led to a broadening and deepening of the pupils' cognitive understanding of Bronze Age life and living conditions, while the cognitive understanding of the historical context contributed to a framework in which they could use their imagination. The results also show the importance of giving pupils time to follow up on their experiences after visiting a heritage site.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 19 February 2023
Accepted 9 March 2023

KEYWORDS
Teaching history; history of history education; prehistory; primary school; historical empathy; cultural heritage; transformation of knowledge

Introduction

In Sweden, it is compulsory to start reception class at the age of 6, followed by years 1–9. In years 1–3, pupils are introduced to a wide range of subjects, with the core content of history closely linked to civics, geography, and religion. The content of the history subject in the early years enables comparisons of the living conditions of children, women, and men over a long period of time, as the core content deals with Nordic Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age, local history as well as the time concepts – the past, present and future.

The teaching of prehistory[1] in the first school years has a long history in Sweden. As early as in the 1889 curriculum (1889), content about prehistory is mentioned for the subject of history and has been taught in primary school ever since. However, due to the large time gap, teaching and learning about a prehistorical period can present challenges and children can find it difficult to relate to (Endacott and Brooks 2013, 46; Hartsmar 2001, 22, 192). In history education research, the concept of historical empathy is considered significant in the context of pupils' contextualisation and understanding of people in the past. Historical empathy implies both a

CONTACT Lena Almqvist Nielsen lena.almqvist-nielsen@hv.se

cognitive understanding and an affective approach to the period under study (Endacott and Brooks 2013, 41). Historical empathy is seen as a process (Barton and Levstik 2004, 223) that helps pupils understand how people in different social and historical contexts acted in, and experienced their world and environment in terms of thoughts, choices, feelings, decisions, and consequences (Endacott and Brooks 2013, 41). It is also important to allow young pupils to develop their imagination about past times, and as they grow older their factual knowledge of the past will contribute to valid historical imagination that enables historical empathy (Cooper 2002, 79).

Because our knowledge of prehistory is based on archaeological science, the expertise of this profession can help pupils make connections between the past and the present (Henson 2017, 45), and through practical insights into the lived experiences of prehistoric people, prehistory can be experienced more concretely (López-Castilla, Terradillos-Bernal, and Alonso Alcalde 2019, 172). When classroom teaching is supplemented with a visit to a historical place, pupils will be able more easily to connect abstract historical knowledge with our own time (Efstathiou, Kyza, and Georgiou 2018, 24). Such teaching can thus enable disciplinary subject matter knowledge to be transformed into knowledge that is teachable and relevant to pupils (Gericke et al. 2018, 429). If, when visiting such a place, pupils have the opportunity to meet experts who can tell them about life during the historical period under study, this can lead to the development of their historical empathy (Barton and Levstik 2004, 228; Wright-Maley, Grenier, and Marcus 2013, 208), and pupils' own interpretations of the past can be stimulated and based on evidence (Cooper 2002, 79). The combination of artefacts, atmosphere, narratives, and reconstructions that a museum can offer, added to the importance of geography related to historical places, can also be effective in developing historical empathy (Copeland 1993, 6; Marcus, Stoddard, and Woodward 2012, 7).

Taken together, these considerations form the basis of this study, which aims to explore historical empathy in relation to young pupils' visits to a heritage site, presented here in the form of the Vitlycke Museum, a knowledge and experience centre on the west coast of Sweden that focuses on the Bronze Age. Here, pupils encounter the Bronze Age through reconstructions and petroglyphs in a place with clear authentic connections to that era.

Vitlycke Museum – a knowledge and experience centre in Tanum

The Vitlycke Museum is located in the World Heritage Site in Tanum. Here, school classes and the public can visit and experience petroglyphs and a reconstructed Bronze Age farm. People have lived and worked here since prehistoric times, but the site also has an educational historical significance. There is a long history of active participation in both scientific and public contexts. In the *Göteborgs Sjöfarts – och Handelstidning* (1933), for example, it is mentioned that 220 pupils from the School for Girls visited the petroglyphs as early as in May 1933.

The petroglyph area with its approximately 600 sites and tens of thousands of petroglyphs was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994. The museum aims to stimulate interest in the Bronze Age, the landscape, and the petroglyphs in, and collaboration takes place with the University of Gothenburg, the Swedish Tourist Board, and the municipality of Tanum. The museum works closely with the Foundation for Documentation of Bohus County Petroglyphs and is committed, among other things, to depicting the rock art in a way that will preserve it for future generations.[2] In connection with the museum, there is also the Swedish Rock Art Research Archives (SHFA), which is associated with the University of Gothenburg and aims, among other things, to digitise images of the rock carvings and make them available to researchers and the public.[3]

Aim of the study

During the spring term, many schools participate in the Museum's educational programmes. This study aims to contribute to the visibility of pupils' learning associated with a field trip to a heritage

site and to investigate how a heritage site such as Vitlycke can contribute to the development of historical empathy in young pupils. The following research questions frame the study:

(1) How can a heritage site like Vitlycke contribute to the development of historical empathy in pupils?
(2) What aspects of historical empathy are manifested in pupils' speech and actions?

Literature review

The study in a history of education context

Teaching about Nordic prehistory has had a firm place in the history curriculum for young pupils in Swedish schools since the earliest curricula.[4] In the curriculum from 1900 (1900, 68), the stories about this period and the simple living conditions that prevailed in both prehistorical times and the Middle Ages were considered suitable for young pupils. The curricula, together with the contemporary social climate, have influenced the content of textbooks, but the texts about prehistory still show traces of early archaeological research and they are clearly anchored in a strong textbook tradition (Almqvist Nielsen 2014).

The idea that teaching should strive to create an understanding of the historical period under study and to judge the people who lived at that time according to their conditions is outlined in several curricula (see 1955, 97; 1962, 252; 1969, 184; 1994, 27; 2022b, 180; 2011b, 172). In the commentary on the curricula from 2011 and 2022, this understanding is referred to as historical empathy (2011a, 6; 2022a, 7).

Teaching methods

The 1919 curriculum (1922, 108) states how the teacher should try to use various means to capture the pupils' attention and interest and make the lesson lively. An example of a lesson topic is *Life in a prehistoric village in Sweden* (1922, 109).[5] In the same curriculum, it is also suggested that some lessons could be replaced by an excursion (1922, 16) and that the lessons should also enable the pupils to use their different senses (1922, 74). School journeys was introduced in Sweden as early as 1894 and at that time meant a trip with the aim of complementing classroom instruction (Bager-Sjögren 1894; Rantatalo 2002, 78). Educational field trips are mentioned in several curricula (1955, 15; 1962, 252; 1969, 184; 1980, 113) and the curriculum from 1955 also takes into account that school journeys can be educational (1955, 15). In the latest curricula, field trips are no longer mentioned in connection with lessons, but the extensive activities at places such as the Vitlycke Museum and the Ekehagen Ancient Village[6] show that they are still popular.

Empathy and the teaching of history

Emotional involvement in the past, according to Thomas A. Kohut (Kohut 2020, 97) can enhance our historical knowledge and understanding. He believes that empathy is even necessary if we are to understand people in the past, their drive, their view of themselves and the world in which they lived (Kohut 2020, 2). Kohut, who is a historian, claims that empathy, besides being based on sources, logic, and sound reasoning, also involves the imagination, insight, emotional intelligence, and emotional resonance, and that it is these factors that contribute to the fascinating and creative subject matter of history (Kohut 2020, 2).

Historical empathy, then, means that through thinking, feeling and using our imagination, we try to encounter people in the past from their perspective in order to better understand them and their experiences (Kohut 2020, 129). This can be done by using our imagination to grasp the subjective position of another person and mentally trying to see the world from that person's perspective, taking in that person's feelings (Kohut 2020, 47). The empathic perspective allows us to bring to

life the ideas, hopes, fears, and experiences of these people without focusing on the outcome (Kohut 2020, 128). It helps us to develop both an affective and cognitive relationship with them in which we try to understand their world as they saw and understood it (Kohut 2020, 4) and what was important to them (Kohut 2020, 128).

In the teaching of history, empathy is considered an important tool for understanding people in the past: by seeing them, their experiences and actions in their own context (Endacott and Brooks 2013, 41). Historical empathy can also be related to contemporary society. Keith Barton and Linda Levstik believe that the concept can serve as a tool for participation in a democratic and pluralistic society (Barton and Levstik 2004, 208, 242).

This study analyses the collected material in relation to Barton and Levstik's definition of historical empathy, which consists of two components: *perspective recognition* and *care* (Barton and Levstik 2004). They see perspective recognition as a cognitive, rational understanding of the feelings of people in the past that helps us to understand those people (Barton and Levstik 2004, 228). They have divided this understanding into the following aspects*: a sense of otherness, shared normalcy, historical contextualization, multiplicity of historical perspectives* and *contextualization of the present*. A sense of otherness means having a basic understanding that other people's values, thoughts, and intentions may be different from our own, and shared normalcy means understanding that other people's perspectives are as important to them as our own are to us (Barton and Levstik 2004, 210–213). Historical contextualization involves understanding and knowledge of the period under study and why people acted as they did, thus explaining events in the past by using historical perspectives rather than contemporary perspectives (Barton and Levstik 2004, 213–215). Multiplicity of historical perspectives is seen as an understanding that people had a variety of different values and beliefs even in historical times (Barton and Levstik 2004, 215–218) and with contextualization of the present, pupils envision the insight that our perspectives reflect our cultural values (Barton and Levstik 2004, 218–219).

In order to create an emotional attachment to the past, which means that the subject feels meaningful, Barton and Levstik use the concept of *care* consisting of four aspects: *caring about, caring that, caring for and caring to* (2004, 228–242). By *caring about,* they mean that if you care about what you study, this contributes to higher motivation than not caring about the subject (Barton and Levstik 2004, 230). *Caring that* means that pupils who are interested in, and committed to the subject they are studying also have the ability to stand up for people who are being treated unfairly (Barton and Levstik 2004, 232–234). *Caring for* can be seen as a continuation of *caring that* in the way that pupils are not only attentive to injustices but also want to go back in time to help bring about change, even if they know that this is not possible (Barton and Levstik 2004, 234–237). Finally, *caring to* means that pupils use their knowledge to act upon their own values and contribute to changing aspects of their own society (Barton and Levstik 2004, 237–240). Barton and Levstik's concepts serve as point of departure in this study for how empathy can be perceived in young pupils' understanding of the past and become important tools in the analysis of the pupils' interview responses. Together with Kohut's thoughts on empathy, these concepts provide a theoretical framework to visualise how a heritage site can contribute to pupils' historical empathy.

Most studies on historical empathy in history education focus on older students (for example Bartelds, Savenije, and van Boxtel 2020; Brooks 2008, 2011; De Leur, Van Boxtel, and Wilschut 2017; Kohlmeier 2006; Rantala, Manninen, and Van den Berg 2016). Studies focusing on younger pupils are few (e.g. D'Adamo and Fallace 2011; Dulberg 2002; Efstathiou, Kyza, and Georgiou 2018; Jensen 2008), and when it comes to historical empathy in the context of prehistory, studies are even fewer (Efstathiou, Kyza, and Georgiou 2018). Of particular interest for this study are studies that look at historical empathy in the context of field trips or museums, younger pupils, and early history, and how the cognitive and affective aspects of historical empathy are understood and used in this context.

The cognitive and affective dimensions of learning in the context of history education have already been highlighted in research (see Brooks 2011; Endacott and Brooks 2013; Savenije and De Bruijn 2017; Trenter, Ludvigsson, and Stolare 2021). Savenije and De Bruijn (2017) focus

specifically on students' knowledge and experience related to museum visits, and their study shows that for an inclusive approach, multiple perspectives need to be elucidated in an exhibition. Trenter, Ludvigsson, and Stolare (2021) show how pupils' interpretation of a heritage site is processed individually and in peer discussions and how both cognitive and affective senses play a role in these interpretations. A clear link between archaeology and historical empathy was also established. In the context of teaching about our earliest history, Efstathiou, Kyza, and Georgiou (2018) show that historical empathy in younger pupils increased after a visit to an excavation site and López-Castilla, Terradillos-Bernal, and Alonso Alcalde (2019) propose experimental archaeology as a method for developing historical empathy in the context of teaching about prehistoric times. This study builds on previous research showing the link between cultural heritage and archaeology in the context of teaching on one hand and the concept of historical empathy on the other, and it contributes to broadening the understanding of the empathy process of younger pupils in this context.

Methodology

The study was conducted in May and June 2021 with three classes from two schools. During a field trip to the Vitlycke Museum, 38 pupils aged 8–10 participated in one of the museum's school programmes. The programme included a guided tour of the petroglyphs on the Vitlycke panel and the reconstructed Bronze Age farm, as well as active participation in hands-on workshops where pupils explored different aspects of prehistoric life. Two Year 3 classes from School A and a mixed Year 2–3 class from School B participated. The visits took place at the end of the school year, after the pupils had read and worked on the Nordic Stone Age and the Bronze Age. The field trip before the summer holidays was intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of the Bronze Age. The empirical material of the study consists of:

- Observations during the visits to the heritage site
- The pupils' drawings before the visit and their drawings in connection with the interviews
- Interviews with 38 pupils at two different schools (14 interviews)
- Interviews with 3 teachers (two interviews)
- Interviews with 3 museum staff members (three interviews)

In this article, the interviews with the teachers provided information about how the lessons went before the visits and how the visits were seen in relation to the lessons. The museum staff contributed information about the structure and their thoughts about the lessons at the Vitlycke Museum. The observations formed the basis for the interviews with the pupils and it is their responses that are covered in this article.

Ethical review

An ethical review of the study was conducted in February 2021 in accordance with current regulations. Participating teachers informed pupils about the study. Information and consent forms were distributed to guardians for signature and collected for signature by guardians before the interviews were conducted.

Design of the study

When the study was conducted, lessons had already taken place for several weeks, based on the teachers' own plans. The teaching methods consisted of reading assignments, writing exercises, drawing and painting, educational films of both a fictional and factual nature, and various practical tasks. The study has an exploratory approach starting with exploration of the pupils' understanding of prehistory in the context of visiting a heritage site as part of a school programme anchored in

archaeological knowledge. The study's design consists of three parts: before the field trip, during the field trip, and after the field trip.

Before the field trip

A few weeks before the field trip, the schools were visited and discussions with the pupils provided insight into their prior knowledge. The pupils were given the task of drawing a picture about the Bronze Age based on what they had learned at school. The task is inspired by the 'Sketch to stretch' method, which aims to help pupils communicate using drawings to encourage reflection without the constraints of language (Pappas, Kiefer, and Levstik 2006, 331–332).

During the field trip

In the morning there were guided tours of the petroglyphs on the Vitlycke panel, which contain more than 500 different images dating from 1700 BCE to 300 BCE, and the Bronze Age farm, which consists of two reconstructed longhouses from the Early and Late Bronze Age. The pupils gained insight into the life and daily routines of Bronze Age people and, with the help of the museum staff's expertise, were able to try to interpret the petroglyphs themselves. The tour also served as an introduction to the afternoon activities.

After lunch, teachers divided the pupils into three groups for the afternoon workshops, led by the museum staff. Pupils had the opportunity to try their hand at cooking, tin casting or participating in a religious offering ceremony. The activities were exploratory in nature, allowing the pupils to experience a situation similar to what prehistoric people probably experienced. After the activities, everyone gathered to taste the food and participate in a joint sacrificial ceremony prepared by the two groups.

Observations. Observations were conducted by the author and another observer to gain insight into the pupils' experiences during the visit. During the observations, attention was paid to the pupils' engagement, questions, and responses, as well as their participation in the different workshops. Handwritten notes were taken, and the experiences were then analysed together to gain an understanding of the pupils' experiences, with the aim of being able to ask the clearest possible questions during the subsequent interviews. Observations were participatory to some extent, i.e. if adult help was needed during a workshop, the observers were helpful.

Interviews after the field trip

A few days after the visit, when the pupils were back at their schools, they were interviewed in groups of 2–3. The groups had been put together by the teachers to create good conditions for pupil participation. The pupils shared experiences from the same workshop and their common experiences helped them to remember and add to each other's stories (see Trenter, Ludvigsson, and Stolare 2021). The semi-structured interviews were conducted in smaller rooms where the pupils felt comfortable. The interviews lasted between 30 and 55 min, depending on the number of pupils and their willingness to talk.

Inspired by the 'Sketch to stretch' method mentioned earlier, during the interviews pupils were asked to draw pictures of something new they had learned at Vitlycke (Pappas, Kiefer, and Levstik 2006). Above all, the drawing task contributed to a relaxed atmosphere during the interviews.

Analysis

The material in the form of interviews with pupils, teachers, and museum staff was recorded and the interviews with the pupils were transcribed verbatim, apart from occasions when pupils talked about things unrelated to the study. These occasions were labelled as 'conversations about other things' to protect the privacy of the pupils. Only the interview material with pupils is used for the reporting and analysis of results. Pupil responses were coded by school, interview group, pupil in group, and gender. That the pupils were coded by gender was due to an open approach to what could be uncovered in the study.

The approach to analysis is hermeneutic. According to Ödman (2016) hermeneutic work is closely related to the interpreter's pre-understanding and the interpretation process consists of different phases. The phases of this study can be described as follows: (1) The interviews were transcribed verbatim and imported to NVivo (2) The interviews were read through several times, after which patterns emerged that led to a classification of the pupils' narratives into the following categories: significance of the visit to the context and understanding of different perspectives, comparisons between then and now and thoughts about the future, significance of the workshop, gender, thoughts about feelings in the past and also feelings related to the visit. The categories were coded in NVivo and most of the references were related to the 'significance of the visit to the context and understanding of different perspectives', as well as 'comparisons between then and now and thoughts about the future'. If a response contained references to more than one category, it was coded under all relevant categories. For example, when pupils talked about cooking, the conversations could revolve around comparisons between then and now and who cooked the food in the family. In this way, such discussions were coded both as gender and as a comparison between then and now (3) The reading then proceeded to alternate the transcribed interviews based on the above themes and the theoretical framework of the study (4) The pupils' responses were then analysed and interpreted using Kohut's notion of empathy as an overarching input and Barton and Levstik's more concrete aspects of *perspective recognition* and *care*. (5) The responses were then structured using the components of perspective recognition and care and are presented in a coherent text in which the quotes presented were interpreted as examples of these aspects.

The approach, which was inspired by Ödman's conception of hermeneutics, is to demonstrate transparency in thinking, understanding, and interpreting, and the material is also available for inspection. Principles for the interpretations were: an open approach to the material, that the interpretations should be seen as reasonable, and that the result can thereby contribute to the understanding of the concept of historical empathy (Ödman 2016, 237–242).

Findings

The pupils' experiences at Vitlycke form the basis for the interview questions that were asked. The results, in the form of their answers, are presented under the headings 'The field trip in relation to pupils' cognitive understanding' and 'The field trip in relation to pupils' emotional involvement'. Minor corrections have been made to the pupils' responses for clarity and, where necessary, explanations of purpose are given in brackets in the quotations.

The field trip gave the pupils an opportunity to experience the historical site and place themselves in the historical setting of an 8,000-year-old cultural landscape to help them contextualise their prior knowledge. It was evident from the conversations that their experience had been part of a field trip as the packed lunch, the bus journey, and which relatives had previously made the same trip to Vitlycke were mentioned.

The field trip in relation to pupils' cognitive understanding

Several of the pupils felt that it became easier to understand what the environment, homes, and life of Bronze Age people were like when they could see and experience the site for themselves. In the interviews, it was found that pupils' knowledge of the historical context was deepened with help of the museum staff's explanations and when they had the opportunity to use all their senses. For several pupils, for example, the explanations about the water level and the location of the rock carvings near the water contributed to their understanding of the landscape at the time. By listening to these explanations while imagining themselves standing on the shore of a bay, the explanations became concrete and could be visualised. In connection with the lessons at school, all the pupils had seen *Arkeologens dotter* (*The Archaeologist's Daughter*), a film produced for educational purposes by Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company in cooperation with The Swedish History Museum.

One of the episodes was about the Bronze Age and was filmed at Vitlycke, which several pupils had noticed. In the following quote, the pupils address the difference they experienced between watching a film and experiencing it themselves.

Interviewer:	Do you think it was easier to understand what it was like at that time when you were there?
Signe:	Yes.
Hamid:	Yes.
Interviewer:	What made it easier to understand?
Signe:	Well, you experienced it yourself.
Hamid:	You could see the petroglyphs better. With the *Archaeologist's Daughter*, you could not see them so well because they were walking there (in front of them) and you could not see them well.
Interviewer:	That was something you could not see so clearly in the film?
Signe:	Mmm …
Interviewer:	And you experienced it, you said?
Signe:	Yes, you felt what is was like … like if you look at something (alludes to the film), they are the ones who feel what it's like, but then … it's not so easy to really understand what it was like … you understand it, but not so much … when you become part of it yourself, you like understand how it is.

The pupils' understanding of the historical context also enabled comparisons with our own times, and several pupils felt that technology had helped to make life easier, which they appreciated. However, they were also critical of children sitting around using phones. Some pupils felt that life was more fun for children in the Bronze Age because they could probably play more than they themselves usually do. But there were also answers to the contrary. When asked what it would be like to live in the Bronze Age, one of the pupils replied 'Boring, I think, but they thought it was normal for them because they did not know that electricity was coming'. Some pupils emphasised that different aspects of being human are the same in many ways, whether you lived in the Bronze Age or in our modern times. Understanding that other people's perspectives, thoughts, and values may be different from our own is what Barton and Levstik call a *sense of otherness*, and by *shared normality* they mean understanding that these values are as important to them as our own are to us (Barton and Levstik 2004, 210–213). Some of the pupils clearly showed that they understood that people then and now are used to different things and that what people were used to in prehistoric times was normal for them.

According to Barton and Levstik (2004, 213–215), historical contextualization means insight into the historical context and its significance for people's decisions, actions, and experiences. Based on their knowledge of the Bronze Age, the pupils tried to understand what life was like for people in this period and how they might have thought or felt. During the visit, the morning was dedicated to the rock carvings. The guides discussed interpretations with the pupils and let them express their own thoughts about the carvings. Some pupils saw the images as a way for Bronze Age people to show other people and future generations how they lived. The pupils reflected and made comparisons and one of them expressed the difficulty of understanding how people thought and felt at that time:

> … we have not tried their life, how it felt for them, maybe it hurt a little bit when they walked on the roads without shoes. They did not have so many clothes. They had almost no free time to do other things.

Pupils showed an understanding that the times we live in affect the knowledge we have, that our worlds are different and so are the conditions, challenges, and opportunities we face. As one of the pupils put it: 'Well … we do not know as much as they did back then. We cannot … it would have been the same if they had moved here, it would have been difficult for them and difficult for us'. The pupil in the following quotation shows that life in the Bronze Age required different skills than we have.

Omar:	Now if you look at each person, each person has a profession and knows something, for the others it was almost like they had a lot of things, almost five things … professions that they had to do. Instead of five people, they had one person who knew five things. We have five people who know five different things.

The pupils in the study do not talk about how our own perspectives are a result of the context in which we live, which Barton and Levstik (2004, 218–221) refer to as *contextualization of the present*. On the other hand, they pointed out that people's conditions were different in the Bronze Age, which may be related to the ability to see and understand *multiplicity of historical perspectives* (Barton and Levstik 2004, 215–218). One pupil pointed out that people's circumstances were different then in the same way as today. I see the recognition that people's circumstances can differ from each other as an important part of the understanding that opinions and values can differ. Barton and Levstik (2004, 215–216) believe that in order to participate in discussions in society it is important to understand that individuals and groups of people have different values and points of view and that conflicts can arise from this. In the following quote another pupil makes the connection between bronze and wealth and that bronze was a mark of status.

Interviewer:	What do you think it was like to live in the Bronze Age?
Alva:	I think it was hard!
Interviewer:	Why is that?
Alva:	You got holes in your teeth.
Nils:	Yes, but that … they pulled them out!
Alva:	There were no dentists!
Nils:	Yes, but they pulled them out anyway. They pulled them out, so to speak! They had pliers and they pulled them out!
Alva:	They didn't brush their teeth.
Nils:	But that's nice!!! It's tedious!
Alva:	Yes, it's still tedious, but it's tough to get a hole.
Nils:	Yes, but then you can pull the tooth out!
Alva:	So, you mean you do not want to have any teeth left?
Nils:	Yeah, but …
Interviewer:	Was it tough then?
Nils:	You got fake teeth.
Interviewer:	Did you get them in the Bronze Age?
Alva:	What the heck!?
Nils:	But if you were rich, you had bronze teeth.
Interviewer:	Do you think so?
Nils:	Yes.

The field trip in relation to pupils' emotional involvement

When pupils had the opportunity to see, feel, and absorb the place with their own eyes, a personal connection was made that triggered emotions, which was reflected in the pupils' responses. Barton and Levstik believe that when pupils care about what they are studying, it has a positive impact on learning. Emotional involvement can lead to a desire to travel back in time (Barton and Levstik 2004, 234–235). In the study, several pupils' responses showed they enjoyed the field trip. One of the pupils thought it was 'cool' when they entered the longhouse and that he almost felt transported to the Bronze Age. The experience also helped to kick-start the pupils' imaginations and empathy. In the following quote, one pupil expresses her joy at being in a place with historical roots and she tries to put herself in the historical context what her life would have been like at that time.

Interviewer:	What was it like to be in a place where you knew people were three thousand years ago?
Aya:	I had the feeling of being happy.
Interviewer:	Why were you happy?
Aya:	I felt like I was standing on the ground that Stone Age or Bronze Age people were standing on.
Interviewer:	Why was that so special? Did you think about anything in particular when you were there?
Aya:	I was thinking about whether I would survive if I were in the Bronze Age.

In addition to being on location, the film the pupils saw at school and the workshops they participated in contributed to personal connections and feelings for several of them. They all got to taste the food prepared according to Bronze Age methods and experienced what a sacrificial

ceremony might have looked like. The pupils made comparisons between the food of that time and the food of today and commented on the taste and the way it was prepared.

The film *The Archaeologist's Daughter* had a clear impact on some of the pupils and an emotional connection was made to both the film and the location. For one of the pupils, the filming location was significant and the historical aspect took a back seat. For other pupils, visiting the site and seeing the film complemented each other and helped them to understand the situation better. During the workshop where the pupils performed a sacrificial ceremony, play and role play were mixed with actual knowledge about the Bronze Age and the pupils became shamans in their imagination. They also made an instrument consisting of a wooden plate with a string attached to one end which, when swung in certain movements, produces a certain sound associated with the Bronze Age. The pupils prepared a sacrificial ceremony at a small lake to which they invited their fellow classmates. One of the pupils was assigned the role of drummer and went to get his classmates while the other pupils in the group waited at the dock of the lake. Two of the pupils pointed out that the sacrifices in the film had occurred at the same place:

Interviewer:	Yes, was it cool to be in the same place?
Arvid:	Yes!
Freya:	Yeah … me and Aisha said it felt like we were in the film because … they came and they went there and then you saw how they … and then when Vidar came and beat the drum, it sounded like that sound too (referring to the film) and it was also in the same place …
Interviewer:	What was the feeling when you heard the drum and when they approached in the forest?
Arvid:	Scary.
Interviewer:	Why was it scary?
Arvid:	The drum sounded really scary, and it is scary when so many people are coming towards you, and you are just standing on the dock.
Interviewer:	How did you (Freya) feel when they came, when you heard the sounds up there in the forest?
Freya:	It felt like being in the Bronze Age because there was music like that then.

Both the cooking and the tin casting groups were more methodical in their tasks than the sacrificial ceremony group whose imagination and play were stimulated in a way that did not happen in the other two groups. The sound and the dramatisation created a special feeling in the pupils, and in the conversations afterwards some of them had difficulty separating play from reality:

Loke:	It is very easy to become a shaman. You just have to go to a sacred place.
Ara:	You just have to speak a special ritual. You have to speak a ritual; it's not just about pointing.

When they made comparisons between themselves and the children of the Bronze Age about what they found difficult, these comparisons could become personal. One pupil talked about feeling stressed when it was time to sleep, and he thought it likely that a child in the Bronze Age also felt stress, possibly related to the fact that his parents might be at war. Another pupil thought about the difficulties people had in the Bronze Age and when asked what might be difficult today, he replied that it might be difficult to make friends. Another comparison referred to what was dangerous then and what is dangerous now. To this, one pupil replied that people in the Bronze Age might have learned which plants were dangerous and poisonous, but today we learn about *Stopp! Min kropp!* and when to tell an adult.[7] In the context of what we will leave behind for the future, some of the pupils brought up today's environmental problems and mentioned exhaust fumes and plastics that do not decompose. They thought about the problem but did not propose solutions. The following quote shows such an example.

Interviewer:	What do you think we will leave behind for the future?
Aya:	Social media! If the apps stay.
Interviewer:	Do you think they will?
Aya:	I am not sure. There are many who say that Facebook and such will disappear. And TIKTOK. Boring, actually.
Interviewer:	What do you think (Arvid)?
Arvid:	Plastic.

Interviewer: Plastic. What do you think about it?
Arvid: There is so much in the sea.
Interviewer: Yes, and you think it will stay that way? What do you think people will think about us in the future?
Valentina: But God, what messy people! They really trashed the place!

Analysis and discussion

Interpretations of the empirical material are based on the idea that historical empathy contains both cognitive and affective dimensions. In this study, this was evident in the pupils' reflections and musings during in the interviews, but difficulties were encountered in separating these parts when pupils switched between cognitive and affective dimensions in the interviews. Sarah Brooks (Brooks 2011) has previously described the complex interaction between these components of historical empathy, and Barton and Levstik (2004, 242) believe that both approaches are important in making the subject of history exciting and challenging. In this study, the field trip becomes a way to facilitate the pupils' contact with the historical culture of prehistory, while at the same time it can help to make the subject interesting and lively. To clarify the differences between pupils' intellectual and cognitive understanding as opposed to their emotional and affective approach, the results were related to Barton and Levstik's model of how these can be separated and understood. The analysis was inspired by the two components, perspective recognition and care, and the aspects that make up these components, but the material is also related to Thomas A. Kohut's notion of historical empathy.

When speaking of historical empathy in the context of prehistory, it is important to remember that the concept is primarily seen in relation to groups of people rather than individuals (Castilla, Bernal, and Alcalde 2017, 172) since the lack of written sources from this period makes it difficult to study individual events or sequences of events. In this study, the focus was on Bronze Age people as a group, but the interviews also specifically addressed children, women and men, and the pupils tried to look at life from the perspective of these people. According to Kohut, empathy enables a cognitive and affective connection with people we do not know when we put ourselves in their shoes (Kohut 2020, 121), but at the same time there must be an awareness of the differences between them and us (Kohut 2012, 17–18, 2020, 121).

During the interviews, questions were asked that involved comparisons between then and now, based on things the pupils could relate to. The pupils tried to put themselves in an environment typical of the Bronze Age, as they had learned about it in class and during their trip to the Vitlycke Museum. Questions, where the pupils refer to themselves in the first person, can encourage reflection and the ability to draw conclusions. However, this type of questions has also been criticised because pupils' answers are not always based on careful examination of the facts, which historical empathy requires (Brooks 2008, 144), and there is a risk that answers may contain more moral values and show more presentism than when pupils answer in the third person (De Leur, Van Boxtel, and Wilschut 2017, 347). Brooks (2008, 145) also claims that first-person responses often lack what Barton and Levstik call a sense of otherness, that is, a basic understanding that other people's values and thoughts may differ from our own.

The aim of this study is to investigate how visiting a heritage site such as Vitlycke can contribute to the development of historical empathy in young pupils and what their interview responses revealed. What was shown most clearly in the results were links between the pupils' responses and four of these aspects: a *sense of otherness, shared normalcy, historical contextualization, and care about*.

The long period of time separating us from Bronze Age people probably contributes to the pupils' clear recognition of the differences between us and them (a sense of otherness), in contrast to what Brooks (2008, 145) saw in her study. Several of the pupils recognise how the perspectives and values

of the Bronze Age people made sense to them even though they were different from ours (shared normalcy), but they also show an understanding of the commonalities between us and them. The location, the workshops, and the expertise of the museum staff complemented history lessons and contributed to their knowledge of the historical context and the impact on people living at that time (historical contextualization). The pupils also understood that people's living conditions were different even in the Bronze Age.

However, even though if it is not explicitly expressed in the pupils' reasoning, the insight into the differences between people within the same period can be seen as a basic understanding of people's different perspectives and how values are coloured by the group we belong to (multiplicity of historical perspectives and contextualization of the present). The emotional attachment of the pupils to the place was clearly visible and, in several cases, can be linked to the aspect *caring about* which Barton and Levstik see as a fundamental contribution to the motivation of the pupils. Endacott and Brooks also consider this emotional connection to be extremely important and believe that historical empathy requires pupils to find emotional connections between the experiences of the historical figures they study and their own personal experiences (Endacott and Brooks 2013, 46).

Barton and Levstik (2004, 229) believe that the two components of historical empathy can be difficult to separate. The results of the study show that both affective and cognitive expressions are mixed in the pupils' responses and that the emotions evoked in the context of the field trip invite cognitive reflection. The workshops in which the pupils participated took the form of both practical and imaginary reconstructions of different aspects of Bronze Age people's lives (López-Castilla, Terradillos-Bernal, and Alonso Alcalde 2019, 172). With their knowledge, the museum staff could contribute to the pupils' cognitive understanding of the Bronze Age, which increased their knowledge of the historical context and could be used when they tried to imagine life in the historical period. The pupils tried to place themselves in the lives of Bronze Age people to understand their perspective and how these people might have thought or felt in different situations, and to make comparisons with their own lives. As pupils compared different aspects of the Bronze Age to their own time, this opened an empathetic approach where imagination, empathy and personal connections played an important role. Visiting Vitlycke complemented the film the pupils had seen in class and added to their cognitive understanding, and when they learned that the film had been shot on location, this also generated an emotional connection.

Kohut believes that imagination is an important part of understanding history. Good knowledge of the historical context sets the stage for enriching our understanding through our imagination and thus bringing the past to life within us when we place ourselves in that context (Kohut 2020, 84). Imagination is an important factor because it helps us see the world as experienced by people who lived at a particular time (Kohut 2020, 130). However, when we use imagination in the context of studies of the past, we still need to be aware that people then are different from us (Kohut 2020, 45).

When comparing with our time as well as thinking about the future, pupils highlighted the development of technology, but they also responded to how the environment has deteriorated since the Bronze Age. However, their engagement or reflection ends there and no examples from the study show that they want to become involved in bringing about change to our society today (caring to). However, an understanding of the problems in society can be the basis for future engagement. The study leans towards the idea that historical empathy is a process (Barton and Levstik 2004, 223; Endacott and Brooks 2013, 41) and that the pupils in the study are at the beginning of this process. Their reflections are spontaneous and firmly rooted in the experience of the field trip. Their reflections do not go into depth, but they show that they can relate to the historical context, and when they compare it to the present, they begin with their perspective and the knowledge they bring with them. They refer to topics that are significant today, such as the environment, but also shed light on more private aspects that shape our time, such as stress and the protection of one's own body.

In her study, Brooks (2008, 133) assumed that the most effective way to make historical empathy visible is through writing. In this study, pupils' responses were collected orally, which can be time-

consuming for a teacher, but given the age of the pupils, an oral process can allow for reflections without the limitations of writing skills.

Conclusion

The visit contributed to both the pupils' intellectual understanding and their empathic process. The cognitive and affective dimensions were interwoven in their reasoning and a clear approach to engagement was the emotional and personal connection which is necessary for the development of historical empathy, and which was facilitated through the field trip. This engagement led to a broadening and deepening of the pupils' cognitive understanding of the lives and living conditions of Bronze Age people while the cognitive and intellectual understanding helped to develop the pupils' imagination, since the understanding of the historical context contributed to a framework for their experiences and ideas about the Bronze Age.

Visiting a heritage site like Vitlycke in conjunction with teaching about the prehistoric world allows archaeological knowledge to be transformed into tangible, relevant, interesting content for the pupils. Not only did they gain a deeper understanding of the period being studied, but the practical elements also included personal insight into the lives of people in the past. The pupils' feelings and ability to empathise and imagine, combined with the cognitive understanding for which the lessons and field trip laid the foundation, enabled historical empathy. The pupils' age influences what questions can be asked, and their answers are also influenced by their experience of reflection on school-related tasks. However, the pupils are at the beginning of a process that requires teaching in which these two aspects have a place if there is to be progress. Their answers also show that pupils have a good chance of progressing if they are given time to reflect and follow up on the experience in class after visiting a heritage site.

Notes

1. Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age are examined in a Nordic context (10,000 BCE – 1100 CE), with the period for the Bronze Age consisting of the years between 1700 BCE and 500 BCE.
2. https://www.vitlyckemuseum.se/en/about-vitlycke-museum/foundation-for-the-documentation/.
3. https://www.vitlyckemuseum.se/en/about-vitlycke-museum/shfa/.
4. See: Normalplan för undervisningen 1878 (1878) Normalplan för undervisningen 1889 (1889), Normalplan för undervisningen 1900 (1900) and Undervisningsplan för rikets folkskolor 1919 (1922).
5. The fact that a lesson topic is called *A prehistoric village in Sweden*, even though Sweden as a nation did not yet exist, can be seen as a way of linking the origins of the Swedes to the Stone Age and corresponds to the nationalist ethos that prevailed in the early twentieth century (Almqvist Nielsen 2014, 33–35).
6. https://www.falkoping.se/ekehagens-forntidsby/english.
7. Stopp! Min Kropp! (Stop! My body!) is published by Save the Children (an organisation based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). The text gives adults advice on how to talk to children about the body, boundaries, and sexual abuse. https://www.raddabarnen.se/rad-och-kunskap/foralder/stopp-min-kropp/.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Lena Almqvist Nielsen http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0875-8564

References

1878. *Normalplan för undervisningen i folkskolor och småskolor [Elektronisk resurs]*. Stockholm: Printed Sources.
1889. *Normalplan för undervisningen i folkskolor och småskolor*. Stockholm: Norstedt.
1900. *Normalplan för undervisningen i folkskolor och småskolor*. Stockholm: Norstedt.

1922. *Undervisningsplan för rikets folkskolor den 31 oktober 1919*. Stockholm: Norstedt.
1933. "S. J. lancerar bohusbygden för skolorna. 220 flickor studera hällristningar och konserver i Tanum idag." *Göteborgs Handels- Och Sjöfartstidning*, 19-05-1933.
1955. *Undervisningsplan för rikets folkskolor den 22 januari 1955 [Elektronisk resurs]*. Stockholm: Kungliga Skolöverstyrelsen.
1962. *Läroplan för grundskolan [Elektronisk resurs]*. Stockholm: Kungl. Skolöverstyrelsens.
1980. *1980 års läroplan för grundskolan [Elektronisk resurs] inledning : mål och riktlinjer*. Stockholm: LiberFörlag/Allmänna förl.
1994. *Kursplaner för grundskolan [Elektronisk resurs]*. Stockholm: Utbildningsdep.
2011a. *Kommentarmaterial till kursplanen i historia*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
2011b. *Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011 [Elektronisk resurs]*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
2022a. *Kommentarmaterial till kursplanen i historia – grundskolan [Elektronisk resurs]*.
2022b. *Läroplan för grundskolan, förskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2022*. Stockholm: Skolverket.
Almqvist Nielsen, Lena. 2014. "Förhistorien som kulturellt minne: historiekulturell förändring i svenska läroböcker 1903–2010." *Umeå universitet*.
Bager-Sjögren, Johan. 1894. "En skolresa genom Harz. En bild af modern tysk pedagogik, svenska skolor till förebild." Nordisk tidskrift för vetenskap, konst och industri: 607–631.
Bartelds, H., G. M. Savenije, and C. van Boxtel. 2020. "Students' and Teachers' Beliefs About Historical Empathy in Secondary History Education." *Theory and Research in Social Education* 48 (4): 529–551. doi:10.1080/00933104.2020.1808131.
Barton, Keith C., and Linda S. Levstik. 2004. *Teaching History for the Common Good*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
Brooks, Sarah. 2008. "Displaying Historical Empathy: What Impact can a Writing Assignment Have?" *Social Studies Research and Practice* 3 (2): 130–146. doi:10.1108/SSRP-02-2008-B0008.
Brooks, Sarah. 2011. "Historical Empathy as Perspective Recognition and Care in one Secondary Social Studies Classroom." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 39 (2): 166–202. doi:10.1080/00933104.2011.10473452.
Castilla, M. Pilar López, Marcos Terradillos Bernal, and Rodrigo Alonso Alcalde. 2017. "The Role of the Experimental Archaeology in the Scientific Spreading as Developer of Prehistorical Empathy." Playing with Time: Experimental Archaeology and Study of the Past.
Cooper, Hilary. 2002. *History in the Early Years*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.
Copeland, Tim. 1993. *A Teacher's Guide to Geography and the Historic Environment, Education on Site*. London: English Heritage.
D'Adamo, Lindsay, and Fallace Thomas. 2011. "The Multigenre Research Project: An Approach to Developing Historical Empathy." *Social Studies Research & Practice (Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama)* 6 (1): 75–88. doi:10.1108/SSRP-01-2011-B0005.
De Leur, Tessa, Carla Van Boxtel, and Arie Wilschut. 2017. "'I Saw Angry People and Broken Statues': Historical Empathy in Secondary History Education." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 65 (3): 331–352. doi:10.1080/00071005.2017.1291902.
Dulberg, Nancy. 2002. "Engaging in History: Empathy and Perspective-Taking in Children's Historical Thinking."
Efstathiou, Irene, Eleni A. Kyza, and Yiannis Georgiou. 2018. "An Inquiry-Based Augmented Reality Mobile Learning Approach to Fostering Primary School Students' Historical Reasoning in non-Formal Settings." *Interactive Learning Environments* 26 (1): 22–41. doi:10.1080/10494820.2016.1276076.
Endacott, Jason, and Sarah Brooks. 2013. "An Updated Theoretical and Practical Model for Promoting Historical Empathy." *Social Studies Research and Practice* 8 (1): 41–58. doi:10.1108/SSRP-01-2013-B0003.
Gericke, Niklas, Brian Hudson, Christina Olin-Scheller, and Martin Stolare. 2018. "Powerful Knowledge, Transformations and the Need for Empirical Studies Across School Subjects." *London Review of Education* 16 (3): 428–444. doi:10.18546/LRE.16.3.06.
Hartsmar, Nanny. 2001. "Historiemedvetande-Elevers tidsförståelse i en skolkontext." Malmö Högskola, Lärarutbildningen, Institutionen för pedagogik.
Henson, Don. 2017. "Archaeology and education."
Jensen, Jill. 2008. "Developing Historical Empathy Through Debate: An Action Research Study." *Social Studies Research and Practice* 3 (1): 55–67. doi:10.1108/SSRP-01-2008-B0004.
Kohlmeier, Jada. 2006. ""Couldn't She Just Leave?": The Relationship Between Consistently Using Class Discussions and the Development of Historical Empathy in a 9th Grade World History Course." *Theory & Research in Social Education* 34 (1): 34–57. doi:10.1080/00933104.2006.10473297.
Kohut, Thomas A. 2012. *A German Generation: An Experiential History of the Twentieth Century*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Kohut, Thomas A. 2020. *Empathy and the Historical Understanding of the Human Past*. New York: Routledge.
López-Castilla, M. Pilar, Marcos Terradillos-Bernal, and Rodrio Alonso Alcalde. 2019. "Experimental Archaeology and Historical Empathy: Key Tools for Learning About Our Origins / Arqueología experimental y empatía histórica: herramientas clave para la didáctica de nuestros orígenes." 2019/01/01/.

Marcus, Alan S., Jeremy D. Stoddard, and Walter William Woodward. 2012. *Teaching History with Museums: Strategies for K-12 Social Studies*. New York: Routledge.

Ödman, Per-Johan. 2016. *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande : hermeneutik i teori och praktik*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Pappas, Christos, Barbara Zulandt Kiefer, and Linda S. Levstik. 2006. *An Integrated Language Perspective in the Elementary School: An Action Approach*. Boston: Pearson Allyn and Bacon.

Rantala, Jukka, Marika Manninen, and Marko Van den Berg. 2016. "Stepping Into Other People's Shoes Proves to be a Difficult Task for High School Students: Assessing Historical Empathy Through Simulation Exercise." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 48 (3): 323–345. doi:10.1080/00220272.2015.1122092.

Rantatalo, Petra. 2002. *Den resande eleven [Elektronisk resurs] folkskolans skolreserörelse 1890–1940*. Umeå: Umeå universitet.

Savenije, Geerte M., and Pieter De Bruijn. 2017. "Historical Empathy in a Museum: Uniting Contextualisation and Emotional Engagement." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23 (9): 832–845. doi:10.1080/13527258.2017.1339108

Skolöverstyrelsen. 1969. *Läroplan för grundskolan [Elektronisk resurs] 1 Allmän del*. Stockholm: Utbildningsförl.

Trenter, Cecilia, David Ludvigsson, and Martin Stolare. 2021. "Collective Immersion by Affections: How Children Relate to Heritage Sites." *Public History Review* 28: 1–21. doi:10.5130/phrj.v28i0.7414

Wright-Maley, Cory, Robin Grenier, and Alan Marcus. 2013. "We Need to Talk: Improving Dialogue Between Social Studies Teachers and Museum Educators." *The Social Studies* 104 (5): 207–216. doi:10.1080/00377996.2012.720308.