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## TEACH AND LEARN THE MIDDLE AGE IN PRIMARY. STUDENT REPRESENTATIONS AND INTERVENTION PROPOSALS

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**Abstract:** The theory of social representations that was created in the field of social psychology, has spread to various academic fields as a useful tool for the analysis and interpretation of different social realities. Education and specifically historical education is one of the areas in which this theory has proven fruitful in recent decades. Studying the representations of the students on different social and historical themes is especially indicated to identify their origin, the construction mechanisms and formulate educational proposals to transform them and build a more rigorous knowledge. This paper analyzes the representations of the Middle Ages that a group of 6th grade students have through the application of a questionnaire. The results obtained are contrasted with other studies that addressed the problem of teaching and learning history in general and the Middle Ages in particular. Finally, some suggestions are made for the teaching of the Middle Ages in primary education consistent with the previous results.

**Keywords:** Middle Ages, social representations, historical education, primary education.

## INTRODUCTION

This article originates from a Final Degree Project for the title of Teacher in Primary Education presented at the University of Santiago de Compostela that sought to analyze the social representations that two groups of 6th grade students had about the Middle Ages. One of the problems detected was related to the motivation of the students who declared that they did not know the purpose of learning the subject. This way, it was decided to investigate the representations of the students to approach their interests and attitudes towards the Middle Ages and thus be able to extract the keys to design an intervention aimed at promoting relevant learning of this

historical period. The work was put into practice with primary school students from two groups of 6th grade of a CEIP in Santiago de Compostela. A participant observation was carried out through information collection instruments such as audio and video recordings, although the main instrument was a questionnaire with which it was intended to collect the representations of these students about the Middle Ages. We started from the hypothesis that the representations about the Middle Ages handled by students would come from various worlds such as cinema, video games, comics, social discourses and others, since the Middle Ages generate a high interest today as we can see easily in the large number of productions present in the media on this historical period. Likewise, it was expected to think that this alternative knowledge could be loaded with stereotypes that would positively or negatively condition new learning. Within the guiding guidelines, it was believed that we must begin by allying ourselves with this alternative and socially shared knowledge in order to later generate a proposal that could provoke a cognitive conflict and introduce them to rigorous knowledge in accordance with scientific knowledge.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### THE THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND HISTORICAL EDUCATION

The theory of representations, developed by Serge Moscovici and his followers (Jodelet, 2008), aims to provide an answer to how people come to build our vision of reality, since this specific knowledge is halfway between the so-called common sense and scientific knowledge. These representations allow people to develop three key operations: understand and manage reality, reinforce their identity through the use of shared knowledge, and obtain guidance on behavior considered

appropriate in each context. It can be said that the representations are adaptive responses to solve interactions with unknown phenomena, of greater or lesser conflict potential, since these are generators of social discourses and from the latter the representations are born. The authors add that for the formation of social representations it is relevant to understand that they are conditioned by the historical moment in which people live, the characteristics of the group in which they are included and the institutions with which they have interactions, including school and family, and the media, among others (Wagner et al., 2007). According to Mora (2002), investigating the representations of students about an object of study allows us to put into practice the three dimensions that they contemplate: 1) information, which indicates the organization or the set of knowledge that a group possesses about a social event; 2) representation, indicates how the content is organized in terms of its hierarchy, varying from group to group and even within the same study group, and 3) attitude; we can know the favorable or unfavorable vision in relation to the object of study, in our case it is the Middle Ages. For his part, Jodelet (2011) has shown how education and teaching and learning processes are a privileged field for the use of interpretative schemes of the theory of representations, especially in what has to do with the complex relationships between academic knowledge, common sense and school knowledge.

We can verify the relevance of social representations applied to the study of history in various authors such as Castorina (2005) who states that it is decisive to take into account the common sense of students in terms of learning historical content since these are conditioned in their acquisition by the former. The formation of theories of primary school students is the product of

interaction with objects, and social beliefs serve as material to build hypotheses and as a restriction and orientation of what can be thought conceptually. It is essential to know the representations if we want to formulate didactic proposals adapted to this group. The author questions whether the students' ideas are the product of their intellectual activity or have to do with the assumption of pre-existing social beliefs. For their part, Carter et al. (2013) have paid attention to how children and young people acquire historical knowledge and how national narratives are constructed and disseminated in the school system. Liu et al (2005) carry out a research work on the social representations of young people from different cultures on how they conceive the history of the world and its most relevant characters and events. They start from the question of whether in this globalized world there are shared representations of history or if different cultures do so in an idiosyncratic way. The extracted data shows that a Western vision of History predominates and that this is supported by the fact that the representations about it are massively shared as an effect of the processes of cultural globalization. In this sense, events of a political and military nature, such as wars and male characters with public functions, dominate the imaginary about the history of young people from different cultures.

### **THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AVERAGE AGE IN STUDENTS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION**

It could be affirmed that the knowledge of the Middle Ages of primary school students is influenced by topics from heterogeneous sources that may constitute a problem due to the divergence of knowledge. Possibly they count in this learning, as Furió (1990) indicates, with more than one image of the Middle Ages. The adjective "medieval"

includes meanings that range from a pejorative, dark and disqualifying vision, a product of Renaissance authors reworked by others from the Enlightenment, to an equally inaccurate positive vision where an idealized, romantic and magical conception stands out (Duchemin, 1987). which is the one that seems to be in fashion today as indicated by the great proliferation of television series, movies, soap operas and other mass consumption productions. Far from unidirectionally considering this alternative knowledge as negative, it must be thought of positively (Mugueta, 2014) as it will serve to come into contact with them, since they are material of interest to them. This knowledge, which may contain stereotypes and originates from social interaction, will serve a multiple purpose: arouse interest in the Middle Ages, investigate their previous knowledge in order to work on it, design a work program adapted to their degree of knowledge using materials and sources that allow this common sense knowledge to be contrasted with a more rigorous knowledge of the Middle Ages. The medieval period is a topic that is relevant because it is present in the social environment close to the students, close to the educational centers in turn, with which it has a curricular and formative relevance. Ubieto (1997) offers us endless examples that accompany the previous statement justifying the study of the medieval period: entities such as banks, municipalities, towns, villages or the cities themselves, which as we know them, are a medieval product of the century XI to XIII. It can be added that the urban toponymy is full of names that allude to guild trades or characters that inhabited it. It is not difficult to see that it is a good resource to organize outings around the city and identify medieval remains in the urban landscape. It also contributes to motivation to become aware that many of the first names and surnames

they have are born in the Middle Ages. This immense conglomeration of accessible data facilitates an empathetic attitude towards the Middle Ages that helps to refute those negative clichés associated with this historical period because it causes a cognitive conflict: if it was such a dark period and the people who lived in it were so backward, how did they discover and they put all these things into operation or how they were able to build all those buildings like the gothic cathedrals? A good start to dismantle stereotypes as Martín (2008) reminds us.

Furió (1990) set out to find out which version of the Middle Ages is hegemonic among Valencian students. In Spain, the one that predominates is heir to the story that was supplied by Spanish nationalist school textbooks, where the context taken into account is the Castilian territory and the vision is political-religious and traditional. As the study progresses, he checks how there are coincidences in the references and in the themes that he obtains from the students that allow him to show that they can be socially shared imaginaries. It adds other possible causes to the conformation of the impoverishing scheme transmitted by the books, such as the existence of comics such as Captain Thunder, the Masked Warrior, Excalibur, etc., which serve to establish the version that considers the peninsular territory as a pre-existing entity. that was lost and had been recovered with the reconquest and other similar milestones. García Pujades (2013) pays attention to the way in which ESO students build their concept of the Middle Ages and the role played by representations from multiple sources, such as television, the Internet, popular culture, school or the family environment. among others. The results indicate that in the first course there is an overwhelming predominance of the conception of the Middle Ages as fantastic

and in later courses, it is possible to speak of a coexistence of the dark medieval with the fantastic, decreasing the fantastic conception in its hegemony in favor of the dark. The conclusions of his work establish that the students have ideas from popular culture in which academic knowledge coexists with the fantastic dimension.

## METHOD AND APPROACH

In our study we have applied a questionnaire to 49 students in the 6th grade of primary education for approximately 30 minutes and in the classroom context. The students, not used to carrying out this type of activity, showed interest and curiosity towards the task. The results of the questionnaire are analyzed from both quantitative and especially qualitative perspectives (Blaxter et al. 2008), trying to identify the meaning that students attribute to facts and situations characteristic of the Middle Ages. The data analysis has been carried out using the Atlas.ti tool (version 7) because it facilitates the information coding and retrieval processes (San Martín, 2014).

We analyze below the results of some of the most outstanding items.

## RESULTS

### WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH MIDDLE AGE

In the first item of the questionnaire, students were asked to do a free word association activity. Dany et al. (2015). This technique used in clinical practice is used here so that the respondents can spontaneously express their opinions and beliefs about the Middle Ages. The students cited a large number of terms related to the Middle Ages, 65 words in total, which indicates that this historical period is widely represented in the imagination of students who mostly cited between 4 and 6 terms.

F	Words
>10 meetings	Feudalism (29) vassal (17), agrarian crisis and guilds (13) Castle (12), Crusades (10).
5-10 meetings	Clergy (9), artisans (8), lords (5).
<5 meetings	- Agrarian expansion, male universities, merchants (4.) -Fall of the Roman Empire, East, West, crops, church, bourgeoisie (3).-Cathedral, cleric, plague, marquises, ruralism, Vikings, warriors, Discovery of America, small cities, lands, wars, parliaments (2).-Diseases, knights, nobles, kingdoms, religion, Visigoths, plow, cattle, conquerors, Muslims, invasions, Christianity, slaves, cities, writing (1).

Table 1. Words related to the Middle Ages with indication of frequency (F). (n=49)

The data indicate that the students identify the Middle Ages with a political system in which vassals and lords lived in a mainly confrontational context, with frequent battles among which the Crusades occupy the preeminent place. At a greater distance appear the economic, social and cultural aspects among which the references to the agrarian world (crops, cattle, plow), religion (clergy, churches, Muslim Christianity) and to a lesser extent the urban world (cities, commerce, guilds). These first results are in line with other studies such as those by Furió (1990), Pierrotti (2008) or García Pujades (2013), which indicate a predominantly pejorative representation of the Middle Ages, both culturally and in terms of living conditions. The presence of many answers where castles, cathedrals and churches appear also indicates that heritage aspects occupy a relevant place. The castle also appears in one of the current hegemonic visions of the Middle Ages, coinciding with what Duchemin (1987) affirms, who maintains that it is a consequence of the classical vision supported by official programs and books, although it also has to do with what magical-fantastic perspective transmitted through literature, video games and other sources, where space is given to

knights, dragons, wizards, witches, etc. As for the components of barbarism, backwardness or lack of technological development that predominate in the conception of this historical period, we find words that reflect it: invasions, plague, slaves, barbarians, diseases, etc. The students assume the prevailing pejorative social imaginary.

### **TIME DIMENSION, CHARACTERS AND EVENTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES**

The second item of the questionnaire asked the students for information about the beginning, the duration and some known dates of the Middle Ages. Slightly more than half of the students agree in locating the beginning of this stage at the time of the “fall of Rome”. This fact, in addition to being part of common knowledge from textbooks, movies or television, possibly must be related to a school activity that was beginning at that time and that consisted of the construction of a large timeline in the corridor of the educational center, in which the beginning of the Middle Ages was indicated with the phrase “Fall of Rome”. This fact must make us aware of the impact of this type of activities that involve the whole student body at the same time that it warns us of the need to avoid the dissemination of stereotyped knowledge that reinforces aspects that are deeply rooted in the imaginary of the school population.

The idea of the duration of the medieval period is more problematic. About half of the 49 students do not answer this question, 12 give a correct and precise answer (ten centuries or a thousand years), while the other quarter gives less correct answers. The only precise dates cited are 476 and 1492, in addition to the 10th and 15th centuries. This temporal perception confirms the results of Duchemin (1987) and Furió (1990) with French and Valencian students, respectively.

The characters that the students relate to

the Middle Ages give rise to a high number of responses. The most cited characters (>10 mentions) are generic names: vassals, nobles, Vikings or kings. Among the singular characters, those who receive the most mentions are Columbus, Charlemagne, the Catholic Monarchs, El Cid, Joan of Arc, Robin Hood or Diego Gelmírez and, above all, the Apostle Santiago. Three traits seem to adorn this gallery of characters. On the one hand, those that embody certain key events in national histories; on the other, those that have been disseminated through literature or cinema and, finally, those that are related to the local context (represented by Gelmírez and Santiago). These data coincide in many aspects with the findings of the works by Duchemin (1987), Furió (1990) or García Pujades (2013), who insist on the components of national histories, the coexistence between historical data and other coming from the legendary sphere or from popular culture and, finally, the appearance of the history of the environment closest to the students.

Table 2 offers the results of the events located by the students in the Middle Ages, which come to abound in some of the aspects already indicated. The events that dominate the students’ imagination are invasions, wars and conquests, followed by events related to national history (“Discovery” of America, “foundation” of Spain by the Catholic Monarchs, Reconquest), and accompanied by others that They are related to the local history of Compostela (foundation of Santiago, Maestro Mateo, Almanzor and La Berenguela). The history of the city seems to have burst into the students’ representations of the medieval world. Neither the school practices of recent years, nor the proliferation of youth publications on local history, nor everything related to tourist strategies to promote the city and the Camino de Santiago must be oblivious to this. In this list of events,

those that reproduce the most traditional vision of the Middle Ages as a backward and dark period (crisis, plagues, diseases) could not be missing, only nuanced by commercial advances or an anachronistic “invention of writing”.

F	Events
>5	Agrarian crisis (10), Discovery of America (6), Barbarian invasions (6)
2-5	Waves of invaders, wars, crusades (4), Muslim invasion and foundation of Spain by the Catholic Monarchs (3), feudalism, Christian expansion, large buildings (2).
1	Plague, plague of diseases, Apostle came to Santiago, foundation of Santiago de Compostela, Viking invasions, advanced trade Master Mateo makes portico, Almanzor and Berenguela, Reconquest, invention of writing (1).

Table 2. Events of the Middle Ages with indication of the number of citations (F). (n=49)

These issues are addressed through three items. The first investigates whether the students are capable of empathically approaching the people who lived at that time in relation to different aspects of daily life. First of all, we have that there are many blank answers (9) in the question about the places where medieval people lived. The most repeated answers are: towns (8), cities (5), countryside (4), etc. Other answers are somewhat stereotyped such as: the rich in castles, the poor in cabins (3), in towns (3) and the rest of the answers describe households or groups represented as poor or that range from small houses (1) to land of kings (1). The idea of that way of life related to rurality and rudimentary dwellings predominates. Despite reflecting responses such as that of cities, the students seem to construct an idea of the Middle Ages as if it were an antagonistic model of current life, as indicated by Mugüeta (2014).

In the question about what their houses

were like, again 9 blank answers appear, the others refer to very poor homes and substandard housing, being a sample: wooden or rock house (5), small castles (5), small houses (4), houses old (3), poor houses (3) small shacks (3) and thatched house (1).

As for the activities in which the medieval population was engaged, the most abundant responses are agriculture (17), hunting (5), fishing (5), handicrafts (4). To this are added ideas such as that people lived from vassalage, from the crusades or from serving a lord. This reveals a rural world with strong inequalities in which the majority of the population lives in unfavorable conditions, but a small group (kings, nobles, counts) live comfortably on account of obtaining wealth from others. The idea of inequality associated with the medieval period appears frequently in other research works.

In the final item of this questioning about ways of life, they were presented with a medieval calendar in which works linked to months of the year included in a total of 6 prints appeared. The students were only able to identify all the trades in 2 of the cases and 11 cases did not recognize any or did not answer. Students identify planting, gathering, and hunting, sometimes confused with slaughter. There are also descriptions that value the whole saying that “they are men gathering food”, “[...] they represent how the vassals worked [...]”, “[...] people who are working to obtain food to feed their people”, etc.

Students who recognize all or part of the tasks that are carried out in the calendar link it to their social and family environment where they continue to be carried out or in most cases (declared in a sharing in class) or also that older people in their immediate environment talk about it at home. This way, we can verify the value of oral tradition to generate knowledge about traditional agricultural activities at a time when these are

almost disappeared from urban environments. The attitude and comments of the students in the classroom revealed that aspects such as food and other aspects of daily life favor an empathic approach to the past and the relationships between past and present.

### **HERITAGE AND MATERIAL CULTURE. THE CLOSE ENVIRONMENT**

The question of the representations of the student body on the heritage related to the medieval world was addressed in two items. One inquired about the immediate environment of the students and the other asked them to cite buildings or vestiges of the Middle Ages in different spatial areas (Galicia, Spain, World). Only 13 of the 41 respondents indicated the Middle Ages as the period in which the city of Santiago was founded, of which three provided a specific date. Regarding the event that gave rise to the foundation of the city, 4 indicated the construction of the cathedral as the associated fact and 6 the discovery of the tomb of the apostle. Arguably, the discovery of the apostle's tomb or his arrival is less found than the foundation of the cathedral, however, the weight it has in the representations is greater, so it could be deduced that the Middle Ages cannot be worked on, with students from Santiago de Compostela, forgetting the legend of the discovery of the sepulcher since it is a very present representation throughout society and constitutes a center of common interest from which to start. It could be said that of the visions of the Middle Ages proposed by Furió (1990), the romantic and magical vision is more valid in primary school students in relation to the explanation of the founding of the city of Santiago.

In the second question, the students more frequently mention medieval remains located in the immediate environment. The

most cited heritage elements in the Galician environment are the cathedral of Santiago (19), the Peregrina de Pontevedra (5), Oseira (4), Catoira, the cathedral of Ourense, the wall of Lugo and the tower of Hercules (3). In the peninsular area, the most represented are the Alhambra, the Burgos Cathedral, the University of Salamanca, the Zamora Cathedral, and the ships La Niña, La Pinta and La Santa María. Outside the Spanish sphere, there are only two references, Los Gerónimos de Lisboa (1) and the Basilica of San Pedro in Rome (1). The results seem to confirm the findings of other studies (Furió, 1990; Sáiz, 2010), in the sense of the hegemonic presence of Spanish heritage and the Eurocentric tendency in those that refer to areas outside the Peninsula. In our particular case, there is a clear predominance of the Galician cultural heritage and the presence of some references related to the Reconquest or the "Discovery" of America, aspects related to the survival of the traditional milestones of national history.

In summary, the data obtained through the questionnaire confirm the results of other investigations and reveal that the Middle Ages are a familiar and recognizable period for students. The knowledge they have on this subject comes from various media and has a western and national bias as a result of the dissemination of social discourses in these directions. On the other hand, visions coexist that go from that story of emblematic characters that live in a warlike and inhospitable context, with the fantastic version where dragons, knights and princesses appear. The dates that are mostly associated with the medieval period are those that go from the 10th century to the 15th century, forgetting others belonging to this historical period. It could be affirmed that they conceive the period as hostile, plagued by diseases and social injustice, where life is difficult for its inhabitants and a conception of a period antagonistic to the current one is



affirmed. This vision is heir to a high degree of a prevailing pejorative vision that is maintained today by a series of factors such as the media, comics, movies, video games, the curricula that maintain the Spanish national story, the books of text that maintain that story and the disconnection between research and teaching. All this reaffirms the usefulness of investigating social representations for the design of an educational intervention that takes into account the points of view of the specific students to help them review and reformulate them.

#### SUGGESTIONS FROM THE STUDY TO TEACH THE MIDDLE AGE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

As Calvani (1988), Egan (1999) and Cooper (2002) have proposed, among others, students do not have difficulties in acquiring historical content due to their evolutionary stage, but these difficulties may lie in: not making a good selection of the contents, in an inadequate didactics based on rigid formulations and in not connecting the contents with their previous ideas, their social representations and not achieving their motivation. The Middle Ages is a topic that is in fashion, as Duchemin (1987) maintains, so it has the potential to motivate students, since access to different resources in different information media is relatively simple. It is necessary to take into consideration that the legacy of the Middle Ages is in force, as Furió (1990) indicates, and we can find vestiges that survive in everyday reality. A didactic proposal must use the nearby historical environment with instruments to measure the impact of the activity. On the other hand, a model is needed that gives priority to the development of students' historical skills, such as the one proposed by the didactic innovation groups of late Francoism, where the excessive volume of theoretical content that had to be memorized

was discarded and flexibility was proposed, and a specific type of collaborative and active work similar to that advocated by the active school (Sáiz, 2010). What these groups proposed is in accordance with the project approach currently advocated, although it is used less than expected. Also and finally, it must be taken into consideration that currently the proposal must be worked from a multilevel approach to serve all students without segregating anyone. Within this approach to the Middle Ages, it is relevant to develop empathy for the inhabitants and ways of life of that distant era in time. One way to contribute to this goal is to work with historical sources. Historical-type sources can connect students with that distant past and make them aware of the passage of time. But not only historical sources allow that empathy. Images from comics, video games, novels, movies and other media can make students aware of the Middle Ages. As Díaz Barrado (2012) states, images can serve to guide public opinion, so it can be deduced that they can serve to achieve a degree of empathy. An important part of an innovative proposal must take into consideration that stereotypes are enduring and that learning from a historical period can collide with myths or stereotypes that must be revised.

In the case of primary school students in Galicia and Spain, many of these myths come from a simplistic national story that is due to the purpose of legitimizing the established power (Pérez Garzón, 2002). Thus the characters, facts and events may not be represented in a rigorous manner. Something interesting to generate critical thinking is to address current burning conflicts in the classroom. By studying the Middle Ages, you can find many of those burning conflicts that are currently being solved, such as the problem of Christians and Muslims, and you can compare the facts and even obtain clues

for resolution. To achieve this, it is necessary to promote a less sociocentric and stereotyped view of the Middle Ages. Duchemin (1987) says, with respect to this stereotyped vision that is interesting to refute, that young people are victims of the pejorative notion of the Middle Ages where this period seems to represent a stagnation between two moments of brilliance. Likewise, this period is also represented as an antithetical image of our society. For the selection of the contents on the Middle Ages of an ideal proposal, cultural relativism must be taken into account. We must think that people generate knowledge in the form of social representations that varies depending on various factors, including the culture in which we are immersed, as evidenced in their study by Liu et al. (2005), where they show that a historical vision is generated, being currently hegemonic a westernist bias enhanced by globalization. We can promote the use of ICT to search for information in various sources and criticize what we teach and learn.

To end with the suggestions that could be put into practice in the treatment of the Middle Ages, the following must be included as essential: 1) the valuation of the tangible and intangible heritage that this period bequeathed us, which is as numerous as it is functional, as shown by its works Ubieto (1997) and De Serrano (2007). One of the ways to appreciate this heritage is to promote outings in the environment locating its different manifestations because it helps to facilitate learning by acting as a motivating element. The relevance of the value of the local arouses interest in the students thanks to the fact that it puts into operation affective aspects and feelings of belonging that can balance the interest that they can cultivate in the manifestations of distant cultures that come from the media. 2) Within the learning that will take place in our proposal, we must create

manipulative material that allows students to elaborate that facilitate the acquisition of theoretical content.

## CONCLUSIONS

The starting point of this work has to do with a need to optimize the teaching and learning of history in the classroom. Here a specific historical period has been chosen as a concrete example of the problems that can be found when teaching.

We begin by carrying out a bibliographic review on: historical teaching and its problems, the Middle Ages as an example of a historical period to study, the state of the social sciences curriculum, the alternatives that there were and are to that model and the study of social representations. and its application in teaching. Regarding the results of these readings, it was possible to learn that the researchers agree in informing us that students do not seem to know what is the usefulness of learning history and the administration continues to grant validity to some classic models in which the excess of content prevails, its memorization, the little importance to the procedural contents and the dependence on the textbook. The teaching of social sciences must go through making it understood that the teacher is the key piece. You also have to be realistic and not believe in magic formulas that are going to radically change the panorama, but the truth is that, if a teacher is motivated, the materials end up appearing.

The application of a questionnaire of representations about the Middle Ages to 49 students in the 6th grade of primary school confirmed some of the findings of other investigations, but there were also some surprises regarding the number and quality of the responses. The questionnaire turned out to be a very interesting instrument. A synthesis of the results gives us the idea that

the vision of our Galician students coincides with a Eurocentric vision, which coincides with the Spanish national narrative and in which emblematic male characters are important. This type of a priori knowledge could be erroneously considered from the point of view of correction, however, it helps us to design our intervention work. Mugüeta (2014) expresses it well: at first you have to ally yourself with the “enemy”. From the studies consulted and the results of the inquiry about the representations of our students, suggestions are made to teach the Middle Ages in the classroom. It is important to investigate the social representations in the educational intervention because it brings us closer to the point of view of these students and allows us to design the intervention in a more adapted way. Giving relevance to the previous ideas of the students we also approach their areas of interest and contribute to the students being more motivated towards school activities.

From the results of the readings and the analysis of the questionnaire, some objectives were specified for a proposal: 1) take into account the ideas and representations of the students; 2) promote a non-stereotyped approach to the Middle Ages; 3) develop empathy towards the ways of life of other times and that can compare them with today; 4) take advantage of the surrounding resources to enrich the project (museums, interpretation centers, urban landscape, etc.); 5) use manipulative material for activities that facilitate the understanding of concepts and encourage active collaborative work and 6) promote the use of ICTs to search for and elaborate information. To round off these conclusions, it can be stated that despite the fact that research on learning history has advanced significantly in recent decades, it is necessary to continue researching in primary education classrooms using specific objects of study and especially in the first courses of the stage that seem to be less attended.

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