

The Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity in Education Thematic Network – “What is diversity in learning?” online research seminar, 30th March 2017:

The online research seminar session “What is diversity in learning?” was carried out on 30th March 2017 by the Universities of Helsinki/Open University and the University of Aberdeen. The seminars purpose was to stimulate thinking about diversity and how to deal with it in research, teaching and learning.

About 15 students and four lecturers in the two cities were reflecting on their teaching practice and experiences in relation to diversity.

Overall, the students were extremely satisfied with the online session and appreciated the opportunity to hear opinions from teachers who were committed to their work on inclusion. Some of the international differences were interesting as well as the commonalities; the Finnish students seemed surprised by the Scottish policy focus on poverty, whereas in Scotland, poverty is the main topic of conversation.

After the session, the students encouraged the Thematic Network to develop more joint sessions, as well as preparing certain topics and sharing them in advance to the seminar to stimulate discussion. Furthermore it was suggested, that feedback could be given on some of the students private works (research plans, reflective diaries etc.).

The Thematic Network hopes to incorporate online seminars into more permanent courses, which would have capacity for more students, further stimulating the discussions and hopefully overcoming some of the language barriers as well as making scheduling more manageable.