Naturorienterad utbildning i förskolan
Pragmatiska undersökningar av meningsskapandets
individuella, sociala och kulturella dimensioner

av

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Akademisk avhandling

Avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i pedagogik,
 som enligt beslut av rektor kommer att försvaras offentligt
 fredagen den 18 januari 2013 kl. 13.15,
Hörsal P2, Prismahuset Örebro universitet

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Abstract


The overall purpose of this thesis is to investigate, illuminate and clarify meaning making processes and content when children between the ages of 1-3 encounter nature in a preschool practice. Further, the aim is to develop and illustrate action-centred methodological approaches that facilitate investigations of individual, social and cultural dimensions of preschool children’s meaning making of nature. The results are presented in four sub-studies that all take their starting points in John Dewey’s pragmatic philosophy, with a specific focus on Dewey’s concept of transactions, his theory of action and educative experience as meaning making. In the first sub-study, a Practical Epistemology Analysis (PEA) is developed and used to investigate physical meaning making by studying actions and the consequences of these actions. In the second sub-study, a Custom Analysis is developed to facilitate investigations of how the preschool culture contributes to children’s meaning making of nature. An Epistemological Move Analysis (EMA) is used in the third sub-study for investigations relating to teachers’ guiding processes. Here, a Substantive Learning Quality Analysis (SLQA) is also developed and used for investigations of multi-dimensional learning qualities in children’s learning about nature. In the fourth sub-study, the analysis methods above are refined to form a tool that can be used by teachers in their reflective work with pedagogical documentation in preschool practice. The results illuminate a multifaceted perspective of meaning making about nature. In this context, meaning making includes cognitive, physical, moral and aesthetical qualities, and nature content includes caring for nature, health and well-being in nature and knowledge about natural phenomena and processes. The results contribute to a critical discussion about preschool science education that concerns how preschool practices can highlight nature learning and the multifaceted aspects that are of importance for making meaning of the environment and of life.

Keywords: Preschool, early childhood education, science education, nature, teaching, meaning making, John Dewey, pragmatism, transaction.

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