



## Brief

# Outdoor sloyd teaching – experiences among early childhood education students

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Previous studies show that contact with nature is very important for human well-being and development. It has been found that people spend too much time indoors and that interaction with nature has decreased compared to previous generations. The research emphasizes that it is important that children at an early age are encouraged to stay outdoors in nature for a future nature connection. There are many positive aspects of outdoor activities in nature for children that are consistent with sloyd teaching outdoors. Previous research on outdoor sloyd teaching is very limited. There is particularly little research on how students in early childhood education experience sloyd activities outdoors and in relation to their future profession. It is therefore considered important to fill this research gap to some extent.

The aim of the study is to investigate (1) how students in early childhood education experience handicraft activities outdoors and (2) how students in early childhood education experience handicraft activities outdoors in relation to their future profession. The methodological part of the study is rooted in hermeneutics. The empirical survey was conducted in autumn 2020 for 32 early childhood education students at a Swedish-speaking teacher education in Finland. As a method of data collection, questionnaires with both structured and unstructured questions were selected. The collected text material was inductively analyzed using qualitative content analysis as a method. The aim was to identify meaning-bearing content and formulate general explanations for the research questions.

Firstly, the results showed that students experience outdoor sloyd teaching as something positive and educational, although there were also some who had negative experiences. Secondly, the results showed that participants were relatively unfamiliar with outdoor sloyd

activities and many had difficulty linking this activity to their future profession. Perhaps the most significant thing was that many students got an improved and expanded view of outdoor sloyd teaching as well as experiences and lessons that they can bring to their future profession with young children. What should possibly be emphasized more in the education of future early childhood educators is the importance of play in relation to imagination and creativity in outdoor sloyd teaching. The results indicate that outdoor sloyd teaching has many advantages and opportunities that should be taken into account in the education of future early childhood educators and in daycare activities. Furthermore, it is believed that sloyd teaching outdoors may encourage children to more outdoor activities in nature.

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