



Brief

Listening to children's questions - a didactic challenge

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This article is based on a study of preschool teachers' didactic group discussions within a network. It follows how a preschool didactic perspective on teaching emerges within a specific subject matter concerning science and sustainable development, with extra focus on how preschool teachers listen to and follow up children's questions and engagement in the subject.

The study is empirically based on twelve conversations in focus groups, from three meetings in the network, which were recorded and then transcribed. The conversations show how the preschool teachers take children's input (questions, emerging theories, hypotheses, actions) as guidance for planning and carrying out the teaching of phenomena in science and processes where aesthetics, play and exploration are seen as important parts in relation to subject related issues.

With the concept *learning as a relational field of potentiality* as a starting point, formulated on the basis of Deleuzian philosophy including concepts such as *event*, *intensity* and *potentiality*, ongoing collective learning and meaning-making are analysed. The study sheds light on how and when the questions of children and preschool teachers overlap and diverge. It also observes parallel processes, when and how preschool teachers latch on to children's questions, and how participants' knowledge of the subject matter affects the process.

The study shows that it is possible to pay attention to and upgrade the potentiality of what is about to happen in the "here-and-now moments" that occasionally appear in preschool practice. It also highlights how a listening approach can improve children's participation, which is a key aspect of preschool didactics. Herein lies an ethical dimension where children's participation and influence over questions of content are put in relation to preschool

teachers' responsibility to create a multidimensional teaching practice. The importance of preschool teachers' subject knowledge for deepening and developing the exploratory process is emphasized. The focus groups reflect on how the aesthetic activities that the preschool teachers arrange give the children possibilities to continue to explore the questions which have arisen during earlier activities and to observe further scientific details.

Keyword: *preschool; listening; science; an explorative approach*