

Including sustainability and facilitating pupils' agency in primary school education



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Introduction

Climate change and its impact on earth is one of the issues that concern young people today. For all of us, who work in the fields of education, it is crucial to understand how young pupils might become engaged in sustainability issues.

This poster is based on an empirical study that examines school practice in primary school, and will be a contribution both to the research field of ESD and the Storyline community.

Method and theory

This study is part of a practise-based action research carried out by a group of six teachers, six student teachers, the school's principal and myself as the researcher.

The research methods were participating observations and interviews with pupils and with teachers.

The study was underpinned by theories of relational pedagogy.



Results

The results demonstrate that the pupils were given opportunities to enhance agency through six main activities:

- 1-2. Key questions and dialogue
- 3-4. Discussions and constructing
- 5-6. Creating lists and presentations

These were 1-2) led by the teacher, 3-4) pupils' independently work and 5-6) teacher and pupils work in cooperation

Conclusions

This study has shed light on how relational agency has been exercised and performed through features of a Storyline; by participating in the process of key questioning, as a member in small group, which includes arguing, negotiating and reaching agreements, and by the teachers' interpersonal caring.

When moving from an individual perspective on agency to relational agency, pupils are considered as interactive agents rather than as individual agents. In ESD, such a pedagogical and philosophical perspective is worth striving for.



Context

This study is conducted in a non-profit primary school, and includes two primary school classes, grade Two (age 8-9), consisting of, respectively, 24 and 25 pupils, and two teachers