

Spontaneous Phenomena: A Mathematical Analysis

Exploring children's ideas about natural phenomena in kindergarten classes: designing and evaluating 'eliciting activities'

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ABSTRACT

Young children's ideas about a number of science topics have been steadily studied in recent years and the respective research findings have considerably supported the development of early childhood science education so far. However, according to the sociocultural perspective on young children's ideas in science, children adopt a variety of theories, since they are based on their everyday cultural experiences, which makes classification quite difficult. It is therefore suggested that any teaching intervention should take seriously into account the ideas of the children it addresses. But such thing presupposes that the teacher's educational design involves 'eliciting processes' of his/her students' ideas. The present study aims to investigate methodological issues on the implementation in Kindergarten classes of such processes concerning natural phenomena, as an essential stage of designing the respective teaching interventions. Particular emphasis is put on the "educational context" of these processes, while at the same time the function of the different kinds of activities exploring the ideas of Kindergarten children about the Earth's shape and the day/night cycle is studied with a view to formulating concrete proposals on learning and teaching in early childhood science classes.

KEY WORDS

Early childhood science education, children's ideas, communication, drawing activity, group discussion, research methods, Earth's shape, day/night cycle

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