

Biljana C. Fredriksen

NON-FICTION

Grasping with the body: Children's experiences as the basis for all learning

Begripe med kroppen: Barns erfaringer som grunnlag for all læring

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 336 Pages

This book challenges general understanding of knowledge, proposing that socialization into contemporary educational systems endangers the embodied human capacities to learn through experience, to maintain motivated to act and create, and to take responsibility for own actions. The main audience are early childhood teachers, but the book is also suitable for anyone who deals with or cares for children. With rich examples from qualitative research with pre-school children, the book discusses how children negotiate meaning during explorative play with materials like clay, textiles, wood, wool etc. It can therefore be said that it is framed within the area of aesthetics, but it highly intersects with area of pedagogy – it explains how cognition is imaginative, emotional and multisensory, and how creativity depends on affordances of physical environments and on inter-subjective relations between children, peers and teachers. Leaning on the work of John Dewey, Lev S. Vygotsky, Elliot Eisner, Arthur Efland, Kieran Egan and others, the author proposes that understanding is always influenced by personal combination of experiences that are holistic and individual.

Young children's learning is traditionally underestimated, however decreasing power difference between children and their teachers, allows children's trust in own power of learning. The same can be said about university students and their teachers; Renewed understanding is demanding: it demands reflection about own attitudes and acknowledgement of own shortcomings. Through a suggestive and personal writing style, the author is trying to motivate readers to



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Universitetsforlaget | cecilie.ulstein-
 brokner@universitetsforlaget.no |
 www.universitetsforlaget.no



invest efforts in order to grasp the complexity of the process of understanding (learning, meaning making) that unfolds in constant interference between the individual, the social and the material world. The readers are invited to reflect about their critical role as responsible in upbringing of future generations.