

Reconfiguring Environmental Sustainability in Early Childhood Education

a Post-anthropocentric Approach

This dissertation centers on conceptual engagement in environmental sustainability within the field of early childhood education, ECE. It problematizes the anthropocentric characteristics of ECE and seeks post-anthropocentric possibilities of engaging with environmental predicaments. Theoretically, it is framed within posthuman thinking. Methodologically, it draws ideas from post-qualitative inquiry.

The dissertation makes knowledge contributions in the following four aspects. First, drawing on empirical data, sustainability is introduced as a generative concept beyond social, human and cognitive affairs. Second, the work challenges the idea of a rational, ethical and agentic child, and explores possibilities for engaging with the unfolding, relational and affective child and its implication for sustainability. Third, the dissertation reasons that since humans are already multiple and enmeshed with the non-human world, learning for sustainability must consider alternative forms of learning such as 'becoming-with', 'learning-with', 'learning to be affected by' non-human others. Fourth, the work highlights the non-humans as knowledge-creating actors/entities, and puts forward the idea of researching with non-human forces and other species apart from researching with humans/children.

In the end, the post-anthropocentric approach is not presented as a panacea for solving the current ecological problems, but rather as a much needed attempt to deal with one of the symptoms (excessive emphasis on human-centeredness) by decentering the human and seeing humans' entangled relationships with non-human others.



Kassahun Weldemariam has previously worked as a lecturer and teacher trainer at Dilla University in Ethiopia, and as a preschool pedagogical leader in Stockholm, Sweden. His main research interest falls under the umbrella subject of Early Childhood Education for Sustainability. Other research areas include: commercialization of childhood and its implication for sustainability, play in ECE, professionalism in ECE, bilingualism, biliteracy and children's reasoning with numbers.

ISBN 978-91-7963-022-5 (PRINT)
ISBN 978-91-7963-023-2 (PDF)
ISSN 0436-1121

Kassahun Weldemariam RECONFIGURING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN ECE



Reconfiguring Environmental Sustainability in Early Childhood Education

a Post-anthropocentric Approach

Kassahun Weldemariam



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG