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IFEN inspire Podcast

S3 EP 05: trois questions à... (EN translation)

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For the implementation of outdoor teaching, the teacher is the key. They decide whether lessons can and may take place outdoors, with what quality, how often, and with or without follow-up in class.

Oli Frisch:

Why is outdoor teaching so important from the directorate's point of view, with regard to children's development?

Joa Baum:

For us as a directorate, holding school outdoors is not simply a nice activity, but rather a valuable form of learning. Children learn best when they are active, move and can experience things with all their senses. In doing so, different areas of the brain are activated at the same time, which leads to more lasting learning. At the same time, outdoor teaching fosters motor skills, health, concentration, social skills and creativity, but also problem-solving. So it helps children build a relationship with their environment and with nature – and thereby also with sustainable development.

Oli Frisch:

What structural conditions are in place in Luxembourg to make outdoor school possible – and what is still missing?

Joa Baum:

In Luxembourg we already have a whole range of good preconditions. The Plan d'études leaves schools a lot of room for inquiry-based, competence-oriented learning. Here one can recall that the 2009 School Act created the legal framework for competence-oriented teaching. The science orientation and education for sustainable development in particular fit outdoor teaching excellently. In addition, schools can set their own priorities within their school development plan, the Plan de développement scolaire. In our region we additionally offer targeted training courses geared directly to schools' needs. Of course there is still potential for development: especially in teachers' initial training, outdoor teaching is not yet systematically anchored. Many teachers only come into contact with it through continuing education.

Oli Frisch:

Where do you see the biggest misunderstanding about the concept of outdoor school? And what do you say to sceptical parents and colleagues?

Joa Baum:

The biggest misunderstanding is that outdoor teaching is sometimes seen as a kind of leisure activity, and that one would therefore fall behind with the curriculum. But that is not the case. It is planned, structured teaching with clear learning objectives. This is also emphasised in the planned new Plan d'études through transversality. The children may learn less, but often more sustainably, because they are allowed to experience and discover things themselves. To parents, school committees and colleagues I would simply say: outdoor teaching does not replace the classroom, it extends it. And often everything starts with small steps. Outdoor teaching is not a fad. It is a scientifically grounded complement to teaching that best meets the needs of children in the 21st century.