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SP - (16185) - EXPLORING THE GUIDANCE OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHER IN AN INQUIRY-BASED ACTIVITY

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Short Abstract

International reform documents have called for an emphasis on students' engagement in core scientific practices, such as inquiry and argumentation, from an early age. However, a review of the literature illustrates that research focused on the role of the teacher in inquiry-based activities remains a largely unexplored research area. This case study aims to addresses this gap in the literature through the examination of teacher's guidance while kindergarten students engage in inquiry practices in the context of learning about forces. Designed as a qualitative case study, we adopted a discourse analysis to identify the type of questions the teacher introduces and how they contribute to inquiry skills development by students. The participants were a teacher, with a long professional career in science inquiry activities, and a classroom of 25 children (5- 6 years old). The results showed that the teacher used ten types of questions, being the most frequent the questions that encouraged students to formulate hypotheses (N=25), analyze and interpret data (N=16) and justified their answers (N=16). This study sheds light to the under-explored research area of teaching-based inquiry practices in early childhood education, providing evidence that it is necessary to abandon the misconceptions about children's abilities in order to provide them with learning experiences.