

Contents and Series Overview

Questions to the Soil — Living Experience Guides

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Contents and Series Overview

This series comprises an introduction, five target-group guides, and shared appendices. All documents are published trilingually (DE/EN/PL) as Open Educational Resources. The guides may be used independently or as a complete sequence.

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The Series

Introduction — Document 00

Title: Questions to the Soil — Introduction to the Series

Scope: Facilitator introduction, conceptual framework, methodological foundations, campus overview, Appendix A (the complete 13 Questions protocol), Appendix B (Soil Explorer Field Sheet for all target groups)

The Introduction is the shared starting point for all five guides. It describes the six integrated pedagogical models of the series — the Three-Stream Approach (Head/Hands/Heart), the 4A-Pathway, Christopher Alexander's Pattern Language, Goethean observation, Hall's Proxemics Theory, and the Token Economy — as well as the spatial campus architecture (Zones A–E) in which the workshops take place. Appendix A contains the complete 13 Questions protocol with all enrichments; Appendix B the Soil Explorer Field Sheet in its standard form.

Recommended as first reading for anyone facilitating one of the guides.

Guide 1 — Soil Explorer / Boden-Erkunder

Title: Questions to the Soil — Guide 1: Boden-Erkunder

Subtitle: For Children and Young People (Ages 8–18, School Classes and Informal Groups)

Duration: 90–120 minutes · **Group size:** 10–30 · **Season:** Year-round

Guide 1 is the entry point for young people. It introduces the 13 Questions in an age-appropriate, playfully scientific form — with Life Count, ribbon test, Mystery Soil, and the Soil Explorer Field Sheet as the central recording format. Its particular strength is the surprise that comes when a square metre of earth is opened: the discovery that "dead soil" is an ecosystem. The guide differentiates between primary and secondary school adaptations and includes guidance for participants with special educational needs.

Methodological emphasis: Goethean first encounter, 4A-Pathway (Awareness → Acknowledgment), citizen science as life count.

Guide 2 — Soil Encounter / Boden-Begegnung

Title: Questions to the Soil — Guide 2: Boden-Begegnung

Subtitle: For Adults and Families (Open Community Format)

Duration: 2.5–3 hours · **Group size:** 6–20 · **Season:** Year-round, especially spring and autumn

Guide 2 addresses adults — garden enthusiasts, Repair Café participants, Makerspace visitors, families. It begins with practical relevance ("What is this soil telling me about my garden?") and moves from there toward the philosophical. Its core theme is the proxemic barrier that adult participants bring to intimate soil contact — and its dissolution, which typically occurs the moment someone deliberately smells earth for the first time. The Soil Explorer Notebook (a four-page folded booklet) replaces the children's field sheet. The sensor dialogue goes deeper: resolution vs. integration, trends vs. snapshots, what sensors cannot measure.

Methodological emphasis: transformative learning (Mezirow), citizen science as a home soil observation network, connection to the Repair Café ethic.

Guide 3 — Soil Memory / Boden-Gedächtnis

Title: Questions to the Soil — Guide 3: Boden-Gedächtnis

Subtitle: For Elders and Intergenerational Groups

Duration: 2.5–3 hours · **Group size:** 8–16 · **Season:** Autumn (ideal), Spring

Guide 3 inverts the conventional educational relationship: elder participants are the knowledge-holders, not the recipients. Their memory across decades is scientific data — longitudinal, place-specific, irreplaceable. The 13 Questions protocol is augmented with Elder Memory Prompts that ask for historical comparison: Was the soil different before? What grew here before reunification? The Kaffee

und Kuchen format is not incidental — it is a proxemically designed space for informal storytelling. Oral soil histories are transcribed and entered into the Erdpuls archive. The shared mapping exercise produces a collective soil cartography of Müllrose that exists nowhere else.

Methodological emphasis: oral history methodology (Thomson, Portelli), historical ecology (Foster & Aber), intergenerational learning (Kaplan), proxemic inversion of the age hierarchy.

Guide 4 — Soil Depth / Boden-Tiefe

Title: Questions to the Soil — Guide 4: Boden-Tiefe

Subtitle: For Artists and Researchers (Residency-Depth Immersion)

Duration: Multi-day — initial session 3–4 hours + self-directed daily practice over 1–4 weeks · **Group size:** 1–6

Guide 4 is not a workshop format but a protocol for sustained practice. Residents — bio-material artists, citizen science researchers, conservation practitioners, writers — conduct the Three Morning Questions daily and return to the full protocol weekly. The daily practice deepens across weeks: Day 1 is novelty, Day 7 is recognition, Day 21 is intimate familiarity. The protocol does not prescribe what emerges from the soil encounter — whether pigment, dataset, poem, or hypothesis. It ensures that whatever emerges is grounded in genuine, sustained encounter with the place.

Methodological emphasis: Goethean dwelling-in-phenomena (Bortoft, Naydler), longitudinal ecological observation (Likens), ecological art practice (Wallen), proxemic immersion as epistemological method.

Guide 5 — Soil Bridge / Boden-Brücke

Title: Questions to the Soil — Guide 5: Boden-Brücke

Subtitle: For Cross-Border Groups (DE/PL Trilingual, Intercultural)

Duration: Full day (6–7 hours) or two half-days · **Group size:** 12–24 · **Season:** Late spring or early autumn

Guide 5 is the geographically and culturally most expansive of the series. The Oder-Neisse border between Germany and Poland divides politically what belongs together geologically: the same glacial sand, the same moraine, the same soil colour, the same springtails. The workshop makes this fact experiential — through hands, nose, and measurement on both sides of the border. The trilingual language protocol (DE/PL/EN) uses translation moments as pedagogical events: when *thusta ziemia* (Polish) and "fetter Boden" (German) carry slightly different connotations, the cultural difference in how soil fertility is perceived and valued becomes visible. The shared meal — food from both sides — is not peripheral programming; it is the proxemic centre of the day.

Methodological emphasis: comparative environmental education (Bray), place-based education (Gruenewald), intercultural proxemics (Hall), bioregionalism as pedagogical standpoint.

Appendices (in all editions)

Appendix	Contents
Appendix A	The complete 13 Questions protocol with all enrichments (trilingual DE/EN/PL)
Appendix B	Soil Explorer Field Sheet (standard version, print-ready)
Appendix C	BNE Quality Catalogue Brandenburg — reference table for all five guides
Appendix D	Recommended reading and references

Quick Reference: The Five Guides Compared

	G1 Soil Explorer	G2 Soil Encounter	G3 Soil Memory	G4 Soil Depth	G5 Soil Bridge
Target group	Children & young people	Adults & families	Elders & generations	Artists & researchers	Cross-border groups DE/PL
Format	Single session	Single session	Single session with break	Multi-day residency	Full day / two-part
Duration	90–120 min	2.5–3 hrs	2.5–3 hrs	3–4 hrs + ongoing practice	6–7 hrs
Group size	10–30	6–20	8–16	1–6	12–24
4A emphasis	Awareness	Attitude + Action	Acknowledgment + Attitude	Acknowledgment + Action	Awareness + Acknowledgment
Languages	DE / EN	DE / EN	DE / EN	DE / EN	DE / PL / EN
Citizen science output	Life count	Soil notebook	Oral history record	Longitudinal dataset	Trilingual comparison record

	G1 Soil Explorer	G2 Soil Encounter	G3 Soil Memory	G4 Soil Depth	G5 Soil Bridge
Distinctive feature	Mystery Soil, Field Sheet	Repair Café connection	Kaffee und Kuchen, map	Three Morning Questions	Shared meal, border geology

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