

Development Plan for Cynefin

BMOE 6002 Curriculum Adventure

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Introduction

During COVID-19 the world shut down and people had to stay home. Being forced inside created a longing for adventure and the need to go outside. It was not just a longing it was a fundamental part of humanity to go outside and adventure (Jackson, Stevenson, Larson, Peterson, & Seekamp, 2021). COVID didn't only affect adults it greatly affected children and teenagers. After the global pandemic, there was a change in the Welsh school curriculum, to be more holistic and outdoors-focused. The Outdoor Adventure Education program at UWTSD wants to promote this new change in the curriculum by utilizing the outdoor facility Cynefin to create a space that supports physical activity in an outdoor environment for children ages 12 and up. Using my unlimited budget and resources I will develop Cynefin to promote outdoor adventurous learning while connecting the developments to physical literacy, affordances, the Welsh curriculum, and risk management.

Importance of physical activity in natural environments

It is challenging for kids to play in natural environments. Adults don't want kids to play outside and utilize their environment. They don't want them to be running around or climbing trees. In some cases, the government does not want children to play in the outdoors. For example, when three boys tried to make a tree house in their backyard the government in Pennsylvania fined them and tore it down because they didn't have a permit (Louv, 2005). This is not fair for kids. If they are punished for existing outdoors, they can only stay inside. This limits the kid's creativity, learning, and socialization (Jackson, et. al, 2021). Participating in

outdoor activities or just being in nature can provide many benefits. It can benefit emotional well-being, reduce stress, improve self-esteem, and promote participation in physical activities (Tillmann, *et al*, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic adolescents had a hard time, they were not getting enough sleep because they were on a screen all the time and were not tired because they didn't have anywhere to exercise (Jackson, *et. al*, 2021). Having an outdoor space that is welcoming and celebrates kids being creative, socializing, and playing is what they need.

The new development of Cynefin

The senior management team of the Discipline of Sport and Healthy Living at UWTSD has granted me an unlimited budget to create a space that will promote outdoor adventurous learning in Cynefin. The new features that I am going to include in the development of Cynefin include an indoor swimming pool, an outdoor natural swimming pool, a bike trail that wraps around the outside of Cynefin, a bike and skateboarding park, a parkour park, and nature hideaway. In Figure 1 the space for the indoor pool is marked in blue. I am going to expand the building so that it can accommodate a medium-sized pool (25 meters wide and 35 meters long). The indoor pool area will include changing rooms, lockers, showers, and a waiting area for parents sitting areas. The swimming pool will include diving boards (5 meters, and 7.5 meters), swim lanes, water features (water fountains, floaties, water guns), a deep-end and a shallow-end (3.5 meters and 0.7 metres). In Figure 1 the space for an outdoor natural swimming pool is highlighted in purple. I am going to add an outdoor natural pool in that space. A natural pool is a man-made swimmable pond that filters itself using plant life instead of chemicals (Tarulli 2024).

This natural pool will feed off into the river in the back of Cynefin. This is a space where paddle sports including canoeing, kayaking, and paddle boarding can take place. This is also a space for swimming in the warmer months in the UK. The boats will all be stored in a small building beside the natural swimming pool. In Figure 1 the space for a bike and skate park is highlighted in yellow. The skate park will include ramps big and small, rails, and a pump track. It will also be connected to the natural bike trail that is highlighted in green (figure 1). The bike trail will be dirt and go around the cynefin and its new features. The space for a parkour area is highlighted in white (figure 1). The parkour area will include platforms in different sizes to jump off of, places to swing around in, moving elements (see-saws) and elements to climb. The last element is the natural hideaway highlighted orange (figure 1). The natural hideaway will include a small pond, two huts, trees surrounding the area, rope swings on the trees, and bird feeders. This space will also include wildlife in the pond including fish and frogs, as well as promoting birds to visit using the bird feeders.

Physical literacy regarding the new development

Physical literacy includes motivation to move and the ability to move the body. “Physical literacy is the ability to motivate and capitalize on our mobile potential and make a significant contribution to the quality of life”, (Jurbala, 2015). Physical literacy has been studied for a long time. It is not limited to the knowledge of the importance of exercise it is about the ability to do any movement big and small as long as the body is capable. It is important to understand physical literacy so that one can make conscience decisions to better their well-being. According to Cairney, Dudley, Kwan, Bulten, & Kriellaars, (2019), physical literacy is a multi-dimensional

concept that includes motor competencies, positive effects, and motivational constructs.

Essentially one needs the ability to move, the enjoyment associated with the movement, and the confidence to continue to keep moving.

What do the elements I am adding to cynefin have to do with physical literacy? The spaces that I am including to cynefin encourage a wide range of dynamic movements and motor skills that may not be used in everyday environments. Swimming encourages the movement of the whole body to stay floating and to move. It is not as simple as walking on the ground or jumping because it is an aquatic environment. The ability to swim can also be essential in not drowning. Being able to hold one's breath for a short period is essential for survival. The ability to swim promotes feeling safer in aquatic environments which lowers stressors and encourages a higher self-esteem (Duldy, 2019). Similar points apply to riding a bike or skateboarding. These skills can promote balance, endurance, and reaction time. These are also essential vehicles for travel. It is faster to travel by bike or skateboard and it is more affordable and environmentally friendly than a car. Most kids ages 12 and up are not driving so to get to their friend's house or school they can ride a bike. With the skills and motivation to ride a bike kids can have a greater chance of exploring their outdoor environment and participating in physical activity. In paddle sports, there are dynamic movements including holding and moving a paddle to move forward, backwards and turning. There is also balance involved in paddle sports, the boat can be tipped but falling is not as taxing as it is on land because the water can absorb some of the falls. Finally, parkour is essential for learning how to catch a fall (Wintle 2023). It is dynamic movements in a small space that utilizes upper body strength, balance, and coordination. All of these features added to cynefin focus on different types of movements to promote diversity in physical activity.

These are also all basic movements and activities that can promote further exploration in other physical activities.

Affordances regarding the new development

Affordances can be surfaces, objects to manipulate, people or animals, substances, mediums, and places (Gibson 1986). A surface can include a sidewalk and the affordance that it provides is that one can walk on it without getting hit by the cars. An object can include a tennis ball, the affordance that a tennis ball can give is to throw the ball. Different affordance characteristics can also interact with each other. For example, if an individual has a ball (object) and is walking on a flat sidewalk (surface) with their friend (people) then they can pass the ball by bouncing it on the ground to each other without worrying about being hit by a car (affordance). An added affordance to this scenario is social affordance. Social affordance is the interaction between the passing and cohesion the kids have to have to communicate passing, (Gavner 1996). Being in the outdoors provides a variety of affordances that can be utilized by kids to promote critical thinking and is beneficial for kids to learn in this kind of environment (McNamara & Fowler, 1975). Learning in an outdoor environment is not enough there needs to be natural features for the learner to interact with to engage critical thinking, imagination and motor skills (Luchs & Fikus, 2013).

The features that I am adding to Cynefin have a variety of affordances to engage the adolescent's critical thinking and engagement. There are flat surfaces, uneven surfaces, different levels to interact. Water is a big part of developing cynefin because it is a dynamic affordance.

One can swim in it, put it in a container, move it around, and with different objects they can go on top of it. The many objects that are added to interact with the water are there to promote creativity and play, especially since teenagers may have a hard time engaging with play solely based on their imagination. In the nature hide away there are ways to interact with the animals, the pond, the trees, and the hut to hide away. Interacting with nature promotes critical thinking and imagination (Luchs & Fikus, 2013). There is also a social aspect to the environment because there will be multiple teenagers in the same setting, they have to wait their turn on the pump track or the diving boards. They will also be watching each other succeed in tasks and improve so they can cheer each other on. There is a diverse environment to engage in that promotes exploration, imagination, cooperation, and critical thinking.

The welsh criucullm

The Welsh curriculum has adopted a holistic pedagogy to teaching especially when it comes to physical education and health and well-being (HWB, 2022) . The holistic approach involves personal development promoting social interaction, and improving resilience. By emphasizing teamwork, communication, and decision-making, students learn to work together and tackle challenges in a supportive environment (Williams & Wrainwrite, 2022). The Welsh curriculum also involves a cross-curricular approach to learning. Through cross-curriculum learning the child can improve fine motor skills, communication skills, and comprehension. It is a diverse learning environment that promotes critical thinking skills that are integral for creativity and problem-solving skills (HWB, 2022). The Welsh curriculum has less of an emphasis on competitiveness and a focus on collaboration. Including more teamwork games and

lifelong physical motivation the Welsh curriculum has moved from participating in physical activities to learning the skills to have lifelong dynamic physical activity. The Welsh curriculum also emphasized outdoor learning. The teachers now have to teach a lesson in the outdoors.

I have taken into consideration the new Welsh curriculum in what I have developed in Cynefin. The activities including bike riding, skateboarding, paddling, parkour, learning about biodiversity in the pond, interacting with wildlife, and swimming are cooperative so that the students can focus on self-improvement and internal motivation more than competitiveness. They can see what they enjoy while also being free to explore other activities with a focus on improvement and developing skills rather than competitiveness and getting the task right fast. There are no organized sports in this space it is all about creativity and settings to explore the natural environment around them. The curriculum will include swim lessons, bike lessons parkour lessons, paddlesports lessons, nature learning (learning about the environment, nature, meditation yoga) and free play (where they can practice the skills learned and have fun). The skills developed are all specific to the activity and all the kids will have a chance to go through each of the activities to see what they like the most or to develop multiple skills at once. There will also be beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes so that kids at different levels will learn different things based on their skills. The goal of this is to improve skills but also create an encouraging environment where no child feels bad about their abilities. Learning by including games and teamwork while encouraging peers and doing what feels right for them

Risk management

The part of the brain that is responsible for learning reasoning, problem-solving, comprehension, impulse control, creativity and perseverance is more developed in teenagers than in young children. Teens can be creative and explore their environment alone and in more dangerous settings. They want to explore and keeping them home is not going to promote freedom (Play Wales). There should be a balance to risk. In the article *Children Play and Leisure - Promoting a Balanced Approach* the author writes “Understanding that the purpose of risk control is not the elimination of all risk, and so accepting that the possibility of even serious or life-threatening injuries cannot be eliminated, though it should be managed.” (2012). There is a benefit to risk but there is a fine line between a bit of risk and total danger. A teenager can notice the risk and avoid it but sometimes kids are going to get hurt. It is hard for kids to learn in a safe environment that does not engage the brain. As soon as there is a bit of risk focus increases and learning can happen (Health and Safety Executive, 2012).

How I am going to promote balanced risk by, providing instructors who are first aid trained, having lifeguards, having rules for each activity, and having the instructors teach about the risks before partaking in the activity. Having instructors who are first-aid trained will create an environment that allows kids to be risky in a controlled environment. If they get hurt doing one of the activities then they can get immediate help instead of waiting for an ambulance or causing themselves more harm. This way the adults can have peace of mind knowing their kids will be taken care of if injured. Having lifeguards is also a risk prevention for swimming. There is a lot of risk involved with water and having lifeguards monitor the pool will reduce the risk of drowning so that the teens and parents can have peace of mind. Including rules is also a way to reduce risk. Rules include kids waiting their turn on the pump track, wearing a life jacket on a

boat, and not swimming if a lifeguard is absent are all things that can reduce risk. When the instructors frontload the risks and rules to the participants they are more likely to avoid them and reduce the risk of them happening. There are still risky aspects of the activities but balancing and reducing risk by having these conditions can promote risk that is engaging and promotes learning.

Conclusion

The new developments that I am proposing for Cynefin are to add an indoor swimming pool, an outdoor natural swimming pool, a natural hideaway, a bike trail, a bike and skate park/pump track, and a parkour park. I have highlighted the significance of these additions regarding physical literacy and affordances. I have also highlighted the changes to the Welsh curriculum and how I have adopted the holistic pedagogy and the cross-curriculum approach into my activities. Finally, I added the importance of having a safe but risky environment and what I am going to add to my developments to make it a risk-balanced space for the participants. Using my knowledge of outdoor adventure education I have developed Cynefin to create a space that encourages physical activity, exploration of a natural environment, personal growth, positive social interactions, and critical thinking.



(Figure 1)

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