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Presentation

- Hello my name is Kelly Watkinson and in this presentation i will be reflecting on my scrapbook and further exploring and critically analysing how sustainability relates to the early years.
- For my scrapbook the area i chose was Tan Y Coed, in the Dyfi Forest, near Machynlleth. It is a woodland area which many people go to enjoy the walking trails and the picnic area. The reason i chose this area is because I myself have enjoyed and utilised the walking trails and the picnic area. I feel it is a special place to relax and enjoy the nature around and to spot wildlife if one should enjoy that.
- Whilst i was exploring and researching Tan Y Coed i found the origin of the trees there. According to Natural Resources Wales (2025) the trees at Tan Y Coed where first planted by the Forestry Commission during the First World War to increase the timber supply needed for building and other uses. This continued through the Second World War by the Land Army Girls. The Imperial War Museum (No date) explains that the Land Army Girls where a civilian organisation which started to replace the work done by men on the farms and other areas when the men were drafted into the war.
- Using the trails and exploring the area it reminded me of some memories of when i was a child. I grew up in Hull which is a city with not many woodland areas around. However, we use to regularly travel to Dalby Forest in the North York Moors National Park in North Yorkshire. I used to thoroughly enjoy making use of the trails and picnic area with my family. I always left feeling happy, refreshed and in awe of nature and the natural wonders of the world. Being at Tan Y Coed reminded me of those happy times.
- Moving on to the next part of the presentation, researching sustainability and the link to the early years. Sustainability is a method of using natural resources such as renewable energy, without running out of resources or damaging the environment. (Greenpeace, no date). Sustainability is important to the conservation of the planet. Majoirty of the environmental issues we face is due to resources being used in an unsustainable manner (Greenpeace, no date).

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- The Curiosity Approach (No date) explains that sustainability is crucial to the early years. It is about meeting the needs of the children in the natural environment they're in and educate them on it without jeopardising the future of the natural environment. This also links into the UNCRC Article 13 "I have the right to find out and share information". This reinforces the need to educate the child on the world they are in as it is their right.
- Additionally, this works alongside The Well-being and Future Generations Act 2015. This goal of this act is to improve the holistic wellbeing of Wales and the residents within it. It encourages government forces to work together when making decisions with sustainability at the forefront of it. Like the previous explanation, the act wishes to meet their needs of the current population without compromising the future of next.
- The National Curriculum for Non-maintained Settings is another piece of government legislation which has incorporates sustainability. By embedding sustainability into the national curriculum, it promotes the education of the natural environment, and it encourages children to build a connection to nature and the natural surroundings they are in. The National Curriculum heavily promotes allowing the children to learn, play and rest outdoors. By allowing children to explore and initiate their learning and holistic development in a child led manner.
- Education for sustainable development* or *ESD. ESD is the response from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation to response to the problems occurring within the climate. ESD encourages people to behave responsibly and supply them with knowledge and appreciation of the natural world which will sustain the future of it. (UNESCO, No date).
- As discussed within my assignment. I utilised the animal discovery trail at Tan Y Coed, by doing i discovered some of the animals that inhabit Tan Y Coed such as birds, sakes, insects and foxes although i did not manage to spot them. I then spent time figuring out how to build bridges and shelters for insects that may be living in the areas that i explored. This is transferable for children who may be exploring this area with the potential for more activities such as a bug hunt and a

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treasure hunt for natural materials whilst learning about the use and impact the have on the ecosystem and biosystem. This links in with the ESD's approach to Practical Learning and Learning from Nature for children and to some of the early years theorists.

- Froebel was a theorist who believed that we as early years practitioners should be educating children on how to nurture and maintain the nature they are surrounded by. Froebel believed that nature was an important learning tool and that children should be allowed to engage with it. Froebel supported the theory that by allowing the children to engage with nature they will develop vital skills through hands on learning, and they will also develop a love for nature which will be carried with the children for the rest of their lives (Froebel Trust, No date).
- However, unfortunately, there are barriers found when planning outdoor learning. A main barrier to outdoor learning is the weather. Although children are encouraged to explore the outdoors in all weathers, however, lack of suitable clothing provided to the children may act as a barrier to this as it is important the children are not subjected to any unnecessary risks whilst doing so. Another barrier to learning in nature may be down to unsuitable training for the teachers providing these educational experiences. Lack of suitable training may affect the teacher's confidence in being able to deliver this approach effectively. Another barrier that can be found when encouraging outdoor learning may be the concerns on the risks found in outdoor learning environments. There are variety of factors that may concern early years practitioners on delivering outdoor experiences to the children within their care. Some of these risks may be children encountering poisonous plants or animals, encountering animal faeces and uneven grounding which could result in harm or injury to not only the children in the environment but also to the early years practitioners accompanying them. These can be easily overcome by suitable risk assessments and planning. (Learning Through Landscapes, No date)
- In Conclusion, Sustainability is thoroughly intertwined with the early years, and the education of the future generations is vital to the future of our planet and the sustainability of it.

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