

How does adventurous activities contribute towards children's physical literacy?

Exposing children to a variety of physical activities especially those classified as 'adventurous' helps develop physical literacy. Adventurous activities can include camping, canoeing, hill walking etc. Physical literacy encouraged and developed lifelong learning through being out in the natural world. This essay will look at the key concept of physical literacy and how adventurous activities can develop the progression of the key concepts. Different teaching methods and potential children's circumstances will also be discussed.

Adventurous activities have been an important part of the education curriculum for many years making its first noticeable framework in the 1944 education act (Newth, 1946) increasing Local Education Authorities to increase their use of the greater outdoors to benefit the education system. Adventurous outdoor activities came into the education system mainly due to the war, wanting to increase the fitness of the younger generation in case of such instance recurring (Veevers and Allison, 2011). Although adventurous activities were available before the education act this was mainly for boys such as the Boy's Brigade with the slogan "the adventure begins here" which was established on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 1883 and was a worldwide motion where some say the adventurous activity camping (1886) first became prominent (The Boys Brigade, 2014). On the other hand, adventurous activities were only available to boys the girls group, formed by Baden-Powell, called brownies was for them to learn how to help their families and communities rather than engage in adventurous activities (Elmore, 2017). The Scouting industry which is now popular across the UK with almost half a million people ages 4-25 engage in regular adventurous activities (Scouts, 2022).

Physical literacy can be visible in many ways and includes motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, understanding, and value (The International Physical Literacy Association, 2016). Motivation for participation in adventurous activities stems from the ability to achieve goals and the ability to take risks safely. In addition, it helps to push personal boundaries and to overcome fear (Ennis, 2017). This will help a child's progression through the education system and then through their personal carriers and goals, as the initial motivation for achievement will be present. Without adventurous activities this motivation could take longer to be noticeable in an individual and will have to be self-taught rather than learned (self-motivated) (Gottfried, 1990). On the other hand, increased motivation could increase competition between fellow pupils thus creating a more negative environment and

could effect their self confidence as they might compare themselves to their fellow pupils. To overcome this, a more inclusive teaching style would be needed. This could be the hybrid method of teaching where students remain engaged and motivated for longer periods of time, this could help engage those that are not as motivated into succeeding (Burton, 2022).

According to Erikson's stages of development in children aged 6 to 11 confidence is formed. If a child engages in adventurous activities from a younger age it is possible that the child will develop faster than what Erikson believes (Eccles, 1999), thus increasing emotional intelligence and increasing the ability to grow intellectually benefiting the child in the classroom. Confidence is an import element to develop in children, it helps develop their individual self-esteem which makes it easier for them to deal with mistakes, it builds resilience (Hosogi et al., 2012). This has a positive correlation with thriving in the education system (Bankston and Zhou, 2006). In contrast, having a child in the education system that is 'over confident' above the 'normal' confidence level for that age, could be intimidating to the other pupils. Therefore, a good supportive teaching style and awareness of how to deal with this is needed. This could be the facilitator approach which is student cantered and helps them develop self-sufficiency (Burton, 2022) which would reduce the comparison aspect between students.

Physical competence is the development of movement (The International Physical Literacy Association, 2016). This is the ability catch, jump, run, swim etc (City of Burnaby, 2014). Being able to develop physical competence from a young age helps engage the child in more adventurous activities as they grow as they will have the fundamentals to be able to succeed. Developing physical competence has a close positive correlation to that of succeeding in the education system (Fairclough, 2003) by increasing their ability and confidence in their physical intelligence meaning that they are more likely to engage in more adventurous activities as they grow older. Physical activity and being in the outdoors increase serotonin levels in the brain (Young, 2007). Serotonin is a chemical in the brain that plays an important role in mood stability and ensures good quality sleep (Cleveland Clinic, 2022). If a child has a good night sleep it is scientifically proven to help them engage in the classroom and do better within the education system (Taras and Potts-Datema, 2005).

Engaging in adventurous activities helps increase knowledge of the world around us (Løseth, 2017). Adventurous activities do not happen within the classroom, for the most part travelling to a different location is needed. This will increase the sense of adventure that children

develop and thus increasing their general knowledge of the location and being able to refer to what they have seen, for example looking at cliffs while kayaking will increase their understanding subjects such as geography. It will help them to be able to learn without thinking that they are learning by incorporating educational activities into their play. In addition to knowledge of the world around us, engaging in adventurous activities helps develop knowledge of themselves. Starting to realise that pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone is beneficial and they will be able to put the skills that they have learned into practise in the classroom. This links to understanding which can be increased by the demonstrator teaching method (Burton, 2022). Being able to visualize what is being taught to them increases interest and motivation and therefore makes the learning process more enjoyable.

With increased value the child will learn to gain respect and learn to look after their belongings. They will learn to value their relationships and key aspects of life. This is developed by adventurous activities because the children will learn to value their time in the outdoors rather than in the classroom (Gesell, 1983). Trust will also be developed between the children as they will learn to guide and help each other, for example when rock climbing the other children could give instructions about how to progress up the wall. This in turn will form deeper connection between the children aiding educational development and progression with the ability to ask for help when needed.

Adventurous outdoor activities in the education curriculum can also help with managing behaviour (Massey and Rose, 1992) especially those with a learning difficulty or behavioural problems. ADHD is one of the most common behavioural disorders (Greater Lowell Psychiatric Associates, 2015) active outdoor play has been shown to reduce the symptoms shown, resulting in children engaging more within the classroom due to the positive learning environment created for them, therefore getting the education needed.

On the other hand, offering adventurous activities on a regular basis could make children less focused and perhaps frustrated because they would only want to engage in fun activities that will offer them a sense of adventure rather than in class learning (Elliot, 2021). This could encourage children to misbehave while in class in order to get the outdoor activities regularly, thus disturbing the key learning needed. Therefore, there has to be healthy balance worked out in the education system to be able to engage in both.

Most adventurous outdoor activities cost money and families who are less fortunate will struggle to be able to afford this. Therefore, the children of less fortunate parents' education could be affected. Furthermore, children who are born with a disability and are in wheelchairs for example, will find it difficult to participate. Therefore, it is important to consider other options, that have the same benefit but are affordable and available to everyone within the curriculum.

There are many residential sites across Wales and the world that offer adventurous activities. The most well-known being the Urdd sites and Pendine. Many school groups go on a week trip to these locations to engage in teambuilding, abseiling, kayaking, surfing, mud obstacle courses etc. These activities are really important and is said to clearly see the personal development of the children from the start of the week to the end (Urdd, 2020).

To conclude, there is a key positive correlation between adventurous activities and the development of physical literacy. By participating in adventurous activities the key concepts of physical literacy are developed including motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, understanding, and value which help engage children inside the classroom. Adventurous activities also helps them develop as individuals building self-esteem and self-confidence which are beneficial beyond the classroom. Children will learn practical skills and self-determination. Ensuring adventurous activities are accessible to everyone is necessary to ensure development and progression.

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