

Script for Sustainability Presentation

Scrapbook Reflection

Hello, my name is Hannah Lovell student number 2100252. I would like to welcome you to myself reflection regarding my scrapbook. To begin the scrapbook itself is made of 100% recycled materials. To expand, the pages are all left over cereal boxes that I have collected from family members, the flowery wrapping paper is birthday wrapping paper that was already in my home. Additionally, the cardboard that holds it all together was packaging from a new bed sheet. When researching and realising the importance of sustainability it was special to me to make the scrapbook its self-sustainable.

I created this scrapbook as part of the John Muir Award. This award promotes the importance of getting outside and exploring. The award allows people of all backgrounds to connect with and care for wild places/ living things. This award has given me the incentive to explore my own garden and take a closer look at things I never may have delved into before, due to a busy work schedule.

A little bit about my garden's history, my house was built in 2008 I moved in, in the year 2015 meaning that I have lived here for nine years now. Before, my house was built my garden was just any empty plot of land. I have a cycle track nearby as well as a field opposite where wildlife thrives. I live in Grovesend which is a small village over 100 years ago the village was known for having a large mining community. It's hard to imagine wildlife thriving here then like it is this spring due to all the pollution.

Whilst exploring with my dog Harri, I discovered that my garden was extremely safe and tidy for him. However, there were not as many opportunities for wildlife and other living things to make my garden a home. Whilst exploring I discovered numerous flowers, but I did not know the names for all of them, so I used an app called Plant Guru to help identify the names. I also found out how important the flowers are for bees in order to feed their colony. The trees and bushes around my garden provide food and shelter for a range of minibeasts. When using a magnifying glass and looking closer at the leaves and flowers I noticed all these beautiful patterns. This

inspired me to create crayon rubbings for my scrapbook using scrap paper from my setting. Whilst exploring I came across the most amazing thing; I found a Robins nest tucked under a wheelbarrow behind my garage. When I realized I placed it back carefully so that the robin was not disturbed. As you can see, I have a QR code which you can access to hear the robin's sing. I found out that only the male robin sings the "true robin song". At a later date I noticed 5 little eggs in the nest too. I decided to follow the journey of the hatchlings taking pictures and watching them grow whilst being mindful of their habitat and protective mother. I felt extremely lucky to have the robins in my garden proving me with this magical opportunity. I wish to teach children appreciation for the outdoors by taking a closer look at the smaller things. It upsets me that in the modern-day society children are more interested in screens and won't have the same childhood as me. The Robins inspired me to write a poem using rhyming words which is aimed at young children.

I found out that robins never return to the same nest twice, so myself and my dad built a bird house out of recycled wood from around the garden to promote conservation in hopes that one day the robins may return, or other birds may make it a home. In university we also made seed bombs and bird feeders which I have placed in my garden. I have enjoyed watching the birds come and go from my window. I have found out the importance of providing food for birds and other wildlife as especially in the winter it is difficult for them to hunt for food to eat. We do already have a water feature in our garden which is great for mini beasts to hide in however in the future I would love to make a bug hotel as they are seen to be very beneficial.

I decided to write a song about the environment, highlighting the importance of us looking after our planet. As I discovered on YouTube there is not many out there aimed at young children.

In my scrapbook I also mention the importance of recycling as well as litter picking as I have discovered the extreme harm that just one piece of plastic can cause to animals. I believe that conservation starts small at that all together we can make a big difference and model good behaviour to our children.

I have shared the process of making my scrapbook with my parents as my dad helped me to put all the pages together. I have also involved my boyfriend's family as they provided me with all the cereal boxes. Whilst collecting the cereal boxes I explained the assignment and what the John Muir Award is to them in hopes to inspire everyone. My grandparents were also involved as they provided some recycled decorations for my pages. Now that the scrapbook is complete, I will be putting it on a Facebook page titled Grovesend residents in the hopes to inspire my community. I will also be taking the scrapbook into my setting and doing small sessions with the children on it. I really love the whole concept of outdoor learning and the experiences it holds for young children. Here you can see some activities I have previously carried out with children on Welly Wednesday.

To conclude, this section I would recommend the John Muir Award programme to anyone, and it has really been an eye opener for me.

Critical Evaluation

To begin the critical evaluation, United Nations (No Date) defines sustainability as meeting the needs of the modern-day world without having a negative impact on the future generations, to meet their own unique needs (United Nations Brundtland Commission, No Date). Mollenkamp (2023) agrees with this by defining sustainability as the ability to support an act or process continuously over a period of time. However, to expand United Nations (No Date) and Mollenkamp (2023) have slightly different approaches. For example, United Nations (No Date) highlights that people should look after our world for future generations without having a negative impact. To contradict this Mollenkamp (2023) just states to support and does not mention the effect it could have on the future and whether what people are doing is right or wrong. Research shows that there are a total of 209 developing countries in the world as of 2024 that are all seeking numerous ways to meet their holistic needs (World Population Review, 2024). However, this goes hand in hand with the increasing threat of global warming, over population, deforestation, poverty, and climate change just to name a few. In order to stop this from happening or decrease these issues members of the public need to stop thinking short term for long term.

issues, people tend to just think about surviving now rather than thinking about the future according to Nan and Qin (2019).

The world is forever changing and so is children's education according to Hooks (2014). This is why the new curriculum for Wales was created. The importance of sustainability and children learning about the world around them is highlighted in the new curriculum for Wales as one of the four purposes is to create ethical , informed citizens of Wales and the world. Welsh Government (2022) defines being an ethical and informed citizen as children understanding their rights as well as their responsibilities to take part in community and care about the world. UNICEF (no date) agrees with this as under article 42 all governments must actively work to ensure that children are aware of their own rights. As stated by Cutter-Mackenzie and Rousell (2019) practitioners can enable this by not only listening to the children's voices but by teaching children their rights as well as giving them the opportunity to explore the world around them. Furthermore, Adler (2015) agrees with this by stating that it is vital for children to see the world for themselves and in 'real life'. To expand both Piaget and Montessori also agree as they believed that children should be given every possible opportunity to do and see it for themselves (Mooney ,2013). However, to critique Department for Education (2024) disagrees slightly as it states that practitioners need to be there to support, enable and promote learning experiences. Especially children with additional learning needs (ALN). As part of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) standard seven highlights the importance of first-hand experiences, curiosity, and opportunities to play outside for young children (Welsh Government ,2016). This shows practitioners that taking children outside needs to be seen as a necessity rather than a reward as the outdoors is key to becoming an ethical citizen according to Thorburn and Allison (2017).

The Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) is linked to new curium for Wales. According to Bennell (2015) many practitioners view it as an extra thing to complete. However, research shows that it is already being undertaken without acknowledgement (Sharma, 2020) . This framework came out in 2012 but practitioners are unaware of what it is or the aims that need to be carried out. The ESDGC is broken down into seven common areas such as choices and

decisions, consumption and waste, climate change, health, identity and culture, wealth and poverty lastly, the natural environment (Welsh Government 2012). A simple activity such as cooking, gardening or the John Muir award can link with all these areas alongside the aims of the new curriculum for Wales. Practitioners need to look more deeply and make the links according to Edwards Jr *et al.* (2020). All these areas are equally important and just cooking for example includes choices and decisions on what to make, consuming what has been made as well as thinking about waste whilst measuring out ingredients, as well as culture because the children could be cooking food from a different heritage. Furthermore, practitioners must consider the resources that they are using for activities according to Seymour (2022) as glitter is not safe for the environment because it is so fine it cannot be flittered out and therefore, is polluting our seas. A better and more sustainable alternative would be dissolvable glitter. However, Reggio believes that loose parts and recycled materials can promote more imagination and creativity (Rawstrone, 2019 ; Gandini, 2005) .

The John Muir award provides time for creative thinking as it can be interpreted in numerous different ways. Everyone is entitled to have their own vision of what their award should look like. The award also allows time for self-reflection as it challenges people to think about what they can personally do to conserve the environment around them. These are both principles of ESDGC. United Nations (No Date a) defines global citizenship as the term used for all social, political, environmental, and economic actions of all holistically minded people and communities across the world. Oxfam (2024) agrees with this by stating that as a result of promoting global citizenship in a sustainable environment it will allow children to embrace and support all society's not just their own. This highlights the importance that we all share common humanity and equal worth. According to Reber (2024) the reason why humans have to look after the world around them because they are intertwined with it, if people look after the world in return, it will provide them with what they need in order to survive.

Additionally, the John Muir award could also support the themes of the well-being of future generations (Wales) Act 2015 as one of the well-being goals is to create a globally responsible Wales. According to Harvard University (2009) and Symons

(1996) in order for children to be responsible and care for the world around them they need to be taught about it. Monbiot (2023) agrees by stating that education is key to sustainability such as learning about important issues such as global warming and water cycles (Huckle and Sterling ,1996). However, Sterling (2001) disagrees with this by stating that modern day education is the problem as the system is producing the norm. The John Muir award breaks this education barrier by allowing children to explore, be curious and promotes sustainability (Elliott and Davis ,2014).

Furthermore, the John Muir award also links with the United Nations sustainable development goals as one of the goals is to create sustainable cities and communities by the year 2030 (United Nations ,No Date b). According to Fien and Tilbury (1998) people need to start small and work their way up. As a result of completing this award it forms strong foundations by exploring places within the wider community. Another one of the goals is to provide quality education , this includes aspects such as hands on learning and learning in the real situation. As a result of learning in nature children can reconnect with the non-human world gaining a sense of place according to Brillante and Mankiw (2015). Wilson (1997) believes that it is down to the environment as some environments hold play opportunities whereas others hold memories , enabling exploration and fostering a sense of place. Alongside the environment practitioners are also important according to Welsh Government (2021). Practitioners that have key skills such as being mindful, creative and caring can help to enable a sense of place for the children in their care having a positive impact on their well-being under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Froebel supports the approach of learning in the real situation as he promotes the importance of play and children discovering things for themselves. According to Hoskins and Smedley (2019) play is essential for all aspects of child development. Froebel also believed that children need to be nurtured and nourished in order to become ethical citizens of the world (Watts, 2021). Through activities such as the John Muir award and quality time spent gardening children's eyes will be opened to the wider world around them. In

addition, Froebel's toys also promoted appreciation for forms found in nature due to their versatility. In the modern-day world loose parts and junk modelling have the same affect, this is a more sustainable alternative. Vygotsky agrees with children learning independently however, thinks that adults should step in when needed (Popova, 2015). For example, the John Muir award is aimed at children ages eight and above therefore younger children may need some guidance. Montessori was inspired by Froebel and encouraged children to care for their environment from a young age (Isaacs, 2018). In the hopes that as they grow older, they will be responsible adults.

There are however challenges to promoting sustainability and the John Muir award in early years for example according to Collinson and Fedoruk Cook (2001) and Moats (2014) practitioners simply do not have enough time. Research shows that teachers are already over worked and unpaid (Nica, 2018). Adding to practitioner's workload may result in a breaking point and cause extreme stress. According to Trodd and Dickerson (2019) practitioners are reluctant to change the daily routines and adapting to something new. The question we need to ask is do practitioners not have the time or do they not want to make the time as practitioners are afraid of change.

If practitioners are able to find the time, they then face the challenge of staffing. NSPCC (2023) states that there should be a ratio of one adult to six children aged four to eight at all times. According to Ingersoll (1997) and Lieberman (2021) this is not enough staff members and staffing issues are on the rise due to budget cuts. Lorenz (2013) agrees by stating that children are often forgotten about and not supported when completing activities. Unfortunately, this then can affect children's self-esteem and confidence negatively.

A potential adversity to the John Muir award is that the John Muir Trust (No Date) states that the award is targeted towards children aged eight and above. This means that the award is not fully inclusive as it is discriminating against younger children. Reggio believes that practitioners must focus on what children can do and not what they cannot as children are extremely competent learners, meaning they can accomplish anything they put their mind to (Gandini, 2005). Boyd, Mann, and King

(2022) enable this point by stating that children can benefit from learning about sustainability and the world around them as young as four years old. Research shows that people who look after the world now are found to have significant outdoor experiences throughout their childhood (Chawla, 1998). This is because these people have more appreciation for the world around them and believe that they can make a difference because they have an overall higher understanding. However, this does not always make people more sustainable. Additionally, Wilson (1993) also highlights the importance of going outdoors and exploring at a young age as he believes that the learning experiences are vital. However, numerous children can be scared of nature, this is a phobia defined as biophobic by Rogers (2024). To help overcome this issue practitioners can role model behaviour outdoors for example, exploring and being curious whilst showing the child that there is nothing to be afraid of. There is an opposite disorder to this called nature deficit disorder the child may become agitated as they require the freedom of being outdoors in the open space (Dickinson, 2013).

To summarise all the points made, outdoor learning experiences are extremely beneficial from an early age so that children are more aware and appreciative of the world around them. This can then result in them being sustainable in the future as well as ethical informed citizens. The curriculum has changed to help ensure that we look after our planet and understand the importance from a young age. The John Muir award has provided me with opportunities I am forever grateful for and has re-sparked my love of nature. I wish to share this with family, friends, community, and the children I care for.

Thank you for listening.

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