

Niall's Speaking Notes for Group Presentation

Introduction and Supporting Learning.

- Outdoor learning environments support a child's learning
- New environment, engaging and fun
- Supports teacher and pupil relationships.

What are Forest Schools?

- Children taught through many interactive activities, fun, enticing.
- As stated by ForestSchool.com (2019) All activities are 'Learner based experiences based on exploration and discovery'
- Children learn through their own personal experiences. Link to Piaget's theory as sensory motors are used heavily. McLeod (2018)
- Gives children knowledge of the environment and nature and its importance for the future.

Activities in Forest Schools and links to Theorists.

- Walking and talking in environment as a group – Collaborative work, fun, engaging for children. Vygotsky heavily links, social development. McLeod (2018)
- Campfire Cooking/Fire Pit – Interactive learning environment. Cooking skills. Later life help. Health and safety. Piaget again.
- Den Building – Collaborative skills, practical building. Hands on, sensory motor. Froebel – creative skills.
- Clay modelling – Hands on. Childs centred learning approach. Can be fit around many themes. Bugs etc. Montessori approach. David (2016)
- Treasure hunts – Woodland environment finding different objects on a check list. Collaborative, memory and sensory motors.

Theorists and their Links to Forest Schools.

Vygotsky

- Social skills important, children's interactivity. Den building.
- Collaborative play. Links to forest schools heavily in all examples of activities.
- Language is the most important tool. Cultural and social. Scharer (2017)

Piaget

- Children are active learners. Learn through doing. Treasure hunts, memory.
- Links heavily to forest schools.
- Schemas
- Assimilation – Using existing schema to manage new situation.
- Accommodation – Existing knowledge does not work, need to adapt to new environment. Finding new activity. E.g. firepit.
- Equilibrium – Mastering new knowledge. Restores balance.

Bruner

- Influenced by Vygotsky – Enactive, Iconic and Symbolic. (Roberts 2019)
- Enactive: Children learn through action and play
- Iconic: Images and Numbers understood.
- Symbolic: Understand abstraction, language and reason
- Enactive links perfectly with forest schools as they encourage play heavily.

Froebel

- Creator of Kindergarten.
- Creativity expanded in outdoor environment.
- Engagement increased in outdoor environment.

Experiences of a forest school

- Part of studies we visited Cywion Bach.
- Aids learning drastically.
- Hands on environment.
- Full range of activities, building, fire pit, hammers and nails.

- Montessori's child centred approach. Children should be free within limits. David (2019)
- As a forest school, Cywion Bach have a very clear ethos. Cywion Bach (2020) state
- 'We believe that fresh air and physical activity is vital for wellbeing, health and development'.
- Shown in their activities. Spend most of the day outdoors in all weather. Children given experiences.
- Bilingualism and cultural learning.
- Language is most important learning tool.

Example of Forest School Activity Plan

- Clay Creatures
- Moulding clay into different creatures.
- Build a home for the creature. Why and what habitat?
- Plan is straightforward
- Natural environment
- Engaging
- Child Centred approach.
- Supports different themes.
- Areas of development section
- Personal, Social Emotional
- Creative.
- Forest School Portfolio (2020)

Children's differences in Outdoor Learning Environment.

- Scolton Manor, woodland activities.
- Behaviour – Children struggle in class environments, engagement in outdoor learning context.
- Out of comfort zone – Gain confidence, do tasks differently to when in class.
- Child centred approach – Children get involved with activities that they choose. Hands-on
- Fun – Collaborative play, Vygotsky. (McLeod 2018)

Why I believe outdoor learning is crucial?

- New environments. As we have spoken about. Forests, Beaches, Museums and Castles. Different way of thinking.

- Children learn about the everchanging nature around us and the importance of its future.
- Climate change
- WWF (2019) Engaging resources have been created to help children gain knowledge of climate change.
- Hands on experience to learn, new activities that they cannot do in classroom environment.
- Develop skills further, Froebel believes in different environments being key to a child's development. Early Education (2019)

How Outdoor contexts aid learning.

- Enjoyment – Fun with pupils is great, but balance is needed. Immersive and hands on.
- Engagement – ScienceDaily (2019) 'Outdoor environments have a variety of beneficial effects on people' Skills, social, mental health.
- Skill Development – Most important, children gain skills they can't in school environment. Experiences. Teamwork, communication, creativity. Vygotsky social interaction is important for a child's development. McLeod (2018)
- Physical Education – Massive part of current education, help a child's wellbeing.

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