HIGHLIGHTING URBAN GREEN SPACES FOR EDUCATION

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Most children have participated in an outdoor educative activity and all-weather learning at some point; this could have been formal, non-formal or informal; many children have been a scout or a guide; both these organizations have a strong outdoor educational component and have traditionally emphasized the sense of adventure that lent to the development of attributes such as self-reliance, self-confidence, personal responsibility, and a respect for others.

OE is active learning is learning that occurs out of doors; it can occur within school grounds, in the urban environment including its green spaces, in rural areas including wilderness and coastal areas; outdoor learning could include physical activities such as camping, canoeing or curriculum-tied academic activities related to geography, the sciences or the environment. It could also include activities such as outdoor play in kindergarten, environmental education at primary and post-primary level or teambuilding activities in further education. Often these experiences will be remembered for a lifetime.

Bringing children back to nature has a number of the following benefits. Research indicates that the use of green spaces improves health. The changing ecology of childhood experiences presents itself as a sedentary and less involved lifestyle with a lack of outdoor activities and an increase in online engagement through social media and home entertainment. Deprived of meaningful outdoor activities and exposure to nature research indicates that their physical and emotional development, and well-being is stunted. OE generally leads to an in increased levels of physical activity.

According to Nimasayu, Fadhilah and Rintayati (2018), there are multiple benefits of OE: “The benefits of learning outside the classroom are:

1. Improving self-regulation;
2. Improve physical fitness and motor development;
3. Improve nutrition;
4. Improve vision;
5. Improve cognitive development;
6. Improve academic performance;
7. Reduce ADHD symptoms and concentration;

8. Increase self-confidence;
9. Build understanding and appreciation of ecosystems, food systems and environmental processes.

There are so many benefits for students that are obtained using the Outdoor Learning method. So not only learning, but also while knowing the environment and playing that can help the development of students affective, cognitive, and psychomotor." They conclude by stating that, "Outdoor Learning is a learning method that invites students to learn outside the classroom while observing the environment. Learners are invited to interact directly with objects, other living things, phenomena directly so that they can provide real and meaningful experiences for them. With Outdoor Learning, students can get to understand the environment, to the efforts that can be done to protect the environment from human damage or natural phenomena."

In short, children taking ownership of the learning process, under pedagogical supervision, through OE experiential activities promotes learning that is intellectually and cognitively stimulating allowing children to engage in physical as well as intellectual activates that contributes to the physical, mental, emotional and intellectual development of the child stimulating curiosity, cognition and creativity, promoting personal development. It increases the cognitive abilities of the learner.

Even with the changeable nature of the Irish weather, anecdotal evidence suggests that individual teachers have always used the outdoors to teach at least one class. The local rural and urban environments have traditionally been exploited by social science and geography teachers, science, and physical education teachers for learning to do field work and physical activities.

In the European context, the motivation for this could either be academic using the natural environment to teach natural sciences; it could also be related to physical health and well-being where students play games, sports or competitions outdoors on a regular basis; still other reasons are that outdoor teaching especially in the summer months changed the pace of a lesson and introduced more play.

Whatever the motivation, outdoor educations allow teachers and students to engage with the natural world in ways they wouldn't be able to in the traditional classroom setting. In the past, people lived very close to the natural world;

unfortunately, this has been reduced over the centuries, and especially in the last few decades.

OE allows us to explore the natural world, live in it and learn from in actively or passively. It allows us to establish positive relationships with our natural world, ourselves and others. OE can introduce us and bring us closer to the reproductive cycles of the nature, to birth, life, decay and death.

In terms of teaching, it allows the teacher to engages their students in active and practical learning, moving away from a purely teacher-centred approach to an approach based around the learner and their environment.

An outdoor education, can among other things, address the imperatives of the Irish Education Curriculum: Aistear - Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, the Primary curriculum, the Junior-cycle, the Transition year (TY) and the Senior-cycle. OE can accommodate the opportunity for learning about a range of issues, such as climate change, sustainability and food security. Curriculum links can be drawn to a number of subjects in primary and post-primary education.

With regard to the Aistear, and outdoor education addresses the general needs and cross curriculum priorities through Childrens connections with others, learn and develop, improve well-being, position the child's identity and belonging in relation the natural environment and promote exploring and thinking. With regard to the other cycles, it supports outdoor and adventure activities and Aquatics; and Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) among other things. For the junior cycle and outdoor education is an appropriate vehicle for establishing the eight key skills: learning to learn, choice and flexibility, quality, creativity and inclusion, engagement and participation, continuity and development, inclusive education and wellbeing.

Overall, a good outdoor educative experience promotes critical and creative thinking, an ethical understanding of our environment and the society we live in; it is instrumental in the promotion and teaching of self-reliance, personal risk management, an appreciation of the vulnerabilities and dangers of the natural world and those that inhabit it the value of life-long outdoor recreation for enjoyment, health and well-being, understanding nature through direct experience and for developing deeper human–nature relationships.

OE draws together the philosophy, theory and practices of experiential and environmental education. It provides students a range of learning experiences.

The rational for OE includes:

- Generating a feeling of oneness with nature;
- Uncovering and encourage the natural bond humans have to natural surroundings;
- Encouraging a healthy respect and love for learning from natural world;
- Encouraging curiosity and compassion towards all life forms;
- Encouraging the use of a childs six basic se nses vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste and imagination;
- Encouraging a child's intellectual curiosity about their natural habit and have them reflect on their position within its ecosystems;
- Promoting the ideas of sustainability within their own lifestyle.

The experiences garnered through outdoor education will help for the learners personality, opinions and ideas about the world they inhabit; it will also provide valuable soft and hard transferable skills for use in life, education and employment or training.

Finally, introducing technology as part of the considered approach and methodology in OE will provide added value to the childs learning experience. Digital technology can be employed in OE in order to consolidate and further the learning experience.

2. THE HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The story of OE stretches back into our collective history; all of us at some point have been on a school trip. In the past, outdoor education was one of necessity training children in hunting a survival skill; when civilisation emerged, education was formalised and developed differently depending on the culture where reading, writing and maths were promoted.

Some academics and educationalists have attempted to link outdoor education to the classical period in Ancient Greece to Platonic Socratic and Aristotelian educational methods. Plato reputedly instructed their adherents in the open air and although he believed in a physical education, play and the virtue it gave Plato's theories revolved around didactic and dialectic approaches rather than a solid method advocating a purely outdoor education as we know it today; although their symbolic capital is less so today, Plato's ideas on play does link us to our past and the presence of outdoor education in the human psyche.

Necessity also encouraged teachers to instruct their students in the open air either because of climatic conditions, it was cooler under a tree that a stuffy classroom, or there were no community resources available for a dedicated instructional building.

However, it wasnt until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that theories on outdoor education were brought to the fore. The theoretical roots of modern outdoor education stem from the ideas of the German pedagogue Friedrich Fröbel; he was an educational reformer radically framing education around the child believing the teacher's role was support and encourage to encourage their learners though individual and group play.

Fröbel was one in a small group of people who believed that the traditional academic approach to education was both narrow and ignorant of the ways children learned. Fröbel responded to this by framing education in more child-friendly terms.

Fröbel was a student of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi a child-centred educationalist who promoted physical exercise and outdoor activity in education. Learning from Pestalozzi, Fröbel understood that sensorial experiences were central

to the learning experience of a child. Fröbel was not unique at the time in promoting an experiential education.

Fröbel created the concept of the kindergarten, or kinder garden a word now synonymous with early childhood education. Key elements of Fröbel's kinder garden play, singing, dancing, and growing plants which were integral to his child-centred educational approach.

John Dewey, the American psychologist and educational reformer, believed people learned through experience or doing things believing reality must be experienced to be of any value and that only through the child's interaction with their environment could they learn and adapt.

The educationalist and founder of schools such as Schule Schloss Salem and Gordonstoun, Kurt Hahn drew on the ideas of Plato in the Republic by espousing OE as a way of imbuing the spirit of adventure and virtue in young people. Outdoor activities were at the core of Hahn's belief structure.

Hahn helped established school's which promoted cultural understanding, character building; cooperation and team work; confidence building and self-reliance; courage and the spirit of adventure; skills building; exploration and connecting with the natural world, and considered risk-taking, among other things, as core skills.

They were promoted through traditional sports and what we would now call extreme sports and all-weather activities in the open air. The idea was to produce well-rounded adults who we not shy of taking risks.

Today, OE within the context of the European Union is experiential, sensorial, and adventurous. Arguably this is the core of OE. It should also be a child-, learner-centred approach.

David Kolb proposed an experiential learning theory that supported earlier thinking by Friedrich Fröbel and later by John Dewey; His experiential learning theory is typically represented by a complementary four-stage learning cycle: believing that effective learning occurred when a students progress through cycle. Kolb's four -stage Learning Cycle and Four Learning Styles the distillation of his belief that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts; these, in turn, can be applied to a range

of learning contexts. In Kolb's theory, the impetus for the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences.

Experiential learning means learning from experience and then reflecting about the experience in order to develop new skills, attitudes and ways of thinking. It is based on constructivist learning where the outcomes of the learning process are varied and to some extent unpredictable and where learners play a critical role in assessing their own learning.

Simon Priest (1986) uses the metaphor of a tree to visualise outdoor education. Frames outdoor education as a tree. The tree has two branches rising from the trunk which is Outdoor Education. The tree is replete with leaves which represent **EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**. The two branches are called **ADVENTURE EDUCATION** and the second is called **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**. The leaves derive their energy from the sun and obtain their nutrients from the soil and air.

In HIS model, the sum is the outdoor context that providing inspiration to the tree, the air is the interdisciplinary curriculum that the outdoor education is based information is exchanged between the process and the curriculum just as leaves exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide with the atmosphere. The soil holds the six senses and the three domains of learning. Experiential learning draws direction from these senses and domains.

First OE is a method for learning; secondly, it is an experiential learning method; thirdly, learning using the OE method occurs mostly in the outdoor setting; fourth, experiential learning requires the full use of the six senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell and intuition (and involves the three domains of (cognitive, affective and motoric) of learning.

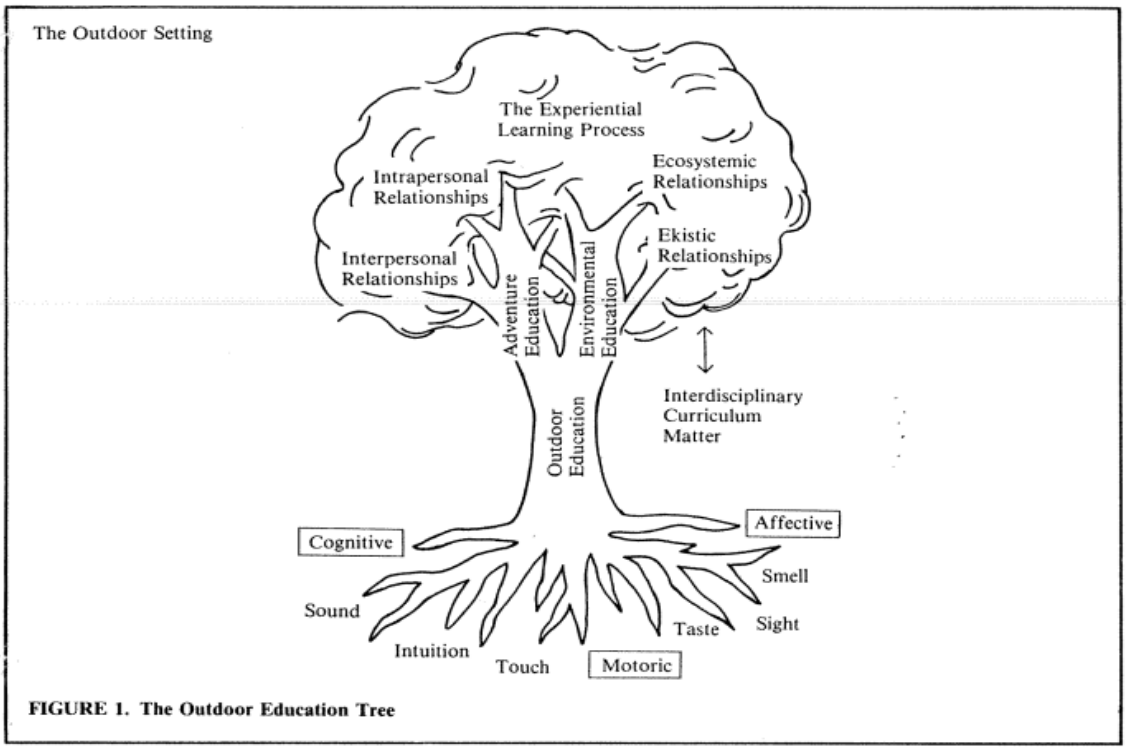

FIGURE 1. The Outdoor Education Tree

In the conference report entitled Effective Approaches for Outdoor Learning published by Real World Learning Network (2013), it states that for teachers practicing outdoor education, epistemological diversity is important. In other words, a synthesis of the head or mind, the heart and hands are above all important. It further reports that OE encourages different ways of knowing and understanding the world. Outlining a model by Peter Reason, the report that as a teaching template or roadmap the following forms of knowing should figure in OE.

These are:

- **Experiential** → or the promotion of empathy through direct encounters with people, places or things;
- **Presentational** → which comes from experiential knowing and provides its first expression through art such as poetry, storytelling, and drawing among other things;
- **Propositional** → knowing through ideas, concepts and theories;
- **Practical** → knowing how to do something and is displayed through skills or competence.

2.1. Current status of outdoor education in Ireland

Reported on the gov.ie website in February 2022, the Minister of State for Skills and Further Education, Niall Collins, spoke about the first ETBI Strategic Framework for Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) he was launching. He was launching the framework and congratulate those behind it on their vision for the future of outdoor training.

He said that "[a] deep appreciation of the natural environment is at the very heart of the outdoor education and training sector and will be intrinsic in its future growth in embedding these principles in its activities and their positioning as centres of progressive education in promoting a sustainable environment […] [they] discover[ing] skills specific to outdoor activities, but also skills in communication, teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking which are valuable for young people as active citizens."

The Director of Further Education and Training Fiona Maloney Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) said that "[a] transformative outdoor experience can contribute to the development of our learners' environmental stewardship empowering them to reach their full potential and to contribute to society at all stages of their lives, to develop the personal and social skills necessary to be active citizens, effective employees and drivers of change for a better environment and a more sustainable future."

In short, the ETB framework for OE and Training Provision will be:

- The provision of a high-quality inclusive, accessible, cost-effective and sustainable outdoor education;
- The provision of outdoor educative experiences focusing on personal and social development that encourages a respect for the natural environment;
- The impetus for the development of high-quality personal and social skills for active citizenship, and be an effective workforce employee;
- A driver for better environment awareness and a more sustainable future.

ETBI is one of many organisations currently running outdoor educational programs within Ireland, as it states on its website (2022), “Outdoor Education and Training gives you a unique learning environment, providing you with opportunities for active, experiential and social learning through water-based, land-based and centre-based activities. […] The benefits of this exciting and innovative approach to learning […] improv[e] your resilience and problem-solving, developing your communication and teamwork skills, discovering your personal strengths and weaknesses, improving your self-confidence, self-esteem and self-knowledge, developing your creative and critical thinking," the benefits are in line with the conclusions of current research and the ideals of the educationalist Kurt Hahn above.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) or An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta webinars and awareness training for school teachers and principals. On how to employ the national curriculum in the outdoor environment.

There are also many organisations providing awareness, guidance and training for schools and teaching personal such as Leave No Trace Ireland states that it “provides research, education and outreach so every person who ventures outside can protect and enjoy the outdoors responsibly.” It is aimed at individuals and organisations interested in outdoor education.

Whilst there are many organisation running outdoor education courses for youth organisations and schools such as Baltinglass Outdoor Education & Training Centre, it is unclear through current desktop research how many individual teacher are exploiting the outdoors for educative purposes, the number of school that have active and comprehensive outdoor educational activities and how this ties in with the school’s teaching curriculum; it is unclear whether the schools have a clear policy with regards to outdoor education and when and how often this occurs, or if outdoor education is restricted to outward bound courses or one-in-a-term excursive event.

3. BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

3.1. Academic benefits

"Outdoor education is education given outdoors in order to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes about the world we live in."
(Phyllis Ford, 1986)

Many studies in the field show that especially young children need more development in the open space rather than the walls of our classrooms and schools. Children experience natural phenomena such as weather, changing seasons and shadows, by stimulating their sense of curiosity through the time they spend outdoors, exploring the world first hand and using their skills related to the scientific research process such as inference, measurement and observation. Outdoor activities provide opportunities for children to learn by doing as active participants.

It was proven that outdoor education, increases the academic achievement of learners/ students with the study of 2000 students in California in 2006. Students from 11 schools that implementing outdoor education curriculum performed 72% better in all subjects than traditional curriculum school students in all subjects, from mathematics to science.

In the same year, Dennis Eaton published his book Cognitive and Effective Learning Outdoors, revealing that students cognitive abilities are better developed in outdoor learning.

Education is the overall improvement of the individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the harmony of body, soul and mind with outdoor activities. Outdoor training can take place in a park, schoolyard, orchard, beach, countryside, woods, mountain – wherever you want!

The relationship with the environment improves the physical and mental development of children. This is because they are encouraged by what they see around them without affecting their "traditional" learning. That is, mathematics, literature, history, etc. They can learn the lessons more willingly. Sharing knowledge of the world, expressing feelings, without the help of others development of important skills such as decision-making ability, self-confidence, literacy, mathematics and science, enables

students to be more successful in school and in life (Wilson,2008). Thanks to outdoor education, children come into contact with nature and learn all lesson subjects together with their friends, not separately. However, it also has positive effects on creativity and mental health.

We can explain the benefits of outdoor education in increasing the academic success of learners/students with the following headings.

Better marks

Outdoor Education strengthens the relationship between learning and cognition so enables them to establish better bonds with their environment. Bringing learning outside enables the knowledge learned in the classroom to be experienced and thus this knowledge to be more permanent. In the science camp project held in Çanakkale Turkey, the event A natural laboratory: Stream takes place. Within the scope of the activity, fifth grade students were taken to the edge of a stream and They were asked to examine the bottom of the stones at the rivers edge with a lens. At the end of the activity students were asked to evaluate the results of the activity. By touching/handling students found the activity interesting and fun. It has been determined that they enjoy learning. And it was seen that all of the students who participated in outdoor education got high marks in the exam.

Students do not have difficulty remembering what they have learned because they participate in the lesson with more than one sense. It is seen that the students are very happy, creative and interested during the outdoor lessons. It's also seen that the variety of stimuli provided by the open-air environment enhances the exam marks of the students.

Low stress level

When the serotonin hormone is secreted in the brain, it gives the person a sense of security and well-being. For this reason, it is also called the happiness hormone. Activities such as listening to music, giving a high five and hearing the sounds of nature ensure the secretion of this hormone.

Thats why activities like being in nature watching a plants growth every day are great for stimulating dopamine production. This will reduce the stress level of learners/students, make them happy and increase their academic success. A student

who spends time outside will relax, and his anxiety will decrease. Performs brain activities faster by focusing more on task and school subjects. Outdoors, children are more comfortable and feel freer.

Outdoor education is relaxing and it also contributes to their development as it is a place where they can throw their energies more easily. Teachers also have positive thoughts about outdoor education, they claim that outdoor activities are enjoyable, fun, stress reliever, happy, and students are active. Stress levels decrease when students feel safe and happy.

Increase in motivation

Children are naturally active and love to be around. The walls of the classroom and school limit them. A 2008 study at Hoolwood kindergartens revealed that most children are more willing to learn outdoors. Researchers cited this result as proof that children are actually willing but not always required to learn in traditional ways.

Outdoor Education provides self-control: Playing outdoors helps children gain more self-control and it improves the condition of hyperactive children. Studies show that learners/students who spend time in nature regularly perform better in the classroom.

It helps with coordination: Outdoor sports such as running and skating enable children to exercise their muscles. Even rocking back and forth on the swing helps kids develop a sense of rhythm, balance, and timing.

In addition, they found that after the outside education, more positive effects emerged on the motivation levels of the students towards outdoor education than traditional indoor education. Thus, students who find school boring and want to escape will be motivated to come to school. And they will be excited to learn new things.

Boost confidence for the lessons

It is not possible to definitively prove the change in self-confidence, but it would not be wrong to think that experiential learning will increase independence and self-confidence.

Some studies support this in 1983, Ronald Force from Saint Francis Academy and Charles Burdsal from Wichita State University observed that the self-confidence of 2

male students with low academic achievements increased after they participated in the 2-week nature walk program.

At the same time in 1995, researcher Jim Zuberbuhler stated in his article Outside the Rules Are Different: The desire to question oneself physically and emotionally is an integral part of outdoor programs. Because pushing yourself in this way can increase self-confidence and self-esteem and improve academic success and communication skills.

The development opportunities provided by the rich development environment offered by the open air (outdoor education) are obvious. It motivates students to learn in more fun learning environments.

So, the learner/ students are expected to be more successful in the lessons by boosting their self-confidence.

Improves memory and imagination

While being passive during the day puts you in a stagnant pattern, moving the activities outdoor helps to learn and remember knowledge by bringing a fresh stimulus. Perceptions become clearer.

Children are always open to new things as outdoor environments are changing and dynamic and full of more and more unknowns. They, in contrast to the usual, familiar closed areas; they always find new things to discover outdoors. This invites children to travel, see and look around. It strengthens their curiosity and imagination. Children have the opportunity to get to know their environment and nature by playing outdoors.

Outdoor expands students i maginations and increases their success. Students develop their imaginations with the objects and living things they see around them. And so, they can find creative solutions to some problems. Seeing botanical gardens, museums, aquariums, zoos and planetariums opens up their perceptions.

Seeing and touching the concepts and living things closely explained by the teacher at school makes students feel ready for the real world.

Increases attention spans

Studies show that children who learn by experience in the open air increase their concentration time and improve their memory performance. A learner/student who can get bored very quickly in the classroom can focus for a long time in outdoor. According to different studies conducted by the University of Illinois, outdoor learning reduces these symptoms even in children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder

Outdoor education, extends their attention span and enables them to progress academically. Helping them learn better. Almost all teachers have positive feelings of outdoor activities on child development. that it is a necessary, useful and irreplaceable activity in especially preschool.

Students who get fresh air and plenty of oxygen refresh themselves thanks to outdoor education. Students who get bored very quickly in the classroom can concentrate better in the open space. They can focus longer. It also helps preventing the problem of early school leaving.

Field trips/Edu journeys and excursions

Taking advantage of out-of-school learning environments in an effective education and the most fun way for students. We believe that students should acquire practical knowledge at every step; therefore, learners are taken for field trips every quarter in the Pre-primary and Primary years which helps in experiential learning.

Field trips, edu journeys also help disadvantaged students have the same opportunities as other students, increasing academic success in courses. A student who listens to the flow of history in a history museum will keep in mind what he/she learns because he uses many sense organs.

At the same time, a student who does not like the history lesson may start to like the history thanks to field trips, edu tours. The fact that the learners experience the lessons on the spot increases their success and enhances their interest towards lessons. Gain new motivations to attend school; Develop their skills and competences to realize new learnings.

Reduces their dependence on technology

Spending time outdoors helps students get away from digitals. It allows children and young people with game addiction to spend time with their peers instead of computer screens.

Today, young people live quite disconnected from nature and the natural processes of the environment. Especially with the Covid 19 global pandemic, young people and students have started to focus on social networks and screens. This, in turn, has pushed them to develop some emotional disorders. For children living in closed spaces disconnected from nature, nature can only be seen in documentaries. turns into an exotic entity (White, 2004).

Research shows that there is a strong link between the natural environment and emotional health. The natural processes that are constantly occurring in our environment are in many ways a very powerful source of learning and connect with our emotional side. With outdoor education, we can bring young learners together with nature, to distance them from virtual environments and to heal their worn-out feelings.

Increases cognitive development

Students learn by participating with all their senses rather than direct expression in outdoor activities. There are many advantages as children learn by living cognitively in outdoor activities.

In terms of cognitive development, outdoor activities include decision making and problem solving. It provides skills such as examining and observing the environment and being aware of their abilities. At the same time, the children observe the environment cognitively, examine and solve problems. Growth and development of the brain, body and emotional development are not independent of each other.

Outdoor activities and time spent in nature improves concentration, autonomy, and self-discipline skills enables them to be more successful in exams (White, 2004). A student who studies the hexagon of a honeycomb may discover that it is all about mathematics in nature. Seeing mathematics in all details enables them to think about maths. In addition, they are interested in science and want to interpret natural

phenomena. This develops them cognitively and raises their higher-order thinking skills.

Improves math abilities

Students can explore mathematical concepts in the real world instead of just inside the classroom.

Moving the math class outside gives students a break from a boring school day.

There is much we can do as a teacher to help our students practice Maths outdoors:

- **Playing hopscotch or other number-related active games.**
- **Measuring objects in nature:** Going outside and exploring math problems in real life can help make math meaningful. Using measurement and estimation skills, for instance, is one way kids can apply what they're learning to the real world. Students can gain mathematics skills through measuring perimeters or areas.
- **Looking for patterns and shapes:** They can touch a triangle, rectangle, or square. Students can do four operations on the soil with a piece of branch. They can learn the concept of angle with the angle of incidence of the suns rays. All these improve students math abilities.

3.2. Psychological benefits

In years past, many believed the only way to learn was in a classroom setting where children would focus on the board in front of them. But all that has changed. While classrooms are still used, more and more schools are opting for outdoor education. Outdoor activities affect children positively in every way. They get fresh air and plenty of oxygen. The kid who comes out is very happy. He is sharing more than fighting. Especially apartment kids. They are happy socially and emotionally because they do not play outside much.

Basically, taking care of nature and the environment is a very important part of this type of education. In addition, children become more creative thanks to outdoor education. They can breathe in the fresh air and exercise without even realizing it. 'A

healthy mind in a healthy body' (Atatürk) is a famous Turkish proverb. As it means The healthier your body, the stronger your mind.

Teachers and many researchers are aware of the importance of the natural environment on students' psychology. At the same time outdoor education enables the development of competences such as creativity, self-respect, autonomy, entrepreneurial spirit, teamwork, self-confidence, respect and protection of natural resources.

The possibilities of the open air are beyond motor, cognitive and emotional development. Participating in outdoor activities also supports learners/children socially. The results obtained from the studies reveal that outdoor environments positively affect childrens creative play, their relations hips with their peers and their relationships with the environment. (Dowdell, Gray ve Malone, 2011). And the most important thing is the opportunities that time spent outdoors offers in terms of psychological well-being, sensory awareness, and relaxation.

Hood River is one of these schools, and as a result of the researches, it is revealed that outdoor education is much more beneficial in And the most important thing is the opportunities that time spent outdoors offers in terms of psychological well-being, sensory awareness, and relaxation. developing and expanding social skills.

Better health

Researches have revealed that outdoor education can be a key factor in preventing childhood obesity. When kids play outdoors, they have a better chance of being at a healthy weight because theyre burning extra calories.

Outdoor games are essential for the child to discharge his energy.

It helps students be in natural surroundings that improve their senses and leads to physiological and psychological growth. Moving the body and increasing its energy enables students to develop positive emotions by strengthening the relationship between the body and the brain. Growth and development of the brain, body and emotion development are not independent of each other (Ouvry, 2005) The importance of fresh air and exercise for brain development has been proven (White, 2008)

Outdoor areas for children It is special and allows children to develop in all aspects as well as help them grow. It provides a number of opportunities for childrens development.

Outdoor games that involve physically demanding movements such as running, jumping, climbing; It ensures the regular operation of childrens respiratory, circulatory, digestive and excretory systems. His small and large muscles develop, his bones become stronger, his general health improves.

Children playing outdoors benefit more from vitamin D. and their immune systems become much stronger. This supports healthy bone development and reduces future risks such as heart disease and high blood pressure. Students, whose brain tissues need more oxygen than adults, also benefit from fresh air and oxygen in the open air. Outdoor education also improves eyesight. According to a study published by Ohio University, staying in the open air for 14 hours a week leads to better vision. Other studies show that natural daylight reduces myopia in children and improves farsightedness. We can also mention good effects of the open air on the immune system.

All these factors enable students to be healthy and have a strong psychology.

Outdoor games help regulate childrens sleep. It encourages empathy, tolerance, understanding and cooperation. It supports the work of the muscles necessary for fine and gross motor skills. It teaches how to overcome adversity. It develops relationships with nature. It prevents children from having a neurotic, introverted, shy and touchy nature.

Having green feelings

One of the aims of education is to raise conscious children for a respectful and sensitive society. Children who grow up without interacting with nature they feel uncomfortable, they start to avoid everything that belongs to nature and they are against environmental problems becomes insensitive. Enabling the students to spend time in nature and develop a love for animals and plants is of vital importance. The earlier environmental education is started, the more effective it will be. Because the interests and attitudes formed in the preschool period form the basis of future behaviors.

The child who has outdoor education, taking care of plants and animals will feel love, empathy, sympathy and trust. The child who realizes that the seed thrown into the ground needs time to germinate will learn to be patient and wait. A child with caring parents will feel what a secure attachment is and will be able to form healthier relationships in adulthood. A child who is aware of the workings of nature will know that difficult times are temporary and that the sun will definitely rise eventually.

Children experience natural phenomena such as weather, changing seasons and shadows by using their skills related to scientific research process such as inference, measurement and observation, by stimulating their sense of curiosity through the time they spend outdoors (Bilton, 2010; Civelek & Akamca, 2017).

Understanding that there are many different animal and plant species, the child will love people who are different from himself and will approach them with tolerance. Outdoor education not only affects the childs psychology positiv ely, but also supports the childs cognitive, physical, emotional and social development. A child who is raised with nature and environmental awareness has a great admiration for nature and protects nature. A child who feels love inside becomes an understanding and conscientious adult.

The relaxing feature of nature and green plays an important role on the psychological health of students. It enables young people and students to both protect the green and help them develop good feelings.

Improves communication and socio-emotional skills

Outdoor education targets teamwork, cooperation and collaboration. Students interact with their peers much more than in the classroom environment. Especially in lessons that require team games, matches and teamwork, students establish a strong bond with their friends. They accept each other as they are and support each other. They try to solve problems together and establish good relations. They can learn from each other; brainstorm and they reach the result together. Children can express themselves more easily in outdoor activities. It is stated that they interact more with their friends and have positive developments in language development.

All this prevents peer bullying among learners. Helps socially introverted and shy students form good friendships. Negative attitudes and behaviors towards school disappear.

It should not be forgotten that the outdoor education is an educational work that will contribute to human relations. You will observe that your students, who you cook together in the open air, prepare the food together and enjoy it while doing it. They both become closer to the outside world and make the communication between them more enjoyable and stronger. This is not an educational work for them, it turns into an enjoyable activity and entertainment, and you can eliminate their boredom.

It helps students who cannot express themselves comfortably in the classroom feel better, reduce barriers to communicate and thus improve their psychology.

Better overall behavior and diminished stress levels

Outdoor areas for children It is special and allows children to develop in all aspects as well as help them grow. (Wilson,2008). Children need to play, run, see, touch, smell and explore freely in the open air. They need nature for their mental, socio-emotional and physical development.

Children and young learners are continually growing, converting and evolving, having to deal with many things at a time. Outdoor education enables them to develop their ability to better cope with the challenges they may encounter in life.

According to a study published in the American Journal of Public Health, activities performed in nature have been shown to reduce the symptoms of Hyperactivity and Attention Deficit more than those performed indoors. Because when children spend their energy by moving more outdoors, their risk of showing attention problems in the classroom decreases and they can concentrate better.

Getting support from their peers or teachers in team games and in some sports enables them to stay more positive. When they feel a peer or teacher support, they feel happier and more motivated towards the whole environment. Thus, they reduce stress and feel more secure.

It is a fact that children in big cities have less contact with nature. This makes them more dependent on technology and displays. In addition, it greatly reduces his relationships with other children. Therefore, outdoor training is an excellent way to

help them communicate with their environment. At the same time, relations with nature support the development of childrens empathy skills.

Creates positive perception

Surveys show that the most enjoyable activity for young children is outdoor education. The students of the school we mentioned at the beginning of our article tell us about this and express that they want to experience that moment again and again. It is thought that prejudices against nature have also disappeared with this educational work, and at least this is how the childrens comments are. Children spend time in nature from a young age, get to know animals and plants; is the great importance for students to grow up as environmentally friendly and sensitive individuals.

Outdoor education is very popular, especially in European countries, and they aim to turn it into a ritual. It can be applied gradually in all countries, and at least if it is preferred intermittently, it will turn children into more enthusiastic students and will greatly contribute to their education and psychological development.

Outdoor education turns into a very enjoyable activity not only for students but also for educators, and we think that it is a motivation-enhancing element. Children in a healthy environment that appeals to all their senses learn by enjoying the freedom intertwined with nature and having fun.

It’s also worth mentioning that students who hate subjects like math can change their perspective thanks to outdoor education. Makes them feel good and confident. So, this is very important in creating a positive perception in students who want to escape from difficult lessons such as mathematics.

Increasing this awareness by making learning more enjoyable will make both teachers and students happy.

Increases self-confidence

Studying within four walls will restrict the educator as well as the student. Walled classrooms are boring for hyperactive students. Hyperactive students who cannot move freely in the classroom cannot highlight their strengths. And this pushes them to lose their self-confidence.

With outdoor education, students can move freely in larger areas. They can run, jump, climb. While acting, the child feels that he has succeeded and is not worried about getting into hard work. Children who are free to explore, observe and imitate develop confidence. Children with high perceptions of self-efficacy struggle with difficulties and try different strategies until they succeed. Thus, the sense of confidence and competence that children develop through their outdoor experiences has the potential to affect all areas of life.

Thus, students with a kinaesthetic learning style adapt better to the lessons. In addition, this type of education helps children learn teamwork and respect the environment.

This relationship with the environment improves the physical and mental development of learners/ children. Increased willingness to attend school and school subject.

The appropriate behavior expected from the child in the community in outdoor activities, fulfilling responsibilities, obeying the rules, sharing, taking turns while playing with toys. They develop social-emotionally by learning to wait and be respectful to each other (Mersin University Journal of the Faculty of Education, Vol. 8, Issue 3, December 2012, pp. 47-62).

However, there is much more diversity and examples that the student and the educator can observe in the educational activities carried out in the open air. It is possible to raise standards, and research shows this more clearly.

Improving emotional intelligence

It is known that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological resilience. As emotional intelligence rises ,psychological resilience also increases. It is a fact that the positive effects of nature on humans strengthen Emotional intelligence. Nature gives happiness and makes it easy for us to make sense of life. According to Dr. Goleman, emotional intelligence has five components: self-awareness, emotion management, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Dr. Daniel Goleman, 1995).

Outdoor education has the effects of improving all these strengths. In early childhood, children learn by using their senses and record what they have acquired

through sensory learning in their long-term memories (Khan, 2012). As Louv (2010) states, sensory experiences connect the childs outer world with his emotional world. For the healthy development of the childs emotional world and inner awareness, it is of special importance for the child to explore his environment by using his senses in the natural environment, which is the main source of sensory stimuli.

Emotional intelligence, or EQ (emotional quotient), is defined as the ability to observe ones own emotions and feelings, to distinguish between them, and to use this information as a guide. It consists of self-awareness, emotion management, motivation, empathy and social skills. Outdoor education aims to highlight these features in learners. It also supports empathy, motivation and good social relations with their peers through activities. Green activities organized in nature improve sensory intelligence and make learners feel happier.

Studies show that emotionally intelligent people are more in tune with their surroundings and satisfied. Thanks to outdoor education, individuals can be aware of their personal abilities and can control their emotions. It supports childrens creativity by allowing them to express themselves freely and create their own unique products. They become self-confident, responsible and result-oriented individuals who increase the motivation of themselves and their friends.

4. MANAGING OUTDOUR CLASSES

When managing outdoor classes, like indoor classes, planning is required, more so because beyond the classroom there are more moving parts, more things that can go wrong, more dangers such as the weather, lost students, and ways in which a student can injure themselves in roads, in farm machinery, in rivers, on hills and in supermarkets. These problems intensify the further your take your class from the school gates.

The teacher needs to consider how to prevent a post-primary class of teenagers from suffering hypothermia in the freezer of a supermarket on a supermarket field trip, or primary children falling hands first into hazardous cow pats that contain parasitic worms, or antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Evaluate perceived and potential hazards from the urban environment and the natural world and plan for emergencies, but allow children to take appropriate risks; children and young adults should not be cosseted from risk and should learn to be able to make personal discissions and take personal responsibility, which should be made clear to parents.

The following recommendations are a distillation of advice we have gained though Eurospeak's experience of running outdoor classes and teaching events. The recommendations are the summary of advice provided by teachers, trainers and auxiliary staff within our organisation who have work across state and private institutions in Ireland and overseas. We believe the advice applies equally to child and adult alike.

Having a clear objective for going outdoors is important; you need to know why you are going. You have to be clear about your purpose for going outdoors, and let students and their parents know, too. This will give you direction, help students engage with what you want them to observe, experience or learn in their time outdoors, and give parents peace of mind. After all, they want to know you're taking their pride and joys to the woods for more than just play, so plan, plan and plan every step of the lesson and have a plan B and escape plan to mitigate problems in the outdoor class, en route or at the teaching location. Remember, stay flexible and make outdoor experiences relatable to the learner and the curriculum, but fun.

There are some many possibilities when you begin to use the outdoors as a teaching tool, but don't get too ambitious; take baby steps and start small, and be patient; to not be too eager to begin with a 7 day outward bound course for your 7- and 8-year-olds; grade the outdoor activity to the age and abilities of your learners. And it's no good taking wheelchairs into the wilds if they're not off-road motorised all-terrain chairs.

Teaching staff and auxiliaries also need time to become accustomed to the outdoor methodology, managing learners and the outdoor teaching environment. Try and begin within the school gates and begin radiating out to curated local urban sites and green spaces where it is easier to keep an eye on your class before you take them to rural and coastal areas;

I also recommend help students get to know their schoolyard, the school neighbourhood and the local countryside. Use initial excursions for students, teaching and auxiliary staff to familiarise themselves with the various environments. Walk around the site and talk with students and the other teacher or teaching assistants asking them about what you find. Find out what questions they have about the things they see; map the sites by turning it into a lesson, and use Google Earth as a pre-excursion reconnoitering tool;

I have found that using parent volunteers on the trip also helps with class management and discipline and provide an extra pair of hands.

You can also build skills and success by getting learners to produce maps the schoolyard, their urban outdoor sites and the rural areas they visit and use technology to document what they see. Exploit the childrens knowledge of photography and filmmaking using their mobile telephone, and have them identify flora, fauna, animal tracks, sounds, smells and metabolic animal waste.

Another teaching opportunity is point out and identify any dangers such as noxious, stinging or pricking plants, unstable ground or river or water course; that they will need to be able to identify these; or better still have students do this by asking themselves what could possibly be a risk to them. Let students explore freely and play with natural outdoor materials before teaching.

When beyond the school gates pair, the students with a trusted partner friend, someone they are comfortable with, always; each one will be responsible for each

others welfare and can report problems; in turn each pair group will be paired with a second group for safety.

Enforce complete communicative transparency, so when you're beyond the school grounds, all teaching staff, students and homebase have each others number on speed dials. All outdoor participants will be aware when and how to us these numbers; obviously, tell students that they shouldn't call their grandmother if they see a 22-spotted ladybird.

Try to vary the location of the outdoor activity and make these locations as accessible to all students as possible.

As a teacher it is your responsibility to ensure that your children are safe, so build community connections with those in and around the learning zone including local residents, parks and rangers, and farmers and landowners, and businesses; focus on long-lasting and reciprocal relationships, this can ensure the classes security and could provide valuable sources of help, advice and partnerships.

I also recommend a Leave no trace policy; leave the outdoor learning environment as you encountered it; carry garbage in backpacks to be disposed of in an appropriate location, leave no equipment or materials in the learning zone. Take nothing from the local environment; do not remove flora, fauna or biological detritus or geological articles, do not exploit nature physically. And always follow the national, local and organisational best practices when in the outdoors.

Try to anticipate the weather; check weather forecasts, but don't be afraid or going outdoors when conditions are inclement; it is useful in all types of weather though you will likely spend less time outdoors if it is cold or rainy; students must dress and be equipped for the weather they will likely encounter. Weather can be fun. Obviously, if the remnants of a 103-knot tropical storm sweeping in across the Atlantic you don't want to take a bunch of eleven-year-olds to the Kerry coast.

Finally, teaching your learners outdoor skills shows them how to behave in the natural world no matter what the weather; show them how to turn over a rock gently, to observe and appreciate insectoid life and replace the stone without killing anything; teach them how to examine a plant without picking it; demonstrate how to sit quietly in contemplation and write thoughtfully about their experience; show them how to observe without being heard, and how to interact with fauna.

These are our recommendations, as you take your classes out you will learn and amass your own thoughts, knowledge and opinions to write your own pieces of advice, recommendations and school policies. Good luck, and enjoy the outdoors.

4.1. Safety charter

This example Charter of Commitment is based on the Irish, European Union and United Nations Charters for the protection of children and the person. The document showcases the commitments organisations are recommended to make to create a safe safety programme for outdoor (OE).

Schools may display the complete physical copy of the Charter in a public facing area in their organisation so that children and young people, parents and caretakers and the broader community can see it and know that leaders, staff and volunteers in the organisation are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and have a PDF document available on-line in various formats including audio, braille, child-friendly version and national co-language version.

Play and education in a curated space

Every child has the right to participate in education, play, creative activities and recreation, even if an illness or disability makes it difficult for them to do this.

Opportunities for education, play and recreation should be suited to their age, the mental and physical development of a child or young person; it should where possible occur in a location designed, created, equipped and furnished, and staffed to meet their needs and the needs of the school staff.

It is the responsibility of the parents and children to inform teachers, auxiliary staff and healthcare workers if the opportunities for play and recreation do not meet their needs.

Play and education in a natural environment

Every child has the right to participate in education, play, creative activities and recreation, unless their illness or disability makes it difficult for them to do this.

Opportunities for education, play and recreation should be suited to their age, the mental and physical development and capabilities of children and young people;

it should where possible occur in a location able to meet the needs of the child or young person.

Children together with the support of their parents can let healthcare workers know if the opportunities for play and recreation do not meet their needs.

Respect

Our child protection is multi-agency, multi-disciplinary. Agencies and professionals work together in the interests of children and the vulnerable. We will treat all equally regardless of origin, gender, disability or socio-economic background.

Everyone is included and welcome. All children and people must be treated equally in line with current Irish, EU and UN legislation and charters. All have the right to be protected from harm and discrimination. Parents and guardians have the right to be respected regardless of origin and language proficiency and should be consulted and involved in matters that concern their children. All children should be treated with care, sensitivity, fairness and respect.

Educational staff will pay special attention to a child's personal situation, well-being and specific need respecting their physical and psychological integrity and personal identity.

Inform

We will give you inform you and your parents and guardians about our outdoor educational program including potential hazards and benefits about your physical, emotional and onsite safety, and what we will do if you feel unsafe, and what you can do if you feel unsafe.

Every child has the right to information, in a format they can understand. And they should never be afraid to ask.

Give you a voice

We will make sure there are lots of ways for you to have a say and be involved. You, children and your parents and guardians have the right to be heard and listened to with consideration, and be taken seriously.

Children have the right to express their views freely and to have those views taken into account in matters that affect them in line with their age and understanding.

Children have a right to be heard, listened to and taken seriously. Taking account of their age and understanding, they should be consulted and involved in all matters and decisions that may affect their lives.

Help

We will listen and act on what the children tell us. We will help them with their hopes and dreams as well as their worries and fears. We will provide pre-OE activity session where they can express their feelings regarding the event, and a post-OE reflective activity session to discuss the OE event.

Trust

We will care about our learner's needs and feelings and will support them. We will continue to improve what we do to help them learn about themselves, improve their education and prepare them for the adult world and the natural environments.

Safety

The best interests of the child should be paramount. We will make our learner's outdoor experience a fun, informative, educational, happy and comfortable for you. Their safety and welfare are everyone's responsibility, including their OE study partner. Their best interests are paramount.

Every child and young person can expect that we will promote an appreciation of the outdoors and empower them to manage their long-term conduct and to reduce physical and emotional stress. Learn more about what they can do to improve the environment in a safe way.

Respect for the natural environment

Our guiding principles are leave no trace, do not remove and do not exploit the natural world physically.

1. Plan ahead and prepare.

2. Be considerate of others.
3. Respect farm animals and wildlife.
4. Travel and camp on durable ground.
5. Leave what you find.
6. Dispose of waste properly.
7. Minimise the effects of fire.

Values

We seek to improve our learners' physical fitness, health and motor development; improve cognitive development and academic performance; increase self-confidence; build understanding and appreciation of ecosystems and environmental processes.

Learners are invited to interact directly with nature, other living things, and natural phenomena so that they can experience real and meaningful feelings, sensations and emotions. With Outdoor Learning, students can get to understand the environment, to the efforts that can be done to protect the environment from human damage or natural phenomena.

4.2. Best practices

As a teaching practitioner, there are a number of practical considerations we must reflect upon and put into practice when facilitating the childrens interaction with the natural environment; we must ask ourselves:

1. What are acceptable limits of engagement with the natural world;
2. What risks can and will be tolerated by children, parents and guardians and the educational institution.

As teachers we have a duty of care looking offer the children of others, the natural environment and wildlife whose habitat we are encroaching upon.

The following considerations have been established to keep the children safe and protect them physically and emotionally while allowing them freedom to explore and interact with the environment around them and the creatures they encounter leading to a safe and fulfilling outcome to their OE experience.

Communicate with parents and guardians

Parents and guardians should be informed by the school when and how often their children will be engaged in outdoor-learning activities in order for them to be equipped and supplied appropriately, and to be informed of any medical condition or phobias.

Communicate with parents and guardians: It is important to communicate with parents/guardians about outdoor learning at your school and how they can help by sending students prepared to learn in the outdoor environment.

Risk analysis

A thorough ground survey of the teaching space must be conducted by the school, teaching staff and ancillary staff to become acquainted with the outdoor learning area regardless of whether it is in the curated location within the school grounds, in an urban green space or in an out-of-town rural location or coastal areas.

Risk analysis (including hazardous animals and insects, or poison ivy and other hazardous plants) Survey the site daily for potential hazards. Continue to assess risks as conditions change. Things to be considered include hazardous animals, plants, and insects; dangerous or unstable terrain and arboreal hazards and instability.

Weather-appropriate clothing and gear

Learners should be fully prepared for all types of weather that's presents itself within the area of outdoors education; this includes clement and inclement weather; this includes safety equipment that may be required. This includes walking books, Wellington boots cold weather clothing or summer gear.

Planning

OE Teaching plan must be drawn up by the school and made available to parents, teachers and support staff.

This plan will include protocols on what to do if an event is rained off; if there is an emergency en route, hazards at the OE teaching site; plans to mitigate emergencies on the OE teaching venue; this includes an emergency and injury preparedness plan will be available with emergency number, equipment and plans of

action and numbers of staff on the OE educative trip. Policy for OE on school premises and beyond the school gates.

Awareness

Parents, children and staff should be aware of the natural environment its limitations dangers and challenges for all those taking part in outdoor educative exercises.

School staff and students should be made aware of the geography, topology of a given OE space regardless of whether it is within the school grounds, a curated urban space or a semi-rural location or coastal area.

Training

School staff OE instructor training all staff will have participated in a n awareness session regarding the OE teaching environment, be trained in first aid and be receiving CPD sessions regarding OE and the environments they are expected to be teaching in.

Curriculum

Curriculum links and activities should be clearly states for the teachers, teaching assistants, ancillary staff, learners and their parents and guardians.

All need to know why they are taking part in the activities; the following four lessons suggestions are a sample of what have been run by teachers and have proved popular with students.

Lesson summaries

Bare Necessities

This is suitable for a CLIL curriculum tie in to Irish primary Social, Environmental and Scientific Education: Science classes for infants studying Living things, Myself, Plants and Animals.

This is a physical and tactile learning activity that can be conducted in within the school grounds, should the school have green spaces, or in a curated area such as a local park, green area, beach, riverbank or coastal area. If the school does not have

green spaces the teacher can use realia such as twigs or branches, leaves, and stones for a pop-up trail or ecosystem.

Select a short pre-determined area in your school grounds, a pathway, a wooded area, behind bushes; if none of this is available it can be organised a pop-up ecosystem in the school playground.

In a rural or wooded area use what is around you; however, if you are creating an ecosystem in the school yard or playground se different surfaces in your ecosystem or route such as: bark; rounded water-worn gravel or pebbles; pine or fir cones; sand and mud; long grass and leaf litter, horse dung and some rocks. Work with the children to prepare the ecosystem.

Regardless as to whether the children are in a natural area or in the school, encourage the children to use descriptive vocabulary using the senses; have them explain and tell the other how it feels, smells, looks and sounds, and how they feel.

Envirophysi

This physical education class is suitable for fifth and six classes of primary level. Learners jog or run over a predetermined distance scouted by the physical education teacher prior to the lesson and with the permission of the landowner or ranger.

The aim of the lesson is to jog or run in a non-competitive natural environment for a period of between 15 to 30 minutes depending on terrain; and run between 30 seconds to 5 minutes with a partner or small group whilst scaling low walls, crossing low obstacles, or traversing small bridges or shallow water courses.

They then walk the course once again this time observing the terrain, the natural and manmade geography and weather conditions.

They will then reflective on the course and how they felt physically and mentally about the course

Español y Más

This is a class for Junior Cycle, or lower secondary school and builds on their foreign-language (L2) education.

Time spent outdoors can be a great inspiration for language students' creativity. The teacher can ask the students in Spanish, or whichever language they are learning, to describe what they can see, hear, smell and feel; the teacher asks them to imagine what it might be like to live outdoors, or in the countryside.

This activity can be used as a creative or free writing task in their L2; either when the students are outdoors or when they return to the classroom, they can reflect on their outdoor experience in the L2. Students could write blogs or post social messages or describing what they have seen and experienced. Students could also create a brief video in their target language narrating their experience or what they enjoyed most about their lesson.

Time away from the static indoor classroom can stimulate language use and verbal fluency. Being outside will allow them space for them to think, consider their thoughts and help the build confidence and verbal fluency with regard to vocabulary and lexis related to the outdoors.

Treasure Hunt

This activity is purely a play event. Prepare a background story where the students assume the characters of treasure hunters or adventurers seeking missing treasure.

To discover the treasure, the learners must work together in pairs or small groups by following detailed instructions that they need to find, in addition to completing any additional tasks that have been set for them. This could be a tie into an "Español y Más"-type language lesson where the clues are written in the students L2.

Treasure Hunt is a comprehension task. If students find the 'treasure' successfully then communication in the L2 would have been made.

Netherfield Primary School

This good practice example shows how primary school makes an effective use of resources and space to provide children with learning experiences. Netherfield Primary School makes the most use of its outdoor resources for "mirroring the indoor

environment as much as possible so that children have access to all of the same kinds of activities and learning opportunities outside as they would inside[1].”

Beyond the outdoor area, but within the school site, there is a little garden used as a “forest school”, where children play and learn while exploring nature and solving problems that are set according to their specific needs. Some children were, for example, seeking out materials that were rough, spiky, smooth or shiny” because staff had realized through assessments that these children needed to develop their vocabulary[2].

This school also has a farm that houses chickens, rabbits and goats. The children take turns to take care of the animals, feeding them and cleaning their cages. This helps children’s persona, social and emotional development as well as adding to their understanding of the world around them.

Farley Nursery School

Farley Nursery School has embraced an ‘outdoor learning’ ethos whereby children spend most of their time outside. It is therefore important that planning for activities and the range of resources available cover all areas of learning. Staff at the nursery have been focusing on developing the outdoor provision for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. As a result, a stimulating range of resources is available to allow children to experiment and solve problems and develop early mathematical skills.

Staff see great benefits for children, who are fascinated by working things out and experimenting[3]. Children develop their understanding of shape and space as they take part in regular ‘big builds’. Working with staff they design and build play structures using materials such as pallets, planks, crates and tyres. They work out the best and safest way to put them together and can adapt them at any time. Most of the materials are free and easily available.

[1] Ofsted (2015): Using the physical environment as a tool for teaching – Netherfield Primary School
[2] Ofsted (2015): Using the physical environment as a tool for teaching – Netherfield Primary School
[3] Ofsted (2012): Taking problem solving, reasoning and numeracy into the great outdoors - Farley Nursery School

Cheap and unusual resources are used by the children to solve problems. Water, as ever, is a big hit! Children run it down guttering and drainpipes to see where it will go and use a diverse range of containers and utensils. They use items such as tin cans with holes pierced in the bottom, plastic measuring jugs, plastic spray bottles and various plumbing pipes and joints. They become engrossed in working out why the spray bottles won't work when there is glitter in the water and spend a lot of time taking them apart, checking them and putting them back together again.

The mud pit allows children to use water on a larger scale. They use a hosepipe, crates, pipes and guttering to direct the water on to the soil and then use tools to dig and explore the properties of mud. The area is only small, but children enjoy experimenting there and, since they are clothed appropriately, it doesn't matter how dirty they get. Activities make the best use of the outdoor environment. A pancake 'shape' race engages children by linking racing and a matching activity. Staff prepare the activity by cutting pancakes into simple shapes, using large, everyday objects of the same shape. The children take it in turns to run with their shaped pancake in a frying pan and find the corresponding shape at the end of the course. It is successful because all children are fully engaged, and staff support the activity by asking children to identify the different shapes.

Oban High School

Outdoor learning is a core part of COVID-19 recovery for Oban High School. There is a clear shared rationale for outdoor learning that is well understood by partners who have been involved in shaping this. The rationale outlines the benefits in terms of improved knowledge and appreciation of the natural world, skills development and wider benefits associated with wellbeing.

Partners play a significant role in helping to deliver outdoor learning across all aspects of the curriculum. Local community groups, third sector organizations, public sector and business organizations all deliver aspects of outdoor learning that enhance learner experience. As a result, partners have a shared understanding of what they are trying to achieve for young people. They make a significant difference to outdoor learning experiences being viable.

In many instances, both Oban High School staff and partners jointly plan, prepare and deliver outdoor learning experiences. These cater for a wide range of

learners including those who require personalized support and those undertaking advanced qualifications. For example, the school has very strong links with the local college who deliver several courses, including national progression awards in rural skills, construction and joinery at Oban High School. Many young people who participated in the courses are now exploring related opportunities within the world of work[4].

Out-of-school Day

More than 470,000 children from more than 3000 schools all over Turkey attended the out-of-school day, which was held for the first time in Turkey. Emphasizing that playing outside, learning by exploring and experiencing is important for the development of childrens physical and mental health, as well as their communication skills and creativity, outdoor education brought children together outside.

Teachers participating in the school outside day introduced the orienteering sport to the students. Orienteering is a time-trial sport that involves navigating with the help of a map. This is a great way to build teamwork and develop leadership and problem-solving abilities. Although it can be done in different terrain conditions, it is generally preferred to be done in forest land. Orienteering boosters the individuals self-confidence and belief. The players take responsibility for their own decisions. The feeling of reading a successful map in a wooded area is that you "really" succeed. Thus, it is a very good example for learning outside. Students who were introduced to the orienteering sport for the first time learned by practicing. They learned to be more sensitive to their environment in the open air, they discovered their self-confidence and developed their creativity.

Students who had this experience in Turkey, which is quite backward in terms of outdoor education, were very happy. This outdoor sport nurtures students creativity, improves their problem-solving skills, and supports their emotional and intellectual development. Adopt a positive attitude to challenge and adventure

[4] Successful approaches to learning outdoors. A report by HM Inspectors. February 2022. Education Scotland. Foghlam Alba

It also enables the growth of idealistic children who are more successful in their classes and have more self-confidence.

Nature Photography

It aims to improve the photography skills of students with outdoor education designed especially for students with an interest in art. Taking a picture of the fall of a leaf, the beauty of a flower and an insect makes students very happy. It enables them to better understand the order and the flawless in nature and to associate it with the science lesson.

Students will compete with each other to take the best picture and reduce their stress levels. By gaining the ability to take photographs, they become more aware of the fact that every living thing has a duty in nature. It is an ideal outdoor activity for both primary and secondary school students. They can focus on different photos by using their creativity. With this activity students become more active in the field of technology and acquire social skills

The activity, which is not limited to a single class, can be applied in different disciplines. For example, in a foreign language lesson, a student can explain the photograph he took in another language or he/she can make a painting that looks like his/her photo in art class. With the activity students have the enjoyment, confidence and environmental awareness. Students who attend outdoor education can be more respectful towards the environment. They raise awareness about environmental pollution, natural events

4.3. Guide on choosing the space for outdoor training

One of the main steps when planning an outdoor training activity is choosing the specific space in which the activity is going to take place. In order to do this, there are some questions that have to be arisen and factors that have to be taken into account to develop the best outdoor training plan possible.

The following guide aims to highlight the main characteristics that must be considered to choose the ideal space to develop outdoor training.

What is the target group?

If you're going to organise an outdoor education activity, you have to keep in mind what kind of students are you aiming to:

- Children (Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary School).
- People with special needs.
- Students (University and Vocational Training).
- People working in companies (Employees, Executives).

What kind of activity or activities will be carried out?

Before choosing the exact location, it is recommended for teachers to be clear about the sort of activity they want to carry out.

For example, one of the most popular outdoor activities is sports. If we are choosing this kind of activity, we have to provide sports facilities like a basketball court, a football pitch or any outdoor space including its specific equipment such as balls, hoops, rackets, etc. These sports activities can include mountain sports like hiking or rafting. In case of choosing an activity involving environmental matters we will have to choose an outdoor space located in nature like the woods or an orchard for gardening, a farm or even the park.

Another example could be team building activities if the target group involved is workers of a company. These kinds of activities are often games so, in this case the space provided could be a place that is totally different from the workplace environment (office, warehouse, factory…). We could think of the woods, a park or any sort of location that involves nature and green spaces.

What kind of risks can be predicted?

Most outdoor learning experiences take place with very low levels of risk. However, on occasion it may be necessary to expose students to slightly higher levels of risk. Naturally it is important to balance risks and opportunities in any outdoor learning experience to ensure that actions are proportionate and reasonable.

One of the most important steps in minimizing risk will be to undertake a site assessment of the outdoor learning area PRIOR to taking students to this area to ensure the site is clear of hazards.

Safety and risk management

When planning an outdoor class, keep in mind these things in order to develop a safe activity:

- Survey the site daily for potential hazards. Continue to assess risks as conditions change.
- Ensure tables and chairs are secure to prevent tipping over. Facility staff should be the only ones moving tables and heavy equipment.
- Ensure extension cords are properly covered to prevent tripping.
- If the site is deemed too risky due to extreme weather such as high winds or a thunderstorm, postpone the outdoor learning experience.
- Let the office know when you are going outside. Write a note on your door letting people know where you are and how to reach you.
- Take a cell phone or 2-way radio that gives you instant communication with the office.
- Each time the group transitions from one place to another, do a head count to ensure that all of the students are accounted for. Ensure a safe path of travel.
- Observe students' interactions with each other and with the environment. Gently guide the students in managing their behaviour, any risks, and interactions as required.
- Explain to students that if they find anything that may be dangerous or pose a health risk (bees, broken glass, needle, dead animal, etc.) they should leave it and immediately inform you.
- Discuss appropriate responses to mosquitos, bees, wasps, ticks, and other insects.
- Review with students not to talk to community members they don't know. If a stranger attempts to engage students in conversation, they should inform the teacher.

- Be aware of signs of heat stress and hypothermia. Schedule hydration breaks or warmup breaks as needed.
- Be aware of any special needs of students such as allergies.

Warmth and comfort

Students must come prepared with weather-appropriate gear for every day they will be learning outside. Children who are not adequately dressed will not be comfortable.

- **LAYERS:** wearing layers of clothing allows children to adjust as needed according to changes in weather/microclimate and activity levels.
- **FOOTWEAR:** boots or sturdy shoes with good grips on the bottom are recommended. Footwear should be closed-toed (no sandals).
- **EXTRA SUPPLIES:**
    - Collect extra clothing including raincoats, snow pants, winter jackets, mittens, hats and boots.
    - Clean these supplies and keep them in a storage bin so that students who are not prepared have something appropriate to wear.

WHEN IT'S WARM, WEAR:	WHEN IT'S COLD, WEAR:
• **A short-sleeved, lightweight and breathable shirt.** • **Durables shorts or pants.**	• Thermal underclothing. Choose a fabric that will wick moisture away from the skin and provide a warm, breathable layer. • Warm, waterproof gloves or mittens that slip on and off easily. • Warm, waterproof hat that covers the ears. • Warm, waterproof winter jacket and snow pants. • Wool or wool-blend socks and warm, waterproof winter boots.

Sun protection

The peak sun hours of 10:00 AM Ь3:00 PM fall within the normal school day. Advise students of risks of sunburn. Ensure students cover exposed skin, wearing hats and sunscreen. Keep sunscreen in outdoor learning spaces. Work in the shade where possible.

Backpack

Everyone should carry a backpack containing:

- Water in a spill-proof bottle and a small unbreakable cup for warm drinks.
- A healthy, high-energy snack in a reusable container.
- A damp, bagged towel or hand sanitizer and towel to clean their hands before snack time.
- Extra socks, shirt, gloves, and a hat.

What is the budget for the activity?

It is very important to keep in mind the budget we have to choose the space to carry out outdoor training activities. If the budget is small, we cannot choose a space that is going to be far away, to reduce expenses such as transport or even accommodation. We also must consider a space that already has all the equipment and materials that are necessary for the activity to take place so that we can reduce the costs as much as possible if we don't have to acquire additional materials.

Another aspect to consider when thinking about the budget is the economic situation of the participants involved in requiring them to obtain certain instruments to carry out the activity like for example technical clothing for mountain or marine activities, or specific materials for a science project or sports.

Also, something to take into account about the budget is if the development of the outdoor activity requires hiring specialized professionals like for example monitors for sports or extra staff if the group of children is large and more supervision is required.

What kind of activity will be developed?

The outdoor learning environment should be an extension of the interior setting. It should be created with the same purpose, should arise, inspire, and motivate, and it must meet the requirements of every person. Your outside area offers a seemingly endless array of learning opportunities.

By moving your activities outside and using the environment to illustrate concepts, you can improve them. There is a wide list of activities that can be developed outdoors, depending on the characteristics of the group or the area of learning or training we are going to focus on.

This is the main aspect we have to consider when choosing the space. First, we have to know what kind of activity we are going to carry out, whether it is sports, environmental awareness, specific formations for workers, gardening, team building…

There are also some typical indoor activities that can be carried out outdoors like for example a science class for the children to experience through senses what they are learning in books. Some activities don't need a space with certain specialties but others like sports for examples need some planning like what kind of pitch do we need or the materials and equipment that will be required.

What kind of location will be considered?

We can find many different outdoor spaces to develop the activity that is planned. One of the main classifications could be rural, urban, or outside of the city locations.

For rural areas we understand a space characteristic of the countryside not included within an urbanized area or urban cluster. We can think of choosing these spaces to develop activities that involve environmental issues, farming, gardening, or activities that are made with the aim of approaching the participants to green spaces or making children from big cities familiar with the rural lifestyle and nature.

Secondly, we have the urban space, considering this to be the area with a high population density and infrastructure of built environment. This option is optimal for outdoor activities like biking rides or the use of parks. We can also find spaces outside

of the city that are not strictly rural but also involve being in touch with nature like woods just outside the city or urban gardens.

Another option is developing outdoor activities that can take place in coastal areas like the beach. An interesting activity related to the environment could be beach cleaning or surfing for sports activities. The same example can be transferred for the mountain.

Is qualified staff needed to develop the outdoor activity?

This question can be arisen when planning activities like that require hiring external staff that is specifically qualified for certain activities that are going to be carried out or even when the group of students requires more supervision because of the peculiarities of the space or the people.

For example, if we are doing a tour maybe we will need to hire a tour guide or a monitor if we choose skiing in the mountains.

What are the climatological conditions?

It is very important to keep in mind the weather when planning an outdoor activity.

Depending on the forecast we can not only choose a specific location we are going to carry out the activity in but also when is the proper time to do it and what specific clothing we are going to need. For example, we won't find the same weather in coastal areas than in the mountains.

When will the outdoor activity take place?

Depending on when the activity is going to take place, we can choose one place or another as well as providing the necessary equipment and materials.

We will not have the same space options during the winter or during summer. Also, for example, if the activity is going to be exploring the woods during night-time, we will have to think about the specific materials we will need like lanterns.

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