ACEWild
Alternative Curriculum – Education out of the Wild!

Action Research Period 2
Case Study – Background Philosophy
(Presentation 2 of 4)

Outdoor Learning at Christian-Hülsmeyer Schule, Barnstorf, Germany
(Feb 2016 to June 2016)

www.acewild.eu
Disclaimer

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What is Outdoor Education?

• Outdoor Education is an experiential method where most of the learning takes place in the outdoors using all senses.
• Outdoor Education programmes often involve residential or journey-based experiences during which students participate in a variety of adventurous challenges.
• Outdoor Education is education in, about, and for the outdoors.
  – In: outdoor education can occur in any outdoor setting from a school yard to a remote wilderness setting.
  – About: the topic is the outdoors itself and the cultural aspects related to the natural environment.
  – For: learning for the sake of the natural world.
Philosophy/Aims of Outdoor Education

• The aim of outdoor education is usually not the activity per se, but rather to learn how to overcome adversity, work alongside others, and to develop a deeper relationship with nature. The three domains of self, others, and the natural world are commonly understood as the main aims in outdoor education.

• Outdoor education programme aims can be to:
  – Foster learning skills
  – Enhance teamwork
  – Learn outdoor survival skills
  – Promote spirituality
  – Understand natural environments
  – Develop communication and entrepreneurship skills
  – Improve problem solving skills
Components of Outdoor Education

• Adventure Education
  – Interpersonal relationships: developing skills for working with others
  – Intrapersonal relationships: developing our sense of self, such as self-esteem, spirituality, confidence, self-efficacy

• Environmental Education
  – Ecosystemic relationships: looking at the interdependence of living organisms in an environment
  – Cultural development: looking at the interactions between human society and the natural resources of an environment
## Didactical challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Culture</th>
<th>Outdoor Classroom Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Told the information</td>
<td>a) Discover the information themselves through investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Reading about topics</td>
<td>b) Experiencing topics first-hand and relating them to real life situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Physical distance from others</td>
<td>c) Working in collaboration with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Limitations</td>
<td>d) Testing one’s own limits and learning what is safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) The expected</td>
<td>e) The unexpected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Intellectual development</td>
<td>f) Multi- Sensory/ Whole-child development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Physical inactivity</td>
<td>g) Physical development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aims of ACE Wild

Due to the nature of the learners, the main focus of the project ACEWild is to develop personal, social and emotional skills, which are vital in day to day life, and to raise achievement.

The two main Learning Objectives were:

• To improve the emotional wellbeing and increase confidence of learners
• To develop inter-personal and intra-personal skills of learners
• To build employability skills and improve life-chances
I. ACEWild - curriculum

A. Framework and guidelines
A. Curriculum ACEWild – guiding principles

- From nature to culture
- From sensation to learning
- From basics to complexity

- Nature and environment as teachers
- Teacher as learners, who learn from learners
- Students as experts

- Learning competencies
From nature to culture

Outdoor learning is about ...

... reminding the students how something started
... tracking the development of technologies
... building up a community
... respecting that the environment has a value
From nature to culture

1. Culture ... as Distinct from Nature

   – Knowing that the nature-culture dichotomy is obsolete we start our activities outdoors in as natural an environment as possible
   – On one hand students should learn about sustainable ways of using natural resources and circumstances
   – On the other hand they should respect the natural laws of the environment
From nature to culture

Culture ... as Knowledge

– Culture is knowledge about the environment and nature
– Culture is knowing about nature and having the skills to work within the natural environment
– Culture is a mental construct of being part of nature
From nature to culture

Culture ... as communication

– Culture is shared knowledge
– students need language skills; therefore students have to learn to express themselves and to understand each other
– Doing Culture needs collaboration and team skills
Culture as ... system of practices

– using natural resources
– understanding how everything is interconnected
– producing and consuming natural resources
– understanding how our way of life affects the environment
We create outdoor learning situations that allow ...

1. **sensation**. That means direct and attractive action which has reasonable consequences. It is a risk, because we do not know what will happen in the learners mind. It is absolutely individual and different for every learner.

2. **experience**. Adventure, sensation is not experience. Learners have to reflect on the actions. Share their experiences with the group and understand their role, needs and expectations.

3. **learning**. Students learn to transfer their experiences into their biography and future life.
Outdoor learning means that learning happens on three levels.

On the **sensation level** a teacher has no influences on what will happen. A teacher can prepare the environment as well as they can, but there is always a risk left, because students are individuals. You cannot predict what they will do, how they may interpret the world and how they may decide to act.

On the experience level students have to interact, to communicate and to share their ideas. That is why we support group learning in outdoor activities.

Students have to communicate and reflect. The sensation becomes an experience, but a single experience is not really learned. Learning is the next level. That is the moment of teaching. This happens in communities, schools in organised learning settings.

The table below gives an overview of what can be achieved by outdoor learning from sensation to learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensation</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Life long learning</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From basics to complexity

We begin with survival basics like making fires, cooking outdoors using wild food and building shelters from natural materials.

We move on to exploring how to use tools/technologies to keep firewood dry and how to make more efficient fires.

We finish by exploring our day-to-day habits, for example the way we heat our homes, use energy, cook and consume food.
B. Content and Competencies
What is being taught?

The content includes

• information about the natural environment and relationships within it
• specific skills to be used in the outdoors
• our relationship with the environment
• how our activities as individuals and as a society affect the environment
Topics and Themes

• Adventure training
• Decision making
• Emotional Intelligence
• Knowing the local environment
• History and traditional knowledge
• Respect
• Responsibility
• Resilience
• Self Reliance
• Inter/Intrapersonal understanding
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue competence</strong></td>
<td>About nature and environment</td>
<td>Working with methods and instruments</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social competence</strong></td>
<td>Communication, teamwork</td>
<td>Solving conflicts</td>
<td>Open-mindness Empathy Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self competence</strong></td>
<td>Personality, emotion behaviour</td>
<td>Designing own life-and career curriculum</td>
<td>Courage and Authenticity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Design competence</strong></td>
<td>About process designing structure building</td>
<td>Designing processes and products</td>
<td>Dealing with variety and difference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Circle of competence development

**Competencies**
- New acquired, deepened, broadened, differentiated

**Information**
- Going deeper into a situation

**Knowledge**
- Linking information

**Skills**
- Making use of it

**Attitude**
- Reflecting on it
C. Teachers and learners
Nature and environment as teacher

• Authentic
  – Creating learning experiences that mirror real life

• Aesthetic
  – A ‘classroom’ that includes natural light, sound, texture and colour

• Direct consequences
  – Instead of quantitative scores you got a feedback in relation to a specific issue
The role of the teachers as facilitators

• have an attitude of assistance and encouragement
• are coaching rather than providing facts
• need to know why you are doing what you are doing
• put the focus on the participants
• encourage students to explore and discover meaning and understanding from the activities
• design situations that will encourage students to want to learn or work something out
• look for and be flexible enough to capitalize on learning opportunities that spontaneously arise
The role of the teachers as learners

- put the focus on the participants
- look for and be flexible enough to capitalise on learning opportunities that spontaneously arise
- Use sequenced progressions that move from simple to complex
- Anticipate how to use students’ failures as well as their successes to maximize learning
- Follow an activity with opportunities for reflection, discussion, generalisation and application.

This is the moment when learner learns from learner.
Outdoor Learning Process

- APPLYING
- EXPERIENCING
- GENERALISING
- REFLECTING
Outdoor teaching Process

- Implementation
- Reflection & Discussion
- Evaluation
- Adaptation
- Knowledge
- Planning
Project Partners and further information;

For more information and resources relating to the ACEWild (Alternative Curriculum Education out of the Wild) project, including resources, case studies, further support and a full list of Project contacts please see; www.acewild.eu

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