



DISCOVERING NEARBY NATURE AND URBAN ADVENTURES:
ADVENTURES WHERE WE LIVE & LEARNING OUTSIDE

Abstract Book

EOE NETWORK CONFERENCE 2025
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European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education
and Experiential Learning - EOE Network

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from social and youth workers,
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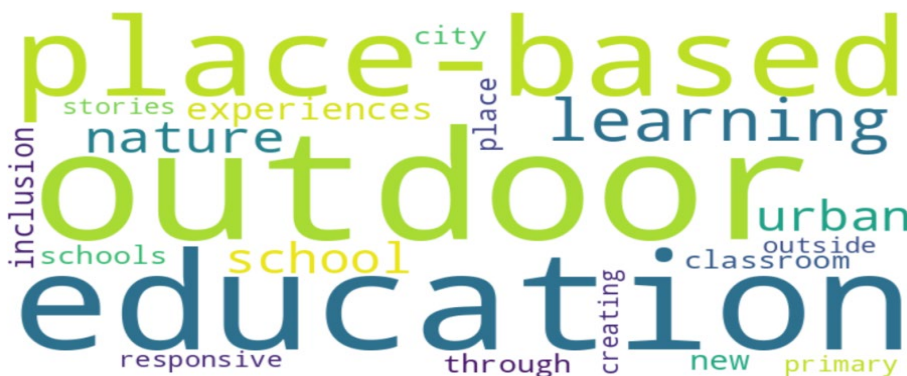
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Comune di Rimini

Dear participants,

First of all, welcome to the 21st EOE Network Conference! We are delighted to host you and create a welcoming atmosphere—both socially and climatically—so that you feel right at home. However, the true stars of this event are you, the participants. Our conference brings together university lecturers, researchers, youth workers, teachers from kindergarten to upper secondary school, environmental and outdoor educators, and pedagogues from across Europe and beyond. This “EOE family” consists of about 180 participants, who will share their outdoor teaching and learning experiences through 22 poster presentations, 18 outdoor workshops, 45 oral presentations, 3 keynote speeches, and 1 research workshop. To give you a sense of the impact of your contributions, please note that the attached word cloud is generated from the titles of your abstracts.



Our world is undergoing significant changes: climate change, forced global migration, unsettling neoliberal policies, rising wealth inequality, and rapid technological advancements, among other factors, have become central to contemporary life. These challenges call for a rethinking of our history, heritage, and established practices to promote more sustainable, innovative, and equitable ways of living and learning.

Collaboration, dialogue, and the opening of international connections are essential for developing high-quality research and educational programs, as well as creating tangible impacts on communities—children, adolescents, and adults alike. This conference seeks to foster awareness and broaden perspectives, encouraging discussions on approaches and methodologies, and promoting a critical view of research and practice in Outdoor Education.

Moreover, responsible and sustainable development in education requires creative strategies for outdoor learning that align with key Sustainable Development Goals: quality education (SDG 4), good health and well-being (SDG 3), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10). It is crucial to consider these goals when planning our educational initiatives.

It is also fundamental to note that in Europe, approximately 74% of the population lives in urban areas (United Nations, 2023). This urban context must be considered if we are to effectively advance the aforementioned Sustainable Development Goals.

In Rimini, people have engaged in both indoor and outdoor learning for over 2,500 years. Our conference will leverage both the historical Roman city and the vibrant modern center, as well as the urban and coastal spaces of the Adriatic.

The EOE Conference Team

Oral Presentations

Re-negotiation of outdoor experiential learning in the Antropocene

Implications of human ecodependence and interdependence in outdoor learning

Larraitz Altuna

Connection with nature is a core element of outdoor education. Within the scenario of polycrisis, the Anthropocene and the need for eco social transition as signs of the times, this research raises a question of the greatest relevance in forest schools: the way in which we, as practitioners and teachers, experience, perceive, understand and pedagogically transmit what we call *nature*. Thus, the two main research questions are: What do we mean by *nature*? And, what are the keys for interpreting our (re)connection with *nature*? This study adopts the Gaia hypothesis for the recognition of human beings' ecodependence and interdependence. From this interpretative framework academic literature on the connections to *nature* is reviewed, including authors such as us, Chawla, Richardson, Beery and Barrable.

The findings reveal that it is important to cover not only connections and disconnections from *nature* in a broad sense, including positive as well as negative feelings, but also to *integrate* them. This approach opens a path to addressing the 'fictitious disconnections' to which we are all prone. Above all, it is one of the main contributions of the eco social approach to forest schools and outdoor learning, as long as it allows overcoming dissociations, which are perpetuated from a conventional and limited understanding of *nature*.

Finally, in practical terms, it supports the combination of child-led and teacher-led activities, as long as all of them are vehicles for the multidimensional connections (experiential, emotional, cognitive, symbolic, material, etc.) with this expanded understanding of *nature*. In doing so, it also could make forest schools and outdoor learning a privileged enclave for eco social literacy and climate activism.

The perception of psychological well-being in guests and volunteers the Beach of Values, a project for the inclusion and care of people with severe disabilities

Francesca Agostini & Erica Neri, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna

Based on the project The Beach of Values developed by Insieme a Te Association (see Debora Donati's abstract), an exploratory study was carried out aimed at investigating the experience of psychological well-being in users of this specific seaside context, dedicated to people with severe disabilities and their families.

The study was characterized by a mixed-methods and repeated measures research design. Thirty guests with total motor disabilities and/or with neurodegenerative diseases (such as ALS), their caregivers (n=75) and 127 volunteers were recruited during 2024 while staying at the Beach of Values for one week and asked to complete a series of questionnaires: World Health Organization-5 Well Being Index (WHO-5; WHO, 1998); Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1998); Scale for Affective Quality of places (QAL; Russell, Lanius, 1984). Preliminary results showed that fruition of the beach was associated with a global improvement in psychological well-being for all users (guests, volunteers, caregivers especially) ($p < 0.005$ for WHO, PANAS and QAL scores).

The joint value of the specialized characteristics of the beach, which allows people with various disability conditions and their families to reclaim moments of pleasure, feel supported and experience significant social interactions thanks to the presence of volunteers and operators, along with the restorative effect that natural blue spaces may elicit (WHO, 2021), contributes to improving psychological well-being, even in case of severe disabilities. It might also alleviate the negative consequences of psychophysiological stress on the whole family system. We aim to further confirm these results with larger samples.

The expedition. Structural Changes as a Strategy for Creating Equal Opportunities for Well-being and Health – Presentation of a New Danish Outdoor Education Course Focused on Active Outdoor Living

Søren Andkjær, University of Southern Denmark

This educational initiative is framed within the context of societal developments, including the challenges posed by global climate change and the increasing urbanization of populations in the Western world. Concurrently, there is a decline in both physical and mental health, particularly among young people, alongside growing social inequalities in health. Recent research emphasizes the importance of nature and active outdoor living for improving health and well-being. Strategic structural changes in landscapes and urban environments have been identified as effective strategies for promoting healthier habits, such as increased participation in outdoor activities.

In Denmark, there are notable examples where structural interventions have successfully created equal opportunities for diverse target groups to engage in active outdoor living, such as harbor baths, mountain biking trails, shelter sites, and nature playgrounds.

The new Bachelor's level course in Sports and Health at the University of Southern Denmark aims to equip students with the competencies needed to professionally and knowledgeably engage in sustainable structural interventions to promote active outdoor living. The course introduces relevant theories and studies to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of this innovative approach to Outdoor Education. A central component of the course is an expedition, where students live outdoors and participate in fieldwork. During the expedition, students investigate successful examples and opportunities for active living, subsequently analyzing and processing the collected data for a seminar presentation and final examination. This presentation will provide an overview of the course's background, content, and structure, along with insights and experiences from the first iteration of the course. Additionally, the presentation will discuss the broader perspectives of the course, potentially in a European context.

Contested places: Co-creating stories of participation and activism in Higher Education

Alex Ang, Gideon Lu, Olivia Sackler, Sydney Spires, Heidi Smith, Gavin Mackenzie

Higher Education is in crisis. The perception of universities as a private, rather than public good (Mintz, 2021), the marketisation of universities with the resulting phenomenon of ‘students-as-consumers’ and the cult of individualism in the academy pervades. Yet, education is widely understood as fundamental to a just response to the intersecting socio-ecological crises facing the world (Rushton et al, 2025). For academics/students engaged in critically exploring questions of sustainability, social justice and human-nature relations, tensions around the purpose and role of education are embedded within the student/academic and student/programme relationship. The Outdoor and Environmental Education Masters Programme at the University of Edinburgh brings together an internationally diverse group of students. The programme seeks to build an intentional learning community striving to cultivate caring relationships between people and planet. This presentation brings together, makes and remakes the stories of students and staff co-creating and place-making as forms of transgression and activism. This dialogue between academic/educators and student/educators engages with a socio-ecological vision (Wattchow et al, 2016) that considers the role of power, democracy, agency and active participation within Higher Education. We invite you to join us as we adopt an environmental intersectional approach to engage with how, as an ethical and internationally diverse community, relationships with place emerge through the programme and foreground questions of privilege and power.

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Connecting children and places outdoors – ninety years apart

Tomás Aylward, Munster Technological University

Current trends in Outdoor Education (OE) indicate the importance of being place-responsive in our programming (Lynch & Mannion, 2021). Exactly how connected school children and teachers feel to the spaces and places where they live and learn can influence their attitudes to the natural world and our shared responsibilities during our self-inflicted climate crisis (Mann et al., 2022). In their exploration of the factors influencing Irish children's construction of identity, Waldron and Pike (2006) suggest that issues such as cultural values, language and Irish history contribute to their sense of identity.

In this case study, an approach to building stronger connections between children's values and their local environment is described. Outdoor and indoor learning is used featuring archival folklore material gathered from children in the same school in the mid-1930s as well as historic maps of the area. This work links to elements of the primary education subject, Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE).

The sociological and historical factors which influence the perception of outdoor spaces and the natural environment in Ireland are varied. Colonialism and famine in previous centuries have led to the formation of attitudes to the natural environment that are generally anthropocentric (Hannon, 2018), while the increasingly sedentary and digitised lives of children have led to a weakened engagement in movement and activities in their local environments. This case study offers an example of how experiential outdoor learning activities can be used to rebuild connections to place and foster stewardship and advocacy on behalf of the planet.

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Education Outside the Classroom at the Teacher Education – a double-sided didactic approach

Karen Barfod and Mads Bølling, VIA University College

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To provide high quality outdoor teachers, the teacher education must offer relevant studies. To support the cascade from teacher educators to teacher education and to pupils in school, we initially surveyed the occurrence and quality of Education Outside the Classroom (EOtC) among teacher educators in Denmark (Barfod et al., 2024). In Denmark, the EOtC component of Teacher Education has been an elective course but should now be integrated in all subjects. Thus, from being presented to some students, it would now become more common. But is this really what is happening?

In this presentation, we first present core educational components of the elective courses. Then we present the main results from our nation-wide survey of EOtC at the teacher educations. And lastly, we want to discuss and share experience with the participants how pre-service teacher students can become acquainted with EOtC as a method in everyday teaching in schools.

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The Institución Libre de Enseñanza's Holiday Camps: first experiences of education in leisure time in nature in Spain

Silvia Basanta Camiño, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

The 'Institución Libre de Enseñanza' (ILE) was a benchmark in education in Spain between 1876 and 1936. The ILE's professors developed their work mainly outside the classroom, with innovative pedagogical principles and an active methodology. They dedicated themselves to regulated education (in all its stages), and to non-formal education. Holiday Camps were one of their most important activities. They followed the example of the first camp on record, conducted by Walter Bion in Zurich (Switzerland) in 1876. Its aim was to improve the health of the most vulnerable children in working class families. In Spain, the National Pedagogical Museum undertook the first camp in 1887, in San Vicente de la Barquera (North of Spain). Professor Cossío was its director. The ILE's Holiday Camps added one more objective to that of improving the health of the children: that was to continue the work of the school, both intellectually and physically, as well as educational and social. Thus, children would follow routines of cohabitation, write a diary, practice sports, go on excursions to nature and nearby villages, analyse the environment and the landscape, swim in the sea... All this accompanied by teachers who guided this experience. The ILE keeps its Holiday Camps alive, adapted to today's world, but continuing with the educational principles with which they were founded. Encouraging the children's disconnection from technology while facilitating their reconnection with nature has become the camps' most important purpose, along with fostering a sense of community and togetherness among fellow pupils and teachers alike.

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Outdoor organizations' social media accounts: A tale of two datasets

Simon Beames, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo

Research suggests that a third of the world uses social media, with just over three billion people using Facebook alone (Statista, 2024). Individuals and organisations who present themselves through these online platforms cannot help but shape what their followers think and do. While a fair amount is known about individual influencers, less is known about the organisations that influence the outdoor education and recreation sectors. While the power and possibilities associated with mobile technologies in the domains of outdoor education and recreation can be exciting to consider, there are larger structural forces associated with these circumstances that demand interrogation. This presentation reports on two separate studies that employed a netnographic research design (Kozinets, 2019) to examine the Instagram accounts from prominent friluftsliv organizations in Norway (e.g. DNT, Norskfriluftsliv) and well-known global outdoor education organizations (e.g. Outward Bound UK, NOLS). Data collection involved taking screenshots of every Instagram posting by each organization over a one-year period. In total, over 2000 images were analyzed using a form of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The findings reveal the socio-cultural norms presented by these organisations and thus raise critical questions about the ways that social media reinforce existing forms of discrimination and inequity in outdoor education and recreation, while also being used as a force to challenge these problems.

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A critical examination of embedding education for sustainable development in secondary education in Ireland

Mareile Betz, Munster Technological University

We live in precarious times, and global environmental, social, and economic problems accelerate faster than ever. We urgently require answers to stark environmental and interconnected social issues (Lynch & Mannion, 2021). In that context, education for sustainable development (ESD) has been identified as an essential element of the global response to climate change (Reimers, 2021). In Ireland, these global debates are reflected in the second strategy for ESD to 2030, promoting curriculum integration, specifically linking place-based pedagogies and outdoor learning to ESD (Government of Ireland, 2022). However, whilst scholars and scientists across various disciplines and nations emphasise the need to educate for a more sustainable future, thus far, current systems have failed to equip young people with the knowledge and the capacities to appropriately respond to climate change (Foley et al., 2016; Reimers, 2021). Concerned with the quest for implications for ESD and considering current curricular modifications in Irish education, this PhD research aims to critically explore ESD in secondary schools in Ireland. As such, this research questions how much and what kind of ESD is being done by investigating the impact of the newly introduced “Climate Action and Sustainable Development” subject in the senior cycle. At this point in the project development, the goal is to support teachers in developing the capacities to educate for a more sustainable future, aiming to inform what pedagogies might be most appropriate to actively empower young adults to establish responsibility for and the ability to respond appropriately to the environmental and social challenges we face.

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“What I like about Nature is what it creates”: children's stories in the Ariosto primary school in Reggio

Rosa Buonanno, Phd student at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

Riccardo Ronzoni, Atelierista at the Reggio Children Foundation

Plant blindness (Wandersee & Schussler, 1999; 2001) describes a cognitive bias that leads people to overlook the presence and importance of plants in ecosystems, while plant awareness disparity (Parsley, 2021) highlights the challenges of integrating plants into everyday life. In response, Peter Pany and his team (2022) introduced the concept of Plant Awareness, encouraging a deeper recognition of plants and their ecological significance. What do children know about plants? How do they acquire this knowledge? As part of the Futura PNRR project, in collaboration with the Reggio Children Foundation, a study was conducted in a fifth-grade primary school class to explore children's relationships with plants in an urban setting through the lens of urban ethnobotany (Arenas et al., 2011; Hurrell et al., 2011). The research, structured around the theme of movement, included indoor and outdoor activities to investigate the school's surrounding environment. The results of the semistructured group interviews reveal children's green memories (Buonanno & Weyland, 2024) and suggest that their botanical knowledge is primarily acquired through family transmission, while formal education offers limited opportunities for deeper engagement (Tunnicliffe, 2000; Strgar, 2007). Additionally, the final questionnaires indicate that children's awareness of plants has significantly developed over the course of the study. This research underscores the need for more immersive educational experiences with plants, fostering children's ecological and cultural understanding, strengthening their recognition of plants' importance for the planet, and cultivating critical thinking on sustainability issues, ultimately supporting the development of green skills (Bianchi et al., 2022).

Keywords: Plant awareness; Urban Ethnobotany; Green memories; Movement; Outdoor context
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The Plod: Honouring multispecies and marginalised entanglements, human and more-than-human, as authentic experiences which emphasise inclusion.

Millie Chaston and Chloe Paul, Plymouth Marjon University

As we navigate the anthropocene, the field of Outdoor Education faces a critical need for re-negotiation to address both the historical and continuing exclusivity within outdoor spaces. Historically, outdoor recreation spaces—such as national parks and mountain ranges—were shaped by exclusive narratives that privileged particular people based on race, gender, and class, sidelining marginalised communities (Warren et al, 2018; Gray et al, 2023). These histories of exclusion have fostered generational attitudes that alienate underrepresented groups from outdoor engagement. This research challenges the historical exclusivity of outdoor spaces, redefining them as accessible sites for reclaiming bodily autonomy and relational awareness within the anthropocene. Engaging with the Lake District as a dynamic, agential landscape, the authors explore how human and non-human interactions—such as traversing rocky terrain, responding to weather shifts, and encountering wildlife—shape embodied experiences that resist anthropocentric and patriarchal narratives of domination over nature. Using the theoretical lens of posthuman feminist phenomenology (Niemanis, 2017), the journey is presented as a collaborative autoethnography (Chang et al., 2016) that explores how landscape and women mutually influence each other's sense of agency and presence. This paper highlights how posthuman feminist perspectives can shift our understanding of outdoor education as together, with nature, we create an inclusive space for all being outdoors.

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The silent fury within: Embodied stories of endometriosis in the outdoors

Millie Chaston, Plymouth Marjon University

Heidi Smith, University of Edinburgh

Women's bodies and menstruation remain a taboo topic in the majority of societies across the globe. Endometriosis - a chronic illness which affects the whole body with well known and lesser known symptoms including heavy and painful menstruation, gastrointestinal/urinary issues, infertility, fatigue, and more (Griffiths et al., 2024) - until recent years experienced even greater silence. This presentation shares research embedded within a feminist paradigm utilising collaborative autoethnography (Chang, Hernandez, & Ngunjiri, 2016) to engage in a deeply reflexive and participatory approach. In line with Hesse-Biber's (2012) feminist research methodologies, our study prioritises lived experiences, relational knowledge production, and the co-construction of meaning, challenging dominant epistemologies that have historically marginalised chronic illness narratives. We exchanged personal stories from our lived experiences of endometriosis and its impacts on us as individuals and as outdoor leaders. Authentic relationships and shared experiences enabled a brave space to share stories which were personal, and often hidden, unshared until now. This presentation shares embodied stories of endometriosis in the outdoors of being, doing and leading. Emerging key themes of identity, silencing, courage and reciprocity will be shared. The benefits for policy and practice include the need for increased awareness, understanding, and changes to support practices which acknowledge endometriosis as a chronic health condition and one which affects the whole body (Griffiths et al., 2024).

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Barriers and Enablers to Education Outside the Classroom in Australia

Helen Cooper, PhD candidate Western Sydney University

This oral presentation will outline a research project focusing on the impact of place-based education outside the classroom (EOtC) on student wellbeing, school engagement, and academic buoyancy. Existing research linking curriculum-based EOtC to positive outcomes relating to student wellbeing and school engagement will be discussed, as well as the significance of the study in the context of the current mental health crisis, emphasising the need for alternative approaches to traditional classroom learning. The study is to be conducted with students and teachers of two Year Eight classes in five secondary schools in Australia. A mixed-methods research study will be conducted using the validated Student Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire [SSWQ] (Renshaw et al., 2015), PISA sense of belonging items (De Bortoli, 2018), academic buoyancy scale (Martin & Marsh, 2008), and school absenteeism data, supplemented with student and teacher semi-structured interviews. Through an examination of experimental design and implementation of a robust methodology, the research seeks to identify what effect a 10-week EOtC intervention has on Year eight students' wellbeing, school engagement, and academic buoyancy.

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Exploring the Implementation of Phenomenon-Based and Outdoor Learning in Foreign Language Education: Insights from Lithuanian Schools

Martyna Culadiene, Vytautas Magnus University

Abstract: This study examines the integration of Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhenoBL) and outdoor learning in foreign language education within Lithuanian schools. PhenoBL, an interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes real-world phenomena as the foundation for learning, fosters engagement and critical thinking (Lonka, 2018). Combined with outdoor learning, which situates education in natural and community-based environments, this approach enhances linguistic competence through experiential, contextualized learning. By incorporating out-of-school experiences, such as museum visits and community projects, students engage in authentic language use, strengthening their communication skills in real-world settings.

Using qualitative methods, this research investigates how Lithuanian teachers apply PhenoBL and outdoor learning, the challenges they face, and the opportunities these methods provide for language acquisition. Data were collected through semi-structured teacher interviews and classroom observations in several schools. Findings highlight innovative strategies, such as integrating environmental sustainability and cultural heritage into lessons (Czura & Papaja, 2013) and leveraging outdoor settings to create immersive experiences that promote fluency and motivation. Classroom practice examples will be presented, demonstrating how place-based learning fosters engagement and communication skills.

The study also reveals key barriers, including limited resources, lack of professional cooperation, and constraints of standardized curricula. Despite challenges, teachers recognize the potential of these approaches to foster creativity, adaptability, and intercultural competence (Leat, 2017), preparing students for a globalized world. This research contributes to the growing body of evidence on interdisciplinary and experiential teaching, offering practical insights for educators seeking to innovate foreign language instruction.

Keywords: Phenomenon-Based Learning, Outdoor Learning, foreign language teaching, qualitative research, Lithuanian schools

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At the origins of the open air schools in Italy: outdoor education and teaching practices and the renewal of teaching professionalism

Mirella D'Ascenzo, Professor of History of Education, University of Bologna

Le scuole all'aperto sono sorte agli inizi del Novecento in Europa e nel mondo per ragioni mediche e pedagogiche, connesse alla riscoperta dell'educazione in natura fin dal secondo Ottocento per un sano sviluppo del bambino. Il contributo esplora le origini di tali istituzioni soffermandosi su alcuni casi europei e in particolare su alcune esperienze pionieristiche italiane. Si concentrerà l'attenzione sulle pratiche educative e didattiche messe in atto per promuovere il benessere degli alunni e l'innovazione pedagogica e didattica nelle diverse discipline scolastiche, che intendevano superare il modello di scuola tradizionale di tipo frontale e trasmissivo. Tramite immagini, testi e video si porrà attenzione alla riflessione autobiografica di alcuni protagonisti delle scuole all'aperto, che potranno raccontare, ancor oggi, la crisi personale nel lavoro iniziale nelle scuole all'aperto, così distanti dalla scuola tradizionale, e la lenta trasformazione della propria professionalità e del senso stesso del loro agire come educatrici e insegnanti, capaci di promuovere una scuola diversa, felice, e fortemente inclusiva.

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Cold water swimming: Learning and Experiencing in Extreme Environments

Dagmar Dahl, NORD University, Bodø, Norway

Background: Cold-water swimming in natural environments is an increasingly popular activity. Anecdotal reports and academic research points to experienced benefits in physical health and mental well-being (Knechtle et.al 2020; Soeberg, 2022) when swimming in cold water. However, immersion in cold-water carries significant risks (Tipton et al., 2017). Therefore, the deliberate decision to face the real risks from cold-water immersion, must be worth the benefits gained from the practice. Dealing with the risks of coldwater swimming is also increasingly the subject of sports teacher training at universities. **Aim:** We want to explore the experiences, the risk management strategies and benefits gained from regular cold-water swimmers as well as students in “Extreme Environments” classes. **Method:** a) 11 cold-water swimmers were recruited to the study for unstructured interviews. b) Additionally, as a second part of this study, open field observations and personal descriptive reports from 18 students were collected in connection with ice swimming lessons. **Results:** The participants were aware of the potential risks to health from cold-water immersion but regarded the adventure experience in connection with the cold, but also the natural and visceral environments as manageable, giving a sense of mastery. For some of the students, the swimming experiences in cold water were more of a tool for improving their self-rescue skills, while others discovered the benefits similar reported by the cold-water swimmers. **Conclusion:** Cold water swimming carries with it significant risk to human health. However, cold-water swimmers have embraced that risk, and derive emotional development characterised by mastery and fulfilment.

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EOtC in Denmark and Italy: a qualitative exploration of teachers perspectives

Elena Diana, PhD student in Philosophy, Pedagogical Studies University of Pisa and Florence

This qualitative study investigates the experiences of Italian and Danish teachers in the practice of Education Outside the Classroom (EOtC), an approach that promotes learning beyond the classroom by fostering engagement with the natural and cultural environment. The focus is particularly on motivations, organization, and implementation of activities. Using a mixed-methods approach, based on case study with ethnographic and phenomenological influences, the research involved teachers in Italy (Tuscany) and Denmark (MidJutland). Data were collected through participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and vignettes. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to identify challenges and opportunities related to EOtC, highlighting common elements across the two contexts and significant cultural differences. Through participant validation and a webinar dedicated to sharing experiences between Italian and Danish teachers, new questions emerged, leading to mutual cultural enrichment. Additionally, EOtC practices proved effective in enhancing student motivation, engagement, and environmental awareness. This research contributes to the debate on Outdoor Education, offering insights for the implementation of more structured and integrated practices in different educational contexts.

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The Beach of Values, Insieme a Te Association: an outdoor project to promote inclusion and education for the care of people with disabilities.

Debora Donati, Insieme a te

Since 2018, Insieme a Te Association has been setting up a temporary summer facility (permanently established since 2024) on the shores of Punta Marina Terme (RA, Italy) reserved for people with total motor disabilities (e.g. tetraplegia), and those with neurodegenerative diseases (such as ALS and similar conditions) to enjoy the beach and to support their caregivers. The so-called Beach of Values pursuits the aim to offer a completely free beach to those who can no longer, or have never been able to, enjoy the simple happiness of a day of sun and sea with their loved ones, to promote an inclusive way of viewing disability.

During their stay, guests and their families are provided with the support of volunteers from a wide network supported by the Association. Volunteer community plays a main role in this context, it means connecting with diverse people united by a common goal: creating a more inclusive world for people with disabilities. Volunteering at the beach can be demanding, but the rewards are many and lasting (e.g. experiencing a sense of belonging to a community, the pleasure of making a difference in guests' lives).

To involve volunteers and sensitise the educational value of the project, the Association periodically promotes calls for entries for students encouraging a different view of disability and inclusion, from primary schools to university students. At the same time, the Association strongly support projects and actions to raise awareness collaborating with and organizing events alongside other associations and institutions at a national level.

OUTDOOR INTERVENTIONS FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Sarah Dupont Kramer Hald

PhD. Candidate Norwegian School of sports science

This PhD project addresses two major societal challenges: the rising number of adolescents reporting mental health struggles and the demand for widely accepted strategies to enhance youth mental health on a broad scale. Mental disorders pose a significant public burden through productivity loss, sick leave, unemployment, and socio-economical strain (OECD, 2013), driving urgent demands for effective, low-cost, and scalable solutions. Research has consistently highlighted the mental health benefits of time spent in nature (White et al., 2019), positioning outdoor interventions as promising therapeutic and health-promoting arenas (Shanahan et al., 2019). Despite the growing interest in nature-based mental health interventions, the field still lacks to uncover: 1) how nature-based interventions can be implemented in a low-cost, scalable manner, and 2) how to effectively deliver outdoor programs to promote youth mental health. Aiming to meet this knowledge gap, this project are currently working to develop and implement an accessible and volunteer-led program, relying on nearby nature and simple resources. The program is constructed through the pedagogical framework ‘Adventurous learning’ (Beames & Brown, 2016), conceptualizing four dimensions of learning through adventure: Authenticity, Agency, Uncertainty, and Mastery. Building on elements from case-study, ethnography and action research, this project explore participant experiences of the outdoor program. Aiming to capture the participants lived experience, we seek to understand the crucial pedagogical factors of the program, alongside developing a framework for how youth mental health can be promoted through outdoor interventions, in a low-cost, large-scale manner. This presentation invites a conversation of OE program implementation, and its implications for mental healthcare.

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Place-based reading. Literature teaching outside the classroom

Dorte Vang Eggersen, Via University College

Place-based reading is described by Eggersen (2024) as a specific four stepped model for literature teaching beyond the school walls. The place-based reading model's theoretical foundation is presented as a merge of three broad academic fields: philosophies of place (Casey, 1993), literary topographics (Moslund, 2010), and education outside the classroom (Bentsen et al., 2012). Teaching with place-based reading as a method means in practice that the teacher conducts teaching activities in places in the school's neighborhood. These activities should enhance the students' exploratory bi-directional attention to text-place in order to learn in, from, and about the place. With this presentation I intend to contribute to a discussion that addresses the question whether literature teaching beyond the school walls could reveal to students that literature and their surrounding life-world are related to each other in manifold ways. After a short introduction to place-based readings' theoretical basis, I will present the PBR model and give practical examples from my Ph.D fieldwork.

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Practicing outdoor education in urban spaces to generate learning and cultural connections

Eugenio Fortunato, Ph.D. in Educational and Social Theory and Research Department of Education, Università degli Studi Roma Tre

Practicing outdoor education (henceforth OE) in urban spaces is tantamount to proposing an “other” look at this way of understanding schooling that has deep pedagogical motivations and countless educational potentials. On the one hand, it is intended to understand outdoor education in urban spaces as an inclusive and interdisciplinary educational practice; on the other hand, the city context helps to broaden the horizons of OE research as it considers the city as an additional interpretive category and educational space on par with the classroom. Such aspects direct the OE approach and consequent teaching to be responsive to the peculiarities of the area, thus emphasizing the concept of an alliance between educational institutions and services and the territorial community. So approaching OE to urban space is functional to consider the city as an additional educational path and learning environment to be experienced in a perceptual and cultural sense. Such an opportunity for exploratory learning about the city: a space that guards squares, alleys, arcades, historic buildings and castles, craft stores, monuments, monumental cemeteries, churches and parks; contributes to intellectual growth and the acquisition of multiple skills. Therefore, the discovery of new educational potential of outdoor learning in the city, ensures learning experiences useful to reconnect to the historical- cultural-artistic-religious and natural heritage scattered throughout the territory; yet, very often unknown or forgotten in school life.

In different words, practicing OE in urban spaces means getting out of the classroom to make learning exploratory, itinerant, experiential and visible, as well as strengthening the awareness of being in a place. So, generating learning in the city, and thus beyond the school and outside the classroom door, facilitates the activation of teaching-learning processes that are inclusive, personalized and capable of developing pupils' civic sense.

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Autistic Adults' Experiences of the Outdoors

Hugh Frazer and Verity Howell

Most autism research is still conducted on autistic people and much of this literature has a deficit-based focus and/or centres on children's experiences. Frazer's (2023) autism-led study worked with autistic adults, using natural inquiry and emancipatory research methods to explore autistic adults' experiences of the outdoors and adventurous activities. An emancipatory method allowed autistic participants to guide and enrich the research, exploring experiences of risk perception, and the social, emotional, and sensory experiences of engaging with outdoor environments and activities. Autistic participation disrupts social and participatory norms in outdoor and adventurous activity subcultures. Through neuroqueering (Walker, 2021), neuronormative practices within the outdoors can be dismantled, leading to more inclusive ways of engaging marginalised populations with the outdoors. Exploring these disruptions through an autistic lens reveals flaws in professional practice and norms, which to an extent, mirrors earlier research outcomes about the experiences of women and ethnic minorities in the outdoors. The authors use their autistic lens to critically examine the neuronormative practices commonly used in outdoor adventure settings to consider how discourse on resilience, challenge and risk is applied homogenously, often overlooking, and conflicting, with neurodivergent ways of experiencing and interacting with the world. This presentation focuses on the experiences of autistic adults in the outdoors, giving voice to their experiences and bringing new and familiar insights into the diverse range of ways of interacting with outdoor spaces, highlighting the need for greater understanding of autism within the outdoor sector.

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The Significance of Region in the Context of Primary Teacher Training

Mgr. Iva Frýzová, Ph.D., Mgr. Kateřina Gorčíková, Ph.D. , Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

The region and its particular characteristics should be the point of departure for the comprehension of the surrounding world. It can be regarded as a pivotal variable in education, particularly at the primary school level. Consequently, at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University of Brno, Czech Republic, we have dedicated ourselves to a long-term initiative with students, namely the creation of a "Regional Portfolio". This initiative entails exploring and understanding the region where the students reside or are employed as teachers. This collection of textual and pictorial information enables students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts related to the geographical, natural, historical and cultural diversity of their region. Creating a "Regional Portfolio" thus provides an opportunity for students to learn about their region and connect it to the school curriculum.

Justifying the Role of Outdoor Education: A Qualitative Inquiry into Practitioners' Perspectives

Peter Gmitro, Charles University, Prague

This contribution presents the findings of qualitative research on outdoor education practitioners' understanding and justification of outdoor education's role in the current world with a specific focus on the impact of ecological and climate crisis. The study included seven outdoor education practitioners (based in Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Slovakia, Scotland, Sweden and the USA) with experience working in different outdoor education organisations. The data was collected through individual semi-structured interviewing and photo-elicitation. The study utilised the grammar of plural orders of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1999, 2006; Thévenot et al., 2000) as its theoretical framework. Outdoor education is hence approached as a scene, or a public dispute, in which educators, researchers or administrators are expected to justify desired outcomes and design of outdoor education programs. This debate then becomes not only a debate about the role of outdoor education itself but also the role of education in the Anthropocene more broadly. The study identified that practitioners primarily use the civic, green, industrial and inspired order of worth and their combinations to make their justifications. It further focused on how the justifications shift in a certain new situation - or after a reality test in Boltanski and Thévenot's words - the ecological and climate crisis. In this situation, two types of responses emerged in the justification process - 'dark green' and 'light green' responses, representing discourses of adaptation and transformation of the outdoor educational field. This study was defended as a master's thesis in the Nordic Master in Friluftsliv Studies (Outdoor Studies) program at the University of South-Eastern Norway, supervised by Jonas Mikael, PhD.

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JFK Outdoor School & Academic Trips Program -Integrating education beyond the classroom-

Breogan Gomez, John F. Kennedy International School, Saanen-Gstaad, Switzerland

JFK is an international English-language school located in the alpine village of Saanen, in the Bernese Alps of Switzerland. The school follows the IPC & IMYC curriculum and counts with more than 25 nationalities among their 100 students aged 4-14. Due to its location and tradition, JFK has always had a special relationship with outdoor-related activities. However, since 2022, JFK Outdoor School was born with the intention to integrate outdoor learning into the curriculum and academics. This is a cross-curricular and co- educational program directed to both levels, primary and middle-school. Each year group receives weekly lessons, and it is linked with another program at school, our Academic Trips Program, that it is also transdisciplinary and explores learning possibilities regionally, nationally and internationally for our students. Both programs propose so outdoor learning activities, intentionally aligned with the curriculum, reinforcing its content. There are no academic reports, but teachers include performance in their formative assessments. On those activities/projects that extend learning, rubrics are created to assessing. Activities range from nature hikes to science experiments conducted outdoors, from creative art activities to social interaction including community services, guided tours, interactive workshops, team-building multi-purpose activities, participation in sports events etc. As well as activities and projects, approaches to learning are diverse, focusing on experiential/placed-based learning, project-based learning and prior and observational learning. Our goal is to provide students less learning in the abstract/theory, and more practically while being more physically active.

ORIENTEERING FOR THE TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE IN A SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTRE

Virginia Gómez Barrios, Laura Díaz Albarsanz, Lázaro Mediavilla Saldaña, Claudia Portillo García and Vicente Gómez Encinas

From the Faculty of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences (INEF) of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, a project was carried out to bring orienteering closer to the students of a Public School of Special Education. The general objective was to design, implement and evaluate an orienteering programme for students in the Transition to Adult Life stage of the school. The specific objectives were to offer healthy family leisure alternatives and to promote the physical, cognitive and social development of the students. The participants were a total of 26 students between 17 and 21 years of age with different disabilities: Autism Spectrum Disorder, intellectual disability or plurideficiency. The programme consisted of sessions in the school facilities and in the surrounding area. All sessions were adapted to each level. In addition, at the end of the sessions, an evaluation was made by the people in charge of the programme. The project was carried out by a multidisciplinary team with the participation of teachers from the Faculty of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences (CCAFyD), specialists in nature activities, teachers from the centre and its direction team, families of the students and volunteer students from CCAFYD. In conclusion, it should be noted that the project contributed to the personal and social development of the students and made nature activities more visible for this community, both inside and outside the school, while offering a new alternative for family leisure activities.

Keywords: Outdoor activities, orienteering, special education, disability, experiential methodology.

Farms for City Children: Assessing the long-term impact of residential educational farm visits.

Frances Harris, University of Hertfordshire

Farm education offers children the chance to learn about food, farming and the countryside, either through day visits or residential trips. For urban children, this can be a rare opportunity to learn about food production and the countryside. Commonly, trips are evaluated through pre-and post-visit questionnaires or feedback, but there is a dearth of information on the longer-term impacts of residential farm education. This paper takes a qualitative and inductive approach to study the longer-term impact of week-long residential visits to farms. The research draws on the experience of a charity in England which has been operating since 1976 with a focus on taking urban children to the countryside. Through semi-structured interviews with founders, staff, teachers and trustees, as well as an online survey of adults who had attended when they were school children, it aimed to determine the long-term impact of a week's residential on a farm. Results show the experience was memorable, supporting learning of the curriculum and softer skills. Further, it shaped the life choices of many regarding where to live, what jobs to pursue, and how to raise their children, indicating that the impact of a residential educational farm visit can stretch to subsequent generations.

Shifting the Narrative – How place-based storytelling can help shift social narratives towards more sustainable thinking and acting

Jule Hildmann (PhD), on behalf of the StN project team Allette Willis (PhD, Project Lead), Jule Hildmann (PhD), Arno Verhoeven (PhD), Ramsey Affifi (PhD). All, at the time of the project: The University of Edinburgh, UK

Storytelling is a powerful tool for community-building and for transporting cultural traditions and values. The ‘Shifting the Narrative’ project explored what and how place-based storytelling can contribute to shifting social narratives towards sustainability in the light of the ecological crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. A two-stage survey was conducted with an international cohort of 56 ‘informed advocates’ engaged in traditional and/or performance eco-storytelling. The survey data were enriched and further explored through seven semi-structured in-depth interviews with experts on storytelling, including three tradition bearers from oral cultures.

Framed by general findings (e.g., on effects of place-based stories; the connections of place, story and sustainability; and what storytelling methods are particularly effective in engaging an audience), this presentation focusses particularly on insights into bridging the gap between the readiness levels of being aware and motivated and actually taking actions – as actions rather than merely intentions yield measurable effects towards sustainability (e.g., climate action and biodiversity). Implications and practical ideas for implementation in Outdoor Education settings are discussed.

This project was funded by the British Academy in the ‘Shared Understanding of a Sustainable Future’ programme (January – June 2022).

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Special Interest Group: Artificial Intelligence and Outdoor Education

David Hills, University of Sunshine Coast

The pervasive integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various facets of daily life presents a new tool to be managed in outdoor education (North et al, 2024). This session delves into the evolving relationship between AI and outdoor experiential learning, drawing upon recent international research and discussions (Hills & North, 2024; Hills, 2024). We will explore key themes identified in global studies, including the impact of AI on adventure education and strategies for effectively managing AI's influence in outdoor settings. Participants will be encouraged to share their perspectives and experiences, fostering a collaborative dialogue on maintaining the integrity of outdoor education in an increasingly digital world. The session aims to discuss participants' current thinking on AI and highlight key areas of future research to ensure a proactive approach to further developments.

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The Global Outdoor Education Community: A Case Study on the Outdoor Education Sector in Australia

David Hills and Tonia Gray, University of Sunshine Coast

Outdoor Education Australia (OEA) and the Outdoor Council of Australia (OCA) play pivotal roles in shaping outdoor education and recreation across the country, advocating for high-quality programs, policy development, and professional collaboration. OEA provides national leadership for outdoor education in schools and tertiary institutions, supporting curriculum development, teacher training, and research initiatives, while OCA works across outdoor recreation, education, and tourism sectors to promote sustainable and equitable outdoor engagement. This session explores how these organisations contribute to the broader international outdoor education landscape, aligning with global themes such as place-based learning, environmental awareness, and social inclusion. Key initiatives will be examined, including advocacy efforts, professional development programs, and strategies for addressing challenges like climate change and urban outdoor education. This session will highlight how Australia's approach fosters collaboration between educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders. It will also offer a comparison and insights for international practitioners looking to strengthen outdoor education frameworks in their own contexts.

This session is facilitated by Dr David Hills who visits the EOE conference from Australia as an elected board member of the Outdoor Council of Australia and a member of the Outdoor Education Australia Executive Committee.

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Systemic urban adventures – how are they played in Switzerland?

Rolf Jucker, Silviva Fondation, Bellinzona

Research (<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-04108-2>) shows that Outdoor Learning is essential for an optimal development of kids in the context of the anthropocene. It is also a social justice issue: if compulsory schooling in all countries offers regular outdoor learning, then all kids, irrespective of background, can optimally learn and thrive. Yet most people live in urban areas, without easy access to the outdoors. In this presentation SILVIVA will show you how we are tackling the challenge to make sure that all kids can immerse themselves in adventures in urban nature in Switzerland. We explore together how we need to conceptualize outdoor learning if we want to make optimal use of urban areas and urban nature. We will also dive into the question how systemic change can be achieved in an inert system (like most school systems are). If we want to make sure that outdoor education is inclusive and diverse, we have to look beyond individual schools and conceptualize social change that will enable all schools to embrace outdoor learning everywhere (urban or rural). And if we aim for change, how do we envision learning and the relationship between learners and educators? Embark with us on this systemic adventure, right in the middle of Rimini.

‘Our son loves it. It is always the first thing he mentions after school.’ – A case study of embedding regular adventurous play and learning outdoors in an Irish primary school

Orla Kelly, Maura Coulter & Joan Whelan, Institute of Education, Dublin City University

This presentation focusses on reflections on learning through adventurous and risky play among children, parents and teachers, including the school principal, in one Irish primary school. This research was carried out as part of an Erasmus+ project which explores adventurous play and outdoor learning in primary schools (APOLE). This work is situated in the context of building resilience in young people through their capacity to manage and take risks and promoting nature connection. A survey was developed using statements from the Natural Connections Demonstration Project and using images connecting with Sandseter's six categories of risky play as prompts for Likert scale responses. The survey also contained some open-ended questions. This survey was administered before and after the introduction of regular (at least weekly) outdoor adventurous play and learning with three classes in the school over two academic years (2022-2024). Some teacher reflections and lesson observations add further qualitative data to this mixed method case study. Initially the survey data showed that both children and parents were generally positive about outdoor learning and risky play, however teachers' responses were more mixed. By the end of the project, the teachers' reflections had positively shifted to be more aligned with the continued positive views of parents and children in terms of learning through adventurous outdoor play. The developments that facilitated this shift in teacher beliefs provide valuable insights to school leaders, teachers and school communities on how to support and embed such practice as part of the regular school day and in meeting curriculum objectives.

Fossils: Traces of Nature Captured in the City

Zdenka Krzyk & Darja Sovan, Gimnazija Šiška, Ljubljana

Fossils are often an overlooked topic in high school education. At Šiška Secondary School in Ljubljana, we aimed to bring the study of fossils closer to students in a practical and engaging way through direct observation of fossilized remains. To organize an outdoor theme day, we collaborated with the Slovenian Museum of Natural History. We found that paper worksheets are often dull for students, so we introduced them to the Actionbound app for fieldwork. In groups of three or four, students navigated using the app's instructions and, through careful observation, searched for six fossil treasures embedded in decorative natural stone on buildings in the city center of Ljubljana. Upon discovering a fossil, they had to complete interactive tasks, which they needed to solve correctly in order to proceed on their route. Students explored lithiotid (Genus: *Lithiothis*) and rudist (Order: Hippuritoida) bivalves, brachiopods (Phylum: Brachiopoda), ammonites (Subclass: Ammonoidea), cone snails (Family: Conidae), and ichnofossils. The impact of the activity was evaluated using a survey questionnaire. The museum visit had a strong short-term impact and most students found learning outside the classroom with the help of the app engaging. Direct interaction with fossils, both in their natural state and as valuable architectural elements, helped students recognize the connection between natural and cultural heritage and appreciate their significance. At the same time, they discovered that the urban environment itself serves as a unique open-air geological museum.

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The trouble will find You Tools and approaches for predicting failure conditions

Jari Kujala, Humak University, Helsinki

What would you do if you did everything right but realised you had done the wrong things? What if all your problems could be solved but the end result was morally questionable? There is something special about learning from failures. Failure is likely to cause fear, anger and melancholy in one's minds. Can we learn anything from these experiences? What is this wasted time where every adventurer is unhappy in their own unique way? What is this maximum that the damage done is greater than its threats caused by the original cause. Traditional learning methods fall short in addressing the dynamic and social complexities inherent in Adventure Education. Conventional learning loops like Kolbe's and Lewin's are reflective and retrospective, which limits their effectiveness in anticipating future complexities. The unpredictable nature of the future, coupled with emerging complexities, necessitates an approach that is adaptive and forward-thinking. In this presentation, we explore the questions. Why don't learning loops predict the future? Can we learn active listening and empathy? How to use multimodal learning in practice? The presentation will be divided into three phases. 1. Scenarios where adventure leaders must navigate without relying on past experiences. 2. Using 6 empathy apps 3. Using music, art, and physical movement to reinforce concepts. The presentation lasts 90 minutes.

References:

Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History",

Otto Scharmer's U-Theory,

Martha Nussbaum's Emotional Resilience,

Veijo Virsu's Multimodal Learning

Pedagogies of Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability - International Student Group on a Learning Adventure in the Heart of Helsinki City

Tero Lämsä, Head of Degree Programme, Adventure and Outdoor Education, Human, Helsinki

PEBES (Pedagogies of Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability) was a collaboration among the University of Turku, Humak University of Applied Sciences and Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources that offered the students of these universities a dive into transdisciplinary learning under the theme of biodiversity, education and environmental sustainability.

In May 2024 Humak organized a field course with the theme “Adventures in urban nature and adventure education in supporting sustainability” which brought together a team of university students to learn how to utilize outdoor adventure education and experiential learning in promoting sustainable development. The field course took place in the heart of Helsinki city and nature destinations accessible by public transportation. Biodiversity loss and climate change are phenomena that touch people around the planet on a local level, but require global solutions. On this course the bird spring migration from Africa to Finland provided a link between the global and local. Students also organized an adventure educational morning to the pupils of a local secondary school in a park by the school.

In the presentation I will introduce the program of the week, highlight the pedagogic elements of the field course and discuss how we created an adventure educational learning process and a week rich with nature experiences in an urban environment.

Link to project website: [Pedagogies of Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability | PEBES](#)

Exploring Place-Related Dimensions in Environmental Learning: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems through Place-Based Education in Chiang Mai Schools, Thailand

Jinnawat Lertpradit, PhD Candidate School of Geography, University of Leeds, United Kingdom

Chiang Mai northern Thailand is home to a range of ethnic minority communities. These communities have diverse Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) that are relevant to local environmental conservation efforts and contribute valuable lessons rooted in environmental knowledge in traditional practices. However, the formal education system in Thailand often emphasises a standardised national curriculum, which is foregrounded in environmental education at the expense of local knowledge systems and cultural perspectives. As such, there are tensions between national policies on environment and education, and the specific ecological and cultural contexts. This research explores the place-related dimensions of learning and human-environment interactions by examining how IKSs can be implicitly integrated into place-based education (PBE) in secondary schools in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This study used participatory action research (PAR) and discourse analysis in collaboration with teachers and school directors, students, community members, and parents to identify strategies for co-creating place-based education curriculum that reflect an understanding of the local environmental practices and knowledges of local ethnic groups through the creation of place-based learning activities, such as community environmental fieldwork, conversations with ethnic groups, group activities, and storytelling through outdoor experiential learning. The study's findings reveal that place-aware pedagogies can promote a deeper understanding of environmental sustainability. However, structural challenges, including centralised policy constraints, language barriers, and limited school autonomy, continue to limit inclusive curriculum design and the full potential implementation of place-based education principles.

Keyword:

Place-Based Education, Indigenous Knowledge System, Environmental Education

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From the city to the forest and back: Polish forest kindergartens` location, paradoxes and influence on the families' lifestyle and attitude towards nature

Hanna Łoboda, University of Lodz, Poland

The presentation aims to show how the location of Polish forest kindergartens affects the particular type of families eager to send their children there and how daily contact with nature affects the families. The results are part of the research I did for my doctoral thesis. Polish forest kindergartens are located mainly in the biggest city suburbs. Parents indicate that the distance and fees are the significant barriers to accessing forest kindergartens. Simultaneously, few forest kindergartens are in the least urbanised but the richest in natural resources regions. Unfortunately, studies show that children from rural areas spend their spare time primarily online. The factors mentioned above lead to a paradox – if u want your child to play and learn outdoors, you must live in the big city and represent the upper-middle class. It leads to the inconsistency of values and principles between a kindergarten and family, in fields such as consumerism or lack of connection with nature. Parents indicate that spending time outdoors is suitable for their child, but they don`t like it, so they delegate it to the forest kindergarten. However, after some time, their attitude changes. It is caused by spending time in the kindergarten while bringing and receiving a child and transmitting children`s attitude towards nature to parents. The forest kindergarten causes changes in the whole family functioning. Parents start to notice subtle changes in nature, they change their lifestyle, attitudes and ways of spending free time as a family from indoors to outdoors.

Looking Through the “I/EYE” of Inclusion: A Photo-Elicitation S-Step Reflection of Inclusive Outdoor Education Practice

TA Loeffler, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Photographs captured while teaching inclusive outdoor education were used as the foundation for a self-study process to examine my experiences of learning to be an inclusive outdoor educator. Being the only outdoor education professor teaching on my campus brought a multitude of barriers and challenges to building an inclusive teaching practice. This presentation will share key findings from this intimate scholarship with roots in narrative inquiry, autophotography, and photo-elicitation methodologies (Glaw et al., 2017). The findings highlight the many challenges in adapting outdoor pedagogy within universal design for learning models, while at the same time covering necessary course requirements (Wilson, 2017). Themes of possibilities, joyous togetherness, intersections, and heightened responsibility will be explored. Additionally, elements of innovative inclusive outdoor teaching practice that developed during this time will be shared and connected to other studies that have occurred (Maina-Okori, Koushik, & Wilson, 2018; Warren et al., 2014).

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Shattering the Silence: Menstruation Experiences in the Outdoors and Beyond

Morgan Ludington, University of Edinburgh, PhD candidate

This presentation shares the process and findings of my Master's research on menstruation experiences in the outdoors and PhD research on holistic narratives of menstruation experiences. Stigmatization around menstruation prevents necessary research from being conducted and the resulting lack of knowledge prevents gender equality and participation in outdoor pursuits. The outdoors provides a unique context to experience menstruation as resources are limited and group dynamics affect the individual experience.

My Master's research identified key themes for people who menstruate: individual experience, environmental stewardship, and ideas for improvements; and two key themes for outdoor leaders: extra load and environmental stewardship. Sharing menstruation stories within an outdoor group setting was shown to lead to unique bonding experiences. This led to my PhD research exploring in how we can shatter the silence around menstruation. I interviewed menstruators to elevate and validate their experiences, curating their stories through narrative inquiry and creative expressions. The key spheres of influence of social, cultural, and political were explored to better understand the personal menstruation experience. Concepts such as self-surveillance, sexualisation of female bodies, isolation, silence, men's reactions, pain, lack of effective and empathetic healthcare, and desire to share more were discussed with each participant. For those who shared creative expressions, the importance of mind and body connection was highlighted. Participants noted that this research sparked an interest to learn more about menstruation, recognition of how impactful it is to everyday life, and a drive to increase knowledge and awareness in their spheres of interactions.

To achieve gender equality and inclusivity in the outdoors, it is necessary to engage with those who menstruate and work together to develop better structures to support menstruation in the outdoors. Once again, participants in my research found empowerment and the strength to reclaim their bodies and stories through sharing stories and creative expressions.

Keywords: menstruation, outdoors, gendered experiences, outdoor leaders, stigma, women

Engaging Students in Outdoor Urban Education Through Interactive Learning Activities

Mateja Mavec, CŠOD, Ljubljana, Slovenia

CŠOD (Center for School and Outdoor Education) is a public institution in Slovenia dedicated to promoting experiential learning through outdoor education programs. While outdoor education is often associated with natural landscapes, urban environments also provide rich educational opportunities. As a teacher in Ljubljana, I utilize the city's diverse public spaces to create interactive, student-centered learning experiences. This presentation focuses on specific educational activities designed to enhance students' critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills in an urban setting. Through map-reading exercises, orientation challenges, and information-gathering tasks, students actively engage with their surroundings. By participating in group-based activities – such as storytelling about historical sites, team-based object-finding games, and public speaking exercises in city streets – students not only build confidence and teamwork skills but also experience the proven benefits of urban outdoor learning in fostering problemsolving and real-world application of knowledge (Waite, 2011). By integrating these interactive strategies, urban education transforms city spaces into dynamic classrooms where students develop essential life skills. Drawing on my experience with CŠOD programs, I will demonstrate how structured, yet flexible urban learning activities contribute to deeper engagement and active participation. This session aims to provide educators with practical methods to utilize their own urban environments for meaningful outdoor education.

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Educational Expeditions into the Anthropocene?

Alun Morgan, University of Plymouth

There is a longstanding tradition of using expeditions for educational purposes, with two key orientations being discernible in terms of positive learning outcomes. On the one hand, emphasis is often placed on personal and social development and growth (character, resilience etc.) which can align with the broad field of Adventure and Outdoor Education. On the other hand, expeditions are advocated for promoting real-world, experiential opportunities for disciplinary learning (content and procedural knowledge and skills), particularly in the Geographical, Earth and Environmental Sciences. Regrettably, much of the history of educational expeditions has been framed in what might now be considered problematic and interrelated frameworks and assumptions using Western Modern models of knowledge acquisition and morality, typically to distant and 'exotic' locales, with often reductionist, objectivist, and exploitative orientations towards resources, environments and cultures encountered.

What is required is a critical awareness of the potentials and pitfalls of expeditionary learning in the context of the Anthropocene. Drawing on post-Mortlockian turn in Outdoor Adventure Education (Beames et al., 2017); and postcolonial readings of exploration (Kennedy, 2014), science and technology and science education (Wallace et al., 2022) this paper advances a new orientation towards expeditionary learning that takes a more dialogic/relational perspective, acknowledges more expansive approaches to knowledge, and emphasises upward, outward, inward and downward personal growth (Stott et al., 2015). The goal is the synergistic promotion of 'sustainability literacy', nature connection and stewardship. A case study from the sail training sector is used to exemplify the synergistic potential.

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KIDS ABOUT TOWN: PLACE-RESPONSIVE EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

Francesca Nardi, Istituto Comprensivo Giovanni Falcone, Grottaferrata (Rm)

Overview

The experiences showcased focus on pupils' participation in urban places as means of learning, promoting active citizenship, healthy lifestyle and bottom-up peacebuilding processes. Three actions engage pre.primary, primary, secondary school, according to a specific project financed by EU - Next Generation EU initiative and the "Schools for health" approach, formally adopted. Common threads:

- the actions provide insights of how urban spaces can be shaped by "movers and shakers" children, through active learning practices;
- human-environment contexts afford visual/spatial, corporeal/kinesthetic and participatory resources for lifewide, inclusive, risk facing learning paths;
- pupils and citizenry play reciprocal roles in raising awareness about health and well-being through a higher-intensity interaction among different population groups and with urban/natural environment;
- local authorities and third sector partners are involved

Actions

- Christmas walk about the town wishing merry Christmas and giving children's hand-crafted cards to fellow citizens: a unique opportunity to experience the value of giving, belonging, social relationships and sharing (100 3-7 year-olds).
- artistic workshops in a public park, concerning sustainable development goals; children's hand-crafted posters arranged near town landmarks (40 8–9 year-olds)
- simulated escape route to take in case of earthquake, running across the town centre and into the established waiting areas (100 13-14 year-olds)

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We aren't born human, we became it

Elena Nardiello, Università degli Studi di Parma

The proposed reflection arises and develops in the knowledge that “wild” children (or *enfants sauvages*) contributed greatly to the deconstruction of strongly defined pedagogical/educational standards. Although throughout history there has been a need to prove the truth of certain tales, sometimes steeped in mythology, sometimes completely invented, these stories of wild children, girls and boys allow us, today, to discuss about our attitude in relation to the wildness and what is defined as such. These children, throughout history have allowed us to reflect on the fact that education is deeply steeped in culture. And the learning of the "verb" itself, understood as spoken language, which seems to us to be an entirely "natural" process, we realize is actually learning by mimesis of a cultural process. Proposing experiential learning processes stands in the breach of these beliefs. Experiential learning in outdoor settings then becomes a means of rediscovering the wild in us, of reminding ourselves and re-knowing the nature of which we are made. The characteristics of a potentially transformative experience and the movements through which we learn from the experience will be described. Finally, the posture of the adult accompanying human pups in experiential learning processes will also be interrogated.

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Lipka – Sharing Outdoor Education Experience and Ways of Supporting Outdoor Teachers

Veronika Neckářová & Petr Opravil, Lipka Brno

Topic: Discovering nearby nature and urban adventures: Adventures where we live and Learning outside near our schools

Lipka is a leading centre for environmental education in the Czech Republic. We offer environmental education programs for schools and preschools, reaching over 20,000 students annually. We also organize science, art, and craft courses, summer camps for children and adults, support university teaching, train educators and teachers and host public events for families. We teach outdoors on a daily basis. Why does outdoor learning make so much sense to us? What are our own experiences with teaching outdoors? How do we support schools and teachers in integrating outdoor learning? We help take learning beyond the classroom in a thoughtful, regular way, aligned with curricula – our support includes seminars, webinars, whole-staff training, long-term methodological guidance, newsletters, an inquiry-based learning portal, as well as advanced methodologies for experienced educators.

Designing Place-Responsive Experiences at Outdoor Adventure Learning Centres in Singapore

Cindy NG, Singapore

Place-responsive pedagogy was introduced in the Outdoor Education (OE) learning area of the Physical Education (PE) curriculum in Singapore in 2024 (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2024). It is anchored on a place-responsive pedagogical framework (adapted from Demarest, 2015; Wattchow & Brown, 2011) which guides teachers in identifying affordances of places and designing experiences that enable students to form connections with places. The goal is for students to develop a deeper desire to connect with places and their communities, ultimately contributing to them.

Students eventually apply what they have learnt in OE through authentic contexts during culminating events such as day trips and outdoor adventure learning residential camps. To ensure congruence in students' learning during PE lessons and these culminating events, it is critical that the pedagogy is also applied to the design of experiences during these events.

This presentation will first outline how place-responsive pedagogy was introduced to educators at government-run campsites for schools, enabling them to design and conduct place-responsive experiences for students during residential camps. Reflections from this process will also be shared.

This will be followed by an illustration of how the educators used the framework to design and conduct half-day place-responsive journeys during the residential camps, through which students explored the natural and urban environments outside the campsites.

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Beyond the Comfort Zone: Investigating Growth and Discomfort in Outdoor Education

Fiona Nicholls, Plymouth Marjon University

This presentation highlights PhD research investigating the widely accepted belief that we must be out of our 'comfort zone' to grow or learn in outdoor educational settings.

With an increasing body of literature which advocates against the commodification of risk and risk pedagogy (Wattchow & Brown, 2011), this study is a focused ethnographic (Knoblauch, 2005) and interpretative examination of an Outward Bound Australia programme, which creates learning opportunities incorporating the expectation of shifting participants out of their 'comfort zones'. The research included participant observation of the 10-day Gutsy Girls women's expedition in the Walpole Wilderness (January 2023), paying particular attention to the moments when participants were encouraged to defy their limitations.

Data was collected from participant observation captured during the expedition, including end-of-day reviews, active reviewing tasks, and focus group interviews with participants. The preliminary findings presented and discussed identify what the students thought they learned from the experience and how this related to their discomfort during the programme, highlighting the differing experiences of participants.

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The place-related dimensions of learning and human-environment interaction in Outdoor Experiential Learning/OE

Nature Calls, Will Universities Respond? Exploring the Potential of Place-based Outdoor Learning in Higher Education and the NGO sector

Andrea Olmi

Despite the evolving higher education (HE) landscape, university learning spaces persist unchanged. With desks typically lined up facing the professor, they fail to engage with students' needs, intensifying disconnection from the living world. Crucially, universities are hesitant to integrate outdoor spaces into their learning and teaching activities, due to a major focus on traditional learning methods over hands-on approaches.

Place-based outdoor learning (PBOL) utilises outdoor spaces to prompt direct experience, inquiry, knowledge and skills development; yet, it is often implemented in primary and secondary education cycles. Given the limited literature on PBOL in HE, this multiple case study research analyses two PBOL programmes, one organised by a Hungarian university and one by a Romanian non-governmental organisation (NGO).

Applying the Activity theory framework to explore outdoor learning and teaching experiences, a combination of focus groups and semi-structured interviews was conducted with university students, teachers and NGO facilitators/trainers, alongside document analysis.

Findings reveal that PBOL programmes fostered an authentic multi-layered connection with nature, students' inner selves and peers, and between students and teachers. Impactful learning experiences, prompted by stepping out of students' comfort zones, contributed to developing a strengthened sense of cooperation, patience, and communication, among other skills. Lastly, while highlighting key ingredients for organising such programmes, university and NGO staff emphasised internal challenges, as well as institutional and financial barriers. Practical recommendations are provided to support the implementation of PBOL in HE.

The Institución Libre de Enseñanza and the beginning of outdoors culture in Spain.

Eugenio Otero Urtaza, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

The Institución Libre de Enseñanza (ILE) was founded by Francisco Giner in 1876. Although it was born with university ambitions, the ILE soon became an innovative school that wanted to transform the country's education by going outside the classrooms and into nature to achieve all its educational goals. Its historical journey is thus traced between 1876 and 1936, when the ILE was the main introducer of outdoor education culture in Spain. Giner and especially his main disciple Manuel M. Cossío had a broad knowledge about European pedagogy. During their trips, made during the 19th century, they did not only introduce in Spain ideas and educational approaches developed in other's countries schools, but their educational practises were also very creative. They considered nature and art to be the two great sources of education for schoolchildren, and believed that both provided «freshness and freedom of thought» by developing intelligence and a sense of beauty.

Particularly noteworthy was their enthusiasm for hiking. The Times noted in 1884 that there was no other school in continental Europe that practised school hiking as much as the ILE did. They believed that real school was in nature and that classrooms were only there to provide analysis and to organise what had been learned outside of them. They also believed that cities should be connected with nature, and so at walking distance to connect with rural life.

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The dynamics of training educators in nature: new contributions from place-based pedagogy.

Eugenio Otero Urtaza, Silvia BasantaCamiño, Breogán Gómez Requejo, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

The Master's Degree in Management of Educational Nature Activities (USC, Campus Terra, Lugo, Spain) was created in 2011. It develops 17 areas of knowledge and 22 teachers participate. The goal is to prepare students for senior educational management in the outdoor field, both from school/academic perspective and social education. This Master's Degree includes and develops different fields of learning through thematic pedagogy. This method is interdisciplinary and links diverse themes like: walking pedagogy, environmental education, literature, music, philosophy, history, sports and art in nature, knowledge of ecosystems and protected areas, design and organization of excursions and camping, and rural architecture and landscape. Students are encouraged to develop their abilities in the fields of management and leadership of groups as well as in guidance and administration of outdoor-related institutions.

Half of teaching takes place outdoors, and the most commonly used methodologies are flipped classroom and experiential learning. Based-placed learning also plays a crucial role emphasising uninhabited/abandoned rural environments and so, creating new fields of study that are currently being developed: creative based-learning pedagogy and the educational value of ruins in rural environments.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the importance that these activities play in society by raising historical awareness. This implies valued debates, judgments and consequences in personal, ethical and political decision-making.

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Fostering Inclusive Science Communication through Outdoor Experiential Learning

Sergio Passanante, Phd student Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio

This ongoing Ph.D. research explores innovative methods to enhance accessible science communication for children, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, through Outdoor Experiential Learning. The study investigates visual metaphors in science education to foster curiosity, understanding, and engagement (Ervas et al., 2017) with environmental issues such as biodiversity and climate change. Central to my eco-pedagogical framework and project is the design of a Sensory Garden within the Lisbon Botanic Garden, where interactive educational workshops, drawing from the intersection of formal and informal learning spaces (Schenetti & Petrucci, 2023), are being implemented. These workshops create an inclusive, hands-on learning environment that bridges formal and informal education (Zuccoli, 2014), enabling children to explore sustainability topics, reflect on environmental conservation, and develop a sense of shared responsibility for a just, sustainable future. Integrating outdoor education with accessible science communication strategies, my project challenges traditional barriers and promotes Outdoor Experiential Learning, empowering marginalized communities (Clapham & Barata, 2024). Preliminary findings suggest that these practices enhance ecological awareness while contributing to the creation of socially just educational models. This research offers practical insights to support accessible science communication, creating inclusive learning spaces that engage with science in meaningful ways, meeting diverse learning needs, and empowering children to be active participants in environmental care.

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- .

Echoes in Stone

Chloe Paul and Georgios Katsogridakis, Plymouth Marjon University

Stories have the power to change how people inhabit the world. They afford experiences allowing individuals and communities to feel and live the various social, environmental, and political issues embedded within the crafted narratives (Taber, 2024). In this presentation we share two parallel stories: one of a woman jumping from a rock into the water below, and one of the rock itself. If rocks can divert rivers, invite birds to nest on them, and even signify political borders, what do they do when people jump off of them? Our aim is to demonstrate the epistemological potential of story-crafting and story-telling as tools for ecologically oriented research and practice within outdoor education. Specifically, we argue that story-telling - which, for indigenous cultures, has been a way of relating to their environment long before its emergence in academic literature (Chigonda, 2018) - can be a powerful tool in outdoor education for highlighting the agency of non-human others (Latour, 2017). This can serve to enrich educational experiences in the outdoors, and crucially, it also feeds into a wider need for research methodologies that challenge Eurocentric, colonial, and heteronormative concepts of knowledge and nature (Smith, 2021). Story-telling informed by posthuman discourse offers an avenue for going beyond the nature/culture binary. It allows us to feel and consider the being of non-human others and to highlight the agential relations that bind us to them; in other words, and as we will demonstrate through our story, it provides a way for thinking and doing with the more-than-human-world.

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Limitations and Opportunities for Developing Irish Public Outdoor Education

John Pierce, Munster Technological University

Following on from recent research in Ireland, this research explores the potential limitations and opportunities for the development of public provision outdoor education in Ireland. Place responsive approaches has been shown to be absent in the pedagogies of Irish public outdoor education (Pierce & Beames, 2024; Pierce & Telford, 2023), and with the public centres aligning with further (vocational) education in recent years, the time has never been more appropriate to encourage evolutions in practice(s) that may include more of a focus on what the more-than-human world can offer to student learning.

This ongoing research inquiry involved two modes of data generation. First, five managers of the 12 public sector Outdoor Education and Training Centres (OETCs) in Ireland were interviewed with the aim of documenting the current perspective(s) of public outdoor education management in terms of the limitations and opportunities for development in the sector. Staff from the same five centres were also surveyed to gain an appreciation of the practitioners perspective on sectoral development.

Analysis is still in its initial stages (January 2025), but already there appears to be some indications that staff training and skills, as well as the self-financing model that the centres operate within, are both key limiters and/or opportunities for this section of Irish outdoor education from a management standpoint. The staff survey, though poorly subscribed, provides a snapshot of positivity towards change that staff feel is needed.

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Teach on the beach within reach: The challenges of, and opportunities for creating place-responsive activities for primary aged children in an area of urban deprivation in the UK

Heather Prince, University of Cumbria

A focus on place-based, experiential outdoor learning provides opportunities to inspire children and young people about their environment and local community towards increased place identity and place-responsiveness. In the urban borough of Barrow-in-Furness, on the coast of North West England, learners value their local environment, yet as an area within the 10% most deprived areas nationally, there are considerable social and economic challenges and barriers to accessing it and exploring its affordances.

To address these challenges, central government funding and planning permission has been granted for a Hub with an environmental education centre close to the beach nearby at Earnse Bay ‘to connect people to open spaces, nature and education’. This presentation will outline a project developing ‘Learning Naturally’ activities based at the Hub for 4-11-year-olds to engage them in place-responsive outdoor learning and to explore the human and more-than-human affordances of that place through a thematic framework with the cross-cutting themes of wellbeing, sustainability and taking action, special Earnse and safety on the shore. It will reflect on the process by which the curriculum developers created exciting learning opportunities, highlighting the special and often unique affordances of that place and responded to stakeholders, including listening to the voices of children and teachers who experienced the activities. It will also describe ways in which the activities plan supports children and young people to become active citizens in their communities for a sustainable future.

“Enabling Nature Experiences for Youth in Urban Environments in a Finnish context”

Johannes Puranen, Folkhälsan, Finland

At Folkhälsan, we have a long-standing tradition of outdoor and adventure education. In recent years, we have systematically developed programs to bring the benefits of nature closer to urban youth. To expand our reach, we collaborate with municipalities to connect with young people, particularly those at risk of social exclusion. Our goal is to provide them with unique urban adventures—opportunities they might not otherwise have access to eg. kayaking, climbing and fishing to foster physical engagement and teamwork. Every season of the year!

Goals of This Presentation

In this session, we will delve into the methods and theories that underpin our work in outdoor and adventure education. Together, we'll explore how these approaches empower young people to engage with nature in their local environments and what structures are necessary for enabling youth to partake in the approaches.

Outdoor Learning in Higher Education – preliminary findings from an ongoing E+ project

Dr. Paul Rameder (WU Vienna, Austria) & Dr. Jule Hildmann

Outdoor learning has the potential to increase transformative learning and competencies for the 21st century as well as benefits for health and well-being. While this is well evidenced in different fields of education, there is little to no academic knowledge about its prevalence and implementation in higher education.

The OLHE project (2024/11 – 2027/10) aims to identify good practices and critical success factors; establish professional networks on local to international levels; and offer support (e.g., guidelines for good practice, training opportunities, open access project outputs) across various academic disciplines.

In order to achieve this, an online survey is conducted at over 50 HE institutions across Europe. It addresses the phenomenology of OL in HE as well as barriers and support needs of HE staff engaged in OL. Preliminary data are presented and implications for research and practice discussed.

This project is co-funded by the European Commission.

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Teaching with the place: Using phenomenological vignettes for collective auto-ethnography in a farm kindergarten.

Tommaso Reato, University of Padova

Recognizing the role of physical contexts is a key concept of place-based approaches. Looking from the teachers' perspective, a place can be understood as a resource but also as an educational partner, as for example in the wild pedagogies movement. Nevertheless, while the relationship between children and nature is the focus of many studies, the relationship between teachers and nature seems to still need to be explored in depth. Therefore this qualitative inquiry intends to explore the lived experience of a group of five educators who work within a kindergarten based in a farm in north-eastern Italy. Their relationship with the place is explored by asking how it is expressed and impacts daily educational action. What meanings does the relationship between educators and place assume when the latter is recognized as a co-teacher in a place based educational context? What dimensions of meaning constitute this relationship? The methodological follows a research design that involves the individual writing of phenomenological vignettes drawn up starting from personal observations in the field, their validation in the group and a subsequent collective discussion. These steps are included in a collective auto-ethnography framework in which the research process is participatory and transformative, as it aims to promote the development of the work group as a community of reflective practice. The research phases are described analytically, with some vignettes generated during the ongoing inquiry process. Teaching with place emerges as a complex and not always clear process, in which dimensions related to learning, well-being, and personal research are intertwined.

Keywords: place based teaching; early childhood education; vignette research; collective autoethnography.

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Preservice teachers and citizen science. Discovering nearby nature and urban adventures: Adventures where we live & Learning outside

Žan Rode, University of Ljubljana

Gregor Torkara, University of Ljubljana

Branko Anđićb, Faculty of Education, Johannes Kepler University Linz.

Biodiversity crisis is one the most prominent crises currently (Albert et al., 2021; De León et al., 2023). On average, one quarter of species in animal and plant groups are threatened, therefore effective communication and increasing the awareness of the general population on the topic of biodiversity is crucial (Torkar, 2016; Van Weelie & Wals, 2002; Walls & Van Weelie, 1997). iNaturalist and other citizen science applications are one of the ways biodiversity is being promoted and has been proven as an effective tool in education as well (Aristeidou, 2021; Hernawati, 2020; Herodotou et al., 2024). In order to learn, how to make learning activities better for preservice teachers, we first had to gain insight into how they make observations. For this reason, we observed two groups of preservice teachers – Biology subject preservice teachers and Primary school preservice teachers. Our students engaged in a month long Bioblitz activity, where they were making observations and at the end, we analysed their observational patterns to see if there were any significant differences between the two groups. We found that the differences between the two groups were minimal, highlighting the availability and ease of use of the iNaturalist application for experts and amateurs. We have also found that there was room for improvement on the topic of observation quality, where in the next iterations, a special attention will be required. Preservice teachers enjoyed the activity, and a quarter of them continued using the application after the instructed activity concluded. Both groups of preservice teachers have the potential to contribute valuable data to citizen science initiatives, as they collectively gathered close to 4300 observations. Through this, they can develop an understanding of biodiversity and science. By addressing the gaps identified and building on the strengths observed, teacher education programs can develop a generation of educators that are not only knowledgeable but also enthusiastic about science and the environment.

Beyond the Break: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Women's Skill Acquisition in Surfing and Outdoor Adventure

Katie Sattler

Skill acquisition is an ongoing process in all aspects of life. It is recurring and fundamental to survival, continually challenging us throughout our lifespan (Button et al., 2021). Skill acquisition differs for each individual, and so our experiences as women in the outdoors must be considered as they continue to impact our ability to learn and develop within this industry. Various factors influence women's skill acquisition and development in outdoor adventure education (OAE), such as a lack of representation, a participation gap, and low-self confidence and perceived competency (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). By deepening our understanding of these topics, we can inform practice within OAE. This autoethnographic research takes a feminist perspective which aims to bring awareness to these barriers and issues faced by women within the broader discourse of OAE. Prominent themes presented throughout the research process, such as the influence of place, other participants and the importance of individual differences, which relate to both my own embodied experience of skill acquisition and surfing, and to the wider experiences of other women in the outdoors. These themes have then been explored within the context of existing literature, which has informed both my practice as a learner, and my understanding of these findings. By engaging in this process, I have drawn conclusions from these experiences and key themes, expanding upon them to ask the question: how could we as outdoor educators create learning environments that are beneficial not just to men or women, but to everyone?

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The Italian Outdoor learning schools Network: experiential training, research & innovation

Michela Schenetti, Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna

The Italian Network of Public Outdoor Learning Schools was established in 2016, inspired by the documented results of the Natural Connections Demonstration Project (Edwards-Jones, et al. 2016). The Network was launched through collaboration with the local administration, environmental and Sustainability Education Centres, and, most notably, the University of Bologna. The Network is led by a flagship school and currently includes approximately 130 member institutions across twelve Italian regions. Today, the Network is recognized as a movement that brings together school leaders, teachers, academics, and environmental educators, all committed to supporting schools in recognizing natural and urban outdoor spaces as place-based learning environments (PBE). The training model, promoted and is tailored to the resources and characteristics of local school territories, experiential, and multidisciplinary. The Network's approach represents an active and intentional teaching strategy that enhances well-being by fostering the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces through a multidisciplinary perspective. This model supports teachers' professional competencies, stimulates interaction with the surrounding environment, and encourages dialogue with other professionals, contributing to the renewal of the school system in alignment with the curriculum and the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2017). Since its foundation, the Network has also initiated research projects to explore perceptions of outdoor education, identify new training needs, and analyze the impact of these practices on teachers' roles (Mannion & Lynch, 2016), as well as on the use and redesign of outdoor spaces near schools. Several studies have involved Network schools to monitor the effects of outdoor education innovations on the school system as a whole and, more specifically, on teachers' professional well-being. In recent years, the teachers advocating for outdoor education in their institutions have established a true community of practice, where their skills and training needs are recognized and valued. This has led to the development of national experiential training programs aimed at fostering an open, interdisciplinary professional community dedicated to producing, and disseminating new knowledge and educational practices in the field of Outdoor Learning (Schenetti et al 2024).

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Bridging Inquiry and Eco-Literacy: Place-Based Education in the School Pond and Forest School Networks

Maialen Sistiaga, Universidad del Pais Vasco

Place-based education (PBE) emphasizes learning through direct engagement with local environments, fostering deeper connections between students and their surroundings (Gruenewald & Smith, 2014; Mannion & Lynch, 2016). This study explores the use of two nearby natural ecosystems by schools in the Basque Country (Spain)—ponds and forests—in supporting experiential learning and scientific competencies. Surveys and oral interviews were analyzed to assess the challenges and opportunities teachers encounter when using these spaces. The findings reveal that school-ponds are mainly used in the second and third cycles of primary education, while forest schools are predominantly applied in early childhood education and the first cycle of primary education. Students show high engagement in both environments, but with different dynamics: forest schools encourage more spontaneous participation due to more flexible activities, while pond schools follow standardized protocols that facilitate data collection but may limit students' exploratory potential. In both cases, teachers reported deficiencies in their knowledge of the natural environment itself (eco-literacy) as well as in science process skills, underscoring the need for more effective staff development programs and the importance of adapting inquiry-based PBE strategies to these different ecosystems (King et al., 2001; Van Dijk et al., 2020).

Place-Responsive Pedagogical Framework in the Outdoor Education Curriculum in Singapore Schools

Kim Seng Tay, Ministry of Education, Singapore

Place-responsive pedagogy was introduced in the revised Outdoor Education (OE) in Physical Education (PE) Curriculum 2024 in Singapore Schools (Ministry of Education, Singapore, 2024). It is anchored on a place-responsive pedagogical framework adapted from Demarest (2015) and Wattchow & Brown (2011). This pedagogical framework comprises five pedagogical foci that guide teachers to develop the students' sense of place as an integral strand of the OE curriculum. By incorporating a set of place-responsive tools, a goal is to enable the students to develop an awareness and appreciation of their place and ultimately care for it.

This presentation will introduce the place-responsive pedagogical framework in the OE in PE curriculum 2024 in Singapore Schools. It will showcase some of the place-responsive tools and strategies that are proposed to enable the students to be present in, engage with, and build a holistic understanding with their place/s.

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OPEN SCHOOLING: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REDEFINITION OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION IN URBAN AREAS

Gregor Torkar, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education

ABSTRACT

Today's schools usually do not provide all the knowledge and skills needed to meet the diverse needs of 21st century learners. The green transition and environmental awareness require students to fully engage with the new knowledge instead of just passively consuming it. Student learning must take place in the real world: at home, in the community, in the museum, in the lab, in the park, etc. It cannot be confined to school walls. It is becoming increasingly clear that the solution lies also in open schooling, which involves a completely different approach to „what“, „where“ and „when“ people learn. Open schooling invites policymakers, schools, parents, communities, universities and enterprises to participate in reshaping the educational experience and transforming the way students learn, while strengthening the link between learning and society. Open learning and open (school) schooling are very broad terms. They describe learning that is 'open' in terms of time, place, teacher roles, teaching methods, modes of access, and all other factors related to teaching and learning processes. It is difficult to give a clear definition as open schooling practices vary around the world and arise from different needs and contexts. The European Commission published a report in 2010 entitled "A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" in which it defines three key factors: inclusive, sustainable and smart growth. I would like to use them to compare initiatives and developments in open schooling around the world and highlight the new role of outdoor education in terms of its content and pedagogy. The theoretical introduction will be underpinned with an overview of the outcomes the European Horizon 2020 project **MULTIPLIERS**, which aimed to extend science learning through open schooling and foster collaboration between schools and society. The project established learning partnerships ("Open Science Communities") in which schools, families, research institutions, industry, informal learning providers, policy makers and media work together to engage students in authentic learning with contemporary challenges in the local environment.

KEY WORDS: open schooling, outdoor education, Horizon 2020, Multipliers

Meeting Nature Halfway – Posthuman Insights on Didactic Practice in Outdoor Education

Tøstesen Gustav, Western University of Applied Science

In this presentation, I will discuss findings from my analysis of teachers' understandings of nature and sustainability in outdoor education (Friluftsliv) as part of PE in the Norwegian school. Drawing on Karen Barad's theory of agential realism, I explore alternative approaches to didactic practice that foster sustainable human-nature relationships, both individually and collectively, within the school as an institution.

Based on in-depth interviews conducted over four months with two teachers from the *PhysEd Academy* (Physical Education Teacher Academy) project in Norway, I examine how their conceptions of nature and sustainability influence didactic content and the integration of sustainable development into outdoor education. These interviews offer insights into how teachers' habitual dispositions shape their teaching methods and, consequently, how students develop a *sustainability habitus*—an embodied disposition that fosters social and ecological coexistence in a specific place.

This study is grounded in Barad's posthumanist perspective, which challenges the division between humans and nature by viewing relationships as intra-active processes through which subjects and objects are mutually constituted. This expands our understanding of learning in relation to nature, sustainability, and the development of students' sustainability habitus by recognizing the complex interactions between human and non-human actors.

My analysis suggests that teachers' didactic practices in Norwegian schools are shaped by anthropocentric views on learning content and the more-than-human nature as a learning context, influencing how students understand and interact with nature, and how sustainable behavior and environmental awareness are developed.

Title: The fjord – a source for education and development

Janni Walker and Karen Barfod, VIA University College. DK

We would like to present emerging results from a Danish development project called: OPHAV Limfjorden (2022-2026) on the island Mors including all schools and daycare institutions on the island. (OPHAV 2022) The project's intention is to promote children and young people's education, knowledge and motivation in using and maintaining the fjord and island's resources sustainably. This project is a unique example of how schools and preschools can use nearby nature, and local partnerships to qualify outdoor education and motivate children and young people's interest and curiosity towards natural science and sustainability. In the project, all schools and daycare institutions educate local resource persons called 'Fjordrangers', and commit themselves to use the beach, fjordlands and maritime surroundings for educational purposes. The project is anchored in a cooperation between schools, pre-schools, local partnerships, museums and the school-education center on the island, and builds upon principles from place-based education (Gruenewald 2003, Leather & Thorsteinsson 2021). In our presentation, we would like to start (briefly) by sharing the unique structure of the project, its theoretical place-based base, and the initial results. Lastly, we will show some examples of how schools and preschool teachers have worked with activities and outdoor education.

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From classroom to community - experiences with creating a 10 ECTS program designed to aid in-service teachers in establishing, developing, and conducting high-quality uteskole [outdoor school]

Winje, Øystein, Associate Professor University of Agder

In recent years, Norwegian schools have experienced a negative trend characterized by weaker learning outcomes, declining motivation, reduced well-being, and increased bullying and absenteeism (Meld. St. 34 (2023–2024), p. 17). This has led to a heightened political focus on developing schools towards more practical approaches to teaching and learning. Uteskole (outdoor school) is recommended as a method that can contribute to this development. Uteskole is a teaching method involving weekly visits to relevant local community sites to support pupils' learning by contextualizing the content through concrete experiences, thereby providing authenticity to the learning process (Winje, 2022, p. 12). This method includes initiating inquiry-based problem-solving activities and explorative, practical approaches. Since 1997, there has been a grassroots movement of teachers in Norway conducting weekly classes outside the classroom. However, uteskole has not been included as a theme or subject in current Norwegian teacher education. In the autumn of 2024, a 10 ECTS program was designed to aid in-service teachers in establishing, developing, and conducting high-quality uteskole at their local schools. This conference presentation will showcase how in-service teachers (n=17) who took the course in the autumn of 2024 developed their uteskole teaching skills, explored the possibilities for discovering nearby nature and urban adventures, and planned learning activities in these settings.

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Healing Gardens and inclusion in care settings: an analysis of the impact on well-being and experiential learning

Maria Carolina Zarrilli Affaitati, Università di Foggia

The evolution of specialty medicine has resulted in a significant transition in the treatment of many diseases, transforming them from fatal outcome conditions to chronic illnesses. As a result, there has been an increase in prolonged hospital stays and visits, with a major impact on patients' quality of life. Against this backdrop, there is an emerging need for inclusive strategies that also promote overall well-being for those in these spaces through educational, regenerative and positive distraction activities. The present study focuses on Healing Gardens, green spaces designed to support care pathways. Following Diehl's (2017) categorization, the study aims to analyse the educational activities that can be integrated in such settings, with a focus on their adaptability to different pathological conditions. Interventions such as garden therapy, mindfulness, and meditative walks are examined. Through mapping case studies of successful Italian experiences, the research highlights the measurable impact of Healing Gardens on psycho-physical parameters for both patients and healthcare staff. It also shows how these spaces can foster experiential learning, promoting, for example, environmental awareness through knowledge of biodiversity and the practice of horticulture. The proposed analysis aims to contribute to the debate on the integration of Healing Gardens in healthcare settings, emphasizing their potential in promoting biopsychosocial well-being and enriching educational practices in healthcare settings.

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Workshops

The explorer's glasses, a wandering workshop: Picture-books to foster wonder and creative thinking with children from 0 to 99 years.

Cresco Fuori

Marianna Cacciatori, Vittoria Ferraro, Cludia Fenzi, Giada Zago

Picture books are a daily presence in educational services for children aged 0-6 years and are an exceptional tool for activating a narrative understanding of the world as well as introducing naturalistic or scientific knowledge. By combining images and words, they offer a complex and engaging reading experience also with respect to the sensorial and imaginative dimension. For this reasons, they are extremely suitable to accompany place-based educational experiences, as they can promote bidirectional movements between place and text, training attentive, curious and critical gazes.

Picture books can also be effective educational resources with young people and adults. Reading them can invite thoughts of wonder, generate metaphorical connections, support open and creative thoughts. This wandering workshop aims to offer a chance to practice and reflect on the value of picture books in outdoor education, both in reference to the education of children and adults. Numerous children's books will be presented and starting from some of these, an interactive workshop will be developed based on the reading and discussion, individual and shared, of texts and images. The workshop will try to intertwine the experience in some different places with the reading of as many books, which will be explored as magnifying or distorting lenses in order to train to look at the world in its complexity.

Key words: picture books; place based education; imagination; reading.

Who's afraid of the digital media in the outdoors?

Elena Diana & Chiara Borelli

The combination of outdoor education and digital media is often seen as controversial. A systematized review by Van Kraalingen (2021) highlights strong scientific evidence against integrating technology into outdoor experiences. Conover and Conover (1995) and Strong (1995) argue that technology diminishes the depth of outdoor experiences, making them more convenient and easily consumable. Similarly, Cuthbertson et al. (2004) warn that if technologically mediated nature is all we know, we risk losing direct and meaningful engagement with the natural world. Smith et al. (2018) further suggest that technology in outdoor learning threatens student relationships and limits connections with nature.

Conversely, some scholars recognize the potential benefits of digital media in outdoor education. Walter (2013) suggests that while the “net generation” needs to reconnect with nature, digital tools could enhance outdoor experiences through photography and interactive applications. Van Kraalingen (2021) presents two opposing views: one emphasizing the benefits of digital tools and the other warning of their risks, concluding that consensus on their impact remains unlikely. Reed (2022) suggests that, given arguments on both sides, it is important to critically reflect on the role of technology in outdoor education.

Given the growing relevance of this topic, the workshop will explore these issues through hands-on experiences and collaborative discussions. Participants will examine how simple digital media can help discover new places, appreciate beauty, observe details, and acquire knowledge in urban outdoor settings. The workshop encourages reflection on both the benefits and concerns of using digital media in outdoor education, considering different tools, contexts, and beneficiaries.

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City Bound, an educational approach for more togetherness in urban spaces.

Meike Foegen & Susanne Kaiser

City Bound is an experiential education approach that aims to promote people's personal development and actively involve them in their surroundings. The city is a space for social learning. The decisive factors for a successful biography are belief in yourself, the ability to orient yourself and be mobile, as well as the talent to convince strangers of yourself and your individual concerns. A self confident appearance is strengthened by positive experiences in contact with other people. City Bound offers numerous opportunities to try out exactly this and places great emphasis on interaction with the environment and the people in the city. The focus is on challenging activities that require participants to work in groups or alone in unknown surroundings and unfamiliar social situations. In our workshop we would like to introduce the City Bound method and its application in working with teenagers and young adults. Please be prepared in becoming active yourself and trying out different activities. The different experiences are then discussed with a view to transferring them to your own work.

Forest School for SEND Pupils and Children with Autism: A toolkit for Practitioners and Schools.

Harris, F1., Hill, E.2, Tripp, K.1, Tunks, F1. Marsh, A.3, Sulaman, S.2

1.University of Hertfordshire

2. Cherry Tree Primary School, Inclusive Multi-Academy Trust, Watford

3. Bridgewater Primary School, Berkhamsted

There is growing research establishing how the natural environment is being used as an alternative learning provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and in particular, those diagnosed with autism (Friedman et al, 2022; James 2018, Bradley & Male 2007). This workshop draws on a project which developed and tested methods to assess the impact of forest school on children with SEND, developed in partnership with the Inclusive Multi Academy Trust (encompassing three primary schools in Watford) which has an outdoor education / forest school programme focussing on children with SEND. This collaboration has resulted in the development of materials which support forest school practitioners and school staff in setting up and managing forest school for SEND pupils, monitoring the impact of forest school on those children, and comparing how children are faring in the forest school and classroom environments. This workshop aims to present the resulting toolkit to outdoor education practitioners and discuss how practitioners work with those with SEND / autism when leading outdoor environmental education.

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Cultivating Communal Hope Through an Intersectional Lens: A gathering to share human stories in the more-than-human world.

Intersectionality in the Outdoors Network

Chiara Borelli, University of Bologna; Millie Chaston, Plymouth Marjon University; Chloe Paul, University of Edinburgh; Verity Howell, Wilderness Way; Amber Phelps, University of Edinburgh; TA Loeffler, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Tonia Gray, Western Sydney University; Heidi Smith, University of Edinburgh; Michele Banks, University of New Brunswick; Katie Sattler, Plymouth Marjon University; Morgan Ludington, University of Edinburgh; Justina Burks, University of Edinburgh; Amanda Lloyd, Outdoor Connections Australia

In Outdoor and Environmental Education (OEE) worldwide, progress for gender equity continues to move at a glacial pace, hindered by implicit biases, entrenched colonial norms, and dominant, often unexamined, gender roles. This gathering invites people of all genders, backgrounds, and lived experiences to a space where we can listen, speak, and challenge axes of oppression together. We honour the strength of women as knowledge carriers, the importance of balance, and the role of all people in fostering change. Together, we invite you to a 'brave space' to explore masculinity, gender asymmetry, cultural narratives of gender and the deep resilience of Indigenous women as knowledge bearers who have always walked these lands as protectors, leaders, and educators. The gathering emphasizes a need to break cycles of "rinse and repeat" discourse that often feels like speaking into an echo chamber. Despite decades of scholarship (e.g., Mitten, Gray, Warren, Loeffler), outdoor spaces remain heavily influenced by a Western, male-dominant culture, with limited access for women, minorities, racialized groups and gender-diverse individuals (Gray & Mitten, 2018; Lundin & Bombaci, 2023; Maina-Okori et al., 2017). Micro-actions, such as equitable keynote representation and increasing personal awareness of biases, are essential to changing this power dynamic. Inspired by keynotes (Potter & Potter, 2022) and allies, we acknowledge the importance of privilege, in recognizing and dismantling oppressive structures that pervade the field. We therefore invite you - with all your intersections of privilege and marginalization - to join us to discuss emerging questions, experiences and stories as we take this conversation forward, together - with hope. We embrace communal hope as an essential antidote, driving us to persist in challenging and reshaping the OEE sector, disrupting the status quo, and reimagining the legacy for all genders and intersections in the outdoors for generations to come.

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Standing with the Herd: Finding Balance in Interspecies Connection

Ippogrifo CEAS APS ASD

Claudia Menotti, Alessia Curatolo, Laura Macherozzi

The interaction between humans and other living species is an increasingly relevant topic in the fields of social sciences, environmental psychology, and ethology. This workshop offers an immersive experience to explore the impact of human presence in natural ecosystems, emphasizing the delicate balance that sustains interspecies relationships, particularly with equines. Through a non-intrusive, observational approach, participants will be invited to step into the animals' space without imposing interaction, instead embracing their presence with openness and without expectations. This method allows for the study of spontaneous communication dynamics, illustrating how equines, when granted the freedom to express themselves, can establish meaningful interspecies connections. The workshop aims to examine the significance of this experience not only from an ethological perspective but also in terms of individual and collective well-being. It highlights how connecting with equines can foster greater self-awareness and provide a lens for reflecting on the ways humans engage with other living beings.

Between Rural Traditions and Outdoor Education: The Azdora Romagnola and the Knowledge of Learning in Nature

Ippogrifo CEAS APS ASD

Simone Mussoni, Antonio Natoli, Sara Pizzioli, Angela Paci

Outdoor education is often considered a modern concept, yet it has deep roots in the traditional practices of rural societies. The figure of Azdora Romagnola, the guardian of agricultural knowledge, embodies a historical connection between the environment, practical skills, and food culture. This workshop explores the educational value of traditional practices related to the foraging and use of wild herbs, focusing both on the scientific aspects of botanical identification and on the ecological implications of human intervention in natural ecosystems. Through an immersive experience in forests and rural landscapes, participants will learn responsible plant identification and harvesting methods, reflecting on the impact of human actions on ecological balance. The workshop then transitions from the “outdoor” to the “indoor” space, as the gathered herbs become the core ingredients of a culinary workshop where traditional Romagnola recipes will be reinterpreted. This process highlights the deep connections between territorial knowledge, gastronomy, and sustainability. By bridging ethnobotany, ecology, and experiential pedagogy, this workshop offers an interdisciplinary perspective on outdoor education, rediscovering past practices that remain valuable and relevant for the future.

Flaneuring in the 21st Century: Rediscovering Urban Space Through Exploration and Outdoor Education

Ippogrifo CEAS APS ASD

Ginevra De Amicis, Valentina Boschetti, Lara Ossani

Experiencing a city for the first time offers a unique opportunity: getting lost without a predefined destination, guided solely by curiosity and spontaneous observation. However, in the digital age, our perception of urban space is increasingly mediated by prepackaged images, interactive maps, and predefined routes, diminishing the potential for unexpected discovery. This workshop proposes an urban exploration inspired by the figure of the flâneur, with the aim of reclaiming the art of mindful wandering and active observation. Through an “urban treasure hunt,” participants will be encouraged to navigate the city with a fresh perspective, developing skills in reading the urban landscape and interpreting the cultural, architectural, and social elements that shape it. Beyond fostering a more authentic and sensory engagement with the city, this workshop will also reflect on how urban spaces can serve as laboratories for outdoor education, promoting experiential learning, creativity, and spatial awareness.

Pedaling Through History: The Bicycle as a Tool for Exploration and Learning in Urban Outdoor Education

Ippogrifo CEAS APS ASD

Federica Delprete, Veronica Guerra, Ginevra De Amicis

The bicycle is not just a mode of transportation; it is a symbol of independence, progress, and connection with the land. From childhood, it represents an opportunity for independent discovery, making it an ideal tool for educational experiences, even in urban contexts. This workshop offers an outdoor education experience on two wheels, aiming to explore the peri-urban landscape of Rimini through a journey across time. Through a cycling route that extends through the outskirts of the city, participants will examine the historical and natural evolution of this environment, observing how it has changed over the past thousand years, from historical landscapes to contemporary transformations. The workshop will provide an interdisciplinary perspective, blending history, urban geography, and ecology to explore the relationship between land and human development, as well as the role of sustainable mobility in its use. A key aspect of this experience is the participation of the young cyclists from ASD ESPLORA RIMINI, a group of individuals with cognitive disabilities who regularly engage in outdoor activities in urban environments. These participants are part of a specialized cycling course, and they will guide us through their city, offering a unique opportunity for interaction and shared learning. This will enrich the workshop by fostering discussions on inclusive mobility and the accessibility of urban spaces. The experience aims to highlight the bicycle as an active learning tool, encouraging participants to develop a deeper awareness of the territory and promoting new ways of engaging with both urban and natural environments through a lens of sustainability and inclusion.

Rise and Shine: Art Therapy, Mindfulness, and Yoga to Connect with Nature's Cycles

Ippogrifo CEAS APS ASD

Guenda Muccini, Lara Ossani, Ginevra De Amicis

Every day the sun rises, the sea dances endlessly with its waves, and nature follows its course in a continuous cycle of transformation and renewal. This interdisciplinary workshop explores the connection between art therapy, mindfulness, and yoga as tools for reconnecting with this cyclical rhythm, fostering a sense of balance and belonging within nature's flow. Immersed in a captivating natural setting, with soft sand beneath and the sound of waves as a guide, participants will not merely witness the sunrise but experience it as a metaphor for their own inner transformation. Welcoming the new day becomes an opportunity to reflect on the constancy and impermanence of life: What drives us to rise each morning? What energies propel us in our own cyclical journey of growth and renewal? Through embodied, expressive, and contemplative practices, this workshop invites participants to cultivate greater self-awareness and connect with their own "inner sun," exploring cycles not only in nature but also in personal experience. This approach aligns with contemporary research in experiential education, somatic pedagogy, and holistic well-being, offering a unique opportunity to explore how movement, mindfulness, and creative expression can deepen our understanding of both natural and personal rhythms.

Let's explore with us

Petr Opravil & Veronika Neckářová

Exploration can take place in nature or anywhere else. We will show you some activities, take you through the exploration cycle, try out different tools and experience first-hand the exploration sessions that our students undertake.

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Nature Bath for Babies: Empowering families through low threshold nature experiences

Nea Törnwall & Gun Hoikkala

Nature bath for babies is a method developed in Finland by “Vauvojen luontokylpy” and Folkhälsan is the Swedish speaking partner in Finland.

The method is based on research findings about the effects of nature on health and well-being. In 'Nature Bath for Babies,' we create a connection to nature and encourage families with infants and toddlers (age 3- 18 months) to participate in nature experiences. The opportunities for sense of community, social contacts, and peer support can enhance the well-being of families and provide them with resilience in everyday life. Shared nature experiences can support the connection and positive interaction between the child and the parent. The activity is child centered and led by an adult in nearby nature close where the families live.

In this workshop we will introduce participants to the core idea of the method and the theories behind it. Participants are invited to experience some of the activities in nearby nature in order to discuss the purpose and effects on wellbeing and nature connection from an early lifestage.

The De Lorean project

Haute Ecole Pédagogique Vaud, Ismaël Zosso & Mélyne Helfer

These are not the best of times. As the clock invented by the directors of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists (BAS) at the University of Chicago counts down the minutes and seconds to the end of mankind, the desire is strong to travel to other temporalities. The De Lorean project is an open-air educational installation, a time travel device. Participants discover a way of questioning their relationship with place and time, rethinking the ecological legacies of the past and trying to imagine futures somewhere between utopia and dystopia. The project is easily transferable to classrooms and teacher training courses. It can be used in conjunction with history, geography, sustainability education and writing. The De Lorean Project workshop will provide an opportunity to reflect on the skills needed to train teachers to work on the issue of the Anthropocene in the city. In fact, on the one hand, integrating the notion of the Anthropocene into the school environment has given rise to debate and controversy, but it also requires a certain amount of knowledge if the desired effects are to be achieved in an ethical manner. What's more, bringing this concept to life in an educational activity in the urban environment makes the process even more complex, and is not something that just any teacher can do. We will therefore also look at the question of training curricula and progressions to bring teachers to such a level of commitment and complexity.

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Viator in fabula

Haute Ecole Pédagogique Vaud, Ismaël Zosso & Mélyne Helfer

Is there a grammar of urban places that we could study to produce the narrative of our relationship to this space? An urban grammar that would enable us to write simple, sensitive phrases about the corner of a square dear to our memory, hard phrases to denounce the degradation and neglect of working-class areas, funny phrases to evoke children's games in a schoolyard. The Viator in fabula itinerant protocol is a tribute to one of Italy's greatest linguists and intellectuals, who taught in Bologna: Umberto Eco. It provides an opportunity to discover a methodology for producing forward-looking urban narratives and integrating alternating in/out moments into teaching practices. The city opens up like an interactive book, a field of inquiry, a source of inspiration and experimentation for young people. The Viator in fabula itinerant protocol enables us to trace urban adventures and transform this experience into narratives and teaching themes. We'll be working mainly on the use of language disciplines, but also geography, history and science. We will reflect on a central concept in the pedagogical relationship to the city: the attention-distraction binomial. We'll be exploring a range of spaces, with a view to developing both concrete activities that can be transferred to standard curricula, and epistemic reflections on outdoor education in an urban context.

Posters

Teachers' perceived well-being in an outdoor education school center 0-10

Francesca Agostini, Giuseppe Siniscalchi, Nicoletta Vitagliano

Outdoor Education (OE) is renowned for its benefits on several dimensions of child development and well-being (Monti et al., 2017; Agostini et al., 2018); however, its influence on teachers' well-being remains less investigated (Deschamps et al., 2022). A cross-sectional study was developed, with a general aim to investigate teachers' psychological dimensions of well-being in association to OE/OL activities. A preliminary sample of 17 teachers (40.5 years \pm 12.3) was recruited from a school system 0-10 (placed in Fratta Terme, near Forlì-Cesena, Italy), which implements outdoor practices from early childhood to 10 years. Teachers completed a series of standardized questionnaires, including Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), WHO-5 Well-Being Index, Nature Relatedness Scale-Short Form (NR-6), and Affective Qualities of Place Scale (QAL; Perugini et al., 2002), along with an ad hoc questionnaire on outdoor Education and well-being. Main results showed a high level of wellbeing and a low-moderate degree of stress in the majority of the sample (76,5% and 88%, respectively) and a negative correlation between perceived stress and well-being ($p=0.007$). Teachers reported significantly higher well-being ($p=0.007$) and lower stress ($p<0.05$) in outdoor school contexts compared to indoor ones; in fact, the affective perception of the school outdoor environment was highly positive (e.g. relaxing, pleasant, exciting) and correlated with higher well-being scores ($p=0.021$).

These preliminary findings suggest that OE may contribute to promote teacher well-being, reducing stress and enhancing positive emotions towards outdoor spaces. We aim to further confirm the results on a larger sample and in comparison with a control group.

The Outdoors where there is no green

Meeting natural educational needs/bisogni educativi naturali (BEN) in every “outdoors”

Lucia Carpi, Psychomotor educator and therapist, trainer, author, teacher Master in Outdoor Education at the University of Bologna

Based on field experience and with the support of appropriate theoretical references, it is possible to uphold the importance and sensibleness of outdoor education regardless of the “natural” characteristics of the place. The shared contribution recounts the objectives, practices and outcomes of a project carried out in an urban context at a preschool, which can be linked to work in any setting and at every stage of life. The theoretical-practical framework is that of corresponding to BEN (Bisogni Educativi Naturali) and promotes a multidisciplinary and ecosocial approach (BEN is Italian acronym for a specific and proven framework for responding to Bisogni Educativi Naturali/Natural Educational Needs).¹ Thus the pedagogical potential of those who educate within an urban context is affirmed. Even more so, a sense of belonging and active participation in the local environment are developed as a significant consequence. Key words: Outdoor Learning, BEN (Bisogni Educativi Naturali), external space, corporeity.

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Designing Inclusive Outdoor Spaces: An Advanced University Training Course for Participatory and Sustainable Learning Environments

Nina Cerneka & Michela Schenetti

Outdoor Experiential Learning provides a unique opportunity to foster sustainable, innovative, and inclusive educational practices. To fully realize its potential, it is essential to rethink how outdoor spaces are designed and highlight the need for an interdisciplinary approach that bridges pedagogy and architecture, promoting shared understanding among stakeholders (Ross et al., 2014; Waite & Pleasants, 2012). This poster presents the process behind the establishment of the University of Bologna's Advanced Training Course *Designing Inclusive Outdoor Spaces*, launched in 2023 and co-financed by ARPAE, the Emilia-Romagna Region, and the Municipality of Bologna. The course was developed to train professionals in participatory and interdisciplinary approaches to outdoor space design, with a focus on equity and accessibility. Bringing together educators, pedagogists, architects, ecologists, landscape designers, and policymakers, it aimed to create a shared framework for the co-design of green learning environments. The training combined lectures, fieldwork, and participatory methodologies, including Thinking Routines (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2008), which facilitated collaborative reflection and interdisciplinary dialogue. The poster illustrates the key phases of the course's development, highlighting how its structure supported the emergence of innovative Project Works aimed at reimagining school gardens, urban parks, and public green spaces. It also explores how integrating Universal Design principles (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012) and community participation fosters inclusive and democratic outdoor learning environments. By presenting this process, we contribute to the ongoing conversation on sustainable, innovative, and equitable approaches to Outdoor Experiential Learning, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and participatory planning in creating meaningful outdoor educational spaces.

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Percorsi di co-progettazione della “Legge Regionale della Puglia sull’educazione in natura: Agrinido e Agrinfanzia”

Ezio Del Gottardo, Università del Salento & Andrea Tarantino, Università Telematica Pegaso, Napoli

L’articolo descrive il processo di ricerca azione partecipativa (R.A.P.) che ha portato all’emanazione di una legge regionale sull’educazione in natura (la prima, per il momento) e che ha visto coinvolti diversi attori sociali (Regione Puglia, Università, Asili nido, Scuola dell’infanzia, educatori, famiglie). Il cammino descritto s’inserisce in un orizzonte più ampio, di respiro nazionale, dove l’educazione in natura assume rilievo legittimo, significativo e scientifico. Lo riconosciamo dal sensibile incremento delle pubblicazioni scientifiche sul tema e dal rinnovato e diffuso interesse, dalla organizzazione di numerosi convegni e seminari, dalle richieste di formazione iniziale, che hanno permesso la nascita di specifici corsi di alta formazione universitari e da quelle di formazione in servizio che hanno coinvolto numerosi servizi educativi su tutto il territorio nazionale. La RAP si caratterizza per una curvatura sistemica (RAP-s) in quanto considera l’importanza di coinvolgere, lungo un processo di progettazione e valutazione partecipata, sia le istanze top-down di gruppi istituiti (istituzione) sia quelle bottom-up dei gruppi istituenti (realità territoriali). Gli obiettivi del percorso di co-progettazione sono riassumibili nei seguenti punti: - creare le condizioni per un processo di legittimazione delle realtà esistenti nel Terzo Settore che lavorano come “Scuole all’aperto”, “Scuole nel bosco”, Agrinido e Agrinfanzia nella Regione Puglia. - possibilità di migliorare la consapevolezza degli attori (educatori, famiglie, - realtà del terzo settore, imprese, gruppi di cittadini, ecc.) in merito alle pratiche educative e alle pedagogie sottese a tali pratiche per riorientarle nella prospettiva della valutazione formativa.

Parole chiave: Educazione in natura, ricerca azione partecipata, scuola dell’infanzia, sostenibilità, biofilia.

Sustainable futures. Integrating Food Systems and Education for Transformative Environmental Learning

The European Commission's goal by 2050: Soil ecosystems will be healthy and more resilient, ensuring they can continue to provide their vital services in the future

Helena Eslon

In the face of accelerating environmental challenges, education plays a crucial role in shaping sustainable mindsets and empowering young people to take action. Our initiative, The ABC of Sustainable Development, brings together key actors from the food system, education, and environmental sectors to foster a holistic approach to sustainability education. Our project is rooted in agroecological principles, emphasizing the interconnections between healthy soil, responsible food production, and environmental awareness. By integrating sustainability into basic education, we provide young learners with hands-on experiences that connect them to nature and food production, reinforcing their understanding of ecological systems. Inspired by interdisciplinary sustainability science and transformative learning, our approach creates a bridge between municipalities, educators, and sustainability change agents. By working within communities, we recognize the role of local actors in facilitating knowledge transfer and behavioral change. Through experiential learning, children and young people develop a deeper understanding of food systems, environmental responsibility, and their own agency in shaping a more sustainable future.

This presentation will outline our model, share insights from implementation, and discuss how education and food systems can be integrated into broader sustainability transitions. We will also highlight key findings related to youth environmental awareness, mental well-being, and the role of experiential education in fostering resilience during times of ecological crisis. Our work aligns with global biodiversity strategies and sustainability policies, making it a valuable case study for educators, researchers, and policymakers committed to transformative environmental education.

Outdoor Urban Experiences in early childhood

Margerita Fassari

Ocean Literacy: nuovi orizzonti per una progettazione educativa outdoor

Emanuele Golino

L'epistemologia pedagogica abbraccia ormai da anni il dibattito in merito alla relazione intercorrente tra essere umano ed ambiente, direzionando tale riflessione verso la cosiddetta pedagogia verde, al punto da associare a tale colore l'insieme di costrutti e pratiche racchiusi sotto il termine Outdoor education. Si presenta però inevitabile andare ad analizzare e approfondire il rapporto con un altro spazio che ben si presta allo svolgimento di esperienze educative basate sull'apprendimento esperienziale, uno spazio non interamente sottoposto a giurisdizione statale: l'ambiente marino, il quale è divenuto uno degli oggetti di indagine maggiormente considerati da diversi campi di studio, tra i quali spicca quello delle scienze marine sociali. Si palesa ineludibile, per le scienze dell'educazione, orientare il proprio contributo verso la strutturazione di curricula educativi basati sui principi essenziali e sui concetti fondamentali dell'Ocean Literacy, paradigma teorico che necessita di essere posto in dialogo con la teoria pedagogica perché emerga, scientificamente fondata, la sua rilevanza educativa. Il progetto di ricerca Sea Education: Blue Practices in direzione di una progettazione educativa in mare nasce con lo scopo di creare in Sicilia, territorio completamente circondato dal mare, e poi in Italia, penisola immersa nel Mar Mediterraneo, percorsi di ricerca-azione a partire dalla mappatura di esperienze di Educazione in mare già presenti in terra siciliana, consentendo di abitare quel luogo peculiare che circonda ciascun individuo, nessuno escluso, ed in cui questi può apprendere facendo esperienza, all'aperto, in relazione con gli altri e con la natura.

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A Trek to Rome: Exploring Wellbeing and Place-Responsive Community Connections Among Long-Distance Solo Walkers on the via Francigena.

Sarah Grocutt

The via Francigena (known as ‘the way of the Franks’) is an historic 1,180-mile pilgrimage from Canterbury, England to Rome. The route is quieter than the Camino de Santiago and is known for not having the same camaraderie. Surprisingly, there hasn’t been much research on solo walkers on via Francigena and their connection to wellbeing, culture and community. Therefore, this study explores participants reasons for embarking on such a journey. Inspired by my own passion for long-distance walking and having undertaken a section of via Francigena together with an academic interest in the field of pilgrimage tourism has enabled me to deal with my own inner critic whilst on this journey where I share similar elements together with the participants experiences as we journey from one village to the next on the via Francigena.

The aim is to gain a greater understanding of the perspectives of the walkers and how this relates to significant places and wellbeing. While four themes emerged, one theme clearly stood out as a central theme: seeking connection with sub-themes, community, culture and spiritual. The data revealed the journey was more important than the destination and although the walkers enjoyed the solitude and being alone, the social interaction of meeting other pilgrims along the way is part of pilgrimage, the community and culture had a significant impact which provided a sense of belonging and social connectedness which contributed to their wellbeing.

Key words: Place-responsive learning, culture, community, wellbeing

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Outdoor Learning and Urban Adventures: exploring place-based education in urban settings

Ippogrifo CEAS APS ASD

Antonio Natoli, Ginevra De Amicis

This presentation introduces two projects led by Centro Ippogrifo, focusing on outdoor learning and urban adventures in place-based education. The first project strengthens the connection between schools and their communities, transforming schools into hubs for regeneration. Students, teachers, and local residents engage in coordinated activities to explore urban, rural, and social environments. Through environmental care and community engagement, this initiative turns urban peripheries into vibrant, inclusive spaces. Schools become central to local social and cultural development (Lancini, 2019). Involving students, teachers, and families, the project fosters school integration into the community. Teachers engage in professional development through experiential learning, while families connect the school to the wider community. This collaboration builds a sense of responsibility, strengthens community bonds, and promotes local regeneration (Iavarone, 2022). The second project addresses vulnerable adolescents, often struggling with anxiety and isolation in an urban, consumer-driven world. Urban outdoor adventures offer a chance to reconnect with nature, fostering ecological thinking and responsibility toward both the environment and the community. These experiences nurture self-care, life skills, and resilience, helping adolescents navigate the challenges of adolescence (Between Present and Future: Being Adolescents in Emilia-Romagna, 2022). Both projects highlight the transformative potential of outdoor learning in urban contexts. They empower participants, promote inclusion, and encourage ecological awareness, enabling individuals to navigate urban challenges with greater understanding and responsibility.

Different Approaches to Learning About Place During Outdoor Week at CŠOD

Irena Kokalj

CŠOD (Centre for School and Outdoor Education) is a public institution responsible for outdoor education in Slovenia. CŠOD offers learning programs in its 25 residential centres and numerous outdoor locations across the country. Each year, CŠOD runs programs for over 100,000 children from nearly every primary school, as well as many secondary schools and kindergartens in Slovenia. It is important to note that CŠOD's outdoor learning programs are part of the national school curriculum. This poster presentation will highlight various approaches used in different CŠOD centres to implement place-based learning, focusing on the exploration of Slovenia's diverse cultural heritage. Due to Slovenia's geographical and cultural diversity, students attending outdoor week at different CŠOD locations can experience a range of natural sites, architecture, history, folk culture, dialects, social issues, and ways of life, and compare these with their own.

Access to other cultures is one of the most exciting and potentially transformative aspects of learning outside the classroom (Waite, 2017, p. 265).

The outdoor week program at CŠOD combines adventure activities, environmental education, and exploration of nearby urban areas.

This poster will compare students' opinions on adventure activities versus exploration of urban areas during their outdoor week experience.

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Outdoor education ‘enters’ schools: analysis of the regional context in Friuli Venezia Giulia

Giulia Masarotti

The research project ‘Outdoor Education and Geographical Teaching: Fertile Connections and Development Opportunities for Effective Territorial Citizenship’ aims at investigating how the outdoor education approach can foster children's knowledge of urban and natural spaces inhabited by them and, consequently, have positive effects on their sense of belonging to ‘their’ places. Preliminary to this analysis is the survey, conducted on a regional scale, aimed at discovering the diffusion of outdoor educational experiences in the public and peer school context, with a particular focus on pre-school and primary schools. In fact, in order to closely observe how outdoor education affects the young citizens of tomorrow, it is first necessary to identify the realities in which this educational approach is adopted systematically and continuously over time. This work therefore brings together the analysis of the replies received to date from teachers who filled in the questionnaire, whose questions were aimed at understanding the extent of a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly widespread. The picture that emerges is in fact made up of numerous schools, especially small ones, that have successfully transferred the learning process from the inside to the outside or are actively striving to realise this aspiration. From the reading of these data and those to come, the objectives that will guide the second part of the research will be formulated, aimed at direct observation of what the children and their teachers achieve by going beyond the classroom threshold.

Risky play as an educational challenge from the perspective of teachers and parents

Milena Masseretti

Risky play is an exciting and thrilling form of play that takes place mainly outdoors: it does not exclude the dimension of risk and, consequently, the possibility of getting hurt (Kvalnes & Sandseter, 2023). Its benefits are widely recognised in national and international literature: it allows children to explore their limits, develop social and problem-solving skills, and improve their risk management skills (Beaulieu & Beno, 2024; Greenfield, 2004; Sandseter et al., 2020). Furthermore, risky play contributes to physical health, mental well-being and perceptual-motor development (Brussoni et al., 2012, 2015).

The research explores the perceptions of teachers and parents of kindergarten children in Italy regarding risky play. Using an exploratory qualitative approach, the study examines the personal, cultural and environmental factors that influence adults' acceptance of risk in play. Preliminary findings highlight a tension between the recognition of risky play as an educational opportunity and the personal and social pressures that limit its practice. Teachers tend to have a more open approach, influenced by the context in which they work and their own training, parents, instead, experience a more acute contrast between memories of their own free childhood and the need to protect their children. Adult supervision is often seen as a strategy for mediating between autonomy and safety, but risk is often rationalised in educational terms, reducing its autotelic value. Schools can play a crucial role in balancing these tensions by creating an environment that allows children to have stimulating, inclusive and safe play experiences.

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Siamo Alberi

Educare nel bosco- Altavilla Vicentina

Giorgio De Battistini, Giulia Meneghetti, Michela Borgo

In our poster, we present a journey undertaken last year with children aged 3 to 6, sparked by the felling of a large tree near our base camp. This event provided an opportunity to gently and respectfully explore the themes of grief and loss through observation, dialogue, and direct experiences in nature. Through this process, the children engaged with emotions, meanings, and transformations, helping them understand loss as a natural part of life's cycle.

Outdoor settings for promoting social inclusion

Maja Antonietti, Elena Nardiello, Mariateresa Scieuzo, Università degli Studi di Parma

The paper aims to investigate the possibilities and potential of outdoor education to promote social inclusion. As reported in the literature, outdoor settings contribute to offer significant opportunities in reference to the promotion of sustainability, despite there are few studies only in our country, and even less with reference to adults with disabilities. The adoption of outdoor practices within paths of self-determination and life projects proposed to an adult population with disabilities can promote inclusion process, both with regard to the area of skills of the people involved as well in building social and educational networks. Therefore, the undertaken research involved semi-structured interviews aimed at the coordinators of four social cooperatives in the City of Parma in order to investigate the links between inclusion and outdoors in the existing educational practices of the involved areas. The paper aims to report and analyze the outcomes of this first exploratory investigation.

Keywords: outdoor education, social inclusion, adults with disabilities, lifelong learning.

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Neurodiversity and “pedagogia del bosco”

Good practices to facilitate inclusive processes

Selima Negro

Since 2014, an ever-increasing number of initiatives inspired by Forest Kindergartens have been founded in Italy (Negro 2019). It has emerged over time that many neurodivergent children and families attend these projects. Even though we think that our approach is potentially very inclusive, mainly because it is based on diversity and personalization (James 2018), we have also realized that strategies that take unexpected needs into account must be intentionally implemented to make inclusiveness a reality (Fisher 2023). Within an informal network of projects that include both Forest Kindergartens and Forest Schools dedicated to homeschooled children, we decided to identify which changes have been introduced in time to respond to unexpected needs that emerged in everyday practices, especially in relation to facilitating the relationship with places and time. In this poster we share a conceptual map representing the key areas in which we introduced specific strategies to accommodate the needs of neurodivergent children, remaining within the pedagogical framework of the “pedagogia del bosco” (forest school ethos), identified through a joint analysis of documentation within the action-research paradigm carried by five different projects: Fuori dalla Scuola, Saltincampo /Misticanza di famiglie, Salpa nel bosco, Boscotrullalero, Fuori nel mondo. The map is meant to be a tool not only for observation and reflection, but also for self-assessment and dissemination of good practices.

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The importance of movement in childhood: evidence and educational perspectives

Educare nel bosco Riva del Garda- Copp. soc. Onlus Canalescuola

Serena Olivieri, Lisa Parise, Daniel Iversen.

The WHO recommends at least 60 minutes of vigorous physical activity per day for children aged 3 and older, including strength exercises from the age of 5. Movement is essential for both motor and cognitive development, and the natural environment provides an ideal setting for spontaneous play and experiential learning.

A 2022 observational study (Tortella) found that children in forest settings exceed WHO recommendations for vigorous activity. In March 2025, a new study (Biino) will analyze play in the forest in relation to the quantity and intensity of physical activity, addressing a key question: Is there a correlation between free, spontaneous play and the amount of physical activity children engage in within a wild environment? These studies highlight the importance of suitable educational spaces for children's well-being and overall development.

Adventures in Outdoor Language Learning in Alto Adige/Südtirol

Jonathan Shave, alpha beta piccadilly cooperative, Bozen, Italy

This poster presents two language-learning projects organized by a non-profit cooperative dedicated to language education, intercultural communication, and the promotion of plurilingualism in South Tyrol, a bilingual province in Northern Italy. These initiatives illustrate the pivotal role of location in Outdoor Adventure Learning (OAL) and highlight the challenges organizations encounter when securing access to suitable environments for such projects. The projects underscore how natural spaces can support experiential learning and language acquisition by fostering a sense of security and community. However, logistical, administrative, and environmental considerations often pose significant barriers to implementation. This poster is designed to spark discussions, foster networking opportunities, and encourage collaboration and the exchange of ideas among educators, researchers, and practitioners invested in OAL.

Teaching Italian through sport to asylum seekers

Raymond Siebetcheu

The contribution aims to illustrate the importance of combining sports with language teaching and learning. According to the Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, involving learners in physical activities while teaching them a language taps into kinesthetic learning, which is often overlooked in traditional classroom settings. The idea is therefore to promote a motivating and inclusive learning environment which emphasized the role of bodily movement (Asher's Total Physical Response method) and multisensory dimension to enhance memory retention and reduce the affective filter (Caon, 2022). On the basis of this theoretical framework, also related to the action-oriented approach, the presentation focuses on Subsaharian African asylum seekers residing in some reception centers in city of Siena. From the analysis of the linguistic needs of asylum seekers, carried out through a sociolinguistic questionnaire, their resistance to learn the language in the classroom and their strong passion for football emerge. From these linguistic needs, through numerous language games proposed on the pitch during football training session, the paper illustrate how football can lower the affective filter (determined by the fear of making mistakes), creating a more conducive environment for language learning. The contribution illustrates that thanks to the outdoor learning (Farné et al., 2018) through realistic, unifying scenarios, asylum seekers are considered not only as students but social agents; and the classroom as well as the pitch are integrated in genuine communicative practices. In these conditions, they learned the language (both that of sport and of daily communication) with pleasure and great motivation (Siebetcheu, 2020).

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REGEN- RE-imagining Gender in Education in Nature
Erasmus + KA210-SCH

Coop Canalescuola, Educare nel Bosco Pecorile
Francesca Domenichella, Annalisa Silvanini

REGEN-RE-imagining Gender in Education in Nature is an Erasmus + project proposing an innovative research approach between gender studies and outdoor education. The project lies on the collaboration of three Forest Schools (Belgium, Spain and Italy), which can be proud of a long experience of pedagogy in nature with children 2 to 6 year old. The exchanges between the three different EU countries' educators, supported by the scientific literature and the observational tools provided by the head researchers, led to a field observation of gender dynamics in children's play and interactions in outdoor environments using Forest Pedagogy. The leading purpose is to contribute to a broader understanding of gender dynamics in these specific contexts, promoting inclusive practices and supporting the work of educators and researchers in identifying gender-related barriers and inequalities. Since the research project is still in progress, the conclusions are partial to this date (March 2025); it will be completed in December 2025.

Brno as a Living Geography Lab: Examples of Short-Term Urban Fieldwork Activities

Hana Svobodová

For geography teachers and their students, the world represents an infinitely large classroom where they can learn in the real environment through first-hand experience (Nicol, 2009). At the Department of Geography of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University, we carry out a number of educational activities in the vicinity of the faculty to show future geography teachers activities that they can implement with their students within short-term forms of outdoor education. The poster presents three activities in the urban space of the city of Brno (Czech Republic) for short-term forms of outdoor learning in the first zone of outdoor learning (Beames, Higgins, & Nicol, 2012), which last a maximum of 2 lessons. Frequently, the implemented activities are connected with the use of IT. The presented activities are as follows:

1. Collecting primary data for the creation of a perception map in the vicinity of the school using the Survey123 application.
2. Inquiry-based learning on the topic of soil in the vicinity of the school.
3. Counting traffic intensity and proposing improvements to the traffic situation in the Streetmix application.

The activities are presented in three phases of field teaching - preparatory, implementation, and concluding phases, including suggestions for improvement.

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Outdoor learning scenarios: planning and implementing activities

Ilona Tandzegolskiene

Outdoor learning can take place in different environments, and regardless of the location in which the learning takes place, the objective for it remains the same: to explore, experiment and, most importantly, learn from experience. Outdoor learning encourages the development of such learner abilities as cooperation between group members, team building, self-awareness and knowing of others, creativity, social and emotional skill formation, and strengthening of environmental attitudes.

- Main aim of presentation: to find out how teachers prepare learning scenarios and organize learning activities for outdoor learning.
- Research questions: What are the characteristics of outdoor learning scenarios according teachers' opinion? What are the main aspects that teachers highlight during the realization of the scenarios?
- Research methods: content analysis of the chosen scenarios.

A total of 78 scenarios of various disciplines and teachers' reflections were analyzed in this study. The scenarios were voluntarily presented by the teachers of 5 – 8 class teachers after the series of seminars on outdoor learning, didactic strategies' analysis and creativity development. The presented outdoor learning scenarios had the following unifying features: clear objectives for the lesson and for the activities outside the school, the content of the planned activities was in line with the topic (according to the general curriculum), the choice of an original/unconventional angle of approach to the topic, integrated two or three subjects, assessment system. It is notable that the teachers who prepared the scenarios themselves also provide insights, showing their willingness to improve, to see areas for improvement, to strive for better teaching results and to identify success factors. The most frequently developed competences are communication/collaboration (students choose the channel and medium of communication, verbal and non-verbal means/forms of expression), cognitive (students describe the content of the topic, identify the main ideas of the topic, identify valid/unfounded statements of the topic, implement a solution strategy, independently evaluate and analyse the information); creativity (looking for non-standard solutions). It is observed that the possibility of such learning mobilizes learners for focus, empowerment and action. Additionally, there is a noticeable shift in teacher's role and involvement in the educational process to that of a facilitator, or even the responsibility is delegated to learner/group, which respectively encourages learning based on experiential learning perspective.

Keywords: outdoor learning, scenarios, planning, activities

Rischi e opportunità

Canalescuola Coop Onlus

Erica Vignolo, Maddalena Scalabrin

La natura offre una complessità di esperienze molto ampia, di cui il rischio è un elemento positivo e formativo per la crescita dell'individuo. Lo scopo è quello di sviluppare una sana ed equilibrata capacità di valutazione e gestione del rischio stesso, facendone esperienza diretta, in maniera regolare, frequente e progressiva. Nell'attuale società c'è un grande bisogno di gestire e valutare il rischio nella vita di tutti i giorni, invece che cercare - invano - di eliminarlo. Con l'approccio esperienziale i bambini imparano competenze fondamentali per la vita e viene permesso loro di sviluppare appieno le loro potenzialità. È bene che gli adulti che accompagnano i bambini in natura abbiano ben presente le strategie per sostenerli in queste esperienze senza rischiare di annullarne (anche se involontariamente) i benefici.



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