OUTDOOR JOURNEYS: Secondary teachers’ and pupils’ experience of local, urban outdoor learning

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Plan

❖ Overview of the research
❖ Introduce ‘Outdoor Journeys’ programme
❖ Discuss research findings
❖ Share some thoughts on...
  ❖ outdoor learning as a tool for social integration?
  ❖ critical thinking & secondary school context
Why do this research?

- 1st year – Audit (quality and availability)
  - Identified an opportunity to work with secondary schools
- 2nd year – Developing Outdoor Journeys in secondary
  - Small-scale trial of Outdoor Journey’s
What did we do....

- Trial - Outdoor Journeys programme
- 3 secondary schools in Perth & Kinross
- S1-S3 (12-14 years old)
- Maths & Geography subject areas
What is Outdoor Journeys......

- Outdoor Journeys enables pupils to learn about the people and place in which they live.
- By planning and undertaking local journeys,
- Pupils generate and answer questions about the socio-cultural and ecological “story” of the land.
- Devised for Primary Schools!
Created to prove a point…. 

- That frequent, local, low cost, meaningful outdoor learning is possible!
- It can be school grounds, towns, cities – urban based!

(Beames, 2010a; Beames 2010b; Beames & Ross, 2010; Beames, Atencio & Ross, 2009)
Three Phases

www.outdoorjourneys.org.uk
Questioning
Sharing
Conducting the research …

- Timetable & structure - 4 x 40min periods

- Range of academic ability classes

- Mix of teacher willingness too!
Research process..

- **Main focus** - practical development of Outdoor Journeys

- Afforded an opportunity for some evaluation:
  - Pupil - questionnaires (156)
  - Pupil - group interviews (22)
  - Teachers – interviews (9)
  - Hours of observation!!
CPD / Training with Secondary teachers

Practical
- Outdoor Journeys guidelines booklet
- Update Outdoor Journeys website

Theoretical/conceptual
- 3 key themes
  - Relationships
  - Culture
  - Context
Key themes

- Relationships
- Culture
- Context
relationships between and within subjects and between schools. for society, and within perth & kinross.

(jess et al, 2011; morrison, 2008; davis & sumra, 2006)
Social integration

Teachers

Pupils

For society

Relationships

Culture

Context

Between subjects
In this context....

- **“social integration”** - young people with different background (gender, ethnicity, social class, physical capacity, intellectual capacity, etc.) can meet and share experience through outdoor learning.

- **Lead to** - new knowledge, new skills and enhanced relationships.

pupil – pupil
pupil - teacher

School

Community
Observation: Enhanced relationships

- **Pupil-pupil** –
  - Within their group
  - With peer group

- **Pupil-teacher** –
  - Seeing teacher & subject differently
  - Mathematical language
Observation: Opportunity to develop critical thinking skills

Pupils
- Develop questions
- Guide their learning
- Critical skills

Teachers
- Identified critical skills development too
- Opportunity fluctuates
Critical thinking

- Not new! - A general aim of experiential / outdoor learning
  - …… generating opportunities to engage with broader issues and to develop critical thinking skills valuable throughout life’. (Higgins, 1992)

- Importance evidenced elsewhere
  - e.g. research linking environment-based education and critical thinking (Leiberman & Hoody, 1998; NEERF, 2000; SEER, 2000; Bright & Tarant, 2002; Ernst & Munroe, 2004; Scott & Gough, 2010; Christie & Higgins, 2012)

- critical thinking + outdoor learning + secondary context
Creative thinking
Other skills/values/attitudes...
Higher order thinking
Citizenship
Sense of place/belonging
Attitudes towards sustainability
Social integration
Future research...

- **Key themes:** *Culture/Context/Relationships*
  - Further research needed in secondary context

- **Key finding:** *Critical thinking*
  - Opportunity to consider critical thinking
  - Clear definitions and links to outdoor learning
  - Further research on outdoor learning….at secondary level!
References


References


Websites
- [www.outdoorjourneys.org.uk](http://www.outdoorjourneys.org.uk)
- [www.education.ed.ac.uk/outdoored/](http://www.education.ed.ac.uk/outdoored/)