

## **4. Outdoor environment we can use for Outdoor education**

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Not only does Outdoor Learning happen in the natural environments where participants can see, hear, touch and smell the real thing, it also happens in an arena where actions have real results and consequences. Outdoor Learning can help to bring many school subjects alive while also providing experiential opportunities for fulfilling the National Curriculum aim "to enable pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change and adversity." Source: DfES & QCA, The National Curriculum, 'Aims for the School Curriculum' 1999. - See more at: <http://www.outdoorlearning.org/Default.aspx?tabid=207#sthash.CjSd0PVh.dpf>

While there are many definitions of outdoor education, the most comprehensive one seems to be, "Outdoor education is education 'in', 'about', and 'for' the out-of-doors." This definition tells the place, the topic, and the purpose of outdoor education. 'In' tells us that outdoor education can occur in any outdoor setting from a school yard in an industrial neighborhood to a remote wilderness setting, in swamps, meadows, forests, shores, lakes, prairies, deserts, estuaries, and all other biomes. Outdoor education often takes place on a walk around the block, or on a visit to a cemetery, a gravel pit, or an urban renewal project. It can happen on the concrete of a playground, in the weeds of a vacant lot, on the fringe of a sewage treatment plant, at a city zoo, on a forest trail, or in a national park. These kinds of locations are conducive to first-hand experiences, to direct contact with the topic, and to participant interaction and socialization.

'About' explains that the topic is the outdoors itself and the cultural aspects related to the natural environment. You may teach about mathematics, biology, geology, communication, history, political science, art, physical skills, or endurance, but learning occurs through the context of the outdoors. Soil, water, animals, and plants make up the basic areas of study, but students may learn and practice the outdoor activities people pursue during leisure time, or may investigate human alterations of an ecosystem; nevertheless, the educational topic is related to the natural environment. In the broadest

“Our landscape. Our home. Our school.”

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Erasmus + project

terms, the topic is the interrelationship of the human being and the natural resources upon which societies depend, with the goal of stewardship in mind.

Cultural aspects include learning social movements and history through discovering abandoned farms or mills, by analyzing dates and inscriptions on tombstones and identifying the rocks from which they were quarried, or by comparing native plants with those introduced from the Old World as landscape or garden species around old homes.

Students can learn the influence of native people on the land, follow the trails and rivers of explorers and settlers, and develop knowledge and appreciation for cultural heritage as it relates to the land. Culture also includes social issues and decisions that alter or determine utilization of natural resources.

'For' tells us that the purpose of outdoor education is related to implementing the cognitive, psycho-motor, and affective domains of learning for the sake of the ecosystem itself. It means understanding, using, and appreciating the natural resources for their perpetuation.

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