A breath of fresh air?
Why learning outside the classroom is a really good idea

Sue Waite
Associate Professor (Reader)
Plymouth Institute of Education

*Why Inside: Teaching the new curriculum outside the classroom*
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A childhood at ‘Last Chance School’

- Shared with fifty boys with social emotional behavioural difficulties
- Fresh starts
- Restorative nature
- Varied learning environments for varied learners
- Developing positive relationships with teachers and peers
- A seed sown...
What happened at Last Chance School?

• Freedom and responsibility
• Learning to negotiate, self regulate
• Imagination and curiosity stimulated
• Leadership to develop ideas and plans

But also...

• Drama and English
• Maths
• Design and Technology
• Science
• And more
What was the purpose?

- Developing friendships
- Fostering enjoyment and independence
- Generating curiosity as motivation

- Project work in primary school
- Similar aims plus

- Problem based learning develops
  - Independent learning
  - Critical thinking
  - Application of content and skills
  - Team working
It’s not an either/or

We’re going to do science outside and they enjoy it and don’t see it as learning so you’ve got to make the most of the opportunity because that’s when they learn the most when they’re relaxed and not actually trying to learn. So I think that’s probably the main difference, when they’re in class they think they’re working, when they’re outside it’s not work, it’s play.’

(Y1 Teacher 1, School A)
Example:
Review of Informal Science Learning (2012)

- focus on intended outcome not delivery method (curriculum/inspirational)
- better integration of formal and informal learning
- more effective engagement with hard-to-reach groups
- more sophisticated way of evaluating the impact of informal learning activities
- stronger link between research and practice
- better evidence to support advocacy of informal learning.
Why that place?

- Our special place
- Nearby and accessible
- Less adult surveillance

- Woodland
- Wildlife
- Risk within limits

- But many other places also rich for exploration and stimulation
Purposeful Places

- Museums and art galleries
- Local community
- School grounds
- Historical sites
- Landscapes
- Field Studies Centres
- The classroom
What about the people?

• Peers
• Parents
• Practitioners
• Providers
• Partnerships
• Power
How does it affect pedagogy?

- Passion
- Personal
- Place based
- Purposeful
- Prior learning
What about *priorities*?

- Positive affirmation of purpose and practice
- New national curriculum
- Content
- Mapping opportunities
- A Naturally Connected Curriculum
- Priorities Assessment Tool
  - Balancing values and demands
  - What is ‘outstanding’?
That’s why getting outside the classroom is a really good idea now!

- Timely
- New curriculum
- Change is on the agenda
- Opportunities
- Values and priorities
- Alignment and partnerships
Natural Connections Headlines

- **Baseline** - July 2014 LINE
  - Teachers $44\% \rightarrow 66\%$
  - Teaching assistants $45\% \rightarrow 62\%$
  - LINE volunteers $81 \rightarrow 141$

- Positive impacts on **teachers’ practice & job satisfaction**

- Positive impacts on **pupils’ enjoyment of lessons, engagement with learning, health and wellbeing, social skills, behaviour, amount of learning**

- Positive but also ‘wait and see’ re. **attainment**

- **Our interim report** is out in **New Year...**
So finally for LOtC...just think peas

- Purpose
- Place
- People
- Pedagogy
- Personalised
- Perspectives
- Priorities
- Partnerships
- PLUS
- Possibilities...

https://plymouth.academia.edu/SueWaite#
An advance notice...

NEW Conference
‘Near and Far’
3rd July 2015

To express an interest in further details
Contact sjwaite@plymouth.ac.uk

THANKS!
Some of the published research that the presentation was based upon...