DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL ESDGC EXPERIENCES FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND CARE STUDENTS

Dr Glenda Tinney
Blynydodd Cynnar / Early Years
Yr Athrofa,
Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales Trinity Saint David
CONTEXT AND INTRODUCTION

- Early years Education and Care
- Foundation Phase / Successful Futures
- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship
- School / Non-maintained
- Ecology – interactions and holism
- Supporting children’s engagement with their world
- Supporting the practitioners working with children to develop curiosity
- Supporting empathy with the natural world
- Developing understanding and play
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH 2013
PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER TRAINEES AND THOSE WORKING IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

❖ Time constraints
❖ Add on and extra to already full curriculum
❖ Complex
DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY AND CITIZENSHIP IN CONTEXT OF EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- Cross cutting themes
  - Wellbeing
  - Rights
  - Inclusion
  - Outdoor learning

- Specific Sustainability Module
  - Sustainability in the Early Years – level 6
YOUNG CHILDREN AS EMPOWERED CITIZENS

Heft and Chawla, 2005
Elliott and Davis, 2014

‘honouring the young child’s right to know about social and environmental issues; to be part of conversations and possible solutions; to have their ideas and contributions valued’ Mackay, 2012: 1
Article 29 (Goals of education):

A child’s education should develop each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage a child to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help a child to learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.
EARLY CHILDHOOD THEORY - ENVIRONMENT

- Constructing knowledge (Constructivism)
- Piaget (1972), ‘young scientists’ – understand from interacting with the environment and learn from mistakes’
- Reggio Emilia approach - ‘environment is third teacher’.

From: http://www.riveredgenaturecenter.org/childrens-natural-play-area/
EARLY CHILDHOOD THEORY - SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Socio-constructivism
Scaffolding and supporting learning

- Vygotsky (1978) ‘more knowledgeable other’
- and peer learning

- Bruner (1990) ‘scaffolding’
- ‘play at this stage is not trivial; it is highly serious and of deep significance’ (Froebel, 1826).

From: http://www.cherubinsdaynursery.co.uk/forest-school/
LOST WORDS

- Conker
- Kingfisher
- Dandelion
- Tadpoles
- Dargonflies
- Oak
- Dock leaf
LACK OF EXPERIENCES

- Significant Life Experiences (Chawla, 1998)
- Nature Deficit Disorder (Louv, 2005)
- Biophobia
SD GOAL 4.7

‘critical engagement and action’
FOUNDATION PHASE AREAS OF LEARNING AND ESDGC (DCELLS, 2008B)

- Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity
  - Conservation and Waste
  - Wealth and Poverty

- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills
  - Health

- Mathematical Development
  - Natural Environment

- Physical Development
  - Choices and Decisions

- Creative Development
  - Identity and Culture

- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
  - Climate Change

- Welsh Language Development
  - Social and Economic Development
GARDENING AND GROWING FOOD

Wealth and Poverty
Health
Natural Environment
Climate Change
Identity and Culture
Choices and Decisions
Consumption and Waste

From: https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2014/gardening-with-children
SENSE OF PLACE

“… a ditch somewhere – or a creek, meadow, woodlot, or marsh …These are places of initiation, where the borders between ourselves and other creatures break down, where the earth gets under our nails and a sense of place gets under our skin.”

Robert Michael Pyle
The Thunder Tree

‘Some environments encourage children "to pause, play, and stay awhile" (Olds, 1989, p. 9), while others do not. Some environments foster a "sense of place" in young children; others do not’

Wilson, 1997
DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES
JOHN MUIR AWARD

Discover
Explore
Conserve
Share

https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award
CONCLUSION

- Practical and real
- Sustainability?
- Understanding relationships by seeing them
- Developing consideration of biodiversity
- ‘Special places’ Wilson, 1997
- Seeing the ‘pillars of sustainability’
- Confidence
REFERENCES


