

3.3: Assessing and consolidating learning

Assessing learning

Assessing outdoor learning can be challenging as it invariably depends on what the aim for the session(s) was. More academic objectives will suggest a different set of assessment strategies to, for example, spiritual, personal, social or health related ones. Outcomes related assessment offers one route, and this may take the form of observed actions, behaviours, skills or knowledge. Whatever the approach though, if there has been an identified aim at the beginning it makes sense there is some way of gauging progress towards it.

Longer term assessment of progress can also be gauged through the achievement of accreditations and awards, for example, Awards and Badges achieved through **Girlguiding** and the **Scouts**, the **Duke of Edinburgh's Award**, the **National Outdoor Learning Award** and NGB skills or leadership awards.



Where high quality outdoor learning practice is taking place

Participants have opportunities to demonstrate learning/understanding through:

- ✓ Activity skills.
- ✓ Sharing knowledge (verbal, written, performance, coaching others, etc.).
- ✓ Demonstrating values.
- ✓ Behaviours.
- ✓ Taking on new challenges with increasing amounts of autonomy.

Demonstration could be through independent activity in the session, through questioning at the end of the session, through leadership opportunities, through the next activity or through learning shared, for example, back in the classroom.

Practitioners feedback to participants:

- ✓ Using appropriate use of praise and encouragement.
- ✓ Offering correction where appropriate.

Consolidating learning

Reviewing supports both participants and practitioners to consolidate learning. How experiences are interpreted is a very individual thing; what may be challenging for one person could be the opposite for another, for example. Many outcomes, therefore, are unique to the participant in how they are interpreted and the meaning they hold. The reflective process, involving structured time to review the experience, can reinforce learning and/or lead to new insights. It has the potential to lead to changes in behaviour, values and thinking for both practitioner and participant alike.



Where high quality outdoor learning practice is taking place

Practitioners:

- ✓ Review to encourage retention and recall.
- ✓ Help participants know what they have achieved and what they can do next.
- ✓ Connect forwards, supporting onwards progression.

Participants:

- ✓ Have appropriate opportunities to reflect on their experiences.
- ✓ Have access to a range of resources, both indoors and outdoors, to aid reflection.
- ✓ Have the opportunity to review and articulate their experiences in a safe environment.
- ✓ Have the opportunity to make meaning from their experiences, and where relevant relate these to real life experiences elsewhere, e.g. at home, school, in the community or at work.
- ✓ Can make connections between what they are currently doing or have done and what has gone before and is yet to come.



Further reading

Beard, C. and Wilson, J.P. (2013) *Experiential learning: A handbook for Education, Training and Coaching*. London: Kogan Page.

Moon, J.A. (2004) *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning*. Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.

Roger Greenaway - *Your Guide to Active Reviewing*

See also

3.1 Planning and initiating

3.2 Session delivery

3.4 The 21st Century Practitioner – Behaviours

3.5 The 21st Century Practitioner - Characteristics

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