

SEVEN QUALITIES OF THE NATURE PEDAGOGUE

Excellent nature pedagogy practitioner qualities

QUALITIES THAT DEFINE AN EXCELLENT NATURE PEDAGOGY PRACTITIONER ACROSS COUNTRIES

Despite the many observed differences, we as a working group developed and agreed through the project on seven criteria of the nature pedagogue which we in similarity adopt in our daily routine.

We describe and document these seven qualities and hope they will help practitioners to identify elements of their pedagogy and their importance. Many of the qualities interrelate and it is the combination of these that are found in a Nature Pedagogue.

Below we offer points to have in mind when rethinking qualities in nature pedagogy perspective. More could be found and

studied in the footages from our settings, best practice videos and interviews of our head-teachers, managers and nature pedagogues. We provide links to the publications on YouTube and our websites.

1. REFLECTIVE

The cycle of reflection: Facts, feelings, findings and future (Greenaway, R.)

Planning, observation and assessment

Peer observation and support

Self-assessment

Supportive relationships

Looking internally, externally and beyond

2. OPEN NOT DOMINANT.

Responsive to child led learning

Not directive

Without fixed outcomes – still with intention, but open to opportunity

Following an interest, irrespective of time

Open body language – at the child's level, with eye contact

Allow the child to lead

When not teaching a specific skill set, learning together

Encouraging children to self-assess/ problem solve

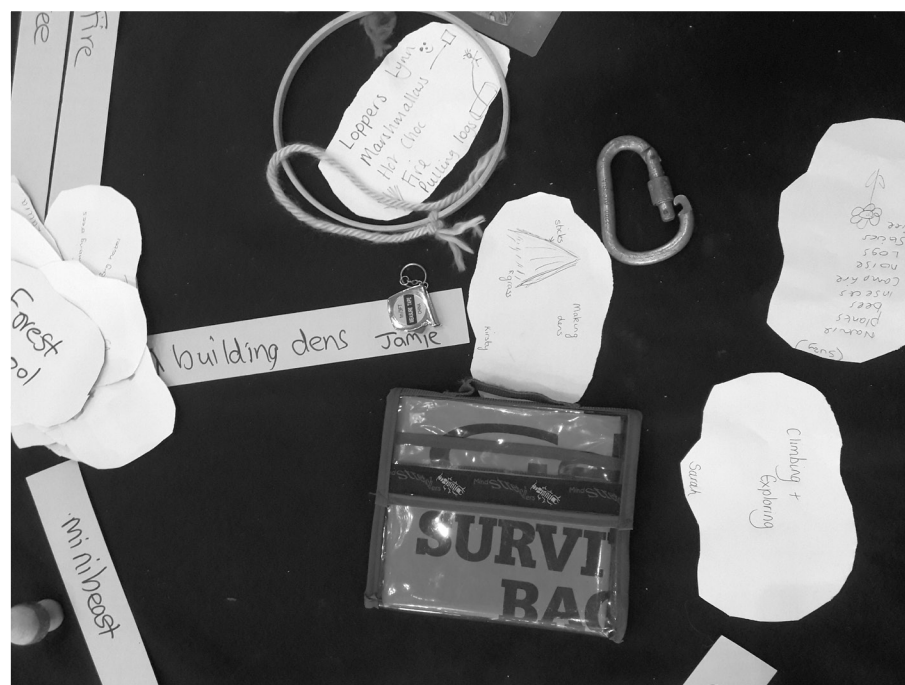
Real listening to the child's 'voice'

Knowing when to interact and not interfere

Inclusive of alternative thoughts and ideas of children – Accepting that children's thoughts do not always follow the intended line of enquiry

3. HAPPY AND SECURE OUTSIDE

Adult has a positive connection to the outdoors



Adults fully engaged in real interactions

Adult demonstrates calm and comfort

Adult is dressed appropriately for weather conditions

Having confidence in own skills and knowledge to feel secure in environment

4. SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE (SKILL SET)

Theory

Experience

Knowing the individual child well

Learn through exploration (adult and child) applying knowledge appropriately

Developing skills for appropriate intervention

Knowing when and how to use own knowledge to teach specific skills

Motivation for self-development

Relevant skills and knowledge vary in each country/culture

Good interpersonal skills

5. RESPECTFUL

Get to know children/ colleagues as individuals

Respect and care of nature / environment

Respectful to the children's play spaces and their property

Ask permission before action

Compromise/agree/discuss

Allow children to solve or attempt to solve own conflicts before stepping in

Thank others for thoughts, ideas and help

Help others to understand their place in nature

Value for the rights of the child

6. SYNERGY WITH NATURE

Official meaning: 'Interaction of elements that when combined, produces an affect greater than some individual parts'

Don't over take from nature; we have a balance of taking and giving

The setting will add value to the community, changing thoughts of the service users

Learning with nature, not just teaching about it

Following the seasons/elements

Complete cycle from start to finish (making charcoal, fishing, observing frogspawn to frogs)

Learning contrasts: Being cold and knowing how to get warm

Working with the environment, not against it – not always sticking to the plan (e.g. still making kites even though it's a sunny calm day, just because it's in the planning)

7. COLLABORATION

Team work: team should support each other to make learning with and in nature work

It often takes a combined effort to achieve goals

Knowing the power of collaboration and when to use it in practice

Using individual strengths to reach the team's full potential

Negotiation and compromise that involves the voice of all

Sharing good practice with other across regions, countries etc.

Intuitive with colleagues

Trust other colleagues

Strong relationships with colleagues, children and families

Effective leadership that manages collaboration

