Chapter 11
Experiential Learning in Outdoor Environments

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ABSTRACT

Children who develop a sense of curiosity begin to discover, question, investigate, and criticize new things. The new environments that students enter allow them to explore their curiosity and try to get to know and explore the environment. While exploring their environment, students research, question, criticize, ask, analyze, and construct/schematize new knowledge. From this point of view, purposefully structured environments for outdoor educational activities or unstructured environments for different purposes offer a rich learning space for students to develop these skills. In order to carry out activities in outdoor environments, it is essential to recognize these environments, to know how to design educational processes, to analyze the contribution of these activities to the development of different skills and learning of students, to adapt to developments in science and technology and to support them with technology, and to evaluate the process holistically.

INTRODUCTION

Curiosity is an affective acquisition that emerges from an individual's desire to know. Children are curious about things that seem different to them, and with this sense of curiosity, they begin to explore or question the new information they encounter. In order to nurture and develop children's curiosity, it is essential to design effective learning environments and conduct learning processes. Because children who develop a sense of curiosity begin to discover, question, investigate and criticize new things. Children who strive to learn also constantly ask questions and seek to

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solve their problems. This enables them to learn new information, and this learning becomes more substantial and more permanent (Oliveira & Lathrop, 2022).

Learning activities in outdoor environments go beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom in nurturing students' curiosity. Outdoor environments allow students to learn in natural environments, increasing interest in nature and sensitivity to environmental learning (Brookes, 1989). The new environments that students enter allow them to explore their sense of curiosity and try to recognize and explore the environment. Because outdoor environments are unrecognized, unknown, and in need of exploration. In these environments, students are curious about the environment and start to learn with this sense of curiosity. To learn, students try to discover everything new in their environment. This discovery process is also a process of problem-solving and acquiring new skills. While exploring their environment, students also try to investigate, question, criticize, ask, analyze, and construct/schematize new knowledge. It is significant for young age groups to learn by experiencing and using these skills to increase their learning quality. From this point of view, purposefully structured environments for outdoor educational activities or unstructured environments for different purposes offer a rich learning space for students to develop these skills. In addition to supporting students' learning, activities in these environments allow them to socialize, develop their creativity, interact with their peers, use their language skills, make connections between the past and the present, and get to know the real world and the natural environment (Guaran, 2016). Again, activities in outdoor environments contribute to students' cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social, and psychological development.

In order to carry out activities in outdoor environments, it is essential to recognize these environments, to know how to design educational processes, to analyze the contribution of these activities to the development of different skills and learning of students, to adapt to developments in science and technology and to support them with technology, and to evaluate the process holistically. At the same time, instructors/practitioners should know about outdoor education, be aware of the individual differences of their students, know the stages of planning the process and plan it according to their students, manage the stages to be considered while implementing the activities, and know how to evaluate the activities. In this section, all these topics will be explained in detail.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Outdoor education is education that takes learning experiences out of the classroom and focuses on providing students with different experiences, includes experiential learning in natural environments, and includes learning activities that

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Mary C. Endersonand Ginger S. Watson (2019). *Handbook of Research on TPACK in the Digital Age (pp. 413-436).*

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