

A Practitioner's Guide to OUTDOOR PLAY BASED LEARNING PEDAGOGY – Part Two!

So, what does pedagogy look like *in practice*?

Last week we had a look at pedagogy; what it means...and how the heck you say it...(peh ·duh go ·jee)!

This week we are going to explore what pedagogy looks like in day-to-day practice...

Most practitioners 'do' pedagogy every day.

It is what is happening when you build on a child's fascination with dinosaurs or support schematic play by providing materials which can connect, enclose or envelope or encourage their curiosity for creepy crawlies by helping them investigate different kinds of bugs...

But sometimes it's hard to know if you are 'doing it right'... Before we look at the *practice* of pedagogy, let's remind ourselves of the *definition*.

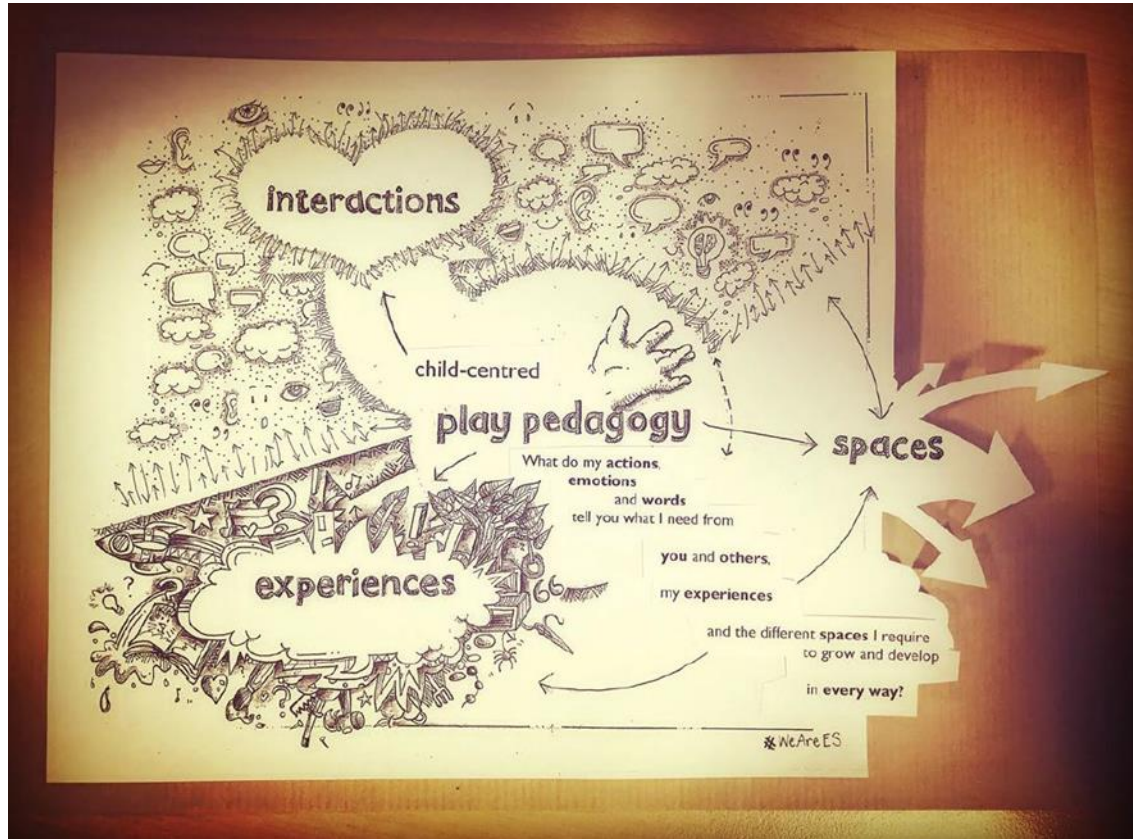
Remind me...what is it again??

Stewart and Pugh define pedagogy as

“the understanding of how children learn and develop, and the practices through which we can enhance that process.”



Realising the Ambition (2020), talks about 'growing and learning' through the **interactions**, **experiences** and **spaces**. If this is the **how** of children's learning and development, what does the **practice** that supports it look like?



Creating spaces for play and learning....

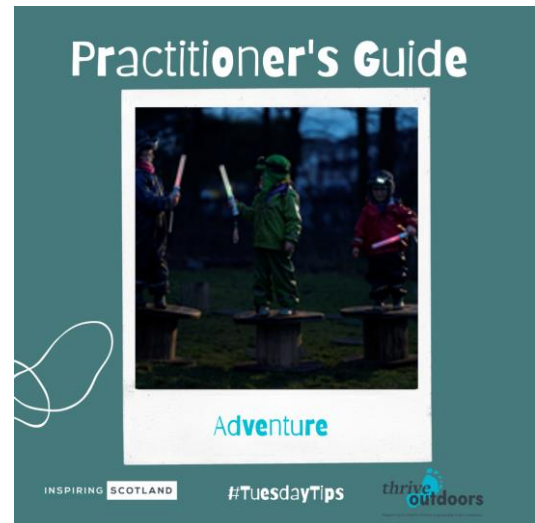
One of our favourite play theorists is **David Sobel**. Sobel identified a set of themes or principles that emerge when children have high quality free play in the outdoors. These can be seen in children's play all over the world and in all cultures....

So, considering these principles will help you assess whether your outdoor **spaces** enable these play themes. After assessing your space, use the principles to plan for providing rich learning **experiences** for the children.

What do the Design Principles look like?

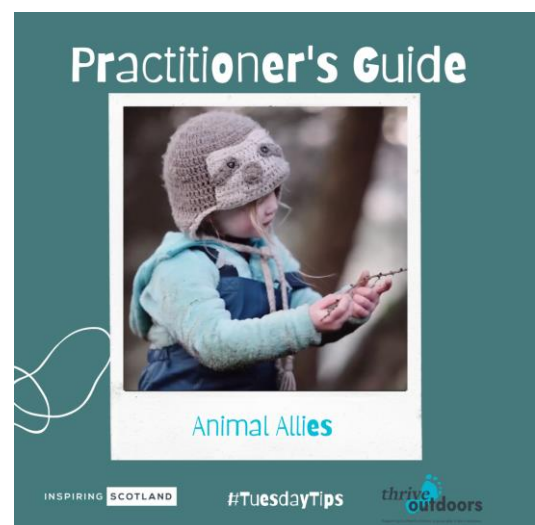
Principle 1: Adventure

'Risky' elements... climbing, jumping, balancing...
Hidey holes to feel like you are lost...
Playing in the dark...



Principle 2: Fantasy and Imagination

Role playing, storytelling, theatrics...
Do you have props, stages, puppets...?



Principle 3: Animal Allies

Learning about nature that shares our spaces...
Bug hotels, bird boxes and feeders, ponds...

Watch [video](#)

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Maps and Paths

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Principle 4: Maps and Paths.

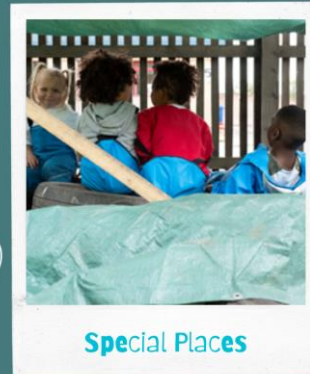
Winding paths, stepping stones, willow tunnels/arches.
Scavenger hunts, geocaching...
Do your spaces have defined zones or landmarks?

Principle 5: Special Places

Do children have spaces to be by themselves or with each other?

Dens, tents, tipis, tunnels, treehouses
Can they make their own special places?

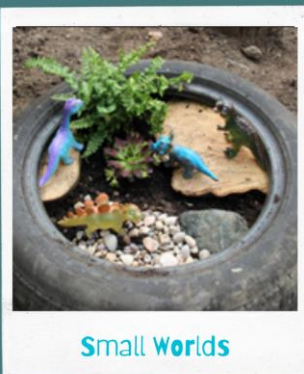
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Special Places

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Small Worlds

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Principle 6: Small Worlds.

Sobel notes:

From sandboxes to dollhouses to model train sets, children love to create miniature worlds that they can play inside of. Through creating miniature representations of ecosystems, or neighbourhoods, we help children conceptually grasp the big picture. The creation of small worlds provides a concrete vehicle for understanding abstract ideas.

Principle 7: Hunting and Gathering

Treasure hunts, hide and seek, identifying games...

Props like cones, stones, sticks...baskets, buckets, tubs to gather items in...



The best bit ~ PLAY (some more)!

So, you've had a look at your **space** using Sobel's Design Principles as a guide and reckon you need to develop in some areas...How do you know what to add?

PLAY! Test things out, change things, move things around, add new props...

Can we practice Sobel Principle spotting? Yes!!

Reflective Task

Watch the following films of two very different spaces and think about which of Sobel's Design Principles you can see in action:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9YOPMensU0>

<https://vimeo.com/123538964>

Enjoyed this? Share your discussions, pictures and progress with us on social media – details below

This week we focused on David Sobel, if you have a theorist you would like us to investigate, please contact us:

Facebook @ThriveOutdoorsScot

Twitter @Thrive_Outdoors

email Jo@inspiringscotland.org.uk

Useful Links

Realising the Ambition <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/realising-the-ambition/>

Education Scotland Early Level Play Pedagogy Toolkit
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/early-level-play-pedagogy-toolkit/>

Cambridge Pedagogy Definition of
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pedagogy>

Stramash Blog – Sobel’s Design Principles – 1 & 2:
<https://stramash.org.uk/2019/11/04/guest-post-cameron-sprague/> and **3:**
<https://stramash.org.uk/2020/07/20/guest-post-cameron-sprague-sobel-principles-3/>

Creative STAR Learning - <https://creativestarning.co.uk/nature-play-learning/nature-design-principles/> and <https://creativestarning.co.uk/interesting-issues-hot-topics/sobels-nature-design-principles-in-action/>