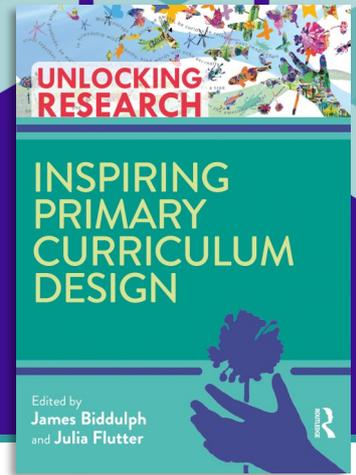


Curriculum and Nature

CHAPTER 6 | DUNNE & MARTIN: LEARNING TO LEARN FROM NATURE



What opportunities can we find in the curriculum to learn from nature?

This activity can be used to explore as a staff the difference between the more familiar concepts of learning *about* nature and learning *in* nature, and the less common practice of learning *from* nature. While the benefits of learning *in* nature are well-documented, and while schools and teachers – particularly at primary level – plan into their curriculum opportunities to learn *about* nature, how much time do we spend supporting students in learning *from* nature? Using an exploration of the differences between these concepts as a starting point, time can then be dedicated to identifying where in the curriculum there are opportunities for these forms of learning and where there is capacity to develop this further.

Starter

What is the difference between learning *about* something and learning *from* it?

As a group, use this image as a stimulus for discussion about what we might learn *about* fallen leaves in autumn.

Example ideas:

We learn that some trees lose their leaves in autumn while others don't

We learn the name for trees that do and don't shed their leaves

We learn that fallen leaves provide shelter for animals in the winter

We learn that fallen leaves decay and nourish the same trees they fell from in subsequent years



fallen leaves in autumn

CLUE: think about recycling

Now, what might we learn *from* fallen leaves in autumn? Example ideas:

In nature, nothing is wasted. Even the leaves that fall to the forest floor in autumn sustain the life of the forest. From this, we can learn how to waste less and how to reuse or recycle the waste we do generate.

Using the conversation cards provided, in pairs or small groups, discuss what we might learn about the subject and what we might learn from it. Allow time for feedback.

Main Activity

Where are the opportunities in the curriculum to learn in nature, about nature and from nature?

In small groups and in response to this question, use the curriculum map for a year group to identify opportunities and note initial ideas for how these could be developed.

Reflection

How will we make these opportunities a reality in our school's learning?

In year group teams, create an action plan for the next half term's learning. Where might we provide opportunities not just to learn about nature, but to learn from nature? When can the learning take place in nature? What actions will we need to take to make this happen (by when and by whom)? What support will be needed (guest speakers or visitors, resources, self-study to expand subject knowledge...)?



succulents and cacti

CLUE: think about use of resources



hermit crab

CLUE: think about reuse



bee colony

CLUE: think about teamwork



pollinators

CLUE: think about symbiosis