

Peninsula Research in Outdoor Learning (PRinOL) launch as Institute for Outdoor Learning: Regional Research Hub

Conference 18th January 2019, University of Plymouth

We were delighted that 88 people attended the conference – thanks to all for making it such an interesting and enjoyable day!

Email PRinOL@plymouth.ac.uk if you'd like to join the PRinOL network

Visit our [website](#) to see the [conference presentations](#)

Twitter: @PenResearchinOL

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Morning keynote speakers

Dr Beth Gompertz (Director of the Plymouth University Institute of Education): Welcome



Dr Chris Loynes (University of Cumbria):
An Outdoor Progression: how local re-
search can help achieve the aims of the
Outdoor Citizens Campaign.
Chris spoke of how the outdoor learning
national network would work in practice,
outlined his progression model for out-
door learning and urged everyone to get
involved.



Ann Finlayson (CEO of Sustainability
and Environmental Education SEEd).
Ann made us all think carefully about
what we were doing with our outdoor
learning activities, why we were doing
it and what effect we wanted it to
have, arguing that it's only when
we're clear about these things that we



Sam Kendall and Gill Mulholland
(Eden Project): "Miss, why are we
playing in the car park?".
Sam and Gill spoke of their out-
door learning project with a local
primary school. They explained
how they had facilitated a whole-
school approach to innovative
practice and grounds develop-
ment that had demonstrable posi-
tive impact on pupil and staff mo-
tivation.



Afternoon workshops:

Theory / research strand

Dr Chris Loynes (University of Cumbria): Can you Prove it?: Myth-busting research and evaluation.

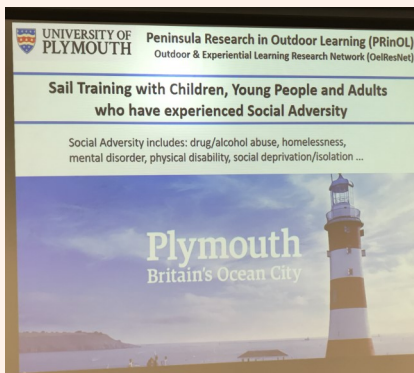
Chris argued that the gap in evidence-based research on outdoor learning highlights the importance of this work. We need to create a better understanding of the work undertaken, communicate more effectively, and create confidence in the work of practitioners and organisations. Chris reminded us of the fact everyone is a researcher and evaluator in their day-to-day lives. He suggested seeking support from academics in the local or central hub with research and evaluation projects, focusing on questions that matter to practitioners and teachers, and to work on becoming your own researcher.

Ann Finlayson (CEO of SEEd)

Ann's workshop looked at the UNESCO agenda of applying a 'whole school' approach to sustainability, and working towards a global understanding of what is meant by this. She discussed the need to have different ways of thinking about education, traditional knowledge, cultural and community knowledge, and discussed gaps in sustainability education that need to be addressed. These include wellbeing, economics and sustainable consumption and teacher education. Everyone was invited to put questions/comments along a continuum of perceived solutions.

Dr Roger Cutting (Donkey Sanctuary): I'm so tired of all this 'learning from nature' stuff

This workshop was focused on the notion of including animals and human animal relationships as a missing element of outdoor learning research; pictures of outdoor learning rarely include animals. Following a donkey fact quiz - how much do you know about donkeys? - led him to reflect on how many are harshly treated, and to question our connection (or lack of) to animals in the west; how different our relationships can be with different sentient beings. He then considered the necessity of animal assisted therapy. The workshop ended with a call out for research ideas or possible support he could provide.



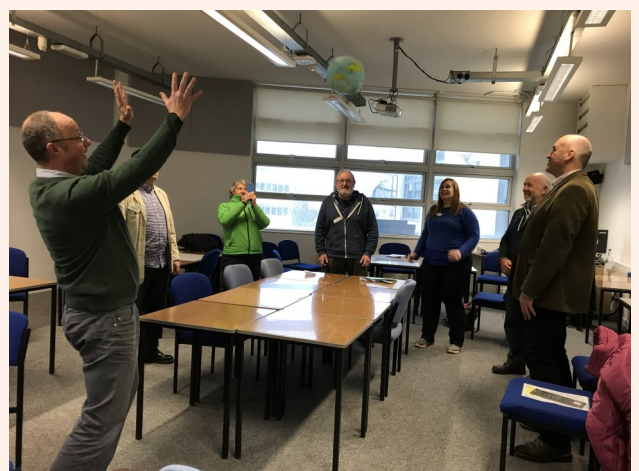
Plymouth as an ocean city

Andy Wills (University of Plymouth) and **Andrew Eccleston** (Horizons Plymouth and Tectona Trust): Sail Training with Children, Young People and Adults who have Experienced Social Adversity.

Andrew and Andy both have a background of using sailing to work with young offenders and people of all ages who have experienced social adversity. The spoke of their ongoing research into the effectiveness of three Plymouth-based sailing projects that aim to enhance social and emotional resilience in children and adults. Findings show a clear increase in confidence in a range of competencies and increased resilience according to individuals' self-assessment.

Jack Sewell and Jon Parr (Marine Biological Association): Ocean Literacy and Citizen Science as tools to enhance outdoor learning.

This workshop started with a game in which we threw a globe ball between the group, relating whether the little finger of our right hand 'landed' on water or land; the proportion of 70:30 exemplified the importance of the oceans to the planet. Jon then spoke about ocean literacy as a framework for outdoor learning, followed by Jack who informed us about different forms of citizen science that anybody can get involved in. Outdoor learning can also be supported by different apps such as iNaturalist.



Health and wellbeing

Theresa Compton and Sarah Howes (University of Plymouth): Outdoor Learning for Health and Wellbeing.

Theresa and Sarah both have backgrounds in the UK's highly competitive, controlled medical profession. They talked of signs of burnout, stress and not being able to cope, and told us, "You must care for yourself so you can care for others". They then discussed different ways of doing this, and gave the group some practical experience—some outdoors, some inside. Final reflections included thinking about how we can bring health and wellbeing into our everyday working lives.



Youth / intergenerational work

Gill Millar (South West Youth Impact Network Co-ordinator, Centre for Youth Impact): Outdoor Learning and Youth Work – tools for building resilience in young people?

Gill argued that youth work helps young people to learn about themselves, others and the society around them, using non-formal learning activities which involve enjoyment, challenge and learning. Aims include building self-esteem and self-confidence, managing personal and social relationships and encouraging positive group atmospheres. Her example was the national citizen's service, which includes a residential in an outdoor education setting, and a social action project in the young people's community; she encouraged us to reflect on how youth work and outdoor learning practitioners can collaborate to enhance our work with young people.

Ash Tod, Victoria Bryant, Hayley Partridge (Plymouth City Council): Active Neighbourhoods – Connecting Plymouth's Communities to Nature.

The aim of the Active Neighbourhood project is to bring about cultural change; to connect Plymouth's communities to nature in a sustainable way through the Poole Farm Project, Plymouth Outdoor Learning Network (a legacy of the Natural Connections outdoor learning project in schools), and Earth Jump. Ash, Victoria and Hayley emphasised the importance of volunteers to all the projects, and encouraged all to get involved with their local equivalents.



Paul Warwick (University of Plymouth): Sustainability Education as Lifelong Learning through Community Engagement.

Paul spoke of the United Nation's 17 sustainable development goals, and how these goals can be applied to local communities. He argued that the process of developing these goals required an understanding of self in order to be able to think in broad terms about what can be done, and then asked how we can involve students in goals for the locality. He then took everyone on a walk and talk discussion, ending up at the new Sustainability Hub on the University of Plymouth campus.