

CONSTRUCTING FOREST LEARNING

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CONSTRUCTING FOREST LEARNING

A Pedagogy for Practice

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For William.

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FOREWORD

This book explains the Pedagogical Model for Forest Learning, which is a dynamic relationship and interconnectedness between the three elements, adult, child and environment or ACE. Pedagogy is looked at in depth, specifically social pedagogy in Denmark, and how it relates to the pedagogical Model for Forest Learning. Here how adults interpret and enact pedagogy of Forest School, how children experience a pedagogy in Forest Learning and the similarities and differences between the two environments are explored, specifically how this impacts the users.

The inspiration for this book has come from the Danish inspired Forest Schools that are now across the United Kingdom. Visiting them sparked an interest in the ways adults and children were working differently in the outside environment. Through play and child-initiated activities children were exploring their environment and learning about themselves as well as nature. My first experience of Forest School came about when I visited the nursery and reception classes in a large primary school in Cardiff. Taking place outside, where there were several trees and shrubs, I saw some inspiring activities that engaged children as young as three years old. Centred around free play, the children explored their environment freely, whilst the adults facilitated the children in their choices. I was fascinated by the way the adults interacted with children, and how children interacted with each other, which seemed different to the way they might interact with each other inside. This experience felt very different to the ways of playing outdoors that I had previously witnessed in other schools, and akin to something I had always tried to create in my own practice. I was intrigued by what they called Forest School and wanted to know more. Since then, my investigations have taken me from Wales and the East Midlands of England, to Norway and Denmark. In my search to find out more about Forest School in England and Denmark I have gained a unique insight into what I refer to in this book as Forest Learning. It is these findings that I now want to share with you, in this book.

Included here is a short background of Forest School in England, and an explanation of Danish early years practice. Next to contextualise, there is a brief section on current early years context in England and Denmark. Case

study examples from each case are then used to provide context and illustrations of how each of the three ACE elements inter-relate. I have added some new perspectives such as social pedagogy and compound flexibility, as well as bringing some areas up to date, by including the revised Strengthened Pedagogical Curriculum now used in Denmark. Wherever you are, and whatever your reason for reading this book, I hope you find it useful, and most of all enjoy reading it.

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