Supporting a Forest School Programme: Practical Skills

This component has six learning outcomes:
1 Understand the structure of woodlands
2 Know how to identify a range of flora and fauna and understand the importance of identification
3 Be able to manage the ecological impact of a Forest School programme
4 Understand the role of risk assessment at Forest School
5 Be able to carry out a site risk assessment and a risk-benefit assessment
6 Be able to apply a range of practical skills relevant to a Forest School programme

For all your answers where you have used information sources to research or support your answer – online or in print – either provide the full individual webpage (not the general homepage) or page number/s in the book/publication.

In this unit some of the criteria are assessed on the course and some are written work in support of this. Also some photos will be required of you doing these activities – you can copy these into a word document – make sure you put a clear label of what the picture shows you doing and the question it is linked to.

1.1 Compare the structures and biodiversity of native broadleaf and coniferous woodland ecosystems

To support your answer to this question you should visit one or more woodlands where you can see first hand the difference between a coniferous planted woodland and a more natural native broadleaf woodland (get a photo of each woodland that shows some differences). In your visit look for the different features listed below and make some observations and also explore some reading to answer this question.

- Briefly explain what defines a broadleaf and coniferous woodland.

- For both coniferous and broadleaf UK woodland explain if the following features are present and why this is important in terms of what can be found living in them:
    - Vertical layers: below ground, ground, field, shrub/understorey, canopy
    - Horizontal features: rides or paths, hedges, edges, and open areas.

- Referring to your visits and the 2 photos you have taken - explore key differences in broadleaf and coniferous woodland for the following:
Levels of light and seasonal variations
Soil properties & drainage
The variety of habitats including dead wood
Comment on overall biodiversity and provide an example of a food web for both types of woodland (if the space you use is in a woodland then link the food web to your answer to 2.2).

Provide a short conclusion about how the differences in these 2 types of woodland (referencing the woodlands you have visited) create a different appearance and feel when you step foot in them.

You will need to provide the reference materials you used – online and or books
(Word Guide 750 words)

2.1 Identify a range of woodland flora and fauna for own site, detailing identifying characteristics for each species

Create a suitable and group friendly resource for your own site to help id a range of common animals, insects, plants and fungi. Cover at least 10 plants/trees/fungi, 6 insects and 6 animals/birds that are found on your site.

- Use drawings, own photos or clearly labelled photos from web.
- Describe some key relevant features to help identify them with your groups including at least 2 or 3 key identifying traits (e.g. colour, size, sounds, smell, etc) and also some further points of interest (e.g. – good for whittling, poisonous, folk lore/ stories, etc).
- Make this information relevant to the age and interests of your groups to aid them in learning about and getting interested in the wildlife on your site.

3.1 Assess the ecological impact of running Forest School programmes on own site
Use handout (or develop own) as the basis for assessing FS activity impact on your woodland site. This can be both negative and positive.

4.1 Define the terms 'hazard' and 'risk' with reference to Forest School

- Give an overall definition of what a hazard is at forest school and an example relevant for your site and group.
- Give an overall definition of what a risk at forest school is and an example of the risk to your group for the hazard you have provided above.

5.1 Carry out a site risk assessment and a risk- benefit assessment related to an experience at Forest School

See the guidance document - 'Risk Assessment Supporting Information' - this also includes an example of a template. Produce a risk benefit assessment for some activities you will be doing and also a risk assessment of all on site hazards (it needs to be specific to the site you are using for your sessions) – this can be 2 separate documents or one risk assessment covering both aspects.

6.1 Select and use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing for working in a range of situations at Forest School
Assessed on the course + photo evidence.

6.2 Safely check, clean, maintain and store at Forest School:
- **tools**
- **ropes/cords**

Assessed and on the course + photo evidence.

6.3 Safely use different hand tools for a range of applications at Forest School

Assessed on the course + photo evidence.

6.4 Tie and use a range of knots selecting ropes/cords for different applications at Forest School

Assessed on the course + photo evidence.

6.5 Safely make a range of craft items using woodland Materials

Partly Assessed on the course + photo evidence.
Also provide instructions and photographic evidence for making at least 2 of your items saying what techniques and materials you used to make them.

6.6 Erect temporary group shelters using tarpaulin/natural woodland materials

Assessed on the course + photo evidence.

6.7 Safely site, build, light and manage a campfire suitable for purpose

Assessed on the course + photo evidence.

6.8 Extinguish a fire and leave the site safe

Assessed on the course + photo evidence.