

8. Give examples of some outdoor activities that can have the positive effect of enhancing the a) social interaction, b) cooperation, c) communicative skills, for persons with mental or intellectual disabilities?

Is adaptation necessary for people with disabilities?

What should be taken into consideration is the accessibility of places to visit, the likely reaction of the environment as well as possible barriers for participants. Generally it is important to remember that the difference between normal environment and new incentives shouldn't be too big. New extraordinary experiences might be too much for the person and make her/him fall back on routines, stereotypes or tics. Persons with intellectual disabilities sometimes need technical equipment, e.g. communication devices or walking aids in order to be able to participate in various activities. In general the advice is that education should be adapted to fit the user not vice versa.

Working questions

9. What kind of adaptations is important in outdoor activities for persons with mental or intellectual disabilities?
10. Why is it important to start from the users starting point instead of the way round –start from education and activities, when planning outdoor activities?
11. What could be positive with choosing already known places, for outdoor learning for people with mental or intellectual disabilities?
12. Give examples of some technical or communicative devices that could facilitate participation in out door activities for persons with mental or intellectual disabilities?

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is based on values of equality and respect for the individual and the right to be included from the beginning of life. Inclusion supports a process for disabled people which incorporate their right to decent quality of life. To make inclusion a reality means that we need to develop strategies to turn the tide away from exclusive attitudes and institutionalised prejudice. The changes envisioned are much greater than we can imagine, because it implies a shift in attitudes towards disabled people, where we let go of our own interpretations of what it means to be disabled. Inclusion changes the roles of staff members, the roles of people in the environment, of parents and naturally of the disabled persons towards themselves. They become an active part of their own lives.

Working questions

13. How does the environment and society treat people with disabilities?
14. What effects could be a result of not being included?
15. What is the difference between inclusion and integration?
16. How do we make inclusion a reality, and who is going to be included in the strategies? Or who is going to be involved?

Attitudes and Socialisation

For a long time the intellectually disabled have received special treatment and been seen as different from others. Negative descriptions and negative attitudes towards disabled people have a direct bearing on their chances to have or not to have social relationships. Changing attitudes from negative to positive is an imperative. To believe in the disabled person's resources in his or her participation and personal abilities makes social inclusion possible. Social relationships are important for quality of life. To develop the necessary social skills for successful interaction is important for everyone including people with disabilities.

Working questions

17. What is meant by the concept socialisation?
18. In what ways can socialisation be strengthened for intellectually disabled persons?
19. How do negative attitudes towards disabled people affect their social relationships?
20. Try to find some outdoor activities that could support the development of socialisation?

Treatment of intellectually disabled persons

An intellectually disabled person may require additional support in order to benefit fully from the environment but does not alter the fact that basic human needs are universal and transcend intellectual capacity. Support may be purely linguistic, practical or emotional. Intellectually disabled persons are often treated as a "group of intellectually disabled". It's wrong to treat people according to a "group definition", everyone needs to be seen as an individual and have personal contact. There is often a risk that treatment becomes a routine, a nonchalant action or just a treatment without deeper thoughts of our role in relation to the intellectually disabled person.

Working questions

21. What is meant by support and treatment?
22. What kind of perspectives ought to be involved in support and treatment for intellectually disabled persons?
23. What is the role of carers and others responsible for providing care that sustains the individual?
24. Why is it important for the care giver to reflect on issues like awareness and commitment?

The Right to Education

Education in today's global and multicultural society implies the need to keep up with rapid technological development and continuously demanding new challenges. In order to catch up with these demands competent citizens and flexible education is needed. By this expression learning and education is no longer just an issue confined to childhood but is relevant to adults as well. Informal lifelong learning is thus justified and wanted.

Working questions

25. The right to education is formulated in several official international Conventions and other international and national documents, try to find a national document where the right to education for everyone is emphasized?
26. What is the difference between formal and informal education?
27. In what kind of education do you think outdoor learning is suitable?
28. In what different perspectives is adult education important?

Learning as a link – values for the learner

Many adults with intellectual disabilities are often isolated and made passive in every day life. To start a learning process can give new courage to access and explore new surroundings step by step. There are many positive values of outdoor learning, for example physical, intellectual, social and emotional. Physical exercise strengthens muscles and bones and trains balance and coordination ability. The opportunity to explore other new surroundings stimulates the intellect and to be out of doors is to be part of society.

Working questions

29. In what way is outdoor learning positive for intellectually disabled persons?
30. Give examples of some positive effects?
31. It can also be frightening to be outdoors, why?
32. How can we manage the fact that it also can be frightening to be outdoors?

Section 2

Introduction to the learning modules

The learning modules in section 2 show some examples of exercises (modules) that were carried out within the project. The purpose of the modules is to give concrete examples of things and activities to do in an outdoor surrounding and to awake curiosity and stimulate others to do the same thing. The modules are organized into four categories based on the different learning spaces used. These are: Urban environments, Parks & gardens, Nature, Sea & lake.

Development of modules within the project

The different national organizations/partners within the project created so called pilot-groups, which carried out the different types of activities shown in this book. The pilot-groups consisted of small groups with participants from the different target groups defined within the project. The teachers/leaders or other care givers involved made notes as to how the exercises functioned in reality.

Learning modules

When describing the different learning modules the following headlines are used:

- Learning environment -This headline describes the learning space used.
- Learners -For which target group is this module suitable?
- Main objectives -Describes aims and goals for the learners.
- Specific objectives -Describes deeper aims and goals.
- Exercises -Describes the specific activities that were done within the module.
- Tips/study questions for the teachers -Examples how the teacher/leader could give support during the activity.
- Accessibility -The accessibility of the place is described in different perspectives.
- Pedagogical methods -Description of the pedagogical methods used in the module.
- Impact and benefits on learners -What effects for the learners were discovered?
- Equipment/material/literature -Here is the equipment used in the activity listed.
- Problems, obstacles and limitations -What specific problems were obtained during the activity?

Working questions

33. Choose a participant group and develop an activity each, concerning the four learning space categories: **Urban environments, Parks and gardens, Nature, Sea and lake.** Use your knowledge about your own town/ home area and choose a suitable place based on the knowledge of the group you are making activities for. Draw up the activity/learning module on the basis of headlines mentioned above.

Questions to help you.

- Which learning spaces can you find in your home area?
- Is this learning environment suitable for your group in means of accessibility for example?
- List some advantages and some disadvantages with the place?
- What could be learnt from this learning place?
- Which pedagogical tools and methods are suitable for the place, for the chosen subject and the target group?

Section 3

Daniel - a Case Study

Daniel one member of a LIM course in spring 2005 seemed to feel better and learn more during outdoor lessons. When the LIM group started on their first outing to the park to do some maths (throw, estimate and measure), Daniel was very happy. He helped to prepare the place and he loved throwing. He counted much better than in the classroom and the next week he remembered what they had been doing. **The LIM course seemed to offer** Daniel a more appropriate way of learning. Being offered chances to leave the classroom and make use of all his senses made the teacher realize, that he had a lot of skills. The longer he attended the classes, the more confident he became. He spoke more; he started to cooperate not only with his old friend but with the two young women as well. Generally he opened up and told about his interests and dreams. Being out in the park he was very much aware of his environment, discovered interesting things and was busy touching and comparing surfaces and structures. He recognized the chestnut tree and counted the parts of the leaf.

Working questions

34. In what ways did Daniel change in behaviour, expression and in learning during the outdoor course?
35. What do outdoor lessons offer in comparison with indoor learning?
36. Specify what was Daniel offered in the two outdoor activities described, that seemed to be important for Daniel, both for his well being and his learning?
37. Discuss the correlation between use of our senses, wellbeing and learning ability?

Interviews concerning Outdoor Education -with users and staff in Germany and Sweden.

The aim of this brief interview study was to increase the understanding of Outdoor Education, and what it means for adults with intellectual disabilities to attend the courses outdoors and how they as (end) users describe what they have learnt from participating. The partners in the LIM project were asked to go back to their courses to find participants as well as staff members, parents, teachers and if possible also a personal assistants which could be interviewed. The questions might be simple but they can give a good view from a user perspective which is very important in this project.

Questions to the participant/end user were:

- What did you like most about the course, what was the best?
- What did you not like, what was no good?
- Would you like to take more courses outdoors? Can you tell me why....?

The most important result is that it was important for the participants to experience something new to talk about and to meet peers. They had something to look forward to. The new experience gave opportunity to communicate with peers during and after the event took place.

Outdoor Education for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities. An empirical study in the municipalities in Sweden.

Services for people with intellectual disabilities in Sweden are provided by the government, county councils and municipalities. The aim of this study is to increase knowledge of outdoor activities among the administrators in Swedish municipalities. This study was done by the Swedish LIM partner team from Stockholm Institute of Education. Data was collected by sending out a brief questionnaire to all 290 municipalities in Sweden. In total about 60 % answered the questionnaire. In the results it appears that the majority of the municipalities arranged some kind of outdoor education or activities for adults with intellectual disabilities. Daily activities with emphasis on work out of doors and leisure time activities were the dominating kind of activities. It also appears in the study that the issue of the value of outdoor activities was not really reflected upon.

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