FDegEcCons

Module Code: EC004

Work Based Learning Project

Student Number: 25630

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Contents

Title: **An Investigation: Can Teaching Woodland Skills Increase Self Esteem?**

1.0 Proposal

1.1 Summary

This report will test the hypothesis that some young people who have been failed by mainstream schooling will benefit from being taught in a different teaching environment in an outdoor setting where meeting success in practical tasks increases self-esteem.

1.2 Employer

The research is to be carried out as an Assistant Countryside Ranger for the Broads Authority at the request of Russell Wilson, the manager of Whitlingham Country Park, Norwich. See Appendix 9.

1.3 Rationale

Working at the Country Park requires some personnel to engage with a wide variety of public interfaces, one of which is participation in Forest Schools activities with visiting children, as described later. Understanding the methods used and analysing their effectiveness is helpful in improving performance and reflective practice.

Benefits accrue for the children if staff are aware of the effects of their work, and staff benefit by increased job satisfaction.

It is an expected outcome that self-esteem is increased in children attending these outdoor schools. A secondary expectation is an improvement in academic performance and a reduction in problematic behaviour. Low self-esteem and disenfranchisement are often at the root of the deprivation and social exclusion culture which blights our society. (Tabbush & O'Brien, 2003) Is it too fanciful to suggest that reintroduction of natural spaces to housing and education might have a benefit? Research on a Chicago housing development found that crime rates were lower in areas with greenery as opposed to areas of little or no greenery (Kuo and Sullivan, 2001).

1.31 Wider context

There is a movement in education to include a strategic element such as is typified by Forest Schools, in which holistic development occurs in a woodland setting. (NCC, 2008)

The Government initiative, the Every Child Matters (ECM) Green Paper, lists five important outcomes for people from 0 to 19 years old: "Be healthy;

Stay safe;

Enjoy and achieve;

Make a positive contribution and

Achieve economic well-being" (ECM, 2008)

The need for these policies is declared by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, DCSF, "Being out of education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 18 is an enormous waste of young people's potential and their contribution to society. What is more, being NEET is linked to a number of other poor outcomes, including low levels of attainment and teenage conception." (ECM 2, 2008)

To achieve these outcomes the DCSF have a reform programme for 14-19 year olds with the educational aim of preparation for success in life. "To achieve this aim we need to get young people to stay in learning now, get them on the right courses, keep them there and help them to achieve. More young people are achieving more L2 qualifications year by year, but there are still over 25% of young people who do not achieve L2 by the age of 19." (DCSF, 2008) Note that the National Qualifications Framework has redefined its levels: L1 is lower grades of GCSE and L2 is grades C-A, which may be considered optimistic for many. (QCA, 2007)

1.32 Local context

One of the more recent developments in education is a wider use of outdoor activities for school children.

While working with groups of children at Whitlingham Country Park near Norwich, it is apparent that changes in their self image take place. The work involves both recreational activities and practical useful tasks performed outdoors, mainly in a woodland setting. (Personal observation)

This report will discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of the Forest Schools programme in increasing self-esteem, as the manager of the Country Park has said that he would like to see more formal evidence of this.

"Many of these children have had not had success in conventional schools and often have been excluded to protect the smooth running of classes and even for the safety of staff and other pupils." (Wilson, 2007)

A combination of perceived injustices and unfairness and low self esteem may lead to peer approval of deviance, (DeWit *et al*, 2000), so society has much to gain in finding effective ways to remedy this.

1.4 Evaluation

Assessing the effectiveness of the programme

Assessments will be made of the general level of self-esteem of each child before their participation in the programme. As attendance is of variable duration and frequency, some correlation between attendance and changed levels of self-esteem may become apparent.

The duration of the study is a period of six months ending in March 2009, by which time reassessments will have been completed.

The very small sample size of the project means that statistical extrapolation is not useful – but it is to be hoped that any general results will be useful in future related work.

2.0 Main Project Report

Fig 1 – Spontaneous coordinated teamwork during a coppicing day
at Whitlingham Marsh (Photo: the author)

Introduction.

2.1 What is Forest School?

"Forest School is an inspirational process that offers children and young people opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and self esteem, through hands on learning experiences in a local woodland environment." (FEI, 2005)

Forest Schools help build self esteem and independence by practical experience of nature: it is delivered by trained and accredited practitioners within a programme but not necessarily within a Forest!

Programmes are tailored to meet the needs of individuals and groups and as learners grow in skill, trust, understanding, confidence and self-esteem. They have the time and space and practical, repetitive, hands-on experiences which the Forest Schools ethos allows them, and practitioners can step back and observe what is needed to facilitate, encourage and inspire them. (NCC, 2008)

2.11 Where did Forest School start?

The idea of Forest Schools originated in Scandinavia, where outdoor living and learning is more embedded in society. The belief that movement in nature is essential to child development means that children spend a day a week in outdoor learning, throughout their schooling. They learn care and

respect for the environment, themselves and others. Forest Schools encourage appreciation of the wider, natural world which should carry over into later life.

In 1995 Forest School was introduced in the UK by educators who were so impressed with the results they saw in Denmark that they developed an introductory programme.

Research has also shown that children with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties especially benefit from the Forest Schools approach. (Falch-Lovesey *et al,* 2007)

2.13 What we do to repair the damage which can cause "bad" behaviour.

Forest Schools improve behavioural problems by modifying the patterns that have been acquired as a result of the many factors that may have caused them. Whatever the causes of a child's poor behaviour, Forest Schools are effective. Understanding the context is always helpful and helps in building empathy and planning the programme.

We model consistency and set standards in a safe supportive FS environment, and trust is built up as the programme progresses.

"SMART" targets or "TATT" - tiny attainable tickable targets - (Hayden, 1997) are set which can be rewarded and this encourages small progressive steps: for example, learning to take turns or to look out for each other.

Positive reinforcement and praise raise self esteem and motivate achievement. When giving instructions and advice, we do not draw attention to faults and failures, but build on success and divert away from inappropriate behaviour.

Questions are asked, but not testing ones, we offer choices where possible, and encourage positive responses by asking appropriately. We use straightforward language without hidden meaning or superior tone of voice.

2.2 What we do at Forest School

What we do is of less consequence than how we do it, but for all groups a simple plan for a session must prepare them for what to expect.

A group of Year 10 and 11 teenagers are the subject of this evaluation, and for them we find practical useful woodland and conservation tasks which need to be done.

The real need for a completed task can be explained to some learners much more easily than the abstractions with which they have so often been confounded in the classroom.

Teamwork, see Fig. 1, safe use of tools, blades and fire, care for each other, feeding and sheltering each other and enjoying exuberant "wild" games, are all combined with learning the skills needed to achieve the highest possible standards for completion of projects. No deadlines are given and at all times individuals are set up to succeed and praised when they do. When mistakes occur, there are no recriminations, but responsibilities have to be accepted. Division of tasks, cooperation and individual

achievement are all valued. Ownership of the completed work is surprisingly often the main contention – these learners contest for the right to say they worked hard!

Figs 2 and Fig 3 below, show practical tasks can increase self-esteem.

Fig.2 – Small group working hard, digging out a large tree root. (Photo: the author)

Fig.3 – Success after hours of digging.
The root is now a trophy and self esteem seems very high. (Photo: the author)

2.3 What is Self-esteem?

Self esteem is an emotional characteristic which arises from the comparison of a self-image with an ideal self (Woods, 2000) - the individual may obtain ideals from wide-ranging and sometimes traumatic

experience in personal life or in the virtual life of the media and the internet. The difference seen in the comparison may be unconscious and may be exaggerated by depressive or other mental states.

At an early age a positive self-image develops from secure attachments (Woods, 2000), primarily from maternal influence.

Later development of the self-image is also affected by perceived or expressed valuations from outsiders - praise or criticism. Reinforcing or countering this can be esteem acquired from social identity with a group having high self-esteem (Woods, 2000).

Self esteem can be raised for negative reasons – such as the exercise of prejudice towards outsiders or "out-group" scapegoats, and this is also a learned behaviour which can characterise a group. (Woods, 2000) In larger groups anonymity allows "bad" behavioural norms to establish (Zimbardo, 1969).

Self esteem is commonly low or very low in teenage children, especially those with Statements of Special Educational Needs.

Self esteem is affected by self-awareness of physical problems: these can be undiagnosed side effects of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) which is often associated with motor control problems, particularly the "inattentive" sub-group type of ADHD. (Parker & Larkin, 2003)

Low self-esteem is indicated by any of a number of traits, including inhibited body language, lack of eye contact, inarticulacy, refusal, lethargy, and other traits which are encompassed by the Emotional and Behavioural Disorder diagnosis with which many children with Learning Difficulties are Statemented as having Special Educational Needs.

Low self esteem may also be demonstrated by loud, apparently confident behaviour which is compensatory.(Wilson & Zangwill, 2003)

2.4 Measuring self-esteem.

Structured responses to surveys and questionnaires are sometimes arranged on a Guttman scale – that is, such that responses are elicited in a logical progression, with subsequent responses reinforcing the trend of previous ones. Often this is difficult to do without causing confusion in the analyst! An example is the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE, see Appendix). RSE is a number which measures global self-esteem. It was designed to be a Guttman scale, which means that the RSE items were to represent a continuum of self-worth statements ranging from statements that are endorsed even by individuals with low self-esteem to statements that are endorsed only by persons with high self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) scored his 10-question scale as a six-item Guttman scale. The first item included questions 1 through 3 and received a positive score if two or three of its questions were answered positively.

Similarly items II and VI combined responses to questions 4 and 5 and questions 9 and 10 respectively. Questions 6 through 8 constitute simple items. For negatively worded RSE questions, responses that disagree and so indicate high self-esteem, the scores were inverted. Rosenberg (1965) demonstrated that his scale was a Guttman scale by obtaining high enough reproducibility and scalability coefficients. (MHSIP, 2000) The example RSE pro-forma based on a design from MHSIP, in the Appendix: it was found to be too general to be useful.

Also, the usefulness of this highly analytical technique in the context of Forest Schools is doubtful – although Peacock, Hine & Pretty (2007) report that RSE is widely used in health psychology, and they used it in their study on Green Health, the RSE test was used for older respondents. The apparently quantitative data arising from its use and the ease with which statistical analysis and graphic representation can be subsequently contrived may disguise the inherently judgemental and subjective responses being recorded.

A more obvious way to evaluate self-esteem is by asking appropriate unstructured or semi-structured questions and filling in a more structured questionnaire later. The nature of the subject means that this is unlikely to be successful unless done verbally in a subtle and highly personal way by a trusted researcher.

The young people attending Whitlingham are from several backgrounds. Some attend privately when recreational courses are run during vacation; others are from local schools who value the service for all their pupils; others are excluded pupils attending the NR5 Project in Norwich and yet others are NEET youths attending YMCA Training. All ages are represented. All attending are already monitored by teaching staff, so their observations and those of parents will be collected, where possible and analysed. For this to be done, liaison and permissions will be sought. A client-list of children from various groups and backgrounds about whom enough information can be collected will be made.

There are known effects on the behaviour and development which indicate improved self-esteem.

Low self-esteem is an aspect of a form of depression – self-criticism, negative feelings about the self, as opposed to general negativity or future negativity or hopelessness, (Beck *et al*, 1997). A record will be logged which notes when and how these feelings are expressed during contact time which the client groups, including when reported by other teaching and support staff.

Focussing on what did not go well is one example of general negative thinking about the world, another is perceiving negativity in others without sufficient evidence, (Greenberger and Padesky, 1995). As these symptoms of depression are mainly vocalised ones, we can pick up on them in most cases, but some children have disorders, such as autism, which can mislead. (Personal observation)

Another aspect of low self esteem is the use of drugs. Three main reasons for this are that using illegal drugs by those already rejected by society is expected behaviour, negative self-attitudes actually cause self-harming behaviour and peer influences increase as self esteem falls, (Emler, 2001).

Behaviour arising from lack of self esteem can be hard to understand. An otherwise intelligent lad may not work for his exams and so have an excuse for not passing. His own conception of himself as a clever lad is thus untouched. *Attribution theory* describes this as a way of dodging failure, of not learning in order to protect a fragile sense of self. He won't start to learn again until he is strong enough in his self-confidence to take success *or* failure in his stride. (Handy, 2002)

In Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model, after individuals have satisfied physical and safety needs and have begun to satisfy their need to belong, they generally want to be more than just a member of their group. They then feel the need for esteem, both self-esteem and recognition from others (Accel, 2008). If the group can gain recognition and esteem to share among all its members, belonging to the group will also be a source of self-esteem.

It is said that there is normally an increase in general self-esteem with age in teenagers, (Maïano et al, 2004), so the therapeutic effectiveness of any activity might be masked by this.

2.4 Expected outcomes

Fig.4 – At start of project, self esteem seems low. (Photo: the author)

The end of the Summer Break and start of Autumn Term was a low point for some, see Fig 4, above.

If in mainstream education, emotional intelligence is either undervalued or unrecognised, the Forest School alternative has potential to compensate with some learners.

Cobb wrote about the interaction of children with landscape as a parallel with our evolution: "Every child, even the handicapped one, must integrate a world image with body image in order to know where and who he is." (Cobb, E. 2004) This is part of the context and ethos underlying these educational activities and their effectiveness needs to be demonstrated.

2.5 Resources used

Literature about forest schools is plentiful in libraries and the internet, but other resources such as the Forestry Commission's Forest Research, the Local Education Authority's Environmental Education

department or The Forest School Training Company, who run OCN accredited training, are good sources of data.

2.6 Past Case Studies

A major Outdoor Classroom study of several hundred children for the NFER found that although the primary focus was on cognitive developments, learning about oneself and about working with others became for them one of the primary benefits of working in the outdoor classroom. Apart from curriculum-related outcomes, young people also referred to the development of confidence, social skills and understanding (Dillon *et al.*, 2005)

In another study, the impacts of Forest School were explored observing changes in 24 children in 3 case studies over 8-months. The children benefited from increased confidence, social skills, language and communication, motivation, concentration, physical skills and knowledge and understanding. There were similar positive secondary effects of Forest School on teachers, parents, and the extended family. (O'Brien & Murray, 2007)

When setting up pioneering Forest Schools at Houghton Hall in Norfolk, a key object was the increase in confidence and self-esteem for participants. "Positive teacher attitudes had a significant effect on children's self esteem and thus potential learning. The outdoor environment offered an appropriate context in which to achieve this. The Forest Schools ethos offered itself as a powerful tool for developing emotional intelligence (Falch-Lovesey et al, 2007).

Each individual forest school operates in its own way depending on local circumstance and the people who are involved. For example, although the desired outcomes are similar for all ages and abilities in terms of increasing self-confidence and self-esteem, each particular project will be addressing a specific manifestation of confidence. For younger children this may be about having enough confidence to take part in activities as part of a large group, yet for young teenagers it may be that they need to gain the confidence to work as individuals. (Murray, 2003)

In a more recent Forest Research report (O'Brien & Murray, 2006) describing and evaluating Forest Schools, the authors quote from the Forest Education Initiative (2005) definition,

> "An inspirational process that offers children, young people and adults regular opportunities to achieve, and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland environment."

In the original FEI words, the phrase "*local* woodland environment" is used, and it is true that the value of locality is one which must be recognised. Learners are more likely to "take ownership of" or invest in a local place to which they might return in future.

As O'Brien & Murray (2006) quote, "'It was repeatedly noted that children with less confidence in their physical ability and lower self-esteem became colder more quickly than the others who would rush

around and keep busy. Justin was less clumsy at Forest School than in the classroom, allowing his teacher and the practitioner to see that he could move effectively in a different environment. [Justin] shows no sign outside of clumsiness or lack of spatial awareness he sometimes shows inside.'
Practitioner, Finmere, Oxfordshire"

Improved self-esteem was demonstrated by children asking to visit woodlands at weekends and in the school holidays, and showing parents their new knowledge (O'Brien & Murray; 2006)

The raising of self esteem may be so emotionally rewarding that it "may result in positive changes in self definition, which makes the performance of the activity more deeply rooted in the person's values and orientations" (Martilla et al, 1998)

The health benefits of exercise can also extend to improved self-esteem, and an evaluation of the Chopwell Wood Health project described by O'Brien (2005) describes how four local schools visited the Forestry Commission woodland where FC rangers and volunteers engaged the children in a variety of activities. The evaluation was by questionnaire (these were not described) and indicated raised self-esteem and awareness, and also an improved perception of the woods as a "healthy place to be".
O'Brien (2005) also cites Murray's (2003) evaluation.

See also example case study in Appendix 8

2.0 Conclusions and analysis of findings

The core study sample was of 12 children, most already having some previous experience of Forest Schools at Whitlingham, and all known to the investigator. Data-sheets in Appendix 4 and 5 describes the group at the start of the study, and at the end. During the course of working with them, notes were taken when relevant to this study. As can be expected, self-esteem like other feelings will vary hourly, daily and over longer periods. Its assessment can be affected and can affect the observer's or practitioner's own self-esteem. Self-esteem affects learning outcomes – this study shows they changed for this group?

There has been a long-term gain in self-esteem for staff and colleagues.

Some questions remain.

- Has the group's mood changed – at a group level? Group norms include esteem.
- Have some individuals gained esteem at the expense of others?
- Is there any element of self-fulfilment in the expectation of higher self-esteem?

Halfway through this study, the group won The John Muir Discovery Award, an environmental award scheme focused on wild places. It encourages awareness and responsibility for the natural environment, in a spirit of fun, adventure and exploration. Certificates were presented by the Park Manager, Russell Wilson, and evidence of self-esteem was quite apparent (see fig 5, below).

Fig.5 – John Muir Discovery Awards for NR5

presented at Whitlingham – 18/12/2008

(Photo: the author)

More recently, when ASDAN Gold Award certificates were presented to NR5 by Hilary Benn, the Environment Minister, at the headquarters of the Broads Authority, self-esteem was awash, for both staff and children, see Fig 6.below

Fig 6 - Hilary Benn, the Environment Minister,

at the headquarters of the Broads Authority.

(Photo: the Broads Authority)

Fig.7 shows the children with their ASDAN Gold Awards and the Environment Minister

Fig.7 NR5 and the Environment Minister

– 16/3/2009 (Photo: the Broads Authority)

The Minister spoke to individuals and their responses showed a new positive self-image and a better understanding of their roles.

These externally awards are an essential validation of the Forest School results, and independent accreditation gives sponsors confidence in funding the work.

Word count 3800

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Appendix 1 – The RSE Scale

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Assessment Scale (RSE)

Contains ten items that can be used to assess global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965)

Assessment: 1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

In this scale, a response of Agree or Strongly Agree is to be scored as positive, unless the item is marked by (R),
in which case a response of Disagree or Strongly Disagree is to be scored as positive.

I   Two or three positive responses is considered positive.

   1) __   (R)   I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

   2) __   (R)   I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

   3) __   All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

II   One or two positive responses is considered positive.

   4) __   (R)   I am able to do things as well as most other people.

   5) __   I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

III 6) __   (R)   I take a positive attitude toward myself.

IV   7) __   (R)   On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

V   8) __   I wish I could have more respect for myself.

VI   One or two positive responses is considered positive.

   9) __   I certainly feel useless at times.

   10) __   At times I think I am no good at all.

Appendix 2 –

Whitlingham staff

Jim   Forest Schools Level 3 Trainee
Richard   Forest Schools Level 1 Trainee
Rodney   Forest Schools Level 1 Trainee
Russell   Forest Schools Level 3 Practitioner
Paul   Forest Schools Level 3 Practitioner
Edgar   Forest Schools Level 3 Practitioner
Visiting staff
Sonia   Behaviour Coordinator
 Ady   Former assistant
 Alice   Former assistant coordinator
 Dennis   Manager of Future Education
 Jody   Assistant
 John B.   Former coordinator
Teresa   Assistant

Appendix 3 –

Notes for data-sheet 1 – start of project – 11-09-2008

For each learner on the sheet mark appropriately any aspect which you think could effect their self-esteem

When we do this again after a period of time, if any of these aspects have changed, they could be factors to be accounted for.

Some factors are unlikely to change, but should be noted, as they can nevertheless be mitigated by others

In the case of Forest School, simply mark the number of sessions attended to date (it is usually a weekly event in school term)

Fixed factors which cause self-esteem		**Variable factors which change self-esteem**	
Nationality	UK	Age	Yrs
Ethnicity	W	Emotional maturity	Immature/ independent
Special Needs	ADD, ADHD, Autism, other	Religion	Possible influence
		Medical	Effects noted
		Physical growth	if abnormal
Educational sources of self-esteem		Body image	mostly a problem
KS assessments	If known	Sport	Eg football
A.L.A.N.	If passed / failed / not taken	Group status	loner, dyad, or whole group member
GCSE	If any	Family status	M/F/Both
Forest School	Number of weeks	Siblings	Number older/younger
Forest School Awards	John Muir / ASDAN		

Appendix 4 – Data-sheet 1 – start of project – 11-09-2008

	Age	emotional maturity	Nationality	Ethnicity	Religion	Family status	Siblings	Special Needs	KS assessments	A.L.A.N	GCSE	Body image	physical growth	Sport	Forest School	Finished
B Alex	17.0					B		Y							34	X
B Bradley	14.9	0.5				B		Y			MESA				0	
B Danny	15.4	1				M		Y			MESA			Fb	44	
B Dayle	15.0	1				M		Y+Aut			MESA			Fb	24	
B George	16.6					B									34	X
B Jamie	16.6					M									12	X
B Kurt	15.0					F		ADD						Fb	36	
B Nathan	15.5					M					MESA			Fb	0	
B Pete	15.8					B					MESA			Fb	32	
B Ryan B.	15.6					M+S				F,P	MESA			Fb + P	44	
B Ryan T.	16.5					B									12	X
B Shane	15.5					B					MESA	Y		Fb + P	34	
B Cameron	15.5					M		ADHD			MESA			Fb	18	
B Ty	15.5					M		Ep			MESA			Fb	8	
B Tom	15.5					M									0	
B Marcus	15.3					B					MESA				0	
G Sarah	15.7					M					MESA				44	
G Tarah	15.6					M		ADHD		F,F	MESA				44	
G Zoe	16.6					M		SH							44	X
G Becks	16.5					B		ADHD							8	X
G Chantelle	16.3					M		OCD+ADD			MESA				12	X

Appendix 5 – Data-sheet 1 – end of project – 31-03-2009

	Age	emotional maturity	Nationality	Ethnicity	Religion	Family status	Siblings	Special Needs	KS assessments	A.L.A.N	GCSE	Body image	physical growth	Sport	Forest School	Finished
B Bradley	15.5	0.5				B		Y			MESA				12	
B Danny	15.9	1				M		Y			MESA			Fb	60	
B Dayle	15.5	1				M		Y+Aut			MESA			Fb	40	
B Kurt	15.5					GF		ADD						Fb	36	◹
B Nathan	16.0					M					MESA			Fb	12	
B Pete	16.3					B					MESA			Fb	48	
B Ryan B.	16.1					M+SF				F,P	MESA			Fb + P	60	
B Shane	16.0					B					MESA	Y		Fb + P	50	
B Cameron	16.0					M		ADHD			MESA			Fb	34	
B Ty	16.0					M		Ep			MESA			Fb	24	
B Tom	16.0					M									7	⊠
B Marcus	15.8					B					MESA				12	
G Sarah	16.2					M					MESA				60	
G Tarah	16.0					M		ADHD		F,F	MESA				60	

Appendix 6 – Notes for Data-sheet 1 – end of project – 31-03-2009

Whitlingham staff			Visiting staff	
Jim	16 of 19 sessions		Ady	2 sessions - Former assistant
Richard	5 sessions		Alice	Former assistant coordinator
Rodney	1 session		Dennis	Manager of Future Education
Russell	17 sessions		Jody	16 sessions as assistant
Paul	1 session		John B.	Former coordinator
Edgar	2 sessions		Sonia	17 sessions as Behaviour Coordinator
			Teresa	12 sessions as assistant

Many factors were left blank in the tables, as they were regarded as not being issues with the children.

Where marked on this and previous sheet, abbreviations are as below:-

Family status - B for both parents present, M for single mother, F father, GF grandfather

Sport - Fb football - not competitive : P snooker and pool

GCSE - all marked MESA about to sit Maths, English, Science and Art

A.L.A.N. Adult Literacy and Numeracy, F-fail, P-pass

Special Needs were marked Y for statemented children, all EBD, LD

Aut - for Autism - actually probably borderline Asperger's Syndrome with ADD

SH self harming

OCD - obsessive compulsive

Ep - Epilepsy

Appendix 7– Examples of Interview records
Example 1

Semi-structured interview record

Date	24/03/2009
Name	Craig Deal
Role	YMCA Pastoral Care Worker
Organisation	Larkman Primary School
FS experience	Two years
Age Groups	5 to 8
Extent of low self-esteem	Since doing Forest School about half of the kids I've worked with have had some kind of self esteem issues.
Perception of relative success	It terms of success I think that Forest School is far more effective than any other projects I've been involved in running.
Relative to what?	For 6 years I've been running self esteem programmes with different levels of success.
Evidence	I often get notes of thanks from teaching staff, thanking me for taking children on Forest School, because they have noticed a difference in class. I've had comments from parents too. Teaching staff that have come out on Forest School sessions always love it and can see the benefit of it. Previously it has been dependent on outside funding, but from September the School plans to invest in Forest School.

Example 2

Semi-structured interview record

Date	01/04/2009
Name	Sonia Bush
Role	Behaviour Coordinator
Organisation	Future Education
FS experience	2 Years
Age Groups	KS4- Years 10,11 (14-16 years old)
Extent of low self-esteem	Almost all children here have low self-esteem to start with - put it at 98%.
Perception of relative success	At least half have benefited greatly, it has provided the bulk of their CV content, especially the Cerificates from John Muir and ASDAN
Relative to what?	Other experience has been with disability and Special Needs, not primarily with self-esteem issues.
Evidence	More egaged with their work after visiting Whitlingham They have built respect and relationships are better When they have been refused permission to attend Forest School, it is for behavioural reasons, this exclusion from the group is usually a deterrent to "bad" behaviour. One girl, T., is often happy to be excluded however, so presumably her self esteem is not improved by Forest School Some children, such as boy Dn., show fear of mainstream schools and benefit from much smaller groups.

Appendix 8– Example Case Study

Craig Deal - YMCA Pastoral Care Worker - Larkman Primary School

I met Mark (name has been changed) in Y3
Mark is a quiet lad, small for his age and quietly gets on with his work at the back of class.
He is never pushing his way through crowds to be the first in line.
He'll be the last to put up his hand and offer any information or answers to questions.
He'd probably be more of a victim in school if he was noticed a bit more.
And although he is doing ok academically he would do better if he had the confidence to ask more questions.

I started working with Mark when he was in Y3, although I had already met him my funding at the time was to work with middle school but at the time we moved into a Primary Mark moved up into Y4 and I started doing some work with him around his confidence and self esteem.
During that time he came on Forest School for 6 weeks.
The group of 10 children I took out at that time had very low confidence and self esteem to the point we had tears before we got onto the bus as some of the children were unsure about leaving a familiar surrounding.

When the children were given the chance to explore the woods Mark would be one of the children who wouldn't really go very far into the woods.
For the first few weeks Mark quietly got on with some of the activities but we saw very little difference.
Each week though he'd be doing a bit more and exploring more and more. By the end he was cutting down trees, involved in appropriately lighting fire, telling stories while we sat around the fire and talking, just talking, he'd come up to me and asked questions about the woods or how to do an activity.

Each week his teacher would get a few children that had been at the woods to stand up in class and tell the whole class what activities they had been doing that morning.
Mark would stand up and show art and craft and explain how to tie knots he had learnt using demonstrations so the whole class could see.
His risen confidence won him a school gold award and his dad often swung by my office to thank me for the difference in his son.

He is now in Y5 and although still quiet and still slightly unassuming Mark is a team player, getting involved and asking questions and still refers back to his time in doing Forest School.

Appendix 9– Project Proposal Letter

Jim Froud,   **Whitlingham Charitable Trust,**
4 Kingsley Road,   **18 Colegate,**
Norwich,   **Norwich,**
Norfolk   **Norfolk NR3 1BQ**
NR1 3RB   **01603 617332**

10th September 2008

Forest Schools

Work Based Learning Project

Dear Jim,

As manager of Whitlingham CP, I would like to see more formal evidence of the
effectiveness of the benefits to young people who attend Forest Schools here.

"Do Forest Schools increase self esteem?", your Work Based Learning Project for Easton
College, is an opportunity I welcome and I look forward to seeing the report.

Yours faithfully,

Russell Wilson

Manager