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# **That's not MY Gruffalo!**



**Tracy Hayes & Caroline Larmour**

**University of Cumbria**

**Working with Children, Young People & Families**

# About us

Both:

- Lecturers on Working with Children, Young People and Families, University of Cumbria, Carlisle Campus
- Have four children each
- Background as practitioners in family learning (amongst many other things!)

Tracy Hayes: Doctoral Researcher in Outdoor Studies, due to complete in 2016

Caroline Larmour: Due to start Doctoral Research in 2016 looking into creativity in learning

# Three main aims

- To share some of Tracy's research, a qualitative exploration into young people's relationship with nature. This takes the form of a Fable (short story with a moral(s))
- Caroline will lead us in a shared exploration of this story, from a family perspective
- Discussion on the impact of activities promoting children's (re)-connection with nature, focused on the use of stories.



# Tracy's research

My research is a qualitative exploration of young people's relationship with nature, by considering how young people make sense of outdoor learning experiences

I draw inspiration from Rachel Carson.  
And Enid Blyton!

I make use of stories/fables – my own  
and others – to generate discussion...



# Background to the Gruffalo Trail

## Gruffalo sculptures

If you venture into the deep dark wood you may bump into the Gruffalo... Fifteen lucky forests have been joined by a giant wooden Gruffalo.

Each Gruffalo has been carved in a different position - the one at Wyre Forest is fast asleep!

(<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/inf-d-9htmte>)



# At the end of the visit we talked...

Tracy asked Emma (8) some questions...

Did you learn more about the story?

Did you learn more about the place?

If you were to rewrite  
the Gruffalo story, what  
would happen?



# Activity – This is MY Gruffalo!



# Impact of activities

“Head for the ... car park and park up opposite – (you’ll need some change for the car park)...”

“I’d been playing The Gruffalo CD in the car to get into the mood...”

“When you arrive, you can collect your Gruffalo Trail map for 50p (£2.00 in some places) from the shop ... although you may want to blindfold the kids/leave them outside with another adult as the shop is full of Gruffalo merchandise...”

“My little one loved the freedom of running around the woodland and it took a bit of persuading to get him to abandon running up and down the wooden bridge to find the next lots of animals...”

<http://westessexmums.co.uk/2015/06/07/review-gruffalo-trail-thorndon-country-park-brentwood/>



*Suppose you read a novel and someone asked you to recount it. You would not tell the story in the same words as the author... what you have remembered ... is your own version of it (Petty, 2009: 6).*



# Spaces & Places

Stories are ... *based on culturally defined and historically situated interpretations and personal experiences.* (Sarantakos, 2005: 39)

*What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place when we endow it with value.* (Tuan, 1977:6)

A place is a ...*collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values and feelings that individuals or groups associate with a particular locality.* (Williams and Stewart, 1998: 19)

*When these environments become irrelevant to what we are doing, they will lose meaning for us and we will cease to inhabit them in any meaningful way. Anywhere is nowhere...*

*With loss of place, with placelessness, we are deprived of the aesthetic experiences particular places provide.*

*Second, we lose touch—with our bodies and other people. Last, we lose a sense of place altogether. ” (Kupfer, 2007, p.39)*

# Summary

*All our explanations can be seen as stories. Whether we call them myths, legends, fables or hard fact, they are all stories. Our most precious scientific processes are still stories: patterns spun to explain observations, rhythms of words that change and grow as our understanding changes and patterns that might help to explain what is going on around us ...we all hunger for stories...*

(MacLellan, 2007, p.165)

# Thank you for listening

To continue the conversation, please contact us...



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## Pictures

Title slide: *The Gruffalo's Child* available from

[http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02086/gruffaloschild\\_2086684b.jpg](http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02086/gruffaloschild_2086684b.jpg) (Accessed 16/06/2015)

## Photos

Taken at Whinlatter Forest Park, July 2015 © Tracy Hayes, 2015

## Further exploration

A short film by a mum on her visit - food for thought! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R7vZ0mNa-r4> (Accessed 16/07/2015)