

LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Elisha Flack	Student ID number:	P145670
Programme:	Primary		
Module:	Principles of Pedagogy		
Module code:	M6X01438/C	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	100%
Lecturer:	Siân Brooks	Internal Verifier:	Siân Brooks
Assignment Title:	'Describe a learning event which has happened during your recent school experience. Reflect upon what took place, connecting events to theories of learning and teaching. Make recommendations about how you could improve your own practice in the light of this. Produce a poster to illustrate how you would develop the elements of an effective learning environment.'	Word count (or equivalent):	5,000 or equivalent.
Submission deadline:	17/10/18 (23.59)	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	14/11/18
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		
Module Learning Outcomes (from module syllabus)			
1. understand, synthesise and evaluate the main theories that underpinning learning, behaviour and assessment in the primary school 2. reflect critically on how learning theories inform the planning and provision of high quality learning environments, demonstrating a clear understanding of how theory and practice are interrelated 3. organise knowledge and learning through the use of a range of information sources, and present work appropriately.			

In this assignment, I am going to be evaluating a learning event which happened during my classroom observation on my bridging days within a primary school. I am going to reflect upon what took place and then I will connect that event to theories of learning and teaching. I will critically reflect on key theories and support my work using relevant theorists and educators work. I will make recommendations on how I think I could improve my own practice and show an example of how I would apply this to classroom contexts. I am also going to produce a digital poster to show the ideal learning environment that I think would be the most effective in today's classrooms. The main focus of my learning event is going to be based on repetition in the classroom and how this links in with behaviourism.

In accordance with the BERA (2018) guidelines, I have chosen not to mention the school's name. I am very aware of the ethical issues such as confidentiality within the classroom. In the transcript that I have to follow, I do not mention the teacher's name or the children's name due to the ethical issues and confidentiality in the classroom. I attended a modern and healthy primary school in a small town in South Wales. Their main focus is that they strive for success for all. This primary school scored 'good' in the Estyn Report (2016, p.2). This included the school's performance being 'good' and the school's prospects for improvement were 'excellent'. Even though it is in a small village there are over 700 pupils within this school, with classes ranging from flying-start up to year 6. At my bridging days, I spent the majority of my time in Year 4 where there were approximately 28 children in the classrooms with a range of abilities.

From my experience at the school, the first thing the children do when they walk in is sit down on the carpet and wait for the teacher to give out instructions. Every single morning they start with the Mathematics time tables. When I was on my bridging experience they had already completed and they knew their times tables up to the 7's. So on this particular morning, they were going through the 7's times table. The teacher did not

have the answers to the times table written on the board, she had for example, '1 x 7 is _' leaving the children to figure it out for themselves. The way the teacher taught the children caught my attention straight away and even I felt like I had learnt something. The teacher used hand gestures and a catchy rhythm when she was calling out the times table.

Aristotle comments on the importance of repetition and believes that knowledge can become so natural to students. Most professors and teachers strive to help their students learn new skills and concepts, and repetition can be a highly effective way to do so. I was looking around the classroom as this was happening and I noticed that every child was interacting and it looked like every child was confident when they were taking part. They would then repeat the time tables over and over again for at least 30 minutes until everyone knew the correct answer for each one. A transcript of what took place is below:

Teacher: 1 x 7 is ...
Children: 7!
Teacher: 1 x 7 is ...
Children: 7!
Teacher: 1 x 7 is ...
Children: 7!
Teacher: 1 x 7 is ...
Children: 7!
Teacher: 2 x 7 is ...
Children: 14!
Teacher: 2 x 7 is ...
Children: 14!
Teacher: 2 x 7 is ...
Children: 14!

I was so intrigued to find out how the children knew exactly what they were doing before the teacher ever started the 7 times table. As this happens every single morning the

children are so used to it they just accept it as their daily school routine. They repeat the different times tables over and over again until they know it off by heart.

I decided to focus my assignment on repetition due to this particular learning environment as it made me aware of how important repetition is within the classroom and how it can help children's development and learning. Repetition is crucial for learning new skills and concepts. The Companion Document by the Welsh Assembly Government (2008, p.18) outlines the most successful and motivating teaching approaches which promote 'reflection on what has been learned and how the learning has occurred'. I decided to link repetition to one of the module contents; behaviourism. I feel that this scenario that I experienced can have a massive impact on the outcomes of my pupils that are in my future practice. The way I assessed this learning event was purely by note-taking and observations. I made numerous notes on how the children know exactly what they are going to do every morning as it is repeated over and over. I observed how the children were taking part in answering all of the questions and then made notes on how this particular part of behaviourism is ideal for developing children's learning. There are many strengths and limitations of note-taking. I believe that note taking is a very effective way of remembering important facts and it is an easy way to turn things into your own words. When you make notes of something you will always have it to look back on and to refer to which is so important when within a classroom. Even a lot of teachers today use the note-taking method when they are assessing children within their classroom. The limitations that I found were that when I was taking notes, something else would catch my eye and I would not have enough time to write everything down that I wanted to. This can distract your learning and observations when you are focusing on a particular moment.

Repetition is repeating something again and again until you are familiar with it. 'Repetition is the mother of learning, the father of action, which makes it the architect of accomplishment' (Ziglar, 1997, p.102). To support this, it is like learning to ride a bike or

drive a car. First, you do not know hardly anything until you practice the essential skills repeatedly. Throughout education and throughout repetition, a skill is practised and rehearsed over time and then that skill gradually becomes easier and easier. Repetition provides the practice that children need to gain and master new skills. When you practice something, or in this case repeat it, you do not need to think consciously about it which frees up space in your brain to learn new skills and concepts. Practice makes perfect! When I experienced this learning event in the classroom I realised that there were effective ways for children to learn and that was through visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning. The children were able to see the times table questions, they were able to hear it through the rhythm the teacher was doing it in and they were able to join each other and make hand gestures following the teacher's movements. To be able to engage in these different learning styles it produces a multi-sensory connection to the new skills being taught. 'Repetition is a key learning aid as it helps transition a skill from the conscious to the subconscious' (APL, 2018, p.3). When children are learning repeatedly it helps them to improve their speed, it increases subject knowledge, increased their confidence and it also strengthens the connections in the brain which allow children to learn.

There are many positives of using repetition in learning. Repetition has many benefits when it comes to learning, if you repeat something enough times it becomes permanent in your brain and it will always be there. Repetition deepens our learning. Repetition also builds on our creativity and our creative side because when the nature of creativity is explored, the importance of repetition is revealed. This is simply because it saves knowledge time and our energy is at maximum level. 'Repetition helps us to discover our personal rhythms and know them more intimately' (Bowen, 2010, p.1). When we all learn a new task for the first time it can be daunting and bring tension as it is unfamiliar. In a very beneficial way, repetition can help us to grow comfortable with tasks which we were not comfortable with at the start. This links back to my learning

environment, as the children were not familiar with their time tables, repeating them every morning and being creative with a rhythm and hand gestures really brought their confidence up a level as they are now comfortable participating every morning.

However, there are many exceptions to this thinking. The question many people ask themselves is, is learning more than remembering? When people sit exams, it is often said that they just memorise the answers and how to do the question, when they do not actually know how to work them out. Once they have completed the exams they forget what it is they have done. Now, once information is passed into our long-term memory, unless it is used or recalled in some way, it is forgotten. Just like the example of exams that I had mentioned. When we forget something it is because it is not under direct conscious control. The brain only retains useful information that it will use repeatedly. This is why we need to ensure that information that we teach children is recalled and used repeatedly. Emotional intelligence is one of the exceptions to this thinking. This means that there are one-off memorable experiences. If you go somewhere which has had a real impact on your life, or done something which meant a lot to you, then you will always remember that. However, Ausubel (1962, p.218) stated that without repetition 'specific items of meaningful experience...tend gradually to undergo oblitative subsumption'. As I am aware of the evolving curriculum in Wales, I have also taken into consideration how this might have implications for my learning event that I observed. However, I do not see how repetition can be affected by this as it is used every day in classrooms.

Repetition links to behaviourism and there is a lot of theory behind this. Ivan Pavlov's theory of classical conditioning is learning through association. Through the repeated pairing of a conditioned stimulus and an unconditioned stimulus Pavlov accidentally discovered the concept of classical conditioning. A well-known psychologist called Skinner was best known for his theory behaviourism and he stressed: 'a response followed by a reinforcing stimulus is strengthened and therefore more likely to occur again'

(Skinner, 1948, p.4). This links with Pavlov's theory. Pavlov trained his dogs to salivate whenever he rung a bell as they were trained into thinking there is food involved every time he rang a bell. He had to repeat this a number of times and use repetition for them to develop this skill. There are 3 stages of classical conditioning which I will elaborate on, which will include how I would use this strategy in my classroom.

Stage 1: Before Conditioning: The stage before conditioning is when the unconditioned stimulus produces an unconditioned response. This is when a stimulus has produced a behaviour which is unfamiliar and unlearned. In Pavlov's theory, the stimulus was the food. The unknown in this particular stage would be the 7 times table for the children. They would first respond to the 7's times table question with an unconditioned response because the stimulus in the classroom will produce a behaviour which is unlearned.

Stage 2: During Conditioning: This happens when a stimulus which produces no response is linked with the unconditioned stimulus, which turns this into the conditioned stimulus. In Pavlov's theory, this would be the bell. Whenever he gives the dogs their food he would ring the bell. The bell would act as a signal for the dogs to indicate that there is food. During conditioning within the classroom, the teacher uses hand gestures and a rhythm when going through each times table one by one. Therefore, the hand gestures and the rhythm to the time table would act as a conditioned stimulus for the children when learning the 7 time table.

Stage 3: After Conditioning: This is when the conditioned stimulus has been linked with the unconditioned stimulus which produces a new response. In Pavlov's theory, when he rang the bell and did not have food for the dogs, the dogs would still salivate. Within my classroom in the future, Stage 3 of Pavlov's theory would indicate that the children know their 7 times tables when associated with the hand gestures and rhythms using repetition. In his theory when the dogs were salivating when there was no food, is the same as the children knowing their 7 times tables after reoccurring it every day. Some people may

critique his theory and argue that it supports nurture over nature. Sometimes it is highly likely that someone's behaviour is because of an interaction between nature and nurture. Another argument against his theory is that because Pavlov created general laws of behaviour, it can therefore underestimate what human beings are actually like and how unique they are.

Watson extended the work of Pavlov. He coined the term behaviourism and stressed the importance of repetition. He spent his time studying the theory behind how specific stimuli led organisms to make a response. He focused on remembering things depended on frequency and recency. 'The more frequent a stimulus and response occur in association with each other, the stronger the habit will become' (Watson, 1928, p.3). His focus on this is often associated with students learning basic skills. He demonstrates that if you do not recall something after you have learned it for the first time within 10 minutes, your brain slowly starts to forget about it, and within one day the knowledge of that subject has disappeared. However, if you recall it every day then it will stay in your long-term memory. Many people will argue the fact that Watson's theory is not always the case because there can be a one-off memorable experience such as emotional intelligence. He did an experiment called the Little Albert where he developed phobias of objects which were rats. Watson showed that classical conditioning could also be used to create a phobia. This experiment used a lot of repetition and focused on behaviourism as they had to test his reactions repeatedly on different animals. Repetition alone does not ensure learning; it eventually produces fatigue and suppresses response. The way I would use Watson's strategy of frequency and recency is when I am explaining something to the class, for example, the 7 times table. I will always spend at least half an hour going through the same questions just because you need to recall something after you have learned it. If you teach something to a class at 9 am and go through it once, you are guaranteed that it will be like you have never taught that subject as it will not stay in the

children's long-term memory. Repetition is a key success which transfers knowledge through behaviouristic learning.

Aristotle focused on the Law of Frequency. 'Aristotle commented on the role of repetition in learning by saying it is frequent repetition that produces a natural tendency' (Weibell, 2011, p.113) and 'the more frequently two things are experienced together, the more likely it will be that the experience or recall of one will stimulate the recall of the other' (p.35). Again, the same as Watson, I would use Vygotsky's work within my classroom when I focus on recalling. According to Bruner, repetition is the exercise of problem-solving. 'The more one has practice, the more likely is one to generalise what one has learned into a style of problem-solving or inquiry that serves for any kind of task' (Bruner, 1960, p.31). Bruner's concept of learning was focused on the importance of repetition 'as it develops basic ideas repeatedly, building upon them until the student has grasped the full formal apparatus that goes with them' (Bruner, 1960, p.13). His ideas build upon Vygotsky's idea where he stated, 'through repeated experiences...children learn covertly to plan their activities' (Vygotsky, 1978, p.29). I would use examples of Bruner's work within my classroom when we have to practice something, practice makes perfect. The teacher in my bridging day was getting the children to practice their 7 times table with each other in the morning and she was setting them tasks to go through it at home with their parents or guardian to make sure that it stayed in their memory. 'Parents who repeat words more often to their infants have children with better language skills a year and a half later' (Newman, 2015, p.12). So practising is one of the main focuses when it comes to repetition.

In conclusion, I have evaluated a learning event which took place during my classroom observation. I reflected upon what took place and I connected my learning event to the theories of learning and teaching. I did this by focusing my learning environment on repetition and how that links in with the module content which is

behaviourism. I think that by evaluating my learning event I could now take this away with me and improve my own teaching practice when I am out in schools. This assignment has had a huge impact on my awareness as a teacher as I will build upon my current knowledge focusing on repetition and how it will help me in classrooms. It has given me an insight into how important recalling work is for younger students as it does not stay in their long-term memory. When I have my teaching experiences in schools I will now be more alert to repetition and how I should be using it. If I had to make any recommendations about how I could improve my own practice in the light of this, I would focus on doing tasks with the children, but always refer back to it and to get children to advance their learning by doing so. After this assignment, I will never assume children will understand an unfamiliar topic if it has been explained to them only once. I now know how important repetition is when it comes to the learner and how fast students can forget things if they are not recalled. By focusing on the theories behind repetition and behaviourism, it will give me the chance to recall things which are important on a daily basis within the classroom just like the maths lesson my learning event is based on. 'Consolidation of previously learned material is achieved through confirmation, correction, clarification, differential practice, and review in the course of repeated exposure, with feedback, to learning material' (Ausubel, 1962, p.197).

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This is what my ideal learning environment would look like. I have inserted arrows alongside the digital poster to show why I chose this specific learning environment.

Students learn in many different ways and in a wide variety of settings, such as inside the classroom, outdoor learning and places even outside of school locations. A learning environment includes the way teachers set out their classrooms: displays on the walls, how the tables are set out, learning materials in the classroom and utilising audio, visual and digital technologies. You should try to organise a classroom which is best for learning and concentrating. I think the way you organise your classroom shows how you view your children's learning. Teachers support the development of children by classroom

organisation. I believe that inside the classrooms it should be colourful, have plenty of equipment in easy reach and be very spacious to allow children to learn in a comfortable environment. 'A teacher's abilities to make efficient use of lesson time, to coordinate classroom resources and space, and to manage students' behaviour with clear rules that maximise the learning that can take place' (Coe, et al, 2014, p.3). Referring back to my learning event and repetition, as I am now aware how important it is to recall things to children, there will be a recap of what occurred in school the day before on the board so the children can return each morning and reflect back on what happened the day before.

The ideal learning environment that I have designed includes spacious rooms for learning which are both indoor and outdoor. ESTYN (2011, p.30) outlines the importance that schools should provide more regular opportunities for children to develop and practise their reading and writing skills outdoors and to plan, organise and assess learning outdoors as they do indoors. From my own experience, if we were to go outside to do a task I would enjoy it so much more than sitting in a classroom and it would be more effective. Children will learn more skills through first-hand experiences through play and being involved in activities rather than learning from a book or the board. I believe that having classrooms in this specific environment would provide children with indoor and outdoor learning. 'We define outdoor learning outcomes as changes in thinking, feeling and/or behaviour resulting directly or indirectly from outdoor education' (Dillon, 2005, p. 16).

My ideal learning environment would be based on an urban farm and this will, fortunately, allow the pupils to participate in food preparation, animal care, supply produce for meals and to give children and teachers a chance to explore different levels in a collaborative way. 'Students working in school grounds growing a diverse range of vegetables, comparing farm animal and human needs and climbing a rock face is so important' (Dillon, 2005, p.16). Having a school environment like this shows the natural

systems of the world. I think that having a learning environment like this gives children so many opportunities to have hands-on learning, to explore and to learn life skills. I think that having a school like this develops children's patience, self-confidence and an open mind to new and healthy foods. When I was in school I remember being taught a little bit about healthy eating and food preparation but I was not educated enough in it. It gives children an insight into almost self-sufficiency which is not taught in schools now. To have my school on an urban farm would have taught me a lot more about healthy eating and where the food comes from. However, I am aware that some people would argue and say that this is not the school's job to focus on these skills.

Technology would be a massive part of my learning environment. In the top right corner of the poster, that room is based purely on technology. Technology is the most important part of education today which is being used more and more every day. Teachers are so reliant on technology. A few examples of what teachers use technology for are: PowerPoints, to communicate, videos, projectors, emails, sometimes for planning and many more. The more students and teachers use technology in the classrooms will benefit their knowledge a lot more. 'Teachers need to be clear about how ICT develop pupil's learning and equip them with the skills they need in the modern world' (Grigg, 2014, p.19). Today, digital literacy is as compulsory as the other core subjects. Donaldson is introducing a new digital competence framework which introduces digital skills across the curriculum and this is why teachers and children need to be up to date with technology. One of the 6 areas of his work 'Successful Futures' includes Science & Technology. An educational researcher who supports my thoughts on this is Sugata Mitra. He had a strong belief that children are able to learn anything through technology if they put their mind to. He planted computer screens in the walls in India and left them the children to figure out things for themselves. He proved that children can adapt to technology in a short amount of time even if they have never seen or used any kind of technology before which I think is

amazing. It shows that technology is a very powerful thing to have in education as children can learn anything they want to learn.

Skills like self-sufficiency are so important in my opinion when it comes to education. I think having life skills are so much more important than some of the things being taught in the curriculum at the moment. Vygotsky (1978 p.172) stated, 'every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level'. By life skills, I mean skills like character development, communication skills, problem-solving, self-defence, manners, healthcare, time-management and decision making. 'Some schools have found it helpful to introduce discrete skills lessons where a specific skill or strategy/tool is taught' (Welsh Government, 2015, p.7). Schools that have this approach have said that it can potentially build children's self-esteem and self-confidence. Schools globally should be teaching children and young people life skills. However, if some children come from disadvantaged homes then is school the only place they can learn their character? Within my ideal learning environment, play would be a huge factor. In the bottom left corner, there are many areas to play here as it is spacious. Play enhances children's creativity and their imagination. It also helps to encourage children to have fun which makes learning more enjoyable. It gives them a chance to explore on their own and come up with their own learning experiences. I believe that children learn more while doing. Hymes (1998) said that: 'play is thinking time for young children. It is language time. It is problem-solving time. It is memory time. It is organisation of ideas time'.

In conclusion, I chose this learning environment as my ideal learning environment because the main focus is that the children feel safe, comfortable, happy and at home when they arrive at school. Skills would be a massive part of my learning environment as I believe it is so important for children to develop different types of skills throughout their time in education. The large indoor and outdoor environment is an excellent idea for all

schools to apply as it gives the children a chance to explore nature, the outdoors and learning how to grow food which some children, unfortunately, would not have done before. It is very important that each and every child has experience in the outdoors and nature. The idea of having it on an urban farm builds self-sufficiency which a lot of schools forget to do. To allow the children to grow food from scratch gives them a chance to see how and where our vegetables come from. I strongly believe that this specific learning environment could have a positive impact on the children's future in my classroom learning environment.

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