

ECGE4001 - Portfolio of Study Skills Assessment Tasks

Part 1

In Iceland and other Nordic countries, it is believed that the outdoors has a positive effect on children's lives. A study from policy documents states that the outdoor environment is very beneficial to children. It states in the curriculum guidelines, that engaging in outdoor activities broadens the way they think and understand about the world as the outdoor environment is seen to have an exceptional approach at learning. Furthermore, children benefit from the exercise of being outdoors that results in a healthy lifestyle and promotes a healthier attitude to their surroundings (Noradahl and Johannessan, 2014).

In Icelandic preschools the emphasis on the outdoor environment has a lengthy tradition for children aged between one and six who regularly play outside everyday. However, the time children of compulsory schools spend outside has commonly been defined to the breaks separating classes. Although, the way in which teachers actually use the outdoors in children's education is not known exactly. It is possible that this can differ between teachers and schools. However, Icelandic compulsory school teachers are using the outdoors in their educational programme more than ever today. 70% of compulsory schools in Reykjavik addressed that they regularly

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perform education outdoors. (Oladottir, 2008, cited in Noradahl and Johannesson, 2014).

Reference list:

Norodahl, K. and Johannesson, I. A. (2014). 'Lets's go outside': Icelandic teachers' views of using the outdoors', *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early years Education*, 3(13), pp. 1-2. DOI:10.1080/03004279.2014.961946

Part 2a

This assignment will focus on forest schools, and how the outdoors environment is an important learning opportunity for children. As O'Brien and Murry comments:

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. (O'Brien and Murry, 2006, p.7)

It is important for children to play and learn outside, it can increase a range of areas in their development including social skills, physical development and many more (ibid.). Parents and carers should not be worried about their children taking part in forest school activities, as all practitioners are aware of the health and safety procedures and keep parents and carers informed of any accidents (Welsh Assembly Government. 2009). Focus group research have stated that the more children experience the use of woodland environments then the more likely and frequently they are to visit as adults, and the less fearful they are likely to be visiting these areas (Thompson et al. 2004).

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Reference list:

O'Brien, E. and Murry, R. (2006) *A marvellous opportunity for children to learn: a participatory evaluation of forest school in England and Wales*. Surry: Forest research.

Thompson, C.W. Aspinall, P. Bell, S. Findlay, C. Wherrett, J and Travlou, P. (2004) *'Open space and social Inclusion: local woodland use in central Scotland'*. Edinburgh: Forestry Commision

Welsh Assembly Government. (2009) *Foundation Phase: Outdoor Learning Handbook*. Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government

Part 2b

1. You could be accused of plagiarism if you do not acknowledge where the source of your information has come from. You should state where you had your ideas from as it authenticates your work and gives the author credit for their work. It is important to avoid plagiarising and to recognize the consequences for this (Cottrell, 2019).

2. False, you need to include your reference if you use a direct quotation and when paraphrasing. If you fail to include your reference when paraphrasing, you can be accused of plagiarism (Pears and Shields, 2019).

3. Wikipedia is not a reliable place to search for credible information, because anyone whether highly qualified in the specific area or not can add or change the information that is on there (Pears and Shields, 2019).

4. Referencing a long quotation which is usually more than 30 words, does not need quotation marks. Reference before and after it has been inserted. It should be indented, justified and single line spaced and include the page number. (Pears and Shields, 2019)

5. You can conduct acceptable research by reading the relevant and reliable information intended for your study. You could use books, journals, reports,

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newspapers, policy documents and more that could assist your research (Cottrell, 2019).

Reference List:

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook* 5th Ed. London: Red Globe Press.

Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2019) *Cite Them Right: the essential referencing guide* 11th Ed. London: Red Globe Press.

Students' Perspectives on Cyber Bullying

Part 3

The article being examined is 'Students' Perspectives on Cyber Bullying' written by Agatston, Kowalski and Limber (2007). The article investigates cyber bullying amongst students by using focus groups, and it identifies the possible need for prevention messages which are aimed towards students, parents and teachers. The article also attempts to gain a better understanding for future development of policy documents for students using the internet. Cyber bullying is a problematic issue among young people, it is getting increasingly easier for young people to access the internet and fall victim to cyber bullying as well as also the temptation of being an online bully. This critical analysis will discuss and understand the writer's key findings and evidence in the article. It will highlight the strengths as well as any weaknesses and provide an evaluation of the journal.

Based on the evidence, the author's key findings indicate that students view cyber bullying as a problem both in and out of a school setting, but are not likely to report any cyber bullying within the school day as it states that the use of cellular phones is not allowed. It identifies a cyber bullying problem within both male and female students but more so among female students. The article states that there is a need for schools to address this matter and policies are encouraged to be put in place.

Firstly, the layout of the article does not seem well organised, paragraphs are not linked very well and seems to be too long and repetitive. Some statistics are irrelevant to the writer's key argument, therefore, with the potential of confusing the reader and making the article harder to understand. As stated by Cottrell (2017) the use of a good structured article and use of good paragraphs make an article better to read and understand clearly what is being said. However, the language used in the article is not difficult to read which could intrigue the reader even of non academic background to read more into it, which could make up for the badly structured paragraphs.

Although the article does lead off topic, for instance, when the writer's include statistics on students eligible of receiving low-cost dinners, it does not state how that connects to the writer's key argument on cyber bullying. However, there are some more recent findings done by the HBSC study that have linked pupils that receive free school meals are less likely to report being a victim of cyber bullying (Public Health England, 2014). The writer's failed to connect their findings on free school meals with cyber bullying or how it would link to their focus groups and they should have backed their statement up with how it could be linked to the article.

The writer's argument seems to be consistent in the article but accuracy of the evidence does not seem to be reliable because the use of statistics are not accurate.

In the abstract of the article Agatston, Kowalski and Limber (2007) states '148 middle and high school students' yet in the article the writers round that statistic up to 150 students and uses the word 'approximately' therefore not giving an exact statistic, which could also indicate that the rest of the statistics used may not be a true representation of the evidence. The writers argue that there does seem to be a small cyber bullying problem, however this is not fully clear as only four schools were used for this study and all focus groups were from the same district. Also the article does not state exactly how many of the 148 students used were in each individual focus group, as Burke (2011) states that the amount of people taking part in groups is an important aspect of group work, as larger groups could overshadow some members within the group which could affect the outcome.

The writer's also explained that the groups were split into same sex groups, but does not give the reasons behind why the groups were split in that way or how that would be relevant to the focus groups. Mishna, Saini and Solomon (2009) argue that mixed gender groups tend to have better outcomes in group work than those in same gender groups. This could of been considered when arranging students into groups. If this was considered, the outcome of the students views may have been different. The writer's also state that cyber bullying is a problem among both male and female students but particularly females, however does not give any statistics on the amount of males and females within the groups that stated there was a cyber bullying problem. Although, there is more recent evidence that suggests that girls have more

experience with cyber bullying than boys (Public Health England, 2014). The article failed to back this up by not providing more information on this.

The article goes on to indicate that schools with a cyber bullying problem should include cell phone policies on how to deal with the use of these among students within the school day. Classroom lessons educating students on cyber bullying is also encouraged, discussing the potential negative effects that cyber bullying can have on a person and how to prevent and react as a bystander. This contradicts what the article recommends as the writer's state that schools should enforce consequences to students using cell phones during the school day, yet encourage classroom lessons which include steps that observers can take to deal with cyber bullying and how to respond. This could potentially deter students from responding or reporting cyber bullying within the school day in fear of getting into trouble due to the schools cell phone policies.

By all accounts, as the research has demonstrated, the article gives a reasonable indicator that cyber bullying does exist among students in the district used for this study, but there is no clear evidence that it is a wider problem. However more recent and wider research should be experimented, as the results could differ and be more broad if more diverse groups of students were used for the focus groups. Overall the article is informative on a small scale but more information should be used to back up the writer's findings.

Reference list:

Agatston, P. Kowalski, R. and Limber, S. (2007). 'Students' Perspectives on Cyber Bullying'. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 41(6), pp.S59-S60.

Burke, A. (2011) 'Group Work: How to Use Groups Effectively', *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 11(2), pp. 87-95. (Accessed: 2 November 2019). Available at: http://www.uncw.edu/cte/et/articles/Vol11_2/Volume1102.pdf

Cottrell, S. (2017). *Critical thinking skills*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mishna, F., Saini, M. and Solomon, S. (2009). Ongoing and online: Children and youth's perceptions of cyber bullying. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(12), pp.1222-1228.

Public Health England. (2017) *Cyber Bullying: An Analysis of Data from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Survey for England 2014*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm>

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[ent_data/file/621070/Health_behaviour_in_school_age_children_cyberbullying.pdf](ent_data/file/621070/Health_behaviour_in_school_age_children_cyberbullying.pdf)

(Accessed: 7 November 2019).