



APPENDIX GA36c

LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Mark Newey	Student ID number:	1803122
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.

Word Count: 4508

Introduction

Reading books to children is one of the many popular ways that adults develop children's literacy development (Gonzalez et al, 2014) and has been common practice within the home and school domains (Swanson et al, 2011). Once children have developed an understanding of reading skills, there is a sense of uncertainty on how to further children's understanding (Reid & Bentley, 1996:6). There is a general perception that children are becoming 'surface readers' which refers to children's ability to read independently but not, in some cases, developing the understanding of the book and deducting further into the story of the book such as inference of the plot or characters (Reid & Bentley, 1996:6). It is interesting to note that narrative skills of children do not develop at the same rate (Lever & Senechal, 2011) and therefore interventions are used by the teacher to enhance children's language and literacy skills (Swanson et al, 2011). Teachers utilise a number of interventions to further extend children's development (Swanson et al, 2011).

The focus of the observation is teacher questioning in a Year 6 class which has been suggested to be a valuable tool for teachers and children to gain greater understanding on a topic (Zucker, Justice, Piasta & Kaderavek, 2010). Imparting knowledge to learners may be said to be an interactional activity, though the way participants construct and manage interaction is something that may not be described as simple (Marguitti, 2006). Questioning can be a device to prompt students to demonstrate knowledge that they already attain and serve as a foundation from which new information and knowledge may be built (Marguitti, 2006).

The observation took place in a large primary school in South Wales. According to the Estyn report, that will not be cited so that the school remains anonymous, the school is a green category school which indicates the school is managed well and the pupils are performing with 85.1% of pupils in the Foundation Phase and 90.2% in Key Stage Two reaching expected levels in the core subjects. The school caters for children aged between three and eleven years and has one-third of pupils that are eligible for free school meals.

Part One:

The learning experience I observed was a whole class reading of a book (class novel); the genre of this book was fiction. This activity took place on the carpet at the end of the school day. The reading took place after maths; maths is organised by ability which meant that some children left the classroom for their lesson. Before the start of the reading, these children were reintegrated and joined on the carpet. The teacher was sat on the front of the class on a chair with the book in their hands. The teacher was the main member of interaction throughout the observation. The teacher read the story aloud to the children and constantly provoked the children to think about the book. To begin, the teacher asked the children which picture the title paints in their mind. This was done as a prediction task. In this instance, children were asked not to verbally discuss their ideas but to keep them to themselves but told to hold on to their ideas so that they can compare their own imagination of the character to the story book.

Throughout the reading, the teacher poses questions to test learners' vocabulary extracted from the book. In many of these instances, learners discuss ideas with other learners before eliciting answers to the whole class. There are some instances where there is rapport directly between learners and teacher; in these cases, answers are elicited in a more spontaneous manner with children calling out the answer and teacher responding to these ideas. There are others however where the think, pair, share technique is utilised by whole class discussion. One such instance is the word 'shell'. Shell is a homograph and relied the context of the book to elicit the correct meaning. The meaning within this context was the Shell petrol company that was linked to real life. Although many children within the class may not have seen one, one child correctly identified the correct meaning and was praised by the teacher. The teacher then developed this by contextualising it within today's culture "when i was growing up, you couldn't go to Tesco's or Asda you had to go to petrol station. There is still one down the road where i live now".

I decided to choose this as my specific learning event because of the use of questioning throughout this process. Questioning is an important tool that teachers use in the classroom to provoke children to think about the topic at hand and develop a deeper understanding. I thought this was particularly interesting when reflection is considered for the age of the children. Within year six, all children were capable, to greater or lesser extent, to independently read and have sessions throughout the week where there is an opportunity to do so. I thought it was interesting

that there was a class novel for Year 6 and that only the teacher had a physical copy of the book. Reasons for group reading will be discussed within Part two.

Observation technique

To record the observation, I utilised a narrative/free description technique (Sharman, Cross & Vennis, 2007). This technique involved noting down everything you see (Sharman, Cross & Vennis, 2007). It was beneficial within the classroom because it only required a pen and paper (Hobart & Frankal, 2004) something found commonly within the classroom which meant that children were more likely to exhibit normal behaviour. This meant that my behaviour was trying to be as unobtrusive as possible (Sharman, Cross & Vennis, 2007). Throughout this part of the bridging day, the whole class reading allowed me to be simply observe, with a more active involvement throughout the day within the maths and science lessons. Although interaction throughout the day may have altered the children's behaviour (Sharman, Cross & Vennis, 2007), the whole class activity did not seem to be affected by observers paradox, with everyone engaged within the story. Literature suggests that avoiding children's eye contact while observing will reduce the paradigm between observer and child (Sharman, Cross & Vennis, 2007).

The behaviour of children, teachers and other adults in classrooms can be complex and open to different interpretations (Grigg, 2015: 19). Therefore observers need to be clear about their approach (Grigg, 2015). I felt that the free description was the most appropriate observational technique because it allowed me to observe the class as a whole and record the spontaneous behaviour observed within the classroom. Although other methods such as time sampling would allow me to record a potentially more in-depth data set of a learner or group, a free description allowed me to observe and record anything of interest.

Ethics

Ethical procedures were adhered to throughout the observations. Within the observations, it was imperative that the teachers knew that that their practices was only being observed and that there was no judgement on what the teachers know and do (Farrell, 2007). I think this was made apparent with a rapport with teachers that allowed us to ask any questions we may have and equally teachers in many instances explaining why they approached activities or lessons certain

ways. This was important in developing and extending knowledge of approaches to teaching practice and management.

Consent was adhered to for the observation within this bridging day with prior consent of my attending for observation gathered from the school through the university. Although pictures were taken throughout the day, with an ethics form signed by the head teacher, the appropriateness to my research topic meant that they were excluded in this essay. However, in any cases of pictures, consent was first collected by the school before children confirming their consent for a picture to be taken. In any cases where safeguarding may have been an issue, the side of caution was taken and pictures were not taken (Albridge, 2012).

In terms of confidentiality, the name of all children and any teachers have been excluded from the observation; this is so that they remain anonymous (Denscombe, 2007). Equally, the school has not been identified being referred to as a primary school in South Wales. This is important to protect the school, its children and staff from being identified.

Part Two:

Throughout the observation, it may be argued that the teacher has adopted a social constructivist approach to learning, where language is not just the process of understanding the grammatical and syntactical structure of words or sentences but also shapes thought itself (Bartlett & Burton, 2012). Social interactions are the foundation in which we learn rather than something that happens internally (Grigg, 2015). This takes a stance that the “social occasions of conversations, group projects and debate, also play a key role in learning” (Grigg, 2015: 139). Of particular significance within the realm of education is the zone of proximal development developed by Vygotsky (Grigg, 2015). The zone of proximal development expresses that children acquire a higher level of learning when it is supported by a more expert partner. This is apparent within the group reading, with the teacher aiding the children’s knowledge of vocabulary within the book and developing a deeper understanding of the pragmatics behind the book. The level of understanding becomes deeper when it is often related to real life (Bartlett & Burton, 2012) where children can use personal experience to develop an understanding of a concept that has arisen from the context of the book. Lever & Senechal (2011) discusses this idea as meaningful episodes that are organised and discussed as the narrative knowledge of children begins to

develop. New information is thus related back to prior conceptions and experiences (Bartlett & Burton, 2012). The zone of proximal development will be different for each child, so consideration of the various levels when doing a class activity needs to be considered by the teacher by challenging students to extend their current knowledge (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

There will be some children who only experience an adult reading aloud to them within the classroom setting (Reid & Bentley, 1996) which was expressed by the teacher who expressed class reading pivotal in children's development of literacy skills. It was interesting that the teacher reading aloud offered children a shared literacy experience to develop skills of understanding behind the words on the page with children benefiting from the adult mediation and interpretation of the story (Reid & Bentley, 1996). This again emphasises that learning is a shared experience by providing a basis for children to develop their thinking skills; teachers encourage children to discuss what they already know (Grigg, 2015) within the context of the book throughout the reading activity.

This idea further represents Bruner's scaffolding principle where interactions of sustained thinking of a topic to develop a higher level of understanding on a topic is present (Burton & Bartlett, 2012). Therefore learning is initiated by the more experienced interaction partner (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Scaffolding refers to the concept that 'teachers need to provide temporary supporting structures to assist learners to develop new understandings, new concepts and new abilities (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005: 8). This was particularly important in reflection from the teacher after the observation who expressed 'the children are high for their chronological age but they struggle to read into the book'. The teacher then goes on to express that this class therefore has whole class reading alongside silent reading whereas the other class in the school, which consists of potentially lower ability children, only have the opportunity for private reading. This is because the teacher wants to develop the children to delve into more detail about the book rather than taking the story and characters on face value. Thus, children in this case will encounter narratives that may be of a higher level than their own and internalise skills that will allow them to improve within their own constructions of meaning (Lever & Senechal, 2011). Therefore, scaffolding allows for children to develop understandings that would not be possible if they were doing it alone (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

The whole class reading of the book allowed extratextual talk to take place (Gonzalez et al, 2014). Extratextual talk may be referred to as the conversation and interactions that may occur about, around and beyond the text (Reese, Cox, Harte & McAnally, 2003) and may allow for a higher level of discussion and understanding to take place allowing children to elicit vocabulary that moves beyond the text (Wasik, Bond & Hindman, 2006). Throughout the activity, children were engaged with the storyline of the book, often discussing characters as well as vocabulary knowledge amongst themselves and as a class.

The way that the teacher elicits this deeper understanding of the book is through questioning. Asking questions is a key element of the learning process (Almeida, 2012) and constitute nearly one-third of early educators' utterances in the classroom (De Rivera, Girolametto, Greenberg & Weitzman, 2005). In terms of questioning, the teacher elicits a wide range of literal and inferential questioning (Zucker, Piasta & Kaderavek, 2010) to the children to get the children to benefit from the group reading. These types of questioning that the teacher utilises may be for knowledge/comprehension or may be higher order thinking which makes children evaluate or draw conclusions from a question asked (Delcourt & McKinnon, 2011). One type of questioning that was utilised to provoke the children to think about the story was a prediction task (described above) where children had to develop an image of the character from a description from the book. This was an effective way to engage the children and create an interest for the children within the story from the outset. This type of questioning allowed children to internalise ideas from prior knowledge and evaluate their ideas with other children. Thus, questions are a vital component of classroom discourse and are an important tool in mediating and constructing students' knowledge (Chin, 2007).

Research by Willemsen, Gosen, van Braak, Koole & Glopper (2018) highlight that teacher questioning often invite participation where there are predetermined correct answers and that even open questions in some cases have this affect. It is interesting that the open questions posed by the teacher to the children were often invited to invoke an answer that would require a suitable response. In these instances, the teacher may have taken this approach to elicit vocabulary items from the children rather than simply providing the answer so that children's prior knowledge could be utilised and a better interaction could be encouraged. In instances where children had provided basic definitions of vocabulary items, the teacher would develop

these ideas. This in turn, would help the children who had some prior knowledge of vocabulary items and provide clarification for those children who had no lexical knowledge of the vocabulary item. This demonstrates that much of the meaning-making occurs through classroom discourse as part of teacher talk and teacher-student interactions (Chin, 2007). Rosenshine (2012) suggests that questioning allows for active participation for the students and express understanding. In some instances, the teacher would ask for understanding by asking the children to raise their hands if they know the answer (Rosenhine, 2012); this would also allow the teacher to check the entire classes understanding of a new concept of vocabulary item before eliciting the correct answer to the class or alternatively ask a pupil to share their idea of that concept. Therefore questioning can be seen to as way to provide teacher feedback of learners' understanding and evaluate what they know (Chin, 2007).

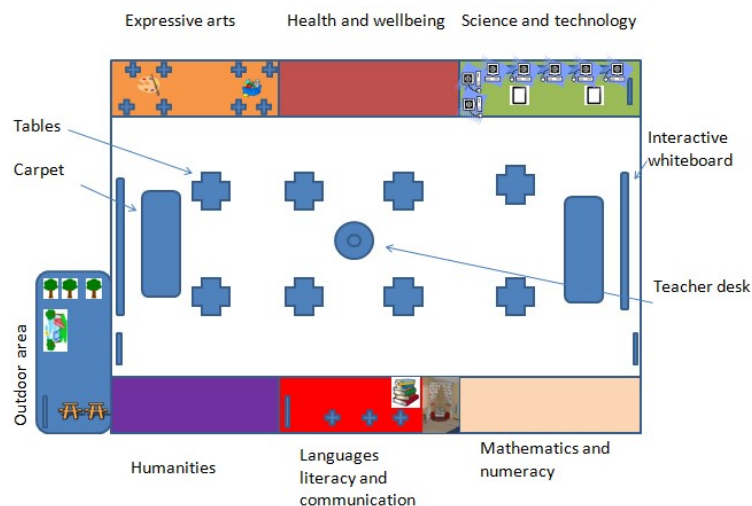
The varying depth of questioning from the teacher provided opportunity for contributions to be exerted from numerous children rather than solely the higher ability children. The reason children may have been more willing to engage within teacher questioning was the wait time. The wait time can be said to be crucial for children's thinking (Almeida, 2010). Research such as Rowe (1986) suggests that teachers do not provide ample time for children to thin, positing that the usual wait time from a teacher question was 0.9 seconds before the teacher would recast the question or pose the question to another child. In this instance, the teacher made sure there was appropriate levels of thinking time for children, especially with the class containing mixed ability.

It may be argued that the teacher takes on a behaviourist approach to praise in children responses to questioning. Mueller & Dweck (1998) highlights that praise can have consequential affects within a mixed ability setting in that it may negatively affect children's responses. Within the discussion within the reading, there were various types of praise that was utilised by the teacher. She invokes contribution by praising when children discuss their ideas about their ideas, whether as a pair of a whole class, and provides praise for simply having a go. Children who may not have been prepared to share ideas in front of the class may feel more inclined to openly discuss their ideas. This was evident for one child, who related some vocabulary to personal experience and another child actually provided the platform to share their idea to the whole class. This reflects the two trends that are often related to praise that predisposes praise being related to

intelligence and intelligence being the major achievement cause for achievement within a child's school life (Dweck, 2007). The teacher advocates a stance where the children are not necessarily being praised for intelligence but for joining in with the class activity.

In summary, the observation allowed me to develop an understanding of a teacher practice that I knew very little about and explore the pedagogical basis for approaching reading in this way. Questioning can be seen to be used by the teacher as a way to socially interact around the book, extending children's literacy skills and allowing children to develop and move away from being surface readers.

Part three:



I wanted to create a classroom environment that would envisage the goals set out by Donaldson's (2015) 'Successful Futures'. I wanted to address the limitations placed on children's freedom within the school environment and take an approach that exhibits children to think creatively about their learning, taking a more child centred approach to learning. Creativity has been embedded in the new 'Successful Futures' curriculum becoming a core theme alongside numeracy and literacy across the subject disciplines (Donaldson, 2015). Although Donaldson (2015) has moved away from the word 'play' from his review he develops the concept of experiential learning. Experiential learning looks at action and experience to create a holistic

learning environment where transactions take place between the individual and the environment (Kolb & Kolb, 2009).

Outdoor learning

The Foundation Phase for Wales advocates an experiential, play based approach to learning for children that includes child led activity within the outdoor environment (Maynard, Waters & Clement, 2013). An important aspect of the natural environments is that it provides a landscape where children can challenge their motor activity (Fjortoft, 2001). Moreover, not only is it a rich environment for physical development but it can be a basis for learning (Garrick, 2009). Play is one way that children can find out about themselves and the world around them (Else, 2009: 30). There are some scholars such as Waite (2011) who argue that indoor based education alone is not able to fully educate a child. Davies & Hamilton (2018) document the potential that outdoor learning environments can have in creating a platform for children's development. The nature learning environment within the early years has come most notably from Scandinavian countries (Lee-Hammond and Waller, 2014) where they place top for children's wellbeing (Unicef, 2007). By taking this approach, it adopts a pedagogy that recognises learning for a child's perspective (McInnes, Howard, Crowley & Miles, 2013) and encourages them to take control of their learning (Mysliwiec, Dunbar & Shibley, 2005: 36). Thus, opportunities for learning to be both child-initiated and child-led (Maynard, Waters & Clement, 2013).

The importance of an outdoor learning environment is the affordances that it offers (Fjortoft, 2001). Waters & Maynard (2010) found that natural space populated with loose parts can provide opportunities for teachers to respond to child-initiated interaction that builds on their interests. Loose parts is the concept developed by Nicholson (1972) that children are free to discover and make judgements about what function a material may have. Therefore children have the creativity to turn materials into anything they desire (Daly & Beloglovsky, 2014). Therefore, there is variability in outdoor environments which makes it unique (Tovey, 2007). Influences on play may be the location, the materials, time and the involvement of other people (Sheridan, Howard & Alderson, 2010: 8). Tovey (2007) suggests the outdoors offers children the experience of sensory rich, adventurous play and that challenging play outdoors is essential to a good childhood and indeed a fundamental right. UNCRC article 31 states the children's right to play (Sheridan, Howard & Alderson, 2010) and having an outdoor area is one effective way to

facilitate this. It provides more opportunities for more practical, hands-on, problem solving activities and it allowed children to excel where they may be considered to be underachieving when confined only to the classroom setting (Maynard, Waters & Clement, 2013).

Expressive arts

There should be an arts rich education at the core of the whole school experience for pupils (Donaldson, 2015). One way this can be done is through the expressive arts and providing an arts corner within the classroom. Art offers scope for learning for children in making and viewing art (Sedgwick & Sedgwick, 1995). Art may have universal components that way merge subject boundaries (Sedgwick & Sedgwick, 1995) and in many cases allow children to learn about many aspects of life helping produce personally significant meaning (Wilson, 2009). There are three major themes that art exhibits: flexibility, ambition and trust (Wilson, 2009). Art creates an environment that would allow the children to create and express themselves using their imagination (Grigg, 2015). Children enjoy art finding it as interactive way of learning and often enjoy the process of making something. It provides the platform for children to take the initiative in their learning and the freedom to explore ideas. Implementing art would be beneficial for children's wellbeing with children's participation in art linked to therapeutic nature and can be an outlet for children to express thoughts and emotions successfully (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007). Ways it may be implemented is having this area where children can engage with painting, drawing, arts and crafts within their free play.

Literacy corner

Since schools began, a main priority has been to teach children to read and enjoy books (Grigg, 2015). Illiteracy is a worldwide crisis (Grigg, 2015) and would be addressed from a young age in my ideal classroom. With the classroom environment aimed more towards the foundation stage, books within the literacy corner is more likely to contain picture books or pictures accompanied alongside simple text (Ganea, Pickard & DeLoache, 2008). Picture books allow children to relate to real life from an early age and often increase the engagement (Tare, Chiong, Ganea & DeLoache, 2010).

Within this corner, it would be beneficial to connect reading and writing strategies and provide a place for children to have the opportunity to practice their writing as a way to explore and shape

experiences (Boldt, 2009). The literacy corner can be a place where children can immerse themselves and move away from the demands and requirements that are placed on children (Boldt, 2009) and absorb themselves within writing seeing it more playful which would result in more motivation to engage with their reading and writing. In so doing it makes a construct where children are motivated to read and write and provide them a safe area to develop their self-efficacy within this domain (Trioia, Shankland & Wolbers, 2012).

Digital Corner

Emphasis has been placed on digital competency throughout the curriculum with children already in a world that is intertwined with the various forms of technology (Donaldson, 2015). Children are described as digital natives for their relationship with technology (). The digital corner would be available to offer provision across all subject areas. The introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) has allowed student centred approaches to learning (). The benefits of utilising technology is that it allows the engagement of learning activities to be presented in a variety of ways (Bodemer, Ploetzner, Feuerlein & Spada, 2004). It provides a novel way to strengthen practices of early childhood education (Shah & Godiyal, 2004) and may be a way to exploit children's prior knowledge and engagement and extends it (Turvey, Potter, Allen & Sharp, 2014). The motivational impact of ICT has been reflected to create more interest towards attitudes to school work having higher engagement and children remaining on task when working independently (Passey et al, 2003).

Ways this may be implemented is having computers around the outside of the area and ipads on the tables so that children can engage with the technology. Additionally an interactive whiteboard would be in the room for the teacher and children to engage in topics and concepts and be utilised in children's free times. This would provide ample opportunities for the children to develop their ICT skills and create an area where children can feel they can work independently to further their learning.

In summary, my classroom is designed so that children have the potential to develop their learning in their own way, offering a variety of areas where they can feel free to engage and explore ideas and concepts. The foundation of these areas are designed from the new areas of learning advocated by Donaldson (2015) where they will be an abundance of rich sources for

children to utilise as a platform for their learning. I think the classroom design particularly emphasises a child-centred approach to learning

Conclusion

To conclude, this essay has outlined my observation within a Key Stage Two classroom. The method used to record the observation was a free description which may have been the most appropriate within the primary school setting. It allowed me to delve deeper in to the teachers' use of questioning in a whole class reading of a fiction book. The approach seems to adapt a social constructivist approach to learning with questioning a method used to extend and further children's thinking of the book. In congruence to this, questioning made children delve deeper into the book moving away from surface readers and creating a deeper understanding of the story and its characters.

The design of the classroom setting was to address the areas of learning set out by Donaldson (2015) and placed emphasise on experiential learning as the foundation for learning in the Foundation Phase. The approach taken was designed to be cross curricular so that areas within the classroom could serve multiple purposes for children's learning and provided the freedom to explore ideas and concepts in a number of ways. Equally, the classroom has been designed so that children have ample opportunities within free time to guide their learning.

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