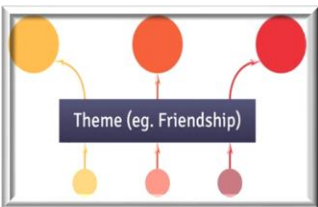


Implementing Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence across the Curriculum in a Year 2 Class

Theme Based Approach

Barnes (2011:69) states ‘Theme-based approaches use a theme to generate exploration through the eyes of several different subjects’. The use of a theme can provide children with experiences that are authentic and relevant to them.



Considerations When Planning a Theme Based Approach

- Hayes (2010) suggests that effective thematic approaches needs to be practical in order to avoid children ‘copying chunks of text from a book’.
- Estyn (2017a) suggests that in order to improve attainment, we must ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop subjects in ‘real-life contexts’ therefore ensuring it is relevant and meaningful to pupils.

Lessons Explanation

The theme ‘Healthy Body’ can provide effective cross-curricular links to many of the Foundation Phase subjects, this is exemplified in the document linked to the QR code below (Appendix 1). These lessons can be carried out over a term or a week. In Successful Futures (Donaldson, 2015) it states that education in Wales in the future will create children who will be ‘enterprising, creative contributors’ this theme would allow entrepreneurship and creativity from children through providing them with the opportunity to create a Healthy Snack within Creative Development, they will then be expected to sell the healthy snacks to fellow pupils within school.

Within mathematic development the theme can lend itself to money, children can undertake this by participating in looking at the price of healthy foods. This will be adaptable to pricing their Healthy Snack within Creative Development.

In Language, Literacy and Communication pupils can look at persuasive writing and slogans, this would further assist them when being directed to record an advertisement and provide a poster to advertise their stall. This encourages the development of Digital Competence, through developing digital literacy as emphasised by Smith (2014) this encourages ‘critical thinking’ as children develop an understanding of the reliability of online sources.



Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence Skills Developed through thematic learning:



- Planning: Creating: create and edit multimedia components in order to develop text, image, sound, animation and video for a range of tasks.
- Oracy across the curriculum: Developing and presenting information and ideas: share activities and information to complete a task.
- Writing across the Curriculum: Organising ideas and information: Write for different purposes.
- Developing Numerical Reasoning: Identify processes and connections: Select appropriate mathematics and techniques to use.
- Using Number Skills: Managing Money: Find totals and give change from multiples of 10p.

Benefits:

- As emphasised by Adeyemi (2010: 12) due to the common theme through-out subjects, children will gain a greater understanding of the topic as they make connections between them
- As highlighted by Estyn (2017a:15) learning through a theme encourages learners to be more active participants in their learning and ensures learning is ‘fun’, this would result in increased engagement.

Limitations:

- Some pupils may not like the theme that learning is being delivered through, within this approach this would result in them being disengaged. This is as all lessons would be expected to have a link to the theme.

Multi- disciplinary Approach

In accordance with Barnes’ (2011) cross-curricular models, the implementation of a Multi-disciplinary approach occurs when two or three subjects are used to enhance knowledge gained from a shared experience.



Considerations When Planning a Multi-disciplinary Approach

- Barnes (2011) emphasises that effective multi-disciplinary work in schools depends upon ‘high degrees of planning, confidence and teacher knowledge.’ without this, learning in this manner may be unsuccessful.
- Greenwood (2013) expresses the concern that through methods like the Multi-disciplinary approach subjects may loose their ‘distinctiveness’. Teachers must therefore, consider making it clear the expectations of the lesson to avoid confusion amongst pupils.

Lessons Explanation

In order to engage children in the Multi-disciplinary learning, they will be stimulated by being presented with a letter which explains the scenario that a forest in a location close to them has experienced deforestation and therefore, the animals have not got anywhere to live. They will be asked to consider what it would require to build a new forest. This activity will stimulate their engagement and the teacher’s role will be to instigate initial discussion about the subject, this will aid in assessing the initial understanding of the pupils.

The powerful experiences for the children will encompass them going on a visit to the forest where they will be directed by the teacher to observe and note the variety of animals also tally and collect the different leaves which will aid them in identifying tree types. They will also be directed to recognise any man made items that are in the forest in order to discuss at a further stage whether they believe that the forest is the right place for the item.

In Personal and Social development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity. The children will develop their knowledge of how we can protect the environment, and through the Powerful experience will address the skills of them therefore, becoming more confident in exploring the outdoors in order to establish what should and should not be experienced in a forest. The work can lead in to discussions about recycling in order to reduce deforestation.

In Knowledge and Understanding of the World children will identify some animals/ plants that live in the outdoor environment in reference to a forest. They can use their collections of evidence collected on the practical experience when looking at this topic in order to promote a deeper understanding of this area.

Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence Skills Developed through Multi-disciplinary Learning:



- Planning, Sourcing and Searching :Use keywords to search for specific information to solve a problem,
- Oracy across the curriculum: Developing and presenting information and ideas: contribute to discussion, keeping a focus on the topic and taking turns to speak.
- Developing numerical reasoning: Represent and communicate: present work orally, pictorially and in written form, and use a variety of ways to represent collected data

Benefits:

- Emphasised by the Open University (2018) multi-disciplinary learning Is often rooted in real contexts which provides a more meaningful experience
- Estyn (2017b) highlight that children who develop well in Literacy and Numeracy learn through rich contexts which stimulate a response. This is provided through the scenario in this activity.

Limitations:

As highlighted in multiple sources such as one linked to the Curriculum for excellence, this approach makes assessment more difficult. Experience in a Primary School showed assessment of the LNF in this circumstance particularly challenging.