

Portfolio of Activities

1)

There is a common belief in both Iceland and other Nordic countries that throughout childhood children should spend plenty of time outdoors. Primarily because, written government documents suggest that the outdoor environment has a positive effect on children. Curriculum guidelines emphasise the importance of learning outside, as this helps children to understand their natural surroundings and their attitude towards this, as well as a place where children can increase their exercise levels and live a healthy lifestyle (Norodahl and Johannesson, 2013).

For children in Iceland aged one to six outdoor play has been encouraged by allowing children to play outdoors each day. Whereas, children aged six to sixteen have limited time outside and are only given time between lessons. Little is known about what is taught specifically by teachers in the outdoor environment as it will vary between different schools and teachers. However, in Iceland there are indications that teachers have been including the outside environments in their curriculum. As an example, In Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, 70% of schools have reported that they now participate in outdoor education regularly (Oladottir, 2008).

Adapted from:

Norodahl, K. and Johannesson, I. (2014) '*Let's go outside': Icelandic teachers' views of using the outdoors*' Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education. Vol 44, No. 4, September 2014, 391-406.

2A)

The primary focus in this essay will be about Forest Schools. The Forest School Network have defined a Forest School as “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 Murray,2006). Concerns around safety and the growing number of activities available indoors have reduced the contact children have with nature (O'Brien and Murray,2006).

Further research showed that the regularity of visits to woodlands as children would have an impact on the frequency of woodland use as an adult. It is believed that there are many physical and emotional benefits to having access to nature (Ward Thompson et al, 2004) Learning outdoors differs to indoor learning and has many benefits. The Welsh Government (2009) are encouraging schools, particularly Foundation Phase to develop their own Forest School or visit a woodland area regularly.

Reference List:

O'Brien and Murray, 2006. *A marvellous opportunity for children to learn: A participatory evaluation of Forest School in England and Wales*. Farnham: Forest Research.

Ward Thompson, et al, 2004. *Open space and social inclusion: Local woodland use in central Scotland*. Report to the Forestry Commission, Edinburgh.

Welsh Assembly Government, 2009, *Outdoor Learning Handbook*, Cardiff. WAG.

2B)

- 1) Plagiarism. Students must acknowledge where they have sourced any research and findings whether this being a direct quote or somebody else's original ideas. It is important for students to avoid plagiarism as it can have major consequences on the assignment grades and usually leads to disqualification of work (Cottrell, 2013, p.177). It also gives a bad reputation, as well as leading to disciplinary procedures. Plagiarism does not only effect students now but can also have long lasting effects which could jeopardise future careers opportunities (University of Cambridge).
- 2) False, acknowledgement should always be made when using somebody else's work or ideas in academic assignments including essays, presentations and dissertations. This means any direct quotes, paraphrasing or summarising from others work should be referenced accordingly. (Pears and Shields, 2016. P.1).
- 3) False. Wikipedia is not a credited website, all information can be edited and added to at any time by several unidentified authors. It has been known that false information is present, therefore it is not suitable for academic assignments (Pears and Shields, 2016, p. 45).
- 4) A long quotation is a direct quote that exceeds two lines, or roughly 30 words. Long quotations are rarely needed in academic writing as short quotes that are carefully selected are more powerful. However, if it is essential to use a long quotation, it is to be presented clearly. Indentation with space left directly above and below and speech marks are not to be used (Cottrell, 2013, p.180)
- 5) To conduct research for academic assignments firstly it is important to understand the literature surrounding the topic. Follow by making a clear plan to identify the different areas within the assignment. Research can then be

conducted through different credible sources, these may include books, articles, journals, official reports and newspapers, effective reading and notetaking is vital to record the relevant information. Once there is an obvious understanding of the literature, and research has begun, a draft can then be formed using the materials gathered. (Cottrell, 2013, p.154-155)

Cottrell, S (2013) *'Palgrave Study Skills, The Study Skills Handbook'* Fourth Edition. Page. 154-155, 177 and 180.

Pears, R and Shields, G (2016) *'Palgrave Study Skills Cite them Right'*, Tenth Edition. Page 1 and 45.

University of Cambridge (2019) *'Why does plagiarism matter?'*
<https://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-plagiarism/why-does-plagiarism-matter> (Accessed: 9 November 2019)

3)

Cyber-bullying is an increasing concern for adolescents because of the escalation in the social media boom (Coughlan, 2019). Authors such as Agatston, Kowalski and Limber have spent much of their time investigating this concept (Agatston et al 2007), evidenced in their 2007 article, *'Students Perspective on Cyber Bullying'*. Here the authors utilise focus groups to develop an understanding of young people's opinions on cyber bullying, this information is then used to create recommendations for schools to combat cyber bullying. However, whilst the information offers an insight into the thoughts of those affected, there are limitations to the article such as: the age of the

information provided, the relevance of the data, the structure of the essay and the language used, which this essay will address.

The article '*Student Perspectives on Cyber Bullying*' concentrates on the concerns of cyber bullying for students of a school age. By conducting focus groups across four separate schools and colleges, the authors found that: cyber bullying is an issue for adolescents, the majority of cyber-bullying takes place outside of school hours, and young people are often reluctant to seek help from an adult for cyber-bullying. From these findings Agatston et al (2007) developed recommendations for schools on ways to limit cyber-bullying in young people. These recommendations included, anti-bullying prevention programs to make students understand that negative comments made through cellular phones is a form of bullying and also ensuring cellular phone policies are followed with consistent penalties when students are found using their phones during school hours. However, whilst on the outset the article appears to be informative and concise, the remainder of this essay will critically evaluate the structure, language and content in order to address the strength of the research.

Firstly, the structure of the article is both coherent and logical in order to develop the topic of cyber bullying. For example, the article begins by introducing the topic and the research methodology, it then goes on to explain the findings, which are then used to generate the research recommendations. Consequently, this structure is easy to follow and allows the reader to develop an understanding of the research. Mishna et al (2009) also adopt this coherent structure to inform their readers of the issues relating to cyberbullying. However, whilst the structure is rational the paragraphs used are at times long and unclear. For example, in the results section the first paragraph begins by stating that individuals in the groups were familiar with technology, but it ends with the authors stating young people do not feel comfortable discussing cyber-bullying

with adults. This represents two opposing statements and whilst the author develops the research results within this section, by utilizing one paragraph to do this, the reader could become confused suggesting the structure lacks clarity.

Having critically analyzed the structure of the article, the next section focuses on the language used. Agatston et al (2007) appear to adopt a formal tone to the article to allow their audience to understand their research findings and recommendations. However, at times the authors appear to use informal language, in order to emphasize a point, they are making. For example, their statement “*young people are very sophisticated users of technology*” (Agatston et al, 2007), demonstrates the authors to be utilizing a conversational tone in order to highlight the skills of young people, with the word ‘very’ appearing redundant. In line with this the authors also overuse certain words when addressing their research results. For example, the word ‘indicated’ is used multiple times throughout this section causing the research to become repetitive and tedious.

Furthermore, the authors have also adopted an objective approach in the language they use, this is similar to the article by Mishna et al (2009). By removing any subjectivity both articles can present clear and unbiased research increasing the credibility of the information provided. Consequently, the authors are able to persuade and encourage the readers to follow the recommendations they have generated from the language they use.

When considering the research and reasoning behind the article it is clear the authors intentions were to develop a detailed understanding of cyber bullying and generate recommendations to aid others. However, when assessing the article 12 years later the reliability of the research is now questionable. Primarily because, since

2007 the use of technology and social media has grown dramatically. In this growth comes changes, changes to the definition of, changes to the opinions of school children and changes to the recommendations that were developed. Indeed, that's not to say the article lacks relevance, but it has become outdated.

Furthermore, there are also issues with some of the information presented. For example, whilst it is clear the authors are attempting to demonstrate the use of a diverse group of students, their statistics on the number of children on free school meals have no relevance to the recommendations they then generate. Therefore, another concern with the article is the relevancy of information provided.

Next, Agatston et al's (2007) definition of cyber bullying is only vaguely considered at the end of their methodology section and makes no attempts to provide examples or go into detail about this concept. It is also unknown where this definition has come from as the authors make no attempt to reference the quote, unlike Keith and Martin (2005) where the definition of cyber bullying is clearly referenced from Bill Belsey, a known educator. This comparison demonstrates a further issue with the article, as without a detailed definition the authors lack clarity on what they are researching.

Finally, there are issues surrounding the validity and reliability of this article. Firstly, although the research conducted concentrates on focus groups, there is no mention on how the samples were generated, why there were only 150 students participating and why they were split into groups according to their gender. This causes significant doubt on the validity of the information provided as the focus groups were unstructured and could not be replicated. Secondly, no detailed explanation was given on how the interviews were conducted, and what the scripted questions were, therefore the reliability of the article is an issue.

To conclude, as identified throughout this critical essay the article presented by Agatston et al (2007) on cyber bullying has both positive and negative considerations. Indeed, the authors structure the essay well to provide a concise analysis and recommendations for others and the language used is relevant for the intended audience. But, when considering the information presented there are issues with outdated information, definitions lacking support and the validity and reliability of the research. These limitations reduce both the effectiveness of the information provided and the recommendations generated.

Reference List:

Agatston, P. Kowalski, R. Limber, S. (2007) '*Students' Perspectives on Cyber Bullying*', Journal of Adolescent Health

Coughlan, S. (2019) '*England's Schools 'Worse For Cyber-Bullying*' BBC News family and education correspondent. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-48692953> (Accessed: 1 November 2019)

Keith, S. Martin, M.E. (2005) '*Cyber-Bullying: Creating a Culture of Respect in a Cyber World*' Crisis Prevention Briefs.

Mishna, F. Saini, M. Solomon, S. (2009) '*Ongoing and Online: Children and Youth's Perception of Cyber Bullying*' Children and Youth Services Review