

Student number: 2316355
ECEY5005/C

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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Part 1



(Start, 2016)

Part 2

The beach setting will be used to observe and support children's curiosity and allow them to develop specific mathematical and scientific concepts. The age of the children participating in this setting will be eight years old (school year four).

According to Barrable and Barrable (2022) outdoor environments promote cognitive and social development. However, whilst the Forest School approach has focused on woodland and forest environments, Barrable and Barrable (2022) argue that little research has been conducted in relation to coastal areas and the development of children. Barrable and Barrable (2022) argue that all outdoor spaces that utilise natural resources, including beaches, provide opportunity for self-directed learning in the early years. This is supported by Plymouth University (no date) who claim that although woodland areas provide optimal learning due to diversity, the Forest School approach can be utilised in any natural environment to promote child centred learning.

The beach provides opportunity for holistic development through encouraging children to explore and use their imagination, through observing the environment, focusing on shapes, forces, materials, and habitats (Horvath, no date). This builds on Froebel's (1899) theory that children learn best in the outdoors, not only focusing on plants and animals. This type of learning teaches children the relationships between living things and the environment, whilst also emphasising the importance of sustainability (Froebel Trust, no date).

The waves at the beach will be utilised to show scientific concepts, including physics and forces, whilst also considering senses such as sound. The below demonstrates the potential dialogue between the teacher and students:

Student 1: I can hear the waves, swish swish swish.

Teacher: Yes, that's correct. The sounds we can hear are the waves. This is also the up and down motion we can see in water. Have you ever floated in the water in a rubber ring, and you bob up and down with the water?

Student 2: Yes.

Teacher: That's caused by the waves going up and down. The water itself doesn't move forward with the wave but goes up and down as the wave travels through the water.

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Student 3: Why does it happen?

Student 1: It's the fish swimming up and down.

Student 4: And the sharks.

Teacher: Good guess, I can see why you said that, but it happens because of gravity from wind and the moon. Let's jump as high as we can. Do we fall back down or keep going up?

Student 1: Fall back down.

Teachers: Yes, that's due to the earth's gravity that pulls you and everything down, including water. Moon pulls water, and earth pulls it too. That's what causes the waves. This is why we have a high and low tide, and this leads to things being washed up on the beach. This can be a variety of things, all with different materials and textures.

The waves could also be used to discuss objects that are washed up on the beach, their different materials and the consequences of human action on pollution and water quality.

Teacher: What would you expect to see washed up on the beach?

Student 3: Rubbish. That's why we shouldn't chuck our rubbish in the sea. It makes the beach look messy.

Student 5: It hurts the fish, and they get stuck in it.

Student 2: My mum always tells me to put rubbish the blue bin, so it's recycled and doesn't end up on the beach.

Teacher: Yes, that's correct, does anyone know what this is called? It begins with P.

Student 3: Pollution.

This provides an opportunity for the teacher to discuss pollution and how this leads to decreased water quality, using different areas of water on the beach to provide illustration. For example, comparison of water colour between the marina and rock pools.

Student 3: Shells and pebbles also wash up on the beach. I've just found a big shell and you can hear the sea when you put it close to your ear.

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Student 4: Can I have a go?

Students 1, 2 and 5: And me.

Student 4: I'm going to go and find a similar shell.

Student 1: I'm going to find a bigger one.

Teacher: Go and find as many different pebbles and shells as you can and count how many different types you find. Compare the pebbles and shells and put them in order of biggest to smallest.

This will allow the teacher to discuss the textures, colours and shapes of the pebbles with the children, developing both mathematical and scientific skills.

Student 4: Isn't sand just pebbles?

Student 2: No, it can't be because sand is soft, and pebbles are hard.

Teacher: Both are very good points but student 4 is correct, the sand is pebbles that have eroded by the waves and brought in by the tide.

Rock pools will allow children to explore how they are formed and the habitats of the sea. This will be an opportunity to discuss and consider the food chain. How animals adapt to live can be considered, including their ability to camouflage from prey. They can also consider different types of seaweed and plants at the beach.

The following leading questions can be used by the teacher to encourage discussion:

- What can you see?
- What creatures would you find in here?
- What happens if we remove this seaweed from the rock pool?

Student 5: There's fish in this water.

Teacher: Yes. What type of fish are they?

Student 5: Black fish.

Student 3: Actually, their proper name are Tadpoles.

Teacher: And what other kind of animals would we expect to see here?

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Student 1: Crabs, snails, starfish, jellyfish.

Student 2: Sharks.

Student 4: Sharks are scary, they eat all the fish.

Teacher: That's it, that's part of the food chain. Can anyone explain to me what this is?

Student 1: It's when animals eat other animals to survive.

Teacher: So what animal do we think is at the bottom of the food chain? Is it going to be whales and sharks or small fish and crabs?

Student 3: Small fish because the sharks and whales eat them, the fish don't eat the sharks and whales.

Teacher: That's right, this is how animals survive in nature, prey and predators, those who hunt other animals for food, and others who are hunted. This means that animals must adapt to live and survive in the wilderness and learn strategies to protect themselves.

Student 1: Is it like camouflage?

Student 4: Like an octopus. They can change colour to blend in with rocks in the sea.

Some of these discussions may also be asked in the Welsh language to promote its use outside of the maintained classroom setting (Welsh Government, no date). This meets the principles of the Curriculum for non-maintained nursery settings policy, which states that Welsh and its culture and values should be taught in all settings in Wales (Welsh Government, no date).

These different aspects at the beach support Nicholson's (1972) multi-sensory variables, encouraging learning and play in early years children. These also help meet the Welsh Government's (2020) Progression Steps. According to Welsh Government (2020) progression step 2 should be met at the age of eight, and includes being curious and searching for answers, understanding the survival of living things, as well as the concepts of forces and energy in the universe. According to this, children at progression step 2 should be able to recognise patterns from observation and communicate findings, use knowledge to predict outcomes and the impact of human actions on the environment all of which these observations and activities at the beach

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aim to achieve (Welsh Government, 2020). Nevertheless, according to the Welsh Government (2023), this type of learning has also been proven to improve the wellbeing of children in the early years, contributing to the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2021).

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Part 3

RISK BENEFIT ASSESSMENT

Location / Activity:	Beach/Coastal area	Date:	15/09/2024
Assessor:	Ryan Morgans	Review date:	15/03/2025

Risks cannot be reduced entirely so this risk assessment is based on the most significant risks. These include those that cause potential injury, death or common risks that interrupt normal teaching and learning. Control measures are put in place to reduce these risks in line with legislation.

Experience exploring outdoor space in photograph	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Hazards and associated risks	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk after precautions RATING: L/M/H
Children playing in shallow puddles and exploring rock pools.	Children will experience relaxation and improved wellbeing, whilst also engaging in physical activity and exploring creativity.	Drowning is one of the biggest associated risks. This can occur even in shallow water when paddling. An	Children	- Swimming is not permitted under any circumstance. Paddling only to be considered under supervision and where the water does not exceed 20cm depth. Additionally, the water should be no further than 10m from land. - The teacher will research the weather forecast, tidal times and rainfall to ensure the safety of the pupils.	L

Experience exploring outdoor space in photograph	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Hazards and associated risks	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk after precautions RATING: L/M/H
	- Children will learn about natural habitats and environments, making connections between the environment and living things, thus problem solving. - It will provide an opportunity to learn about scientific concepts such as tidal currents, waves, forces and food chains.	incoming tide, strong currents or increased flood water are also associated hazards, posing a risk to being cut off or carried into the sea. Children are more susceptible to hypothermia due to entering cold water.		- Sun cream will be readily available, as will additional clothing to prevent exposure to extreme weathers. For example, the cold, rain and heat. - Teachers will receive first aid training and be competent to carry out any first aid in case of an emergency. - The site will be reviewed prior to visits to ensure it is safe for young children and any hazards are considered. A pre-check of rock pools will be conducted to ensure they are safe before children begin to explore. - Changes in the environment such as an incoming tide will be discussed with the children prior to the visit to ensure that safe practices are adopted, and risk of harm is reduced. - Children and staff will thoroughly wash hand following exposure to the	

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		• Reflection from the water may cause increased risk of sunburn. • Sea creatures may bite or sting.		water and any objects present in the sea or rock pools.	
Uneven surfaces, jumping and walking on different topography and climbing and	• Supports balance and walking, teaching children how to carefully walk on different gradients and topography.	• Slippery ground and little grip due to its material, leading to slips, trips and falls. This may	Children Teachers	• Ensuring appropriate clothing and footwear is worn. • Playing wobble games in preparation so that children become accustomed to it. • Explain the changes and differences to children in advance and during and advise them to walk slowly.	L

Experience exploring outdoor space in photograph	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Hazards and associated risks	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk after precautions RATING: L/M/H
balancing on rocks, stones, and sand dunes.	Teaches children about slopes, gradients, forces and energy.	cause injury such as broken bones. This can also be caused by slippery and sharp rocks.		- Check the ground to ensure it is safe for children to walk on, avoiding any slips or trips. - The teacher will supervise children when walking on uneven surfaces or slippery grounds and remain under close supervision until abilities or conditions improve.	
Digging holes, sandpits and dirt and the handling of materials found on the beach, such as pebbles, sand,	- Children will experience pleasure from this activity, whilst also working with others and developing problem solving and creativity skills. - Children will develop	- Injury from handling sharp or hard objects. - Sand or mud present in eyes through rubbing or throwing objects, as	Children	- Staff training is one of the main control measures for this activity. Risks are inevitable and therefore staff should implement and share good practice. - Staff inspection of the area is necessary to ensure the environment is safe for children to handle objects and materials, reducing the risk of injury. These inspections should look out for dangerous items, litter and faeces.	L

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sticks and stones.	knowledge of the objects found at the beach and their formations, improving their engagement with natural environment. - Children will develop an understanding of potential risks, improving decision making capabilities and risk taking. - Children will learn how to prevent damage to	well as the wind. - Infection from animal faeces. For example, residue dog faeces. - The handling of litter, including glass and needles increasing the risk of injury and the spread of disease.		- Behaviour of children should be monitored during the activity to ensure little contact is made with the eyes, for example discouraging children from rubbing eyes or throwing objects. - The carrying of heavy and sharp items such as rocks and stones by children should be done in a safe manner, with the teacher advising on good practice, for example lifting with a straight back. - Teachers will be first aid trained and carry a first aid kit on the visit. - Children to be reminded that litter can be hidden, to be cautious and what to do if litter is found.	

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	natural habitats and environments. • Children will learn about shapes and forces. • This may provide opportunity to learn about energy, for example by rolling deserted vehicle tyres and displaying momentum.				
Stranger danger, and members	• Children may develop social skills by speaking to members of	• Members of the public behaving in	Children	• Contact between children and members of the public will be controlled and teachers will intervene if required.	L

Experience exploring outdoor space in photograph	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Hazards and associated risks	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk after precautions RATING: L/M/H
of the public behaving in an inappropriate manner	the public, particularly if children are questioned on their activity, improving cognitive thinking. Children taught the importance of not sharing information with strangers to ensure their safety, and the associated risks involved with speaking to strangers.	inappropriate manners, including violence and aggression. - Members of the public walking dogs on the beach. Dogs may pose a risk, through attacking and biting. - Abduction of children or children becoming		- Stranger danger discussed with the children prior to beach visit. - Regular headcount and register undertaken by the teacher. - Teachers must be aware and alert to any undue attention from members of the public. Report any concerns to the police.	

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Experience exploring outdoor space in photograph	How will young people BENEFIT from this activity?	Hazards and associated risks	Who is at risk?	PRECAUTIONS in place to reduce the risk of injury	Overall risk after precautions RATING: L/M/H
		lost or separated from the group.			

Part 4

Outdoor learning is central to the development of social and emotional skills, as well as problem-solving capabilities in the early years (Sage Publications, no date). However, Early Excellence Inspirational Learning (EEIL) (no date) state that direct learning in the classroom provides the best learning opportunities. EEIL (no date) however, acknowledge that outdoor learning provides opportunities for children to make connections with mathematical concepts whilst also improving cognitive ability and vocabulary. Nevertheless, early years practitioners have a responsibility to encourage and support mathematical and scientific learning in the outdoors in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act (2021). The Welsh curriculum emphasises the importance of outdoor learning based on its positive impacts on wellbeing, social development, creativity, empathy as well as risk taking and resilience (Welsh Government, no date).

Speldewinde and Campbell (2022) refer to nature play as an educator. Speldewinde and Campbell (2022) claim that mathematical concepts are learnt through play and opportunities to do so should be provided by the learning setting. This builds on Froebel's (1899) approach which states that children's understanding of concepts is learned through direct experience, and that play is the greatest representation of development. Froebel (1899) highlighted the freedom of child-led play, and the importance of observation by practitioners to understand the interests of children in order to support curiosity. As part of his work, Froebel (1899) emphasised the importance of materials, comprising of sticks, blocks and wooden shapes. In his view these provide children with freedom to search and play which is integral to learning (Froebel, 1899).

Froebel's (1899) concepts therefore continue to shape outdoor activities provided in early years settings through the use of shapes, spaces, measurements, gardening and nature. The provision of materials develops shape and spatial relationships, whilst nature provides opportunity to develop mathematical and scientific skills (University of Edinburgh, no date). For example, measuring heights of plants and sticks, and considering volumes and weights of objects (University of Edinburgh, no date). Furthermore, gardening provides opportunity for children to learn about both biology and ecology, with a particular focus on life cycles, habitats, and the growth of plants through the planting of seeds (University of Edinburgh, no date).

This is linked with loose parts play, a concept developed by Nicholson (1972). Loose parts are referred to as variables that allow children to explore, discover and learn, including animals, plants, materials and shapes (Nicholson, 1972). Children are provided with materials and are left to freely explore, play and discover their own learning, with no set structure provided by the practitioner (Nicholson, 1972).

These approaches help children build independence and improves judgement, as well as decision making through self-activity, thus developing problem solving skills relating to mathematics and science (Tovey, no date).

Spencer et al. (2019) also states that not only does this approach provide opportunities for exploration and self-regulation, but also promotes physical activity and the use of natural resources in the outdoors, allowing children to make links and explore different types of play. This is supported by PACEY (2019) who suggest that tyres, bricks, planks of wood, stones and water can be utilised in the outdoors as loose parts. This provides children with an enabling environment, promoting learning in; decision making regarding type of play and the sharing of resources, shapes, sizes, counting and measuring objects and understanding world concepts by testing ideas and theories (PACEY, 2019).

PACEY (2019) claim that there is no incorrect way to interact with a loose part and avoids children feeling a sense of failure. Instead, it allows children to experience a sense of achievement when meeting their own set goals (PACEY, 2019). However, Spencer et al. (2019) found that the loose parts approach does have drawbacks to learning. Their study found that some children are often apprehensive when provided with loose parts materials and are left to create their own learning (Spencer et al., 2019). In many cases, the child withdraws interaction until a recognisable activity is started (Spencer et al., 2019). Furthermore, Spencer et al. (2019) claim that outdoor loose parts play can be hazardous, posing risks to physical injury through heights, tools and materials. Nevertheless, Spencer et al. (2019) claim that this risky behaviour allows children to learn about risk, understand their limits and learn from physical injury. The risks are also further reduced through risk assessments undertaken by practitioners (Spencer et al., 2019).

Despite these barriers, Nicholson's (1972) loose parts approach and Froebel's (date) free play approach allows children to meet the Welsh Government's (2020)

progression steps, by showing curiosity, exploring the environment and the use tools to construct and deconstruct concepts.

In contrast to Nicholson's (1972) and Froebel's (1899) approaches, Vygotsky (1990) argues that cognitive development is linked with language, and that problem solving occurs with the help of speech. In Vygotsky's (1990) view, there is a point at which a child's development cannot be improved without the help of others. Whilst at this point, which is referred to as the zone of proximal development, children will learn skills from others to improve and this becomes a continuous cycle (Vygotsky, 1990). Due to this, Vygotsky (1990) emphasises the importance of both child-led and adult-led play. In his view, it is essential that practitioners undertake observation to be aware of when to intervene and take control to ensure that the learning continues, working towards extending and challenging the child's knowledge (Vygotsky, 1990). This includes asking questions to develop metacognitive thinking (PACEY, 2021).

Harcombe (no date) argues that observation should be unnoticeable by the child, as this can cause changes in self-consciousness and behaviour. Furthermore, Louis and Betteridge (2020) argue that observation is subjective and therefore different practitioners might intervene where others may not, based on underlying prejudice. Nevertheless, West Sussex Government (2021) highlights how observation allows practitioners to assess progress, identify interests and any learning needs, allowing them to plan and tailor their teaching to the needs of the child, ensuring a child-centred approach is adopted. However, NCFE (no date) argue that outdoor learning naturally encourages the use of questions in children as they discover new concepts. Practitioners should, however, use open ended questions to develop discussion skills and the exploration of new terrain, encourage evaluation of solutions and opinions, and allow time for children to reflect (NCFE, no date).

Whilst exploration is taking place, the practitioner should make reference to an object's size, colour or weight and use the child's response to generate more questions and tailor these to the interests of the child (Mazzocco et al., 2021). Additionally, the practitioner should propose a question that will make the child problem solve or test, such as the rolling of sticks or stones down a hill (Mazzocco et al., 2021).

Wandsworth Government (2024) argue that open-ended questions encourage children to develop communication skills as it stimulates thinking in children, requiring

the use of extended vocabulary. Children must think about their answers, elaborate details and provide opinions (Wandsworth Government, 2024). Ultimately, it improves imaginary and creativity skills, whilst also developing problem-solving skills through thinking about issues, finding solutions and providing ideas (Wandsworth Government, 2024).

This is supported by Svanes and Andersson-Bakken (2021) who state that it encourages participation in the activity and allows children to elaborate on their ideas. However, research shows that the use of questioning techniques is rare in educational settings despite its importance on child development (Lee and Kinzie, 2012).

However, Sandling (no date) argues that open-ended questions can lead to unclear responses as children fail to provide direct answers, and that children with lower cognitive ability may struggle to provide responses.

This type of learning has however been recognised for its ease and ability to conduct in any outdoor space including playgrounds, woodlands, and fields and provides varied real-life concepts and materials that children can interact with (Mazzocco et al., 2021). Furthermore, this type of learning has been praised for its physical benefits and contribution to wellbeing, helping practitioners meet the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2021).

Similarly, Vygotsky (1990) states that practitioners should ensure that children can collaborate with their peers by sharing knowledge. Consequently, children will improve metacognitive abilities through reflection on their knowledge, and the knowledge of their peers (Vygotsky, 1990).

Vygotsky (1990) also proposes that practitioners ensure group work and social interaction between peers is readily available. Vygotsky (1990) emphasises the importance that peers can have on individuals due to the varied skills and abilities of children leading to the supporting of development of other children, and the gradual learning of different skills. If a child encounters an issue, this may encourage discussion thus improving social skills, ideas may be discussed until a solution is reached, contributing to the development of problem solving and creativity skills (PACEY, 2021).

Nevertheless, McLeod (2024) argues that this scaffolding process can be ineffective with peers and does not have the same effects as intervention by practitioners, due to their ability to assesses and adjust support based on the needs of the child.

In conclusion, outdoor learning provides opportunity for children in the early years to develop mathematical and scientific skills, meeting the principles of the Welsh Curriculum (2021). Practitioners can support this through providing opportunities for free and child-led play, using loose parts to support learning. Observation and the use of open-ended questions also supports cognitive thinking, allowing children to develop mathematical and scientific knowledge. Despite its drawbacks, most research supports play based activities due to its ability to incorporate various areas of learning, supporting curiosity, balance, problem solving, innovation and risk taking. Future practice should therefore continue to integrate play in the outdoors to support the development of mathematical and scientific knowledge in early years settings.

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