

EAAE6006 – Media and Digital Literacy.

Section 1 – A critical evaluation of the effectiveness of digital devices used by young children to access media content/ support in ICT development. Demonstrate your understanding of possible positive and negative aspects of access to digital media on children's learning and development. Ensure to make links to theory.

By encouraging children in early years education to use digital devices in class to access media content/ support in ICT development, it can have positive and negative effects on children's education and development. It is obvious that over the past year and a half children have had to use digital devices more than ever to access their schoolwork because of the global pandemic, Covid-19, whereas if this were normal times we would not be as reliant on media and digital literacy as we are today.

Dodge et al (2011) suggests that children have a variance of understanding of media and digital literacy whilst growing up. Flewitt et al (2014) suggests that this is because from birth children are exposed to digital communication. Wartella et al (2010) agrees with this as they also suggest that young children are immersed in digital communication practices during the crucial time when their emerging literacy skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing, are being shaped. This is a positive aspect of the effectiveness of digital devices being used by young people as by the age of two a substantial number of children view screen media daily. Bavelier et al (2010) and Wartella et al (2010) both believe that there has been sufficient evidence to suggest that children are exposed to television during their toddler years. This had both positive and negative side effects.

According to Cranmer et al (2009) e-safety is discouraging many teachers from incorporating it into their day-to-day teaching. UNICEF (2016) also suggests this as they state that more and more children are going online in even greater numbers, therefore we need to ensure that they are safe when online as well as offline.

There are many negative aspects of young children using a screen. One of the major negative aspects is that they will be stuck inside rather than playing in a group of friends. Duch et al (2013) suggests that being alone could impact their ability to develop their language as they will not be speaking to anyone. This may also lead to them not being able to understand multiple social cues as they will have less interaction with other children and could form a habit of ignoring people. This goes against Bandura's theory of social interaction (1979) as they suggest that children learn from each other and in social settings. Vandewater et al (2007) agrees with Duch et al as they state that using technology for long amounts of time during the day could interfere with children's sleep habits as children will be less likely to be active during the day if they are on a device.

The American academy of Pediatrics (2012) suggests that parents who want their children between the ages of 18 months (about 1 and a half years) and 24 months (about 2 years) to be using digital media should choose a high-quality program and watch it with their children to help

them understand what they are watching. For children between the ages of 2 to 5 years, parents and guardians should limit the screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. The parents and guardians should co-watch the program with them at this age still but attempt to incorporate what they watch into the world around them. The American academy of pediatrics' (2012) also suggests that children who are six and older should have consistent time limits on the time they spend using media and the types of media and the parents should ensure that using technology does not take the place of sleep, physical activity and other activities that are essential to ensure good health. A way in which parents or guardians could do this is to designate media-free times together that could include dinner times as well as technology-free rooms at home like children's bedrooms. They also suggest that parents and/or guardians should have ongoing communication about online safety which should include treating others with respect both online and offline.

Newport (2019) suggests that we need time spent free from other inputs to process what has happened in a day or what a child may have learned that day in school. By using technology or playing a game for example, Children will not get the time to process relevant information that they may have learnt that day.

E-safety is a major concern when introducing technology to children nowadays as Barnard-Wills (2012) suggests that e-safety is an umbrella term and online safety is more accurate. We as early-year practitioners need to ensure that we teach children how to be safe online. One way in which we should be doing this is by teaching children about their digital self. Younie and Leask (2015) states that children entering school today will increasingly have to create and update their 'digital self'. They argue that for children to be successful in later life they will have to manage their online and off-line presence. This can be seen in society nowadays in many news articles as there is a big focus currently on being kind to people in the media. There are multiple initiatives and movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement which is trying to tell people that everyone is the same and the color of someone's skin should not matter in the way people are treated. This can be linked to everyday life as pupils should be taught that even though not everyone is the same shape, size, or color they should all be treated the same within a classroom. This can also be linked to the Equality Act (2010) as that states that everyone deserves the right to be treated equally. Article 3 of the UNCRC (1992) as this also states that everyone has the right to be treated equally and fairly.

One way in which schools can protect children online is by blocking and using strict filters children in school can experience. Savage and Barnett (2015) suggests that this will be a filtered version of the internet which in turn could be putting the children at a greater risk. Ofsted (2014) backs up Savage and Barnett as they suggest that those in schools with filtered systems are more vulnerable overall when schools used filtered versions because they were not given enough opportunities to learn how to access and manage risk for themselves. They also suggest that children need to be empowered to understand and learn how to stay safe.

Ofsted (2014) also suggests that it is the school's responsibility to protect and educate their school pupils and staff on the use of technology and to support any incidents where appropriate.

Donaldson (2015) also agrees with this in his successful futures report as he states that teachers must educate learners on how to use technology safely with respect for others. The national curriculum (2013) also agrees as they state that an area of priority at both key stages 1 and 2 pupils must be taught to use technology safely and respectfully.

Section 2 – An information leaflet made for the parents/careers of young children outlining the issues relating to supporting and safeguarding children when accessing digital media/ICT. Ensure to make links to relevant and appropriate policies and legislation.

SUPPORTING AND CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WHEN ACCESSING DIGITAL MEDIA AND ICT



Image: Maloney (2020)

According to Lee (2019) technology is a reliable source of learning and entertainment for children nowadays. However, there are health implications of screen time that as a parent, guardian, or early years practitioner we should consider. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2018) has put together a table of recommendations for the screen time your child should be having now.

Age	Time recommended
Up to 2 years old	No screen time at all!
3-5 years old	No more than one hour a day in front of a screen.
6 years and older	You should place consistent limits on media time.

Due to Covid-19, children nowadays have had no option but to start using technology at a younger age. They are using it both at home and for school. By giving parents and caregivers a better understanding of the recommendations the American Academy of Pediatrics (2018) they may be more likely to listen and may give you better understanding of the options available on what you might want to set up in your home when it comes to screen time.

Advantages of Screen Time

There are many different advantages of using technology. For example, computers can be used to do work, research, play games online, play educational games and improve a child's language skills. Pediatric child health (2018) suggests that televisions often offer educational programs such as documentaries and other educational materials especially for children who are struggling with their speech and language skill. Most child's videogames encourage developmental skills such as hand-eye coordination. Some video games that are motion-controlled, active games can be used to help promote physical activities. Even video games can encourage developmental skills such as hand-eye coordination. Some motion-controlled, active games can also promote physical activity such as dancing.

Further reading or links!

According to NSPCC (2021) this is their helpline information.

- call our 02 NSPCC Advice Line on **0800 800 5002** for advice on apps, sites, games and online safety.
- visit an O2 Guru in store – our trained advisors can help you set up parental controls.
- use **Net Aware** to have a look at the apps, sites and games children like to play online.

Or visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

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Media and Digital Literacy

Section 2

Reasons to Limit Screen Time

While these advantages are valuable, there are important reasons why experts encourage parents to not let the children over do it. Some of these include:

Sleep

According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent psychiatry (2018) getting enough sleep can be a challenge for kids as they often have homework and after-school activities that need to be completed after school. Some may even have sports on the weekends. As the American Academy of child and adolescent psychiatry (2018) also suggests that this would result in screen time running into bedtime. This may be because of the electronic stimulation that has been proven to interfere with a child falling and staying asleep.

Attention

Gentile (2012) suggests that too much screen time can be associated with attention problems in class times. A study in America proved this as they found that children who already have trouble paying attention or who tend to act impulsively, videogames were their focus of the study.

Schoolwork

Sherif et al (2010) suggests that children who watch a lot of television are more likely to struggle in school and read fewer books than children who only watch an hour of tv. By cutting down the amount of time a child is watching the television, the child's grades should begin to improve.

Physical Activity

More screen time has been associated with reduced physical activity and a higher risk of obesity in kids.

Social Interaction

When someone uses technology such as computers, games, and TV, they are not interacting with others. Since finding good quality time can be difficult for many families, allowing technology to cut into those moments is something parents may want to prevent as much as possible. While it can be fun to have a family movie night or play a video game together, the fact is that screen time means less face-to-face interaction.

Ways to Limit Technology

There are many ways in which you as a parent or guardian can limit your child's technology usage. It is easy enough to turn the television off or let a child play a video game when they are bored however that is not a long-term solution and according to Lee (2019) there are many options of things you can do to find entertainment if and when you chose to. You are still able to allow your child to use technology with limits if you set up parental locks on your internet and devices.

One way in which you can do this is by downloading a VPN and ad blocker. This will stop any inappropriate ads popping on the screen which your child is using the device.

Another way in which you can minimize your child's screen time is by not putting a television in your child's bedroom. If you do put a tv in your child's room the child is more likely to develop sleeping problems and put on weight.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2018) suggests that you should help your child chose a film or video game. This will not only tell you what they are watching is safe, but you can help to sway their decision if they go to choose something inappropriate.

You could also place time limits on your television so the tv is not on for extended periods of time. This will not only encourage the child to do something else, but he may also find something he prefers to do rather than watch tv.

Even though technology can provide wonderful opportunities, it can also have negative effects on health and well-being. While you encourage your children to unplug, keep in mind that you can set a good example for them. Try to limit your own screen time and do your best to create non-tech centered activities for the entire family.

Section 3 – Plan an activity to promote digital literacy and the competence of a group of young children when accessing ICT. You will need to note the age of the children and the role of the

practitioner within the activity. The activity should be child-led and play-based. (450 – 550 words)

Activity Plan for Digital Literacy Skills		
Number of children - There are 18 children including one child with autism.	Age of children – The children involved are between the ages of 5 and 6.	Number of adults – There will be two teachers and one learning support assistant who is also our qualified first aider. This ensures that we are in line with pupil-to-teacher ratio.
Location – We will be walking from the school to the riverside walk in St Clears which is also known as Peillac way and then back to the school and into the ICT room to conduct the research task.	Preparation – Before mentioning the walk to the pupils, we will be walking the path we would be taking and conducting a risk assessment to ensure the pupils' safety. We will also be sending out parental/guardian consent forms.	Activity time – the activity will take place for two hours. The first hour will be the nature walk and the second hour will ideally be in the ICT room conducting the research tasks.
<u>Resources</u> - The first resources we will need are pens or pencils for each pair with a piece of paper and a clipboard. This will be needed to complete the first task of the activity. The second resource we will need is our risk assessment which must be completed before we do this activity. This is for health and safety requirements and it will ensure the safety of the pupils, staff and any other community member who may also be walking the same path which we are on. The third resource we will need it to ensure that children who will be taking part in this activity have given back a parental consent form to ensure that the parents are up to date with the school's activities. The next resource we will need is a first aid box. This is to ensure that if any minor accidents occur whilst on our nature walk, then we will be fully covered and able to treat it there and then. Finally, we will also have to make sure that all the children and staff are dressed appropriately for the weather on that day. For example, if it is raining then we must ensure that the children are in waterproof clothing and are warm. If it is sunny then we should encourage the children to wear a sun hat and sunscreen and to bring a drink with them.		
<u>Links to digital literacy/competence outcomes</u> - The children will be asked in pairs to sign into their own computer account. They will then need to name and date their work and save it in the correct folder which will be set up closer to the time. They will also be asked to print out their own copy of their work to place in their work folder. According to the digital literacy framework (2008) these are things that all 5-6 years old should be able to do or are starting too do. Therefore, by encouraging the children to do this in lessons, then the children should improve on the ICT skills, their communication skills, and their teamwork skills.		
<u>Details of the activity</u> – The activity we have planned will be split into two parts. The first part is a nature walk. The walk will take part within the local community thus meaning that we will not have to get transport as we can walk to and from the nature path. This will give the children involved a chance to get some exercise whilst visiting a new area they may have not seen before. During the activity, the children will be asked to work in pairs and look for three things. These things should be part of the natural environment and something that the children will easily remember. The children should be		

encouraged not to pick up or move or even touch their chosen things. By doing this we are encouraging the children not to disturb the natural environment around them and letting them know they can look but not touch. We will then make our way back to school and go to the ICT classroom. Here, all the children will sit at a computer in their pairs. They will then be asked to google photos of their three chosen things and describe them in a word document. This will encourage the children to use technology when discussing something they have enjoyed. It will also give them a chance to work together as a team and improve their team working and communication skills whilst doing something fun.

Section 4 – Critically evaluate the planned activity making specific links to the digital competence framework strands, curriculum requirements and research-based sources. Consider how the activity could be adapted to meet a range of needs, abilities, and dispositions.

The activity I chose to do for this assignment, I feel was a good decision. This is because it not only incorporated the environment and exercise, but also touched upon historical aspects of our village. It touched upon aspects of geography, history, and physical education. It also helped to improve children's holistic development, social skills, communication skills and working together as some big teams to ensure we all stayed safe.

Corbishley (2011) suggests that outdoor learning experiences can develop awareness, encourage responsibility for their own learning, build a sense of community and develop awareness and respect for the environment. A major benefit of being outdoors is that it will increase a child's heart rate as they engage in multiple physical tasks. In 2016, a report carried out by the telegraph found that 1 in 5 primary school children are obese by the time they leave school. OFSTED (2008) suggests that where possible, the outdoor and indoor environment should be linked so that children can move freely between them. This can be known to improve a child's mental health. According to the Mental Health Foundation (2017) 10% of children in the UK have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem. Carlile (2016) states that the national demonstration project recently reported that 90% of children suffering from mental health said they feel happier and healthier whilst learning outside.

Children can build on their emotional resilience through being in the natural environment as they encounter risk and challenge. It is important for children to have these experiences as this will allow them to develop their own concepts of what is safe and what is dangerous. According to White (2011) when facilitating outdoor play, teachers should provide experiences that are “as safe as necessary not as safe as possible”. Allowing children to judge risk and challenge themselves could arguably help them as adults when dealing with risk and challenge in the real world. This is suggested by Danks and Schofield (2006).

There are many educational benefits of going on a nature walk also as the Audubon Nature preschool suggests that “children are born naturalists. They explore the world with all of their senses, experiment in the environment, and communicate their discoveries to those around them.”

White (2014) agrees with this as she states that outdoor play allows for direct, first-hand learning experiences. Children can explore, experiment, and understand the environment whilst making connections with the natural and human world. The Raleigh School (2018) backs this up as they state that without play “the intellectual lives of children become stagnant and dull”. They also suggest that by encouraging children to do work outside, this will demonstrate a decrease in their distractibility which in turn will increase their attention when back in class. I witnessed this during our activity as the children had used up all their energy on the walk.

According to White (2011) being outdoors allows children to build relationships with one another and helps to develop social skills and communication. For instance, by pairing up the children on the walk they had to ensure each other were safe whilst working together as a pair. This is in line with the digital literacy framework (2008) as it states that children between the ages of 5 and 6 should be able to work well together. The Raleigh School (2017) backs this up as they suggest that playing in nature improves social connections. Children who play in natural spaces play more, play with more friends, and play nicer.

By incorporating a nature walk into this task, it helps to ensure that children do not get the chance to overuse technology both at home and in the classroom. NCT (2018) suggests that the play strategy for Scotland states that open space allows children to be physically active and challenge themselves, so they sleep and eat well. This will encourage them to gain healthy habits that will hopefully stay with them for life.

On our walk over to the nature trail, we passed a historical statue that had been put up in our village of the Rebecca riots. By incorporating place-based learning away from the school, it gave the children a chance to explore photos and historical boards related to their own village's history. Cooper (2002) suggests that this may encourage them to go home and ask their families about their own family's history. This is beneficial as it encourages cross-curricula learning. Another subject that this benefit is Geography as Scoffman (2013) states that Geography is best learned through the soles of your feet. By integrating other subjects, Scoffman (2013) suggests that we are creating a nexus where pupils can develop a deeper understanding of what it means to live in our area.

One of the children who accompanied us on our activity has an additional learning need. Children who have additional learning needs can benefit from the outdoors through the use of sensory and visual experiences. Ploughman (2008, cited in Williams (2016) points out that lack of experience outdoors for children with impairments provides twice the number of disadvantages in that they are deprived of healthy activity which is proven to boost the cognitive functions.

Taylor and Kuo (2009) suggests that children with ADD/ADHD were able to perform better on cognitive tasks after being outdoors in comparison to sitting in a classroom 9-3.

By taking a group of children on a nature walk, this gives the children a chance to learn about landfulness. Baker (2005) understood young individuals and their experiences with the outdoors

and adventure-based learning and states that children should be able to understand how unique our environment is and to understand the environment around them.

Whilst on the walk, the children had the opportunity to write down what they saw in pairs, this included all the wildlife they saw, new plants and trees, the historical elements that we walked past and a chance to have a play in one of the fields. They were given strict instructions before leaving not to disturb the wildlife and as far as we could tell they stuck to this.

Once we got back to school the children were all taken to the ICT room and sat in their pairs. They then went onto the computers in pairs and wrote about what they saw using Microsoft Word and incorporating pictures they found online. In accordance with the digital literacy framework (2008) the children should have been able to sign into their own school accounts, set up the page accurately, print out their work once completed and place it into their folders. This they all managed to do efficiently, and we even had spare time at the lesson.

The children who took part in the experience had the opportunity to discover the area beyond our school gardens. This gave them the opportunity to not only learn about the history of Rebecca riots in the village but get the chance to learn about the historical value of the nature walk and how it is used today. By discussing the area in their pairs, it gave them the opportunity to improve their communication and social skills.

Overall, I believe that this activity was a success and highly beneficial to the children. However, if I were to do this activity again, I think I would try and find somewhere else to go with easier access. This is because we had to walk through a village and up and down some steps, therefore if we had a child or teacher with us who were in a wheelchair, they would have struggled on the steps and may have felt isolated as they could not do it as the other members of our group could. If this is not possible, I would try to figure out a way to arrange transport from the school straight to the nature path. This would be a safer option; however, it would not be very cost-efficient.

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