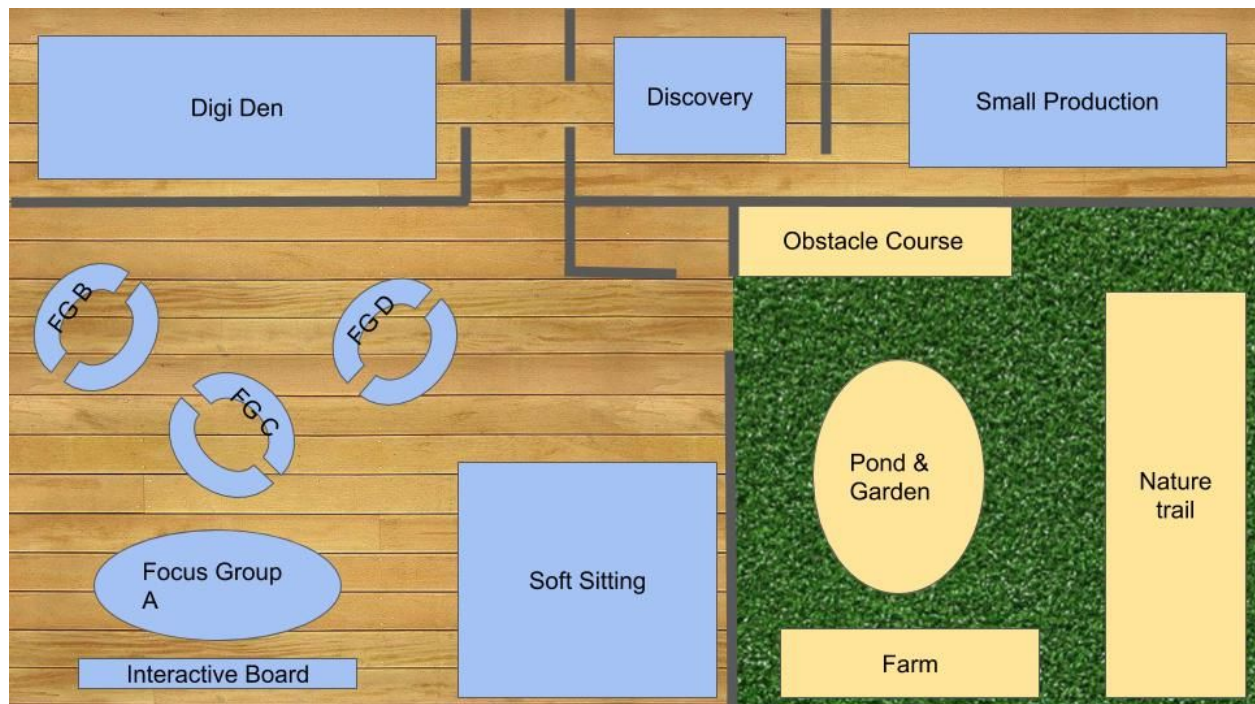


LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Huw Rhys LLewelyn	Student number:	ID	1803404
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	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.			

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.



Submission Date: 17/10/18

Word Count: 5097

Introduction

Child education is a complex area with a number of different theories and areas to explore as an academic. It is stated that there are three main learning theories, the behaviourist, constructivist and social constructivist approach. All with different founders, these learning theories are often what we can relate many educational techniques in primary schools to. In among these there are a number of areas up for debate and how they impact learning. Play for one is an area where we still haven't quite understood the true impact on education (Ginsburg, 2007). Assessment for Learning (AFL) is another area where it is suggested different techniques are more useful than others (Stiggins, 2002). Education in Wales is at a turning point, with Graham Donaldson's *Successful futures* (2015) recommendations, the Welsh government have given teachers the opportunity to write a national framework highlighting the 4 areas of learning Donaldson highlighted as important. These being Ambitious capable learners, enterprising creative contributors, healthy confident individuals and ethical informed citizens (Donaldson, 2015). To be able to implement and provide the best quality teaching of this new framework, an understanding of theory and teaching techniques is important.

Throughout this essay I will focus on one learning event and how this links into theory, supported by research. I will also look at how this literature will impact my own ideal learning environment, and what techniques supported by this literature I would put in place to impact all four areas of learning and key areas of framework. In accordance with Bertha Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) all names have been removed from my observation. The school in question is located in South West Wales, the school has three form entry and varies in class size from 25-32. My observation took place within a classroom in Key Stage 2, both the teacher and pupils were made aware of my observation before entering the classroom. I was given permission by the teacher to take pictures of any book work, excluding children names and any displays around the classroom. I was not permitted to take pictures of the children or anything that fell under their safeguarding policy.

Observation

The learning event I am going to discuss took place before and after a class activity on rock formation. The students had recently taken a trip to New Gale beach, where they had decided to do a class project on the environmental impact upon beaches. In groups the class were tasked to use google classroom and create a powerpoint showing their knowledge on sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks. The aim of the lesson was for students to collaboratively work towards an outcome, using teacher guided resources. The focus point of my observation is the use of AFL and type of formative assessment used by the teacher for the lesson, highlighting on the interaction between students whilst peer assessing.

Prior to the lesson the teacher created the tools needed for this particular AFL strategy. Each child was given a Tool Kit (*Figure 1*) and Success Criteria (*Figure 2*) to stick into their books. Both of these used the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) scoring method also known as the Traffic Light system. Each student was to highlight the areas they understood or needed help with/were yet to complete. The understanding in this class was that, if you put red you needed more time on a skill and if you put green you were comfortable and felt you could confidently answer questions. This allowed them a visual representation of what they needed to work on. I saw the use of this type of formative assessment in two parts.

The toolkit identified what they needed to do, representing the steps they needed to go through to complete the section of work. As shown in Figure 1 there is a place for both self assessment, and peer assessment on their tool kit. Children were asked to fill their tool kit out as they went along, when they felt that they had completed their work other children in their group could access the work through google classrooms and peer assess their contribution. What I found interesting was not just the use of the RAG scoring system but also the use of google classrooms comment section for each of the children

to give qualitative feedback. . Figure 3 shows the brief conversation and digital correspondence of a student peer assessing an others contribution.



Child 1: What slides are you?

Child 2: I did igneous rocks, I've put it all on one slide.

Child 1: (laughs) I like your title, you should make your writing move.

Child 1: I like your title and your pictures, I think you need more pictures and less writing.

Child 2: Thanks, I didn't think of that.

Figure 3: Brief verbal and digital conversation between two students. Digital conversation/feedback highlighted in green.

It was interesting to me that with both the RAG scoring system, which was part of the Tool Kit, and the digital feedback presented on google classrooms, the teacher formatted the response for students. In the digital correspondence shown in figure 3, they were told to comment on something that they liked and also one thing the other student should add or improve. As regards to the RAG scoring technique used in the self and peer assessment shown in figure 1, the class teacher had pre-written sentences for the pupils to rag score against.

The second part of my observation, which sandwiched the peer assessed feedback was the use of the Success Criteria (figure 2). Each child was given a success criteria to self assess their ability, before and after the lesson. The success criteria had a range of areas of learning throughout school years. Breaking it down into learning intentions, with Literacy and Digital Competence Framework (DCF) being subheadings. Under both of these, were skill levels that the pupils were working towards. At the start of the lesson the students were asked to RAG score themselves against the learning intentions. All 3

children that were observed RAG scored themselves as red, stating that they didn't understand or didn't know anything about the topic and the skill they were going to be asked to do.

Using the success criteria the pupils then went through the lesson, RAG scoring at different points when they felt they had completed a stage. They then as a class, self assessed their original skill levels after the task, RAG scoring where they now thought they were at. All 3 children now RAG scored themselves as green, stating they had a full understanding of the skills. All pupils then gave themselves some written feedback and feed forward (traditional known as What Went Well, Even Better If) as shown in figure 2. What was interesting to see, was the openness the pupils had to sharing their level. The pride they took in being able to see the difference in the RAG score, from the start to the end of the lesson. I was later told by the teacher that they use this style of assessment in all areas of learning, and then whilst marking the pupils look for two colour pens, green for growth, and tickle pink for good work. This highlighted to me the impact of the visual stimulus that children were using and recognising in this mode of assessment.

Observations in a school setting are incredibly valuable. They don't only allow us to see and study child interactions, but also social and educational development, as well as educational techniques on show from a teacher. For my observation I used direct observation taking written notes, this is seen as a naturalistic way of observation in a classroom. It allows students to go about their lesson without an abnormal distraction, the observer can almost blend into the background of the students natural environment. This form of observation allows us to observe a flow in conversation and behaviour, it also allows the researcher to study the entire situation (Mcleod, 2015). This observation could of been enhanced through the use of video. This would not just allow us to replay and assess the validity of our observation, but look at the entire situation again incase there was something missed. However, unlike an observer sat in the room, this is much more of an unnatural situation for children. It is suggested that there would have to be a period of acclimatization to having a video camera in the classroom.

Developing from that, Marsh and Mitchell (2014) found a number of benefits to having video cameras in classrooms for observation, and that children as well as teachers can benefit from video observation in a number of different ways. Although there are benefits to more technological forms of observation, the method used was appropriate for the situation.

I chose this learning event because I thought it showed great use of formative assessment but also collaborative working. What struck me in this observation was the willingness pupils had to share ideas and have their work peer assessed. As shown in figure 1 and figure 2 this type of formative assessment offers the pupils a visual representation of the level they are achieving. I believe that this form of assessment encouraged the pupils to talk about their work through peer assessment, sharing ideas this is particularly evident in figure 3 and through the use of google classrooms.

The aim of the this type of formative assessment is for the pupils to not only visually be able to see their understanding, but to also introduce an easy way for pupils to talk about their work. It was evident to see throughout my observation how peer assessing has encourage children to not just talk about their work, but also offer ways in which a student could improve theirs. Showing an important, social and education connection between the students. Black and Wiliam (2009) suggest that one of the key aspects of formative learning includes, activating students as instructional resources for one another. The brief dialogue in figure 3 shows exactly that, one student getting directional advice from another through verbal and digital conversation. Figure 1 and 2 both show the use of the RAG scoring method. This produces a form of qualitative data or feedback, through the three colours that can be used. Shepard (2008) states that formative assessment gives us a qualitative insight into the understanding of the students. The observation shows exactly that, the teacher is now able to look at both the peer and self assessment and to gage, via a score how much understand their pupils have.

I believe that the use of formative assessment in this way is a great tool to utilise. As stated earlier it indulges into student peer interaction, which is suggested to be important in Vygotsky's Social

Constructivist theory. It's also suggested that some of the best learning children do, is through peer interaction. Topping (2009), expresses that empirical evidence, supports peer assessment for the promotion of higher order thinking and cognitive development. Supporting the importance of cognitive development is Piaget's Constructivist theory, which states that children are actively constructing knowledge through cognitive processes (Turnbull & Lash, 2013) . For formative assessment to aid cognitive development, it has to be applied in the correct way to allow social interaction between peers. Social interaction is integrated into a number of theories.

Content & Learning Theories

There are a several different learning theories, all taking slightly different views on educational development and learning. The three main learning theories which will be discussed are, Behaviourism, Constructivism and Social Constructivism. William (2010), states that formative assessment is a bridge between learning and teaching, however it is not clear as to which school of thought AFL is most clearly linked to. Formative assessment has been defined by Turnbull and Lash (2013) 'as its purpose is to help form or shape, a students learning during the learning process', expanding on this they also state that 'formative assessment places demands on students to take a more serious approach to learning and to work harder'. These statements alone, don't help us directly link formative assessment to any learning theory. However, we can take from them, that formative assessment has an element of children taking charge in their own learning.

When talking about learning theories, Behaviourism is one that many can link educational techniques to. For example a sticker for good work, a reward for the behaviour the teacher wanted. We can also relate how many children learn their times tables, through repetition back to the behaviourist approach. This approach is often credited to Ivan Pavlov, respectfully known for his work with dogs and the formation of classical conditioning. Classical conditioning, involves learning to associate an

unconditioned stimulus with a particular response with a new conditioned stimulus (Grant, 1941).

Pavlov used dogs to show that an unconditioned stimulus (food) prompts an unconditioned response (salivation). But by using classical conditioning a conditioned stimulus (bell) can prompt a conditioned response (salivation) (McLeod, 2013).

Behaviourism also has a second well known school of thought. It's understood that behaviour of man and many animals is modifiable by the experiences of life (Thorndike, 1933). From this view Thorndike created the Law of effect, which formed the basis of Burrhus Skinner's Operant Conditioning. According to this principle, behaviour that is followed by a positive consequence is likely to be repeated. Skinner found that through the addition of a positive reinforcer or the removal of a negative reinforcer you can assess and then strengthen desired behaviour. It was noted that a single reinforcement is enough for a conditioned response (Iversen, 1992).

When looking at AFL the behaviourist approach would say that we need to reinforce desirable behaviour as soon as it happens, strengthening learning. Which is a key point of teacher guided formative assessment. However, the problem with the behaviourist approach is that it ignores the influence of mental processes on learning. John Watson's famous comment of "Give me a dozen healthy infants...my own specific world...pick anyone, and I'll train them to be become any type of specialist" (Todd and Morris, 1986) suggests just that. Peel (2005) stresses the point that the behaviourist approach ignores cognitive processes. Kolb (1988) goes further and states that the behaviourist learning techniques can only happen in an artificial laboratory. Even though this isn't entirely correct as we see examples of classical and operant condition in classrooms today, It's easy to see where holes can be plucked. This lead Psychologist to look into different directions.

Jean Piaget did exactly that, developing the Constructivist theory. Constructivism sees children as lone scientists, actively seeking out knowledge. Powell and Kalina (2009) agree with this and state that constructivism involves ideas being formulated through a personal process. Piaget argued that

children went through 4 stages of development (Wadsworth, 2004), developing and altering schemes at each stage. Piaget, didn't look at child or educational development, but looked at the idea of thought, with how existing knowledge helps shape the learning process (Bodner, 1986). He also stressed that children can't just be given information that they immediately understand, but they must construct their own knowledge (Piaget, 1966). The constructivist theory was developed from this line of thinking, it acknowledges the impact of external stimuli but states that learning and the formation of knowledge is the result of internal processes.

Constructivism, emphasis the active role students play in acquiring knowledge (Terwell 1999). Terwell (1999) also points out that a number of curriculums across the world, have used the constructivist theory as a base. However this has been a highly contested area, Walker (1992) suggest that education should be careful not to adopt theories that may not have a basis in educational development. It's important to note that constructivism is used in British classrooms today. It's most clearly seen in the foundation phase with continuous provision. Providing situations and an environment to promote individual learning (Powell and Kalina, 2009). The idea of children being their own scientists is evident here. However, for some this didn't go far enough, there were questions raised as to why social interactions were not of importance to child development.

Social Constructivism grew out of the constructivist theory, led in particular by Lev Vygotsky. The key difference being, that social constructivism states that social interaction leads to the formation of cognitive functions. Then at a point are internalised on an individual level. Vygotsky, placed a high value on social interaction whilst learning, whether that being with a teacher or a peer. Vygotsky (1986) argued that learners are moved through stages of cognitive development through socially mediated situations. The idea is that speech is a tool that allows a child to engage and collaboratively think with others, which is gradually internalised for a child to use as a resource (Hirtle, 1996). Vygotsky believed that learners actively made meaning of their world, with language being a key part on the

internalisation of knowledge. Vygotsky took this theory further and created the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

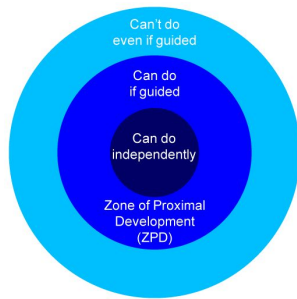


Figure 4: Vygotsky's ZPD, (Freund, 1990).

ZPD suggests that there is a level of knowledge a child has, representing one zone. The second zone is the area of knowledge that a child doesn't have but can understand, with help from a more knowledgeable other. The third zone being, something the child doesn't understand. Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level...and the level of potential development in collaboration with more capable peers". This is where the strongest links can be drawn back to the AFL, a structure where children can feed back and learn from each other.

As stated, the closest links to theory for AFL and this type of formative assessment can be drawn back to the social constructivist theory. The whole idea of social constructivism is for children to learn from others. The AFL strategy used showed exactly this. Watson (2001) promotes this perfectly whilst looking at social constructivism and children sharing work in a classroom. "children can enrich each others ideas...Explaining to others and justifying their own views are intellectually stimulating experiences". The line "thanks, I didn't think of that" shown in my observation text (figure 1) shows a great example, of how good AFL can stimulate a key aspect of the social constructivist theory . How, a

child stating a simple idea as 'making your writing move' can allow another to think in a different direction with how they can improve their ideas.

Peer interaction is often importantly spoken about in AFL literature, especially when discussing formative assessment. Peer-assessment is seen as an important method of interaction to help a child's metacognition, whilst encouraging deep rather than surface learning (Brown, 2005). This again showing links back to the social constructivist theory. Classrooms that use this type of AFL promote the idea of a community of learners, children all being there to help each other through peer assessment. Elements of literature also relate ZPD to AFL, it's stated to be useful in understanding the gap, between a child's learning and their potential learning (Turnbull and Lash, 2013). This idea can relate back to the classroom example of RAG scoring. Green being a child understands, relating to the inner circle of ZPD. Amber being a child somewhat understands but could use some help, representing the middle circle and Red showing no understanding, being the outer circle. Looking at research it's easy to say that the Social constructivist theory underpins the elements of AFL discussed and the use of it in a classroom.

In this case formative assessment is almost indistinguishable from instruction, by RAG scoring at the start of their lesson pupils are already assessing their own ability, through interaction with peers after the task, allowing gaps in knowledge to be filled in and ideas stimulated. The way we assess children can be really important, it's critical to remember that over assessing will never work, but keeping children in the dark about Assessment isn't beneficial either. In my opinion and from the suggested literature it is of incredible importance that AFL is carried out in the correct way, to allow interaction and stimulation between children. I feel it necessary to state that the AFL used, which was observed in my observation, stimulated every child. The quality was evident to see across the class through pupil engagement. Promoting the idea of formative peer-assessment and peer-interaction as an important part of learning. Taking this into account my learning environment shows a number of areas where child peer interaction is an important part of the learning environment.

Learning Environment

As stated above I believe that peer interaction throughout school is an important tool to use and develop, not just through teaching strategies but also through the environment we place children in. A good learning environment is said to accelerate a child's learning, where autonomous and cooperative learning is stimulated (Smeets, 2005). Figure 5 represents my ideal learning environment for a key stage 2 class, when given an unlimited budget.

As shown in Figure 5 my ideal learning environment has both an indoor and outdoor space. Both allow us to access key areas of the curriculum in different stimulating ways. I will Briefly explain why I have included an outdoor environment in a key stage 2 classroom. I see the use of the outdoors as an incredibly important tool. I believe that by enhancing our natural environment as a learning resource we can not only stimulate more conversation and understanding of our natural environment for children, but as educators it allows us to explore new and engaging ways to access key areas of the curriculum. National Framework states that children need to understand measurements, whilst using suitable tools and techniques, relating mathematical skills to a variety of contexts. The outdoors allows us to do this. Rather than exploring circumference or the diameter of a circle, why not enhance those learning skills using the same techniques to find out the age of a tree. Research supports this view, stating experiences within outdoor spaces are vital to effective environmental education, allowing children individual investigations and group skill development (Maynard and Waters, 2007).

The outdoor space is of key importance to my learning environment. Literature states that outdoor learning provides opportunities to improve academic achievement, social emotional intelligence, promoting self confidence and cooperative problem solving inside the classroom (Mirrahmi et al, 2011). The use of the outdoors allows children to be physically active, through my obstacle course I would hope to be able to utilise the benefits of physical activity. Person-environment fit theory states

that behaviour, motivation and mental health are all related to the access of a physically active environment (Ozdemir and Yilmaz, 2008), being an important role in health and wellbeing of the learner. It's important that the outdoor environment reflects a natural aspect, its seen that children that play in a natural environment rather than a man made environment perform better in motor skill tests (Fjortoft, 2001). This justifies the inclusion of a nature trail and pond in my learning environment allowing children this natural play. Whilst allowing a teacher to stimulate lessons from the environment, identifying a crosscurricular approach to a topic and holistically using active learning and play (Maynard, 2008). My learning environment also incorporates a farm. The use of animals has been used in classrooms for a number of years, literature states that child interaction with animals almost always has a positive influence, animals provide love and acceptance which is a basic human need (Siegel, 2004). Promoting health and wellbeing, Siegel (2004) also states that it encourages responsibility within children. All impacting Donaldson's key areas of learning.

There are 5, indoor key areas in my learning environment. The first being the "Digi Den". This area, is where I would incorporate all things technological into my classroom. Inside the digi den I would have Ipads and chromebooks for the students to use throughout topics. I would also incorporate an immersive room with interactive walls so, I could almost physically put children into a topic. This space would also allow them to create their own productions through the use of cameras and a green screen. Literature supports the use of technology in the classroom. Groff (2013) states that, technology can open up new opportunities in teaching and learning.

I believe that we are very much in a digital world, and helping children develop skills and understanding of this concept is important. Successful Futures (SF) highlights this, Donaldson (2015) states that digital competence should be across curricular aspect due to the importance technology has in the world today. This space would also allow me to best integrate the Digital Competence Framework

(DCF) in to my lessons. Through the use of this room and the technology incorporated, I would be able to utilise all 4 aspects of DCF.

My focus group (FG) area and discovery room would be used together, through a carreseling method. The FG area A would be used for teacher guided work, FG areas B, C and D would be used for break out work within groups, while the discovery room would be used for independent work. Utilising this space for learning will allow formal and informal learning to occur. This idea feeds off, the social constructivist theory that children need time to interact with more knowledgeable peers but are also more than capable of learning independently as lone scientists (Terwell 1999). This type of classroom structure has been highlighted in a recent 'Excellent' estyn report. It stressed the benefits of allowing child initiated learning through independent spaces, whilst effectively using learning bays for group work. Using a direct focus group area allows the teacher to interact on one to one level with each child during a topic through caresseling this allows problem areas to be highlighted quickly, it's' suggested that focus groups increase active deep learning rather than shallow passive learning which is more likely to take place in a whole class lesson (Jones, 2007).

AFL will be a key part of my learning environment, and can be easily taken advantage of in focus groups and learning bays. As stated early AFL has greatly developed and is believed to have an significant impact on learning. It's said to contribute to the personalised learning agenda, where learners are empowered to take an active part in their own learning (Jones 2005). During focus groups the possibility of giving immediate teacher feedback is important, the use of independent and group learning environments throughout will allow for crucial peer assessment which can be even more important. It is seen that peer assessment is not just a grading process, but is part of a learning process where skills are developed (Dochy et al, 1999). The importance of AFL is shown throughout areas of the National Framework, stating that pupils should be able to use a number of checking strategies. Using affective AFL will allow children to form their own goals, and understand what they need to do to

achieve the next steps in their learning, this use of formative assessment produces evidence which can actually be used to impact the learners needs (Black et al, 2004)

As an addition to be used during caressing and as a stand alone. The Small Production space, is an area I would use to highlight the expressive arts. Relationships have been drawn to the subjective development of social and cultural practices through expressive Arts (Marfil-Carmona and Chacon, 2016). This is an area where I would keep and utilise musical equipment. This would also be an area where there would be continuous provision for children to be creative within a specific class topic. Results of research suggest that in primary schools we should be using expressive arts alongside technology (Marfil-Carmona and Chacon, 2016). Allowing children to become creative in but also allowing creativity throughout key aspect of the curriculum and culture, linking into the idea of learning whilst doing. Successful futures recommends specific detail to be paid towards the Expressive arts, I believe that it is important to provide suitable resources to enhance a child's learning to the best of our ability, in all areas of learning. Donaldson (2015) states that expressive arts can impact all 4 areas of learning, highlighting the importance of being able to activate this area of the curriculum and providing suitable opportunity to do this.

I have also included a soft seating area. This is an area formed around the idea of more informal learning whilst inside the classroom. Literature states that pupils with enriched informal learning environments have significantly higher reasoning abilities (Gerber et al, 2010). This allowing children to develop ideas in a different way. This informal environment is also said to help health and wellbeing among children, research suggest that having an element of informality to learning can increase health and wellbeing outcomes (Saab and Klinger, 2010). Informal learning often produces play. Play does not only encourage positive emotions, but has the paradoxical effect of improving the efficiency of thinking and problem solving (Goldstien 2012). These aspects are all highlighted in successful futures, This kind of area has a huge amount of potential to positively impact a child.

To conclude

The observation witnessed highlights a key AFL technique. It is evident to see that the AFL technique used allowed children to discuss and learn from each other, stimulating conversation in the classroom about the specific piece of work. Allowing children to get more ideas from other members of the class. This type of social interaction highlighted as important in ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). The AFL used as well as the type of formative assessment developed by the teacher in this classroom, reaped the rewards through peer interaction. It's easy to state through literature presented above it is of impericable importance, for children to have this type of social interaction throughout schooling and education. Using my observation and literature, I have been able to understand the importance of good AFL in a classroom, and the true impact it can have alongside the Social constructivist theory. I hope to take this knowledge into my own teaching practice.

It's also important to note that AFL and its connections with the Social constructivist theory are not the only important impactors for learning. The use of ICT is of growing importance, DCF helping us prepare children for the modern world. Alongside the use of informal learning as well as the activation of play to stimulate and aid learning for all aged children. Not forgetting, the importance of an outdoor environment for children should not be forgotten and should be a tool to utilise. Using my ideal learn environment I have been able to formulate ideas to activate all four areas of learning.

Finally, through the use of literature I hope to be able to improve my teaching whilst creating an inclusive and creative learning environment to aid pupils through all areas of education.

Appendix

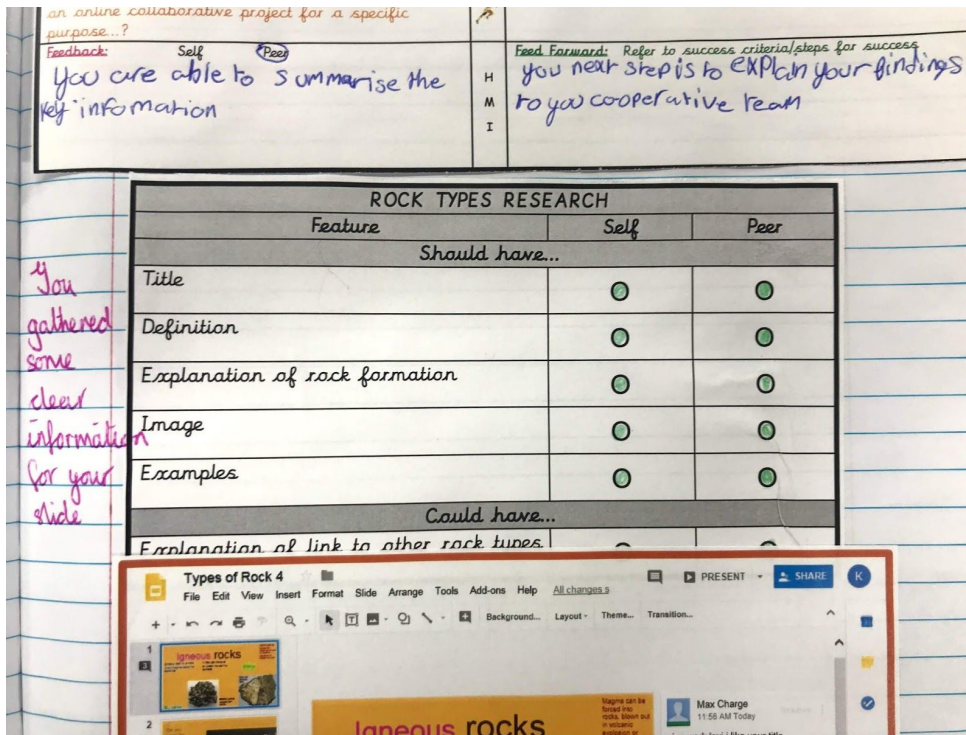


Figure 1: Student tool box, used for google classroom activity.

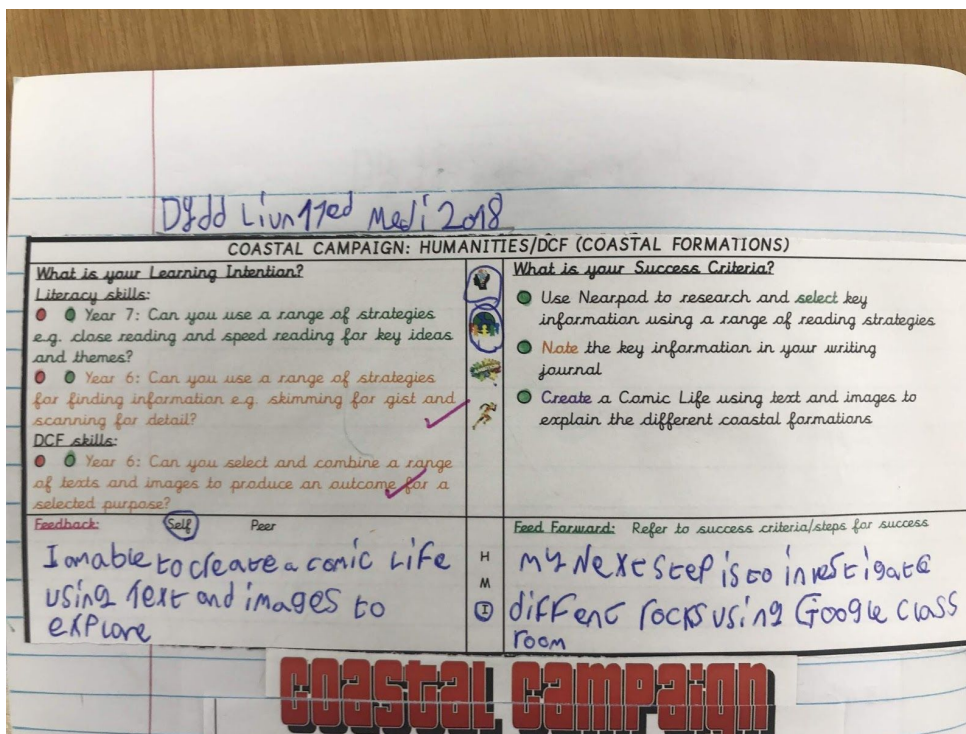


Figure 2: example of success criteria used by class.

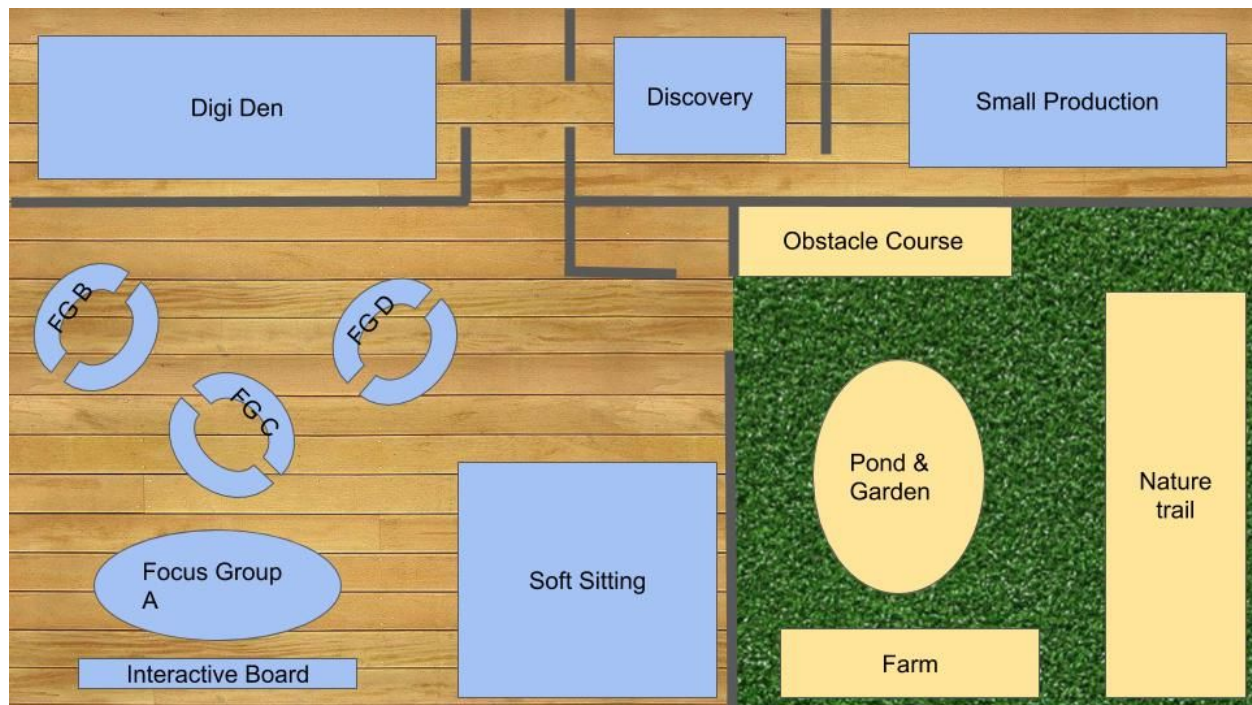


Figure 5: Birds eye view of my ideal learning environment.

Additional Resources

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