

LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Jessica Griffiths	Student ID number:	1802765
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): 5417 words	5,000 or equivalent.
Submission deadline:	17/10/18 (23.59)	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. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.
Module Learning Outcomes (from module syllabus)	
1. understand, synthesise and evaluate the main theories that underpinning learning, behaviour and assessment in the primary school 2. reflect critically on how learning theories inform the planning and provision of high quality learning environments, demonstrating a clear understanding of how theory and practice are interrelated 3. organise knowledge and learning through the use of a range of information sources, and present work appropriately.	

‘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.’

Introduction

A bridging day in a nursery at a primary school in South Wales was carried out, where the class routines and procedures were observed for one day. This particular school had an above average percentage of free school meals, with a moderate number of children also using English as an additional language. Whilst visiting this school and spending time in the nursery many observations were made, however for the purpose of this assignment one specific observation will be called upon concerning an autistic child. In accordance with BERA (2018) guidelines, this child will be anonymised as child ‘C’ for this assignment, with full confidential treatment. Other guidelines of BERA (2018) which were followed were the researcher operating with an ethic of respect for all persons involved after obtaining consent from the school to observe, bringing no harm to any participants and any data or notes from the observation being kept securely, in a locked cupboard and password protected computer. This essay will firstly describe the witnessed event in part 1, connect this observation to learning theories by using a range of sources as well as this event being reflected upon for the improvement of my own personal teaching practice. The last element of this assignment will consider what an effective learning environment can look like, with an assisting commentary of the justifications for these suggestions of an effective learning environment.

Part 1 - Observe

On the afternoon of my observation child C was independently playing alone. When playtime approached (and subsequent mini events in the classroom such as snack time and home time) I noticed the teacher and teaching assistants bringing a schedule over to child C. On further inspection this schedule had these key events stuck onto a laminated sheet with explicit picture instruction as to what routine child C had that day, and as each mini event of the day approached the teacher would show this schedule and point to the picture which corresponded with the approaching event. The schedule had removeable pictures which allowed to the teacher to be flexible in what tasks she wanted to conduct in the nursery and stick the corresponding picture onto the schedule. When child C abided by the schedule and responded positively to the schedule he was praised. This schedule can be seen in Figure 1 below, where the child's name has been blurred out as well as any faces on the schedule.



Figure 1 – the discussed schedule belonging to child C.

This significant event was chosen for several reasons; it is applicable to many aspects of creating a positive learning environment, such as an inclusive learning environment (see part 2). Additionally, this significant event related to much of the module content in Principles of Pedagogy, for example, additional learning needs, inclusive practices and children as learners.

Observations (defined as taking data from natural occurring situations, Coolican, 2014) have many advantages whilst exploring children in classroom settings, for example, examining different types of infant behaviour and investigating genuine behaviour in real life settings which is not constrained by artificial settings such as a laboratory (Coolican, 2014). However, there are also disadvantages for observational designs, such as reactivity effects- participants' behaviour being affected by the awareness of an observer. Secondly, observations are very time consuming (Coolican, 2014). For this observation in a nursery, a naturalistic observation was conducted, with two specific observation methods being employed- narrative recording and event sampling (Andrews, n.d.). The narrative recording (also known as written record) is good for focusing on all behaviour witnessed, where the observer records everything seen. When the significant event was observed during this narrative recording, a shift to an event sampling method of observation was then narrowed down to. Event sampling is an observational method in which the observer waits for a specific event to happen and then record this specific behaviour. This is advantageous for studying a desired event, although it does limit the amount of behaviours observed (Andrews, n.d.). This information can then be analysed through an ABC analysis (see figure 2).

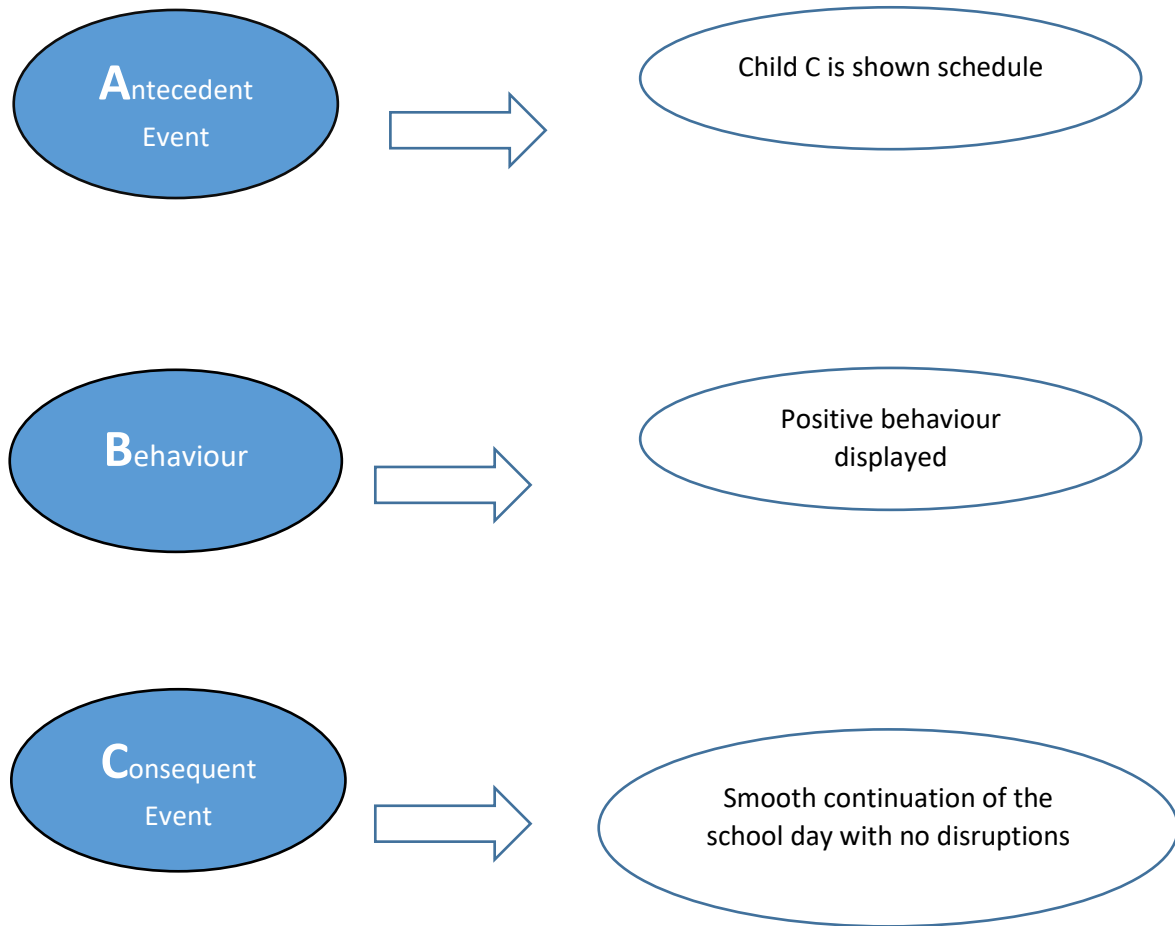


Figure 2 – ABC analysis of the observed learning event

According to the Office of Enterprise Communication (2007) approximately 1 in 150 children have autism, although more recent research estimates this figure to be 1 in 68 children, with the prevalence of autism being higher among boys than girls (Christensen et al, 2016). These statistics reveal the need to integrate inclusive practices for children with autism in classrooms particularly because autism diagnoses are increasing at an “unprecedented rate” (Moores-Abdol, 2010: 153). Children who present with having autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have persistent difficulties communicating (both verbal and non-verbal communication) and establishing social relationships (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Further

deficits are observed in restricted behaviours, for example repetitive patterns of behaviour and limited interests (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These social and behavioural difficulties in children with autism are revealed in school and classroom settings, for example, children demonstrate impairments in social interactions with other children and self-stimulatory behaviours (Goodman & Williams, 2007). This results in a lack of social relationships and segregation as well as a resistance to participate in classroom activities. Research has also demonstrated that children with ASD that were included in classrooms have increased levels of social engagement than those who were segregated (Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995). These studies reveal the necessity to include those with ASD (and other additional learning needs) in the accessibility of the curriculum to prevent the disruption of learning for children who have autism. The inclusion of pupils who have ASD results in many positive effects, such as social development and general positive academic outcomes (Schreibman, 2005).

When examining inclusion in classrooms, teachers who have more positive attitudes regarding inclusion had increased pupil satisfaction levels, class cohesiveness and less friction in the classroom according to the pupils (Monsen, Ewing & Kwoka, 2014). This reveals that the teacher attitude towards inclusion is vital in providing a positive learning environment. However, other variables have also been revealed to impact inclusion, such as the availability of human support in the classroom (such as a teaching assistant) as well as physical support and resources (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). This is supported by Moran and Abbott (2002), who found developing inclusion in schools required teachers to clarify the roles and responsibilities of any teaching assistants, to help promote an inclusive classroom. Obiakor et al (2012) listed additional elements which teachers must implement to

develop an inclusive classroom, such as a diverse range of assessments and instructions for the child whom has additional needs.

Some areas of difficulty for developing an inclusive environment for those with additional learning needs which have been highlighted are lack of preparation when creating inclusive activities and giving instructions on these activities, high workload resulting in stress and being unable to attend to additional learning needs of children and teachers feeling inadequate for dealing with children with such additional needs (Leblanc, Richardson & Burns, 2009).

The United Kingdom (UK) has seen many interventions in primary schools for children with ASD (Robins et al, 2005; Magiati, Charman & Howlin, 2007; Howlin, Magiati & Charman, 2009 & Adams et al, 2012), which have included speech and language interventions, robot toys to model social skills and general early intensive behavioural interventions. In one systematic review investigating the effectiveness of such interventions on autistic children in primary schools, it was reported that early intensive behavioural interventions significantly improved outcomes when compared to control groups who did not receive an intervention (Howlin et al, 2009). One method which has seen particular success for engaging autistic children in the classroom is the use of classroom schedules. This was something which was observed on my bridging day, and after examining the research into the use of classroom schedules on behaviour and engagement it is apparent that these are a very effective method to use. In a seminal study by Hall, McClannahan and Krantz (1995), it was revealed that a picture schedule which described the classroom routines for the day was adhered to 90-100% of the time, along with a reduction in classroom aide prompts. Subsequent research has supported this seminal article, for example Knight, Sartini and Spriggs (2015) reviewed the literature regarding

classroom schedules and whether it could be justified that the use of these are evidence based. The results of the review revealed that classroom schedules can be considered as an evidence-based practice, which also increase and maintain numerous skills. Further investigation into why these schedules are so effective for children with autism has pointed out several aspects, including predictability which reduces anxiety and stress (Wildenger et al, 2008; Salmon, 2010), decreasing tantrums during lesson transitions (Schmit et al, 2000), keeping the child on task (Bryan & Gast, 2000) and lastly, reducing overall problem behaviours (Lequia, Machalicek & Rispoli, 2012). The use of classroom schedules has also been found to help children who have severe autism, with O'Reilly et al (2005) finding the use of a schedule in class significantly reduced self-injury and resulted in high engagement levels. Conversely, when investigating high functioning autistic children, it has been found that classroom schedules also significantly improve pupil performance, and without this classroom schedule performance dropped. Many studies have concluded the importance of the practical implications for the use of schedules in classrooms and equipping students to be independent by doing so (Bryan & Gast, 2000; Knight et al, 2015; Watson & DiCarlo, 2016).

Part 2 - Connect

When examining learning theories regarding ASD it is apparent that many of these learning theories are applicable to autism and the learning event observed. The learning theory of behaviourism has several founders, Pavlov, Watson and Skinner (Gould, 2012). The definition of learning given by behaviourists is that learning is a change in behaviour which is brought about by the association of a stimulus with a response, requiring prior experience in order for learning to occur (Gould, 2012). In the context of learning, this theory is crucial in behaviour management in the classroom. For example, using positive or negative reinforcement and positive and negative punishment in the classroom. When observing the significant event behaviourism was observed by means of positive reinforcement via praise. Child C was praised each time the schedule was adhered to and positive behaviour was observed. This positive reinforcement means that child C is more likely to reperform the observed behaviour due to the praise received. Research has found that there are different types of praises- judgemental praise and evaluative praise (Becker et al, 1967). Judgemental praise is simple praise commonly used in the classroom, for example saying well done to a child or praising neat work. Evaluative praise is where the teacher takes time to identify specifically how the action/work is praiseworthy. Similarly, the praise which clearly describes the progress made by the child and the achievements made is what best supports learning (MacMillan, 1973). There are problems with the behaviourist approach, for example, the theory suggests that learning is based on external factors, such as punishment, rather than a genuine desire to learn. This critique has been given even in older research such as by Ballard (1987), who said pupil initiation for learning is heavily minimised using a behaviourist approach, due to the control of learning by the teacher. Criticism of the

punishment element of behaviourism has also been given by Vargas (2009), who stated that punishment can disrupt progress further, as well as producing harmful effects which can be difficult to eliminate. Bandura (1969; 1971) supports this statement, stating reinforcement is more effective than punishment. Jarthur (2014) adds to this, stating punishment can be perceived by children as a reward, by the means of being given attention. For my personal practice as a teacher the behaviourist approach will be considered by providing plenty of evaluative praise and avoiding punishment when possible.

A second learning theory is constructivism, with the founders being Piaget, Bruner and Vygotsky (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). Constructivism learning theory posits that learning, knowledge and meaning is constructed with experiences, with learning occurring due to the child exploring and interacting with his/her environment (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). Constructivism was moved on by Vygotsky, who developed the theory stating this meaning of experience was constructed socially (Hedges & Cullen, 2012), which differs to Piaget (1980) who described the learner as a lone scientist. When examining autism then this Piagetian view can be applied, as autistic children often do act as lone scientists due to their social deficits. However, when examining social constructivism with Vygotsky's (1978) later addition then this approach can promote social skills by the means of creating a learning environment which emphasises an exchange of ideas and collaboration when (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). When examining the social constructivist approach and its principles the methods in which my personal practice as a teacher will be impacted upon will be considered, for example, using collaborative learning methods and teamworking (Jarthur, 2014). When accounting for the Piagetian constructivist approach then this will impact my future practice by helping learners in assimilating new information and

using the environment to help do this (Jarthur, 2014). When reviewing the significant event with a constructivist view the classroom schedule that the pupil was using was helping the child with some routine to help develop new experiences and routines, enforcing different elements of the day. This is particularly helpful for children with ASD as one common feature of autism is perseverative behaviour which results in a lack of interests and reduced participation in activities (Goodman & Williams, 2007). Having a classroom schedule to help encourage the moving on of activities and allowing a smoother transition from activity to activity is beneficial to the child. Furthermore, learning through the interaction of the environment in accordance with the constructivist view is encouraged when using a classroom schedule, as the child is given support to do this, as opposed to sticking with one fixed, anchored activity. Criticism of the constructivist approach has been given, for example it has been criticised for being too simplistic when describing complex learning behaviours (Gojkov, 2011). Another criticism of the constructivist approach is that it is generally poor when faced with complex reality, as the constructivist approach remains silent on the contexts which help facilitate learning in addition to what conditions are needed for learning to occur (Gojkov, 2011).

A third learning theory is the humanistic approach with Maslow, Erickson and Roger being the founding fathers of this approach (Khatib, Sarem & Hamidi, 2013). Lei (2007) defines this approach as an importance being placed on the child's thoughts, feelings and emotions in human development. Khatib et al (2013) describe this child as first a human being followed by a learner. This approach is given its importance because a child must have their basic needs satisfied both psychologically and physically before they can be expected to be an effective learner (Wang, 2005). The humanist approach aims to optimise learners psychological state as this optimises

learning conditions and results in the ability to think critically (Khatib et al, 2013). When examining my future practice as a teacher, then an attempt to maximise the learners' psychological state will be made, for example by implementing mindfulness. Mindfulness has been demonstrated to significantly improve children's wellbeing (Huppert & Johnson, 2010; Schonert-Reichl et al, 2015), including for children with autism (Singh, 2011; de Bruin et al, 2015). By implementing mindfulness into my teaching practice, I will be fulfilling this aspect of the humanist approach, by investing time in the children's mental states. The humanist approach also states that learning is the child's responsibility where teachers are looked upon as facilitators (Khatib et al, 2013). The significant event observed was partially related to the humanist approach, as the teacher did act as a facilitator, helping move child C on to new activities to facilitate the learning. However, in the case of autistic children who like perpetuated routines (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) the humanistic approach is possibly not suited to these children who need structure and routine to help them function.

Limiting the complexity of learning to one singular learning theory approach is dubious, where consideration of all models needs to be considered when trying to understand learning (Gojko, 2011). Figure 3 summarises these three learning theories in a table.

Figure 3 – table summarising the three main learning theories

	<i>Behaviourist</i>	<i>Constructivist</i>	<i>Humanist</i>
Main Theorists	Pavlov, Watson, Skinner	Piaget, Vygotsky	Maslow, Erickson, Roger

View on Learning	Reinforcement needed for learning to occur	Learn through experience and making meaning	Child basic needs to be satisfied before learning can occur and potential can be fulfilled
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Other areas which were mentioned in part 1 which will impact my own practice as a teacher will be my own attitude to inclusion in the classroom. Research has shown that teachers with positive attitudes to inclusion had increased pupil satisfaction levels as well as increased class cohesiveness and less friction in the classroom (Monsen et al, 2014). When considering my future practice, I will hold positive attitudes to inclusion, by actively ensuring the materials used in the classroom are inclusive to all, whether the additional needs are a mental health disorder, a physical disorder or English as an additional language. Research has also found that when creating an inclusive classroom specific elements such as having a diverse range of assessments or instructions for the child who has additional learning needs is needed (Obiakor et al, 2012). When considering this research for my own practice I will ensure that the individual needs of the child are accounted for when doing assessments on the children. Furthermore, ensuring the instructions for either classroom rules, work or anything else being instructed will be tailored to what the child with additional needs for successful, powerful learning will be given. This could be in the form of providing a classroom schedule for a child with autism, to provide clear visual instructions for that child so he/she knows the routine for that day. Other research has found that difficulties can arise when there is a lack of preparation for making the classroom and all the activities inclusive (Leblanc et al, 2009). This will be tackled by ensuring that each aspect of the classroom day has been prepared to the fullest. This will be done by ensuring my organisational skills are exceptional,

allowing plenty of time to create inclusive lesson plans and thinking of every aspect to the lesson which needs to be inclusive, such as instructions, writing materials, a schedule or a providing materials in additional languages. Lastly, previous research has revealed that high stress levels and feelings of personal inadequacies when dealing with children with additional learning needs impact negatively when trying to create an inclusive environment (Leblanc et al, 2009). This will be combatted by handling stress effectively, and as mentioned above, engaging in mindfulness meditation with the pupils, as this form of therapy has been revealed to be effective for teachers (Flook et al, 2013; Skinner & Beers, 2016). When considering any personal feelings of inadequacy when being able to deal with additional learning needs, my future practice will reflect on my specialisms in psychology, with a bachelors and masters degree being held in psychology. These qualifications will give me confidence when dealing with children who present with additional learning needs, and the ability to conduct detailed research about any new needs that will be encountered, to find out what is required to make the classroom inclusive for a certain individual, and how best to accommodate for that child.

Part 3 – Reflect and Innovate



Figure 4 – poster exemplifying an ideal learning environment

Poster Commentary

Children spend a great deal of time at school, so having an excellent learning environment to have efficient learning and making the most of the time spent at school is essential. This classroom learning space can motivate and promote learning, with the design being flexible, timeless, creative and enterprising (Gonzales & Young, 2015). Wannarka and Ruhl (2008) wrote how the environment and classroom behaviour cannot be separated, thus must be considered holistically. This importance of classroom design was demonstrated by Barrett et al (2015), who found classroom design had a significant impact on the learning of children, with classroom design being attributed to having a 25% (either positive or negative) impact on pupil's progress over a year. When examining the layout and design of a

classroom, it is important to create a learning environment which is evidence based, as criticisms have been given that a teacher's opinion on what works well for the classroom may be unfounded, with the teacher's perception being skewed (Dillenbourg & Jermann, 2010). The importance of this design being evidence based is also highlighted in different terminology by different researchers, with Mohanan (2000; 2002) referring to classroom design as built pedagogy. When attempting to create a learning space based on a learning theory, it is difficult to reflect a specific learning theory philosophy due to the learning theories not providing descriptions on their ideal physical environment (Akinsanmi, 2008).

The first thing to note when examining the poster (see figure 4 or appendix for enlarged poster image) is the seating arrangements. The seating arrangement is in groups, and this is to facilitate conversational learning. Conversational learning requires small interactive groups which have areas for teaching, collaborative working area, workgroup area and a transfer area (Atif, 2012). The seats on the poster are also intended to be moveable chairs, as this gives pupils the ability to move around the classroom and again allow for collaborative work or discussion. Research has found that it is the task type which should dictate the seating arrangements, and that the teacher needs to be flexible in his/her approach to seating. For example, Wannarka and Ruhl (2008) found that when pupils need to be working alone on an individual task they should be seated in a way which makes communicating to others inconvenient and difficult, such as rows. However, when giving tasks which are collaborative and group communication needed then clustered desks should be utilised. When examining the poster created as an example of a learning environment, there are beanbags and lap trays next to the carpet as a means of providing flexible seating and writing surfaces. These things

have been demonstrated to improve pupil engagement (Lombardi & Wall, 2006; Sanders, 2013), as well as encourage group interaction, collaboration and the opportunity to solve any misunderstandings (Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2017). However, this flexible seating arrangement has been criticised by some pupils and teachers as giving the appearance of the classroom as disorganised and messy (Rands & Gansemer-Topf, 2017). Having flexible seating arrangements which allow pupils to do their work on beanbags can help the children feel comfortable in the classroom and less restricted in where they can do their work.

Two aspects in the poster which exemplifies an ideal learning environment is the iPads and green screen. With the rise of technology in society and the need for children to be digitally competent in modern day society, the Welsh government has implemented initiatives such as the Digital Competence Framework into education (Welsh Government, 2018). This framework helps children learn the skills needed to thrive in a digital society. Implementing iPads into classrooms for learning is one method to do this, with iPads having a strong advantage of mobility in the classroom, and the ability for pupils to collaborate and work together (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). Another strong advantage with the use of iPads in the classroom is student engagement being high- with pupils feeling empowered, creative and confident with their work (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). One problem with iPads is children getting distracted, and children who use iPads yet are not supposed to. One method to overcome this is the teacher setting out clear expectations of what is expected with the children using the iPads, and setting rules before the commencement of using iPads (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). More support for using iPads in the primary classroom comes from Beauchamp and Hillier (2014) who investigated the use of iPads across primary schools in Cardiff, with the results revealing that pupil

independence was increased as well as teacher, pupil and parent motivation and enthusiasm also increasing. The use of technology in classrooms can be both constructivist and behaviourist approaches, with one argument being that technology acts as a teaching machine which is trialled and errored, adapted by past experience, whereas the constructivist idea to technology is that knowledge is not transferred from teacher to pupil, and instead the child constructs their own knowledge and learning from the technology (Henderson & Yeow, 2012). One way of developing digital competency in primary schools is with the use of green screens and film making. This method has been described as an effective learning tool which encourages active learning in the classroom (Derelioğlu & Şar, 2010). Other research writes how film making encourages critical thinking, discussion, presentation and team work (Advisory, 2012), as well as having the advantage for teachers being able to use this method across of the whole curriculum.

When examining the décor of a classroom this has been implicated in pupil engagement and achievement. In a study by Fisher, Godwin and Seltman (2014), it was found that kindergartner children performed worse academically when there were wall displays when compared to children who had bare walls and no displays. On the poster created (see figure 4), there are several displays planned for the walls which have been supported by evidence to improve engagement of pupils. The selected displays are 'Wow Wall', a pupil voice wall and an investigation area. Wow Walls and pupil voice areas have been revealed to improve learning by giving children a sense of ownership in the classroom. The Wow Wall allows children to be rewarded by presenting their work to the class by it being on the wall, and is an efficient way to encourage pride in pupils work (Barrett et al, 2015). Incorporating pupil voice has been found to make a strong primary school teacher (Gipps,

Hargreaves & McCallum, 2015), with an advantage being it encourages engagement and participation from the children (Bucknall, 2012). Investigation areas in classrooms have been demonstrated to encourage the children and engage them in an active way, by having exciting experiments and investigations which they are interested in (Bluyssen, 2017).

There are other variables in a classroom which can also impact academic achievement and engagement. The lighting in a classroom has been revealed to have a significant effect on pupil performance. Children who are exposed to natural light whilst being in class achieve higher in school (Edwards & Torcelli, 2002; Tanner, 2008; Cheryan et al, 2014). In an older study by Heschong Mahone Group (1999), socioeconomic status and race was controlled for yet higher maths and reading scores were observed in students who were exposed to more daylight in the classroom. My ideal learning environment would have large windows allowing sunlight in, with a building situated with no objects causing darkness or the classroom being in the shade. Other variables shown to impact pupil performance is noise levels. Excessive noise has been shown to hinder learning in classrooms (Klatte, Bergstroem & Lachmann, 2013). One study which examined this was by Evans and Maxwell (1997) who compared test scores of pupils whose school was in the flight path of a major airport and one school which was in a quiet neighbourhood. Results indicated that even when accounting for socioeconomic and demographic factors, the pupils who were in the school near the airport had significantly poorer performance than the quieter school. The ideal learning environment of my classroom will be a class which is not shared with another classroom open plan- there will be walls in between each class to minimise the noise. Furthermore, the

classroom will not be affected by outside noise by having noise reduction panels and soundproof insulation.

Research has found that temperature can have an effect on learning, with the optimal temperature being between 20 degrees Celsius and 23.3 degrees Celsius (Earthman, 2004). My optimal learning environment will take this into account, with the classroom temperature being in this range. Another variable which has been found to impact on schooling is the air quality (Schneider, 2002). Pupils and teachers who are exposed to low air quality were found to have lower attendance, as well as teachers' abilities to teach well being negatively impacted.

An important thing worth noting is ensuring that the learning environment is accessible and inclusive to all, and that the learning environment can cater to those with additional learning needs. Hemmingson and Borell (2002) noted that the absence of ramps, lifts, automatic doors and inclusive desks/chairs can restrict the learning and ability to engage and participate for those with physical disabilities. Those with mental disabilities also need to be accounted for in a learning environment, for example implementing the use of classroom schedules for children with autism, for example.

The pictures situated on the perimeter of the poster (see figure 4) are learning spaces which are very desirable in addition to the immediate classroom area. Some of these pictures show a forest school- a growing concept in the United Kingdom (O'Brien, 2009). Forest schools involve learning outdoors by the means of regular contact with woodlands, allowing familiarity with the natural environment (O'Brien, 2009). The constructivist approach to learning aligns well with forest schools, as it involves children going into the woodlands and making meaning from their

experience in the forest (O'Brien & Murray, 2007). Research has found many positive effects of forest school learning, such as an improvement in children's motivation, concentration and confidence (O'Brien, 2009). Other positive effects which have been observed are improvement in social skills, knowledge of the natural world, language and communication skills and physical outdoor skills (O'Brien, 2007).

Some of the images on the poster of an ideal learning environment included green spaces. Green spaces have been revealed to significantly improve mental and physical health (Bowler et al, 2010). The use of green spaces in primary schools are very beneficial, with significant improvements in cognitive development observed (Dadvand et al, 2015). This improvement in cognitive development was due to inattentiveness being reduced and working memory increased. However, this effect is mediated by air pollution, thus the location of a school is also important (Dadvand et al, 2015).

One image on the poster which is included in an ideal learning environment is a specialised music room along with availability of instruments. Music has been shown to have a variety of benefits, one benefit being that it enhances the quality of school life. Eerola and Eerola (2014) found that music education enhanced the quality of school life for children in key stage 2, with prominent effects being observed in increased satisfaction levels and greater opportunities available for children. Other benefits to having music lessons in primary school comes from the strengthening of literacy skills (Piro & Ortiz, 2009; Moreno et al, 2011; Engh, 2013) and cognitive development (Rickard et al, 2005). Using music in the classroom can also help children with autism, as music therapy has been found to be a strong intervention to implement for those who have autism (Møller et al, 2002; Gold, Wigram & Elefant,

2006). Furthermore, recent research has found that music education within schools had promising results when helping improve academic performance, pupil behaviour and communication skills for the children who have ASD (Foley, 2017). Music education has also been shown to lower anxiety in children with additional learning needs (Darrow, 2011). It is evident from reviewing some of the literature in this area that music education can be very beneficial to children with additional learning needs and for those who do not have any additional learning needs, and it is these reasons which is why a specialised music area was selected to be implemented into the learning environment.

Conclusion

To conclude, this essay first described a learning event which was observed on a bridging day. This event was then examined by research and theory, which was linked to how this learning event could be understood as well as what would be incorporated into my own future practice as a teacher. This covered a variety of things such as positive attitudes to inclusion and a consideration of learning theories when delivering lessons. The final part of this essay was focused on an example of an ideal learning environment and a supporting commentary which was evidence based to support the reasoning behind this learning environment.

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Appendix

