

'Supporting pupil progress: a detailed analysis of one child's holistic development, with justification for the next steps in learning.'

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Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to observe a child in detail and provide a holistic representation of the pupil and to provide the appropriate next steps required including justifications for these decisions. The school will remain anonymous as well as the pupil that is refereed to throughout the essay. It is imperative that the child's identity remains confidential as it supports The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1992: ARTICLE 8).

The observations took place in a town school situated in Neath Port Talbot. The school offers education for pupils aged three to eleven years old. There are currently around 360 pupils on roll these include mix aged classes. Of this number, 75 pupils are part-time nursery pupils who attend morning and afternoon sessions. According to Estyn (2016) most pupils who attend this school live in the Neath area with very little coming from outside the catchment area. At Present, 42% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has recognized that 47% of its pupils have additional learning needs and 5% of these pupils are statemented.

The child who was observed for the purpose of this essay is a nursery pupil. The pupil is a 4-year-old female who will be known as Child A. Child A is a pupil who attends morning nursery with 1 teacher and 4 teaching assistants. She has severe speech and language difficulties and has been diagnosed with Global Learning Delay (GLD). According to Howarth (2009) GLD a condition that occurs during the developmental period of a child between birth and 18 years. It is typically identified by a child functioning at a low intellectual level. Child A has previously had an operation for hip dysplasia and is awaiting an Early Years Assessment for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Child A does not fully interact with others and will quite

happily play on her own. She is a happy child who likes to play with all activities which are sensory based. Carpet time is not successful as her concentration span is low and she can become quite fatigued. The schools Educational Psychologist is planned to complete a cognitive assessment on Child A in hope for a statutory assessment to be issued to support her with the transition to full time education in September. Her attendance has improved in the past few weeks but prior to then was below 87%.

Data Collection Methods

Evidential data needed to be collected and evaluated in order to analysis and suggest the next appropriate steps for Child A's progress. Throughout the observations I used the mosaic method to gather evidence on Child A. According to Brooker (2001) the mosaic approach is a multi-method style of gathering evidence. Ranging from photographs, interviews, tours and maps. This enables a greater understanding of the child in their setting. The Mosaic approach empowers children to be experts in their own lives. This creates a unique framework as it listens to young children and it demonstrates their perspectives. It could be argued that this was an appropriate method to use as even young children can play an active role within the interview. This however was difficult due to the age of the child and needs of the child. Therefore, I followed and observed her areas of interest opposed to her verbally telling me.

I also decided to use observation as another methodology to collect the data required. Observing children is vital for class practitioners to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of a child's needs (Riddall- Leech). Observations are also utilized to detect and pinpoint a child's developmental progress (Forbes 2009). It is, however, important, that when observing children practitioners appreciate that a child's behaviour can be unpredictable and their mood can affect how they behave. According to Gray (2012) observations can occasionally be problematic for practitioners, as they must withdraw from their instinct and responsibilities. It should

be noted that ethical procedures were addressed before any observations took place. Parents were informed of their right to withdraw and were able to express any concerns to myself as the student teacher. Ethical procedures are produced to protect the rights of the participants (Nutbrown 2011). Tassoni (2005) state that it is crucial that researchers respect children as they can be vulnerable. According to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children have the right to be listened to and have their opinion viewed seriously. All images used for the purpose of the study have Child A's faced blurred out to protect their identity. The class teacher signed the appropriate paperwork in order for me to observe the child (Appendix 1)

I incorporated a narrative observation in my data collection. This is a detailed account of an observation on a child in their everyday surroundings (Thornes 2005). This is delivered when the observer positions themselves discreetly within the classroom setting for a natural and less obvious approach. By combining both narrate observation and the justification of the ASK model enables me to evaluate and reflect upon the holistic view of the learning taking place. The ASK model, which stands for attitudes, skills and knowledge in learning, is an educational model designed to create process for shaping students' learning.

Additionally, cameras are used in the Mosaic approach for learning walks and tours. Either with the practitioner taking the photograph or the child taking charge of the camera, following on from this discussion. Incorporating cameras enables children to be in control and talk freely about their certain areas of interest within the school or classroom. This enables a child led approach and automatically creates a less formal process which allows the child to feel comfortable. Clark and Moss (2011) suggest that photographs offer a powerful tool and new language for young children and involves empowerment. Children can express their feelings. However, this had to be adapted slightly due to Child A's learning difficulties. Child A was unable to express in words her areas of interest on the 'Learning walk'. Consequently, I followed her and took pictures of her in the areas that she was most drawn to.

(Coad and Lewis, 2004; Gabhainn and Sixsmith, 2006) suggest that numerous authors declare that the active contribution of children as research participants is

abundantly less evident in the stages of analysis and report writing. The Mosaic approach which emphasises a child's interpretations of their childhood, comprises of two stages: the child expressing their views and reality of life and childhood: the adult interpreting the data without the child present and not included in the formal analysis of the findings. It could be argued that adults that interpret these findings may surface misconceptions (Clark 2001)

Ultimately, I found the observations on Child A intriguing. Although there was not a significant amount of verbal communication between her and I the observations were powerful, and I was able to retrieve an insight to her daily school life, education and personality. Argyle (1978) argues that nonverbal communication can have as much as five times as much impact than someone's actual spoken words

Analysis of learner and next steps

Maths

Before children start primary education most children begin to develop an understanding of basic addition and subtraction. This is often through their everyday interactions and counting objects with the guardians and siblings. It is believed by doing so this gives a child an advantage before entering education. Using addition and subtraction through daily routines and activities for example counting the steps on the stairs on the way to bed. This is simple yet effective and teaches children the meaning of number- counting on (Claxton 2002).

Many theorists have suggested ideas about how children learn, these are related to how children learn mathematics. Piaget cited in Macloed (2006) was a constructivist theory proclaimed that children will interact with their environment and construct their own understandings, typically through their interactions. Additionally, Vygotsky emphasised the importance of children having guidance from another person. That person being more knowledgeable. By interacting socially with that person is believed to support the learner and enables them to progress and understand the meaning of learning. Vygotsky also proposed the idea of the 'Zone of Proximal Development', this being a child can work with someone else to complete a task opposed to working on their own where it is known that the task is difficult and too complex for that specific learner to complete. However, it could be argued that the

child will just copy and not actually think for themselves in such a way to progress their learning.

During a maths activity which involved recognising numbers 1-5 and saying them orally and then physically counting the numbers by finger painting, Child A found this difficult. Child A was able to recognise the numbers 1 and 2 however struggled with the remaining three numbers. She became completely distracted by the paint on her finger and when I asked, "Can you paint 1 dot on the ladybird" (Appendix 2) she placed many "dots" on the paper. This was repeated when I asked her to paint 2 dots. Child A's cognitive development was clearly shown as delayed as she was even unable to count 1-5 yet alone recognise the numbers. Clearly the child did not understand my instructions. It is important to note that child A did not become upset at any point. I praised her for her efforts and demonstrated how to count. I pointed to the numbers and asked her to repeat the numbers, so she began to become familiar with the sounds and words of each number. This was crucial for child A's self-esteem and learning as Forbes et al (2009) suggests According to Meggit (2012) by the age of 4 children can recite the numbers 1-10 but may not recognise all of them. In conjunction with the ASK model, child A demonstrated a curiosity attitude towards the task however didn't show a great amount of skill or knowledge. Her communication towards me was not strong, and she found it very hard to sit and complete the task as she wanted to go to another area of the classroom.

For child A to progress in maths and focusing primarily on number, I suggest that numbers are introduced daily to reinforce the learning and understanding. Large numbers can be placed on displays, so they are visual and easily accessible. Due to the age of the child the activities need to be for short periods of time due to the attention span. Towering blocks whilst counting orally, carpet time can be adapted so there is a 5-minute slot for number, counting and recognition. (Black and William 1998) suggests that regularly revisiting work enables a child to process what is being taught and gives them time to put their learning into action. Using Numicon can help with the visual aspect of counting. Numicon is usually introduced in the Early Years setting and is a popular resource in Nursery and Reception classes. Numicon is used as a 'real life' resource for children. It is specifically designed for children to see and touch them. It co insides with the maths mastery approach, as it provides concrete objects for children to count as its multi-sensory.

Literacy

Literacy is an important aspect of a child's education, even in the Early Years. Literacy covers many areas such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Literacy skills are significant even in the Early Years as it is the core of basic life skills that children will possess in their daily lives and into adulthood. Without these skills adults find the simplest of tasks a struggle (Bruce 2012). Literacy skills cover many aspects of importance including concentration. It is believed that concentration levels can improve through literacy by story time. Forbes (2009) argues that if parents spend time reading to their children and encouraging listening and speaking at an early age, it supports their transition to education environments. Arguably, as literacy is such a vital quality it is up to all adults to demonstrate this skill. All teachers should be responsible for delivering literacy as a whole school ethos and not just to their individual class. Donaldson (2015) also believes literacy to be of great importance as within the new curriculum 'Successful Futures' literacy is a cross curricular responsibility.

At a young age children's language and literacy skills can be developed through play. Play is believed to enable children to express their emotions and opinions through play. Role playing can be useful for children who have anxiety or anger issues to realise tension they have built up (Lindon 2001). According to Scarlett (2005) by the age of 3 years children will take part in imaginary play. Many theorists suggest that play is an essential element in a child's developmental stage. Bruner believes play provides a rich environment where children can experiment and express ideas. Similarly, Vygotsky states play is crucial, however believes adults should organise resources to stimulate children yet discourages too much adult/child interaction as the child may not challenge themselves enough.

During a literacy session in the nursery class, Child A found sitting down and listening to the story very challenging. The teaching assistants (TA) had to encourage the child to sit on the carpet and listen to the teacher however child A became very disruptive making noises and became forceful and she did not want to sit down (Appendix 3). The story was read from the Interactive White Board (IWB) and the remainder of the class were joining in with the actions and the re-telling of

the story. The TA had to sit Child A on her lap so she was able to support her and stop her from leaving the carpet disruptively. Child A continued to 'shout' out but not in full sentences, rather one or two word demands 'play now!!'. The teacher told her 'no' in a strict voice; to which she responded by actively listening. Child A became less restless and displayed signs of concentration for a few minutes. The teacher gave her a laminated picture of the caterpillar. In alliance with the ASK model, child A became resilient and used her communication skills to demonstrate her understanding of the story. Child A was able to clearly say 'caterpillar' then without prompting said 'butterfly'. This clearly indicates Child A was fully aware of the story being told and she used her prior knowledge of the book, as it was read to the class continuously that week. Since Child A was holding something this stopped the fidgeting on the carpet, and she became more interactive with the teacher on the carpet. The teacher however modelled the correct pronunciation of some words and asked Child A to repeat them. Child A appeared significantly calmer whilst holding the picture. As previously stated, Child is awaiting assessment for Autism. Fidget toys are used for children with Autism or special needs. It helps with concentration and enables them to focus more. Fidget toys are also used as a behaviour strategy as it calms children down and reduces stress and anxiety (Autism UK 2018)

As a teacher, for the next steps of learning I would designate a specific area on the carpet for Child A, thus being a certain rug or cushion. I'm aware there are limitations to this approach as the other children in the class may question why they have not got the same as child A. However, the class are extremely aware of Child A and her behaviour patterns so I genuinely believe they would be supportive and extremely encouraging towards Child A. Adapting carpet time would focus the child and encourage her to sit down with less disruption. According to (Coad 2008) providing children with mats or colourful rugs significantly improves concentration in children. I would ensure that the class are fully participating with the story so there are not distracted, this can be done by dressing up, holding pictures, speaking aloud and actively taking part in the session. It was evident from the observation that Child A's speech and language was very immature compared to her peers. Mirroring how the teacher addressed the issue by modelling the correct speech, I would continue as it promotes continuity and consistency. I also would ensure constant praise is given to the child to boost her self-esteem. As I am ELKLAN trained I would instil my expertise

within the setting, however primarily on the child. ELKLAN is a speech and language programme designed to help children with these difficulties (ELKLAN 2019). A common belief of the founders of the organisation is that we should change the way we speak to children, so they understand more of what is being said.

Physical Education

Physical education also known as P.E is defined by the moving of the body typically during exercise. P.E plays a vital role in the curriculum as it motivates children to participate in activities, it develops an awareness of health and well-being, it can promote confidence to achieve and promotes positive self-image (Moyles 2008) P.E can often be a subject that is believed to be a Key stage 2 lead however this is far from the truth and it is just as important in the foundation phase. Children's physical development should incessantly be encouraged by supporting them to use their bodies effectively. P.E incorporates numerous skills such as fine and gross motor skills, spatial awareness and their physical control (Johnson 2009). Many theorists believe there is a strong link between physical and cognitive development. P.E will promote a child to use fine and gross motor skills and then utilise this through cognitive development. Although some children find P.E difficult, Piaget (1986) believes that children are active participants in their own learning and that children learn and develop throughout their experiences even when they come across challenges throughout their lives (Doherty 2009). P.E should be adapted for all children, taking into considering disabilities so they are able to participate. Limitations to P.E within the school settings are that of culture and beliefs. Some cultures believe sport and any sort of physical activity to be ineffective and therefore don't agree with taking part in such a subject.

During a non-structured P.E session whilst I was observing child A, the children had the opportunity to 'explore' the playground apparatus in the infant yard. The children were first instructed to run around the yard and were informed then questioned about the importance of exercising and completing warmups. Child A did not want to participate in the warmup, she ran around the yard and wanted to 'explore'. The teacher had to remind her several times to join the rest of the group. When the

children were finally designated to certain areas of the yard, child A immediately ran to the balancing beam. Unfortunately, she was unable to climb onto it but displayed great determination in trying to climb up independently. After several attempts she was unsuccessful. Child approach me but used no verbal communication, she pulled at my hand to steer her in the direction of the balance beam. In my observation I noted that she was confident in her ability to succeed (Appendix 4). Against the ASK model Child A was performing well, she used her communication skills and displayed resilience in wanting to achieve. However, whilst I assisted her onto the beam, she became less confident and wanted me to hold her hand while she walked across the beam, when she came to the end of the beam, she found it difficult to jump off and needed support. Encouragingly, Child A wanted to repeat the activity several times over. Her verbal communication became more apparent as she repeated “again, please miss, again”. Consequently, I praised her for her efforts. By providing the child with positive reinforcement encouraged her to attempt the beam independently without the support of an adult. This supports the theorist Erikson’s belief. Erikson developed a theory of psychosocial development. He suggested that between the ages of 18 months to approximately 3 years old, children possess a developing sense of control over physical activities after being supported by a trustworthy adult in the early stages of development (Meggit 2006).

As previously stated in the observation the child found it difficult to jump off the beam. Whilst jumping is a milestone typically associated between the ages of 24-36 months (Megitt 2009), it’s important to note that Child A has previously had an operation for hip dysplasia therefore may endure setbacks. Hip dysplasia is when the hip joint becomes partially or completely dislocated due to the hip socket not covering the ball of the upper thighbone. (NHS 2018). This is a condition that is usually present when the child is born, in the case of the child, this statement is true. As a teacher I would recommend light exercise in order to build up confidence and self-esteem. During P.E sessions I would organise different areas to develop certain skills. Clearly the child found it difficult to jump so I would lay out hoops at ground level for this to improve. Playing ‘hopscotch’ or ‘jumping beans’ will make the session fun whilst discreetly improving the skills. As the child was reluctant to join in with the initial activity then more emphasis needs to be put on involving the child, making the activities ‘exciting’ and ‘engaging’. This can be demonstrated through

play. Alderson claims that introducing play methods to children can increase their participation (2001: 147).

Donaldson (2015) strongly agrees in pupil voice. I would incorporate this by asking the child “How can we make jumping fun?”, and then action her thoughts and feelings. Miller (1997) illustrates that by including children in such ways enables children and young people to plan improvements within nursery settings. Finch (1998) also agrees with this, stating by letting children role play out ideas creates successful outcomes for adult planning. Limitations to pupil voice are that ideas may go off track and steer from the actual skill that is needed to be covered.

Health and well-being (including Welsh)

Health and well-being are important especially in schools. Being able to develop relationships and engage in learning is fundamental to a child’s health and wellbeing (Lindon 2008). If a child is upset or distracted by health problems, they find it very difficult to succeed in social aspects as well as academically. Donaldson (2015) has ensured health and wellbeing is one of the six core areas of learning in the new curriculum ‘Successful Futures’. This is separately structured and emphasises great importance on a child’s mental health. As a student teacher soon to be qualified I find the new curriculum enthralling as before children can achieve academically, they need to feel comfortable and more importantly happy about their life and surroundings.

As I became familiar with child A during observation week it became evident that in order to facilitate her well-being, she spent time in the sensory room that was equipped with all sensory items such as bubble lamps, textured rugs and many more. On the day I observed her in the sensory room I was mesmerized by her whole demeanour whilst she was in there. She appeared completely calm and displayed a happy face. As shown in (Appendix 5 and 6), she spent the duration of her time sitting next to the bubble lamp which was lit up as the main light of the room was turned off. She did however interact with the other child in the room and showed affection by hugging them. She responded to the member of staff saying, “I’m happy,

I love sensory". She produced a singing tune, but it appeared more of a humming noise, however this was clearly out of contentment not in anger or frustration. The TA informed me that the sensory room was used during snack time as the child can become overwhelmed by the whole structure of sitting down, having snack and asking for it in Welsh. So, by taking her to the sensory room they were providing her with care and ensuring her well being was looked after. During the time spent in the room I interacted with her and asked her "Do you like afal, banana ar oren". She responded by saying "afal please". This indicated she understood what was asked even though it was in Welsh, not her first spoken language. When it was time to leave the room, she became upset and the member of staff had to comfort her and reminded her that she would be able to come back tomorrow, and it was home time.

As a teacher I fully understand the reasons behind taking the child to the sensory room, however in terms of progression I would try and eliminate the amount of times it was visited in a week. From in September 2019 she will be in Full Time Education in a Reception class, and due to staff ratio, it is inevitable that she will not be able to attend the sensory room on a daily basis. Instead I would ensure that she is able to visit once a week and ensure that there is a designated area of the classroom with a lamp so she can sit during snack time. This will integrate her with her peers and reduce her anxiety when it comes to snack time.

I am aware of limitations to this as the child could become upset but being consistent in the approach would progress the situation in a positive way. Due to the fact she can understand simple Welsh phrases I would continue to use those with her and encourage her to utilise it during snack time. If child A became upset, I would provide a drawing activity as I know she finds drawing fun. Conversely, Barker and Weller (2003) disagree that drawings may not be popular with every child.

Conclusion

Overall it is evident that Child A posse's delays in her learning socially and academically. This is due to numerous factors such as attendance and the fact, she has GLD and awaiting assessment for Autism. Compared to her peers she interacts with children very little and her speech is very delayed. However, according to the staff in the class this has positively improved. She has exceeded anyone's

expectations in terms of speech and language skills, this is supported by her WELLCOMM score. In September she was at the babbling stage but with improved attendance she can now speak coherently on times. For the purpose of Child A's future holistic development, I would suggest she is encouraged to become slightly more independent and possibly take part in more physical activities such as music and dance. This will support her social skills as she will be interacting with other children. However as previously stated modelling and scaffolding from the teacher is vital in order to demonstrate good practise and expectations of the child. I have learnt that children all learn at different stages and it is up to the practitioners to support and be patient with each individual child. Child A clearly enjoys all things sensory (Appendix 7 and 8) but needs to learn to share (Appendix 9). This can be done by demonstrating and modelling good behaviour through the classroom. Since the child has Global Learning Delay, she has yet to meet the milestone of sharing and turn taking. Furthermore, happiness is key. Academic success has the possibility to fall short if the well-being of the child is not considered. I spoke to the class teacher about my findings and she supports my observations and believes they are a true reflection of the pupil.

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Appendences

Appendix 1


Prifysgol Cymru
 Y Drindod Dewi Sant
 University of Wales
 Trinity Saint David

Yr Athrofa
 Institute of Education
 Addysg i Gymru / Education for Wales

RE: Primary PGCE student assignment: permission and confirmation that work has been undertaken in school for assignment 'School Development and Pupil Progress', Summer 2019.

Dear Class/Senior mentor,

For the university module named above, trainees are required to identify one learner within the class in which they are based and, over the course of the Professional Teaching Experience, explore their learning in detail. The evidence that they need to gather could include:

- observation;
- asking the learner to identify places/things that help him/her learning;
- discussing what helps the pupil learn and how they feel about learning with the pupil and/or teacher;
- collecting samples of work which might show something about the learner's progress and development.

They are asked to focus on knowledge, attitude and skills in language, mathematics, wellbeing and at least two other areas of the curriculum to gain an holistic picture of the child. They then suggest the next steps for the learner, and indicate how these will be achieved. Trainees are expected to undertake this work independently where-ever possible, and have been given ethical guidelines to follow (although undertaking the work above would be in line with typical classroom practice). The trainees have been asked not to reveal the identify of the learner or the school within their assignment. Students have been asked to:

1. Seek permission for this work (by consulting with the class teacher and learner)
2. Provide verification that the work has taken place.

We would therefore be grateful if you could confirm that permission has been sought and that tasks have been undertaken by signing below:

STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT): Hayley Thomas

SCHOOL NAME (PLEASE PRINT): [REDACTED]

SENIOR MENTOR/CLASS MENTOR NAME (PLEASE PRINT):

Faye Evans (Deputy head)

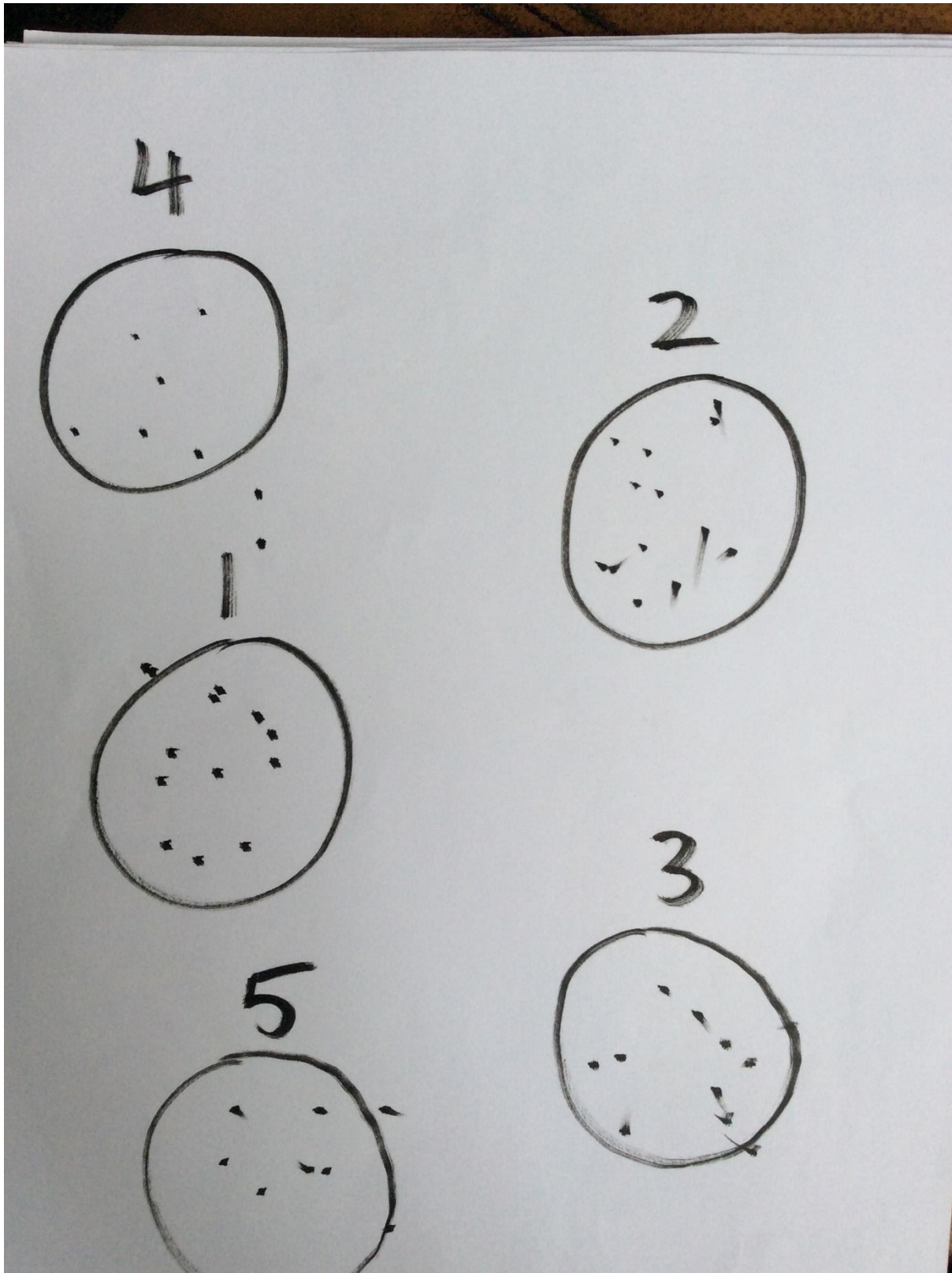
SENIOR MENTOR/CLASS MENTOR NAME (PLEASE SIGN):

FHE

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the module lead Mr. Mathew Jones.
 M.Jones@uwtsd.ac.uk

Many thanks in advance
SIGNED COPY TO BE INCLUDED IN APPENDIX OF ASSIGNMENT

Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Canolfan Addysg Athrawon
De-Orllewin Cymru
The South West Wales
Centre of Teacher Education

Learner Observation Form

Name of learner(s):

Child A

Class: Nursery

Time:

Date: 10.05.19

Activity:

Literacy

(Reading a book on the carpet)

Comments

- Unable to sit still
- Became quite loud and disruptive making noises, say 'play now'.
- TA had to firmly hold her before she harmed others by moving.
- After she was handed a laminated picture she settled down.
- She identified the picture as a Caterpillar and said 'butterfly' so she knew the sequence of the story.

What needs to be done to move the learning on?

- specific mat/spot for her when she sits down.
- speech and language support.
- lots of positive reinforcement.

Appendix 4

Canolfan Addysg Athrawon
De-Orllewin Cymru
The South West Wales
Centre of Teacher Education

Learner Observation Form

Name of learner(s):

child A

Class: Nursery

Time:

Date: 09.05.19

Activity:

P.E (outdoors climbing frame)

Comments

- Wouldn't join in warm up
- ran off
- Wanted to play on the balance beam
- Even though she couldn't lift herself up she didn't give up.
- After around 5 minutes she approached me to help, tugging at me.
- Became very animated and excited when I placed her on the beam.
- "again miss, again".
- unable to jump.

What needs to be done to move the learning on?

- jump hoops
- hop scotch
- To increase gross motor skills
- Promote independency
- Constant praise.

Appendix 5



Appendix 6



Appendix 7



Appendix 8



Appendix 9

