

Sport, Health & Outdoor Education

Assessment Feedback Sheet

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Module: Professional Development and Practice
Module Code: SHSS4062

Personal Evaluation – to support your academic progress please complete the section below BEFORE submitting your work.									
What do you consider to be the best aspects of this work?	I feel that the variety of resources in which I collected information and supporting references from is good. I think the structure of the essay is also solid.								
Which aspects do you consider could have been improved in this piece of work?	I believe the planning and time I gave myself to complete this piece of work could have been worked on a lot more. I think the quality of content within the assignment could be stronger. At points within the essay I feel that I did not follow the question fully. As a mature student at UWTSD it can be hard to get back into the swing of academic work after being out of education for the last 5-6 years.								
What have you found most satisfying whilst undertaking this submission?	I thoroughly enjoyed researching and collecting information from a variety of sources throughout the assignment. Although I have not yet finished the book, I am really enjoying 'Last Child In The Woods'. After taking on this assignment I would like to explore the topic and the question into further detail.								
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Learning Outcome	GRADE							
		Poor 0-25%	Unsatisfactory 26-39%	Satisfactory 40 – 49%	Good 50 – 59%	Very Good 60 – 69%	Excellent 70 – 85%	Exceptional 86– 100%	%
Essay content and quality of resources used	1								30%
Referencing within the essay	1								20%
Correctly constructed reference list	1								20%
Structure of essay and clarity of writing	1								30%
It is expected that students will present work that is proof read, correctly referenced and adheres to the Assessment Checklist . Therefore a range of 0 – 10 marks will be deducted for non-completion of any of the points on the checklist below .									
TUTOR COMMENTS:									
Submission date: 1/11/19 via Turnitin		Return date: 8/11/19 (at least within 4 weeks)		Tutor:			Mark:		

Discuss whether there really is a need for children to play freely outdoors.

Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, creative for the child and freely chosen by the child. (Play England, 2009)

In this assignment, there will be a discussion whether there really is a need for children to play freely outdoors. Playing is important to all children no matter what their impairments or behaviour (Play Wales, ND). Exploration, imagination and an understanding of the environment can all aid a child's development through outdoor play. However, these benefits cannot always be available when potential drawbacks and barriers from parents, modern technology and society are thrown into the picture. Within this assignment, both the benefits and barriers to playing freely outdoors will be discussed so that a conclusion can be made whether there really is a need for children to play freely outdoors.

Firstly a discussion on the benefits of free play and what children can gain from the outdoors shall be presented in this main body of work. It is easy to provide a list of benefits that can be acquired from playing outdoors, however, exploration, creativity, imagination and developing an understanding for the environment shall be the primary focus. "Young people tend to have a natural affinity with the outdoors. They are often easily enthused both to explore and care for nature." (Mortlock, 2001, p.131)

Through outdoor play and the exploration of natural elements, it is possible to promote education in its broadest sense. Activities related to playing with soil and water can serve as examples of learning opportunities in which concepts related to mathematics, science or language were promoted in an integrated way. (Bento, Dias, 2017)

After an opening of an exhibition curated by Robert Macfarlane took place, Macfarlane (2017) explains how as he "released children into the wild" it took only a few seconds before they were immersed in the natural surroundings, picking up random objects, telling stories and entertaining themselves through the environment and all things natural in the outdoors. Playing outdoors can open up a world of imagination as opposed to being inside in front of a television or video game. Children heighten their imagination by playing make-believe games using props and nature's resources. An example of this can be seen when the 'Lost boys' play an old dinner game using imagination to help Peter remember he is Peter Pan in *Hook* (1991).

A plastic fried egg remains a plastic fried egg, whereas a flower, a leaf or a stone can stand for a fried egg or anything else that a child wants it to be (Tovey, 2007, p.20). Children develop more comprehensive knowledge about their world when they have a chance to watch, observe, predict, and learn in the moment (Kinsner, 2019). It is clear that as an adult, you only have to open the door for a child, to allow and provide the resources needed to play freely as well as educate. Yes, you can place a child in front of the television and show a nature documentary, however, if you go outdoors to a local park, national trust venue and so on the opportunity for learning is massive. We cannot expect children to take responsibility for the natural world if they have never had a chance of experiencing it in delightful ways (Tovey, 2007, p.29).

“There are gates; gates that open one way and not another and that will swing back and forth if you push them just the right way. There are small walls you can walk on very carefully. There are sewer lids that have fascinating regular patterns and scraps of brightly coloured pizza-delivery flyers. There are intriguing strangers to examine carefully from behind a protective parental leg. There is a veritable zoo of creatures, from tiny pill bugs and earthworms to the enormous excitement, or terror, of a real barking dog.” (Gopnik, 1999, P.211)

Understandably, the current trends in technological advancements, crime, education, parenting and modern society and so on can be seen as potential drawbacks, barriers and risks towards playing freely outdoors.

“British children now spend on average less time outdoors each day than prisoners. They’re climbing walls not trees [for] under an hour outside. Screen time is soared and screen time is mostly inside time. Poverty, postcode, ethnicity [and] risk perception all effect children’s experience of nature.” (Macfarlane, 2017)

Even when children do manage to put a foot out of the door to play can they be held back. Louv (2005) explains how three siblings spent 8 months worth of time, creativity and money to build a treehouse in their back garden only to be told to tear it down because they had no building permit. Although in modern society it would be worth checking with the local council before taking on such a project, seeing something so pure and organic taken away from yourself can be, off-putting towards the want to do that very same thing or something similar again. “We should have the same rights as adults did when they were young” (Louv,

2005, p.31). When a child or person does not spend a considerable amount of time in an outdoor environment he or she can develop a case of 'Ecophobia' according to Sobel (1996). Children can ask questions such as ("who checks the woods for killers?") or ("If I touch this animal will I get poorly?"). There is a whole world waiting to be explored and discovered just outside that front door, even if it is with the protection of a parent, guardian or older sibling.

"Nick believes fish should be caught and eaten; I believe that fish should be caught and, most of the time, released. Nick believes that violence is inevitable, that suffering is redemptive, and that a father must teach his children about the harshness of life by exposing them to that harshness. I believe that as a parent, it's my job to protect my sons from the brutality of the world for as long as I can." (Louv, 2005, p.20)

The Decline in access for outdoor spaces for play has been paralleled by an unprecedented rise in the level of anxiety for children's safety, a 'Culture of Fear' (Furedi, 2002). More and more parents are worried about the safety of their children when letting them outside to play, restricting children from physical exercise, meeting new friends, learning opportunities and of course free play. A growing culture of fear about the possible accidents that might happen affect parent's and professionals attitude towards outdoor play, so children tend to be kept inside, occupied with structured activities, and controlled by adults (Bento, Dias, 2017). Modern technology such as computers, video games, film, television and so on are continuously attracting the eyes of the younger generation. According to a survey carried out by Louv (2005, p.10) in which he interviewed children and adults, a child in the fourth grade said: "I like to play indoors better, cause that's where the electrical outlets are". Although this isn't the main reason why children are not stepping out of the house, it is a big factor. (Prisk, 2013) director of 'Play England' explains on a 5 News interview that children are saying how they don't play outside because there aren't any children outside to play with. These factors all interlink and are a continuous problem as to why children are failing to play freely outdoors.

It can be seen as quite apparent that children must be given the time to play freely outdoors, failure in doing this can result in many drawbacks and will also become clear through the way they develop into teenage years and onto adulthood. The first years of life shape a child's future into adulthood (Their World, ND). Although it may be harder for families suffering from poverty, living in inner city residential homes or even fearful parents to provide a safe environment for their children to play in, it really doesn't take much to step out the door and

walk your child to the local park. Once you have made it through the gates of the park, the child will do the rest and play freely with the tools provided. Encouraging the youth to explore, discover and create an environment to play in will benefit both the parents and children towards a healthy and positive lifestyle.

Word count - 1385

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