

LESLEY MARTIN
2ND YEAR STUDENT
BA HONS
EDUCATION STUDIES
UWTSD



PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE

This portfolio contains a diary of evidence to support the experiences I encountered during my recent placement at a secondary school in Wales. It includes my:

- Observations
- Interviews
- Involvement
- Key learning experiences

over a 10 day period.



Days 1 & 2

24 February 2020 12:43

Day 1 - Inset Day - Teaching and non-teaching staff

Location: Main Hall & Classroom

The day began with a short presentation from the Head Master about general matters surrounding the smooth running of the school. We then split into groups and I went with the teaching assistants to listen to an external speaker talk about strategies for supporting pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. She spoke about the triad of impairments that affect children with ASD, i.e. problems with language, communication, imagination and socialisation and provided us with information and simple strategies to help them. Some key learning experiences for me were:

- Always use the individuals name at the beginning of an instruction
- Without highlighting them, look at their weaknesses to see how I can best support them
- Check that what has been explained has been clearly understood - keep verbal clarifications brief, simple and not literal to avoid misinterpretation



NASEN: Helping everyone achieve - SEN Support

Day 2 - Year 7 – English (top set)

Location: Computer / Library Lesson

Task - 'Produce a leaflet aimed at upper primary school pupils giving advice about how to look after a specific pet'.

Pupils could work in pairs or groups and share ideas, but the leaflets had to be produced individually. Once the teacher had explained the task, pupils were given questionnaires (Appendix 1) and encouraged to use a mixture of resources including the internet and library facilities to assist with their research. Using this semi-structured approach, allowed the teacher to facilitate rather than teach and promote independent learning. I identified that working this way allowed pupils to:

- Work independently / with moderate support
- Work as part of a group
- Develop their social skills
- Develop their research skills

By the end of the lesson the teacher had achieved her objectives and all pupils had completed the task (Appendices 2 & 3) in a fun, friendly and relaxed atmosphere.



Days 3 & 4

24 February 2020 13:03

Day 3 - Paired reading (Year 7) - Led by Year 10 Pupils

Location: Library

These sessions were introduced to assist pupils who needed additional help with their reading skills. This one to one support is aimed at increasing pupil's self-confidence and motivation to learn. Before attending pupils are given questionnaires (Appendix 4) to confirm what they think about reading and can choose colour coded reading material based on their interests and appropriate reading age. Pupils are expected to read out loud so their mentors can support them with difficult words, check their understanding, make links to their life and the world around them and ask appropriate questions. By receiving praise and encouragement, it is hoped that their enthusiasm will increase and they will want to read more. At the end of each book they complete a Reading Record Sheet (Appendix 5) to:

- Confirm their understanding
- Say what they liked or disliked about the book
- Give it a score out of 10

Parents/carers are also encouraged to support and read with them at home.

The pupils told me how much they were enjoying these sessions and how the rapport they were building with their mentors was having a positive effect on their attitudes and ability to read. They also confirmed how comfortable they felt in this environment as they recognised that everyone in attendance was there for extra support.



Day 4 - Maths Lesson - 1 Teacher, 3 Teaching Assistants, 5 Pupils and Myself

Location: Learning Support Room

Attended by pupils with additional learning needs. At the start of each lesson they are allowed 10 minutes to work independently on an on-line system called TTRockstars (Appendix 6), a programme used to practice their times tables. The teacher appeared to have a very good understanding of the children and their different personalities, strengths and weaknesses. After listening to him explaining the questions, we used his recommended approach to provide one to one support to the pupils. One pupil refused any help and hid her work, while others asked for a little or a great deal of support and reassurance before they would attempt anything. The pupil I sat by clearly knew his times tables from my earlier observations on the computer, but had great difficulty trying to apply his existing knowledge to the questions. Following the lesson, I spoke to the teacher who confirmed how challenging some Maths lessons were for these pupils, with the majority relying too heavily on the support provided. He explained that even though some pupils were more able than others, depending on how they were feeling on the day also had a significant impact on how they would perform. I learned that by withdrawing these pupils from mainstream English and Maths lessons they were able to follow the same curriculum but in an environment more suited to their individual needs.



24 February 2020 13:03

Day 5 - Meetings with the Nurse & Pastoral Support Officers

Location: Medical Room & Pastoral Support Office

Mental Health and Wellbeing are a key issue in contemporary education. I wanted to gain an insight into the general queries and concerns being addressing daily.

For the nurse it is mainly headaches, sickness and sporting injuries or for pupils to access their prescribed medication which is stored securely in the Medical Room. Children with EpiPen's are permitted to keep theirs with them at all times. The Pastoral Support Officers on the other hand are dealing with anything from social media issues, to depression, self-harming, drug related enquiries or worse. Pupils visiting these services are assured that anything discussed remains completely confidential, unless seen as a safeguarding issue where they are escalated to the Safeguarding Officer for appropriate referral. While most cases are genuine, several pupils have been identified as using these services as an excuse to leave lessons they do not enjoy or find too difficult to take part in.

Prior to our discussions I had not realised just how much of an issue mental health and wellbeing had become in young people.



Days 6 & 7

24 February 2020 12:43

Day 6 - Geography Lesson - Mixed Ability Class, with TA support

Location: Geography Room

Here they were learning about 'Photo Analysis'. They were each given a photo of a beach (Appendix 7) to describe in as much detail as possible. Then they had to carry out the same exercise using a photo of their choice from a personal holiday experience (Appendix 8). I noticed that one pupil with ALN was receiving one to one support by using a few support strategies. The TA explained that he had a diagnosis of ASD and sometimes struggled with mood swings and anger management. They had previously discussed strategies to help him and come up with a traffic light card system:

- Red meant he did not want to communicate with anyone and would often take time out of the classroom to gather his thoughts
- Amber indicated something or someone had irritated or frustrated him such as a peer, teacher, lesson or something completely unrelated
- Green indicated he was willing to accept help and attempt some form of interaction with other pupils

Thanks to the time this TA had dedicated to working around his weaknesses, they now usually managed to change his mood colour card from amber to green before things escalated. The TA had also created a word chain to help him with the common words he mis-spelt. By laminating words onto small cards and attached them to a large keyring, rather than having to continuously spell words out to him, she simply showed him the word to copy. Both were simple, but extremely valuable cost-effective strategies that helped with his:

- Self-esteem
- Independence
- Social interaction

I learned the importance of communication and how even the simplest of interventions can make all the difference when supporting any child in education.



Day 7 - Life Skills Session

Location: Special Teaching Facility

These children all have speech, language and communication difficulties (the majority have autism). Once a week Teaching Assistants run a lunchtime session to help develop their social and domestic skills. They start by sitting around a table to eat their food where they are encouraged to engage in conversation with each other. On a weekly basis, pupils are allowed to choose what skills they want to work on next, e.g. using a microwave or boiling a kettle to make a cup of tea. In the session I attended they were learning how to change a pillow case and duvet cover. They also learned about fair-play and what was and was not acceptable behaviour, by playing games that involved sharing and taking turns. Engaging in these short activities and receiving praise from staff and peers appeared to have a positive effect on these children and boost their self-confidence.

From this experience I recognised how challenging some simple tasks can appear to children with ALN. Running these groups, helped to raise pupil's:

- Self-confidence
- Social skills
- Practical skills
- Awareness

Pupils were encouraged to play games and practice these skills further at home.



Days 8 & 9

24 February 2020 13:38

Day 8 - ASDAN – FoodWise Short Course

Location: Gower College, Tycoch

Available for less academic pupils in years 10 and 11. I accompanied a TA and four year 10 pupils to Tycoch campus by minibus. The Module they were working towards was called 'Healthy Eating'. Their task for the day was to research food groups and nutrition, then think of a recipe in preparation for their next lesson when they would be expected to bring in the correct ingredients to make the meal. Through food preparation and cooking this course aims to develop individuals:

- Knowledge
- Personal skills
- Social skills
- Work-related skills

and teach them about:

- Healthy eating
- Wellbeing
- Cooking on a budget

They either record their skills development and evidence in a student booklet (Appendix 9) or online using the ASDAN e-portfolio system, ready for the Tutor to view their progress, sign off their work and provide feedback. Pupils who meet the requirements, receive a certificate at the end of the course.

I learned that ASDAN provides numerous programmes and qualifications to help motivate adolescents to develop core skills for learning, work and life in Wales. These qualifications and awards are approved and funded by the Department for Education and Skills. ASDAN courses give pupils the opportunity to work outside the school environment and highlights how important some curriculum topics are in daily life experiences. It was reassuring to see the pupils social interactions on the bus journeys to and from the college.



Day 9 - Safe Haven

Location: Learning Support Room

A supervised area overseen by Teaching Assistants for children who struggle with unsupervised and unstructured breaks and lunchtimes. Between 8 and 18 pupils attend on a regular basis. Some chose to sit on their own and read; some do their homework independently or with the help of a TA, while others sit around chatting or play games. The only time technology is allowed in this area is to access class/homework. Much as this area keeps these pupils away from the mainstream environment, it is purely down to their choice and they are free to come and go as they please. During the summer months they are encouraged to use an outdoor area or go for walks with a TA in attendance if they do not feel confident enough to venture out on their own.



Day 10

24 February 2020 13:44

Day 10 - Teaching Assistant Meeting

Location: Staffroom

An informal meeting where notes were taken and forwarded to the SENCO. The key topic was not having any PPA time. With differentiated work not always available at the start of lessons, TAs recognise the importance of having prior knowledge so they can plan their approach in advance and be ready to support pupils. In addition to being allocated reasonable planning time I suggested differentiated work folders containing appropriate subject worksheets be placed in individual classrooms. These simple interventions would benefit Teachers and TA's but more importantly the pupils requiring additional support.

Another topic discussed was Educare. I learned that this was an on-line service, containing essential duty of care and safeguarding material. TAs are required to sit these courses and answer questions as part of their compliance training and receive certificates as evidence for Estyn inspections. Courses are usually completed during Inset days or in staffs own time. Again, staff recognised the importance of this information and suggested realistic time be allocated for them to complete these courses.



Sample of Educare Courses

Conclusion

24 February 2020 13:46

I appreciated this opportunity to engage with pupils and staff to gain a better understanding of school, based on real life experiences. This work based evidence has been put together for me to identify my development and allow me to think critically about my performance, approach and learning through experience.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants support is essential and requires professionalism, patience, effective interpersonal, communication and organisational skills, along with a good sense of humour! By creating a safe, fun and positive environment, this school allows children to flourish by developing their skills, knowledge and appropriate behaviours.

On reflection, the key learning experiences for me were:

- Becoming familiar with the school's policies and their Code of Conduct for School Based Staff - it is the responsibility of all staff to adopt safe working practices to ensure their own Health and Safety and that of the pupils for whom they have a duty of care
- Establishing how well pupils responded when the teacher acted as a facilitator, rather than just teaching them from the front of the class
- Ensuring that support focused on pupils learning and not just completing tasks
- Understanding that the primary role of Teaching Assistants is to help pupils work as independently as possible while accessing the national curriculum
- Recognising how effective some of the simple, most cost-effective forms of intervention were for supporting all children and not just those with additional learning needs
- The importance of interacting with pupils to find out what they think is or is not working
- Appreciating the needs and targets of individual children by engaging with the child, their parent(s)/carer(s) and the school

The school I visited had been awarded Gold by Unicef UK's Rights Respecting School programme and confirms their commitment to promoting and realising children's rights and encouraging adults, children and young people to respect the rights of others at all levels of school life. This Award recognises their achievements in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at the heart of their planning, policies and practices which are available via their school website.

Appendix 1: English Questionnaire

24 February 2020 15:59

Task: Produce a leaflet aimed at upper primary school pupils giving advice about how to look after a specific pet

What type of pet are you going to write about? <u>Goldfish</u>	Make notes about how the animal should be fed: • Sprinkle the food across the top of the water • • •	What preparations should you make before you bring the animal home? • A fairly big area to put the tank • • • • • •
Research to find out the answers to the following questions: How many different breeds of the animal are there? <u>There is an unknown amount, estimate - 100;</u> Do different breeds have different needs? <u>Yes</u> At what age can you buy this type of pet? <u>Any age</u> What type of temperament (their nature that affects behaviour) does this animal have? <u>Not really relevant</u> Can people be allergic to this type of animal? <u>Yes</u> How long does the animal live generally? <u>5 to 10 years</u> From where does the animal originate (come from)? <u>Asia</u> How much does it cost to buy this animal? <u>For 1 fish = £1 - £10</u>	What equipment would you need at home to look after this animal? • A tank • Gravel/Stones • Ornaments • Filter • Stay Sage tank spray • •	 Make notes about how the animal should be groomed (washed or brushed): • Wash the tank out every 3-4 weeks put the fish in a big bowl - • •

Appendix 2: Booklet Cover

24 February 2020 18:13



Appendix 3: Booklet Contents Pages

24 February 2020 18:14

How to feed your <u>goldfish</u>		DO	DONT
1. Get some goldfish flakes (usually found in Pets at home) ^{Make sure they are for goldfish not tropical fish} 2. Sprinkle a pinch onto the surface of the water 3. Let the goldfish enjoy! PIC	PIC PIC	Do ask for help if you are not sure on something Facts that you might not know - There are many types of goldfish - They originate from Asia	Don't clean with chemicals
Don't be mean to clean! Clean out their tank every 3-4 weeks You might want to get more than one goldfish so they have company DO NOT touch their scales have a protective layer of gel to stop them getting infections	DIRTY TANK  	Things you need to know Don't mix tropical with gold	

Appendix 4: Paired Reading Questionnaire

24 February 2020 18:15

How do you feel about reading?

Read the following questions about reading and decide which answer applies to you. Tick the appropriate symbol to indicate your choice:-

☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

1) I read at home.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

2) My family read at home.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

3) We have a lot of books at home to read.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

4) My family and I visit the library to read other books.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

5) We have newspapers delivered to our house to keep in touch with the latest events occurring in the world.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

6) My parent/s read to me
☐ Less than twice a week ☐ More than twice a week

7) If I choose a book to read which has difficult words, I lose interest easily.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

8) Reading will help all my other subjects.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

9) I wish to improve my English mark, therefore I read as much as possible.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

10) I enjoy reading to others.
☐ True ☐ Not sure ☐ False

Appendix 5 Reading Record Sheet

24 February 2020 18:16

ENGLISH READING RECORD	
Title	Author
This book is about _____	

I liked/did not like it because _____	

I would give it a mark of ____ out of 10.	
Title	Author
This book is about _____	

I liked/did not like it because _____	

I would give it a mark of ____ out of 10.	
Title	Author
This book is about _____	

I liked/did not like it because _____	

I would give it a mark of ____ out of 10.	

Appendix 6: Website link to TT Rockstars

24 February 2020 18:17

<https://ttrackstars.com/>

Pupils are given their own Usernames and Passwords to access this site.

Appendix 7: Photo Analysis Task

24 February 2020 18:18

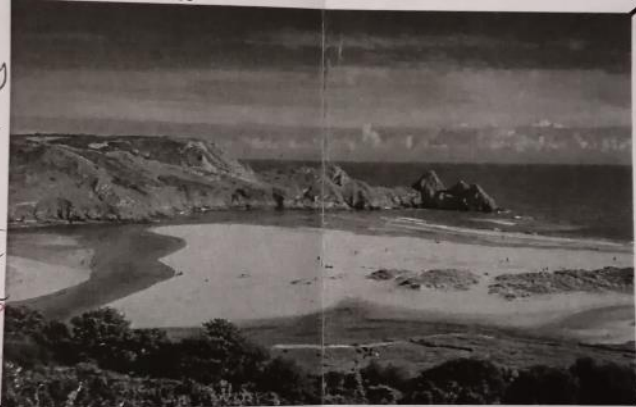
Photo Analysis

1. What questions would you ask about this image?

What's the history of this place?

How many people visit a year?

What other people think of this place?



6. Describe exactly what you can see in the image.

- Three cliffs bay
- Grass
- Sand
- Sea/water
- People
- Trees
- Grass
- Clouds
- Sky
- Waves
- A beach
- Rocks

2. What is it about the image that makes you feel this way?

The fact I could walk there every day to see it

3. How do YOU respond to this image?

I feel lucky when I see this image because I like to look

5. If there are any people in the image, what do you think they are feeling/thinking?

Happy because they are having sun at the beach

4. What is the relationship between the people and the place?

It is an area of outstanding natural beauty, it is local for Bishopston Pupils. It is a lovely holiday place

Appendix 8 Personal Holiday Photo

24 February 2020 18:18

13 May

1) Describe exactly what you can see in the image?

- Sydney opera house
- People
- Me
- Orange and white cones
- Railings
- Brick paving ✓

5) What questions would you ask about this image?

What were the judges names that rejected his design twice? ✓



2) If there are any people in the image, what do you think they are feeling/thinking?

Happy, because if they are tourists they are experiencing something amazing, and if they are local they could be feeling lucky. I felt happy to see this opera house.

3) What is the relationship between the people and the place?

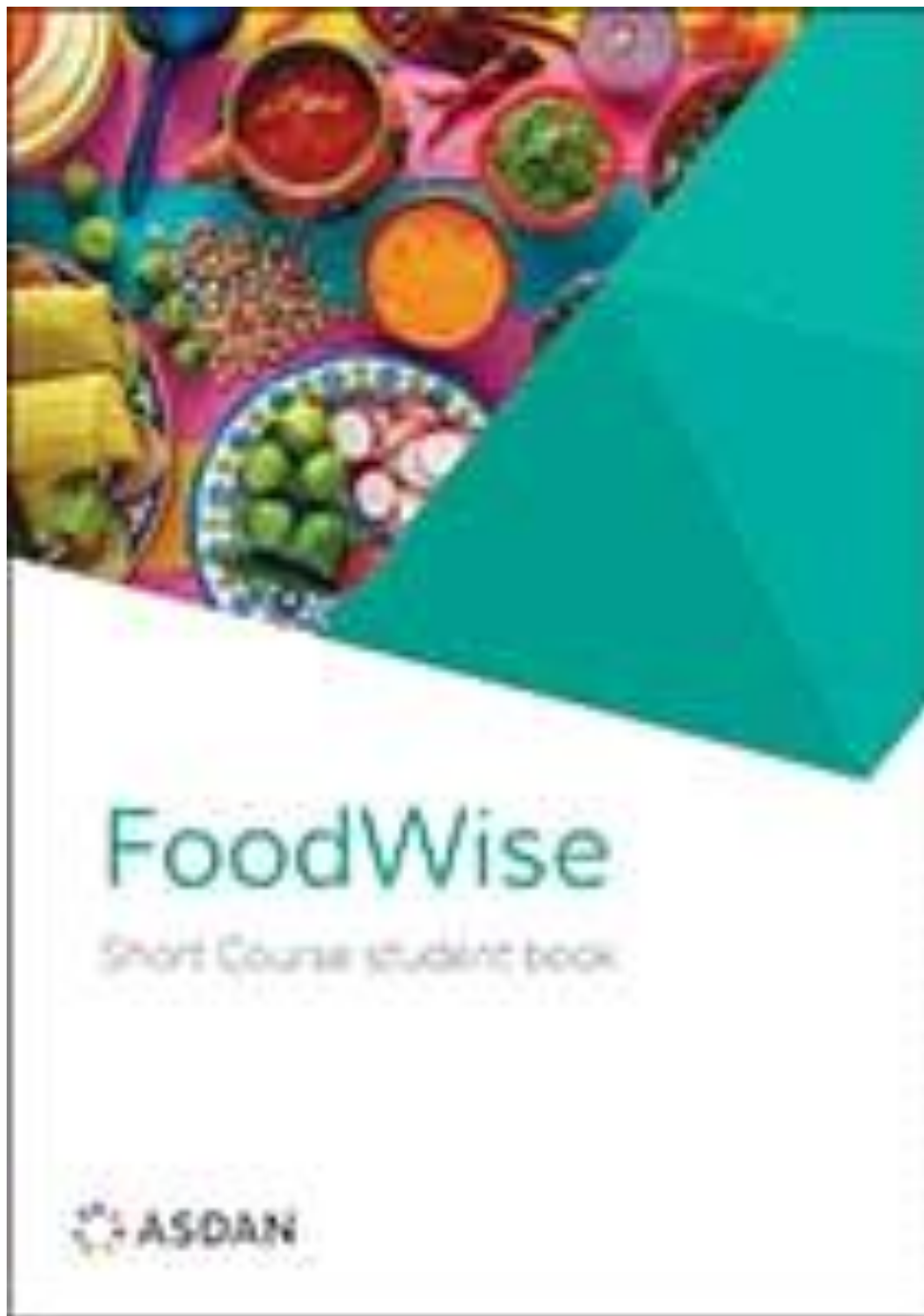
It's a tourist place, to go to it you have to go to Sydney. I have been there and therefore I know really it's a good place.

4) What is it in the photo that makes you feel like you do?

The fact I was lucky enough to visit and do a tour inside. Da naan

Appendix 9: ASDAN Student Book

24 February 2020 18:20



<https://www.asdan.org.uk/courses/programmes/foodwise-short-course-student-book>