



Play Based Learning Specialist and Advocate

2102049

ECGE5002P

Who Am I?

I am currently studying primary education at the University Of Wales Trinity Saint David in Carmarthen. The university Bolton states that having a degree in education helps open many doors to different careers and not just teaching (University of Bolton, 2021).

I previously studied NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma For Children's Care Learning and Development as an A Level where ive gained 2 years of experience in a primary school. While doing this ourse i developed many skills that have helped me in the classroom. As stated by Kent State University, by doing hands-on learning it helps us have a much broader view of the world and an appretiation of the comminity (Kent state university, 2023).



My key Skills

communication

Communication is key while working in education as it helps build and foster a safer learning environment where your students can thrive, prosper and learn to the best of their abilities. Hanifan (2022) was a useful source of information. It is vital that you communicate with the staff, especially the staff that are working in your classroom in order to make the day run smoothly. It is also important that you communicate with the children in your classroom in order to understand their needs. Pupil's voice is a good way of communicating with students. It is a whole-school commitment that listens to the wishes, views and experiences of the children in order to help give the children a better experience at school (Mentally Healthy Schools, 2023).

Team Work

Teamwork in the classroom is a skill I developed while doing my A Level placement. It is important to communicate and work as a team to understand what is going on in the classroom. By working as a team, it helps with teaching and learning essential communication and social skills, such as effective speaking and active listening (Malborough, 2019).

Time Management

Time management is a key skill for every teacher. It helps to properly manage time for an effective classroom environment (Resilient Educator 2023). By using time management in the classroom i have been able to help the teachers plan out the day and set goals for when tasks and activities need to be finished.

How do you use play in the classroom?

By using play in the foundation phase children who are unable to sit and learn at a desk and children who suffer with learning difficulties are still able to get an education without suffering. Play can be used in work through many different ways, one way that is being encouraged is outdoor learning. Outdoor learning is growing in popularity as it gives children the chance to go outside and explore while still learning. Forest schools is a good example to use as a way of outdoor learning. While doing my placement, our school turned an unused fenced off section of forestry and turned it into a forest school area when the children could go off and explore in a safe environment. The children were able to collect items that they found in the area in order to create projects e.g. the children had to collect materials and create a house for the class mascot Fred the frog. The children used teamwork, got to explore the area and most importantly have fun while doing the task.



Critical Discussions

While thinking of play-based learning, many people struggle to see the academic side of this topic. Many have raised a question of the lack of formal training around play-based learning as it is new to the curriculum. More traditionally trained teacher generation may struggle to see the benefits of play-based learning as they are so used to academic side of education which revolves around the children sitting at the desk and learning that way, rather than using play to benefit students who struggle with sitting and learning at the desk.



We have covered what a play-based education curriculum should look like, but more important is why it needs to look like this. There are many ways play helps kids flourish, both in an early education environment and in life (Resilient Educator 2021).

New research shows play-based learning may be more effective than direct instruction in improving outcomes for young learners especially with math and spatial skills. In addition to inspiring young minds to become receptive to learning, play is a critical component in children's brain development. Researchers and educators alike agree that play is a crucial component of child-rearing and one not to be neglected (Prodigy 2021).

Policymakers, researchers, and educators promote the idea that learning through play is developmentally appropriate--that it taps into innate school-age children's curiosity, and at the same time, it smooths an often-challenging transition from preschool to school. Learning through play has emerged as a critical strategy for promoting student engagement, inclusivity, and whole-skills development beyond the preschool years (Harvard Graduate School of Education 2022)

Through such play, children are able to build social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and develop the confidence necessary to participate in new experiences and environments. This means children learn best when they are mentally active, engaged, social, and can form meaningful connections with their lives, which are all characteristics of play. When young children are playing, children are continually responding to new knowledge, getting specific experiences of how the world works, and building feelings of achievement (Edmentum 2021)

Rowan shares strong value for the teacher's role of engaging socially with kids during play, especially in order to promote positive social interactions and expand learning. All three actors discussed the importance of teachers monitoring and supporting children with different abilities in their play interactions. All three enactors highlighted different ways that they take on a supporting role during their child's play activities in order to facilitate positive social interactions between children with disabilities and those without disabilities (Danniels and Pyle, 2018)

Although some researchers and educators endorsed the view that play should remain an activity for children,^{40,41} educators reported concerns about meeting academic standards without being able to provide some guidance in playtime.⁶ Given the evidence, a comprehensive approach to play-based learning, that addresses both developmental and academic benefits, is recommended. Developmental and academic perspectives of play-based learning have advanced with different recommendations regarding the types of play endorsed and the optimal roles for educators who implement this pedagogy.³⁴ Researchers who have focused on developmental benefits of play-based learning have stressed the importance of uninhibited play and the passive role of the teacher, whereas researchers who focus on academic benefits have stressed the importance of teacher-directed, shared-direction play and an active role for teachers. Previous studies have identified different approaches to play among preschool teachers, with some teachers equating play-based learning with free play that is guided by children, while others occupying more directive roles within the game (Boryga 2022).

Rather than trying to balance the imperatives of emergent learning with the traditional emphasis on a pedagogy of play, teachers often described situations where they had difficulty infusing play-based activities into preschool cultures that had a deep-seated, directive, instructional emphasis on academic learning (e.g. Many classrooms are foregoing the kinds of discovery and critical-thinking skills engendered through play in favour of academics, researchers from the University of Virginia found, led by education-policy scholar Daphna Bassok.

The power of play as an early-childhood learning driver, and a critical force for the physical, social, and emotional development of young children, is unquestioned, according to a report, The Kindergarten Crisis. Yet, play is disappearing fast in preschools and early education in general. We know this because of Piaget, Vygotsky, and all of these fine theorists that speak about the importance of play for young children.

When children engage their imaginations in the context of play, they find learning opportunities, and they build the creative skills they all use throughout their lives. 1. Language skills and communication Research has shown that play-based learning is important when it comes to helping children build skills that are essential for early literacy, such as storytelling language and grammar. A When children participate in learning through play, they are actively building language and communication skills. They talk to their peers, describe what they are doing, and learn how to tell stories.

Children learn best through first-hand experience: Play motivates, stimulates, and supports children as developing skills, concepts, language acquisition, communication skills, and attention.

Guided Play allows teachers to direct children's play toward specific learning goals (e.g., standards-based goals), which can apply to many subjects, from learning place values in math to identifying rhyming words in literacy activities. Guided play experiences can be designed to build deeper learning experiences a child will remember and absorb.

Using educators' professional knowledge of how children develop and learn, their understanding of individual children, and their knowledge of the social and cultural context, educators can then start thinking strategically about how to focus playful learning (especially guided play and games) in ways that capitalize on the way children naturally learn. Playful learning involves more than games and engaging activities: It involves activating a mindset in which experiences are frames that invite curiosity and creativity, and in which teachers and students are empowered with joy and agency (Zosh, Gaunderau and Golinkoff et al, 2022)

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