

How does effective continuous and enhanced provision contribute to the depth of independent and focused learning taking place?

Gallwch ychwanegu'ch targedau o'ch aseiniad diwethaf gan ddefnyddio'r tabl isod. /

Please add your targets from the previous assignment using the table below.

	Targed/Target	Yr hyn yr wyf wedi'i wneud yn yr aseiniad hwn. What I have done in this assignment.
Targed/Target 1	Continue to develop use of sophisticated language.	I have continued to develop the use of sophisticated language in this assignment by proof-reading my work.
Targed/Target 2	Consider developing counter arguments further.	I have ensured that I have been critical in my assignment by reading a variety of literature.
Targed/Target 3		

How Does Effective Continuous and Enhanced Provision Contribute to the Depth of Independent and Focused Learning Taking Place?

The aim of the research project was to explore whether continuous and enhanced provision has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Gwegogledd (2018) state that continuous and enhanced provision is meant to enhance, enrich and extend pupils' learning. Throughout my first Professional Teaching Experience (PTE1) I have observed the use of these provisions in the classroom and it is something I am passionate about. My interest in how it can have a positive impact on pupils' problem solving and independence skills has grown throughout my placement and this research project has given me the opportunity to look into how these provisions can influence pupils to build new skills.

In my class, pupils are given the opportunity to access continuous and enhanced provisions in most of their lessons where they complete cross curricular activities which are differentiated for their ability groups. Due to being in their final year in foundation phase, the pupils access carousel style lessons where the continuous provision is enhanced accordingly each day to challenge the learners. My partner is placed in a nursery setting and we both agreed that it would be interesting to explore how continuous and enhanced provision benefits pupils from when they enter foundation phase to their final year before entering key stage two. We decided our research question would be: 'How does effective continuous and enhanced provision contribute to the depth of independent and focused learning taking place?' in order to find out how beneficial this method of learning is to our pupils. For my class this means that I will be observing them accessing their enhanced provision during one lesson and observing and recording any evidence of learning.

To gain a more in-depth understanding of the impact continuous and enhanced provision has on pupils' learning I have read a variety of books, journals, government documents and online material. Bryce-Clegg (2017) makes a valid point stating that teaching practitioners need to recognise that when a child learns through play and exploration it can have an immense impact on their learning, however, there has to be concise thought and consideration put into the planning of activities and resources. DCELLS (2008) and Maynard et al (2011) state that the Foundation Phase encourages pupils' learning through a play based and experiential approach where the learning and activities are both teacher and pupil initiated. The Foundation Phase contains seven areas of learning that are organised and delivered in an

environment through continuous, enhanced and focussed provisions. Estyn (2017) believe that successful foundation phase practice has to have a suitable balance between continuous and enhanced provision. Wainwright (2016) and Bryce-Clegg (2017) state that continuous provision should be an environment where the pupils can constantly learn. Estyn (2017) believe continuous provision should be the starting point of pupils' learning, activities should then be added onto this as time goes by to make the activity more enhanced for the pupils and therefore introducing enhanced provision to the pupils. Bryce-Clegg (2017) warns that when it comes to using continuous provision, practitioners need to be aware they do not over theme the learning environment. This is where enhanced provision comes into place where the themed resource is used to enhance to area of provision. Enhanced provision should provide pupils with heightened learning opportunities which enables pupils to progress in their learning. These activities should be connected to what the pupils have learned previously, and they should be given the opportunity to practice these skills by using them in different contexts (Gwegoledd, 2018 and Hambridge, 2018). Wainwright et al (2016) state that enhanced provision should involve introducing different resources and tasks that are linked to the class topic and pupils' interest to the continuous provision in order to challenge and enhance learning. Papatheodorou & Ramasult (1994) and Penrose et al (2001) state that when pupils have access to continuous and enhanced provision which is a well-managed space with suitable resources, it has a positive impact on their independent learning. Although continuous provision seems to have many benefits to pupils learning, when it comes to enhanced provision, where the pupils' learning is scaffolded and more play based, Taylor et al (2016) discovered that enhanced provision is the provision that has been observed the least. Estyn (2017) and WAG (2017) believe that continuous and enhanced provision is vital in the learning environment, pupils should spend an adequate amount of time using these provisions in order to develop new skills such as independence and creative thinking, thus making them active learners. They express the importance of continuous and enhanced provision as when pupils have access to a range of learning opportunities, this gives them the opportunity to build on what they have learned previously. If pupils are challenged and stimulated accordingly, this can result in them becoming independent learners and thinkers. However, Moyles (2005) questions whether learning through exploration and play can provide our pupils at present and in future with quality, real learning. Bryce-Clegg (2017) argues that it is our job as teaching practitioners to enable pupils with the opportunities to use what they have already learnt and to enhance these skills by learning through play, exploration and investigation; this can have a powerful impact on their learning. It is vital that when planning for continuous and enhanced provisions that teachers are aware of pupils' skills that need to progress, Gwegolledd (2018) state that around eighty five percent of pupils' learning occurs when they interact in an organised, challenging and stimulating learning environment. However, Estyn (2017)

discovered that the learning environment in a large number of primary schools in Wales is not well organised. They state that teachers do not have a thorough understanding of what continuous and enhanced provision looks like. It seems for continuous and enhanced provision to be beneficial; it is vital that they are well organised and planned thoroughly as well as providing pupils with resources and activities that are engaging and capture their attention. Vygotsky (1978) and Arthurwears (2019) both agree that in the right setting, pupils can achieve and attain a great deal more when exploring a task independently compared to when they are guided by teachers or collaborating with pupils. The skills developed when working alone will exceed as they get to investigate the task or activity and therefore having a positive impact on their problem solving and critical thinking skills. Pupils will want to learn independently if they are provided with opportunities and resources that will stimulate and excite them. Bryce-Clegg (2017) supports these authors, stating if a pupil is provided with a variety of suitable resources and activities, it enables them to experiment and explore their uses and therefore learning a range of skills which they can continually use and build on in future.

Donaldson (2015) states that successful pedagogy needs teaching practitioners to have a thorough understanding of the what, why and how of teaching. The methodology used for this research project was lesson study research, which is an active research method. According to Holmes (2017) and Stigler & Hiebert (1999) lesson study research methodology is a model of school based and teacher-led research which involves teachers working collaboratively together to identify teaching and learning that needs developing or improving in their learning environments. Lewis et al (2006) states that this method of active research relies on teachers observing live lessons, collecting data and working together to analyse it. Hiebert et al (2007) express the benefits of using lesson study methodology in education as it enables teaching practitioners to aspire to be active researchers who can negotiate their own learning throughout their careers. Holmes (2017) supports this statement, stating that lesson study can enable teaching practitioners to have in depth discussions about pedagogy which can result in them gaining a new outlook on their practice. However, Brosnan (2017) states that if this approach not implemented accurately this can result in it not making any difference to pupils' learning and progress as teachers may feel daunted due to their already heavy workload. Lesson study approach can be time consuming as it requires a lot of discussion and observation. If the approach does not have a suitable focus with appropriate evidence, support and organisation, this may result in there being little to no outcomes and progressions of the pupils. (Weston, 2017. cited in Holmes, 2017: para 11). Holmes (2017) states lesson study is a powerful research method if it is implemented correctly, it can encourage teaching practitioners to look into the curriculum, assessment, pupil voice and behaviour in more depth. One method of data collection I used for the research project was non-participant observation,

during my research I made flexible and unstructured notes (see appendix 1). Davies (2018) believes this type of research tends to be more appropriate when collecting qualitative data where descriptions and reflections are noted from an individual who is uninvolved in the observed activity. Non-participation observation and qualitative data collection can be one of the least intrusive methods and it allows you to witness things in the natural setting. The data collected is suitable for logging verbal and non-verbal behaviours in pupils' natural context. (Cohen et al, 2018 & Bailey, 1994). However, Dewey (1938) cited in Palaiologou (2019, p.5) argues that observing pupils alone is not sufficient enough, it is vital that researchers understand the importance of everything they 'see, hear and touch', hence the reason my partner and I decided to interview the pupils as well in order to collect further data and evidence. Whilst observing the lessons the reflections were captured using reflective journals (see appendix 2). Davies (2018) commends the use of reflective journals, stating that when it comes to teacher led enquiry, they are one of the core components, as they enable the researcher to capture the reflections and occurrences of the lesson whilst they are still fresh. Prior to the observation taking place, I prepared an observation schedule in order to present the behaviour and actions which would be observed and monitored during the lesson study. Lindorff & Sammon (2018) suggest that when observation schedules are used alongside interviews and qualitative field notes this can provide the researcher with detailed descriptions of their lesson study. I used the Leuven Involvement Scale (see appendix 3a & b) to measure the case pupils' level of involvement during the lesson studies. In order to be able to rate the scale reliably; I had to ensure that I was aware of the signals of involvement such as concentration, creativity, energy and persistence (Laevers & Haven, 2003).

Another method of data collection used for this research project was through the use of focus groups. Morgan (1988) suggests that this discussion centred form of methodology is beneficial when observing groups of pupils as it enables the researcher to observe an array of opinions and experiences in a live setting. However, there is a risk of case pupils not expressing their true opinions. Jayanthi & Nelson (2002) state that some pupils may imitate or copy what their peers have said and therefore it is vital that the researcher is aware of and able to overcome this barrier. Three pupils from both Nursery and Year 2 were chosen as our focus group, they were to be interviewed following our lesson studies. One pupil was chosen from each ability group in order for them to represent the higher, middle and lower ability pupils. Cohen et al (2007) believe that when it comes to research, interviews are a well-accepted form of data collection. They enable the researcher to have a suitable balance between the use of open-ended and guided discussion and therefore allowing for the questions asked and feedback to be more flexible. However, Scourfield et al (2006) suggest that interviews can at times be intimidating for pupils; it is vital that the interviewer ensures they do not spend too much time

interviewing as there is risk of pupils finding this too challenging which may result in them becoming disengaged. My partner and I interviewed our focus groups straight after each lesson with pre-prepared interview questions (see appendix 3a & b) which were differentiated for both nursery and year 2 to ensure understanding and to prevent the pupils feeling overwhelmed or daunted.

I had to ensure that I understood the ethical considerations when carrying out research in the classroom. Prior to conducting my research, I had to complete an ethics form, explaining my research methods, which needed to be approved by the university's ethics board. I also had to receive consent from both my pupils and their parents in regard to them being involved in my lesson study, I did this by sending letters out to the parents explaining my research question and what the lesson would consist of. I also ensured that I was confidential about my observations and that the participants were kept anonymous (BERA, 2018). McGinn (2018) states as well as following ethical regulations, an ethical researcher must be thoughtful when reflecting on how they are going to handle their data and respect the participants rights.

The first lesson study took part in my partner's placement setting, which was a nursery class. The lesson consisted of a discrete teaching session with seven pupils, the teacher introduced the learning topic and each pupil was given a picture of a purse and five real pennies. All pupils were able to recognise prices up to five pence and they understood how to transfer money with the majority of them being able to count the pennies independently. I observed that the pupils responded well to using the real pennies and they were able to recognise that price tags were used to tell you how much things cost. Following the discrete teaching session, the pupils then accessed their continuous and enhanced provision areas. All pupils went to the shopping area and although they required initial teacher support at first in order to set up their roles, they did not need any further guidance when it came to the use of appropriate mathematical language. They were able to count independently and put the money they received in the till as well as putting items they had bought into bags and walking away. This showed that they had a clear understanding of the transference of money and shopping situations. The three case pupils moved onto the enhanced provision area which was a fruit shop. The pupils played independently in the fruit shop throughout the session with one of the case pupils (child three) leaving the area independently to get a purse and came back to use it to select items. The pupils initiated imaginary play throughout their session; I observed that they were completely engaged and were able to have independent conversations about what they were buying. Each pupil was able to play appropriately when they were playing different roles and they were able to swap roles at ease. They were able to use the correct mathematical terms with one pupil being able to count up to ten coins independently. As the

pupils' confidence increased in their shop situation, the pupils were able to enhance and personalise their own learning, an example of this is child three started using the price tags as receipts and he was able to explain what a receipt was in simple language. Child one began weighing the fruit before putting it into the basket which then led to Child two scanning the fruit and making a 'beep' sound. This proved that they were using their own experience of shopping to influence their imaginative play. Child one and three were engaged throughout the whole session with child two accessing the shopping area intermittently as he did get distracted by other activities taking place in the classroom.

We interviewed the three case pupils straight after the lesson in a private room where they felt comfortable and at ease. Due to the pupils age it was appropriate that we used simple questions, drawings and picture cards to ensure they did not feel daunted and understood what we were asking them. We also interviewed them as a group as we felt it was not appropriate to separate them as this could have caused them to feel uncomfortable and prevent them from communicating their answers about their learning.

Child one was comfortable being interviewed and was enthusiastic informing us what she enjoyed about her learning. She understood the questions being asked and answered them clearly and was animated throughout the interview. When asked to draw what she had learned (see appendix 4b) she clearly explained what she was drawing (money, fruit, her friends). When my partner displayed the pictures representing how the pupils felt about the activity, child one chose the happy picture. This was obvious when observing her learning through play as she was one of the children who did not lose interest and continued to use her imagination in the shop setting as her confidence developed.

When child two was interviewed (see appendix 4a) about his learning, he clearly communicated that he understood he was learning about money. He seemed to copy child one's answer when asked what he enjoyed most about the activity as he did seem a bit hesitant in answering at first and waited for child one to answer first. When he was asked to draw a picture of what he learned today he explained to the teacher he was drawing pennies, himself and his friends (see appendix 4a). The picture he drew (see appendix 4b) seemed to prove to us that he understood he was learning how to use money with his friends. When shown the picture cards on how he chose the confused picture card, the teacher asked him the question again to ensure he understood what we were asking him; he did not change his answer. This may be because he did lose interest in the shop area at times and went to different activities in the area unlike child one and three who remained completely engaged

throughout the lesson. However, when asked what he would like to do next time he did reply that he wanted to play in a toy shop, which shows he did understand the lesson focus.

Child three was the least enthusiastic to be interviewed (see appendix 4a) as he seemed to be distracted and did not want to sit down with the other case pupils. The interview did take place at the end of his morning session in the nursery which meant that it was nearly time for him to go home; this could have had a negative impact on our data collection as the feedback we received from child three did not seem to match what we had observed. He did comply with the first few questions and he communicated to us that he understood he was learning about money in shops and that he enjoyed playing with his friends. It took some encouragement for him to draw what he had been learning (see appendix 4b), however, he did comply and seemed to enjoy this. When asked to point to the picture to represent how he felt about the activity; he chose the confused picture which did not match our observation of him during the lesson as he, alongside child one was one of the most engaged pupils. Child three would not answer the final question and my partner and I decided to stop interviewing as we did not want to risk him feeling overwhelmed.

With the use of our observation schedule, reflective journal, interviews and observation notes it proved that using continuous and enhanced provision areas are beneficial to pupils' learning, as all of the pupils we observed did use their creative and independent skills to learn through play. My partner and I both agreed, we would use the same data collection in lesson study two however, we would alter the questions for the year two pupils in order for them to be age appropriate. We also both agreed that it was vital to ensure the provision area was well planned and organised beforehand as well as ensuring there is an adult available in the area to ensure pupils remain on task and to address any misconceptions.

The second lesson study took place in my placement school in a year two class of twenty-eight pupils. I introduced the lesson with a money recognition game where I used flashcards to see if the pupils could recognise different coins up to one pound. Once it was clear the pupils could recognise and differentiate between different coins, I recapped on the previous lesson where pupils were comparing money and I reviewed different techniques for working out the difference as well as enforcing the use of number grids for the middle and lower ability groups.

The higher ability group were the first to access the enhanced provision activity, I added different prices to the shop board that were at the ability level of the pupils. I recapped the task to ensure understanding and I explained to them it would be an independent task. The pupils seemed excited to start the activity and were confident in using their independence skills to

complete the task. The pupils used their resource sheet to work out the total amount they needed accurately. Pupils were observed using mathematical language and were using their problem-solving skills by speaking out loud or collaborating with their peers to work out how to make certain amounts of money. I was pleased to observe the pupils remaining engaged and focussed; considering different ways they could make the money using coins. They were all able to complete the activity independently with some pupils deciding to work as a team and adding three items together instead of two items. When it was time for them to move onto the next activity, pupils were asking if they could do one more which proved they had a positive response to this provision.

For the middle ability group, I changed the money on the board in order for it to be suitable for their ability. This group was more unsettled in the beginning of the activity with most pupils not seeming very confident to complete the activity independently. I reinforced the use of the number grids to aid them to complete the task and I also allowed some pupils to work in pairs in order to increase their confidence. It seemed the pupils were able to complete the activity independently once they had practiced it a few times, however it was prominent that some pupils doubted themselves which acted as a barrier to them completing the task.

The lower ability group was the final group to access the enhanced provision activity. They were challenging to remain on task at first and I did have to regain their attention. These pupils benefitted from me modelling how to complete the task. This group found it challenging to complete the activity independently and they worked better when working in pairs as this seemed to increase their confidence.

During the plenary the pupils were asked to assess their learning by giving thumbs up, to the side or down to show their understanding. Only two children of the whole class had thumbs down or to the side which shows the majority of pupils had a clear understanding on what they were learning.

When interviewing the three case pupils in year two they were all very positive about their independent learning. Whilst interviewing child one (see appendix 4c) who was in the lower ability maths group, we asked her if she enjoyed her independent learning; child one stated that it was easy and a fun way to learn about money. When asked if she understood the activity and if she needed any assistance to complete it independently, child one stated that she fully understood the activity and she used her hands and number grids to work out the total amount of money. We asked child one to explain some of the things she had to do in the activity, she clearly explained that there were certain items on the board that were sold out, which meant they could not buy these items. Child one was enthusiastic and seemed to enjoy being interviewed about her independent learning, when asked what she would like to do again she replied, "all of it". She also stated that she would have liked to do subtraction sums as well as

addition. These findings match our observation notes as Child one was fully engaged in the lesson and did not require much guidance or assistance from myself.

Child two (appendix 4c), who was in the middle ability group also gave us positive results that enhanced provision is beneficial to pupils independent learning. Like child one, he was also comfortable and animated when being interviewed. He clearly explained that he enjoyed writing out the sums, working out the total and finding the right coins to pay for the items. When asked if he needed any assistance, he stated that he understood the activity and only used his hands to work out the total price that he needed to buy the items. Child two clearly explained that he had to choose items and write them in the box on his resource sheet, followed by writing the total amount in another box. This showed that he was using the resource sheet under his own initiative, which proves he was using his independence skills to work out the amount. Child two explained to us that he did not need assistance and that if he could change the activity, he would want the sums to do use his multiplication skills.

Child three (appendix 4c) was in the higher ability group and like the other two pupils she was also at ease and happy to be interviewed. When asked the questions stated above, she stated it was fun; she enjoyed adding the money together and that she did not need any assistance. When asked to explain a part of the activity, child three clearly explained about how she chose different items and wrote the sum on the resource sheet. She added that once the total was worked out that she would then make the correct amount using different coins. Like the other two pupils, child three was confident that she was able to complete the activity. When asked if she worked independently or in a group, she did explain that she began to work independently but then worked in a group as they were working out more challenging sums. Child three also stated that if she were to be doing the activity again, she would like the sums to be made more challenging.

Following this lesson study, it was evident that the pupils used their independence skills to complete the task. However, following their interview the pupils did state they would have liked to be given harder sums. If the lesson were to be improved, it may be beneficial to ask the pupils to choose what prices the items in the shop could be in their enhanced provision area. By doing so, this enables the pupils to control and challenge their own learning.

Following our lesson studies, observations and the interviews with the six case pupils it was clear to see that enhanced provision does have a positive impact on their independent learning. The majority of children accessing the enhanced provision area were engaged and enthusiastic with a small amount needing minor guidance and modelling to keep them on track. When it comes to enhanced provision being beneficial to pupils' independent learning, I have discovered that it is vital that the provision is planned thoroughly and well organised. Resources need to be linked to the lesson focus as well as capturing the pupils' attention and interests. Estyn, (2017) and Thomas & Lewis (2016) state that teachers need to ensure they

provide pupils with appropriate resources, challenges and tasks that are suitable for their stage of learning and their interests.

The observation schedule presented evidence that five out of six pupils were fully engaged in their activity. The five pupils were observed concentrating on the task, being creative and persistent when accessing their enhanced provision with just one pupil in my partner's setting who did seem to get distracted by different activities and tasks that were happening around him. Knight (2019) states it is the teacher's job to act as the co-constructor of the enhanced provision, where they ensure that the pupils are accessing activities that have a clear learning focus which challenges them and promotes problem solving. I discovered that the pupils did benefit from adult guidance to model the activity before they could complete it independently, this was especially important for the middle and lower ability groups as they did lack confidence in the beginning. This can be linked to Vygotsky's social constructivist theory as the theory states the importance of pupils working collaboratively together as well as being guided by the teacher; who is known as the more knowledgeable other in order to allow pupils to progress through their zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978 & Knight, 2019).

For my class, I believe that accessing enhanced provision through a carousel is beneficial for the pupils as long as they are provided with stimulating activities that promotes independent learning. Knight (2019) supports this statement, stating it is beneficial to learning when pupils have access to a carousel of activities which have been designed by the teacher; aiming for the pupils to be able to learn independently and also from each other. Moore (2017) states that the teacher's role in enhanced provision is vital; not only do they have to provide a stimulating learning environment, but they have to be fully present and available to support pupils interacting in the provision. Wainwright et al (2016) and Bryce-Clegg (2017) state the aim of continuous provision is to ensure an adult is available in the interactions with the children, however, good continuous provision also plans for the pupils' learning to continue if there is no adult present in the area. This can only happen if the provision is predominantly linked to the development of pupils' skills and experiences and then enhancing the provision to reflect on the class' them and the pupils' interests.

To conclude, I believe that the evidence collected for this research project was not distinct enough to prove how exactly continuous and enhanced provision contributes to the depth of independent and focused learning taking place. Although I have learned that accessing these provisions has a beneficial impact on independent learning, I felt there was not a clear way to measure the data being collected. I feel that the data collected was challenging to generalise as it mainly relied on pupils' opinions on the task and our observation notes. In my next school

experience, I will continue to explore the benefits of accessing enhanced provision. My future placement is in a key stage two class in a pioneer school, the school is piloting having a foundation phase approach across all key stages so it will be interesting to see how continuous and enhanced provision benefits pupils in key stage two. When it comes to limitations of study, time was a major factor. Both Dudley (2014) & Grigg (2016) state that researchers would benefit more from observing at least three lessons in order for them to achieve more reliable and detailed observation notes. Dudley (2011) expresses that lesson study should not be a one-off event and should take place over time. Another limitation could be the reliability of our observations. Although there was only two of us observing the pupils, this may have had an impact on the pupils' natural behaviour. This can be linked to the Hawthorne effect, where pupils change their behaviour when somebody new is in their environment and they know they are being observed. Payne & Payne (2002) support this statement, suggesting it is likely that a pupil will alter their behaviour when they know they are being studied which may have a negative impact on the research outcomes. I feel that although it was beneficial having two of us observing the activities, at times we did distract the children.

If I were to be undertaking lesson study research again, I would choose a research question that is not as broad as the one I have used for this study due to the fact we concentrated mainly on the benefits of enhanced provision on independent learning. However, going forward I fully understand the importance of ensuring pupils are provided with well-planned and organised provision areas with resources that stimulate and excite them. Knight (2019) states that when continuous and enhanced provision is implemented properly in an empowering classroom, pupils can learn to become self-regulating, enduring and responsible individuals who understand self-efficacy. I also believe that although pupils should be encouraged to work independently; it is also beneficial to have an adult available to guide, scaffold or even challenge the learning if need be to ensure they can reach their full potential.

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