Childcare and Development

Guidance on modifications to Higher course assessments for session 2021–22

January 2022

Introduction

The discussion and examples provided in this document are not exhaustive and should be used as a guide, rather than an instruction on how to deliver the Higher Childcare and Development project.

Any relevant theory and/or theorist can be used by candidates, and teachers and lecturers delivering this course should encourage and support candidates to research around the different theory relevant to the brief.

Candidates should be encouraged to consider different examples in order to demonstrate their own knowledge and understanding.

Project Brief 1 — How can literacy development be supported for children and young people?

Case study 1

> Brodie is 4 years and 2 months old. He lives with his older brother Calum, who is 6 years and 2 months old, and his mum and dad in a small town in central Scotland. Brodie attends two local nurseries: one is attached to the local primary school, which he will be starting after the summer holidays; the other is a small, privately owned nursery, which offers outdoor play and learning, and free access to nursery resources. When Brodie arrives at both nurseries, he is encouraged to 'sign in' and hang his jacket on a hook, which has his name on it. Brodie shows a keen interest in mark making and trying to write his name, and likes to spend time reading with either one of the practitioners in the book corner or 'reading a story' to one of his friends. At home, Brodie loves story time with mum, and enjoys listening to music and singing. Brodie goes shopping with his parents frequently and often helps to get items on the shopping list. When walking to nursery and the shops, Brodie's mum and dad point out road and shop signs, telling him what they say and mean.

Prompt B

Analyse three factors that influence development

Factors that can influence Brodie's literacy development could be:
A language-rich, home-learning environment, where Brodie has the opportunity to explore and play with language. This will encourage curiosity and further exploration of language. Praise and encouragement from his older brother and parents will further encourage Brodie to engage with reading, writing, listening and talking. Opportunities to participate in activities like shopping will encourage responsibility, and opportunities to identify items on the shopping list will enhance Brodie's social and emotional development, as well as his cognitive development. Moreover, these activities will encourage letter and word recognition.

When Brodie is 'reading a story' to his friend, responsive planning by practitioners can enhance these 'literacy events' by ensuring Brodie has access to appropriate resources to complement the book he is 'reading'. Such resources could be anything from small world characters, creating a specific area to further explore the story or helping Brodie predict

future events relevant to the story. This will encourage Brodie to explore other resources further, enhancing both his language and cognitive development.

Access to resources that encourage mark making will enhance both Brodie's fine motor skills and his development of reading and writing. Signing in at the start of a nursery session will encourage Brodie to explore and recognise his own name, further enhancing his self-esteem, confidence and recognition of his own identity formation.

Brodie attends a nursery that has a focus on outdoor learning, where he has the opportunity to enjoy new experiences and explore different environments. This could lead to new literacy experiences including opportunities to learn new words in a different context and make connections with some of the environmental print he sees daily.

Prompt C

Explain two theories of development

Appropriate theories could be:

Learning Theory — Skinner (also behaviourist approach) and Bandura

Skinner focuses on operant conditioning, where the development of language happens through parental selective reinforcement and 'appropriate' linguistic behaviours.

Bandura focuses on observational learning, where the imitation of others results in complex and lengthy utterances. Positive reinforcement allows the application of newly learnt language; feedback helps children understand appropriate use of language (Keenan et al 2016).

Both of these theories would apply to Brodie; he has ample opportunity to listen to significant others talking, is asked to participate in language and is praised for his efforts, thereby reinforcing positive language behaviour.

Nativist Theory — Chomsky

Chomsky believes that children have a biological predisposition to learn language, which allows them to understand the principles that govern language. This innate mental structure is called the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). This structure in the brain contains common grammatical concepts, or universal grammar, which allows it to operate with reference to any language.

Chomsky believes children should have access to a language-rich environment and be bathed in language; this would seem to be the situation for Brodie. He has plenty of opportunity to interact with his parents, brother and other children in nursery, and has lots of access to reading and mark-making materials.

Interactionist Theory — Brunner

Brunner believes that social support and social interaction are equally important in language acquisition, and that both are as important as biological factors. He uses concepts such as scaffolding, motherese (child-directed speech), expansion, and recast to support his theory,

believing that all facilitate the biological predisposition to language acquisition. These collected strategies are known as the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS).

You could apply other theories to the case study, including those of cognitive theorists Piaget and Vygotsky. You could discuss Piaget from the perspective of cognitive development supporting language development, and Vygotsky in terms of supporting the social interaction of others to underpin language development, and the role of the 'more knowledgeable other' to support this.

Play Theory — Moyles

The focus of Janet Moyles' theory is on active involvement of teachers and practitioners, reflective dialogue and 'play spiral'. Her theory relates practice to 'entitlements', the areas of development addressed, and an activity plan developed. This highlights what the children already know, what they need to learn and what provision needs to be made.

Prompt D

Analyse how two of the chosen theories of development in Prompt C can be applied to the chosen child.

Chomsky — One of the major criticisms of Chomsky is how can we determine what kind of universal grammar is common to all languages. His theories have also promoted discussion around the length of time a child can take to learn language. Brodie comes from a home-learning environment that is rich in opportunities for him to participate in all aspects of literacy development. He has many opportunities to listen, talk, read and write, which are all aspects of developing literacy. A child who does not come from this type of environment will still develop literacy skills, but perhaps not to the same extent as Brodie.

Moyles — Critics of Moyles' theories highlight the differences between Moyles' views on play to those of other theorists, including Bruce. While Moyles stresses the ways play can be used to support learning, Bruce favours free-flow play, which is child centred and initiated. An example of this could be Brodie pretending to read to his friend; Moyles would support this with 'playful teaching', whereas Bruce would take the lead from Brodie and make provision to extend the play, prompted by the play activity itself.

Prompt E

Explain two strategies and/or initiatives

Learners can choose from a range of strategies; some of these are listed below — this is not an exhaustive list.

Strategies

Literacy Action Plan
Realising the Ambition: Being Me
Bookbug
Curriculum for Excellence
GIRFEC
Every Day's a Learning Day
Play, Talk, Read
Big Bedtime Read

[Story Sacks](#)
[NYCOS](#)
[Caterpillar Music](#)
[Supporting literacy at home](#)

Resources

[Ushare Childcare and Development](#)
[Play Strategy for Scotland](#)
[Curriculum for Excellence through outdoor learning](#)
[National Improvement Framework](#)