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## Learning Outside The Classroom: Benefits And Drawbacks

This assignment aims to critically discuss learning outside the classroom with a focus upon science, by defining key terms and the benefits and drawbacks of it. Involving a medium-term plan with a cross curricular design and associated with a chosen educational setting; risk assessment will be attached to highlight the risk and precautions of learning outside of the classroom. Overall, exploring how all the above would have a paramount impact on a child's learning and development through science.

When considering the meaning of learning outside of the classroom and the impact it has on a child's development, Barron (2009) defines education outside of the classroom as a different and unique learning experience, these experiences will differ depending on budget, space available and type of location. He adds that wherever possible each location of learning outside of the classroom should be the construction in co-operation with the children, it is important that each child feels a sense of ownership in its design. Toplis (2011) argued there had been some concern in recent years that the numbers of students going on educational trips and visits as part of their science education has fallen, he stated that this could be because of a lack in educational funding or family incomes being the reason as to why these opportunities were not being given to children. Contrasting, Thomas & Thompson (2004) found in their research that it has become more beneficially when left for education instituted to provide outside of the classroom learning in relation to the development of science understanding. He found that children were not getting enough learning experience away from their homes or classrooms because of family incomes. Therefore, finding that children who had not had enough access to outdoor environments due to budget and income in childhood, they were unlikely to spend time in the outdoors as adults, with consequent impacts on adult health and well-being. Ofsted (2008) stand in agreement through their key findings of research, it had been brought to their attention that when planned and implemented well, learning outside of the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils' personal, social and emotional development. They mentioned that learning outside of the classroom was most successful when it was an integral element of long term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities (See Appendix 2). Therefore, highlighting that learning outside of the classroom has become very beneficially to a child's development in primary education, as it gives children life experiences and not only helps with their educational development but has a positive impact on health and well-being when transitioning into adult life.

The Think Tank is the chosen outside of the classroom learning experience which fits in with the medium term plan (See Appendix 2) which offers an educational programme with a wide range of stimulating memorable on-site taught sessions, self-guided visits and outreach services which are all designed to inspire and engage the students relating to any chosen topic (Birmingham Museums, 2019) Braund and Reiss (2004) expressed that museums have a long educational legacy and connection with learning science. They went on to suggest that in the last twenty years there has been a growth in what is called 'hands on centres' Therefore, they provide a much higher degree of interaction with exhibits than is generally found in more traditional museums and galleries. Students from educational institutes are encouraged to touch, explore, investigate and bring about change through personal interaction with the exhibit (Falk & Dierking, 2000). This type of interactive setting often entails substantial thought about the

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underlying science, and collaboration and conversations with other to help consolidate and deepen the learning (Braund & Reiss, 2004) This learning environment will allow the pupils to think critically in the use of the scientific vocabulary, can use their five senses in an intellectual way that a teacher would be limited to provide within the classroom. Braund and Reiss (2012) support the chosen educational setting to investigate science as these museums are rich and stimulating environments. They suggested that they should be joyful places for learning to take place, free of strain a formative setting of the school curriculum classroom and laboratory almost inevitably require and impose to overall benefit on a child's understanding of an area of the science curriculum. Ballantyne & Packer (2002) suggested that children in a new environment should be given the chance to 'take it all in', they warned against the use of over structure learning outside for the classroom activities based around science, nothing that the use of worksheets, note-taking and reports were unpopular with students and it did not seem to contribute greatly to their environmental learning to develop their understanding of science. Consequently, learning outside of the classroom is an enhancement to provide additional information and a secure understanding for every child to suit their individual needs; bringing a love of learning to the students, whether that be inside or within outside of the classroom learning in science – linking to standard 4B (Gov, 2019)

Within the medium-term plan, conducted was a cross curricular approach to the learning of the science topic, with a main over view of science linked throughout drama and art. The Rose Review (2009) advocated a cross-curricular approach to learning and teaching, identifying that it strengths subjects and supports understanding. The Rose Review makes it significantly clear that it provides opportunities across the curriculum for children to use and apply what they have learned from the discrete teaching of subjects when implemented in a cross-curricular format. Dean (2011) supports the Rose Review through further research by stated that cross-curricular work offers a creative way to develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding while motivating them to learn through stimulating, interconnected topics through the power of interests. Muijus & Reynolds (2011) believe that the reason cross curricular work is motivating is because it allows for more independent, learner led, exploration of the topic. Therefore, by encouraging children to make links to their learning is one of the attributes for a good learner (Claxton, 2012.)

Although there are many apparent positive arguments towards a cross curricular approach to learning, there are also negative factors. It was found within a case study by Ofsted (2008), Barnes (2011) and Laurie (2011) all agree that links need to be authentic and logical to avoid learning being compromised in a subject. Furthermore, Kelly (2013), questions whether subjects lose their identity because the planning of topic focuses on the product rather than the process of learning and the contribution of the variation of subjects.

A creative approach for teaching science with a cross curricular basis relies upon learning being significantly more personal, where the pupil is at the centre of the learning and the creative teacher seizes the moment and adapts plans to suit more than one area of the curriculum and encourages involvement (Oliver, XXXX.)