Learning Goals

Identify 3 learning goals at the start of the module and write reflections at three identified points during the module to indicate your progress in learning related to your stated goals.

**Evidence: Learning goals identified and three short reflections will be written about your chosen learning goals and reflect about your progress in development of your ideas, knowledge and critical thinking during week 1, 6 and 10.**

*Goals*

3 goals I want to achieve throughout this module:

1. Develop my knowledge & understanding of poverty and its effects on children, families and educational attainment.
2. Due to the module being the first in which the 3rd and 4th year MA Education students have been mixed, I hope to develop the skills I use whilst on placement in this environment. For example, working with others and sharing thoughts & ideas with those who I do not know.
3. Develop my ideas and resources which will aid my future practice in different areas of HWB.

*Reflection*

1. I feel I achieved this goal following the input we had with Donna; having the opportunity to receive information and statistics was a starting point. Previous to starting this module, I was already interested in poverty and its effects on children and young people, particularly their educational achievement. With the issue of attainment currently being so topical in Scotland there have been many sources of information which I have drawn on to develop my knowledge and understanding further; these include a variety of different books, journals and research papers. This is also an aspect of my thesis and being able to reflect the reading/discussions in relation to HWB, I feel it has broadened my understanding greatly. For example, having already read a book we were directed to in the lecture, ‘The Spirit Level’, I was able to discuss with my peers what I already knew about issues surrounding inequality. In addition, McKendrick *et al.* (2014) - *Poverty in Scotland 2014: The Independence Referendum and Beyond* – was of great interest. This very up-to-date book discusses poverty’s impact on Scotland as a nation. Through reading this book, it has deepened my understanding of what is meant by the term ‘poverty’, how it is measured and what action & policy is/could be used to tackle the issue. I do however, acknowledge that this reference is coming from one point of view and may have a degree of bias towards its writing.

The activity done in class regarding perceptions was interesting and also began to challenge everyone's thinking, including my own. This involved us individually deciding where we felt we stood on a scale of 1 – 10 for different statements. Doing the task activity involving closing the attainment gap also enabled opportunities to discuss what is happening in both Scotland's Political and Education landscapes. It was interesting to see where people positioned themselves and listen to the reason(s) they gave for doing so. It became apparent throughout that how an individual perceived the statement influenced their decision.

Finally, watching the BBC Foodbank Programme which was aired in late September, allowed me to see how poverty & deprivation is affecting those living in the same city as myself. It was very thought provoking and challenged me to think about the individuals I may be working with now & in the future. The number of families living in working poverty is continuing to rise and the programme highlighted that anyone from any walk of life may find themselves having to rely on such a service. I believe that each of these examples has enabled me to develop my knowledge and understanding of the wider issue of poverty and therefore assisted in furthering my professional thinking & development as well as within this particular HWB module.

1. This goal was set due to feeling quite apprehensive about being mixed with the 3rd year students. Although whilst out on practice, I work alongside and communicate with other professionals daily, it is still a bit nerve wracking in a university setting. I believe that throughout this module there have been a vast amount of opportunities to achieve this set goal. One example in particular which I feel was of great benefit to me and my professional development was during the lecture on ‘Building High Quality Relationships’. At the start of most lectures during the module we were ‘mixed up’ to enable us to work with others whom we may not have the chance to otherwise. I believe that this is an effective strategy to use in the classroom however I do feel that it must be appropriate for the activity which will be undertaken. For this specific activity, before carrying it out, I had my doubts. We were mixed up into a different group of 5/6 and then split into two groups of 3. When Donna began to explain what the activity involved, I think everyone in the room was a bit daunted to start with. The task was to develop our listening skills through a set of 3 activities:
   * Person B tell Person A about: Something that you have strong feelings about.

* Person B will tell A about: The way (they think) other people see them
* Person B will tell A about: an event in their life that changed them.

The group changed each time so that everyone had the opportunity to be an observer, listener & talker. I was the speaker the first time and I believe that, although I found it a little bit of a challenge to go 1st, it was the easiest topic of the 3. Talking openly about personal issues is difficult for anyone, especially with those you are not close with/don’t know. I feel that as a group, Laura, Hannah and I, put each other at ease. I had worked with Laura before however not on such a task and I had just met Hannah that day! I believe that due to us all being in the same situation, we worked well together to ensure no judgement or intimidation was felt. Throughout the duration of the task, I believe it got easier. Through using strategies to better our listening, I feel we became more open to discuss the above statements which in turn enabled us to build a relationship and develop our listening skills which will aid our future professional development. In addition, this task enabled us to think about how a child may feel in such a situation and therefore what we can do as teachers to make them feel better about discussing anything with us. Following the end of the 3rd person talking, there was a small time before the class got back together. This was a nice opportunity to get to know each other a little better as usually there is not this time available during lectures.

I believe that this task enabled me to build relationships with others as well as developing my communication & listening skills. As \*\*Egan (2014) states, “at the heart of any relationship is communication”. I strongly agree with this statement and feel as a result of participating in this specific activity as well as working with others throughout this whole module, my communication skills have been further developed. Furthermore, I feel I have a better understanding of what empathy is and how to show this during any conversation/communication with another individual. I hope to take this forward into my upcoming placement and continue to develop this throughout my future career!

1. I believe that participating in this module has enabled me to gather a vast amount of information & resources which I can draw upon in my future practice. I feel that from every lecture delivered it has challenged my thinking, developed my knowledge & understanding and with many, highlighted resources & activities which I can take forward into my own practice within the classroom. However, I will only highlight some inputs in particular for this reflection. For example,

Will’s ‘Outdoor Learning’ input encouraged us to develop a lesson/activity which could be implemented whist on practice. We then shared this with another group which in turn let us gain a different activity from them. I believe this was good as we were sharing ideas and discussing how they could be used in a school/class setting. We also discussed things that may have to be considered and resources which may be required. Further to this, as a whole class we discussed some other activities which we also tried & tested in the pouring rain!! These inputs also gave me the opportunity to consider the benefits of outdoor learning and develop my understanding of the term, ensuring it is ‘Outdoor Learning’ that the children are participating in and not just simply ‘taking learning outdoors’…there is a very big difference! Outdoor Learning is something that I believe we do not get enough opportunities to experience during our time in university and it is something I hope to implement and develop my skills in when I have graduated and working in the classroom.

Nikki’s input on ‘Restorative Approaches’ was of great interest. This is an area of HWB which I have never really considered, mainly because of never coming across it in practice. Having the opportunity to watch a clip of how such an approach is used within a school setting, it was interesting to then discuss with peers. Participating in a role play activity afterwards enabled me, and those I was working with, to gain an understanding of how resolving a situation may play out if done using a restorative approach. It was quite difficult to actually do and during the role play activity, there were points of ‘what do we say now’. This made me think about how challenging bringing about a restorative approach may be and reinforced the notion of it having to be a whole school approach with everyone on board to make it as effective & successful as it could be. The role play activity is a good way to get children to develop their own understanding of restorative approaches and this is something I hope I may experience further in the future.

Going along to the Sacro Open Day encouraged me to think about how effective this approach is in changing the way in which young people deal with situations and their behaviours. Discussing the influence of their work, the workers were keen advocates of the approach and gave a very positive figure of, 72% offenders not re-offending after they have gone through the restorative practice programme. In addition, talking about peer mediation enabled me to think about how this could be an effective way to ensure children’s wellbeing is kept high. Opportunities to discuss their feelings, concerns & even happiness with someone they believe is listening to them can have a positive impact on their mental wellbeing. Children may find talking to a peer less daunting and more beneficial than an adult or teacher whom they may feel uncomfortable discussing personal issues with. After visiting this open day, it gave me a vast amount of information regarding the service and how they can assist schools and practitioners in ensuring children and young people receive the support they may require in order to make positive changes in their life.

Finally, Maureen’s input on ‘Food for Thought’ was very beneficial in discovering the vast amount of resources that are available for teachers & practitioners working with children and young people. Scotland’s problem with food is an issue that continues to exist in today’s society and it is becoming more apparent that a better understanding about the food we are eating is needed. Much of the information we were given was new to me and some of the discussion was quite interesting. Considering the issues surrounding food choices, it was clear that there are a wide range of reasons for our individual and family habits. I found it of great use to discuss the current policies that are in action to try and tackle the issues surrounding food and health amongst children and young people. For example: Better Eaters, Better thinkers (2014); Dietary Goals for Scotland (2013) and The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. In relation to HWB, food and health plays a large part in informing children and enabling them to make decisions about healthy choices. CfE enables the notion of food and health to be explored in many different ways including through stand-alone lessons, whole school/class initiatives & Interdisciplinary Learning Contexts. This not only develops the children’s knowledge but also their skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, we participated in a cookery lesson which highlighted the different aspects of learning that the children may undertake in such an experience. This included weighing, reading & following a recipe as well as using a variety of products to create a healthy dish/food item. If an opportunity arose which enabled the children to partake in a cooking experience, I believe that this would have great benefits to their educational learning but also personally. For example, having an awareness of a healthy diet and an understanding of how to cook simple, healthy meals can encourage independence and confidence amongst young people as they grow and develop through adulthood.

Furthermore, HWB does not just look at the foods we eat but also considers food preparation and hygiene. This is something which children often begin to develop at a young age, through snack time at nursery. Through my own experience, involving the children in the preparation of snack plays an important part of engaging them in eating healthily and encouraging positive behaviours such as hand washing etc. The information which Maureen provided regarding hygiene resources was great! Recommending sites/services which I had heard of, but was unaware they provided resources encouraged me to think about my future practice and the activities/experiences which I may do. The resources which were brought along regarding food education were also invaluable. It gave me an opportunity to look through what’s available and think about how they could be used in a classroom context. In addition, her expertise in this area is great and the references and support material which she has provided will be great to keep for developing my own practice in this area of HWB.

\*\* Egan, G (2013) *The Skilled Helper*. International 10th edn. Belmont, California: Brookes/Cole