

Improving Literacy Outcomes through Play with a particular focus on construction play.

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Our Context

Musselburgh Burgh Primary has a school role of 324, including our Nursery pupils. We, as a whole school are building our engagement with Play pedagogy and have undertaken some CLPL opportunities to enhance our knowledge and understanding of Play and the benefits for our young people for their social, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. We have developed a play-based curriculum within Primary 1, Primary 1/2 and have aspects of this within the Primary 2 class too. Children from Primary 1 and 2 follow the Read, Write, Inc (RWI) for our Phonics programme which improved literacy attainment outcomes for most of our learners. It became apparent when observing the children, particularly boys, within my P1/2 class that they were reluctant to transfer their literacy knowledge gained from RWI into their play. As a result of this observation it became clear that this was a key development point within my practice and would ultimately become my focus for my case study for the SEIC course.

Our Outcomes	Our Measures
Most children can transfer their phonics learning into play opportunities within the classroom environment.	*Leuven scale used as a baseline assessment and then used again to track any progress in engagement. *Staff used the observation cycle within the classroom environment.
Some children will be observed using writing skills within the construction area in the classroom environment.	*SEIC literacy trackers to track improvement from October 22 to May 23.
Most children can describe, through conversation and/or labelling, their creations and designs within the construction area.	*Dialogue with children. *Use of the GL assessments to track improvements in social skills as well as improvement in literacy skills.

Actions

- Identified key children and completed the Leuven Scale on them to assess their engagement in Play.
- Identified from the Leuven Scale that there was a lack of engagement in the construction area within my classroom.
- Identified the need for literacy opportunities to become more apparent within my classroom environment. This was highlighted during Session 5 of the SEIC connectors course as well as reading SEIC's *EARLY LEVEL PEDAGOGY IN PRACTICE PAMPHLET: Issue 2 – Mark Making*.
- Discussed with the children what they liked about the construction area and what could be improved with a specific link to literacy. This discussion was evidenced in our class floorbook.
- Implement identified changes to the construction area within the classroom environment with a focus on improving literacy outcomes.
- Evaluate impact of change through observations, dialogue with children, data gathered from SEIC literacy trackers.
- Invited parents/carers in for Stay and Play sessions across P1 – P2 to allow them to see our play-based experiences within the classrooms and the learning developed through Play.

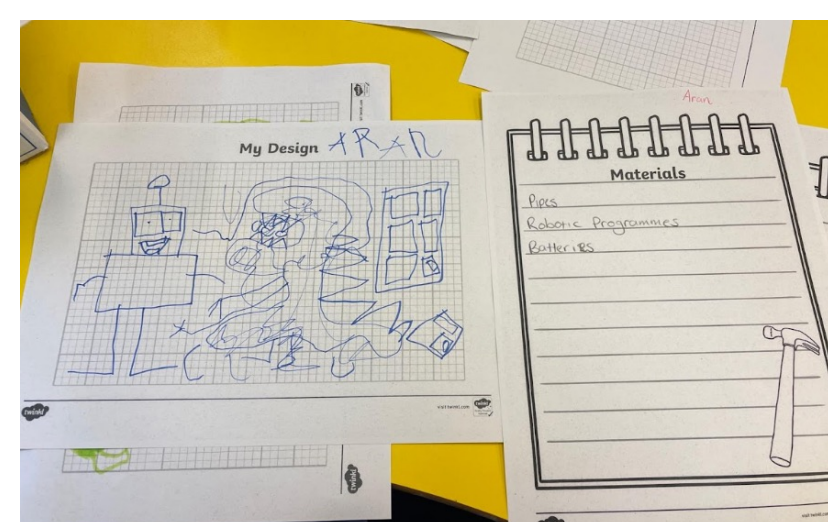
Whole School Actions –

- Deliver CLPL for teaching staff on how to improve literacy outcomes through play opportunities at all levels.
- Hold a Play drop in session for teaching staff which will 'showcase' construction play and will aim to provide staff with ideas on how to embed construction play within their classrooms. Again focussing on across the CFE levels.
- Run a targeted 'Construction Club' for Primary 5 pupils during a lunch time. Evidence the impact of Construction Club within the Burgh's Play journey floorbook.

Our Learning and Our Results

- My confidence increased in developing literacy within Play opportunities through attending the SEIC Play Connectors course. This is evidenced in my confidence wheel and audit completed on the last session of the SEIC course.
- After adding in more open-ended literacy opportunities within the play spaces in my classroom and in particular the construction area, I began to observe children applying their literacy learning within their play- planning designs, labelling models, drawing maps, mark-making.

Child's example of planning a 'robot' with a list of materials needed to make his 'robot'.



- After attending session 2 of the SEIC Connectors course my knowledge of how to use the observation cycle increased as well as understanding the reasons behind observations and how I use observations to inform a child's next steps.
- I read Froebel's 'Observing young children' pamphlet as well as engaging with Realising the Ambition to enhance my understanding of how to be an effecting observer.
- As a result, observations within the classroom showed an increase in talking skills which were as a result of having literacy opportunities embedded within my classroom environment.
- GL Assessments showed an increase in attainment in social skills as well as literacy skills. These were tracked over the three terms (August – December; January to April; April – June.)
- SEIC literacy trackers showed an improvement in literacy attainment for identified children.

Whole School results –

- Staff were given the opportunity to plan play opportunities with their stage partners. They began engaging with the CfE Experiences and Outcomes and link these with some of their planned play experiences. This allowed staff to see the opportunities for improving literacy through play.
- Teaching staff showed engagement during Play drop in session and I had some positive dialogue with Second Level teaching staff about how construction play opportunities could become visible within their classrooms and we were able to discuss what they felt they needed in terms of training and resources moving forward.
- P5 Construction club was a very positive experience for myself and for targeted children. Construction Club allowed P5 children to experience free play opportunities but also provided them with a safe space away from the playground which was, at times, a challenging space for some. Social and mental well-being for these children improved and I was able to observe some excellent social skills, turn-taking, problem solving and teamwork skills. The skills which Play encompasses!



"It's a city. It has buildings, bridges and tunnel. Look it even has chimneys on the top. Smoke isn't good for our Earth though."
Child A, P1/2.



"You sit in our house and tell me what we need on our shopping list. I will write it down on this tablet."
Child B

Example of construction play, imaginative play as well as the children transferring their literacy skills through mark making.

Next steps/Actions

- This year I have focused particularly on how to ensure literacy learning opportunities are available and embedded within my spaces and environment therefore as my next step I will begin to look at Numeracy skills and how to improve Numeracy outcomes through play opportunities.
- I will continue to build my knowledge of Play pedagogy through engaging with research, policy and attending CLPL opportunities.
- Deliver Play Pedagogy CLPL sessions for staff which will look at the why and how of Play Pedagogy with a view to embedding more opportunities for true play opportunities across all classes in the school.
- Develop the Burgh's own Play Policy with staff and partnerships.
- During my visit to Roslin Primary School as part of SEIC's learning school visit I really like the use of a Core Provision document which was used at each stage by class teachers. The document linked CfE experiences and outcomes with play provision opportunities and also was displayed on each classes wall for the learners and adult to engage with. I would like to develop a similar document which links play provision opportunities with CfE and also Education Scotland's meta-skills within the Burgh PS.