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Experiential Project Presentation (Story Sack)

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Experiential Project Presentation (Story Sack)

Lecturer: Geraldine French

Programme: BA in Early Childhood Education, Level 8, Year 2

This is a description of an implementation of an assessment method by a lecturer or group of lecturers. The content of the page is the result of an interview conducted through the RAFT project in DIT in the 2013-14 Academic Year.

Description

This assessment relates to a module in *Early Education Intermediate* on story-reading/storytelling education as underpinning early literacy. The project forms part of the overall assessment for the year and is called Story Sack.

A story sack consists of a purpose-made cloth bag which contains a story, a book of facts relating to a story, props and other accessories. The purpose is to stimulate reading activities and to make shared reading a memorable and fun experience. Students are required to select a story (appropriate to the age range of the children in their placement) and to develop the story by designing first-hand experiences to extend the story. This includes building/creating a physical representation of the story itself which students have to build/create, all of which can be stored in a portable carrier bag (sack) and used to bring the story to life for children. In addition students have to create further 'enhancing' scenarios to assist in the story experience (e.g. organise an actual teddy-bears' picnic for the children or go to an imaginary bear-hunt).

Both the contents of the storysack and the additional scenarios are assessed both orally and in the form of a written 3000 word report. Students are requested to devise 4 plans which extend and deconstruct the story approaching it from 4 separate angles or scenarios to first-hand experiential experience from creation, through implementation to final presentation.

Why did you use this Assessment?

The art of storytelling/story-reading is creative and complex. It focuses on the use of oral language as underpinning literacy skills and is critically important in supporting children's learning and development. This assessment is both theoretical and practical and it captures several angles of storytelling/story-reading and compels the student to think outside of the box and to build on children's interests in order to bring the story to life on several levels.

How do you give feedback to students?

Individually, through oral feedback and through a structured written report.

What have you found are the advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Early learning is made visible for the various placement settings
- Project is re-usable
- Encourages creativity
- Encourages planning, implementation and evaluation – key elements in reflective practice
- It is fun

What have you found are the dis-advantages of using this form of assessment?

- Length of time for lecturer to correct work and write reports
- Huge workload for a part-time lecturer

If another lecturer was using this assessment method would you have any tips for them?

Lecturer needs to be extremely clear about the ultimate goals of the assessment and the process of the work involved.

Ideally, the work needs to be assessed as soon after the presentation as possible – which can present difficulties when student numbers are large.

Do you have any feedback from students about this assessment?

Student feedback is extremely positive. It is practical and contains a variety of learning opportunities. Students have to critically evaluate their own work and have a real experience of planning for the workplace.

Any additional comments?

Very interesting for the lecturer – particularly in terms of how students extend the stories.