

L3 Lead Examiner Report 2001

January 2020

L3 Qualification in CPLD

**Unit 4: Enquiries into Current
Research in Early Years Practice
(31599H)**

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Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

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Unit 4: Enquiries into Current Research in Early Years Practice (31599H)

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	8	17	29	42

Introduction

This was the second January series of the new specification. Some learners were well prepared for the assessment but many still struggled to demonstrate an understanding of essential content from the specification and include this in their responses

The question paper follows the format identified in the sample assessment materials. The paper is split into four activities. Each activity requires learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of different aspects of research. This includes research methods, their advantages and disadvantages, the implications of the research for individuals, early years' settings and the wider society. Marks for each activity are allocated in accordance with the specification design.

Each of the questions has been marked using a 'levels based' approach to assessment where the overall quality of the response is considered rather than the specific number of facts stated from the indicative content, although this does have a bearing on the quality of the response. More detail can be found below in the individual question section of the report.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

- Learner performance varied throughout the paper. Learners need to show knowledge and understanding of research methods and their application in early years' practice. Both depth and breadth of information is needed in order to fully address the demands of the paper.
- Activity 1 requires learners to review the stimulus material (an article from The Economist about the provisions and quality of early years provision across a range of countries and continents. The article is informed by a review of secondary data sourced from the countries included, with additional case studies. Learners are asked to comment on the research method used (a review of data and Case Studies) and to compare this with the methods used in research that they have sourced themselves. Marks are available for work related to both sources, with additional credit being awarded for learners able to provide comparisons and conclusions.

- Activity 2 requires learners to develop their ideas, with particular reference to the impact of a good relationship between settings and parents on the child's progress.
- Activity 3 requires learners to consider the implications of a key quote which highlights the importance of a good relationship between the adult and the child within a learning relationship. The response should include reference to the article and the implications of information they have found within the research they have looked at.
- Activity 4 focuses on research practices needed to investigate the impact of involving parents in the child's early education. Learners are required to critique a research proposal, making suggestions for improvement where necessary.
- Throughout the paper, where learners were able to show application of their knowledge they were able to access the higher mark bands for the activities. Where basic knowledge was evident, but little application was demonstrated within the responses, learners were not able to do this.
- It should be note that responses overall were of a varied standard, with some learners able to address the paper effectively whilst others were clearly not so well prepared. Some learners were able to demonstrate an understanding of research practices and offer realistic critiques of these as well as making suggestions for the application of findings within a classroom environment.
- As this paper is based on the material provided in Part A, centres are encouraged to ensure that learners focus on the material provided by Pearson for this activity. Some learners commented within their work that they had accessed the original source material which informed Part A. Whilst this was not generally an issue in their responses, centres are reminded that the questions and expected range of responses is based on the materials provided in Part A, and that reference to the original article will not allow access to additional marks.
- Using the SAM materials during centres' preparation for this paper will allow learners the opportunity to practice how to structure and present their responses in order to attain the marks available to them. This should include opportunities to practice analysis and make recommendations for future practice.

- Group work and discussion would provide a stimulating way for them to apply research knowledge and terms, whilst working collaboratively in teams to make future recommendations for practice. Using a 'mantle of the expert' approach within the classroom provides a stimulating learning opportunity for this to develop; ensuring candidates take control of the assessment as 'researchers'. Referring to the mark scheme during the activities will familiarise them as to the level of analysis and judgement required in Level 3 assessment.

Individual Questions

Activity 1

Learners were sometimes able to identify some or all of the research methods, including a review of secondary data which informed the stimulus material. They were able to comment on the research methods used although their opinions and levels of understanding varied widely. Terminology such as validity and reliability was minimal in many scripts. Many responses failed to consider both parts of the topic, with only one aspect being considered.

The authors of the paper had used data from studies conducted in many different countries and learners were able to comment on the variations which this inevitably generated. Stronger learners were able to show an understanding of the validity of the findings as well as identifying the issues arising from variations of data produced by a range of nations.

Stronger learners made clear reference to research papers and articles that they had sourced themselves and were able to provide comparisons and conclusions about the methods used in these papers. Learners who accessed the higher mark bands were able to compare the research methods used in the research that they had sourced with those that informed stimulus material and draw conclusions on the reliability of the findings in the different sources used.

The work shown below demonstrates a comprehensive approach to this question.

The article given used interviews as their main research method, They used these to gather information about the countries. This research method benefitted them because it allowed the answers to be used for both qualitative and quantitative data. The results and answers from the interviews were then used to create the case studies through this article. This was a good research method because it had lots of detail and it was first hand information. They were used in the article appropriately as well, having three articles all from different ranking positions in the starting well data. This provided reliability and a range of different opinions. Although the methods of research in this article were used well there are a few things that they could have done better for example, it is important that they mention ethical considerations and none were mentioned, this involves gaining permission to

use peoples information and allowing them to withdraw consent at any time. It also includes mentioning of respect and honesty about the information gathered.

To make the article more reliable they should have used a bigger variety of people to interview this is because most people used were high up and very intelligent so they are doctors or are scientific. A way they could have gained practical and examples with experience is if they interviewed pre-school settings and Early Years teachers.

They reviewed their data collected which would have been very time consuming and because it was a large longitudinal study it means it took a while to collect the data, one case study is mentioning evidence between the years of 2006-2009 which is out of date and can be un-reliable

research method used was reliable because 3000 children were used to compile this data they were from 141 different childcare settings this included: Day nurseries, integrated centres, play groups, private day nurseries, nursery schools, nursery classes. The thing that made this longitudinal study reliable was that to gain the best and most accurate information home groups were selected as well, this involves children with none or minimal pre-school experience. It also

Data was received. This survey collected figures in which enrollment in pre-primary schools in India. This article is reliable because although it is 10 years old updated information has been used in other research about India and the article given also suggests India is not the best place for pre-primary education I know this because out of the 45 countries in the article India takes the 45th position on the childhood education.

Another research method I used to gather information was the EPPE, this was also another longitudinal study all about a national sample of young children's development between the ages of 3 and 7 years. This

research method used was reliable because 3000 children were used to compile this data they were from 141 different childcare settings this included: Day nurseries, integrated centres, play groups, private day nurseries, nursery schools, nursery classes. The thing that made this longitudinal study reliable was that to gain the best and most accurate information home group were selected as well, this involves children with none or minimal pre-school experience. It also

provided evidence that there is a correlation between less pre-school experience shows poorer concentration and poorer social and cognitive attainment. This longitudinal study will have had to receive lots of consent and it was a good and reliable source of information because it was done over a long period of time so ethical considerations will have been a massive priority allowing opportunity and time for changes. Because it was done over a long time it means a large sample can be analysed and reviewed in the time that it took place.

Another reliable source of information was from 'Study of Early Education and Development - Study of quality of Early Years provision in England (Revised Research Report - December 2017 (revised May 2018)) this was also a major longitudinal study and it was reliable because it involved from May 14 to the end of April 2016 it carried out 1000 visits to early years settings 402 room visits in a 2 years old pre-school and 598 for settings for 3/4 year olds. It also focused on staff training and qualifications and staff were observed when the EPPE project interviews were carried out in 1997-1998. parents informed the interviewer of the setting.

(Total for Activity 1 = 15 marks)

Activity 1 cont.....

Weaker responses failed to refer to the source material or made no reference to additional material sourced by the learner. Many learners referred to histograms, pie charts and other presentation methods as research methods. They were not able to demonstrate an understanding of data review and therefore showed little understanding of the way this had been used to inform the source article.

Reference to other methods used to investigate this issue, and comments on reliability and validity were often not included. Where these were presented, work was superficial and not supported.

The example below provides an example of work that fails to address key areas of the question:

The use of data in this article is effective as it gives you a wider understanding of the research.

The research used in this article has given a wide variety of data from different countries. The research is related to the article as it is the main focus of it.

Although the use of data in the article is informal and valid, there are many other methods that could have been used such as questionnaires. This would give them a wide range of results from

different places around the country/world.

In my research I found that countries in Europe have higher staff:child ratios, staff have higher qualifications and there is stronger government investment into early years education.

Schools outside of Europe are said to have lower staff: children ratios, teachers have less training

and the governments are less invested in early years education.

The methodology of this ~~was~~ was a country sample. This is a report/study, it was from 2013 so it may be ~~dated~~ outdated, therefore the results ~~to~~ may be invalid.

The study only used 15 countries, so does not involve data from all countries, the data may be valid however the variation could be wider.

Education, D. f., 2013. Gov. UK [online]

Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/212564/DFE-RR269.pdf

[accessed 08 January 2020]

Activity 2

Learners should be able to show an understanding of the impact of impact of the relationship between parents and the setting on the progress of their child and their education in the setting.

Work for this activity gained marks across the range of the mark bands, although the majority of work achieved in mark bands 1 and 2 as many learners were not able to show and understanding of this issue and provide appropriate information supported by research findings.

Work that achieved in the higher mark bands cited secondary sources and included reference to the learner's understanding of early childhood development and learning. Relevant points were made explaining the relevance

and impact of a good relationship between parents and the setting having a positive effect on children's learning. A few learners were able to show a clear understanding of the relationship between the two.

The example below shows a good understanding of the key issues.

I think that ~~that~~ the relationship between a parent and an early years provider needs to be a good and healthy one. My secondary research suggests ~~the~~ chinese parents beliefs on education systems. According to a Journal I read, done by ~~the~~ Bi Ying Hu Et Al, suggested ~~the~~ chinese parents beliefs on education and the importance of it. This source suggested the feasibility of quality pre-school inclusion and why this was important. This source could link to this because it shows what chinese parents think about education systems - which if this is read by a researcher, this may improve provision and quality of them.

According to another piece of research I found, it suggests what OFSTED (in the UK) look for in early childhood education. This is according to the website "what you need to know as a childcare

professional," which suggests what OFSTED look for in reviews and it suggests their standards for Pre-schools. ~~One~~ One of the requirements of OFSTED is for children, parents and practitioners to have a good relationship with ~~the~~ one another. This is important because it helps them to work with one another to help provide children with the best quality of education. Another source that I found, another website, "Education Inspection Framework" suggested what OFSTED expectations are and provides lots of information on this. Similarly to the source mentioned before, it suggests

What OFSTED look for and what the simple requirements are of an early years setting in the UK. The EIF also known as Education Inspection Framework suggests that the parents and practitioner relationship needs to be good so that the parent are able to trust the practitioner and rely on them. It also important because one of the OFSTED requirements is for the children to have a key person while

they attend that setting; This is stated in the Statutory Guidance frameworks which will help with the relationship between a parent and practitioner because they will be able to rely on the practitioner more and will be able to feel as though they can trust them. It also allows the practitioner to feedback to the parents of their key child easily if they have an easy going relationship with them. An example of an OFSTED inspection I found was at Kingfishers preschool where it suggests in this report what they looked for and why the overall provision was rated 'good'. It states "children are happy, confident and settled and

enjoy a range of activities which are supported by staff members." This suggests that parents could potentially have a good relationship with practitioners because they are able to discuss what the child's interests are.

In Part A research, according to the data, it suggests that one of the requirements/elements of the the thing they were looking at in the research is "parental involvement in preschools". This suggests that the higher rated

Countries such as Finland and Sweden, have a better system with the involvement of parents. This is because it's rated the top 2 best countries to have this which also suggests that children are supported ~~so~~ better in these countries which means children will be more developed in ways with the support they need, from parents and practitioners. By having a good relationship, they will be able to discuss the child's needs. It also suggests in Part A research that some families will be more privileged than others, such as middle-income countries such as Greece compared to lower-income countries such as China or

India. This may be due down to the population of each country and how this could potentially affect children's early education in many different ways. If the population is greater in China then this may be hard for practitioners to have regular chats with the child's parents due to having a certain amount of children to look after, where as it would or may be easier for those who live in Greece as the population isn't as big as china's for example.

(Total for Activity 2 = 15 marks)

Activity 2 cont.....

Weaker learners often struggled to present relevant information, with many discussing the costs of early education as opposed to the relationship between parents and the setting. Learners were sometimes able to make some reference to the key issue but this was not developed. Where presented, links made to secondary sources were tenuous, and this information was not always relevant. Weaker scripts contained few conclusions which were supported.

The work below is an example:

Economist Intelligence Unit (2016) 'Starting well: Benchmarking early education across the world'

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development (2017) 'Starting Strong; key OECD Indicators on Early Childhood Education and Care' [online] Available at: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/starting-strong-2017_9789264276116-en#page12

Both, articles from the Economist Intelligence Unit and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD), were created to inform countries and the education authorities ~~that~~ of the current issues ~~an~~ in early childhood education and care, and what needs to change to ensure quality, affordability and accessibility for all families. The article by the Economist Intelligence Unit looked at many different aspects of early childhood education and care, however one area in particular was the role parents had in their children's education and development. The article stated that

"parents have a major role to play" however many countries do not involve parents as much as they should. The research shows that Countries such as France and Italy have significantly large gaps in this specific area and the countries lack in parental education programmes. However, countries such as ^{the} Czech Republic has a "strong understanding of parental engagement." However, advanced programmes such as parental education programmes cannot always be implemented. Things such as funding need to be of a substantial and consistent amount to be able to have a quality education system, and only then can a country begin to focus their funding onto other aspects. To further support this, ~~provide~~ the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and development has also recognised the importance of funding into the early childhood education and care system, in their article published in 2017. ~~They~~ ^{It} highlights that a quality Education and care system can "strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for all children." Their research found that ~~some~~ ^{many} countries that have high or middle incomes only designate 0.2% or less of their countries' cantry's GDP to early childhood education and care, however some countries who have lower-incomes invest more than 1.0%. Although some countries such as Chile are an exception, and ^{lead by} example, ~~to the rate~~, the Economic Intelligence Unit also highlights some of the

Reasons for lack of parental involvement in some countries. India ranks last in the table, with limited availability, the lowest quality and high costs for early childhood education and care. However, the article explains that this is because the country has some of the toughest social conditions in the world. The limited resources can make it challenging to allocate them towards child development and health, therefore they are definitely unable to allocate their limited resources to parental engagement programmes. "long-term government commitment" and resources are required to ensure quality parental engagement, and funding has an important role when achieving this.

As well as this, the quality and level of qualification required is important when ensuring a good working relationship between parents and education providers to support children in early years. Both articles highlight the importance of the quality and high level of qualification required to teach in early education. With quality education to train to teach in early education, comes the skills & knowledge required to achieve the "desired long-term outcomes" of a good early childhood education, and to be able to work in partnership with parents.

Activity 3

Some learners were able to access this question and to describe the implications of the suggestion in the source material that the relationship between the adult and the child is the most important factor in the child's learning experience. Many did not link their response to child /adult interaction at all and referred to the use of technology rather than reading to a child as an opportunity to 'bond with the child', or suggested that 'speech would progress faster/ the child would learn social skills from watching on screen'.

Some learners were able to show an understanding of the implications of the relationship between the adult and the child in the learning experience. They were able to relate this to the implications for resourcing early years' environments and to their own experiences and findings from other information sources. Realistic conclusions were presented in line with the points made in the responses.

The work below provides an example of work that addresses key areas of the question:

The relationship between adults and children is vital for children to develop and enhance their learning and development. The Montessori approach allows children to play and do work that they like, stimulating their fine motor movements by doing work such as building towers, table work, drawing and jigsaw puzzles. The mass influence on technology, although is useful, however do not overall stimulate a child's brain to gain an understanding of the world and enhance their fine motor movements including pincer grip and tripod grip.

It is shown in the article from one case study: New Zealand's pioneering curriculum that qualified teachers were the key to quality provision and pre-school success; this provision

has a strong emphasis on the relationships between adults and children in settings. In addition this implies that if the teachers knowledge is outstanding then no other resources such as technology is needed. From my own secondary research I have found that countries such as Denmark ^{have a} needs based funded early years programme, this relates to one case study as their ~~ratio~~ child to adult ratio is 6:1 in which findings show that they believe that the teacher should be the only resource. However, Montessori approaches to learning also include a range of resources in relation to children's development in which in lower income countries there is a lack of funding to imply this.

However, some may argue that technology has improved the educational system and has put less strain on teachers, make content 'easier' and more fun! From ~~an~~ an article from The Times it has been found that settings ^{that} include more technology into their curriculum ~~could~~ ^{improve} ~~and~~ ^{improve} ~~concentrate~~ ^{on} ~~the~~ ~~more~~ ~~and~~ ~~with~~ ~~technology~~ have a 45% increase in results in the UK. However, health

experts have advised that this may affect a child's learning and development in the long term. This also does not include the Montessori approach in which does not give the child the opportunity to have an inclusive child based environment; depending on funding this may also include disciplined sharing.

Due to a lack of funding and support it is difficult for some families to let their child go to pre school; some parents may not know that it is available and proved to be highly effective. In the case study it

says that ~~think~~ in the UK children are entitled to 15 hours for free, however how do parents become knowledgeable ~~after~~ of this information? I have found from my secondary research that in countries such as China and Japan such provision does not exist in which children have no rights to be able to attend pre-school. This shows how availability is a ~~big~~ big influence in affecting a child's development.

Activity 3 cont.....

Weaker responses demonstrated a limited understanding of the implications of the relationship between the adult and the child in the learning experience. They were not able to identify relevant points from the source article or make reference to appropriate additional or research information. Where conclusions were included these were not supported or justified.

The work below provides an example of work that fails to address key areas of the question:

The implications of this key finding is that the children and adults in the setting might not ~~get on~~ have very good relationships due to poor practice at the setting. This would have a detrimental impact on the education in that environment as they would not have a positive learning experience. In an article I found during my secondary research it stated 'the right mix of care and specific ~~training~~ teaching promotes childrens interactive skills and develops their thinking.' (Education Finland 2019). This demonstrates how your practice has a ~~take~~ huge impact on the childrens learning therefore it is of the most importance that you build strong relationships with the children as an early years practitioner.

The extract from the article states 'child-centred approaches to education do not require major ^{investments in} infrastructure, yet are highly effective'. This suggests that it is ~~useful to~~ important to include child-centred approaches as it doesn't mean you have to invest in extra resources or time, etc. but it is very effective towards the children's development. This can help develop a strategy for supporting high quality education as it has to be ensured that there are more child-centred approaches to improve effectiveness of education.

An implication of this finding some settings might have a technology centred approach to education and find it successful so by ~~talk~~ saying they don't educate children, there may be people who disagree. Although they might also have good relationships between the adults and children they may have strong opinions on having a technology based approach. They might believe that this supports children by giving them a high quality education, alongside having strong relationships.

Another implication is that everybody has different views and opinions therefore creating just one strategy for everybody is not going to be enough for some people and a lot are not going to ~~enjoy~~ agree with what you think.

Activity 4

The majority of work for this activity meets the requirements for mark bands 1 and 2. Higher quality work demonstrated the learner's understanding of essential aspects of research processes, including reliability, validity, sample size and implementation practices. Learners were able to critique the suggested research plan and suggest ways in which it could be improved, such as increasing the number of settings to be included in the study. Stronger

responses included essential aspects of good research as identified above. Suggestions for change were appropriate and well supported and links to the case study were evident.

The example below provides an example of work which demonstrates a comprehensive approach to the question, including an understanding of research processes and how these can be effectively implemented within research practice.

Part of this research proposal is to interview the pre-school staff at 3 different schools. This research method would provide valid data because the interview could be transcribed, therefore the qualitative data taken from the interviews will be direct quotes and not objective. This is important for the validity because it ~~supports~~ ensures that all

data is from the practitioners and not interviewer bias, from trying to manipulate answers. Also, ^{however} this research method ~~is~~ ~~reliable~~ was it valid because they used a small sample size of three schools so the data won't be generalisable. ~~the~~ ~~research~~ This means researchers will not be able to compare the data gained from ^{the} interviews with other schools. Also this method is not very reliable because due to the practitioners ~~be~~ being bias about how they involve parents and their importance in the child's development it can

be seen as untrustworthy. A limitation of this research is they can be scripted so if the volunteer spots an issue & that can be clarified they are unable to ask further questions. Also another limitation is if the interview is scripted the interviewee can rehearse their answers, which will negatively affect the reliability of the interviews. This is because the answer could be based on social desirability

therefore, making the answers dishonest. A suggestion for a change would be to put the questions into a questionnaire because this way the practitioners would be able to anonymously submit them. This would increase the reliability of the research because ~~it~~ through submitting them anonymously the practitioners will feel like they can be more honest. For example in my first article, '30 hours at risk' respondents ~~are~~ were being honest as opinions such as worries about there not being enough childcare places ~~and~~ ~~is~~ costs being

raised for two and under year olds. ~~was~~ were raised.

The interview will be a good method to achieve the objective of how the effectiveness of involving parents because the purpose of an interview is to gain desired information while being able to read facial expressions. When carrying out the interview the interviewer must show research skills such as patience because

they need to allow the interviewee enough time to consider and answer all questions honestly. This is because if they feel rushed they may not ~~give~~ give their true opinion with certain questions. Another skill needed is being objective because the interviewer needs to have a professional demeanour which means they can't bring their own opinion into the interview. Before starting the interview the interviewee must have given consent for them to be recorded and used in the research and have been

told they can stop at any time. Also during the interviews fidelity and autonomy must be shown to uphold the ethics.

The other research method, observation is invalid because a small sample size was used, therefore it was not very generalisable. Also it was reliable because the observer ^{writes} ~~wrote~~ down what they see without including their

opinion. They should also have parental consent.

Activity 4 cont

Weaker learners were able to identify some research processes and show a tenuous link to the plan suggested. Sometimes they were able to identify validity and reliability as important elements in the process, but few weaker learners were able to relate these to the plan suggested. Occasionally, learners linked their comments to suggestions for improvements. Sometimes the suggestions were not linked to the proposal, and occasionally learners suggested using settings in 3 different continents and offered a rationale for this although it was not relevant to the question for Activity 4.

The work below is a completed answer for this activity. The work demonstrates limited understanding of the requirements of the activity.

My report

In my research findings after visiting three settings I found that my information was valid and reliable data was looked at. Preschool settings which are for children aged 3-4yrs 11 months old and after interviewing several members of staff about their approaches by involving parents in their child's education, by giving them access to Online Learning Journals for example; Tapestry which has photo's and recorded information

about how their child is developing.

Parents can also get involved in their child's overall development by reading to the children and encourage reading for those children who are well above the expected levels. Children can be provided with a book that records child-parent involvement. This will give the preschool manager some indication as to where a child is at in terms of development and whether the child will need further assistance for example; extra support at home from the child's parents/carer.

The Potential limitations of my research is that in order for children to be supported by their parents throughout early years education, is about social context, affordability, quality of education & funding. This could be changed if parents were able to afford extra fundings for activities, food and education.

Factors to consider when researching activities is that they are reliable, they have clear information with good purposes and objectives to allow the practitioner to research and the knowledge to do so, as well as ethical conditions that need to be considered.

Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, learners should:

- Have a basic understanding of research methodology, data collection and presentation of findings
- Be able to review and comment on particular research methods and say how these are used within the source material and in the information that they have sourced themselves
- Show a clear understanding of key issues such as validity, ethics and consent when planning or reviewing research findings
- Be able to evaluate research findings and draw realistic conclusions
- Be able to make links between research findings and the implications for early years' practice, with particular reference to the adults in the child's life
- Be able to show an understanding of the links between research findings and wider society, with particular reference to practices in early years' education
- Demonstrate an understanding of how the adults in the child's life can have an impact on the child's learning and development
- Understand that research has implications that are sometimes not intended
- Be able to communicate their ideas and understanding in a logical way
- Be able to address specific points within the appropriate activity

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