



T Level Technical Qualification in Education and Early Years (Level 3)

QN: 610/5748/4

Occupational specialism assessment (OSA)

Early Years Educator

Assignment 2 – distinction

Guide standard exemplification materials

Contents

Contents..... 2

Introduction 3

Assignment 2..... 4

Student evidence..... 6

Examiner commentary12

Overall grade descriptors13

 Occupational specialism overall grade descriptors..... 13

Document information15

 Change history record 15

Introduction

The material within this document relates to the Early Years Educator occupational specialism sample assessment. These exemplification materials are designed to give providers and students an indication of what would be expected for the lowest level of attainment required to achieve a pass or distinction grade.

The examiner / moderator commentary is provided to detail the judgements and rationale for grades awarded, in context of the grade descriptors. This should be used in conjunction with the Qualification Specification and the relevant external assessment materials, which detail the related qualification content and grade descriptors for assessment.

In assignment 2, the student must produce **two** activity plans according to various specifications. The exemplification sample provided consists of **one** such plan. This partial sample is intended to demonstrate competence in the standard of student work, rather than representing the volume of such work that would be required to complete the whole assignment.

After each live assessment series, authentic student evidence will be published with examiner commentary across the range of achievement.

Assignment 2

Read the information carefully before starting your work.

Scenario

You are an early years educator working in the reception class in a rural school. The school has access to a forest school classroom within its grounds.

The topic for the next 3 weeks is **Magical Me**.

This topic involves the children learning more about themselves and each other, and may include:

- what makes us similar and different
- our families
- managing our own health and wellbeing
- our likes and dislikes.

You have been asked to plan **two** educational activities, **each** lasting at least **20 minutes**, for a small group of children aged **4 to 5 years**. The educational activities must support the children's progression in the areas of **communication and language** and **personal, social and emotional development (PSED)**, particularly **supporting children to manage their own health and wellbeing**.

One of the children, Safia, has English as an additional language (EAL). This means she uses her home language (Arabic) for linguistic and cultural reasons when with her parents but speaks English within the school setting. At times she uses words from both languages in the same sentence. Safia can be very quiet in class.

One of the other children, Noah, has recently joined the reception class and has not yet settled in or developed a friendship group. Noah demonstrates shy and reserved behaviour.

Brief

In your role as an early years educator, you are required to support the care, learning and development of all children. In order to do this, you will plan educational activities to promote children's progression.

You must plan **two** educational activities (one per task) that support areas of learning in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). Both educational activities will be planned to support children aged **4 to 5 years**. **Each plan must** be for an activity that is at least **20 minutes** in length on the topic of **Magical Me** (one for each task).

Educational activity 1: one educational activity that **must** focus on **communication and language**.

Educational activity 2: one educational activity that **must** focus on **PSED**, particularly **supporting children to manage their own health and wellbeing**.

Use the information above to write **two** educational activity plans. The educational activities must be appropriate to the age and individual needs of **all** children within the small group.

Your educational activity plans should be detailed and self-explanatory so they can be used by another occupationally competent early years educator who has **not** seen them before.

All relevant considerations should be made clear, including:

- learning objectives linked to the EYFS
- opportunities for holistic development
- the early years educator's role, including working with others
- links to theoretical and philosophical approaches
- pedagogical strategies used in supporting children's learning and development
- characteristics of effective teaching and learning
- opportunities for observations to inform next steps.

Student evidence

Early Years Education and Early Years Occupational Specialism Assignment 2: Activity Plan 1

Magical Me activity: focusing on communication and language

Student X
May 2027

The role of the early years educator including working with others for my activity for communication and language: Magical Me!

In order to plan a suitable experience for young children I will need to have an awareness of their developmental needs, their interests and any personal circumstances which may affect the experience. At my setting, structured step by step next steps planning is applied to meet children's individual needs.

Age: 4 to 5 years

Developmental need: two children within the group have specific needs, which require me to adapt my planning: one child is new to the setting and is still settling in and another member of this group needs support in relation to communication and language as she uses English as an additional language.

A child settling in will need the reassurance of a familiar key person. I must ensure that before I plan any experience involving this particular child, that they feel safe, secure and content in the group.

I need to liaise with the children's key person, who will have useful information from parents / carers and other professionals as appropriate.

The Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025, identifies the role of the key person emphasising their strength, meeting the individual needs of children during transition when a child is settling in, requiring 'each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs'. This really strengthens the need for me to get to know the child, spend time finding out what their interests are and ensuring that they are ready to be part of a group.

The role of the early years educator would be to ensure that he / she liaises with the key person and other colleagues to ensure that the activity / experience would be suitable for the child's interests and needs. During the activity the educator should not interfere too much but should be around to extend learning, develop sustained shared thinking and support engagement as well as maximising opportunities to maximise learning, specifically communication and language. The educator should always be aware of where the children are and that they are safe, taking notes for monitoring and tracking purposes. When planning the resources, it would also be part of their role to check for hazards and carry out a risk assessment to make sure the outdoor environment is safe and healthy, the resources used would also need to be checked to ensure that they are age / stage appropriate for independent use and that they do not pose any risk to the children. It would also be a safety precaution to be mindful of the weather and ensure children are safe, ie wet floors will be slippery and in the heat children need caps / sun cream as appropriate. Any accidents or incidents would need to be recorded in line with procedures. Whilst children are able to enjoy the experience independently, the educator must be mindful of how the children are coping with any challenges ensuring they are able to contribute and participate. The early years educator should ensure all children are able to participate in an inclusive and fair way.

The resources required for the Magical Me activity are identified below (age / stage appropriate):

- story book / s
- streamers
- dressing up clothes / masks
- music
- resources for mark making and display
- sequencing cards.

The overarching principles of the EYFS that include:

- every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and / or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways.

I have been able to uphold these principles in my planning and informed implementation of the activity as I ensured the activity was child-centred, that the resources, materials and expectations were enabling and that children were encouraged to take opportunity for positive relationships to develop with both adults and children.

Learning goals

I will look at how emergent communication and language skills are provided for currently at the setting and use these to best inform my planning to appropriately meet the age / stage and individual needs of the children building from what they already know / can achieve. *According to the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025, communication and language development involves 'two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading'. As the activity develops, children will be exposed to emergent opportunities including:*

- *identification of sounds and letters (early phonics)*
- *mark making*
- *speech, language and communication.*

Whilst deeper concentration skills may not be established until 4 years, *Development Matters 2023 does imply that by this age the child typically 'listens to stories with increasing attention and recall'*. To support the children, I will use targeted strategies and engaging, diverse activities (such as storytelling and outdoor experiences) to maintain interest and promote learning.

Self-regulation is concerned with feelings and expressing and managing own feelings whilst showing an awareness of the feelings of others. A child settling in will need the familiarity of the key person who will support them to make relationships, build self-confidence and self-esteem in a safe, enabling environment, (co-regulation). *The experience will contribute to this by providing 'stability in staffing, and in grouping of the children' (Development Matters, 2023).*

The **title** of my activity is **Magical Me**.

According to the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025, activities must be relevant to age, stage interest and offer opportunity to children to engage with areas of learning through a holistic approach. Opportunities and experiences need to be inclusive and make use of child-centred, spontaneous play, 'in the moment' experiences, as well as the practitioner being mindful of any developmental need or

learning goal. This activity will be an extension from stories, music and rhyme and will build on the experiences and the available resources in the setting.

The book, 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen, poems and rhymes with musical instruments will ignite children's imagination and curiosity inspiring provocation and creativity. The activity will allow for indoor and outdoor flexibility so if the weather prevents outdoor play, we can still participate. The clear dialogue and simple repetitive language will support Safia as she becomes familiar with English. The activity requires educators to be sensitive to the child new to the setting offering close support, facilitation of conversation and commentary to help them understand the process of the activity without pressure to respond.

This activity / experiences will support these children as well as appealing to the interests of other children in the setting who will also be included and welcomed into the play environment.

Children will follow footprints leading to discoveries that encourage physical exploration such as running, jumping, and navigating obstacles inspired by 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. Weather permitting, the trail will take place outdoors, with improvised features like a crunchy path (e.g. gravel or crumpled paper) and a simple bridge for climbing. Throughout, the practitioner will model language using familiar phrases and varied intonation to support communication, especially for Safia.

After the trail, children will return indoors for a music and singing session using instruments and streamers, followed by a group discussion. Collected items from the trail will be used for sustained shared thinking and sequencing activities, promoting further language development. These resources will support mark making and reflection, with opportunities to display and discuss the children's work with parents / carers.

The educator will monitor peer interactions, ensuring the child settling in is supported and not overwhelmed, and that Safia is engaged in communication. Open-ended questions will be used to encourage expressive language and peer dialogue.

This can be achieved through voice intonation and of course using familiar words and phrases from the book. Language and in particular speech and communication are key to children's holistic development and specifically for Safia. At the end of the trail, the children will be led back and music will be playing in the main play room. Children will be able to choose from the musical instruments and the streamers, and a singing session will take place, finishing with a discussion about the activity. The practitioner can use the different pictures and objects that the children have collected along their trail for sustained shared thinking, valuing the child's voice, and then the story and picture cards, from the story can be available in the book area so that children can role play or sequence the pictures freely.

Throughout the activity I will be mindful of the main aim and draw speech, language and communication out. I will be aware of the needs of the children identified and ensure that the settling in does not get overwhelmed, I will also use this activity as a way of monitoring who he is playing with and any preferred play experiences as well as peer friendship groups. I will need to be aware of how Safia child copes in social groups and ensure that he is coping with communication throughout, making the most of opportunities for expressing herself. I will use open-ended questions to support communication and language with peers and adults.

This activity will focus on emergent communication and language skills, including phonics for early reading, mark making for early writing and communication. Speech and language for oracy and holistic development and wellbeing. Appropriate skills within the specific area of communication and language within the Early Years Foundation Stage:

'It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together' (Early Years Foundation Stage, 2024).

As the activity develops, and as stated in the planning section, the children will be exposed to emergent literacy opportunities including those identified in the planning stage:

- identification of sounds and letters (early phonics)
- mark making
- speech, language and communication
- literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Literacy

Reading:

Children read and understand simple sentences, decode regular words using phonics, and read some irregular words. They show comprehension by discussing what they've read. This is supported through familiar story phrases, sequencing activities, and labelled displays.

Writing:

Children use phonics to write words that match spoken sounds, including some irregular words. They write simple, readable sentences. This is encouraged through mark making activities.

Holistic Development

Activities promote development across the EYFS prime areas.

Physical Development

Children use fine and gross motor skills during the trail and singing activities. Outdoor play supports coordination, energy release, and social interaction.

Communication and Language

Children engage in story time, songs, and discussion, developing listening, turn-taking, and emergent phonics. Practitioners model language and use open-ended questions to support development.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children express emotions, make choices, and play independently or in groups. Familiar adults provide emotional security and support confidence-building.

Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

It is important that characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2024 include:

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

- **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The activity supports key EYFS characteristics:

Playing and exploring: children investigate and try new things.

Active learning: they persist through challenges and enjoy success.

Creating and thinking critically: they develop ideas, make connections, and solve problems. Children explore freely outdoors through sensory play with natural materials. This aligns with Piaget's view that first-hand experiences are vital during the pre-operational stage (ages 3–7), where learning is shaped by direct interaction with the environment.

Research such as the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project (1999) highlights the importance of skilled interactions in early years settings. Quality adult-child engagement supports sustained shared thinking, now embedded in the EYFS (2024), where children and adults work together to solve problems, clarify concepts, and extend learning. This research identifies prime conditions for sustained shared thinking – a key factor in early literacy and one that is now embedded in the EYFS 2024, 'sustained shared thinking involves 'episodes' in which two or more individuals 'worked together' in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities or narratives, etc. During a period of sustained shared thinking, both parties contributed to the thinking and developed and extended the discourse'.

Links to theoretical perspectives and philosophical approaches can be made here, for example the children will be enjoying spending time outdoors and this can be seen in the approaches pioneered by Rachel and Margaret McMillan, who believed that fresh air, exercise and a healthy diet improves children's health. Free flow play is embedded into best practice within early years.

Children will feel safe and secure in their environment as familiar staff will be nearby, this allows children to flourish in a safe and emotionally secure environment, specifically helpful for Noah and Safia. The work of John Bowlby (1950s) has been represented through the role of the key person system in an early years setting as it is a requirement that each setting provides every baby and child with a key person, supporting the need to appreciate attachment and its role in children's lives. The work of Bandura and in particular research surrounding self-efficacy will further support this work. For example, the child settling in will be developing confidence in the new social group and will take time to develop autonomy potentially. Both children will have opportunity for positive role modelling as well as the opportunity to engage closely with the familiar adult.

The work of the Forest School has been considered as children enjoy being outside and exploring their natural environment through exploration and discovery, nurturing and meaningful experiences to support learning and development.

Scaffolding, (Bruner), children's learning has been a consideration during the planning of this activity. This will support Safia by offering activities in small, broken-down tasks so as to introduce opportunity for language. Children are able to be supported by the practitioner at every stage; however, children still have enough freedom to express themselves and explore with new learning. This is described by Moyles as a spiral of learning, her 'spiral theory' states that children should be allowed to play freely first, then structured and then freely.

Pedagogical strategies to support children's learning and development that may be applied to this activity / experience, including characteristics of effective learning in line with the EYFS.

Children will be offered a play-based approach to learning through the EYFS, which provides a range of diverse play types and experiences. It is important to allow for as many different types of play as you can in order to maximize learning. The child who is settling in may feel more comfortable in the outdoor environment, but this will need to be carefully monitored by the educator so that he / she does not become too overwhelmed. The activity / experience provides opportunities for group learning, socialisation and sustained shared thinking. Child-centred play with a balance of adult directed play opportunities is also embedded into this activity and this will reassure the child settling in and enable focus on language for Safia, whilst also providing decision making opportunities.

The main focus was communication and language, and the activity allows for communication and language development appropriate to the children's age / stage and is inclusive for the two children identified. The activity could be shared with parents / carers and other colleagues as well as being able to complete observations to support monitoring records.

REFERENCES

Development Matters, 2023.

Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025.

Examiner commentary

Distinction

The student has produced a coherent and appropriately in-depth piece of writing that embeds the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework throughout, weaving theory and philosophical approaches in a sophisticated writing style, providing a detailed, informative and appropriately perceptive response to the demands of the brief. The identified needs and interests of the children requiring adaptive pedagogy are central to the work, whilst there is a clear awareness of the significance of planning for the wider group.

The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge of the EYFS and offers reasoned analysis and solution-based outcomes. For example, the student is able to explain the impact to the child of transition and details the role of effective key person practice. There is a comprehensive understanding of communication and language development within the EYFS, and specifically at this stage, opportunities for its development across the prime areas of learning as well as how the educator maximises such opportunities, and these are explained accurately in context. The student is able to precis information from a range of suitable sources and makes exceptional use of appropriate information, building on the topic of Magical Me to maintain interest and motivation. This is clearly evidenced when the student makes excellent use of pedagogical approaches, philosophical and theoretical influence that also benefits from appropriate reference made to The EPPE Project.

The section detailing the role of the educator is extensive with impressive knowledge of planning, inclusive child-centred practice, being specifically sensitive to Noah and Safia's health, safety and wellbeing, holistic opportunities for learning and comprehensive application of theoretical as well as philosophical influence to clearly demonstrate an understanding of the different perspectives / approaches associated with early years education, a theme which continues throughout the work.

Overall, in this work the student demonstrates extensive knowledge of relevant concepts and techniques reflected in an early years education role and precisely applies this accurately, with skilful analysis and well-reasoned judgement. To improve the work, a greater insight to how observation opportunities in this activity could be used to enable effective next steps planning for communication and language would be useful, specifically to support the key person working with Noah and Safia.

Overall grade descriptors

The performance outcomes form the basis of the overall grade descriptors for pass and distinction grades.

These grade descriptors have been developed to reflect the appropriate level of demand for students of other level 3 qualifications; the threshold competence requirements of the role are validated with employers within the sector to describe achievement appropriate to the role.

Occupational specialism overall grade descriptors

Pass
The evidence is logical but displays baseline knowledge in response to the demands of the brief. The student makes some use of relevant knowledge and understanding of how it informs practices of the sector and demonstrates a baseline understanding of perspectives or approaches associated with early years education. The student makes acceptable use of facts / theories / approaches / concepts and attempts to demonstrate breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding. The student is able to identify information from appropriate sources and makes use of appropriate information / appraises relevancy of information and can combine information to make decisions. The student makes judgements / takes appropriate action / seeks clarification with guidance and is able to make progress towards solving non-routine problems in real-life situations. The student demonstrates skills and knowledge of the relevant concepts and techniques reflected in an Early Years Educator role and generally applies these across different contexts. The student shows adequate understanding of unstructured problems that have not been seen before, using limited knowledge to find solutions to problems and make justification for strategies for solving problems, explaining their reasoning. Early Years Educator (EYE) only – demonstrates achievement of all EYE criteria.
Distinction
The evidence is precise, logical and provides a detailed and informative response to the demands of the brief. The student makes extensive use of relevant knowledge, has extensive understanding of the practices of the sector and demonstrates an understanding of the different perspectives / approaches associated with early years education. The student makes decisive use of facts / theories / approaches / concepts, demonstrating extensive breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, and selects highly appropriate skills / techniques / methods. The student is able to comprehensively identify information from a range of suitable sources and makes exceptional use of appropriate information / appraises relevancy of information and can combine information to make coherent decisions.

The student makes well-founded judgements / takes appropriate action / seeks clarification and guidance and is able to use that to reflect on real-life situations in an early years education role.

The student demonstrates extensive knowledge of relevant concepts and techniques reflected in an early years education role, precisely applies this across a variety of contexts and tackles unstructured problems that have not been seen before, using their knowledge to analyse and find suitable solutions to the problems.

SAMPLE

Document information

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Change history record

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v1.0	First published version	03 November 2025	04 November 2025