

L is for Language,
O is for Outdoors.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the staff and pupils of my setting for giving me the opportunity to conduct my research project.

The children in primary one took part enthusiastically in all the tasks and activities asked of them.

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Contents	Page
Statement of own work	3
Learning Outcomes	4
Explanation of terms used	6
Chapter 1 Introduction/Rationale	8
Chapter 2 Review of Literature	10
Chapter 3 Research Question	15
Chapter 4 Investigative Design	17
Chapter 5 Implementation	21
Chapter 6 Findings	23
Chapter 7 Discussion of the findings	28
Chapter 8 Implications	33
Chapter 9 Conclusions	35
References	38
Appendices	
Appendix 1-1d Project Proposal	41
(including supporting evidence for proposal and Ethics form)	
Appendix 2 Flow chart	56
Appendix 3 Focus Group discussion	57
Appendix 4 Observation evidence/children's responses	58
Appendix 5 Transcript of interviews	61

Statement of permission

I certify that all individuals used in this study have given permission for their evidence/quotations and information to be used in the text of this assignment. The actual names and identities of all the children, staff, parents and other individuals contacted have been deleted from the materials used in the appendices. Pseudonyms have been used where reference to individuals are made in the assignment text.

Explanation of terms used:

When writing this project I realised that the words stated below could be quite confusing to define, therefore I have summarised their meaning from a variety of different sources using my own words. I hope you will find this helpful in the reading of this project.

Phonics

- a method of reading that teaches children to recognise the different sounds represented by letters.

Phonological Awareness

- the awareness of the sounds which make up words. In other words hearing the sounds in words – the realisation that words are made up of sequences of sounds.
- the conscious awareness to the sound structure of our language. Basic levels of phonological awareness skills include listening to, recognising and completing rhymes, segmenting spoken words in sentences and syllables in words and recognising onset and rimes.

Phoneme

- the smallest unit of sound in a word e.g. in cat, there are three phonemes: c - a - t, but in church there are also three phonemes ch - ur - ch (as 'ch' and 'ur' are digraphs - sounds represented by two letters pushed together).

Phonemic Awareness

- the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds – phonemes - in spoken words.
- categorisation of words according to onset and rime
- recognition of beginning sounds
- the awareness of sounds in words

Sources used:

<http://www.begintoread.com/articles/phonemic-awareness.html>,

accessed 7/8/11

<http://www.warwick.ac.uk/staff/D.J.Wray/Articles/phonic.html>, accessed

7/8/11

<http://www.readingresource.net/phonemicawareness.html>, accessed

7/8/11

Introduction/Rationale

The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky.
Margaret McMillian cited in Bayley et al (2006).

Action Research begins with hopes, dreams and desires. An Action Researcher hopes that they can create a change for the better, dreams of a better world and desires to make a difference (MacNaughton & Hughes 2008:5). It is about developing and researching an area of personal and professional interest.

Considering these quotes in juxtaposition and my personal interest in children's language skills, the topic *using the outdoors to develop basic language skills* began to take shape. This is explained further in my project proposal (appendix 1).

The rationale grew from working with the primary one children, where some of them found it difficult to grasp their "Phonics", and appeared unaware of the link between the initial sounds and word beginnings – namely having a lack of phonological awareness which can result in problems with reading.

As many of these children are also kinaesthetic learners, I decided to research using the outdoors as an alternative to the traditional classroom and began to read related material. I found that the Experiences and Outcomes for Language and Literacy in the Curriculum for Excellence had been updated and now contained links to the outdoors. Therefore I thought that this would be beneficial for our children and worthwhile investigating further.

The structure of this report shows how I gathered my information, used the children's ideas, and related this to research and literature.

Deacon, (2011) quotes the social reformer Robert Owen who said "at no age is the desire of knowledge stronger than in early childhood", thus I believe that it is that desire we as Early Years Practitioners need to nurture, by providing the best possible education for the children within our care, through resources, time, space, leadership and indeed being an active research-based reflective practitioner, which this project aims to demonstrate.

Review of literature

Linking action research, language acquisition, and using the outdoors to develop a holistic educational environment is the aim of this literature review, which is a continuation of the literature reviewed for my project proposal.

Action research:

This refers to a practical way of looking at your own work, considering ways to improve it, reflecting on it and providing instigation for change as described by McNiff (2002), MacNaughton & Hughes (2008), and Roberts-Holmes (2009). Likewise Pollard (2008) shows how researching, planning, analysing and evaluating our work helps to improve the service we offer; therefore consolidating both descriptions provides an overall view of what is expected of an action research project. Curriculum for Excellence, the coherent overarching framework for young people's education from three to eighteen years, seeks to ensure that children are Successful Learners, Effective Contributors, Responsible Citizens and Confident Individuals.

We must also consider Ethical Issues when completing an action research project. Farrell (2005) gives useful information regarding working with children, explaining the need for keeping children's identities secure,

deleting faces or taking photographs from the back. Similarly Bell (2005) states that care should be taken even with adults to protect identity, with pseudonyms being used.

Language/literacy/outdoors and their place in the curriculum:

Carroll, et al (2011) in her book and Martlew et al in the journal *Literacy* state the importance of language and literacy acquisition and in using different learning environments to help develop these skills. Meanwhile Beetlestone (1998) develops this further by discussing the merits of teaching creatively to improve the quality of education, make learning more fun and allow staff more exciting ways of approaching the curriculum. Comparing this to Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke (2000), who again talk of the merits of using as many different environments as possible to increase children's language skills, we can see the need for using the outdoors to benefit and support oral language skills, which is what underpins much of literacy development in children.

Filer (2008) and Dumont ed. (2010) also support these views and discuss the benefits of using the outdoors to develop a holistic education through the rich, multi-sensory environment it provides, allowing for good descriptive language to take place and motivating children to learn, by sharing their experiences of the world around them.

This is shared by Learning & Teaching Scotland in *Taking Learning Outdoors* (2007), which notes that "outdoor learning can have a positive impact on long term memory" (p9). It goes on to talk about the coherence of learning outdoors, through drawing together the different strands of learning, often in a single extended experience, sharing the benefits of this holistic style of education. Relating this to Bruce (1997), where she talks in her *Ten Common Principles of education* that:

young children learn in an integrated way and not in neat tidy boxes (principle 3).

thus exemplifying the rationale underpinning the Curriculum for Excellence. Its principles state that the curriculum should be organised so that children learn and develop through a variety of contexts. They should also be given opportunities to develop different types of thinking and learning (Curriculum for Excellence - Principles for Design).

Turning to child-initiated learning, again reflected through *Effective Contributors* we can see that both Beetlestone (1998) and Bayley & Featherstone (2004) talk about staff and children sharing learning through discussion, children being allowed to have a degree of self-initiated learning, and staff being willing to make learning more meaningful through having a more holistic approach. All of this backs up Dewey's theory that children's programmes should be child-centred, with real-life experiences in learning, and that of Bruce (1997)

Children learn best when they are given the appropriate responsibility, allowed to make errors, discussions and choices and are respected as autonomous learners (principle 4).

Considering this from another perspective, the South Gloucester Council booklet, in conjunction with Surestart, states that

Whilst all learners can flourish outdoors, research shows that those children with a kinaesthetic learning style (often found in boys) benefit from quality outdoor provision. Such children may struggle indoors but then really shine outdoors where a more physical and hands-on approach is provided (p6).

Using the outdoors in early years is not a new concept. The pioneers of early nursery education from the eighteenth century - Rousseau (1712), Pestalozzi (1746), Owen (1771) through Froebel (1782), the McMillian sisters (1859 & 60) and Isaacs (1885) - to today's generation, where Sue Palmer and Claire Warden advocate using the outdoors through "The Potential of a Puddle", discussing how children enjoy jumping in puddles,

building dens, and using large paint brushes and water to write on the playground. These all offer a forum for using descriptive language when analysing their feelings during these outdoor activities.

Looking at the rationale stated in Learning Outdoors in the Early Years (EYIP-2005) that "the outdoor area provides young children with one of the best possible environments in which to learn" (p9), and supported by Bilton's principles of outdoor play (also cited in this publication), viewing indoor and outdoor areas as a combined integrated environment, illustrates the need for both to be simultaneously available. The benefits this has on language and literacy through allowing children to talk about real experiences related to the outdoor environment encourages the use of descriptive language, while increasing their general knowledge. This captures the importance of using the outdoors as a beneficial learning and teaching environment.

Language Acquisition

Johnston & Nahmad-Williams (2009) (as discussed in my project proposal - literature review) talk of spoken language as our primary means of communication (without oracy there would be no literacy) and that learning to read depends on two basic foundation skills: knowing the sounds of letters and phoneme awareness (the ability to work with the sounds in words). If children do not grasp the basic sounds and word formation then they will continue to struggle with all forms of basic language skills. Likewise Browne (2009) states that language acquisition progresses at an amazing rate, with children as young as four and five achieving competence in at least one language and that they may already know almost 2,000 words, being able to understand many more. She goes on to say that as cognitive beings, actively exploring their worlds, they need to be exposed to as many different environments as possible which in turn allow them to increase their ability to develop their language skills.

This is also backed up by Deacon's research paper *Joining the dots* where she says that by the age of five years, 85% of our language is in place, supporting the need for as many different learning environments as possible. Widening their horizons and experiences from an early stage is vital to allow this to happen (p18).

Looking at ways to tackle this, Bayley (writing in Featherstone; ed (2009), explains the need for good basic phonic skills and the ability to relate sounds to words, offering many excellent activities to try and again in her own book *Literacy Outdoors* (2006) gives many different ways on how to achieve this outdoors. Both these books I found to be very valuable sources for activities, background reading and general information around phonics and phonological awareness.

The key points that arose from my reading showed that there was a wide interest in discussing the benefits of using the outdoors to increase children's language skills and therefore as a result the possibility of developing the outdoors as an additional teaching and learning environment grew. Thus became the subject for my research question.

Research question

As explained above, my literature search, together with discussions with the staff in my own setting, helped form the idea for my research question, as noted below.

How can we use the outdoor areas (in our setting) to effectively help in developing children's oral language skills, encouraging them to become successful learners and effective contributors to their own education?

I then looked at this more closely and decided that to complete my research fully I needed the sub-questions below. These questions would help me complete my research in small manageable stages and allow for maximum child participation, meeting the requirements of both my

setting's development plan and the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Therefore my sub-questions are

- What activities can we use to increase the development of oral language skills outdoors?
- What is the effect of involving the children in the planning of these activities?
- How can being outdoors improve/develop language skills?
- What evidence is there of the children's skills before and after the project?

By answering these questions I aim to:

- use our outdoors environment as an effective learning experience, and
- help to develop/improve the children's basic language skills, allowing them to be successful learners.

Investigative design

"Research plays a vital role in improving education practice" (Hulme & King TESS 2011). This article asks: "How do we know what works in the classroom?", stating that many staff instinctively revise their practice but do not have the time to write up the findings. However, completing an action research project allows this to happen; Burden cited in this article states that the key basic project questions are –

- *Who most wants change to occur?*
- *How will anyone know if it has been successful?*
- *What is happening now on a daily basis?*
- *What data have already been collected, and*
- *Where do we go from here?*

Therefore it was with these points in mind that I set down the design for this project and will show in my conclusion how these points were answered.

As stated in my proposal (appendix 1), the research method used is a small scale, systematic action research project, which will be initially for the benefit of my own setting. Therefore the main approach used is qualitative, with a small element of quantitative data.

Using a qualitative method allows me to collect my data through sustained contact with the people in my setting, spending time observing, interviewing and gathering my information.

The researcher enters the world of the people she plans to study, gets to know, be known and trusted by them, and uses purposive sampling to select the people studied (Bogdan & Biklen 1992, cited in Siegel 2002).

I chose the purposive sample method of selection of adults to gain the knowledge, ideas, and views of the people most closely involved with the children with whom I was working.

The data collection approaches needed to complete the sub-questions resulted in many different instruments being used:

Initial exploration of ideas and information via:

- Informal/semi-structured interviews with staff and parents, ascertaining their thoughts, issues, concerns and knowledge.
- Small focus groups with staff and children.

These focus groups took place at a number of different stages throughout my research. This allowed for interaction to take place through organised discussions with the various parties, comparing the information gathered and analysed to the various research materials read and leading hopefully to offer a forum for change.

- Mind-mapping with the children – this was completed through small discussion groups which allowed for maximum child-centred learning and participation in my research. The children often came up with ideas that staff had not considered. This also helped to demonstrate to the children that their views were indeed an important part of my research. The results of these can be seen in the mind-map included in the next section.

Research & Information gathering

Throughout my work on this project, I continually read and researched information from:

- books, journal articles, the internet, reports, policies, curriculum documents and other research papers;

and gathered information from

- baseline assessments and activities - using the original baseline assessments (staff involvement) allowed for identification of the children who would benefit most. Activities were then used to assess and involve the children in the various tasks needed to complete this research (see the section on implementation).
- Observations - these were carried out at various stages throughout the implementation stage of my research and will be discussed and analysed later.

Consolidating this and the information from MacNaughton & Hughes (2008) I drew up a flow chart as a reference point (see appendix 2).

Using these methods helped meet the objectives of:

- identifying opportunities to develop language skills in the outdoor environment
- involving the children in planning activities, empowering them to improve their learning

- monitoring the children's language skills before and after the project.

At the outset, one must always be aware of ethical issues, as mentioned in my literature review. One of the key points of this project was to involve the children in all aspects of my research as this would both enable me to gain their perspective on the curriculum and develop them as Effective Contributors and Successful Learners; thus the ethical issues became more acute. Using the guidelines in Farrell (2005), I took extra care to ensure that there was no pressure on the children and explained prior to all discussions that there was no right or wrong answer and that it was *their* views and ideas were being sought.

Ethical conduct states that permission must be given when photographic evidence is used and in this project all faces have been blanked out and names changed. Letters to specific parents, requesting permission for photographs to be included is advised even when the setting uses a blanket permission form.

Implementation

This chapter illustrates the practicalities of the implementation process used in this project. The actual outcomes can be found in the following chapter.

My preliminary task was to gain information from all the primary one teachers on the baseline assessment for phonics and phonological awareness, in order to identify the children needing extra help in developing basic language skills.

This table shows a record of all the children in primary one who knew all their sounds/blends at given points in the term.

24 initial sounds and 18 blends are taught.

Total number of children = 45.

From this, five children were identified and a focus group (the purposive sample) was formed to use organised discussions to gain information

Baseline assessment	Initial sounds = 24	Blends = 18
@end Sept.	20	0 (not fully taught yet)
@end Dec	30	20
@end March	35	30
@beg. June	40	35

warranted by my main research question.

From these discussions it was agreed that as most of these children were also kinaesthetic learners, I would move their learning outdoors and try different ways of developing their basic language skills.

Suggestions for ideas came from using the research and activities, and from a focus group of interested adults (see appendix 3).

I also used the ideas from the previously-mentioned flow chart, to carry out a number of different investigative activities.

I held informal group discussions with the children and we constructed a variety of mind-maps using the headings from my sub-questions.

I observed the children during these activities, gaining photographic evidence which I have included throughout this project.

As the timeline for this project included my setting's summer break, the activities had to be conducted with the then primary one children in a relatively short space of time. That said, the results have since been used to benefit the current primary one children.

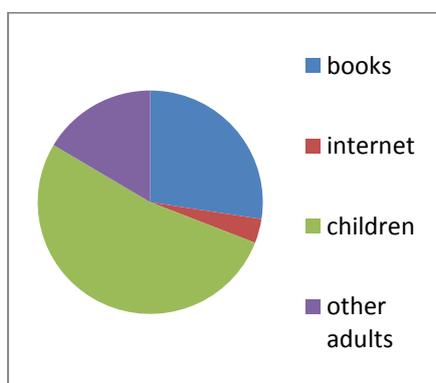
Findings

From the above work, the evidence gathered is presented, analysed and interpreted as follows.

Using the original flow chart (appendix 2) to look at ways of answering the sub-questions, I then gathered the data from each sub-question and have summarised my findings below.

Sub-question 1 – What activities can we use to increase the development of oral language skills outdoors?

In answering this I spent time using different sources to gather information. The pie chart below indicates the proportion of time spent in relation to each one. Books and the internet gave ideas for activities; discussions with other interested adults added their views, as did the primary one children.



As seen the largest amount of time spent was in gathering information and ideas from the children. This was completed through a small informal

discussion group using the mind-mapping technique to record ideas. This will be discussed further in the next section.

Sub-Question 2 - What is the effect of involving children in planning these activities?

Involving children in planning allows them to become Effective Contributors to their own education and teaches them to be Responsible Citizens, two of the four capacities of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Analysing the answers given by both staff and children, summarised below, consolidates these findings.

Summary of comments from the children: we

- learn what we want to find out
- work better
- like being involved
- learn more
- listen to what our friends want to learn
- become responsible citizens
- work harder

Summary of comments from staff: the children

- stay on task more
- are less disruptive
- have better finished work, in general
- show more interest
- enjoy being involved and want to know next steps.

Sub-question 3 - How can outdoors improve/develop language skills?

This was answered through gathering data from activities and questions carried out with the children and staff interviews.

Activities with the children

I first asked the class to look around inside the room and tell me what they could see, then we went outside to the school grounds and I asked them the same question. When the children were inside they named seventeen items, however when this was repeated outside their enthusiasm was amazing. They not only named more than three times the number of items but were able to describe what they saw in more detail, an example being "large trees pointing towards the sky". A recording of some of the more descriptive language they used can be found in appendix 4, clearly showing the benefits of outdoor learning.

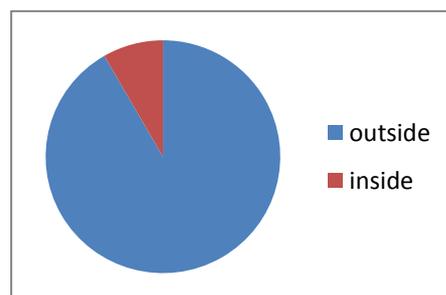
Discussing this further with the children and looking at the lists we had made, I then asked:

Do you think there are more opportunities to develop/(use) your language skills outside or inside?

Total number of children =24

Outside =22

Inside = 2



The reasons they gave are recorded in appendix 4a but basically they saw more opportunities for using descriptive language outdoors and saw it as an extension to how they learned in nursery - a point I will return to in the conclusions.

It was interesting to note that as more and more activities took place outdoors, the children's phonological and phoneme awareness grew and developed. Their oral language skills also became more skilled in other classroom tasks.

I also gathered information from staff.

I interviewed two senior members of staff, separately, using a semi-structured interview, transcripts of which are found in appendix 5; however the main point that arose was that both felt the children greatly benefited from a learning environment that included using the outdoors. Person C said she had also been in touch with many other settings and all were now encouraging staff to take some of their lessons – mainly maths and language - outdoors for some part of the day (weather permitting) and have found that there was an increase in their learning and behaviour. This is something I would like to continue to explore when I have finished my project.

The rest of the information to answer this question came from research, books, journal articles and the internet. I will expand upon this in the next section.

Sub-question 4 - What evidence is there of the children's skills before and after the project?

At the end of the project I met again with the focus group of staff and asked if they had seen any improvement in the children's descriptive language skills – the result was an overwhelming yes.

Also from the original baseline assessment of phoneme awareness, the children were now able to relate many more sounds to words than at the beginning. Many of these words now included things they had seen or done outside. This I believe was only a very rough guide to the success of using the outdoors, as the main evidence can be seen in the photographs and comments from the children. The enjoyment that they received

outdoors, using a different environment for learning, and the general increase in their use of descriptive words, supports the benefits of using the outdoors as an addition to the classroom, which in turn will help improve the education of some of our more vulnerable children.

Discussion of the findings

Reflecting on my main research question :

How can we use the outdoor areas (in our setting) to effectively help in developing children's oral language skills, encouraging them to become successful learners and effective contributors to their own education?

The answer I believe can be derived from linking together the data gathered via my sub-questions discussed above under four broad headings, which showed that **when**

the children were involved in planning, their learning was truly influenced by this as can be seen by the mind-mapping exercise below containing some of their ideas and suggestions. As we worked on these activities their enthusiasm for learning and being outdoors grew and they continually suggested more and more games, and ways of building on their language skills to develop and relate to what they saw outside to their initial sounds: thus both their Phonological and Phoneme Awareness grew.

Mind map

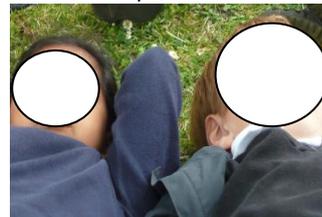
look around & think of something you see, then describe it
e.g. blue-sometimes has bits of white in it- things fly in it
answer –the sky

think of something you see
say the sound -others have to guess what it is then give other words beginning with same sound – l-ladybird- lovely/lonely etc

What activities can we do outdoors that would help develop our language skills?



Lie on the ground , eyes open
Describe what you see



Take some letters outdoors and match them to things we see
e.g., b=bush, bird feeder etc



look around and think of something we can see e.g. bird –then say something else we can see or lives outside for each letter
bush, insect, rain, dog

run around touching 5 different things- go back to adult and tell them what you touched- and the sound it starts with

My findings were consistent with the views of Beetlestone (1998) and Siraj-Blatchford & Clarke (2000), reported in my literature review, showing the benefits of being creative in our approach to the curriculum. These support the merits of using different environments for teaching and illustrating the value of a curriculum that is both child-initiated and child-centred, as often the children gave suggestions that the staff had not considered. Relating this to Bruce's statement (again from my literature review) that "children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility", demonstrates the value of including the views of our children in research, as discussed at the beginning of this project, and is consolidated in the responses from staff.

information was gathered from a variety of different sources (discussions, observations and reading), this led to a wider range of experiences being offered to the children, the children themselves being involved in their learning and the expertise of other people's experiences being valued. Using my observational skills I was then able to record the benefits of these experiences and after reflection could alter and amend where necessary (the key to being a reflective practitioner).

value is given to using the outdoors, we can see that the statement used by South Gloucester Council (stated in my literature review) -"whilst all learners can flourish outdoors - children showing a kinaesthetic learning style often benefit more" certainly lived up to its assertion when applied to this project. The initial group of five children greatly benefited from using the outdoors, and their enthusiasm for using descriptive language grew.

When these experiences were extended to the primary one children as a whole group, their replies provided consolidation of the benefits gained.

all this is related to language, the benefits, although harder to record, can be seen in the confidence of children during other class activities, for example at "show and tell" (an activity where all children are given the

opportunity to bring something from home and explain to the rest of the class why they chose that item): good descriptive language was being used. This is recorded in the photograph below and a transcript of the children's conversation



Here child J chose the sound **p**. He put it beside the **p**urple flowers, then said "I need a *f* for flower as well." The child beside him said "you can add *g* for green and *l* for leaf, then we would have lots of letters."

Using the findings of Brunner (1985) and Vygotsky (1978), that through talk children can organise their understanding of the world, exposing them to the wonders of the outdoors and offering them the opportunities to develop their oral descriptive language, can therefore benefit both the children themselves and their educational setting.



opportunity to

In this photograph the children were asked to run to something beginning with *t*. Once they were there they had to say something about it - *big, rough, bumpy*.



Here we see children having the chat about what they have found.

The opportunity of using the outdoors as a learning and teaching environment was a very positive experience for both the children and myself. However, that said, the implication of completing this style of learning on a regular basis is limited to the availability and willingness of

staff to undertake the tasks described above while being aware of child staff ratios and the risk assessments involved. That aside, I truly believe it is achievable and worthwhile.

Implications

Action research uses a practical approach to a professional question; therefore the implications of completing an action research project involves three dimensions.

- personally
- for the setting
- for the profession

Looking at these individually

- *personally* – from the key activity used at the start of the course material (copy attached to appendix 1), through the structuring and re-structuring of my proposal to its final accepted form, working with the children developing activities, testing them out, gathering information and conducting interviews to the final write up of this project, not only helped me meet my learning outcomes, but made a very interesting and rewarding project to complete.

Reflecting back to my main research question has increased my thirst to continue to develop and enhance the outdoors as a learning environment for all areas of our curriculum and not (as often currently used) as recreation or a reward.

- *my setting* benefited in that consolidated time was given to a small group of children needing extra help. A more interesting way of conducting lessons was experienced, and the whole-class activities provided an opportunity to trial the use of the outdoors as an alternative to the traditional classroom, providing opportunities for outdoor learning. However as previously mentioned, staffing levels

are a concern, with increased staff being needed for this type of programme.

- *for my profession*, it shows that action research should not just be the domain of senior management. Successful action research can make a difference to the way we educate the children in our care and offer a forum for change to occur.

Linking this then to the original questions asked in the chapter on investigative design:

- *Who benefits...* the staff and children in the infant department of our setting
- *How did they find out...* through the activities that took place and the dissemination of my findings
- *What happened and how* observations, interviews, group discussions, activities were all recorded and disseminated to staff
- *Where are we now....* opportunities are available to offer an alternative learning environment to our children to enhance their education.

Taking this a step further we can see that offering the children the opportunity to use the outdoors as a learning environment not only benefits their health and wellbeing but helps to increase their academic ability as well.

Conclusions

It is never easy to critically appraise your own work, however I have decided to sum up my conclusions using the diagram below which is taken from Pollard (2008: p10-11), where it states that using reflective teaching which incorporates research should, could and can benefit both the staff and children in our settings.

If we

reflect → plan → make provision for → act → collate
analyse → and evaluate our findings,

the results should and I believe CAN make a difference to our children's education.

Using this method in my own research showed that.....

- *I reflected* on how we could address a problem.
- *I planned* with both children and adults how we could achieve this.
- *I made provision* for these activities to take place.
- *I acted* on all of the above.
- *I collected* my information.
- *I analysed* the information collected, and
- *I evaluated* the results.

The empirical research (the knowledge I acquired from my observations) conducted as part of this action research project increased my knowledge and awareness for both language acquisition and the benefits of using the outdoors as an alternative to the traditional classroom.

This was a very positive experience which allowed me to draw together the knowledge accumulated from the other modules studied for this degree and met my personal learning outcomes as stated at the start of this project.

Reflecting on the comments from other staff members, I believe this has also been a successful action research project and one which allowed for change to take place, albeit on a small scale.

The achievement and enjoyment of the children during their activities outdoors makes for a truly holistic education and one I believe well worth pursuing.

I also believe that with the Curriculum for Excellence early level straddling both nursery and primary one, children need to be offered the opportunity in school to continue the learning that takes place outdoors in nursery. Often in nursery, children have the regular access to the outdoors, however when they come into school this “free” access is no longer available. Therefore taking more lessons outdoors can begin to even out the balance and I am happy to have played a part in this shift in priorities.



I would like to conclude my project with the same statement I started with:

The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky.
McMillian cited in Bayley et al (2006).

This I believe is the true benefit of outdoor learning.