Evidencing Engagement:
Developing an Evidence Gathering App for Observing Engagement in Early Childhood Settings

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“Engagement sets the optimal occasion for learning to occur”

Engagement

• ‘For students with special needs/disabilities, research has suggested that engaged behaviour is the single best predictor of successful learning’

• (Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber & Kincaid, 2003; Bulgren & Carta, 1993; McWilliam, 2010; Casey and McWilliam, 2005, Carpenter et al, 2015)
7 engagement indicators:

- Curiosity
- Responsiveness
- Investigation
- Persistence
- Initiation
- Discovery
- Anticipation
Engagement Profile

**Practice Indicators**

- **Responsiveness**: Shows awareness, acknowledgement or recognition
  - The need, thirst or desire to explore, know about, learn or make a connection with
  - Actively trying to find out more within or about an activity or experience

- **Curiosity**: Demonstrates realisation, surprise or excitement, etc., at new application of previous learning
  - 'Light bulb moment'

- **Initiation**: A self-directed request or indication which expresses an intention, want or need
  - 'Sticking with it'
  - Continued effort (may be in short bursts), perseverance, determination, refusing to give up or let go

- **Anticipation**: Shows expectancy or prediction as a result of previous knowledge, experience or skill

- **Persistence**: Continued effort (may be in short bursts), perseverance, determination, refusing to give up or let go

- **Investigation**: Actively trying to find out more within or about an activity or experience

- **Discovery**: A self-directed request or indication which expresses an intention, want or need
The seven lenses of engagement for learning

Children with Special Needs need assessment which is wrapped around them in order to capture their learning.
Engagement Profile

Case Study: Child E

7 Practice Indicators

Name: Ella
Date: January 2019

- Facial expression does not change
- Fleeting eye contact
- Lined objects up collects 'like objects'
- Wary of new activities will examine new objects and turn them in her hands
- Flinches at unexpected happenings waits for a response when pressing switches etc
- Pulls at an adult pushes hand under an adults hand for help no eye contact for communicative intent
- When highly motivated, will repeat actions when difficult, will pull an adult to help her achieve outcome

Responsiveness

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Traditional methods... barriers to systemisation
Overview of learning outcomes, evidence, formative and summative assessment
Parents are able to collect and submit evidence from outside of school.
Collecting and recording Engagement data

What were we looking for? To use switch to communicate choice. Use two switches to create different effects. Practising this skill will help to use switches to communicate and share wants, needs and choices.

What the young person did to achieve it: well done you really worked hard today, using your hands to press the switch and communicate what you wanted to play with. You smiled in anticipation to the bubbles in front of you and then used the more switch to tell me that you really wanted the bubbles. You did not stop pressing the tone switch until you had got what you wanted.

Next steps: bubbles are really motivational to you so let’s try with something less motivational. Signature: feather

Scales of engagement intervention: to use two switches to activate a variety of different stimuli. Use more switch to express want or need in class.
Collecting and recording Engagement data

Overview of Relevant Issues

e.g. Environment / Learner's mood / Noteworthy factors or differences

A little tired today - message in book to say that has been up since 4:30am.
Overview of learning outcomes, evidence, formative and summative assessment
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Engagement Reports – data and evidence
Challenges of evidence-based practice

- High quality evidence – captured as it happens
- Annotated, linked and catalogued to fit YOUR curriculum, assessment and school models and systems
- Flexibility to work with any framework including bespoke and changing. “Pick n Mix”
- Support highly-personalised approaches
- Link back to key statutory documentation where appropriate
- Allow you to capture holistic development
- Multi-agency teams, families and the learner - transition
- Versatile to reflect changing needs of learners - transition
- Centralised, limitless yet easily retrievable
The value of your (high quality) evidence

- Supports your understanding of the learners needs
- Able to demonstrate even small, subtle steps of progress over time
- In some cases, only a video will do it!
- Corroboration, moderation... inter-rater-reliability
- External moderation.... Quality
- Collaboration between multiple stakeholders and multi-disciplinary teams
- Follow the learner to support key transitions in their life and development
- Review of evidence to support curriculum development
- CPD
- Action research
Evidence for Learning

Development of the App

- theTeacherCloud Ltd founded in 2011
- Evidence for Learning (EfL) used in more than 600 schools globally (UK, Australia, US)
- EfL SEND Community now more than 400 schools/settings
- 2+ million observations and evidence collected during last 12 months
- Development is driven by practitioners and leaders in the field
“Early intervention for children with Complex Learning Disabilities is crucial. Through the lens of engagement, we can deepen our understanding and strengthen our knowledge, in turn underpinning pedagogical approaches to teaching. As education staff, it is our duty to develop learning opportunities to maximise Engagement. Reviewing video footage, revisiting previous learning opportunities and collaborating with others allows us to view a wider, richer picture of what children with Complex Needs are experiencing and how we can form a vital part in their learning environment.”

Teacher participants in ECI Evidence for Learning App Pilot
“Developing a profile helps plan for and develop activities that ‘spark’ engagement. Whether that engagement is fleeting or sustained, the monitoring and tracking of this progress informs educators, supporting the ongoing development of provision. Assessment traditionally focusses on what a child can or can’t do, the lens of Engagement lets us see a whole new world of opportunity waiting to be unlocked.”

Teacher participants in ECI Evidence for Learning App Pilot
Authors

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