Early Years Twilight Seminar Video

How did the Literature Review connect the VEYLDF to the learning sciences?

Part of our task with doing this literature review was starting from the language of the VEYDLF,

but we needed to go into that language of the learning sciences because our job was to look at measurement tools and assessment tools.

So we had to… We had to do a bit of translation work between how learning is defined in the learning sciences and how it's expressed in VEYDLF.

Dan's talked about our decision to focus on domain-general skills, so that means we decided we wouldn't look at (AUDIENCE MEMBER COUGHS) literacy and numeracy.

There's a lot in that space already. We'd look at the assessment of the more holistic aspects of learning that sometimes get lost if there's too much of a focus on the literacy and numeracy side.

So, Dan's picked out four of those domain-general areas of learning that we address in the literature review, and I'm going to have a look at how they map onto the VEYDLF to help you with using that language and reporting against the VEYDLF outcomes.

So, when Dan's talking about executive function, many of you might be familiar with that…that concept already, but we can see it…Sorry. We can see it in the… (COUGHS)..in the VEYDLF when children do things like negotiating and setting achievable goals, OK? That's taking responsibility and managing their learning.

When they make plans, when they carry out systematic courses of action and then evaluate their results. This is all in the VEYDLF and it's all executive function, OK? So, there's nothing new in this learning sciences perspective.

In terms of, well, what does it mean to think about executive function when you're assessing against the VEYDLF? We'd encourage you to look at what are the skills that are precursors to learning?

Often, we sort of dismiss them as behaviours, you know, that children…that child has. It still, "Oh, that child can't concentrate."But think about it in the same way that you would teaching something like writing or any of those domain-specific skills.This is actually something that we can focus on and we can develop that is part of that child's learning.

And in thinking about executive function, and thinking about the tools for assessing it, you can just tune your radar to focus on those things.

Problem-solving was the second area of learning that Dan mentioned. That's in lots of places in the VEYDLF. So, when children invent, investigate and discover, when they hypothesise, experiments research and investigate, when they brainstorm, reflect and reason - problem-solving is all throughout play-based learning.

In terms of how we take that awareness of problem-solving that we get from the learning sciences and really tune our radar there, what we can do is think about, "Well, what opportunities do we provide for children to problem solve? Do we have those clear and protectable sequences where children can figure things out for themselves?"

Do we - and this is…this is a big misconception, I think, with learning - do we focus on children getting things right or do we focus on the reasoning process that got them there? Because that's the problem-solving. So again, it's tuning your radar to a different aspect of learning.

The third one Dan mentioned was social skills. Thinking about social skills as an avenue to learning can be a bit of a new way of thinking as well, but in the VEYDLF, we see children engaging in active engagement with others who speak and respond to their interests. Learning from demonstration and modelling by others, especially others that they care about. So there's a lot of social aspects to learning.

So that… All of the outcomes in the VEYDLF, of course, cross over with one another, but we can see that those social skills that are foundational to learning as well.

And likewise, motor skills. Again, we might think about motor skills, as Dan mentioned, as an aspect of learning. We might think about them as, "Oh, that's just physical development." But actually, it's children's motor skills that enable them to explore their environments and do that discovery and learning through which those other areas of learning emerge.

So, I guess we're offering here just some new concepts, different ways of looking at what's in the VEYDLF, drawing on those ideas from the science of learning.

I want to touch on two other things quickly. The outcome… Dan's talked about learning. This outcome is about confident and involved learners, so it's not just about children learning. They've got to be confident, they've got to be involved in it. So, when we were looking at how to assess this outcome, we also looked at paying attention to children's confidence. Is it that they can't do something, or they don't believe that they can do something and they're not willing to have a go? And that's part of the outcome as well.

In terms of involvement in learning, planning so that children have opportunities to get deep into things, to explore and discover themselves. That they're not moving from one thing to another too quickly. And also thinking about the role of relationships in…involvement in learning.

So we know that relationships are foundational to practice inand learning almost as distinct from one another, but we know they're not. And that idea of involvement in learning, of educators and children enjoying learning together is how that connection is made.

So, that's how you can take those…those sort of scientific concepts, um, from the research that Dan's been doing and translate them into what you're doing in assessing children against the VEYDLF.